

MASONIC LITERATURE.

Of late years the literature of Masonry has assumed large proportions. The ablest men in the Order, men of genius and learning, have devoted themselves to its investigation. Its principles and its system have become matters of study and research. The results of this labor and inquiry have been given, and still continue to be promulgated to the world at large, in the form of treatises on masonic science, and which have at length introduced the question among some of the fraternity whether masonic books and papers tended to the advancement of the institution.

Many well-meaning members of the fraternity object to the freedom with which masonic topics are discussed in the publications of the Order. Some imagine that the veil which should conceal our mysteries from the unhallowed gaze of the world at large, is too much withdrawn by the modern race of masonic writers, and that the esoteric doctrine which should be entrusted only to the craft, and received through oral instruction within the tiled recesses of the lodge, are thus improperly exposed to the public. In their imaginations the masonic press assumes the form of a great mechanical cowl, which is constantly striving to betray secrets, and upon which they would consequently be willing to inflict the penalties of masonic law.

But the great majority of the craft, undoubtedly equally as conscientious, but bolder and more expansive in their ideas, find no possible danger or impropriety in the discussion of any portion of masonic science or history, provided that the peculiar methods of recognition, and the ritual of initiation into the various degrees, remain unpublished. Many of these brethren view the masonic press as valuable help to assist and explain the mysteries into which they have been initiated, and without whose indispensable aid they would be unable to

understand with completeness the designs upon that trestle board by which every Mason is expected to erect his spiritual temple.

Since the last century the publications of Masonic authors and editors of the English masonic press have been distinguished for the freedom, as well as ability with which the most abstruse questions and principles of the Order have been discussed, and have greatly added to the literature of the Order. The science, the philosophy, the history of Masonry—these are the topics which need all the research of the student; and the more it is written and published, and the more they are brought before the minds of the Craft, and rendered accessible to the masonic student, the more will their value be increased, and the more will the institution of which they constitute the very foundation, be elevated.—Sunday Times.

FREEMASONRY AND TEMPLARS.

It is evident that there was some connection before the revival (in 1717) between Freemasonry and Templary, as they had a common origin from the Benedictine Order, who, separating into two branches from the cloisters in the 11th and 12th centuries, went forth into the world—the lay brothers employed as architects to repair and erect new ecclesiastical edifices to the "glory of God"—the other branch guiding and organizing the multitudes proceeding to the Holy Land to recover and guard the sacred places of Our Lord's nativity from the infidels—which gave rise to the religious and military order of the Templars, both branches promulgating the same doctrines—"the sacred mysteries." In Dryburgh Abbey there is an old tomb of the Fourteenth or Fifteenth century with a memorial, cross-hilted Templars sword, surrounded by a wreath of ivy, having a square and compasses on each side of the sword under the hilt, evidently referring to the connection of the old Templars and the builders.—Keystone.