

pride, vanity, and all debasing passions, and so present him in his nearest possible resemblance to a perfected, qualified humanity.

There is, however, a technical culture in Freemasonry by no means to be disregarded—a culture important in itself, and also as constituting an essential preparation for that more general work of enlightenment and discipline already indicated. Masonic culture is a phrase that must carry with it first of all the idea of an understanding of the system which is included within the broad lines of our Fraternity. There can be no culture such as is entitled to the prefix of Masonic, unless a due amount of study has been given to the underlying principles and teachings of the institution, thereby reaching some clear perceptions as to its character and purposes. Then there must be an acquaintance with forms and ceremonies, so as to know what these observances are, when used, how applied, and how related to each other, together with their moral significance. It is a mistake to suppose that one can acquire all needed culture in these matters, by "passing through" the various degrees and orders which belong to the Masonic system, or witnessing now and then—at very distant intervals, perhaps—the rendering of the work. Something more is requisite if one would be a cultured Mason, even according to this lower form of designation. The inquiring mind must apply its powers to discern the intended application of varied forms and practices,—the meaning of ceremonies that in themselves may appear very silly, but which rightly understood, will take on a very different character. The intelligent Craftsman will of necessity be a student in respect of whatever belongs to the prescribed expression of Masonic truth, while he will note with care all signs and tokens—symbols as well as words—bearing upon the illustration of these various lessons brought to his attention.

Masonic culture, even as thus limited, makes too many demands on brethren to be altogether popular. Some cannot give the time; some have not the inclination; others do not realize the worth of such study and application; while others, who are prompt attendants upon festival occasions, seemingly care nothing for the Masonic system or organization, except as its social features are presented. And so the class of the non-cultured is exceedingly large. Brethren take all the degrees and gain high honors, but they do not master the first principles in the science of Masonry; they do not study the ritual; nor give careful scrutiny to the ceremony; they do not think, read, and investigate, in order to become cultivated and proficient in the royal art. It needs no argument to show that such as these add but little to the strength and efficiency of the organization. Only the well-informed and well-disciplined—they who comprehend the essential nature and genius of the Masonic system—can be relied upon to stand by the Fraternity in any exigency that may arise, and to be faithful under all conditions and at all times. Our sacred trusts are safe only as ability, intelligence, and virtue shall have prevailing power in the hearts and lives of brethren—only as such a class shall have controlling influence in the counsels of the craft. They who are thus cultured, being well versed in the technical lore of Freemasonry, understanding its history, and appreciating both its philosophy and its moral teachings, are best prepared to make it productive in its most important uses for the practical good of men, and to lead it on in the way of a true progress. They are to be the teachers, helpers, inspirers of others less informed and less strong—remembering always the law of duty and responsibility to which they are bound: "Unto whom much is given, of the same much is required."—*Freemason's Repository*.