

de W Baum



VOL. 1.

GREENSBORO, N. C., FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 1876

NO 25.

An Extensive Masonic Library.

Among the collectors of Masonic works R. F. Bower, of Keokuk, Iowa, holds a leading place. We see it stated that his collection now amounts to nearly 4000 volumes, including many rare books and documents bearing upon the character of our Institution, which have been procured at no inconsiderable outlay of time and money. A Brother who recently visited this Library gives a brief description of the same in one of our exchanges, affirming that it contains almost a complete collection of all the ancient and modern works and periodicals ever published on the subject of Freemasonry. Brother Bower is declared to be an enthusiastic Masonic scholar and collector, a subscriber to every Masonic magazine and paper in the English language, and a ready purchaser of any choice and rare works that may relate to the origin, history or character of the Institution. It is a matter of rejoicing that this Brother has both the means and inclination to engage in the work of collecting such a Library, which must tend in many ways to the diffusion of Masonic light and knowledge. We wish that others might be incited to a similar course.—*Repository.*

THE HERMIT OF THE SOUTH MOUNTAINS.—A story comes from Burke county which savors very much of the romantic and vividly recalls the tales of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. About two years ago a man with rather a foreign look and peculiar dress, but possessing unmistakable evidences of culture and refinement, passed through the town and, going into the South mountains, purchased a small tract of land in one of the most hidden and inaccessible defiles, and there built a miserable little log cabin. In this he has since remained, only emerging to administer to the needs of the indigent and sick around him, and to supply his own meagre wants. Those of his rustic neighbors who have had the audacity to invade his sacred premises, assert that he lives in the rudest style—to use their own words—"sleeps on boards with mighty nigh no kiverin' and don't take but one bait a day." Nothing whatever can be learned of his history. He especially avoids the society of women and it is said that on one occasion when a woman crossed his fence and started towards his hermitage, forbade her entrance, and burned the rails which came in contact with her dress as she crossed. Sometimes letters are sent to him, and sometimes money, which he uses for charitable purposes. He is an invaluable friend to the poor who abound in that region. Recently he sent to Morganton a handsome watch, a clock and a large music box to be exchanged for medicines and other things to supply their wants.—*Landmark.*

The Trestle-Board.

Our ancient Brethren, by their zeal and attachment for the institution of Masonry, have given it a permanency that no other human institution ever has, or ever will, claim. It possesses at this day a solidity which excites the wonder of the civilized world; for those who have been connected with the Fraternity are well aware that there is no part of the habitable globe where Masons cannot be found to carry out the broad principles and extend the rights and benefits appertaining to those to whom of right they may belong, and those who as yet have never seen the light of Masonry, find it almost impossible to account for the absolute strength of the institution, in every age and clime, and under every known form of government.

It is an old adage, and a true one, that the sun never sets upon the institution of Masonry, and how it is that the Christian, the Israelite, the Moslem, and the Buddhist, one and all can greet each other as Brethren, irrespective of their separate religious creeds, their nationalities of their political views, all of which may be as different as the poles asunder, can hardly be understood by the profane, who have never been permitted to enter the interior of the Temple. Brethren may meet each other, coming from a score or more different places, each of whom is unable to speak a single word of the language used by his companions, and yet they instantly recognize each other as Brethren, readily fell implicit confidence in each other, and by the mystic language of the Craft, receive or grant those privileges that Masons good and true invariably have the right to demand.

The usages of the Craft, all over the world, are universal in their character. Every nation adopts the same unerring law, and it makes no difference whether our Lodges are held within the palaces of kings or in the deep recesses of the forest, among the Indian tribes, as men and Masons we bow with reverence to the same protecting power, and work out all our designs from the same trestle-board.

