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THE GOOD OLD TIMES OF MASONRY.

Every now and then you meet a brother who laments what he styles the decadence of Masonry. He deplores the fact that Masonry is not now what it once was—in "the good old times." You might fancy that these "good old times" were in the remote past, in the pristine days when Masonry was young, a century or a millenary ago; but, no, the "good times" that are now no more were in the earlier days of our pessimistic brother's life. He pretends to speak whereof he knows, and to draw merely from his own experience. No doubt he is honest, but he is certainly mistaken. Distance always lends enchantment to the view, and the past is usually veiled in a tint *couleur de rose*. It is a common mistake to praise the past at the expense of the present. Masons are by no means the only ones who fall into this error. In Church and State there are those who not infrequently become discouraged at certain seemingly untoward events, and then imagine that everything is going wrong, the world is being turned upside down, and that the "golden age" was in the past, and will never be reproduced. We are convinced that in every such instance—civil, religious and Masonic, the true "golden age" is in the future, and that the present is to be preferred before any era that preceded it, because it is nearer to the cul-

minating period towards which events are tending. Let us examine into the Masonic aspects of this subject.

Some querulous old, or croaking middle-aged, Freemason may tell you that the same class of men are not in the fraternity now as formerly. Then they were all of the best—the Washingtons, Franklins, Marshalls, and De Witt Clintons of their time; but now the fraternity is mixed, awfully mixed. They forget that Washington, Franklin, and the large majority of the old worthies, when they were alive, had their enemies and detractors, as not a few eminent men have to-day. It is only distance that renders them now immaculate to our view. They were men of like passions with us, imperfect as us, and if they could look at us at the distance that we look at them, they would magnify our virtues as we magnify theirs. Depend upon it, the difference between men now and fifty or a hundred years ago is not great, and it is in favor of the present generation. All things are progressing, advancing, improving; the intellect is brightened, education is far more generally diffused, and in every respect the world is growing wiser and better. Almost every man you meet is a Briareus. The inventive genius of man has mastered the five old elements, and made them do his bidding. Instead of being down in the hollow