

long since crumbled into dust, but the works of their hands still live and are recorded in the history of past ages as events of the day and time in which they lived.

We, of the nineteenth century, in reviewing the past by the means of the works of eminent scholars, view with awe and astonishment the master workmanship of the ancient builders, many of which are clear and distinct at this late day. The mind can hardly take in the magnitude of their works—the difficulties encountered and surmounted, and the zeal, time, labor and money that was employed in their erection. Well may such structures as the “seven wonders of the world” stand forth as monuments of their architectural skill. Well, we may say, that they are “lost arts,” as, indeed, they are. Can the architectural talent of the present century erect a pyramid, a sphynx, a colosseum or an obelisk, that time, with all its decaying influences, will not obliterate? Can the workers of steel temper a blade that will stand the test of the Damascus? Can the painter mix his colors that will not fade as those of ancient Pompeii? We, in our egotism, call the ancients ignorant, yet, do not the excavations of Rome and Pompeii prove that we are ignorant and they are wise? We boast of an age of culture and refinement. Is it culture to invent machines that will produce untold destruction? Is the hand that destroys at one foul blow the beloved chief of the nation refined? From the architecture of the antediluvian period has sprung the architecture of the past and present; “from little acorns tall oaks have grown;” from a race of semi-barbarians has sprung a race of intellectual beings.

Now, some one may ask what has all this to do with Masonry? Let us continue and see if we can find an analogy. From whence Masonry originated, or when, or where, or who were its founders, is not for me to say. It must suffice that it did ori-

ginate somewhere, and was founded by some one, whether it be the Dionysian before the time of Solomon, or Solomon himself, or by the Roman emperor, Numa Pompilius, or of a more recent date, I for one must plead ignorance; but one thing is a fact, at the commencement of the eighteenth century it was transposed from an operative to a speculative body. When those few Masons, the representatives of four lodges, gathered together in London, in the year 1717, to form a Grand Lodge, they realized full well the vast importance of their scheme. Previous to that, operative Masons were eagerly sought after by those whose desire was to build and erect monuments that would withstand the ravages of time. At that time it was thought best to make it such an organization that all classes could be received within its body; the poor as well as the rich, the peasant as well as the noble, the low as well as the high, eagerly sought admission, for they all met upon the same line of equality. With but the exception of about twenty years, when it seemed as if the institution must fall, it has steadily increased in size, numbers and importance, as, for instance, in 1878 there were 12,986 Lodges in the world, the United States alone having 8,768 of that number. Can there be a better comparison of from four lodges in 1717, to 12,986 in 1878, made of the truth or the adage, “Tall oaks from little acorns grow.”

The desire of the founders of Masonry was to place it on a sound basis of Truth and Morality. They knew full well that to exercise brotherly love towards all men, to relieve the distressed, to be truthful in all of our dealings with ourselves, our fellows, and our God, and to be always guided by the laws of morality, implied the full import of Divine command. Yet how little did they dream of the importance those lessons would bear towards our lives. Little did they dream that the society they were so