

The Orphans' Friend.

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Many wise and good men object to the present plan of supporting the Orphan Asylum, and think a better can be devised. The Masons of Mississippi are now studying the same difficult problem in their own jurisdiction. An intelligent committee has gathered facts and statistics and embodied them in a very elaborate report. We purpose to discuss some of the topics mentioned in this report, and to dissent from the conclusions which our illustrious brethren have reached. This discussion will have direct reference to our own Orphan Work. Let our own people (whether Masons or not) consider carefully what course is wisest and best, and let us work harmoniously on any plan that may accomplish the end proposed. We publish the entire report that it may be deliberately pondered, and that we may all study thoroughly the lessons which it teaches:

(CONTINUED.)

It is entirely practicable for us to provide for the education, maintenance and training for some useful station in life, every Masonic orphan, and, at the same time, to give shelter and an honorable support to every brother's widow in this jurisdiction, and we say this in the face of the fact that the result of our investigations, if we except the Institutions in England, Ireland and Kentucky, have not been of a character to afford encouragement. From England and Ireland we have not been able to elicit the details, but we know that they have permanent endowment funds, and *this we consider the secret of their success.* While there seems to be a cloud at present resting upon the Kentucky Home, we feel sure that with the progress already made, the noble-hearted Masons of glorious old Kentucky will not permit this great work of their hands to cease until the cap-stone shall be raised and the Home secured from any contingency which may arise, by the completion of the endowment fund. It has already repaid all the labor and expenditure bestowed upon it, in the satisfaction each genuine Mason in that State must feel as he gathers his little ones about him, and knows that they, at least, are sure of aid, succor and support when his own strong arm shall be withdrawn from them.

NOTE.—Since the foregoing was submitted, in Grand Lodge, it is announced that the Lodges, by a large majority, have voted to tax every affiliated Mason in Kentucky one dollar, for two years, for the purpose of completing the Home.

In this enquiry there are two questions which naturally arise; the first relates to the character and purpose of the Institution which it is proposed to establish, or, in the language of the resolution, "the plan." The second relates to the means of support. To the first enquiry we reply that it is not a mere eleemosynary institution which we need or want, where women and children are to be kept in idleness for a time and then turned loose on the world to live as objects of charity and without the resources of making a living. It is not only present good, but future beneficial results, which we must seek to attain in this practical utilitarian age. While we are providing for the

tender years of infancy and during the time when the mind is forming, we must so direct the education and training of our beneficiaries that when they leave our guardianship, they will be fitted to go forth and fight the great battle of life—strong men and women, and not as helpless objects of charity. It would be mistaken kindness to gather up a few scores of children and to feed, clothe and educate them for a few years if we were to turn them loose—say at fifteen—without the means of earning a livelihood. We propose to establish an Institution which shall be as homelike in all its appointments as it is possible to be any where outside of the home circle—where children shall be instructed in some useful trade or occupation, as well as given an ordinary English education. It is not necessary that we should elaborate this "plan;" the details will best be left to those who shall be confided with its management; and we, therefore, proceed to the second, but at this time most important branch of our enquiry, the means of support.

In our judgment, the first step to be taken is to raise an endowment fund sufficiently large to yield an annual revenue of not less than \$10,000. This would require the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, invested at seven per cent. per annum. A sum so large that it would require many years of anxious care and herculean exertions to raise, if the Grand Lodge were to resort to that precarious and uncertain source, popular subscriptions, but which may be easily mastered by the adoption and firm adherence to a systematic plan of regular assessments upon our membership. We estimate, that without levying such a tax upon the brethren, that the most impoverished could complain, the sum of \$15,000 a year could be raised by the adoption of the following plan: We propose first an annual tax of one dollar upon every Mason in the jurisdiction; a tax of five dollars upon each initiation, and the devotion of the surplus funds of the Grand Lodge to this object; this, basing the estimate upon the returns of 1875, (see statistical table to be found on page 191 of the proceedings of 1876), would yield the sum of \$15,155, annually, as follows:

From 10,770 affiliated Master Masons,	10,770
" 60 non-affiliated,	60
" 465 initiations, at \$5 each,	2,325
" surplus funds (say)	2,000
Total,	\$15,155

This sum could be greatly increased if the tax upon non-affiliates should equal in amount the average annual dues of the Subordinate Lodges (estimated at an average of \$5 from each member) and by sternly enforcing our regulations against this class of Masonic drones. We have no means of determining the number of non-affiliates in the jurisdiction, but the number cannot be less than three thousand. If every Lodge and every brother will refuse to recognize these slothful brethren as Masons, at any time, or under any circumstances, at least two-thirds of them will either join a Lodge, or, in order to maintain their standing in the

Order, contribute \$5 a year to the Orphans' Home fund. This would produce a sum so large in itself, that the creation of the endowment fund is not only possible, but probable. If we were to resort to no other source of income, \$10,000 may be raised from this source alone. We are well aware that some will say that we have no right to lay a tax upon non-affiliates, but it has been done for too many years in this jurisdiction to now question its legality. But the fact is that we do not propose to exact this money from non-affiliates without giving an adequate return for it. The choice with them even now is to contribute a sum equal to the ordinary Lodge dues, or to run the risk of being denied Lodge and Masonic privileges; such as funeral honors, the right to visit, etc. We only propose to rigidly enforce the rule already of long standing, and absolutely forbid our Lodges and membership from recognizing any non-affiliate who does not contribute to this fund, or join a Lodge, as a Mason; in other words we propose that he shall be regarded as a suspended Mason, not only in name, but in fact, so long as his status is that of a non-affiliate, or non-contributing Mason.

