

As Ye Did It Unto These, Ye Have Done It Unto Me.

Through the bleak and dreary street, Where the cold winds keenly blow, See a child with bare, chill'd feet, Wan'ring on 'mid ice and snow; Houseless, homeless,—God's own word Shall its precious comfort be, "As ye did it unto these, Ye have done it unto me."

In an attic cold and bare, 'Mid the dropping of the rain, See a woman, gaunt and wan, Stitch from morn till morn again, Fainting famished.—Christian man, Does not God appeal to thee, "As ye did it unto these, Ye have done it unto me."

When you pass the orphan by, With averted look of scorn; While the lone one toils and sighs, Faint and weak from morn to morn, Think there soon shall come a day, When thy God shall say to thee, "As ye did it unto these, Ye have done it unto me."

Progress of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry makes progress like a noiseless river of oil. It has swept through the ages almost without the ages being aware of it. It has not even preserved carefully its own history. The records of the Craft during the last century are scarcely to be found, and prior to that time we have to rely mainly on tradition. So little is the brotherhood distinguished for self assertion, or, apparently, for ancestral pride, were it not for its enemies the world would rarely hear of it. Its system is one of Light as opposed to Darkness, and it courts not the observation of the profane. Whenever Masonry has been brought, even in name, to the attention of the world, it has been through its enemies; and when it has been, as it were, held up to the public gaze, and vainly exposed to bring upon it public contempt, it has not even then met aggression with defense. We have all heard of an anti-Masonic party, but who ever heard of a Masonic party? Masonry exists for itself, not for the world. True, its reflex general influence is always civilizing, ameliorating, and ennobling, but this is a necessary consequence not a studied purpose. We can't help benefiting the world. But Masonry never strives to proselyte. Those that petition for Light and Knowledge come of their own free will, unsought, unbiased. Not only does it not disparage, or attack, or capture its enemies—it does not defend itself. It wields neither the sword of Mahomet nor the logic of Chillingworth. It is like the blind goddess of justice, blessing those who are true to themselves and to the right, and that seek her service. Such, in its essential principle and general practice, is Freemasonry.

How often has the newly-made Mason when he entered the Lodge for the first time, and sat among its Brethren, exclaimed to this one and that one, why, are you a Mason? It may be that the first Brother he sees is his next-door neighbor. It may be his father initiates him into the mysterious rites. It may be, many, if not all, of the officers of the Lodge, are his nearest and dearest relations and friends. His Brethren are kindred, indeed. It is strange, he reasons to himself, that I did not know these men to be Masons before—my neighbors, my companions, my kindred. How true it is that we cannot thoroughly know a man until we know him as a Mason!

It is this quiet, unobtrusive spirit that the world does not like. The world loves jar and rattle and noise. It counts display, and delights in a flourish of trumpets. Because it is a braggart, it counts all who quietly ignore it as cowards.

Hence the vicious and the ignorant slander and libel it, and persecute it when they have the power. The Jesuit would exterminate the Craft, if he could, because it is a Brotherhood of freemen—each free to speak, think and act in the light of reason and Revelation, as they appear to each individual mind. The Freemason is the slave of no master, not even of the Worshipful Master.

The only thing that objectively gives notice to the world of the existence of the Craft is the presence of Masonic Temples all over the globe. Stone walls of architectural grandeur, and towers of lofty elevation, from ocean to ocean, and almost from pole to pole, dot the earth. But they speak only as nature speaks—silently. There are other agencies at work for, and within, the Craft, but they are not public agencies. We refer to Masonic books and newspapers. These are for Craftsmen alone, and only circulate among Craftsmen, for the reason that they alone appreciate and value them. And, besides, Masonic publications deal only with exoteric subjects—those that are not secrets, those that any Mason may communicate and any man may know. It is left mainly to the newspaper and magazine literature of the Fraternity to supply a liberal education to Craftsmen. The Work of the Lodge is almost exclusively confined to the rendition of the degrees in their regular form—rarely, far too rarely, does the Worshipful Master elucidate and illustrate the full meaning and beauty of their lessons by auxiliary lectures. In theory Freemasonry is a science of sciences, but in fact, if it were deprived of its literature, in the shape of Masonic lectures, published Proceedings, Reports, Books, Newspapers and Magazines, it would be but the skeleton of itself. We look forward to the day when every Lodge Room shall be a brilliant centre of Masonic Light and knowledge—when the "seven liberal sciences" of which Masonry is said to be the patron, shall be in fact, as well as in theory, genuinely fostered by it. So mote it be.

It is with Freemasons as it is with the best of men throughout the world—we do not live up to our ideals. It is so easy to glide along with the tide; it is so hard to go against it. The very fact that Freemasonry has been so noiseless in its progress, and yet accomplished such wonderful results—binding together in fraternal bonds the prince and the peasant, diffusing the atmosphere of liberal culture so that it is breathed more or less by every Craftsman, beautifying the earth by erecting Masonic Temples of marked architectural splendor, and thereby developing the aesthetic natures of all who behold them—these apparently easily wrought achievements are apt to lead us to believe that Freemasonry, by its own weight, will ceaselessly go forward. There is truth in all of this, but it is truth that should stimulate to renewed efforts to elevate still higher the character and works of the Brotherhood, and we should not rest satisfied with either the noble past or the happy present, for they are both owing to the loyalty to solemn obligations of those who have preceded us in the Craft. The present is the legacy of the past to us, and the future will be our legacy to those who shall succeed us. May the latter be worthy of us and of Freemasonry.—Keystone.

Wages are ten cents a day in China; but with those ten cents you can subscribe for a daily paper, buy a brace of chignons, witness a play that lasts nineteen hours, and have a comfortable sum left to send to the benighted denizens of the New World to be used for missionary purposes.

Ladders.

Did you ever see a man carry a ladder? He puts it on his shoulder, or may be he puts his head between the rounds and has one of the sides resting on each shoulder, and, having it nicely balanced, walks along. A man with a ladder is an interesting object in a crowded street. He looks at the end before him, but the end behind him he cannot see. If he moves the front end to get out of the way of a person, away goes the rear end just as far in the opposite direction, and the slightest turn of his body, only a few inches, will give the end a sweep of several feet, and those in the way look out for bruised hats and bumped heads, while window glass on the street is in danger from the unseen rear end of the ladder.

When a small boy, I was carrying a very large ladder, when there was a crash. An unlucky movement had brought the rear end of my ladder against a window. Instead of scolding me, my father made me stop, and said very quietly—

"Look here, my son, there is one thing I wish you always to remember; that is, every ladder has two ends."

I never have forgotten that, though many, many years have gone, and I never see a man carrying a ladder or other long thing but I remember the two ends. Don't we carry things besides ladders that have two ends? When I see a young man getting "fast" habits I think he only sees one end of that ladder, and that he does not know that the other end is wounding his parents' hearts.

Many a young girl carries a ladder in the shape of love for dress and finery; she only sees that gratification of a foolish pride at the forward end of the ladder, while the end she does not see is crushing true modesty and pure friendship as she goes along thoughtless among the crowd.

Ah, yes, every ladder has two ends, and it is a thing to be remembered in more ways than one.



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