

social life. We perform all our charitable actions in a stately way, after an approved and fashionable model. We cultivate our literature upon absolute methods, and try to convert a speculative into a mathematical science. Because we cannot logically prove our origin, we are continually discounting sentiment; aiming in fact at impossible historical accuracy. We are very Pharisees in striving after form, but not quite so heartless. We are not as dead in practical faith as we are intellectually cold, formal, and unimaginative. Our academic tendencies have not taken all the heart out of us, and our charities remain as the golden links which unite faith and practice. Our Lodge meetings, lifeless as they too frequently are, stimulate obedience and respect for authority; they keep alive the love of ritual and do something towards strengthening the formal ties of brotherhood, while our banquets satisfy the grosser wants of the animal man. The spiritual influence of the teachings of the Craft always makes itself felt in the lodge-room, but it loses too much of its power when the brethren separate. They then become strangers, except in isolated cases where personal friendships are formed, and which would exist apart from Freemasonry. Were it not for our blessed Charities we fear that the Craft in England would be but a skeleton, a cold and rigid formalism, enlivened occasionally by the social enjoyments of the table.

"Feast, and your halls are crowded;
Fast, and the world goes by;
Succeed and give, and it helps you to die;
But no Companion can help you to live.
There is room in the halls of pleasure
For a large and lordly train,
But one by one we must all file on
Through the narrow aisle of pain.

"Rejoice, and Companions will seek you;
Grieve, and they turn and go;
They want full measure of all your pleasures,
But they do not heed your woes.
Be glad, and your friends are many;
Be sad, and you lose them all;
There are none to decline your nectared wine;
But alone you must drink life's gall."

American Freemasonry having passed through the fiery furnace of opposition and persecution, seems to approach nearer to the spirit of equality, one of the principal bases on which the Order rests. Personal liberty, no doubt, sometimes degenerates into license, and public displays too often minister to personal ambition at the cost of dignity. Bro. Leonidus F. Pratt, Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons of the State of California, put the matter very clearly in his annual address, delivered to the Companions in April of last year. He said:—"We are coming rapidly to make much display and parade of our Masonic standing and handsome apparel. We are gradually drifting away from that simplicity and those practical features of Freemasonry which in our early experience so charmed and delighted us. We compromise our faith and our teachings, and we belittle our profession by too much Masonic display and too little Masonic labor." This love of display, to our mind, is the great danger of American Freemasonry. There is another evil less defensible and still more dangerous, which has the same root in the desire for novelty and show. America is overrun with so-called Masonic offshoots. Their name is legion, and their influence far from good. There are many men in this country who would undertake the command of the Channel Fleet who had never seen a war-ship in their lives, but we have few, if any, who would undertake to paint the Masonic lily, or gild Masonic gold. These pretensions seem to be the special property of our American brethren, who delight in isms, and who are ever hankering after something new. They want a little of our superfluous ballast, a little of our decorous refinement, just to keep them more faithful to their original inheritance. It is easy to condemn, still easier to give advice. We cannot do the former without giving some show of reason, the latter is generally offer-