

"MORE LIGHT."

What is Freemasonry?

This is the question put almost an innumerable number of times to every member of the fraternity who is supposed to be, either from his position in the craft, or his opportunities for study and observation, more fully posted on the end and aim of our ancient and honorable Institution. From the profane world the question continually presents itself; they are very anxious to learn, *what is Freemasonry*. Freemasonry is a system of pure philanthropy, beneficence and benevolence. Philanthropy, is the simple love of fellow-men, and may develop as variously in Institutions, as in the breasts of individuals. Every personal feeling which tends to create a zeal for the good of the species, and to benefit it either socially, morally or physically, is pure philanthropy: and any Institution which instils into its votaries a love of their fellows, and a desire to be of service to them, may justly be termed a philanthropic Institution. It is not always necessary to ensure the execution of the good intention. Beneficence, on the other hand, is active goodness, the conferring of the benefit, without necessarily implying philanthropy; either in desire or object.

Instances are numerous in which men have been lavishly beneficent, from purely vain-glorious motives, without taking into account upon whom their bounty alighted, or to the private feelings that have been wounded by the public act.

Benevolence, however, denotes the utmost kindness of feelings toward the objects of beneficence, and consults with careful tenderness the shrinking feelings of its recipients; never suffering a harsh, unfeeling world to gaze with rudeness upon the misfortunes of others. All these attributes of practical goodness to mankind, *we hold*, are presented in a concentrated form in the one word *Freemasonry*. It is philanthropic because it is founded upon a love for the human family, and exerts itself to promote their benefit to a greater extent than the outside world has ever imagined. It is beneficent, because its benefits are actual, substantial and properly timed; not theoretical, frivolous, or fanciful, but are bestowed at the time when their presence is desired, silently and without acclamation.

It is benevolent, because its feelings and sentiments are fraternal in their manner; confidential in communication, and are characterized by that brotherly kindness, which makes them grateful to their recipient. Masonic charity being obligatory to all its members, the position of the recipient is therefore a common privilege, and all sense of humiliating obligation is done away with; and there is no obligation shared by the fraternity which does not partake of this advantageous character.

It has often been said that the claims of Freemasonry to the attributes of general philanthropy are unfounded and false, inasmuch as it benefits, whatever they be, accrue only to its own members.

We acknowledge the above to be the case, and find our authority for upholding the fraternity in the practice of the same, in Holy Writ, "Do good to all men, but especially to those of the household of faith;" not meaning, however, the professors of any peculiar religious creed, for the Masonic fraternity embrace all who bow to a Supreme Being, and render homage to the G. A. O. T. U.

No Institution yet established in the world would be capable of doing good to the people of the entire universe, but that one nearest approaches philanthropy

which excludes none on account of nationality, language, or creed, and finds its members and beneficiaries in every part of the globe.

In fact, to use the words of a German brother, "A Mason's country is the whole world, and between his compasses is contained all that concerns mankind."

It is also alleged that our fraternity in its system of beneficence is less active and extensive than that of other Institutions of later date, and of greater display.

While we would not for a moment wish to disparage any attempts put forth which tend to the benefit of man, and which are operating around us, we may be calmly conscious that ours is the system which obviates at once both the possibility of attack or defense. It is essentially *private*: its beneficence is veiled by its benevolence; and its benevolence is sanctified by its secrecy. Of Freemasonry we can properly say that "its quality of mercy is not strained."—*N. Y. Square.*

Resolutions

Of the Grand Lodge of N. C., adopted at the Annual session in Dec. last:

The words "*Ancient work of Masonry*," were adopted as the title of the work of this jurisdiction.

That resolution No. 1, on page 30, Grand Lodge Proceedings of 1871, be repealed, and that the following resolution be adopted:

That any member of a Subordinate Lodge who shall apply for a dimit, it shall be granted him upon his producing the Secretary's receipt that he has paid all Lodge dues, if there be no charges against him; *Provided*, That any Mason who thus becomes non-affiliated, by his action distinctly releases all members of Lodges from any and all Masonic ties between himself and them, retaining no Masonic right except that of petitioning any Lodge for membership.

