

I depose P. G. Nichols to dedicate and consecrate to Masonic purposes the Masonic Temple in Charlotte, and Brother S. S. Everitt, W. M., of St. John's Lodge, No. 1, to lay the Corner Stone of the Temple of Israel in the city of Wilmington, and I am happy to state that the manner in which they performed their duties, did honor to themselves, and credit to the Fraternity. I have issued a large number of dispensations authorizing the election and installation of officers, where the same had not been done at a proper time.

Upon proper recommendations I appointed Brother Richard T. Turner, of Savannah, Georgia, to represent our Grand Lodge near the Grand Lodge of Georgia.

ORPHAN ASYLUMS.

No subject engages our attention which is more important, more sacred, more peculiarly the work of Masons, than that of the maintenance of the Orphan Asylums. I regard their sustenance as the grand test of the sincerity of our attachment to the great principles taught by Masonry. We are heralded to the world by our published works, through our journals and our orators on festive occasions, as a great benevolent institution founded on the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. We declare that Charity is the chief end in the ladder which extends from Earth to Heaven. In our Halls these principles are taught, and by the beautiful symbols of our ritual is continually impressed upon the mind. If then, when these are the principles we publish as being the ground work of the order, and on this foundation there have been established homes for the destitute orphans, a class peculiarly the charge of Masons, if when we tell the world that charity is the Grand Masonic principle on which we lay claim to recognition and we permit these institutions to languish or to continue to be piteous, pleading beggars, we should hang our heads in shame.

Of the one hundred and fifty-six answers of Masters of Lodges to a circular letter on the subject of the support of the orphan work. I am happy to say that very few showed disinclination to continue the work, many deplored their inability to do as much as they deserved, promising more activity in the future. Some favored legislation looking to a more general participation in the burden of supporting this charity by levying a tax upon the Subordinate Lodges. Some favored the making the work in its operations strictly Masonic, and there were some growlers and complainers. There were some who thought charity ought to begin at home. For those who answered not at all, I can make no record, except that their silence shows such forgetfulness of obligation that we cannot expect much co-operation from them, and just here I would say that legislation should be had defining in what way the Grand Master may rebuke such contempt of his authority.

After carefully comparing and digesting the views of the answering Lodges; I am of opinion that it is the wish of the majority that the orphan work shall not be circumscribed in its usefulness; that while it is peculiarly Masonic, and its support ought chiefly to come from Masons, yet such is the character of its recognition from without, that, if Masonic charity permitted, we should not take from it the high character we have impressed upon it, that of a general benevolent and charitable enterprise.

It is gratifying that every year we see manifested more interest in its success in every quarter; churches, conventions, associations, conferences, the press, all now lend their aid in furthering the work

And I cannot leave this part of the address without grateful notice of the act of the Governor calling attention to this object, in his thanksgiving proclamation, as are worthy of the thankofferings of the various congregations of the State, and to return thanks for the liberality with which response was made. May we not hope that it may be the precursor of more material endorsement and aid? Let us not abate in zeal for this, the crowning glory of North Carolina Masonry, but rather let us push it with the energy which its importance demands, and its sacredness and our honor requires. Let us persevere until all shall recognize, aid and encourage the manumission of the helpless orphans from a thralldom which, in some instances, is ignoble and degrading.

To the recommendation of the Superintendent, I beg special attention, as being far more worthy of consideration than any thing I might say.

I regret very much that he has intimated, more than once, a wish to retire from office at the close of this term. I do hope such considerations may be presented as will induce him to continue. I know it must be a position full of care and perplexity, withal of very great and serious responsibility, one from which any one might well shrink from assuming. Yet it is one of highest importance, promising higher rewards than perhaps any other save that of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation; one of which Brother Mills has honored by self-sacrificing devotion, unflinching faith and unwearied efforts. He has shown to the people the claims of the orphans upon them; he has shown them that the "orphans have rights which all good people are bound to defend." He was so liberal as that their claims are being heard, and we may confidently hope that aid is not far distant when proper provision shall be made for their relief. They are as much entitled to the fostering care of the State as those who are bereft of reason, or the deaf, dumb and blind, and the work set on foot by Brother Mills and fostered by the Grand Lodge, we may yet see amply provided for by the Government, as we insist it is its absolute and imperative duty. When this is effected, then, and not until then, can we describe the benefits of our asylums to the orphans of Masonry, and we should not desire it. We can support them; we must do it, not to do so will be a shame.

