

the joy and consolation of their old age, who, but for Masonry, would be weeping over the debaucheries of a profligate or ruined son, and would be courting the last, long, deep sleep of the grave, as a refuge from the bitter memories of the past, the sorrows of the present, and the land of silence undisturbed by the tidings of the future! How many young men in the land, to-day, modest, moral and upright, props in the government and pillars in the church, who, but for Masonry, would be a disgrace to their parents, and live only to break the hearts they were born to bless!

Let me conjure you, ladies, to-day, by all that is sacred in character—that is pure in truth—that is tender in sympathy—that is beneficent in charity! by the recollection of your homes and household gods! by the memory of a father's care, of a mother's prayers, of a brother's love, of a sister's angelic affection! by all that bereaves sorrow of its sting, that inspires youth, that cheers the solitude of old age! I beseech you approve, encourage, sustain Masonry. For you its temples rise and its altars live. Strengthen its truth and its faith, and like a ministering angel, it will bless and baptize you in the light of its love!

Most worshipful Grand Master and Brethren all! let us now anew consecrate ourselves at the altar of Freemasonry! here, in the midst of this intelligent and hospitable community—in this "loveliest village of this plain;" here, in full view of yonder Hill, whose base is washed by the limpid waters of the Colorado, and whose summit is rendered sacred by the dust, and consecrated to the memory of gallant men, who fell in defence of liberties and institutions of that country which we are proud to call our own; yonder sacred Hill! where

"Sleep the brave who sank to rest.
By all their country's wishes blest,
And Honor comes, a Pilgrim grey,
To watch the sod that wraps their clay,
And Freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!"

—The Ashlar.

LODGES OF SORROW.

BY AUG. C. L. ARNOLD, LL. D.

ALTHOUGH, in this country, Lodges of Sorrow are somewhat rare, they are of very frequent occurrence in Europe, and especially in Germany. Always, on the demise of a worthy brother, the "Trauer Loge" is opened, when the virtues of the departed Brother are commemorated, and funeral ceremonies of an impressive character are performed. But with us, whenever the lodge convenes, as such, to bury a brother, and performs over his remains the beautiful service for the dead, it is, in fact, a "Lodge of Sorrow."

But we believe it would be profitable to hold special lodges of this description once in each year, to call to mind those who have deceased during that time, and by a study of their examples, and an invocation of their virtues, to seek growth in wisdom and virtue.

Our festivities in honor of the two Saints John are, at the same time, Lodges of Sorrow, remembrance and invocation.

The significance, indeed, of all such ceremonies is that the departed good and great are still, although unseen, really and intelligently present in spirit, observing all our thoughts and deeds, and presiding over, and carrying forward those benevolent enterprises which tend to improve the condition of mankind. Death does not, and cannot, affect any of the relations which God has established between man and man. They remain forever the same. Religion, from the first, has taken note of this fact, and asserted the unbroken continuity of life, and the unity of the race—an idea which Paul teaches when he says: "For as we have many members in one body, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

The church at the beginning, seizing on this great truth—which is, indeed, the very foundation of our masonic institution—earnestly proclaimed that individual men were members of a common

brotherhood; that this law of brotherhood is eternal; that death does not and cannot break the continuity of the life of humanity, nor dissolve the ties of consanguinity, affection or fraternity, and that those, whom we call the dead, are yet objects of interest and love to us, and we are yet objects of interest and love to them.

Acting on this principle, and moved by this truth, the ancient nations, universally, established festivals in honor, and for the benefit of the dead; and a Hebrew writer, four centuries before Christ, says: "It is a holy and pious thought to pray for the departed."

The Chinese, Japanese, and other Oriental nations repair annually to the graves of their deceased friends, which they ornament with garlands of flowers and of leaves.

"O deem it not a superstitious rite, though old,
It having with all higher things connection,
Prayers, tears, redeem a world, so harsh and cold.
The future hath its hope—the past its deep affection."

So far, indeed, did the church carry this idea, that it asserted, as a positive doctrine, a reciprocity of influences between this visible world of living men and the invisible world of spirits—that by invoking them, our departed friends would watch over us as guardian genuses; and that we, on the other hand, by our sympathy and prayers, might benefit them, and aid them in working their way up from the "receptacles of sorrow to heaven's everlasting rest."

Without, however, endorsing all these ideas, Freemasonry everywhere recognizes the IMMORTALITY OF MAN; and immortality implies that man will be identically the same through all eternity—death cannot rob him of any of those prerogatives or attributes which are necessary to their identity. In the future life, man will be essentially the same as in this. He will remember the past, recognize and love those whom he had known and loved here; and he will also retain the noble attribute of freedom, and the capacity for progress. The future life is a life of activity and advancement—a life of affection and sympathy, as well as retribution; and being separated from this only by the veil of flesh, it penetrates and flows into it, and is forever connected with it by mysterious bonds that cannot be broken.

