

## THE ORPHANS' FRIEND.

Wednesday, December 2, 1873.

### MEETING OF THE GRAND LODGE—THE ORPHAN ASYLUM.

The Grand Lodge of Masons of North Carolina met in Raleigh on Monday. Among the many questions that will come up for consideration before the body, not the least important will be that pertaining to the Orphan Asylums at Oxford and Mars Hill. Several plans will, we have reason to believe, be proposed looking to the permanent endowment of one or both of these institutions. Whether any plan better than the one now employed for the support of the Asylums shall be matured, or even offered, we are not sufficiently informed in regard to the details of any of them to express an opinion. That some plan, (outside of State aid which can not be obtained for some time to come,) may be devised more certain and satisfactory in its working, we do not doubt; but we do not think it would be advisable to attempt a change until the plan intended to succeed the present shall be well matured and settled upon a sure basis. To discard the present mode of raising contributions for some untried experiment, we believe, would endanger the existence of the institution.

Perhaps the best that could be done at present would be to increase, as much as possible, the sources of permanent income, and depend, as heretofore, upon the blessing of Providence and the voluntary donations of a Christian people for the necessary means of continuing to feed, clothe and educate the unfortunate and helpless class for whose benefit the institution was organized.

We merely throw out these suggestions for consideration, believing the Grand Lodge, being composed as it is of sensible and prudent men, men who have the success of the orphan work at heart, can and will wisely legislate on the subject, and that whatever plan may be agreed on will be one that the Masonic fraternity as a body, and the other benevolent organizations of the State, as well as the public at large, will approve and unite in rendering effective.

### SANTA CLAUS AND THE ORPHANS.

Our correspondent, "Ereldoune," from Argyle, suggests that

"On the night before Christmas, when all through the house, Not a creature is stirring, not even a mouse," and the little bags and stockings are suspended on the nails by the fire place, floor posts and other convenient places for "old Santa" to slip the goodies in, one bag or stocking shall be hung up, separate and apart in each house, for the benefit of the orphans at the Asylums of Oxford and Mars Hill. We think the proposition a good one and thank "Ereldoune" for making it, but, in endorsing it we wish to make a suggestion or two that we think will conduce to the good of the orphans and to the comfort of those having immediate care of them.

First; that, wherever these orphans' stockings are hung up, it shall be made a point to insist that Santa Claus shall not let his contributions to them consist too much in candies and sweetmeats. Just imagine an avalanche of candies, sweetmeats, &c., pouring in

on us from all points of the State, and over a hundred children stuffing themselves on them from morning till night, and then—perhaps a short supply of paragon on hand!

Secondly; we would be very grateful to the good old saint if he would be a little stinting in his supply of music-making contrivances, such as tin whistles, toy-drums, &c., reserving that particular line of goods for isolated families in the country, in which there are limited numbers of children with an unlimited range of field and forest to whistle and drum in.

Third and lastly, we would suggest that, in supplying these stockings, an eye be had more to the *utile* than the *dolce*—more to the useful than the sweet. A dollar bill or a five dollar bill, or a piece of fractional currency; a pair of shoes or stockings or both; in short anything of permanent usefulness that will please and benefit, would be a suitable contribution to the "Orphans' stocking."

With these suggestions we leave the subject with Santa Claus and his admirers and the friends of the orphans everywhere, asking them, when they look upon the happy, joyous faces of the little ones at home, as they cluster around the cheerful evening fireside, to remember that there are some sad hearts and care-worn youthful faces scattered over the land that may be cheered and brightened by a timely remembrance and very little sacrifice; and that these fatherless and motherless and homeless little waifs never cease to feel, especially upon such festive occasions as that we are approaching, that

"When the kiss of love goes round,  
Alas there is no *less*" for them;

and that their own ragged-toed stockings are not likely to hold any of the good things from Santa Claus's well-filled pack, on Christmas morning.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

We have received from a friend a note containing the following inquiries: "How many orphans are in the Asylum? How many are Masons' children? Is there any discrimination in favor of Masons' children?" The writer requests us to answer through the ORPHANS' FRIEND, which we proceed to do as follows:

There are in the Asylum at Oxford, at this time, one hundred and five children, and at Mars Hill thirty-one.

