

brought into contact. The most idle, the most petty, the most unfair excuses are often made by those who ought to know better, and act better, because they do not feel inclined to recognize the fair claims of that true support, and that kindly countenance which the press, whether Masonic or un-Masonic, has a right to ask at their hands. There are many, for instance, who profess the greatest interest in literary pursuits and studies. Hear them talk, 'ore rotundo' (what a wonderful thing is the 'gift of gab,') you would suppose that no more zealous, intelligent, self-sacrificing patrons of literature can be found than those who speak so nobly and so well. But, wait a bit. Ask them for personal aid—that is a subscription for value received, (90 per cent, in fact, ad valorem, if you like,) and what is the reply too often, but the cold shoulder, complete silence? Many a prosperous little literary venture goes down, (some will say not improperly because if it does not succeed it is not wanted), because Higgins, and Stiggins, and Jiggins, great in praise of literature, per se, do not like to pay, whether for results or non-results. We have been led into these remarks by complaints which come before us frequently, and principally in the American Masonic periodicals. In that great brotherhood of over 600,000 members, the positions of the Masonic press, for instance, especially appears to us to be unprecedented and inexplicable. Indeed, we will be greatly obliged to any American correspondent who will try to let in a little light on so dark a subject. In America, Masonic literature, even that of a high order, seems to be alike most precarious in its position, and most uncertain in its conditions. It is supported largely to-day, it is given up without a struggle to-morrow, and we read constantly the calm yet almost despairing avowal from publishers that they cannot naturally afford to lose their time and give their paper gratis, and we listen to excuses from non-support also, which appear to us alike most conflicting and most un-Masonic. There is no doubt an amusing side of the entire question, What is the density of the 'excusing mind,' and the absurdity of the excuses given. Indeed, the latter are so puerile and so ridiculous as to become even amusing from their utter want of appreciation, either of the value of Masonic literature per se, or of the important question at issue. We quote the following choice little extract from an American contemporary, partly a newspaper and partly a magazine:—"A country editor received the following:— 'Dear Sir,—I have looked carefully and patiently ~~for~~ your paper for months for the death of some individual I was acquainted with, but as yet not a single soul I care anything about has dropped off; you will please to have my name erased.' This may be a good joke but it contains a useful moral. For this is about the staple of the value of excuses for non-support or discontinuance, which Masonic and non-Masonic publishers and editors often receive, and serves to afford us a laughable and amusing commentary on the 'high falutin' of talkative 'dilettanti,' and the utter unreality too often of mere profession. The *Freemason* has happily but few complaints to make and finds itself warmly supported by a larger and more zealous clientele than at any period of its existence. But it is well for us all to bear in mind what is often going on around us, close to our own doors, of which we may be utterly ignorant, and to express for others that sympathy, though we need it not ourselves, which in the great struggle of life is due from all like ourselves, who are sensible of the claims and wants, the difficulties and the drawbacks, the condition and progress of journalistic literature. There is as we before observed, no doubt another side to the whole question, which we may be tempted to advert to in an early issue."