

Masonry moves, and the result is that it never seems to be moving at all. All the changes in its past history were well-nigh imperceptible. From being builders of material temples to becoming builders of spiritual temples, Freemasons glided along without a jar or discord. Men who were *not* operative Masons were gradually admitted, until finally they outnumbered the operatives, and the craft no longer was distinguished by wielding the Plumb, the Level and the Square, the Twenty-four inch Gauge and the Gavel, as implements of labor, but came to use them as symbols only, for more noble and glorious purposes than they were used by their famous progenitors. This advancement was actual, yet it was scarcely noticeable, and it resulted in the highest advantage to the fraternity. As the immaterial or spiritual is higher than the material or natural, so is speculative Masonry higher than operative Masonry.

The initiate, early in his career, learns that there is possible advancement for him in Masonry. Once, in the history of the craft, the majority of its members were either Apprentices or Fellows, and but few were Master Masons; now all may speedily, sometimes too speedily, become Master Masons. In a month's time the newly-initiated brother finds that he can be "advanced;" and in another month's time "further advanced." In six months' time (in Pennsylvania) he can be "still further advanced," by being received into the chapter, and there learning what, one hundred and fifty years ago, he might have learned in the lodge, but which, since the excision and relegation of a part of the mysteries of the lodge to the chapter, he must seek now in the chapter. Such advancement of a brother in Freemasonry is apparent, it is objective and tangible; and yet is it always in truth real advancement? Or is it only formal? Forms and ceremonies are necessary to constitute advancement, but if they be

empty forms to the initiate, he is not advanced a jot. He must learn the substance under these forms, he must comprehend their meaning, he must look through the sign and see the thing signified. This brings us to the consideration of what is, after all, the real gist of advancement in Freemasonry.

All the forms and ceremonies of Freemasonry are shells, every one covering a kernel. This kernel is always some vital truth, practical truth, interesting truth, Masonic truth. It is what Masonry exists for, what it teaches, what has kept it alive through the centuries. Hollow forms could not keep it alive a year. Indeed, no single feature of its wonderful composite could ensure its perpetuity. It is a beautiful system, of morality, of instruction, of entertainment, all combined. Suppose a brother "goes it strong" on its morality alone, or its instinctive features alone, or its conviviality alone, he is rightly judged to be one-sided, cranky, not appreciating the fullness of Masonry. He advances backward. He gives up the whole and accepts a part. All of us may value some one feature more than another—that is, some one of these may minister to us more benefit or pleasure than another, but we do not ignore the rest. The young brother, and some who are older, never advance far in Masonry because they mistakenly think they see through it at the beginning. You can never see through it. Its capacity to instruct and delight the thinking mind is endless. You cannot outgrow it. So long as you reflect upon what you see enacted in the lodge, chapter or commandery; so long as you study, with the aids which literature gives you, the hidden meaning of all Masonic forms and ceremonies; so long as you "further advance" in the knowledge of what Masonry was and is; so long as you delve in the mines of learning which the cultured brethren of past and present times have opened, and