We do not know how many of this number are the children of Masons. Occasionally when a letter is received asking information as to what course is necessary to pursue to obtain the admission of an orphan into the Asylum, the writer states that the orphan is the child of a Mason. Further than this no information on the subject is possessed by the Superintendent, nor is any further information sought, nor is any necessary in deciding upon the reception or rejection of the applicant.

We are aware that a false impression on this subject prevails in some localities of the State, and have heretofore alluded to it in these columns, and we now reiterate, in answer to the above inquiries, what we have said before, that no discrimination is made in favor of the children of Masons in their reception or treatment after they are received. We will further venture the assertion that a large majority received here are

not the children of Masons.

We know that the writer of the note alluded to does not believe that there is any such discrimination made, but from the fact of his making the inquiry we guess he has heard that others think it is made, and it is due to him and to the institution to say that such is not the case.

There are certain conditions to be complied with in behalf of a certain class of orphans in order to obtain admission into the Asylum, and these conditions, and the class of orphans to be benefited, and also the blank form of application, have been published in the ORPHANS' FRIEND nearly every week from the first day of its publication. When these conditions are complied with in behalf of "indigent promising orphans," whether the children of Masons or not, they are received, if, in the judgment of the Superintendent, the means at his command for taking care of them, will justify it.

For the Orphans' Friend.

MR. MILLS.—Feeling a deep interest in the welfare of the Orphan Asylum, my heart is frequently cheered when I read in your paper the donations you receive from different parts of the country for the benefit of the little ones that God has placed under your charge. Yet when the number of children is taken into consideration, the present system of voluntary contributions is so precarious, that I greatly fear that they are destined to suffer the coming winter for warm clothing and good wholesome food. Time and again you have made touching appeals to the public for substantial aid for the Asylum, and although these appeals have been responded to by the benevolent, still the fact is apparent that you have had a hard struggle to keep the wolf from the door, and a tight race to keep the children from actual want.

Now, I propose, through the columns of your paper, to make an appeal in a new direction. I propose to call in the aid of the Patron Saint of all good children—the benevolent and kind-hearted old "Santa Claus"—to help the orphans. He has never yet dishonored a legitimate draft on his traditional pack. I would suggest that in every household in the land, where the time-honored custom is observed of hanging up stockings, that an extra stocking shall be hung up for the orphans; and where the Christmas tree is substituted for the stockings, that a *big limb* shall be set aside for their benefit. Now, I am sure, that in this way old "Santa" will contribute liberally to the orphans. All these "Santa Claus" offerings can be turned over to some good friend or to the nearest Masonic Lodge, and they can be forwarded to Oxford.

If the press throughout the State will advocate this scheme, the hearts of the orphans will be cheered, and they will never cease to bless old "Santa Claus."

ERELOUNE.

Argyle C. C. R. W.

### A Christmas Legend.

It was a Christmas eve. The night was very dark and the snow falling fast, as Hermann, the charcoal burner, drew his cloak tighter around him, and the wind whistled fiercely through the trees of the black forest. He had been to carry a load to a castle near, and was now hastening home, to his little hut. Although he work-

ed very hard, he was poor, gaining barely enough for the wants of his wife and four little children. He was thinking of them, when he heard a faint wailing. Guided by the sound, he groped about and found a little child, scantily clothed, shivering and sobbing by itself in the snow.

"Why, little one, have they left you here all alone to face the cruel blast?"

The child answered nothing, but looked piteously up in the charcoal burner's face.

"Well, I cannot leave thee here. Thou wouldst be dead before the morning."

So saying, Hermann raised it in his arms, wrapping it in his cloak and warming its little cold hands in his bosom. When arrived at his hut, he put down the child and tapped at the door, which was immediately thrown open, and the children rushed to meet him.

"Here, wife, is a guest to our Christmas eve supper," said he leading in the little one, who held timidly to his finger with its tiny hand.

"And welcome he is," said the wife. "Now let him come and warm himself by the fire."

