

the direction of Masonic organizations, especially in cities, are quite likely to think it necessary to advance several candidates in one evening, besides providing for the transaction of business and giving an hour to the social features, which on no account ought to be neglected. The hours of the evening quickly pass away in carrying out this varied programme, and it is midnight or later before brethren separate and depart homeward. It is needful, we are told, that these late hours should be kept, for otherwise the fulness of Masonic work could not be done and the organization kept in an active, progressive condition. But is there this urgent need? Would it not be better to increase the number of meetings rather than crowd so much into one evening? In some cases might not the lodge be convened at an early hour, and the work of testing candidates, &c., gone through with in the presence of the officers and a few brethren able to attend at such an hour without inconvenience, so that considerable time might be saved afterwards in the progress of the ceremony? And then it would be a great gain if promptness could always have rule, preventing waiting at the beginning, or delays during the rendering of the work. Our thought is that it would be altogether better if the work and business of every Masonic organization could be so arranged as to close by ten o'clock. Then there would be time for a brief social occasion, and brethren would still reach their homes at a seasonable hour. Two hours are ample for a Masonic ceremony if its full impressiveness is to be brought out. There is apt to be dullness and exhaustion if this limit is much over passed in ordinary lodge work. Let the service be as elaborate as may be thought expedient, yet it can hardly be appreciated after more than two hours of earnest attention. The social occasions ought not to be abridged, but we hold it would be all the more

enjoyed, as well as more generally participated in, if entered upon somewhat earlier than is the practice in many localities.—*Freemasons' Repository*.

THE THIRD DEGREE.

The "natural work of Masonry is practical life," has been well said, and every degree in the Order illustrates this profound though not sufficiently appreciated truth. The ceremonies of the craft are not merely ceremonies; they are types of higher and grander mysteries, and teach with eloquence unsurpassed by any human code the duties that man owes to the Creator and his fellow-creatures. Our great moralist, Johnson, has left us an allegory, conceived in the true Masonic spirit, in his recital of the journey of Obidah, the son of Abensina—a comparison of human life to the journey of a day. He tells us that the traveller started "early in the morning, and pursued his journey through the plains of Hindostan with fresh hope," "incited by desire." Obidah "walked swiftly forward." "Thus he went on till the sun approaches its meridian, and the increasing heat preyed upon his strength," till tempted by the coolness of a shady grove, left the beaten track, and wasted in objectless wanderings the precious time at his disposal.

But darkness soon approached, and the foolish traveller was fain to retrace his steps, while the "winds roared, and the torrents tumbled down the hills." Finally, however, he finds a place of shelter and refuge in the cottage of a hermit by whom he is entertained, and to whom he relates the occurrences of his journey. The hermit bids him remember that life itself is but the journey of a day. "We rise in the morning of youth, full of vigor and full of expectation; we set forward with spirit and hope, with gaiety and diligence, and travel on awhile in the straight road of