

to communicate the fact to his principals. It was some time before the pious piece of deception was found out, and, when it was, it led to a reconciliation between the relatives, which has lasted, to their mutual gain and satisfaction, to this day.

“A duel of a particularly grievous sort was prevented by masonry a few years ago at Bucharest, the capital of Roumania. Two brothers, who had not seen each other for years, quarrelled over some property, and at length one challenged the other to fight a duel. In spite of the reasoning and entreaties of their friends, they insisted on meeting, and were about to fire at each other, when it was suddenly discovered that both were Masons. The ties of blood had not held them back, but the bond of Masonry was too strong to break, and they stopped; the quarrel was satisfactorily adjusted, and they became the fastest of friends.”

### EARLY FREEMASONRY IN FRANCE.

Introduced into France in 1725, Freemasonry made, during a lapse of a quarter century, immense strides, so that, in the year 1776, was erected the famous lodge of the Nine Sisters (meaning the Muses) designed originally by the great philosopher, Helvetius, as a place of congregation for the leading intellects of their age. Although Helvetius died before accomplishment of his design, it was carried out so successfully by his admirers as, in 1778, to embrace in its membership Benjamin Franklin, Court de Gebelin, Lalande, and almost all men of genius at the Court of France. Still there was one man wanting to complete this circle of intellectual greatness. Voltaire, pleading his advanced years, had declined to join the lodge until, at solicitation of Franklin, he was proposed by the Abbe Cordier de St. Firmin, and initiated June 7th, 1778, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, being supported on entering the chamber upon the arms of Franklin and of Court de Gebelin, the most zealous Egyptologist of the time. On the 28th of November in this same year the same persons participated in the funeral of Voltaire, when, as each brother deposited upon the cenotaph of the deceased the mystic bough, incidental to the funeral services, Franklin offered, as his tribute, a crown, previously presented to him in the name of the lodge. Among the earliest victims to the fury of the Revolution

were the philosophic members of this very Lodge—martyrs to the cause of humanity.—*Masonic Chronicle.*

### THOUGHTS FOR THINKING MASONS.

How many Brethren who spend evening after evening in the lodge-room ever ask themselves to what end all the curious rites and ceremonies, which are the property of our mystic brotherhood, are so frequently repeated? Who pauses in the midst of the ritual to ask himself its meaning, or stops to inquire in what way it relates to the every-day affairs of life? Too many look upon the work of the Craft as a mere meaningless repetition of words, which by infinite toil must be learned by heart by any one who wishes to become an officer in his lodge, but to them it is a matter of no concern, demanding no thought or attention, and attracting them only as the words when uttered by a speaker of good delivery may have a sonorous roll, pleasing to the ear.

How seldom, indeed, we find that the pure radiance of the First Great Light is allowed to shine with its divine effulgence upon the Mysteries of our Craft. If our Brethren would but take the trouble to commit to memory, carefully and thoughtfully (not mere parrot learning), the entire ritual of the Fraternity, and then in the patient spirit of investigation look up, by means of reference Bible and Concordance, all those passages which seem obscure and meaningless to them, they will find themselves well rewarded for their trouble. Unfortunately for the good of the Craft, the Bible seems to be as much of a sealed book to not a few Masons, as if they were under the administration of the Romish Church, which forbids the laity to read the Word of God for themselves.

If the Craft as a whole knew the work better, we would hear fewer complaints of bad grammar in the authorized work. Too many Americans get their only ideas of grammar from the dogmatic and empiric books on the subject which form the text books in most of our schools, both public and private, and which by arbitrary rules, that seem all important to the self-appointed authority, endeavor to straighten out the English language as if with a rod of iron, thereby seeking to remove from it all the force of character and wonderful strength and elasticity of expression that have kept the English of