

ever they may cavil in inquisitive ignorance over the "secrets" and amenities, which are the absolute possessions of the initiated, the outer world is bound to confess, as it gazes on the splendid institutions we have raised for the shelter of the aged and decayed, the maintenance and education of our youth of both sexes, that although the ways of the Craft are to them inscrutable and past finding out, yet there is in it, at all events, a substratum of almost boundless charity which must excite the admiration and emulation of all right-thinking men, and prove to even the most sceptical that brotherly love, relief and truth exists in reality and not merely in name. The world in general sees the results of exertions put forth in this respect by the munificent sums that are subscribed thrice a year at our festivals, testifying to a generosity and spirit of practical philanthropy equalled by no other institution on the face of the globe. But great sums on paper testifying though they do to the immense liberality and self-sacrifice of the Craft, generally do not represent in any degree the personal and heroic actions by which such results are attained.

Of this the world can know but little, if anything; their province is to look on, passive admirers of the great and glorious work which is achieved year after year by an Order they so often affect to hold up to ridicule. To us who are initiated to "look within and out," the realization of this grand work is all the more glorious and sublime. It denotes to us that not only has money flowed in by thousands upon thousands, through the various channels, of the highest type of human benevolence, but we see in the person of every Steward who comes up to our festivals the embodiment of collective and individual sympathy with the bereaved and needy, and a determination to assist in every possible way in assuaging the aggregate of the poverty and distress that surround us on every side. We see not

merely the quiet contented home of the aged and infirm, where "age and want sit smiling at the gate," cared for in their declining years by tender and loving hands; but our thoughts are carried back to the days when these recipients of the bounty of the Craft were in better position, if not in enjoyment of comparative opulence. We hear the voices of gratitude that have resounded through those walls, like sacred music, recalling the forms and features of many who have passed away to the Grand Lodge above, where the worn and weary are at rest, and there is no want to need the exercise of human compassion. The grateful acknowledgments of those who are still with us are best, and echo similar strains that fell upon our ears in "the long ago," and inspire us to persevere in the task so dear to the Masonic creed of "going about doing good." Let there be no contemptuous curl of the lip at the utterance of such sentiments as these. We are not sermonizing, but placing before those who are most intimate with facts, the real state of the case. Turn again to the ruddy-cheeked lads and modest maidens, many hundreds of whom are being clothed and fed and educated in our schools, and say whether in fitting those little ones for the stern realities they must face in after life there is not a grand and beneficent scheme which must be placed to the credit of our oftentimes maligned Order? We say this in no apologetic strain, or boastful humor; the chariot wheels of Masonic benevolence roll noiselessly, yet invincibly, over the rough roads of life, carrying with them help and healing to the distressed and needy, and expecting no reward or praise from any human lip.

These thoughts, we say, give pleasure to the sensitive mind who visits the Hall and portals where so much real charity is periodically dispensed. But, on the other hand, there is a tinge of sadness in the thought, that, however open-handed the brethren have been, the demands are far in ex-