

The Orphans' Friend.

FRIDAY, -- DECEMBER 7, 1883.

The Thanksgiving offerings to the Orphan Asylum speak volumes for the sons and daughters of our good old State. We cannot find language sufficiently adequate to express the grateful feelings to one and all for their generous gifts. Like Gaston, we say, "they need but the match to kindle a flame in their hearts," for those who are less fortunate in bounteous gifts. May they never know anything of the trials that test men's souls. May their lamps never go out, but ever burn with the noble, christian principles we would wish every North Carolinian to possess, and their future be full of blissful anticipations.

CONFERENCE.

The North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, convened in the town of Statesville on the 22nd November, Bishop John C. Keener of New Orleans presiding. This is one of the leading religious bodies of the State. It embraces within its jurisdiction the entire territory of North Carolina except the counties west of the Blue Ridge and those north of the Roanoke, about twenty in number. The body is composed of over 200 clerical members and 48 lay delegates.

Donald W. Bain, Esq., was elected Secretary, Rev. N. M. Jurney, Assistant Secretary, J. B. Carpenter, Statistical Secretary, D. W. Ward, Esq., Financial Secretary and Rev. C. Byrd, Recording Secretary. Statesville is a thriving town on the Western N. C. Railroad, in Iredell county, containing 2500 inhabitants. It entertained the Conference with profuse hospitality. The *Landmark* was issued daily during the session and contained a full account of the proceedings besides other matters of interest. Bro. Caldwell, the editor, displayed much tact in getting out this daily and it had quite a circulation.

Bishop R. K. Hargrove of Nashville was present as a visitor and made a fine impression by his pleasant manners as well as by his faithful and earnest preaching. He comes among us to secure recruits for our ministerial work in the far west. A number of the young preachers signified their willingness to go. They will be duly assigned to work in the Conferences on the Pacific coast.

Thanksgiving day was properly observed. Bishop Hargrove preached the sermon. Our Orphans were not forgotten. A collection was taken up in the Conference room amounting to \$77.52. This with amounts realized at other churches in town and from a concert at night, will foot up about \$340 from Statesville on Thanksgiving day. Well done! Thanks!

One of the attractive features of the occasion was the

lecture on Friday night by Rev. Dr. Milburn, on Sargent S. Prentiss. Mr. Milburn is an orator of rare gifts. A fine presence, a full round voice, stately and elegant action, and inimitable descriptive powers are happily blended in this wonderful man, who is so appropriately called "the blind man eloquent."

The Sabbath services were of an exceedingly interesting character. The day was opened by a Conference love feast at 9 a. m. It was good to be there. Bishop Keener preached at 11 o'clock. He is not a great orator in the popular sense, but for massiveness and wealth of thought, facility and strength of expression, he is rarely equalled. In the afternoon there was a memorial service. Six of the preachers had died. It was the last tribute of the brethren to their departed comrades. The churches of the town were open and the various pulpits filled by ministers from the Conference.

The following figures were taken from the statistical reports:

Local Preachers,	238
White members,	72,257
Colored members,	162
Infants baptized,	2,626
Adults baptized,	3,335
S. S. Scholars,	45,167
Raised for Foreign Missions,	\$8727.43
Raised for Domestic Missions,	5047.95
Raised for Church Extension,	2000.00

POISONOUS READING.

The following is an extract from the address of J. G. Pulliam, delivered at Judson College. It furnishes much food for thought:

One day when the 'fast mail' going West on the Union Pacific Railroad stopped at Omaha, a mail bag was opened from which there came three rattlesnakes, two young alligators and a stinging scorpion. When our mails come in they bring foes more dangerous than Florida's scorpions or Iowa's rattlesnakes.

Novels, 'Police Gazettes,' and many corruptions in the shape of so-called 'fashionable literature,' are scattered among us like a den of poisonous serpents turned loose.

In Greek mythology the hair of a certain goddess was changed into snakes, and the advancement of the present age brings with it corrupting changes in literary productions. In South America the anaconda snake swings himself to a limb and catches his prey while it is passing. When the boys and girls start into society they find a more deadly foe than the anaconda hanging around their paths.

Between these 'fashionable novels' and rattlesnakes there is a striking similitude. They are very much alike. First, they are both poisonous. In time of war Indians poison their arrows in the following manner: Two of them start out, one carrying a long pole with a piece of liver on the end; they soon find a rattle snake, and while one worries it with a stick the other holds that piece of liver and lets it strike its poison into every part of it. The liver is then placed in the sunshine and it soon becomes a mass of poison; into this the Indian thrusts the heads of his arrows; they are then ready for use, and

when one breaks a man's skin the poison is communicated to the entire system. And a person may read novels until their venom has been darted into every part of the mind. The imagination, judgment, memory, and all the faculties become contaminated, and the mental nature is soon in the condition as that liver into which the Indian thrusts his arrows; and others minds coming into contact with it are liable to be corrupted by the poisonous influences that are sent out.

The bite of the rattlesnake produces the same effect upon the physical system that habitual novel reading does upon the mind. After the pain and feverish excitement of snakebite have subsided, reaction takes place, a dreamy inactivity sets in, the individual becomes dull and stupid and is adverse to bodily exercise. And of all that is sluggish, inactive and indolent it is the mind of a novel-reader just after some exciting novel has been completed. In society such minds are like dead trees in a green forest. The individual dreams around like an owl in daylight. If a woman, she imagines a hero in every plow-boy she sees; if a man he grows rapturous over the hair and eyes of the milk-maid. Thus, they believe that "life is a dream" sure enough, and they float down its stream as contentedly as Cleopatra when she sailed down the Cydnus to meet Mark Antony.

