

tion was, that Masons are too much disposed to extravagance and display. The institution costs too much, said our friend. Masons put out too much money in halls, equipments, regalia, and the various adjuncts which are required to make a fine display. They are too lavish in their expenditures, and sometimes to the neglect of claims in other directions of the most sacred character.

We could not altogether deny the allegation. There is a tendency (entirely foreign to the genius of Masonry) in this direction which should at once be checked by sensible Brethren. But while we say this, believing that no foolish, wasteful prodigality of means should be countenanced by any branch of the Masonic organization, we yet do not hesitate to avow our opinion that comfortable surroundings, appropriate paraphernalia, with appointments that shall suggest both beauty and elegance, may properly be indulged in where the needful ability exists on the part of a Lodge or individual members. Masonry recognizes man's esthetic nature, and gives high rank to the element of beauty, no less than to the element of strength, which enter into the structure that it builds. Our institution does not exist for money-getting and money-saving; and while its financial management should always be prudent, it may yet provide for itself liberally in the things that belong to a graceful and pleasant establishment.

Our friendly critic was also inclined to urge that Masonry ministers unduly to human vanity, — that Brethren are too fond of showing the jewels and badges of the Order on occasions of parade and public celebration. We do not think this charge holds good. Take them as a Body, and Masons do not seek the notice of the world; they appear in public but seldom, rarely indeed, except upon some occasion of commemoration or service which has to them a peculiar significance. Connected with our Fraternity, however,

is a class to whom the criticism justly applies. These are the Brethren who are always on hand on special and great occasions when there is a chance to draw the sword or flaunt the glistening jewel before the public eye. They enjoy processions and pilgrimages which make opportunities for much display and rich banquets. Good-hearted Brethren they are—a little vain perhaps—but they by no means constitute the great majority of the Fraternity who prize Masonry for something higher and better than the opportunities which it furnishes for parades and celebrations.—*Freemason's Repository*.

Freemasonry, Past and Present.

Masonry is the most ancient, and, so far, has been the most enduring of all human institutions. From the earliest times of the world's history until now, associations and orders have existed among men; some have left their footprints on the sands of time, but most have perished, without the shadow of a name, or one gilded cloud to mark the glory of their setting suns. Nations as well as institutions have arisen and been swept away; dynasties have sprung up and perished; the genius of revolution, with her ever-revolving kaleidoscope, has ceaselessly worked in the transformation of governments—converting, now kingdoms into republics; and now republics into empires. The old nations of the East have passed with the gorgeous civilization of semi-barbaric opulence and power, down to the Plutonian shore, and have bathed in its Lethean waters. Fair and classic Greece and Rome, eternal and imperial, purpling her seven hills with countless triumphs, have sunk into the decrepitude of age; the new and unknown Muscovite has sprung up like a giant and stretched his long arms and huge proportions over half Europe. The great Christian city of the East, the rival of unrivalled Rome—the city of the Golden Horn and