

same level. The practice of the lodges was principally of a social and companionable nature.

Sometimes the Master found leisure and inclination to deliver a charge, or a portion of the lectures, and such entries as the following are frequent in the minute-books of that period:—"The Master delivered an elegant charge, or a portion of Martin Clare's lectures, as the case might be, and the evening was spent in singing and decent merriment." The usual penalty for a breach of the by-laws was "a bottle of wine, to be consumed on the spot;" and it was not an uncommon occurrence to expend the whole fee on a night of initiation on a supper and wine.

A fine contrast of what the spirit of Masonry is accomplishing, may be seen in the fact of the recent pageant at St. Louis, and the age of 1113 A. D., as described by Addison in his "History of Knights Templar;" "Nine knights renounced the world and its pleasures, and in the Holy Church of the Resurrection, in the presence of Arnulph, Patriarch of Jerusalem, they embraced vows of perpetual obedience and purity, after the manner of monks. They elected as their first Master that true knight Hugh de Payens, and united themselves in the two most popular qualities of the age—devotion and valor."

The great progress of the age, the different ways of thinking, and the universality of the liberal arts and sciences, all prevail to so great an extent that we are apt to forget the elegant system of morality of Masonry, and look upon it as a delusion. We can practice Masonry to-day with the same sincerity that did the three Grand Masters in the days of Solomon King of Israel. We have just as much need of such an institution, and there is ample opportunity on our part for the same display of zeal and earnestness as shown in the history of the three eminent craftsmen just named. Even in our daily avocations we can apply the lessons of

the working tools, all of which will add materially to make us honored citizens.

The Bible is the gift of God to man. It is the consummation of wisdom, goodness and truth. Many other books are good, but none so good as this. All other books may be dispensed with, but this is absolutely necessary to our happiness here and our salvation hereafter. Oliver gives us this explanation of the three Great Lights of Masonry:—"The book before us contains rules for preserving health, by the exercise of temperance and chastity; for procuring blessings, by the practice of fidelity, industry, and zeal; for securing a good reputation, by integrity and a faithful discharge of every trust; and for inheriting the promises, by the exercise of faith, the encouragement of hope, and the practice of charity, or the universal love of God and man.

"Upon the first Great Light, we find two others—the square and compasses, which are varied in their position in every degree, to mark the gradual progress of knowledge, and the former is opened at different passages appropriate to each; for the Bible being considered the rule of a Mason's faith, the square and compasses, when united, have the same tendency with respect to his practice." If we read the lessons of the emblems as explained by the great writers, we are surprised to find out how much useful information is contained in each one.

The writer is of the opinion that the Masonic system of morality is a broad one, and that the request of Zaphar to observe the scriptures is the first duty of a brother. The fact that over half a million of men are enrolled in the membership of this fraternity, the large number of charitable institutions, as well as the elegant temples that are being erected all over the world, are satisfactory evidences that by searching the scriptures a good work has been wrought through the instrumentality of Masonry.