

history of the Institution, may be obtained by any one of moderate means and abilities, with no appreciable loss of time by the perusal of some first-class Masonic magazine.

In the article of Dr. Oliver, which we have already cited, he attributes the eager curiosity respecting the science of Freemasonry which then prevailed in England, and its influence on the morals of society, to the circulation of the *Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, a work commenced in 1834, and which continued for nearly thirty years, to diffuse important instruction among the English Craft.

That work was followed in this country by many magazines, none of which were its equals in the tone of literary excellence. And it cannot be denied that if the Craft of America, at this day, are more intelligent, are better acquainted with the principles of the Institution, and more capable of appreciating its true character, than were their predecessors half a century ago, the fact is to be almost solely attributed to the elevating influences exerted by the Masonic press.

To the editors of Masonic journals in this country, the Craft are indebted for the elevated position that Speculative Masonry has attained. To these editors they are indebted for almost all that they know of Masonic literature or science, or jurisprudence, or history. The debt has never been adequately paid. The editors have diffused light and the Craft have received it, but very few have thought of the duty of replenishing with oil the lamp which gives the light. The editor gets cold commendation, but no increasing subscription list. *Virtus laudatur et alget*. Virtue is praised, says the Roman poet, and it freezes.

Those who write for the improvement and instruction of the Masonic public get no substantial reward for their labor, and one by one, disheartened and disgusted, they abandon the vineyard which produces fruit for others but none for themselves.

Now this is the glory and the shame of Masonry.

It is its glory that it has a noble literature, whose tendencies are all all of the most elevating nature, and that there are scholars who labor incessantly, "without hope of fee or reward," to disseminate this literature among these brethren.

It is its shame that not one Mason in ten reads a Masonic book or subscribes to a Masonic journal; that there are so many who are content to expend their money on Masonic degrees and Masonic jewels, but not a cent on Masonic education.

The result is that Masonic magazines, which are the sources of Masonic knowledge, are established, languish for a few years, or perhaps months only, and "languishing, die." The indifference of the Craft puts out the light, and they contentedly live on in ignorance.

If the Masons of Massachusetts did not actually kill the *New England Freemason*, they suffered it to die for want of their patronage. To them we commend the words of Milton:

"As good almost kill a man as kill a good book; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself."

We say in conclusion, that there is a practical feature in this question of the treatment of Masonic journalism that must be met and fairly considered.

It is admitted that to Masonic journals are the Craft mainly indebted for the elevated position that the Order now maintains, as a system of philosophy. Then it follows, that without these journals, that elevated position cannot be long maintained.

Now let it be remembered that authors, however unselfish they may desire to be, are after all, only men. But men fight with the hope of victory,—they labor only with the expectation of reward.

When then, the conductors of Masonic journals find defeat on every attempt to diffuse information, and loss accruing for all their work, the time must inevitably come when competent writers will withdraw from the field of Masonic literature.

When the sun withdraws from the sky there is darkness over the earth. Let the Mason who looks with apathy upon the death, year by year, of Masonic journals, from the want of patronage, reflect what must be the result upon the Order when the last too trusting scholar shall weary of the struggle against the tide of ignorance and indifference, and when Masonic journalism shall cease to exist.

A widely extended association without an organ—six hundred thousand disciples without a teacher! To contend after that, that there is anything in Speculative Masonry worthy of the attention of intelligent men, will be absurd.

Then will we see indeed the real glory and shame of Freemasonry. A noble, scientific institution,—an unequalled system of moral philosophy and practical ethics, degraded to the level of a social club by the unwillingness of its own membes to maintain its true character.

It is the solemn duty of every Mason to magnify the glory and to extinguish the shame.—*Voice of Masonry*.

MARIE THERESA, in 1764, did strictly forbid Freemasonry in Austria, because the Grand Master declined to initiate her or communicate our secrets.