

these Shadows of men and of things; often are we disappointed and deceived; we dream of a Friendship, a Love, a Sincerity, which will always charm us as an undying melody; sometimes we see what to us appear to be friendly Forms, and hear what to us seem to be words of Truth and Love, but Life! Life! the terrible Deception is before and around us; the vision dissolves—nothing remains but the ugly Forms of Deceit! In the very midst of Society, this flaming pit where bodies and souls are consumed;—of Society—this terrific abyss where fiery passions and opposite interests struggle with hideous roar;—Society, this mysterious phantom-land, over which roll everlasting shadows, and the wailings of an infinite despair;—in the very midst of Society so living, so incessantly active, man feels himself to be but a solitary hermit! Alas! that man, while surrounded by beings created in the same Image, and pressed by them on every hand, should yet be compelled to mourn that he is a lone wanderer on the earth!—But such is the gloomy destiny which our imperfect social organizations hold out to Man. They isolate the individual, and make him the natural enemy of his brother man, deceiving and deceived!

Now he who enters our fraternal Association rises above this Life of Selfishness, Hypocrisy, and Deceit. He moves in the midst of men who have laid aside their MASKS, and sees himself surrounded by friends and friendly faces; and hearts into which he may look, as into the pure and cloudless sky. The mystic tie of sympathy raises and binds him to the society of congenial spirits, on whose kindness and truth he may always rely;—whose words to him will be always true, and whose acts will always be open and sincere.

Here, it seems to us, we *must* see the need of Odd-Fellowship, and its adaptation to the wants of the present times. It opens a new temple, and erects a new altar above all prejudice and dissensions and selfishness—a temple dedicated to Friendship, Love, and Truth, where men of all parties are taught to lay aside their differences and their hypocrisy, and meet on the common ground of Truth and Charity. Our Lodges are the asylums of Peace and Love; political or religious disputes can never enter there, and within their peace-inspiring walls men of antagonistical faiths meet as brothers, and bind themselves by solemn vows to fulfil the Christian Law of Love, and to do good to all men, as they have opportunity or ability. There, may the lone wanderer, weary and discouraged in his search for friendship, find repose in sympathizing and loving hearts. We ask then if there is not a need, and a pressing need, of an institution like this?—an institution which will re-combine the scattered elements of society, recall men to a sense of their fraternal relations and duties, and revive the almost extinguished faith in Friendship and Virtue? Our Association is peculiarly adapted to this end;—nay, Unity, Love, Friendship, are the *very* objects it seeks to promote. We affirm, then, without any qualification, that there is no human institution which has so many legitimate demands on our reverence and sympathy. There is no institution existing, save this, whose only aim is to promote social harmony.

But we would not be unjust. We would not say one word against those charitable and philanthropic associations, in which the present age is so remarkable and rich. There are Peace Societies, Temperance, and other Societies, all which spring from a laudable desire to improve the condition of man. These are all very good, but Odd-Fellowship not only embraces all the excellencies of each of these, it goes far beyond them. It asks not only that justice be done—it demands Friendship and Love. Thus it towers above them all, stands pre-eminent in beauty and splendour, as the bright moon amid a heaven of stars.—*Gazette of the Union.*

THE SYMBOLS AND RITES OF THE ORDER.

We have spoke, often, of that sceptical, material, and utilitarian spirit, which repudiates all *rites, forms, badges of distinction, and symbolic Language.*—“Where is the *utility* of these things?” men are constantly inquiring. There are many amongst us, who pretend to see no reason in ceremonies and decorations which do not confer an immediate and *material* benefit. They do not seem to know that the Spiritual is incarnated in the Material—that the reason can *never be disembodied*—that truth never makes so deep an impression, as when it is proclaimed by solemn ceremonies, or shadowed forth by appropriate representation, or embodied by Art in beautiful forms.

Odd-Fellowship is often opposed, by many who approve of its general objects, because its instructions are ritual—and it employs decorations and solemnities, as *instruments* by which it may accomplish its purpose.—But *this*, instead of marring the beauty of Odd-Fellowship, in our opinion, surrounds it with additional attractions. For ourselves, we cannot find language sufficiently strong to express our deep abhorrence of this unsanctified Spirit, which, could it get itself elected to the kingship of the world, would pluck from the skies the last star, and from the earth the last flower!—divest Life of all its embellishment—rob the Universe of its Beauty, because that Beauty has no *material* utility—and in a word, dry up the very fountains of spiritual life!

One of the very greatest errors of the Age, is the constant employment of naked, abstract reason, in all instructions, whether moral, scientific, or religious;—thus reducing all precepts to words, and the incessant addressing of the understanding, as if men were not creatures of imagination and Soul, as well as of Spirit or Reason. By discarding the language of symbols, which through the imagination speaks to the Soul, we lose the most efficient and powerful means of imparting religious and moral instruction. Mere words never make a lasting impression on the heart, nor do they ever stir up profound emotion, unless they are accompanied by some significant acts, gestures or attitudes, on the part of the speaker, or are wrought up in a highly metaphorical and symbolical style. Words may enlighten the understanding, but *acts, ceremonies, images*, address the profoundest sentiments of the heart. That faculty, which we denominate the Reason, the Spirit, whose appropriate instrument of utterance is speech, is not the source of activity, nor is it the noblest element in man. It *observes, determines and judges*, but its *judgments* are generally partial, negative, and selfish; never does it elevate the Soul, nor fill it with a divine enthusiasm; it creates no heroes, nor has it ever accomplished any great thing for Humanity! It is the Soul which acts, which makes men brave to face danger, and strong to endure fatigue; and the Soul's language is not verbal, but symbolic and ritual. Not a man lives, but feels at times, that language, in its happiest combinations, is all too weak to express those burning thoughts, which oft stir up his soul into a very tempest of emotion. Hence Religion, which concerns the Soul ultimately, is always in its truest state associated with a ritual, the more imposing, sublime, and beautiful, the better.

But, it is often asked, *why* do you wear your aprons, sashes, collars, and decorated caps? and where is their *utility*? We ask, in return, where is the utility of the *flowers*, with which God has garnished his footstool—with which you embellish your gardens, and delight to see your wives and sisters and daughters decorate your parlors? Where is the utility of the ornamental devices you weave into your garments? of your martial equipage and display? And, if we may be allowed to address ourselves to the ladies, where is the utility of your collars and aprons of lace and silk, your ribbons, golden bracelets and chains; and especially of that