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BENEVOLENT WITHOUT OSTENTATION.

In the estimation of many Freemasons, Masonry is nothing if not charitable. Charity is both the corner-stone and cap-stone, the alpha and omega of the fraternity. Its treasury exists for the sole purpose of aiding the distressed, and to use it otherwise would be to misuse it. This is an extreme view, but its foundation is laid in truth and justice. The corner-stone of Freemasonry is charity, but its cap-stone is not—charity is the foundation, but not the super-structure, of our institution. Freemasonry is a composite, a many-sided society, an out-growth of the ages. There is nothing narrow about it. First of all it is charitable, but after that it is much besides. It is supported by three columns, Wisdom, Strength and Beauty—the Wisdom of Truth, the Strength of Charity, the Beauty of Brotherly Love. Its Truth is God's truth, revealed truth, the truth we find in the First Great Light in Masonry. Its Charity is its own charity, dealt out not by measure, but with the freeness and fullness of a brother's love. Its Beauty is likewise emphatically its own—the beauty of fraternity, of complete sympathy, of sincere friendship, of mutual and convivial enjoyment. We have to consider now, however, only its strength of charity.

Masonic charity embraces the ideas both of benevolence and beneficence—it wishes well to its brethren, and

it does well for them. It suits the action to the word. It does not say to the distressed, "Be ye fed, or be ye clothed," but it feeds the hungry and clothes the naked. It is nothing if not practical. The beautiful sentiments which are aired by Masonic orators on St. John's Day, are exemplified within the tyled lodge. No deserving brother is sent empty away. The charity of Masonry is personal. It never deals with masses, but with individuals. It benefits hosts of individuals, who may have suffered from the same cause, at the same time, but it does for each one in turn, on his own merits—it is a personal gift. There is nothing mechanical about it. If it errs at all, it is in relying too much on the individual, and taking much that he says to be absolute verity. Freemasons are taught to trust each other, and the brother who is well-to-do, does not believe that his unfortunate brother has forgotten to tell the truth.

We know the nature of much of the so-called charity of the world. It may be liberal, but it too often suggests the giver. Ostentation is the chief characteristic of profane charity. Does the fashionable world wish to contribute to a benevolent object, it adopts as a means a charity ball. In other words, it enjoys itself first, and gives to the poor afterwards. Not so with Masonry. Not that it is entirely forgetful of itself, but it