

the Oriental seat of King Solomon. But is he really competent to preside and shape the character and destiny of a lodge, because he can confer the degrees, and open and close the lodge, and not trip for a word? What does he know of the traditions? Can he give a good account of our history? What idea has he of the different rites? Is it not a lamentable fact, that in the great majority of instances these questions would have to be answered in the negative? And now, by virtue of his office, he is entitled to a seat in the Grand Lodge. Is it any wonder he is a wall-flower there? Is it strange that the business of the craft falls into the hands of a few men, who, at the sessions of the Grand bodies, are overwhelmed with work? Not at all. The hour from which our novitiate passed the gates of the Temple, he has been familiar with nothing but the showy wardrobe of Masonry; and we repeat again, that those who govern the craft, and oversee the workers of the quarries, are, in a measure, responsible for this lamentable ignorance, for not encouraging a taste for reading, and enforcing it by precept and example. What can we expect of a fraternity whose members are absorbed in regalia, parades, the glory of Templar uniforms, and who think that proficiency in degreeism and ritual, is the acme of Masonic knowledge? Who are content to remain in ignorance of its literature, who rarely ever open a Masonic paper or magazine, and are actually ignorant of what is passing in their own jurisdiction, to say nothing of what is transpiring further away from home. This is an evil that should be remedied, if we would enlist the appreciation of the talent and intellect of the age, enliven the usual weary monotony of the lodge meetings, and remove the slur that Masonry is only another form of club life, a pleasant saturnalia, a plausible excuse to stay out late at night.—*Masonic Record.*

A PLAYFUL CRITIC OF MASONRY.

One of the most amusing men who ever made sport of Freemasonry was Thomas DeQuincey, the English Opium Eater. He did not single out Masonry alone as the target for his literary arrows, feathered with wit and sarcasm, which he kept shooting as long as he lived, but he made sport of almost everything. He liked to say odd things, to take new views, and to overturn old ones. We may instance his paper in which he whitewashed Judas Iscariot; and another in which he discussed "Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts." We have always enjoyed his writings, because they are so original,—in fact, we know scarcely any recent writer who excels him in this respect. DeQuincey is a perfect dare-devil in originality. Perhaps none of his essays is more enjoyable, especially to Freemasons, than that upon Secret Societies. In it he is in his best vein, not caring what he says, only caring to be bizarre, brilliant and incisive. At an early age, he says, he became interested in secret societies, from his desire to know, (1) *What they do;* and (2) *What they do it for?* His was no peculiar experience. Many a man has become a Mason instigated by this same curiosity; but curiosity, while the lowest form of intellectual motive, in Freemasonry always leads up to something higher. DeQuincey's curiosity, however, only led him to view our fraternity from the outside, and always simply with the view of burlesquing it. Here is the first result of his sportive lucubrations:—

"The two best known of all Secret Societies that ever *have* been are the two most extensive monuments of humbug on the one side, and credulity on the other. They divide themselves between the ancient world and the modern. The great and illustrious humbug of ancient history was the ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES. The great