The children all pressed round to welcome and gaze at the little new-comer.

They showed him their pretty fir tree, decorated with bright, colored lamps in honor of Christmas eve, which the good mother had endeavored to make a *fete* for the children.

Then they sat down to supper, each child contributing its portion for the guest, looking with admiration at its clear, blue eyes and golden hair, which shone so as to shed a brighter light in the little room; and as they gazed it grew into a sort of halo round his head, and his eyes beamed with a heavenly luster. Soon two white wings appeared at his shoulder, and he seemed to grow larger and larger, and then the beautiful vision vanished, spreading out his hands as in benediction over them.

Hermann and his wife fell on their knees, exclaiming in woestruck voices, "the holy Christ-child!" and then embraced their wondering children in joy and thankfulness that they had entertained the Heavenly Guest.

The next morning, as Hermann passed by the place where he had found the fair child, he saw a cluster of white flowers, with dark green leaves, looking as though the snow itself had blossomed. Hermann plucked some and carried them reverently home to his wife and children, who treasured the fair blossoms and tended them carefully in remembrance of that wonderful Christmas eve, calling them Chrysanthemums; and every year, as the time came round, they put aside a portion of their feast and gave it to some poor little child according to the words of the Christ: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

### The Petrified Forest in Nevada.

From David Rideout, who has been engaged in preparing a section of a petrified tree for the Centennial exhibition, says a Nevada paper, we learn the following relative to the petrified forest in the desert of northwestern Humboldt. On the plain, about thirty miles west of the Blackrock range of mountains, stands one of the greatest natural curiosities ever discovered in

Nevada. It is a petrified forest, in which the stumps of many of the trees, now changed into solid rock, are still standing. There are no living trees or vegetation of any kind other than stunted sage brush in the vicinity. Some of those ancient giants of a forest which flourished perhaps thousands of years ago, when the climate of Nevada was undoubtedly more favorable for the growth of luxuriant vegetation than it present, rival in size the big trees of California. Stumps, transformed into solid rock, stand in an upright position with their roots imbedded in the soil, as when growing, measuring from five to twenty-six feet in circumference; the ground in the vicinity is strewn with the trunks and limbs, which retain their natural shape and size. Mr. Rideout, determined to secure a section of one of these trees for the Centennial exhibition, with two other men spent twelve days in cutting it from the stump. This was accomplished by drilling all around the tree and separating it with wedges. The specimen is three feet high and eighteen feet in circumference, and its estimated weight is three tons. It stands on the stump from which it was severed, ready to be loaded on a wagon. Mr. Rideout does not feel able to incur the expense of bringing it by team to the railroad, though he had once made arrangements to do so. He is anxious to call the attention of the Centennial commissioners to the matter, and see if they will not furnish the means to get it to the railroad. The country in which it is situated is an inviting field for geologists.

### "Crazy One."

A scientific gentleman who was making a survey for an old farmer, tells the following:

During the after-dinner talk, the rough specimen for whom I was surveying remarked that mathematics had always seemed a very wonderful thing to him. Thinking to interest him somewhat, I began to illustrate some of the wonders; among others, tried to show him the way in which Neptune was discovered. After some twenty minutes of elaborate explanation, I was somewhat taken aback to hear him say, "Yes, yes; it is very wonderful, very; but (with a sigh) there's another thing that's ailers troubled me, and that is, why you have to carry one for every ten; but if you don't, twon't come out right."

### ITS EFFECT ON THE BRAIN.

Long before the era of temperance ordinances and organizations, Hyrti, by far the greatest anatomist of the age, used to say that he could distinguish, in the darkest room, by one stroke of the scalpel, the brain of the inebriate from that of the man who lived soberly. Now and then he would congratulate his class upon the possession of a drunkard's brain, admirably fitted, from its hardness and more complete preservation, for the purpose of demonstrations. When the anatomist wishes to preserve a human brain for any length of time, he effects that object by keeping the organ in a vessel of alcohol. From a soft, pulpy substance, it then becomes comparatively hard; and so, too, before death, the use of alcohol causes the induration of the delicate and gossamer-like tissues.