

THE PAST.

It comes o'er the heart like an echo bland,
 Or a gentle voice from fairy land,
 On balmy breezes borne to the strand
 Of memory's sea ;

It tells of the joys that our childhood knew,
 Of hopes that were bright as the rainbow's hue,
 Of the tears that were pure as morning dew
 On the vernal tree.

It speaks of the hours of earliest love.
 Of the sylvan glen and the summer grove,
 Through which our footsteps oft would rove
 In the by-gone days ;

Of the laughing glance of an azure eye,
 Of a cheek that was dash'd with the rose's dye.
 Of a smile that was bright as an orient sky
 When the sunbeams play !

And oh ! it is sweet, as the night comes on,
 When the heart is dreary, sad and lone,
 To muse on the friends that are past and gone,
 To come—oh, never !

And to know that they live in the memory bright,
 As forms that are clad in the hues of light,
 And will not depart till the "stilly night"
 Be set for ever!—*St. Louis Freemason.*

MASONIC VITALITY.

THE century in which we now live has been often and aptly characterized as the age of marvels. The genius, industry, and application of men have revolutionized the ideas of thirty years ago, and things which then, if predicted, would have been scouted at as impossibilities are now such every-day affairs as scarcely to attract attention.

But of all the marvels of this nineteenth century the steady, upward and onward progress of the Masonic institution is the most marvelous; While social and business matters have undergone absolute revolutions, while parties in politics and sects in religion have been completely overturned, while ideas once—and but lately—universally accepted have been relegated to the dust and ashes of the past, Masonry has kept steadily on its way, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, but looking and marching always towards the ideal set out from the beginning. During the past few years the distress always following a war has fallen upon the commercial and industrial classes of this country with a force all the more severe, because the least prepared for and unexpected, yet we do not find any sensible check to the progress of the craft. Year by year its Lodges increase and its membership is enlarged, and that, too, in a degree which the most sanguine could not, in reason, have expected; and not only this, but the advanced degrees, involving large expense to those who solicit them, have made greater strides than ever before, and are to-day much more sought after than has ever before been known in the history of the Fraternity. To account for this we must look beyond the surrounding circumstances; for we see that while trade is almost at a stand-still, while the work by which thousands get wealth and tens of thousands their daily bread, lags, because there is no demand, the progress of our institution is scarcely interrupted, and all the branches of the craft move forward as if possessed of the gift of perpetual and onward motion. The true solution is in the inherent and natural vitality of Freemasonry. It is the natural outgrowth of that persistent element of power and continuance which has ever distinguished the society. It is a demonstration of our right to live, and our claims upon the sympathy and good will of all men, of whatever persuasion or manner of thought, who wish to elevate the general social status and persuade men to live, not for themselves alone, but for the general good, and that each generation may take one step nearer toward that consummation which all good men so devoutly wish for, when nations shall no more make war, and when