

perseverance, at last finds himself able to repeat the whole phraseology of initiation, puts on the mental strut of a he-pigeon, and says to himself, "soul, thou art indeed rich, for thou art Master of Masonry;" while to the most common-place question touching the history, spirit or law of Masonry he would be unable to reply.

This zeal is not according to knowledge, and needs the directing hand of experience, that it may be trained to higher and better purposes; for that is not the most profitable labor which stops at the front door and leaves all the other parts of the house untouched and unexplored. The ritual is an excellent thing in its place, and needs some one or more in each Lodge capable of rehearsing it with skill and effect, that it may thus pass from one generation to another as little changed as possible; but this is not the whole of Masonry, nor is it a worthy exhibition of intellectual skill to be satisfied with proficiency therein. Mere ritualists will rarely become exemplars of Masonry in its best sense, because they find greater opportunity to exhibit their gifts to admiring audiences than they would if they took post in the ranks of the delvers. And yet, having passed through a portion of either experience, we can assure our youthful brethren that there is more real satisfaction in studying out some question of history, philosophy or law than in the most skillful enunciation of the forms of initiation; more satisfaction in being able to tell why thus or so is the case than in being able to announce a result in a given form of speech, without the most distant idea of the why or the wherefore.

We suggest, then, to our younger brethren, just setting out on the voyage of a Masonic life, that they should make provision so to dispose of their labors that a portion of them shall be given to satisfying the spirit of inquiry, searching for a reason for the faith which is in them, seeking to know the law and why it is the law, digging out each one for himself the grains of knowledge hidden in the symbols and allegories, being not ashamed to begin at the beginning, looking after light and dividing the fruit of his researches with those who are similarly engaged. The columns of this journal and the services of its editors will always be cheerfully given in aid of those who thus seek; and none need fear to ask because he may imagine that some one else has asked the same question before.

We by no means pretend to know everything, and are not ashamed to acknowledge that we are as eagerly looking for light as ever we were, neither shall we hesitate to receive instruction from even the youngest apprentice who may succeed in unearthing some item of knowledge which has hitherto escaped us.

The attrition of thoughts, like the sudden impinging of flint upon steel, has the quality of evolving fire, and when the spark of light falls upon minds and hearts prepared for its reception, warmth and knowledge ensue.

Look at what was called Masonic literature half a century since, and compare it with the present state of Masonic letters, and an estimate can be formed of what comes by perseverance. Many fallacies have been broached, and much written and printed, which at first glance we might be inclined to think had better remained in the brains of the writers. We must, however, upon reflection, con-

cede that upon the whole good has been the general result; for by them the truth has been made to appear in a clearer light, and we know that if there were no errors to expose and refute, truth would grow rusty for want of exercise. Half a century ago Masonry was, more than anything else, a convivial association, and its great lessons were drowned in libations or smothered in culinary delights. For those days it has paid a severe penalty, and out of that penalty has grown a better, truer ideal. We have learned that we can be eminently social without being convivial; that we can laugh with Momus without passing through the temple of Bacchus, and we have risen to so much higher an appreciation of the Masonic system that, as we now understand it, it will not be made the cover for merely sensual enjoyment. If there had been no thinkers, no toilers, no writers, we should not have reached our present level; and unless we continue to think and speak and write we shall not reach the next higher step. It is, then, a duty we owe to ourselves, to each other and to Masonry, to prosecute the search, to ask for what we have not, to divide what we have with our brethren, and each, according to his ability, strive to promote the general good by earnestly looking for light.

#### SANCTITY OF THE BALLOT.

The Committee on Foreign Correspondence of the Grand Lodge of California thus sensibly refers to the sanctity of the ballot. Alluding to the proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, the writer says:

"There is given in the journal a long report from the Committee on Appeals, by which we are led to think that the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania does not regard it as an impossibility to discipline a brother for the improper use of the black ball, though in the particular instance they reversed the finding and sentence of the subordinate Lodge which had expelled a brother for the exercise of this right. We know that our own Grand Lodge confirmed the sentence of one of its subordinates last year in a like case—but we do not believe that this sacred right ought ever to be meddled with. We know that the patience of brethren is often tried by the rejection of one they esteem in every sense an unexceptionable person—but we profess to hold it as a truth that the ballot must be secret, and unanimous; and that no one has a right to question another as to how he voted. But if Lodges are permitted on any pretense whatever to institute an inquisition for the purpose of discovering who exercises the right of casting a black ball, the theory utterly fails, and practice under it is out of the question. One who is so lost to his Masonic obligations as to use the ballot maliciously, has the spirit of the assassin, and will not fail to open the door for his discipline in some other way. Let us wait and be patient, and zealously do our own duty and guard our landmarks, and the interloper, the true cowan, will discover himself, and we can cast him forth of our sacred retreat without any violation of our laws or stretching of them to meet particular cases.

**MASONIC TEMPLE.**—The Masons of Memphis Tennessee, are preparing to build a grand Masonic Temple there.