

A Year's Work

While it is my duty to place before you a report of my official acts, along with that of my fellow-officers, for the past year, a still greater duty devolves upon you, who will sit in judgment and render a verdict as to the claims your executives have in meriting the honors you conferred upon them.

In reviewing the reports of your official leaders, it would be well to retrace our footsteps to the starting point of this year's journey, which has led us to centre here to-day. When the gavel sounded at the close of our last Grand Lodge meeting, at your order I assumed command with a full knowledge of the responsibility attached to the position you honored me with. During this time I have conscientiously endeavored to direct the forces under my charge. What degree of success I have attained in the performance of my duties will be revealed to you as the session advances and other office-bearers present their reports. As you proceed to review the evidences of prosperity which have attended our efforts, you will also be called to pass judgment upon any acts of mine and those associated with me which may have in any way retarded the progress of our Association.

Private Members Have Done Well

In this duty which now rests upon you, it may be well to make an individual inspection of each office-bearer's record, and thus place responsibility and honor where they rightly belong, both for retrogression and progression in the various departments of our work. In every part of our wide field there are those whose loyalty and devotion to the cause never wanes, while on the other hand, it needs continuous urging on men to do the part of the work assigned to them. Every organization experiences the same drawback, but we cannot afford to overlook it. It is easy to ascertain to what extent the weapons of each office have been used in the battle of a year of victory and in the strengthening of our ranks. Personally, I am prepared to attribute our success to those who have diligently marched in the front ranks of the home guard, that is, in the private lodges of our Association, whether these men or women were Grand Lodge officers or attached simply to the rank and file, "By their fruit ye shall know them," and according to their work should they be elevated to positions of honor where their usefulness can more fully redound to the success of our beloved Order.

The failures, if any are indiscernible, that may have retarded our progress I attribute to lack of energy on the part of those who stand ever ready to rejoice with the victors, and claim the laurels won without their aid, and who at the same time stand ready to condemn where failures are visible, failures which they themselves may have assisted to bring about, because of their indifference or lack of loyalty to those in command. In this there is food for thought. As you sum up the individual acts of a year's service, complete in behalf of the Association generally, by those who have directed its affairs during the past year, glance if you will along the hedgerows which proved barriers, but see beyond and above these the sturdy oaks, that neither the fierce winds of opposition nor the pessimistic sheets can move. True Blueism has its mighty oaks, and perhaps its crackling timbers, too.