

current? and if not in every sense the same as we may interpretate were they not in substance the same? If any differences are noticeable they certainly are not worthy of any weighty consideration, except by such as may wish to make them subjects of argument. If such views are and have been common to man we can not claim as members of our own or any secret society, that we are in a religious sense making any advancement, or stamping any views peculiar to our several institutions that in any sense may advance other than their social or moral welfare. Considering the nature of Freemasonry, whose tenets in these respects are and have been of such a nature as to offer no barrier to admission to the order, it can safely be said that the simplest of all fundamental truths embraced in morality, are symbolically taught. Other societies follow in the same style with more or less success. As Masons, we imagine we may justly claim superiority in many considerations, and in justice to other kindred societies we admit that they too can not be censured for setting up their respective claims. Admitted then that "morality and fraternity" are the essentials not alone of Freemasonry, but of other sister societies, what impression does the ritualistic teaching have other than to confirm beliefs and maxims early inculcated. We know of no instance wherein a Freemason, as such, was a better citizen than before initiation, or do we know one whose Christian life dated with his Masonic career. I, on the contrary, can recall many instances wherein Masonry, instead of upholding a good name, has debased by drink many choice friends, and been the indirect means of their utter ruin. I have seen some of the best men that our vicinity produces as members of our fraternity, and their noble characters have added a hold to Masonry, which last mentioned was vulgarly assumed to be the cause of such virtues as the typical members pos-

sessed. They are the ones who keep aglow the everlasting fires on our altars.

It is needless to state that speculative Masonry teaches everything necessary for good citizenship and morality, but when I notice in report of transactions of Grand Lodge (page 224) 1886, that a motion relating to the non-permission of liquors of an intoxicating nature in any room adjoining a lodge, &c., was considered out of order and referred to the next annual communication, it would appear that the motion, although laid over for session 1886, would never pass. Our ancient brethren were wont to hold their mystic meetings in taverns, and Burns affords us, in his "Invitation to a Medical Gentleman," an illustration of what was anticipated:

"To hold our grand procession
To get a blade o' Johnny's morals
And taste a snatch o' Manson's barrels,
I' the way of our profession."

Burns, in his Masonic relics, except "The Sons of Old Killie," never fails to mention *that stimulant*, which in his "Holy Fair" he says "gies us mair than either school or college." In the old "Tun Tavern," Philadelphia, the first lodge in America was held, but no Burns has left a poem to commemorate the day. But it is needless to state "how they (the members) crowded to the yill when they were a' dismist." It may be added that at the "Revival" lodges assembled at taverns in metropolitan cities, and so continued to assemble for many years, as records of the various British and colonial lodges testify.

"Old times are changed, old manners gone," and we have improved (?) in civilization. for we are privileged to have in our larder the *educator* mentioned by Burns; and "which name but craftsmen ever saw."

Since commencing this article I have become acquainted and have had a lengthy conversation with two Master Masons, one a minister, the other a barrister. The former a mem-