

The Ideal of Freemasonry.

It has been well observed that every event or movement in the history of humanity is a new apocalypse of man, or Nature, or God. This thought is eminently true. There is not a movement in the material world, nor event in the life of man or society, but is the relation of eternal Truth—a new step of humanity in its upward progress. All revelations in society—the great questions which agitate nations—the mighty ideals which burn in the bosom of all laboring to realize themselves in the various philanthropic enterprises and benevolent associations of the age, have a deep and solemn significance—are attached to the divinest sentiments of the soul—are expressive of the souls' aspirations—responses to the great needs of humanity. They mark the victories of man over ignorance and selfishness, and are pledges of an ever growing perfection. For while man labors he thrives; while society struggles, and is in conflict, it advances. All the phenomena of life, all institutions or movements in society, devised by human genius, have been so many attempts of man to fathom the mystery of his being—so many struggles to rush and embrace an ideal beauty of excellence which glimmered in the immeasurable heights above him. Hence all the movements are of momentous import—are providentially devised; and are worthy of a profound study and investigation, and will be studied by those who reverence virtue, and cherish a genial love and large hope for man.

Among the providential institutions which should arrest the attention of thinking men, are the mysteries, as they were formerly called, or secret societies as they are now denominated. In the earliest periods of the world, the wisest and best of men withdrew from the imperfections of the exterior society, and in their secret temples sought to sound the mysterious deeps of God. Nature and the soul and to live out this idea of a true life. The mysteries of Egypt, of Eleusis, of the Cabiri, and those of India and the north of Europe, had a widely extended influence; and so important were they that an investigation of them is necessary if we would have an accurate view of the theology, philosophy, science and ethics of the past time.

The singular tendency to secret associations in all ages, and the remarkable progress and prevalence of these societies at the present time, in spite of the selfishness and materialism of the age, indicate most clearly a providential origin and a providential design. When the conditions and circumstances attending them, and the position they have occupied and do still occupy—the countless thousands of earnest and intelligent men who have worshipped and do worship every day at their altars are considered—who will say that these institutions which have, in all periods of the world, commanded the admiration and reverence and service of the best and wisest of our race, have not exercised a powerful influence on the life of the past, and are not destined to accomplish mighty results in this present age, and wield a prodigious influence over all its thought and life? What have been those results, and what may we expect them to be in future? What has been, and what is destined to be their influence on, and their relations with the progressive development of man?

It is a part of the mission of the Masonic societies in general to elevate the tone of public and private morals, and to realize in all the arrangements of life, a diviner sentiment of justice, a truer ideal of charity, and more enlightened notions regarding man's relations with his fellow-

man. They are a means of intellectual, moral and social progress, and belong to the great category of divine instrumentalities, ordained by Providence for the advancement of the human race.

This remark is eminently correct as it regards the ancient mysteries. They were the sources of moral life—the fountains of theology, philosophy, ethics, science and politics—the ministers of progress—in a word, the mother of civilization. In the Egyptian, Grecian and Indian mysteries, and the Druidical institutions of the north of Europe, were nourished and developed those moral principles and sentiments, and those social ideas, which afterward entered into the life of the people, and became actual in their social forms.

And this is the divine method of human progress. Men, in the mass, do not and cannot rise at once to the comprehension of absolute truth; nor is it possible for them to appreciate it in its fullness, nor, unaided, to apply it to any practical result. Neither do they advance, either individually or socially, by virtue of their own energy but receive the elements of progress, growth and expansion from the spiritual world—that is to say, from God. When new elements of life are to be sent forth from the bosom of the Deity for the revivification of the nations, or new ideas are to be promulgated to further their advancement toward a more perfect civilization, a few earnest and far-seeing spirits are first agitated by them—to them the revelation is first made. They invoke these new ideals, and labor to bring them down from Heaven to earth, and make them living and actual in the world's life. But a wide sea of ages sometimes rolls between the ideal and the actual—between the discovery of a principle and its full and perfect application to life: yet cherished by the enlightened few, illustrated in their mystic circle, it grows, expands, gains influence, and at length blends with the people's life, and modifies all the institutions of society.