The Grand Master of Alabama, in his address to the Grand Lodge in 1855, puts on record an incident which our committee on Foreign Correspondence quoted in the report of 1869, and which I deem worthy of perpetual record, as showing how much a simple offering of a child of great faith did for a great and noble cause. He says, "In Mississippi, at Lauderdale Springs, a Home for Orphans is in successful operation; there are within its walls ninety old orphans of Masons, besides many others; a little girl living in Kentucky, Jennie Moxby by name, nine years old became impressed with the importance of the subject and gave all the money she was saving to buy a doll for the benefit of the Home of Lauderdale Springs, not satisfied, after much concern of mind, consented to part with her memory string of beads and flowers, very precious to her. Her mother told her no one would give any thing for that. She replied in simple, but grand faith, I will try. She gave it to a friend to sell, who offered it to a friend, relating the incident, who gave ten dollars for it and returned it. This was repeated until one thousand dollars was realized for the Orphans Home." He adds, and I here repeat, cannot we, and will we not,

strong men, do more than this child of faith?

It is proper that it should be stated, as it may not be known to all, that our work has no connection with that started during the war, to the endowment of which such praiseworthy contribution was made. That perished with the close of the war. All of its accumulations were confederate securities, except some real estate, which the Supreme Court of this State turned over to the grasp of a creditor of the person who sold it to the "Orphans' Fund," on the ground that the "Orphans' Fund" was against public policy in that its benefactions, as set forth in the acts of incorporation, were furnished to those who should be made fatherless by the events of the war, to wit, the orphans of confederate soldiers. I mention this not to take issue with the court, though I am of opinion the dissenting judge was right, and according to the law, but to show to those who may not know the way their money went, as some enquiry has been made to that effect. See Trustees N. C. Endowment Fund in S. S. Sutchwell, 71 N. C. Report, page 111. The courts of Mississippi refused to allow confiscation of the Lauderdale Springs property acquired under the same circumstances.

I have rec'd a letter from Brother Milvin E. Carter giving information that title to the Mars Hill property has been perfected and that as soon as the deed shall have been recorded it will be forwarded to the Grand Master. The thanks of the fraternity are due to Brother Carter for the interest manifested and labor done in behalf of our work.

WASHINGTON MONUMENT.

I am in receipt of an appeal from the Secretary of the National Monument Society asking for aid from the Masonic work so long neglected, in honor of the man whose fame is common heritage of our whole country. While he needs no monumental shaft, no stately pile to perpetuate his memory in the hearts of the lovers of Constitutional free Government, it is, perhaps, on the near approach of the one hundredth year of our independence, fitting that the American people should testify their gratitude by the completion of the Washington Monument at the capitol of the nation.

It is fitting too, that Masons should join in the great work, for besides the common interest we all feel in the perpetuation of the memory of his greatness, we cherish with pride his memory as one of our noble members, and most illustrious exemplars of the principles and aims of our order.

I hope the Grand Lodge will take proper notice of the appeal, and such steps in furtherance of the object as may be deemed expedient, consonant with our appreciation of the great name of Washington.

To the reports of the Grand Secretary and Treasurer I invite special attention, that the recommendations pertaining to their offices may be heeded and such legislation made as will aid to carry out their suggestions.

In conclusion brethren, let me express to you my profound gratitude for the undeserved honor you have conferred upon me, and the uniform courtesy I have received at your hands. I have come far short of my duty, and have from the beginning of my term keenly felt my want of ability to perfectly discharge the high and responsible duties of Grand Master, and I am persuaded that I have not come up to the exalted requirements of the office. I desire to work in the vineyards and shaded retreats, not on the house tops; I desire not honors and rewards.

I rituate what P. G. Master Reade said: It has been the custom of this Grand Lodge to continue in office the Grand Master for two terms, a wise and judicious precedent and one which ordinarily ought not to be departed from; for their experience of the first year enables the Grand Master to be more efficient and useful the second year. I say this lest the course which I felt impelled to take may be followed as precedent. My felt inability to perform the high duties of the office, the multifarious perplexities of

my duties, private and professional, demand that I should retire. The station of Grand Master is not one of honor solely, but one of great labors, requiring almost constant care and attention which with the other duties devolving upon me it is impossible for me to give. So I hope you will relieve me at the next ballot.

I shall always cherish in my memory the high honor you have conferred—a life time of devotion to the cause cannot repay the debt of gratitude I feel. To the Masters of Lodges, my compeers, and particularly to the Grand Secretary, am I indebted for valuable assistance in the discharge of my duties and to all I tender my heartfelt thanks.

May we all be guided by a desire for the good of the order, for the spread of its principles, for enlargement of usefulness to mankind. "May brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue cement us. Let the benign genious of the Mystic Art preside over our councils, and under her sway let us act with a dignity becoming the high moral character of our venerable institution. And when we have done the work laid out on the trestleboard and assigned to us, may we have an abundant entrance into the realms of the blest, through him in whom we trust. Amen.

G. W. BLOUNT,
Grand Master.

THE MASONIC JOURNAL.



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