

One other charge against this body I must refer to, but briefly ; a charge which I am pleased to explain ; a charge which is indeed true, but the reason given for its existence is so slanderous to the Craft, as it is unjust and unfair to those in whose favour it is made, that I take great pleasure in explaining it. Charity, charitable judgments, honour to whom honour is due, and the highest respect and esteem for the fair sex, are principles most thoroughly inculcated on every Mason in each and every degree as he advances in the mysteries. And so when the charge, the slanderous charge, the unjust, uncharitable, the severe charge is made that the Craft does not admit women to membership *because they cannot keep a secret*, it is as false against the Order as it is unfair, and maliciously urged against the women.

True, indeed, women are not admitted members, but the reason of this is based upon the fact that Speculative Masonry is but the application of Operative Masonry, and the first Masons were those engaged in the building of material edifices, requiring strong, hale, hearty, able-bodied men to do the work assigned to them. And so we find one of the first pre-requisites to initiation that the candidate be "a man," a man in every sense of the word, a man intellectually, a man morally, physically, and religiously, fit to do a day's work, and worthy of the work in which he was engaged, and hence we find many old charges in ancient Masonry, saying "a candidate must be a man, free-born, of good kindred, true, no bondman," that he "have his right limbs, that he be good and true, of mature and discreet age, no immoral or scandalous liver, but one of good repute and well-recommended." All this is based on the fact that King Solomon employed only men in the construction of the Temple.

This requisite has been a land-mark of Masonry from its origin, now nearly 3000 years, and the land-marks of Freemasonry, like the laws of the ancient Medes and Persians, alter not. We should expect to see signs of decay and death in the Craft should any of these change, and so the prohibition, implied in the requisition that the candidate be a man, has its origin there, and not where it has been so unkindly put. Personally, we should be only too happy to welcome to our social lodge assemblies our lady friends ; but we shall have to continue deprived of that pleasure and of the ennobling and exalting influence of the ladies, whom, may the G. A. O. T. U. ever bless and protect.

Knowing our principles, the wisest and best of men in every age have not only become members, but have been encouragers and promoters of the art and science, and have never deemed it derogatory to their dignity, their position or their influence, to join themselves to the Craft, and extend her principles. And particularly is this so with christian men, for, as I have already intimated, not only are Scriptural truths and facts proclaimed by her symbolism, but Holy Scripture itself is taught in all the workings of a Masonic Lodge. The Book of the Law, the Holy Bible, is by no means a sealed book or a dead letter in Masonry, but rather, it is a living, active agent in all the work and teaching of the Craft. It is