

it is the simple experience of many a worthy brother, who under the ægis of our order has passed from darkness into light. Such deeds of kindness seldom meet the public eye, or gratify the public ear, but they are being daily registered in imperishable characters in the records of the Grand Lodge above.

It is sometimes said that Masonry is selfish, that masons confine their benefactions to themselves. Were this true to the fullest extent, it would be no serious imputation; for all will admit that our charities or benefits must be limited by our resources, and it is in no wise derogatory to the masonic body if their "charity begins at home." Freemasonry, undoubtedly, gives the first place in its regard and benefactions to its own children, but its principle is that of unrestricted philanthropy: and, beyond its pale, many a heart has been made to throb with reviving hope, and many an eye to sparkle with joy by its timely aid. The true Mason's ear, while it is peculiarly alert to catch the faintest cry of distress that is rung from a brother's heart, is never closed to that cry from whatever quarter it may come. The spirit which animates our order, inspiring all its faithful members and controlling all their acts, is the spirit of love—love deep as the fatherhood of God and wide as the brotherhood of man.

It is not only to each other, therefore, that we are to exercise the virtues of charity and *forbearance* (for the former includes the latter), but to all mankind, to all who need our sympathy, our kindness, and our assistance. And in a world so suffering as this, we are never at a loss to find an ample field for the exercises of those graces. In every corner of our cities, towns and villages we see honest poverty struggling with the most adverse circumstances. Everywhere we tread in the midst of indescribable misery, everywhere open before us the dwellings of hungry poverty, where oppressed and suffering virtue hides herself and weeps. The field for the exercise of our charity is unlimited, and it is the special glory of masons that they belong to an institution which is as widespread as the evils which it seeks to remedy.

There is another distinguishing feature of our Order, which although I have alluded to in former addresses, I cannot pass over on the present occasion. It is a glorious part of the mission of Freemasonry to seek to promote a true spirit of *brotherly kindness* among all ranks and conditions of men. Knowing no distinction but that of *merit*, and including in her fold men of all classes and creeds, she frowns upon all sectional and sectarian differences, and says to the angry disputants in politics or religion—"Sirs, ye are brethren!" May I be permitted to repeat on this point words which I addressed to the Grand Lodge four years ago, and to which recent events have supplied a sad and striking commentary?

Freemasonry has ample work to do in all States and nations in hastening the brotherhood of man. In this Canada of ours there is sufficient need that it should spread the cement of brotherly love to counteract the sectional, political and sectarian tendencies to alienation and strife. In the religious world even, I am sorry to say, there is need of masonic labor to realize the unity for which every true worshipper of the great Jehovah ever hopes and prays. It ought not so to be, but it is true that in the Masonic circle there is a tie of brotherhood which makes religious men more truly fraternal, and not merely to express more of that union which is so essential to religious joy and usefulness than they are wont to have outside that circle. And surely if ever age or country has need of all the forces that can be made available for so great a result, our young Dominion in this, the hour

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