The operative Mason, before he proceeds a single step in the erection of the temporal building which he is on the point of constructing, examines with great care the trestle board that is placed before him. The designs have all been drawn by a master workman, fully acquainted with all the minute details of his profession. Not a single point, however slight it may be, has been neglected. Not a point has been overlooked; the plans are absolutely perfect, and may be fully relied upon. If carefully followed, without the slightest deviation, the building will be corrected in all its parts, and readily pass inspection; on the contrary, if the workman deviates from the designs laid down upon the trestle-board, the building may, and probably will, be regarded as worthless, while the workman himself will have derived no benefit what-

ever from his labors

So also, the speculative Mason is called upon to examine faithfully the trestle-work laid before him; he also has a building to erect, and the designs, correct in every detail, have already been furnished him by the Grand Architect, in whom there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning. The "Sacred Writings" reveal all that is necessary for him to know in order to fit himself for a life of usefulness here, and the Sacred Writings he must ever regard as the trestle-board upon whose pages are found all the designs for his future guidance. In vain may he seek for a scheme of philosophy that will enable him to bear with fortitude "the shafts and arrows of outrageous fortune" which attend him from the cradle to the grave. In vain may he look in any other direction for the unerring rules by which every just and upright Mason should be governed. Here, and here alone, he finds designs that are absolutely faultless, and governed by them, he cannot but grow wiser and better day by day, until at the close of his earthly career his work is accomplished.

Those of the Fraternity who value Masonry for its signs, tokens, pass words, glittering insignia and jewels, have but a faint conception of its utility and value, for these all perish with the using. It is the heaven born principles of the Craft that never die—these will survive so long as time itself shall endure, and it is these principles alone which has perpetuated the institution and made it the admiration of the whole civilized world. It is a comparatively easy thing for the neophyte to learn, parrot-like, the technical language of the Craft; it involves the study of years for him to understand and practice its sublime teachings, with pleasure to himself, and honor to the Fraternity.

The speculative Mason should, under no circumstances whatever, permit himself to lose sight of the trestle board by which every act of his future life should be governed. We should never lose sight of the fact that virtue and vice never stand still even for an instant. We either advance or recede as each successive day rolls over our heads we are either better or worse than we were yesterday, and while constant practice of Masonic virtues makes us rank higher in the estimation of our Brethren and fellows, and secures to us the approbation of Heaven, a neglect of them impairs our usefulness here, and destroys our hopes for happiness hereafter.

It is to be regretted that the sublime principles of our ancient brotherhood should be so imperfectly understood. Masonry was never meant to be confined to our Lodge rooms. There we teach its commendable virtues, but it is when we are brought into daily contact with the world around us that these virtues should be practiced. To be true as steel to our Creator, our country, our neighbors, and

to live under the tongue of good report—these are the duties we are called upon to perform; and if we would perform them aright we should never lose sight of the trestle-board which has been handed us in good faith as the rule and guide of our life.

What opinion should we entertain of a master mariner who should deliberately throw his chart overboard, and attempt to navigate his vessel successfully to her port of destination? Could we regard him as much better than a lunatic? And yet, the man who claims to be a Mason, while absolutely disregarding the trestle-board that has been placed in his future Masonic instruction and advancement, must be looked upon as far more culpable. Without that trestle-board he is powerless to understand the beautiful designs with which it is expected he should be familiar. He may possess the shadow, but the substance is forever beyond his reach.

The operative Mason dares not deviate from the plans laid down upon his trestle-board, because he knows by doing so the building upon which he is at work will prove untenable. His object is to perform his work successfully, so that his building, when completed, may be perfect in all its parts and ready for occupancy by its owner.

Does it never occur to the speculative Mason that his labors will at some time terminate? That this state of existence is but the prelude of another, to which we are all hastening? Here we have no abiding place, we are merely workmen, preparing for ourselves future habitations. The trestle-board is before us, every design our eyes rest upon is absolutely perfect, but do we follow those designs? Have we absolute and implicit confidence in the Master-builder, or do we at times deviate from His designs, and work with untempered mortar after our own plans? If so, when the Craft are called from labor to refreshment, by what earthly right do we demand wages not our due—wages we have not fairly earned? Let every honest Mason ask himself the question, and if after due trial and strict examination, he finds that he has deviated from any of the designs laid before him, let him commence at once to tear down his defective work, to trust implicitly to the plans of the Master-workman in future, and endeavor, by every means in his power, to do his work faithfully in strict accordance with the plans he finds laid down upon the trestle-board, and thus secure to himself the reputation of a finished workman in the opinion of his Brethren and fellows, and what is of far greater importance, the approbation of the Grand Architect, by whom his work will be ultimately inspected, when time shall be merged in the glories of eternity. So mote it be.

This one line fills out this page.