So, in modern times, we have seen a certain social idea—the idea of equality of the worth of man as man, and his right to elect his own superior as chief—pass through several phases, till it attained to a perfect incarnation in liberal political institutions. This idea, born in one of the monarchical orders of the Roman Church—that Church of strange constants, where democracy and autocracy hourly issued under the shadow of the most unmitigated despotism, realized in the internal arrangements of the secret Orders of the middle ages, became fully developed and defined in the Fraternity of Freemasons, and with that association through every country in the mundane sphere.

But as yet it had not changed the political aspect of society. It was only an ideal of a new state, the consolation and hope of those earnest men, who, looking with longing toward the future, sought refuge from the withering arrangements of the outward life in the fraternal embraces of their sacred institution. It was a type of an order of things yet to be created. But as every thought finds its appropriate word, so, sooner or later, will every idea find an expression in some of the forms of life. Thus the social idea which had been laboring for ages in the hearts of the good and wise, which in these secret associations had been worshipped for centuries, and which the Masonic Brotherhood adopted as the leading thought, found an utterance and embodiment in the institutions of the countries where freedom exists.

From what has been said it follows that the mysteries are not only useful but necessary. There is always the need of an institution where a higher ideal of life shall be worshipped and sought after. There is yet to be found realized in the existing political organizations an institution which will recombine the scattered elements of society, arm itself against the selfish tendencies of the race, give men faith in virtue and confidence in each other, and reveal to the world a diviner ideal to be actualized in its life.

If our theory be correct, these societies are precisely the institutions which the world needs at this particular crisis, and

which are demanded by all the wants of man. Society needs an ideal of a higher and better state to which it may aspire. The Masonic association, or institution, reveals that ideal, and gives it an actual being in its own particular forms. It presents to the world the future of a new order of life, a new social arrangement far above, and in advance of the most perfect of political compacts. Men need faith in virtue and confidence in each other, for without these there can be no stability in business nor improvement in individual or public morality. They create this faith and virtue, and insure this mutual confidence. They strengthen public morality, promote peace and good will between man and man, and see to apply, always and everywhere, the Heaven-born idea of union and love, as they are revealed in the command: "Bear one another's burdens."—Canadian Masonic News.

As it is not only the Master's privilege, but also his duty to rule the Lodge, none are permitted to enter it as visitors but by his permission, since he is responsible for the conduct of the assembly. At a communication of the United Grand Lodge of England, held near the close of the year 1856, this subject was discussed, and the resolution unanimously passed, was—"That it is the opinion of this Grand Lodge, that it is in the power of the W. M. and Wardens of any private Lodge to refuse admission to any visitor of known bad character." But irrespectively of character, whoever claims to be present at a Masonic meeting, must if a Mason, be perfectly aware that he is bound to satisfy the Master and Brethren as to his qualifications. The investigation into them cannot be too strict, and it should never be entrusted but to a sagacious as well as competent examiner. The Master has the right to demand all the evidences of the visitor's right to admission—the production of his certificate—the proof of his being what he asserts himself to be, and any other test that he can devise. It is of course disagreeable to reject any one professing to be a Brother; but it is better that many true Masons should go away disappointed from our doors, than that one unauthorized person should gain admittance there.—Dalton Enterprise.

Secrets of Freemasonry.

Old Zachary Wheeler was quite a character in his time, being a clever, easy-going, confiding man, who managed to let everybody cheat him of his inherited estates. Just as his farm was about to slip out of his hands, he succeeded in raising the money to lift the mortgage. Aaron Reemer, a prominent Mason accompanied him to town. As they went riding along on horseback, Zack says to Aaron in a confiding tone:

"Now, Aaron, as we are all alone, I want you to tell me the secrets of Masonry."

"I can't Zack; they would kill me."

"Why, they won't know; they will never find it out."

"Yes, they will, you'll speak of it."

"No, I swear I won't."