An annual tax of one dollar upon each affiliated Mason amounts to less than one-third of a cent a day; is less than two cents a week, is eight and one-third cents a month. Surely the Mason who is not willing to deny himself to this extent in order to establish and sustain a great charity such as it is now contemplated shall be established by this Grand Lodge, never was a Mason except in name, and he who would refuse or begrudge the pittance for which we plead, is too sordid and selfish at heart to be affected by any argument we are capable of offering; having failed to learn the alphabet of charity as taught in the sublime instruction of St. Paul, repeated in the second degree, we despair of instilling into him a single sentiment of genuine Masonry. To such we say, with the poet—

"Down to the dust, and as thou rottest away,
Even worms shall perish on thy poisonous clay."

If Masonry sought initiates, it would probably be bad policy to lay a tax upon applicants for initiation. It would be better to wait until we had them fairly in the meshes of our net, and then bleed them to the required extent. But as no man was ever rightfully made a Mason who was solicited, and as nothing is more repugnant to the genius of the Order than to canvass for members, we need not display any solicitude least a few dollars more or less, imposed as an initiation fee, should have the effect to drive away a score or two of applicants. What we want is quality, and not quantity. The qualities requisite for a Mason, who would be such in the true meaning and full significance of the term, are not found in any man who would hesitate to lay down a contribution of five dollars to so noble a purpose as the making of a provision for his own and his fellow's children and widows in the day of adversity. We not only do

not want initiates who are not charitably disposed, but all such men who have found their way into the Order are a positive detriment to it, and no happier riddance could be imagined than their departure from our tabernacle.

We presume that no one will doubt the propriety of devoting the surplus funds of the Grand Lodge to this object, and need not advance any argument in support of this proposition.

After a sufficient endowment fund has been accumulated, we can safely proceed with the work of securing a site and the erection of buildings, but until the endowment has been secured beyond peradventure, it seems to us, in view of the fact that the failure of many enterprises of this character, is attributable to undue haste in "setting them going" without first taking steps to provide the means of keeping them in motion, that it would be a blind refusal to profit by the experience of others, if we were to neglect to take this precaution. The amount of income from the endowment fund should be sufficient to pay current expenses. After the endowment is completed, it will be necessary to continue the assessment until a building fund is raised. For this purpose it is probable that the sum of fifty thousand dollars will be required, but it is now quite impracticable for us to predict what will be the necessities, or the tastes, of those who shall have the proud satisfaction of proceeding with this portion of the work.

This brings us to a consideration of the probable annual expense of conducting such an institution. Of course, this item will vary with the number of inmates, the cost of provisions, clothing, fuel and the materials and machinery required in the operations of each year, and we can only approximate. We have seen that the cost of the Kentucky Home, for the year ending August 31, 1875, was \$13,815.84, or about \$107.84 for each of its one hundred and twenty-eight inmates—being about thirty cents a day. The cost of clothing, feeding and all other expenses of the Hebrew Order of the Sons of the Covenant, at Cleveland, Ohio, was, during the first eight years of its existence, an average, for each year, of forty-three cents a day for each inmate, decreasing annually from fifty-one cents during the first year to thirty-eight cents during the eighth year, or an annual expenditure of \$138.70 for each inmate. Taking the mean between these two Asylums, or an annual expenditure of \$115.48 for each inmate, as the basis of our calculations, it would cost the Grand Lodge to clothe, feed and educate one hundred orphans each year, the sum of \$11,548.00. We omit the cost of such machinery as our plan contemplates, because we cannot know until the institution is in actual operation, the amount required, or even the trades which it would be advisable to teach our beneficiaries, but it is safe to say that after the first five years, the receipts from the sales of manufactured articles would equal

the expenditures falling under this head.

The last question to be considered is the form of government to be adopted. Experience has demonstrated that the governing body of a public charitable institution should be composed of as large a body as can conveniently be assembled. We suggest a board of managers, to be composed of the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master and Grand Wardens, as *ex-officio* members, but without being eligible to office in the management, and fifteen managers, to be divided into classes of five each, the term of office of one class to expire each year, as a sufficiently large body, and yet at the same time small enough, to be assembled as often as may be necessary. The managers should be given authority to appoint their officers, time and place of meeting, and to adopt rules and regulations for their government. The Grand Lodge should require full and exact reports, and have a general supervision of all their proceedings.

Although Section 3, Article I, of the Constitution, confers authority "to assess such contributions from Subordinate Lodges for charitable and other purposes, from time to time, as" the Grand Lodge "shall judge right and proper for the good of Masonry," and would probably be conceded to be an ample grant of authority to warrant it in proceeding at once to organize an Orphans' Home, we have, however, deemed it advisable to submit the proposition to the Subordinate Lodges in the form of an additional Article to the Constitution, and we therefore recommend the adoption of the following:

Resolved, That the following be adopted, for reference to the Subordinate Lodges, as the Sixth Article of the Constitution of the Grand Lodge, and that each section thereof be voted upon separately, by the Subordinate Lodges:

ARTICLE VI:

WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' HOME AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

SECTION 1. The Grand Lodge shall establish and maintain a Widows' and Orphans' Home and Industrial School. *Provided, however,* that no expenditure shall be made for this purpose until an endowment fund shall be raised, the annual income of which shall not be less than \$10,000.

SEC. 2. For the purpose of endowing, supporting and maintaining a Widows' and Orphans' Home and Industrial School, there shall hereafter be paid by each of a Subordinate Lodge the sum of \$1, to be collected as other Lodge dues are collected, on or before the Festival of Saint John, the Evangelist, in each year.

SEC. 3. There shall hereafter annually be paid by each non-affiliated Mason resident within the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge, for the support and maintenance of a Widows' and Orphans' Home and Industrial School, the sum of \$5, which sum may be paid to the Grand Secretary or to the Secretary of any Subordinate Lodge, who shall

(CONCLUDED ON FOURTH PAGE)