

## THE SPRIG OF ACACIA.

BY J. L. E.

The Symbols of Freemasonry have been chosen with an appropriateness that challenges comparison, and disarms those who through ignorance or malice may ridicule the system by every plausible weapon, and establishes in the mind fully enlightened the divinity of its origin.

The harmony that everywhere pervades the spirit of its teachings and the great power of its symbolic lessons, give intelligent Masons an unwavering trust in its expositions of moral science, and a satisfaction in the beautiful lessons taught by the various emblems so widely chosen and sacredly preserved by the Craft.

To the sons of light, none of these surpasses in sacred beauty the acacia, once planted to mark the resting place of a great and good man, who had fallen by the hand of an assassin, and by aid of conspirators had been buried in darkness, in a place they hoped fraternal hands would never find.

This emblem, which once marked the resting place of the illustrious dead,—symbolic branches of which are now cast upon the coffin lid at the burial of a brother,—teaches the great lesson of life and immortality brought to life; that though the earthly body moulders back to its mother earth, the spiritual body has arisen, and by the timely-applied power of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is crowned with immortality.

The following beautiful lines from the pen of Bro. J. A. Williams, LL. D., of Kentucky, will be appreciated by every Mason:

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE."—*Jesus.*

The pit, the worm, the darkness and the cold!  
Thus lies the Mason, as if cursed by God!  
Corruption riots in Acacia bowers,  
And beauty moulders 'neath the fairest flowers.

Is this, indeed, the destiny of man,  
His home the loathsome vault, his life a span?  
Must he whom virtue crowned in life as just,  
Forever sleep, disowned, and in the dust?

Invoke the virtue that adorned him then,  
And seek to raise that form to life again!  
Alas! in vain apprenticed virtue tries,  
Her touch no warmth imparts, no life supplies!

Yet there's another token, mightier still,  
Which only science knows, and learned skill:  
Will not the brow which love did once illumine  
Feel her inspiring touch within the tomb?

The lettered Craftsman, with his cunning hands,  
Applies the token, but despairing stands!  
Death mocks his learning, and the treacherous grave  
Still binds the victim that his power would save.

Yet man shall live again! A Lion hand  
Will give the token that shall burst each band;  
And he whom VIRTUE, GENIUS, may not save,  
Through Judah's Lion triumphs o'er the Grave.

## THE FREEST PLACE IS A MASONIC LODGE.

Equal rights, equal laws, and equal privileges, constitute *true liberty*, masonically understood. Thus defined, a Masonic Lodge is the freest place on earth.

It has ever been so, in all ages and climes,—before the Saxon set foot on Britain—before the Franks had passed the Rhine—when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch—when idols were still worshipped in Mecca; by the inhabitants of the torrid zone, or of the ice-bound regions of the world, no matter by what cruel and formidable despotisms it may have been and may still be surrounded. It

is thus that the members of our ancient and honorable fraternity are pre-eminently entitled to the proud distinction of the *Free!* For although this distinctive appellation was, according to our legends, originally conferred only upon worthy Craftsmen among the enslaved multitudes of ancient laborers, when duly initiated into the Councils and taught the science of the master-builders, it has from the beginning implied every privilege, every enjoyment and every security which perfect liberty can confer. Strict equality of individual rights and opportunities of advancement; a perfect liberty of conscience in politics and religion, which is entirely exempt from all enquiry and disparagement; and the exalting consciousness which fills every Mason's heart that his fair fame, whether he be personally present or separated from us by boundless oceans, that his nearest and most cherished ties in domestic life, that his business interests and most pressing exigencies, together with every lawful secret of his breast, are secure and sacredly safe in the hands of his brethren, constitute a kind and degree of reciprocal liberty which no state or phase of society in the vague world of mankind could possibly afford. And thus it is that our institution has ever been the purest, the most enduring and the most universal of republics that ever existed within the history of the human family. The Masonic Institution, governed by its own organic laws and codes of mutual obligation, and conscious that no earthly power, not even the greatest, can annul them, since they are deeply engraved and impressed upon every Mason's heart, has flourished amid the deserts of despotism, and desires no new favor from political power in this happy land, so fertile in freedom and prosperity

## THE MASONS WE NEED.

[From an oration delivered before the Lodge of Journeymen Masons, Edinburgh, in honor of the memory of Bro. James Smith, for twenty-four years Treasurer of the Lodge.]

Our deceased brother was a sincere, downright honest man. He was one of the few persons in the world to whom we would readily entrust our reputation. He had no flummery, no pretence. He made no promises which he did not fulfil; he held out no hopes which he did not realize. We were not deceived and disappointed by him. He did not come before us flaunting with masonic jewels, and boasting of his masonic knowledge, his masonic services, and his attachment to masonic principles. He did far better. He showed what the principles of Masonry are by his actions. He showed that its justice, its fortitude, its temperance, its truth, its brotherly sympathy and charity, were the objects of his affection; that they were implanted in his nature, and bore their legitimate fruits. He was, in short, a real man, and no sham. We have Freemasons now-a-days that can be regarded as nothing better than sounding brass or tinkling cymbals. Great is their noise, their display, and their pretended regard to the requirements of our Order; but strip them of the cloak which they wear, and you will find them full of fraud, falsehood, calumny, intemperance, and every abomination. Such men are a disgrace and a source of weakness to the society with which they are connected. They may, it is true, sometimes receive applause; they may be taken under the wing of men in power, and patted, caressed and encouraged; they may even gain triumphs, and be sur-