

and passed out of existence, it alone remained in its quiet and solid character as the exponent of human fraternities.

"Its answer is simple and comprehensive. It is in full sympathy with the highest aspirations of mankind in all that relates to the improvement and elevation of human society. It is not confined to the charity of moneyed assistance, but encompasses that higher and grander charity of opinion and judgment. It is not confined to the inculcation of fraternal love, but leads its novitiates into the sublime paths of search for the truth. It not only recognizes and teaches, through His works, the existence and attributes of God, but, being composed of members having human impulses, it teaches the purest lessons of morality, without which there is no true religion. Without being a total abstinence society, it realizes the necessity of temperance in all things in speech, in acts, in opinions, in resistance to wrong, in advancing self-interests, in daily work, in sleep, and in eating as well as drinking. It endeavors to impress upon the mind of its initiates at their first instruction the safe-guard of prudence in all things; teaching them by emblems the most expressive, the importance of upright walk and conversation, governing their entire life by the principles of exact and undeviating justice. It appreciates the impossibility of such an improved, if not perfect manhood, without also advancing with the age in its developement of educated thought, and calls the attention of the initiate to the ennobling studies of the liberal arts and sciences. To these lessons, so great and so important, it adds the absorbing problem and demonstration of the immortality of the soul and its relationship to its author, the Great Architect of the Universe.

"It is not, and cannot, be expected that all who enter its mysterious portals shall fully comprehend this immense scope of study and practice, but that is no fault of the Institution, but due to the frailty of human nature; and the most that can be expected is that it will make men wiser and better than it found them. Even this it cannot do by power of inspiration, but alone by close attendance, study and reflection. If a lodge accepts a candidate whose mental structure is deficient, or who by nature possesses none of the higher and holier aspirations of heart and soul, or who inherits a base and low disposition, it has made a mistake for which it cannot always be justly held responsible. It often has to accept men whom it has not personally known for years, hence its errors of acceptance are not to be wondered at, when we daily witness the errors committed by men and women in the knowledge of each other's character and disposition, even after years of intimacy; also by men of long acquaintanceship forming the most unfortunate business co-partnerships. Even the church, with all its sacred surroundings, and with all its impressive sacraments, following the most earnest declarations of penitence and reform, has been deceived and disappointed, not excepting its most honored and trusted priests. Such has been, and will always be, the case as long as man is human. Notwithstanding all this, Freemasonry has stood through its entire history a remarkable association of faithful and moral citizens in all lands and among all men.

"Its lodge-rooms afford a quiet retreat from the turmoils and prejudices of daily life, and they are capable of being used for the highest purposes of intellectual improvement. If a lodge has no library, at least some of its members have a collection, which, however small, contains works from which selections may be made and read, when there is no ritualistic work to occupy the spare hour after regular business is transacted. Readings and lectures need not necessarily be confined to strictly Masonic questions, but topics of scientific interest, of social or artistic culture, or of agriculture, history, geography,