OFFICIAL INTEGRITY.

The following notice of a faithful public officer is clipped from the *New York Observer*. Such confidence is indeed rare in these days of political corruption. Would that we had more such men in our country.

A few days since we received from a correspondent at Norwalk, Conn. a tribute not to the memory but to the character of a citizen of that place, then still living in full health and vigor in his 93d year. It was taken from the *Norwalk Gazette*, and referred to the fact that the subject of the notice had voted at the recent State election, having refused to be taken to the polls by a committee in a carriage. He walked from his home with a vigorous step and deposited his vote. Two days later we received intelligence of his death, which occurred suddenly on the 17th inst. The subject of the notice was Eli B. Bennett, who for fifty-two consecutive years had been treasurer of the town of Norwalk. Despite all the changes of parties, the rise and reign of local factions for more than half a century, Mr. Bennett stood so high in personal character and in the esteem of his fellow townsmen, that no other man was thought of or desired for the responsible trust of caring for the town's moneyed interests. For years no bond even would be accepted from him, and finally he himself insisted from a sense of its propriety in furnishing one, so absolute was his integrity known to be there was not a taxpayer in all Norwalk who esteemed it anything more than an unimportant memorandum of the responsibilities of his trust. Not only was his word ever as good as his bond, but so high and inflexible was his honesty and so perfect every man's trust in him, that a bond from him was deemed a useless formality.

If you want to get a Xmas present for your sweetheart go to J. G. Hall.

The Masonic Lectures and Lecturers.

In our last issue we stated as the general opinion of all intelligent Masons, that our Masonic Lodges are not what they ought to be; that no instruction in the mysteries, the ritual, and symbolism of the institution is imparted in them; that no mystic lessons of brotherly love, morality, forbearance and charity are taught there; and that a majority of them present no attraction whatever to an intelligent, studious, and investigation brother to retain his membership in them; and hence the cause of the wholesale dismission now so loudly complained of. As a remedy against this withdrawal, we recommended a reformation in the working of lodges. That there is the most ample room for improvement in this particular, no one at all acquainted with the facts of the case can deny. But how is this reformation to be effected? That is a question of the most vital importance—one which should engage the attention of our Grand lodges at the earliest possible moment.

Too little attention, it appears to us, is paid to the study of the Lectures of Freemasonry in the United States.

The lectures of Freemasonry, under the veil of allegory, embody all the philosophy and abstruse teachings of the order. Like the rough ashlar in whose wrought dimensions is contained the perfect stone, and the block of marble which hides the life like statue to be developed by the chisel of the skilful artist, the lectures of Freemasonry, when properly explained by an intelligent, scientific lecturer, show forth the teachings of the institution in all their simplicity, in all their beauty and in all their truth.

And here we come to the important point to be considered, How is that degree of intelligence to be obtained by the master or the lecturer that will insure the proper explanation of the lectures? We answer, that it can be acquired only by the closest and most careful study of the First Great Light, of the legends and traditions of the order and of the many scientific publications of learned masonic writers of the past century and the present. The light shines clearly enough, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. The works of Hutchinson, of Preston, of that Goliath of masonic scientific writings, Dr. Oliver, and of Dr. Mackey, contain, under a veil, the whole philosophy of Freemasonry; and these writings, thanks to the Masonic Press, are now within the reach of all our brethren.

But it is not every brother who is possessed of that education, natural talents and tastes, which will enable him thoroughly to succeed in his investigation and study of the science of Freemasonry. Like the teachers and professors of other sciences, the masonic lecturer should be trained for his profession, and its practice should insure him a respectable and permanent income, so that his whole time and his whole attention might be devoted to the discharge of his masonic duties. He should be a man of the most liberal education, gentlemanly deportment, kindness and affability of manners, and unsullied moral character; in short, a model man and mason.

There is not a Grand Lodge in the Union under whose jurisdiction such a brother, with the proper training and facilities, may not be found; and it is, in our opinion, the duty of every Grand Lodge to seek out and find him and give him the facilities to become thoroughly master of his profession, and let his election be for life, or until superannuated by age, or incapacitated by infirmity. Suppose every Grand Lodge in the United States to have such a lecturer, and him to have under him and trained by him the requisite number of district lecturers, to bring under their teaching all the Lodges in their respective jurisdictions, what a happy result might not be reasonably anticipated in five years! Masonic intelligence would then take the place of the ignorance and blindness which now obscure the masonic vision, and that "giant evil"—dismission—which is now represented as "a clog to the machinery" of Freemasonry, would give place to a healthy, a happy, a united and intelligent membership.—*American Freemason*.

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REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING.

It is a good thing to be able to remember, but it is no less desirable to be able to forget. Happiest among men is he whose will exercises the strongest control over his memory, for he can bury his cares in oblivion, and record the pleasant incidents of his life where "every day he turns the leaf to read them."

Some men can remember nothing. Theirs is a great misfortune, for experience is of no use to them. They walk in darkness, minus the lamp by which wiser feet are guided, and of course stumble as they go. There are others whose forte it is to remember pleasurable all that good men strive to dismiss from their recollection.

Their minds are like filters, which permit that which is pure and excellent to run through them, but retain whatever is coarse and noxious. There fund of immoral information is inexhaustible; but of facts which illustrate the best traits of human nature, or the wisdom and benevolence of its Author, their memories are bare.

There is a very large class that cannot remember benefits; another, that never forgets wrongs. In short, the specialities of memory and of forgetfulness are manifold.

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Do not purchase your Christmas supplies before you come to see me.

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