

FOREIGN MEMORANDA.

—
CALIFORNIA.

The Anniversary of Washington's birthday was celebrated in the city of San Francisco, on Thursday, 22nd February, by the laying of the corner stone of the new City Hall and Law Courts, with very imposing Masonic ceremonies by the Grand Lodge of California. About 3000 members of the Craft were present, and about 40,000 spectators were on the ground.

The Grand Master, Hon. Leonidas E. Pratt, delivered the following address.

Mr. Chairman and Fellow-Citizens:—The Freemasons of to-day are the heirs and representatives of the practical builders of the olden time. They were operative—we are speculative. Venerable with age and enriched by the clustering memories of their labors and achievements, their fame and their art alike have come down to us through the unbroken continuity of many centuries. From a period anterior to the erection of the grand old edifices which still survive to mark both the Orders and the progress of architecture, from the time when Masonry was an operative science purely, we have been accustomed to lay the foundation stones of public edifices; not, however, without discrimination, but such only as were to be devoted to those purposes calculated to advance the general welfare of society.

We have laid the foundation stones of your Governmental buildings; and it was fit and proper that we should perform that service, not only because we are the representatives of the earliest architects and builders, but because Masonry inculcates loyalty to government, obedience to the laws, and devotion to the peace and good order of society.

We have laid the foundation stones of your educational institutions. It was right and proper that we should render that service also, for it is one of the great purposes of Freemasonry to impart knowledge and understanding. She teaches her children to be lovers of the arts and sciences, and "more light" is the constant demand and aspiration at every stage of Masonic progress.

We have laid the foundation stones of your public asylums—those edifices which spring from the heart-throbs of common humanity; the homes where the unhappy and afflicted wards of society, the mute, the deaf, the insane, the aged, the weary and the indigent, repose in peace and comfort on the charities of the Common-wealth or of individuals. It was appropriate, indeed, that we should do this, for Masonry teaches with special emphasis the great lessons of charity, benevolence, and brotherly love.

But to-day, in the grand and comprehensive purposes to which this edifice is to be devoted, are combined all the reasons which conspire to render it more fitting and appropriate that we should lay this corner-stone with all the ancient rites and ceremonies of our venerable Order.

On this spot shall stand an edifice devoted to Justice, Order and good Government; and within its walls and beneath its lofty dome, through ages let us trust, shall be administered the vast and complicated interests of the queenly city, where Orient and Occident, under the inspiration of a nobler and progressive civilization, and reaching out to each other over continents and across seas, clasp hands to-day in fraternal grasp. This building is not for a year, a decade, or an age even, but it is for all the marshaled centuries which are coming forward to meet us from the bosom of the vast and illimitable future.

How great the magnitude of the interests to be here considered and adjusted when the developments of time shall have converted the infancy of to-day into the manhood of a century hence, human foresight may not essay to comprehend. For your noble State and thriving city, the future is filled and overflowing with marvelous promises. The land itself is nature's masterpiece—reserved to be the last and fairest empire of all time. If we were as faithful in its development as nature has been prodigal in its endowment, the realities of a not distant future will surpass the wildest visions of the present. Here shall gather people of every land, clime and condition; the young, the active, the vigorous shall come in pursuit of new enterprises and new