

of course, there are many amateur musicians whose abilities, be they vocal or instrumental, will compare well with the abilities of the professional artist. But they are indicative of a desire on the part of those who contribute them to promote the general enjoyment, while with the performances of the trained singer or instrumental artist, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they afford a real pleasure to the brethren present. Why then should attempts be made to limit the musical programme which so desirably constitutes a part of the proceedings of our lodge meetings, on the score that it involves a needless expense to have the services of professionals engaged, and a considerable waste of time?

Again, there are other grounds on which the retention of music should be advocated. It is usual at our gatherings to have a certain list of toasts, and the list is almost invariably the same, no matter what the occasion may be which has called us together. Thus we begin with what are known as the loyal and Masonic toasts, and these are followed by similar honors paid to the Worshipful Master, the Past Masters, the Masonic charitable institutions, the visitors, the officers of the lodge, etc. It is impossible for even the most eloquent of speakers to impart anything of novelty into the speeches in which they severally introduce or acknowledge these compliments.—There may be local or other circumstances which occasionally justify a departure from the ordinary phraseology employed, but these seldom present themselves; and what is an unfortunate W. M. to do in submitting the same toasts at successive meetings but address his audience in set terms in behalf of the several propositions he brings forward? What, for instance, can he say of the Past Masters, as a rule, than that they are a capable body of men, who fully deserve the honors that have been conferred upon them, and that he has

derived great benefit from their loyal advice and assistance? What can he do more in proposing "The Visitors" than extend to them a hearty welcome? And what can these do more than express their sense of the hospitality they have received? or the Past Masters than thank the W. M. for his appreciation of their services? Of course the language that is used is capable of being varied on occasion; but it is impossible to speak of a stereotyped subject in other than stereotyped terms, albeit the terms themselves may be both graceful and sincere. Then it is not every one who can play the part of orator—even though after-dinner oratory may not, as a rule, be of very much account. Some men break down from extreme nervousness, others are verbose, others inconsequential, and others egotistical or didactic. When music is introduced between the speeches, the audience finds immense relief from the monotony of the speech-making, and the separation of the brethren "in peace and harmony" very truthfully describes the close of a Masonic gathering.

Some of course will rejoine that, while these arguments may be satisfactory enough in the case of amateur singing, they will not apply to lodges which on important occasions secure the services of professional singers, and that, too, at considerable outlay. A set banquet, they say, is costly enough in all conscience without incurring the further expense of a set concert. But we have yet to learn that a Master is to be blamed for sanctioning or incurring an expenditure which he knows is well within the compass of his means. It is not the man of large fortune who is to be condemned for spending freely of his superfluous moneys, but the man who pinches or impoverishes himself in order to make a display. There are lodges which could well afford to have a set concert by professional artists at every one of their meetings, and there are others which, even with the