

of facts, but more frequently by silence. Now, a brother arose and said he had something "to offer for the good of Masonry, and this lodge in particular." A brother with his family, on their way to the farther West, the husband, being taken violently ill, had stopped the previous day in a shanty out about a mile on the Fleming road. To-day the brother had died, but not before he had made himself known as a member of the Universal Brotherhood. The family were left with absolutely nothing, except a worthless team and waggon, and a few household goods of about an equal value. The funeral would be on the morrow, when he hoped to see every member of the lodge in procession.

"Are the wants of the family supplied for the night?" asked a brother.

"They have had their supper. They have clothing for their beds, so they will not suffer, but the breakfast, and all thereafter, is unprovided for."

A member moved that a committee of one, to supply the necessities of the family, be appointed, and that he proceed in the fulfillment of his duties forthwith.

The motion was duly seconded and when put, was adopted by an unanimous vote. Bro. Crary was appointed, and accepted the trust. The duties of his office were by no means a sinecure. The storm which had broken over that locality since the opening of the lodge, was then at its height and raged with great fury. There were no lamps on the streets over which he had to pass in going to the shanty where the recipients of his favors were to be found; the walks were rough and deep with mud in many places, and a darkness as that of Egypt in the days of Moses, enveloped the country.

Bro. Bentley, who had been provident, or prophet enough to foresee the storm, had brought his waterproof cloak along. This he pressed upon the committee, who had no overcoat, and took shelter under the umbrella of a brother who was going his way.

The lodge was closed, after an earnest appeal had been made by the presiding officer for all to attend the funeral of the deceased stranger, and the members bidding each other "good night," dispersed to their homes. Bro. Crary, who had the task of visiting the house of death allotted to him, addressed himself to the performance of that duty. He proceeded to the nearest family grocery store and filled a sack with such articles as he judged would be most acceptable to the bereaved ones, and wended his weary way through rain and darkness towards the stranger household.

SCENE THIRD.

"Oh, Heavenly Father, aid thou and assist the widow and fatherless in this hour of trial and extremity. Reconcile them to Thy will, and if it be possible let them see the hand of Thy love even in this terrible bereavement."

As the Masonic committee drew near the hovel that served as a shelter to the bereaved family, he heard the voice of supplication and prayer, and looking in through an open window, open because there was no means of closing it, the words above written were pronounced in a sobbing, heart-broken tone, as if the aid asked had already been denied. Tarrying until the voice stopped or was resolved into convulsive sobs, he rapped lightly upon the frail door. It was immediately opened by the widowed mother, and Bro. Crary entered.

On a cot laid the body of the dead man. a tea-kettle sat in the corner of a wide fireplace, a chest, on which were placed a few dishes occupied one side of the room, while in a corner reclined on a well worn mattress, the three children, forgetting for a time their sorrows and sufferings. A feeble candle shed its faint rays over the scene and contributed to its ghastly appearance.

Enough has already been revealed to account for the condition of the family, and it is not necessary that we follow their history further. Their present and immediate wants were supplied, and when the Masonic committee left on that stormy night, a peace that the stricken ones had deemed impossible to them, brooded over the scene. A neighbor woman had been procured to watch with the wife through the night, and kind and reliable friends had pledged their sympathy and attention. Though bereaved, they were not forgotten of friends; though afflicted, they were not forsaken.

SCENE FOURTH.

The morning came bright and beautiful. The sun shone on hut and palace, as the rain had before fallen on the evil and the good. At the hour appointed, the brethren assembled in the lodge, arrayed themselves in the expressive clothing of the Order, and went to the house of death. Encouraged by this example, many of the townspeople turned out and made a part of the congregation. Among these was the lady whose conversation we have given in the first of these sketches—Mrs. Crary.

It would be perhaps too strong language to say that she would not have been present, had she not seen that Masonry had made it popular to attend the funeral of a stranger, but she certainly would not have attended had she not been desirous of seeing the