That Art. IV of Anderson's Constitution, which we consider the highest written authority on Masonry, fully defines the ancient law and usage on this subject, to-wit: "Only candidates may know that no master should take an apprentice unless he has sufficient employment for him, and unless he be a perfect youth, having no maim or defect in his body that may render him incapable of learning the art, &c."

That a Lodge cannot appeal from an acquittal, nor allow a spiteful accuser to use its name and machinery to gratify his malice.

That the dues from Subordinate Lodges to this Grand Lodge shall be fifty cents per capita annually for each member reported.

That when a Lodge has forfeited its Charter and sent its records to the Grand Secretary, the former members of such Lodge, before uniting with another Lodge, or petitioning for a Dispensation for a New Lodge, shall provide themselves with a certificate of their having formerly belonged to such Lodge which shall be given by the Grand Secretary on receipt of all dues shown by such records to be owing by them to their former Lodge.

THE CHINESE AND CHRISTIANITY.—We have the heathen at our doors in a double sense, and the experiment of the effect of christianity upon them is an interesting one. The Rev. Charles N. Fitch writes that there are 2,000 Chinese on the Pacific coast under christian influence. He says the converts are frugal, yet liberal. "They will roast a whole hog for dinner, and then 'sell off' what remains, because it is cheaper, and then go to the mission at night and give liberally to relieve a brother or help spread the gospel."—*Philadelphia Record.*

Is Voting in the Lodge a Right of Membership?

GEO. FRANK GOULEY.

Some years ago there was introduced into the system of Masonic government of subordinate bodies, a by-law like the following: "No member in arrears for dues for the space of—months shall have the right to vote."

Exactly where such law was first started, and by whom, it would be difficult to state, but that it got into the lodges and spread by degrees, by one lodge copying the laws of another, until it finally attracted the attention of Grand Lodges, etc., there is no question. That it ever got any considerable foothold without being at once crushed out, can only be accounted for on the well-known fact that Grand Bodies are slow to move in such matters, unless their attention is directly called toward them. Not one committee on by-laws in a dozen, appointed during annual sessions, ever has the time or inclination to read all the matter submitted to it, and the result is that the subordinate body goes ahead with all its errors under the honest supposition that they have been "confirmed." In jurisdictions, however, where the subject has received attention, such a law has been declared unconstitutional, null and void, for the reason that it is an infringement of the vested rights of membership and a deprivation of the same without even the formality of a trial. A member in arrears may be so from good and just cause, if he has an opportunity to explain, and as every member is supposed to be in good standing in his lodge when not under charges, he cannot be deprived of a part of his rights without the destruction of them all. It would be just as legal to say the Wardens cannot occupy their stations if they are three months in arrears, or to have a law that the Master cannot preside if he is twelve months behind hand, or that a member cannot visit his lodge, as well as to say he cannot vote. The laws of every well regulated jurisdiction provide that no member shall be deprived of any of his rights, except by the award of his brethren. If he can pay and will not, then try and punish him for disobedience, and until he is found guilty and the punishment awarded, he is still a MEMBER. If he wants to pay and cannot, and the brethren are satisfied of that fact, then let them remit his dues, or grant further time. In either case, he is still a MEMBER, entitled to enjoy all the rights, immunities and privileges belonging to such membership, and he cannot constitutionally, or in equity, be deprived of them by the simple fact of arrearages. His indebtedness is one thing, and his right to vote is another. Let all Grand Lodges declare such *ex parte* laws unconstitutional.—*Voice of Masonry.*

Three Masons, at least we hear they are such, without the fear of Grand Master Bell, or the Grand Lodge of Arkansas before their eyes, ignorantly, we must presume, have been making Masons in Crittenden county, Arkansas. They asserted that their object was to get enough good citizens to take the degrees to secure enough Masons to petition for a new Lodge near where they lived. Unfortunately some good citizens, believing in their assumed power and right, have paid their money and are progressing in the art. Three have taken all the degrees pertaining to a Lodge, and five more are on their way. A sudden light has fallen upon them, and they are now waiting to learn, "the way to be saved."—*Jewel.*

Thirty-seven convicts have been sent from the Penitentiary to Old Fort to work on the Western Railroad.

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