It follows, therefore, that the great, the wise and good of the past time—our brothers and companions departed—the illuminators of men of all nations and ages—are still moving among us, fulfilling each day their various ministries of beneficence and love. They overshadow us when we meet in our lodges of mourning and remembrance, and envelop us in their undying sympathy. Being dead in the flesh, they are alive in the spirit, the true apostles and benefactors of man, and are unceasingly present as helpful divinities. In the examples they have set, the truths they have uttered and the lives they have lived.

They fell, devoted, but undying;
The very waves their names seem sighing;
The waters murmur of their name,
The woods are peopled with their fame,
The silent pillars, lone and gray,
Claim kindred to their sacred clay;
Their spirits wrap the dusky mountain,
Their memory sparkles o'er each fountain;
The meanest rill, the mightiest river,
Rolls, mingling with their fame, for ever."

By these commemorative ceremonies, therefore, which recall, and, in a manner, reproduce the events and personages of the past, we are brought into direct communion with the intelligence and life of the heroes and saints of the old world, and by this communion their life is transmitted to us, and we are regenerated by their virtues. We should, therefore, remember the history of their trials and conquests, and keep outspread before us the picture of their glory. When in sorrow, perplexity and distress of soul, we should ask them to come to our aid. And they will come—they will come in the might of their pure examples, the omnipotence of their holy lives, and in the regenerating virtue of their philanthropy and

love. They do come—angels of mercy—to preserve and defend us! By their goodness we become good, by their wisdom we become wise, and by their strength we become strong.

Thus the good and honoured of other times—the illustrious examples of masonic virtue—have left a thousand brilliant traces on the earth—a thousand memories in the mystic circle where we were wont to meet them, which are to us a perpetual ministry of Love, and Life, and Light. They are so many Pharoses, which a kind Providence has kindled on the Sea of Time, to show the rocks and quicksands we are to avoid, and to direct us to the perfect lodge of security and peace.

Another salutary effect that would follow the frequent opening of Sorrow Lodges, would be the more rational views and feelings which we should entertain in regard to that supreme hour which, sooner or later, will introduce us to the sublime mysteries of eternity. By familiarity and rational meditation, all unreasonable fears and misgivings would be removed.

As a general thing, there is no subject less welcome to our thoughts, and which we contemplate with less pleasure, than that of DEATH; ever do we turn away from it as a terrible spectre—ever do we strive to fix our minds on a more pleasing theme. But strive as we may to avoid it, the thought will intrude itself upon us, and every day "the king of terrors" himself stands before us, and bears away to his mysterious realm some friend or companion, thus crushing our hearts with grief, as well as filling them with unbreakable dread.

Although every day we are called to hear the funeral knell, and witness the sad cortege of sorrow winding along our streets, we never seem to succeed in conquering the terror which the thought of death inspires. Let it enter the gay and gilded saloons of the great—the hall where beauty and fashion assemble, surrounded by all the charms and fascinations that belong to the golden and facitious life which they live—and the stoutest arm is paralyzed, and the manliest heart is struck with dismay, and the proud-glancing eye quails, and the rose fades from the cheek of beauty as the rainbow vanishes from the summer sky, and the throne of joy is usurped by the spectre of fear.

The spirit and teachings of Freemasonry lead us to see the unreasonableness of these fears. True, the masonic ritual speaks of the "spade," the "grave," the "death's-head," and "marrow-bones," those last sad remnants of mortality; but it does so only that it may turn our eyes, beaming with triumphant joy, to the immortal "ACACIA," the glorious emblem of "Eternal Life." It does not aim to throw gloom and terror around our last hour, nor to marshal an army of hideous spectres around the beds of the dying, or the graves of the honored dead. On the contrary, it would remove every gloomy token and every fearful apprehension. It would take away from the grave's brink the thorns and briars of despair and dread, and plant in their stead the beautiful flowers of Hope, and Trust, and Love. It would rend from the sculptured monuments which cover the dead, the grim and ghastly images of woe, and fix in their place the symbols of a Hope that burns more and more bright through the ages, and of a Love which is as perpetual as eternity! It would quiet our fears, and bring to our bosoms a calm and enduring faith in the Invisible, and an imperishable trust in the Grand Master, and Father of the world. It would so quicken our faith that it could penetrate the veil of eternity, and see the generations of the wise and good, who have glorified the past, re-youthed, and clothed with forms of immortal beauty, and renewing and continuing the sweet communion which commenced in this world.

Unfortunately, our age is not an age of profound and positive faith. There is far more of worldliness, more dread of death, and less of heroic firmness and hopeful confidence at its approach, than in the earlier times. Our rude but earnest and truth-loving fathers, although pagans, seemed to know none of those fears which now so much disturb us. The future life presented itself to their minds in the most definite shape, and they welcomed the idea with a most profound conviction of its truth. They even died with tranquility, and