

often fail, as it appears to us, in another feature of true brotherly love, kindness and fairness to others. How often, for instance, do we see in Masonic literature, the most remarkable evidence of a thoroughly non-Masonic spirit in the unbrotherly letter and the hostile incrimination. How frequently do we note that the profession of brotherhood is only a cloak for much of personal animosity, for feelings of active antagonism and relentless opposition. Rivalries and jostlings for place or influence will ever arise and abound in all earthly institutions; and Freemasonry does not profess, as it cannot expect to be exempt from the frailties of humanity. But yet we might have anticipated, from our own first principles, that if such all but inevitable tendencies were developed in our fraternity, they would be somewhat checked and mitigated by the benign teaching and holy morality of our benevolent Order. Yet, alas! not so! There are always some little men who will be jealous of their neighbors; there are ever some inferior minds who will begrudge to talent its rightful sway, and to high character its well-earned reputation. And if, in addition to this, we call to mind that men will not always "run straight" here: that there are those who are neither very creditable members of society, nor very scrupulous citizens of the world, who are flippant in speech, vulgar in sentiment, and lax in morals, we must concede, we fear, that, whether as men or as Freemasons, brotherly love cannot be fully appreciated, and, above all, perfectly realized by very many of us all in our transactions through life, in our conversation in the world. Were we to attempt to defend Freemasonry as perfect, and only made up of those who fully acted up to what they professed, we should be doing more harm than good. We write to improve as well as to inform, to amend as well as to elucidate. We will therefore attempt to sketch out one or two defects in our higher spiritual practice of brotherly love, and to point out, if most imperfectly, what we believe to be the true teaching of our own incomparable formularies, and of the great and ennobling principle of fraternal goodwill in its highest of all representations and characteristics. We may some of us remember how an inspired writer has told us that though we may give all our goods to feed the poor, yet if we "have not charity" we are, after all, really as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." If then we wish to cultivate the highest and truest spirit of brotherly love, ours must be a surrender of all that is mean, and low, and base, and treacherous, and unworthy in our intercourse with our fellow creatures, above all with our brother Masons. We must not think that in order to carry a point, or gain an end, we may strain the moral law, on this side or that. If we fancy that we can rise on the fall of others, if we believe that some of our brethren are in our way, if prompted by ambition or tempted by interest, we are given to think that all is fair, if only we succeed, we shall soon over-step the narrow boundary line which divides truth from falsehood, honor from dishonor, treachery from fair dealing, and right from wrong. So too, again, brotherly love bids us always to be most chary of believing any reports to their disfavor or discredit. There are those who have an innate love for gossip, of scandal, of detraction which nothing can weaken or remove. To them the idle tale of a brother's folly, for we are all mortal, to them the sadder story of a brother's disgrace, are literally a source of actual enjoyment. They listen with greediness, they retail with alacrity. It matters to them nothing, what feelings they hurt, what wounds they inflict, what tender hearts they lacerate. "Dame rumor," for them is no "idle jade," but a lady of the highest reputation. Unlike the good old parson, whom Præd paints for us in such pleasant verse, who did not "count all scandal fair, although he had a taste for joking," they are deeply impressed with Father Bartolo's theory of the excellency and expediency, nay, of the necessity, of "La Colomnie." And thus it comes to pass, that when in Freemasonry we look for brotherly love amidst our professed declarations, the moment we dive beneath the surface—we find too often as in most of the things of this world, that lip-verbiage is one thing, that heart-truth is another. Great and good as Freemasonry is, it wants from time to time the reminder that on it, as on all other human institutions, are inscribed in indelible letters, these two sad little words, "Frailty and Decay." If we are sincere in our professions, as many of us are, if we love Freemasonry for its own inherent graces, and not for the glamour of its idle show, or high name, or stately rank, or festive hilarity, or glittering decorations, we shall rejoice to be at once again reminded of our higher duties, and warned against passing imperfections. The truest of all philosophers is he who seeks not to please but to instruct, not to gratify but to edify, and he is the soundest of Masonic teachers, in our humble opinion, who does not "daub the wall with untempered mortar," but speaks out clearly, freely, manfully, honestly, face to face, and heart to heart, for the welfare of our common Order, and the elevation of an honorable brotherhood.—*London Freemason.*

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In London alone there are 213 lodges of Freemasons, and 66 Chapters of R. A. Masons.