

of the R. W. M., it was unanimously agreed to minute the great loss which the Lodge had sustained by the death of their Substitute Master, Bro. P. S. Macleod, who for a period of nine years had been closely associated with the Lodge, and gave it his hearty and enthusiastic support. The Brethren desire to record their high appreciation of the manner in which he performed the duties of the various offices held by him in the Lodge, their extreme regret at his early demise, and their genuine sympathy with his relatives."

During the last two decades the Fortrose Lodge has passed through a period of uneventful prosperity. Her Masters have been enthusiastic and hard working, her office-bearers capable and loyal, while the Brethren have been regular and punctual in their attendance. The number of entrants, notwithstanding careful scrutiny and selection, has frequently mounted up to 27 and 28 per annum, and for the last few years the average has been 23. The general funds have steadily gained in respectability, and the scope of the Lodge charities has been proportionately extended. During last year (1904) the substantial sum of £75 18s. 6d. was distributed among poor and distressed members of Lodge Fortrose and their relatives.

A record of the transactions of the Freemason Lodge in the small town of Stornoway, must necessarily, on account of obvious limitations, be of more local than Masonic interest. It is, however, a misfortune that the Brethren in the earlier stages of the Life of Lodge Fortrose were so secretively inclined that they followed the teachings of Masonry only too literally in this respect. As a consequence the minutes are reduced in most cases to a bare mention of the opening and closing of the Lodge. The ordinary business is never, or very rarely, committed to paper. After the second birth, in 1797 the names of Brethren taking the various degrees are introduced, but it is not until well into the nineteenth century that we have full records of all Lodge transactions. The minutes of later days have not, however, the charm of age, the quaintness of spelling, or the piquancy of language which renders records of past centuries so interesting and attractive to the present day reader, be he Masonic or non-Masonic.

One fact we can glean from a study of the Members' Roll. All that has been best and most intellectual among the old aristocracy of Stornoway may be found therein. The great majority of the business men who have made our town what it is, and by their foresight and business acumen raised it above the level of a fishing village, have passed through the portals of Lodge Fortrose or are descended from Brethren who have taken a prominent part in its deliberations.

The discipline maintained in a Freemason Lodge, the business insight gained in discussing and regulating its laws and existence, the opportunities afforded for expressing individual opinions and suggestions, the accuracy essential to the proper conduct of its ceremonies, undoubtedly are all powerful factors in directing the energies and moulding the characters of the younger Brethren.

The simple, moral teaching of Freemasonry, which places prominently before the world the practice of human kindness and charity, forbearance and brotherly love, and has from remote ages tended to foster knowledge, promote education and further all schemes for the common good, without reference to political opinions, private obligations or religious creeds, has made the Society what it has been, a great moral and social factor in the complex problem of civilization.

May it therefore ever be our desire and aim, as Brethren of the Fortrose Lodge, to make the influence of Freemasonry a power for good in the community, and as individual members of our Ancient and Honourable Craft to continue to keep before our eyes the sacred dictates of Truth, of Honour, and of Virtue.