"Well, if you'll ride close alongside of me, and put your hand on my thigh, and take the oath, I'll tell you the secrets of Masonry."

Zack was not slow to comply; and a most powerful iron-clad oath was administered and taken.

"Well," said Aaron with much solemnity and secrecy, "in the first place we Masons combine together to cheat everybody as much as we can. This is the first grand secret."

"The second is like unto it. When we can't find anybody else to cheat, we cheat each other—but as little as we can."

"Well," exclaimed Zack, with surprise, "I swear I'll join; I wish I had done it twenty years ago—I might have been a richman afore now."—Ex.

Wisdom consisteth not in knowing many things, nor even in knowing them thoroughly, but in choosing and in following what conduces the most certainly to our lasting happiness and true glory.

News Gleanings.

Ex-Mayor, A. Oakley Hall, made his debut at Park Theatre, New York, Saturday night, in the drama called "Cruelty." He had an enthusiastic ovation from a crowded house.

Last September a Scotch sailor named Anderson performed one of the most perilous feats on record. He climbed to the summit of the South Half Dome, in the Yosemite Valley, a distance of 1800 feet by means of spikes and ropes. After him a few other tourists reached the dizzy height.

It is said that about fifteen thousand bunches of violets are sold daily in Paris. The aggregate sales foot up 500,000 francs a year. The violet is not so much in favor now as it was during the empire, as it is now looked upon as an Imperial flower.

A lump of Australian gold, worth about \$35,000, is to be sent to the Centennial at Philadelphia. Very rich gold fields have recently been discovered in Australia, in another portion of the island from that in which the old gold fields are located.

The common council of Montreal have made arrangements with the contractors of the various departments who have agreed to take a number of men at six cents a day; this, with a number to be employed on mountain work etc., will, it is believed, give work to about ten thousand men. This will yet leave several thousand men in a starving condition and "the end is not yet."

Difficulties have arisen in feeding the large Indian hamadryad (*Ophiophagus elaps*) in the London Zoological Society's gardens in consequence of his refusal to eat all other food except living snakes, which in the winter time is not easy to procure in that country. A supply, however, has been received from the Continent, and the *Ophiophagus* has just made a meal. The monster has devoured some two of his weaker brethren since his arrival in England in March.

CHARLESTON, S. C., Great excitement prevails here in consequence of the election, by the Legislature of eight Circuit Judges and one Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. Wright, colored, was chosen to the latter position. In the Charleston Circuit, Judge Reed, a moderate republican, is replaced by Whipple, whom Governor Chamberlain publicly denounces as utterly incapable and corrupt. Charleston is the most unpopular city in the State. Ex-Governor F. Moses, Jr., is elected in the Third Circuit and the other circuits have been filled by the election of persons less notorious and objectionable to the tax payers.

The first public statue of Oliver Cromwell erected in England was unveiled on the 1st of December in Manchester. The statue is of a bronze, and together with the pedestal, an unheaven block of stone was the gift of Mrs Abel Heywood to the city. The figure was constructed by the English sculptor, Crowder, and represented as standing upon rough ground near a broken tree stump. He is shown in the well known costume, deep boots, heavy spurs, leather gaiters and a leather coat cross-sworded to the ground, and his right hand upon the hilt. The head is bare. The portrait is said to be a faithful one.

The Mosel to Have Been Sunk in Mid-Ocean.

LONDON, Dec. 15, 1873. Thomassen, the man who has engaged a passage to Southampton by the steamer Mosel and the owner of the case of dynamite which caused the terrible disaster at Bremerhaven, has confessed that he intended to destroy the vessel when in mid-ocean.

In relating some of the details of the fiendish plan to the authorities he declared that he had accomplices at New York, who, it is presumed, expected to divide the plunder derived from the excessive insurance which they had effected.

It is generally hoped that Thomassen will recover, or at least be sufficiently restored so that full particulars of the crime may be obtained, and that the murderous affair may be traced in all its ramifications to every man connected with it directly or indirectly.