

MASONRY AND THAT SORT OF THING.

To the Editor of the Casket:

Sir,—I don't profess to know much about Freemasonry. I have, indeed, a conviction that it is a strong organization which works a deal of harm to both Church and State. I asked a very intelligent English Mason once whether they did not look upon the fraternal bond of Masonry as superior to that of Christian fellowship. He answered that to some extent they did, and illustrated his meaning by an example. "If I were travelling," he said, "and came to a ferry where two ferrymen solicited my patronage: if I knew that one of them was a Mason and not a Christian, and the other a Christian and not a Mason, I should feel bound to give my patronage to the Mason." That principle should be enough to turn any reasonable Christian against the craft. It is the very reverse of St. Paul's teaching. But I have made no special study of Masonry and do not assume to write about it. What troubles me is the way some Catholic newspapers speak about it. They speak as if the gates of hell have now at length really prevailed, and as if Masonry had its foot, so to say, on the neck of the prostrate Catholic Church! This doleful pessimism seems to me absurd and, at times, bordering on faithlessness. Bishop Potter of New York made a speech some short time ago at a Masonic banquet. He spoke of the bond of Masonic brotherhood, and illustrated his remarks by the example of two men who had been enemies, and added that "Freemasonry had brought them together—something which the Christian religion could not do." That a Protestant Bishop should thus disparage the Christian religion is not surprising in these days of "Higher Criticism"; but that a Catholic paper should bring itself to agree with him is more than surprising; it is shocking. After quoting his remarks the Philadelphia Standard and Times adds: "The statements he makes are valuable. He assigns to Freemasonry a higher potency, and consequently a higher place, than Christianity; and from all that we have been able to observe, this is the estimate that best corresponds with the actual position. Bishop Potter himself furnishes an explanation of the failure of the Christian religion to do what it was commissioned by its Divine Founder to do."

"A higher potency and consequently a higher place than Christianity!" and this corresponds to the actual position! The old Standard seems to have lost all sense of responsibility in the use of words. Do we really need that our Lord should come again visibly to reassure us with the words: "Fear not, little flock: I have overcome the world." He is still with the Church, His spirit is the potency of the Church. And this potency fights and conquers a good many enemies more potent than Masonry will ever be. That some hundreds of thousands of men scattered over the world and banded in secret societies can do a deal of harm goes without saying; but that they possess more actual power than the Catholic Church of to-day is too utterly absurd, and a very mischievous assertion for a Catholic paper to make. The Masons are not one body. They are organized on national lines. They do not found school systems or build universities or hospitals. They try to influence States and Governments in these matters. The Catholics of the United States alone spend more money on education and charity in one year than all the Masons of the world give, it may be in ten years. For every pair of enemies brought together by Masonry the Catholic Church throughout the world brings together thousands, not in outward show of amity, but in the real reconciliation of charity. Masons are mostly men of the world, who give a portion of their time to the interests of Masonry. The number of those who make it a life work must be very small. The Catholic Church commands the life work of hundreds of thousands of educated and influential men. But why pursue a comparison the very mention of which is offensive? Christ is still the most powerful King on earth. His Kingdom, the Catholic Church, has

greater potency, not merely than any other society, but greater than any other power, whether civil, sectarian, or satanic. When there is question of relative superiority I like to see a man disposed to stand up for his country every time. The same must be said of the Church: for our spiritual as well as our material country has a claim on our sense of loyalty. This sentiment seems to be wanting in the Standard writer, there is such an absence of consciousness in the way he coolly puts the Church down in second, third or fourth place. I may be all astray in this, either from my ignorance of Masonry or because I don't know all the meanings that words may have, and I shall be grateful to you, Mr. Editor, if you state whether I am right or not. READER.

(We have nothing to add to the foregoing forcible and timely letter save the remark that the Standard is found occasionally to be at variance with its old self ever since its union with the sprightly but fickle Times. Matches are not always made in heaven.)—Ed. Casket.

WHEN LOVE IS STRONGEST.

A well known woman has studied the question thoroughly at what age a woman's affections are strongest. Whether we agree with her or not, her deductions are interesting.

"Woman is always a difficult and complicated subject to analyze, and at the best we can only generalize.

"One fact is too obvious to need more than merely stating—the girl under 20 is wholly incapable of forming a life-long attachment.

"If she does form one which lasts through all the vicissitudes of maturer years, it is merely a happy chance which has aided her, not the result of her ripened judgment, fine intuition or mature emotions.

"One, however, might let this statement cover all attachments—at whatever age—since marriage is so evidently a lottery. An engagement of seven years, where the lovers saw each other almost daily, has been known to end in separation after a year of married misery.

"Nevertheless, as a rule, a woman of 25 is better able to form a correct idea of a man's character than a girl of 18, and she is capable of a deeper love and a more practical expression of it.

"So far as the real intensity of a woman's affections are concerned, I believe they are rarely at their strongest before 30 or 35. A woman of that age is to all earlier ages what August is to April, May or June. She craves affection more than she craves it in her adolescence, and she is better able to appreciate and to reciprocate.

"Every day I meet bright, intelligent, intellectual men, whose lives are filled with worldly aims and ambitions, and who are supremely unconscious of or indifferent to the fact that their wives are starving for expressed affection.

"I have heard men laughingly refer to sentiment as a thing outlived or submerged in the sea of reality; and use the plural, indicating that they believed the condition was mutual, when I have been the confidant of the heart hunger and restless discontent of the wives who were included in this plural reference.

"Thousands of American men to-day believe they are the most unselfish and devoted husbands because they are giving brain, mind and body to business with the idea of bestowing luxuries upon their families.

"They have no hour for calling, no time for recreation, no evening for social life or entertainments, and no impulse for love-like attentions to their wives.

"They return home tired, nervous, irritable or sleepy, and think the wife unreasonable who complains, since they are giving all their energies for her comfort and pleasure.

"Yet her comfort and pleasure would be tenfold if the husband was to escort her about occasionally, with the same lover-like attention of his days of wooing, and if he were able to talk to her of other things than business and finance.

"The middle-aged man may be satisfied with his ambitious aims, but it is the middle-aged woman who craves and feels the deepest love."

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