

THE MASONIC EMBLEMS.

It cannot be denied by those who have passed through the veils that the very progress of Masons. in their journey from darkness to light, is regulated at every point and stopping place by some incident or illustration familiar to them, as readers of God's inspired volume.

The ladder which Jacob saw has been adopted by us, the three principal rounds of which are Faith, Hope, and Charity; and our whole course and progress are regulated by that beautiful implement which is to mark the degrees by which we are to ascend from our state of ignorance and indifference to the highest intelligence, to the brightest honors, and to the highest points of virtue and usefulness in Freemasonry.

There is not an emblem, not a badge, not a sign nor signal, not an implement of our Craft—there is nothing connected with our Heaven-ordained Brotherhood which is not designed either to teach a moral lesson, to inculcate some truth, to vindicate and establish some virtue, to propagate some righteous principle of humanity, to relieve the sufferings of our kind, or to scatter light and knowledge among the races who fell with Adam, and by whose fall we have inherited sin and death, and all the evils that infest the earth, and has transformed our Garden of Eden into a theatre of war, of treasons, of stratagems, aye, of rash rebellion against the law of nature and the commands of the Most High.

Every piece of furniture in one of our lodges, implement or instrument of work, every figure on the checkered floor, everything the eye can behold, impresses—or ought to do so—the mind with some truth, some principle, some moral or religious sentiment, or some precept of humanity.

The square which is used by all Masons, the level and the plumb, which likewise are found in every region, and in every lodge where Masonry has established its beneficent influence, teach such lessons of morality, virtue, and religion, as must command the respect of all regulated minds. The square enjoins morality, the plumb rectitude of conduct, and the level admonishes us that we are all equal.

In a word, the level, with the square and plumb, constitute the immovable jewels of a lodge, impress us that all men are equal by birth; that talent, that probity, and that the noble exercise of the gifts with which we have been endowed by the Creator, alone make the difference between the men of this or any other generation of the sons of Adam. The working tools of the Society alone should be quite enough to win the esteem of every man who has a right appreciation of the duties, and the obligations, and the wants of life. There is scarcely an instrument belonging to the Fraternity that does not inculcate some token of industry, and that does not imprint on the mind the importance and necessity of labor. They not only enforce the lesson spoken of above, that all men are equal, and are actually equal by nature, but they impress the other more important one, that men must labor, and must not be ashamed of toil.

The apron which Masons wear, besides being an emblem of innocence, is the sign of industry, and all the badges and implements of our Craft, impart two ideas most essential to be perceived, those of labor and equality. The curse pronounced upon Adam (and consequently upon his posterity) was, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return unto the ground." And the rites, mysteries, ceremonies, and observances of Freemasonry recognize this stern command. The very pillars of a lodge represent wisdom to devise, strength to support, and beauty to adorn.

—*Bro. Tisdal, in the Scotsman.*

THE MYSTIC ORDER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SALAD FOR THE SOLITARY AND THE SOCIAL," ETC.

THE approaching dedication of the grand Masonic Temple at New York, which is to take place next June, is our apology, if any be needed, for presenting a brief sketch of the rise, progress, and present condition of this world-renowned fraternity. Although the popular idea of Freemasonry is, or used to be, that of a secret conclave, having entrenched itself with mysterious and terrible rites and ceremonies, and bound together by fearful oaths and fiery ordeals; yet, a better acquaintance with the genius of the institution, is said to reveal so much to commend, as to leave comparatively little against which exception might be taken. True, it is environed with profound mystery, and this is by some urged—justly or unjustly—as an objection against it; yet, as there is otherwise so much of interest connected with the Order, we will not disenchant the inquisitive reader by divulging any of its occult secrets, but glance at some of its works and results, that have become historic. Like almost every other influential institution, Masonry has been the object alike of extravagant encomium by its friends, and unmerited obloquy by its opponents. Without attempting to reconcile these dividing