

our mode of rendering aid to those in need is, that we render the same without the least ostentation; in fact, we studiously avoid its becoming known that we have given any aid, strictly adhering to the Biblical advice, not to let the right hand know what the left hand doeth.

We, my brethren, know that in our society certain ceremonies are performed, certain signs, tokens and words of recognition are used; but we also know that he who is only acquainted with these ceremonies, and possesses only those signs, tokens and words, without having studied and practiced the real secrets of Freemasonry, yet imagines that he is conversant with the science of Freemasonry, takes the shadow for the substance, but does not catch the spirit of our noble institution.

And for this reason it has been correctly said that the most tattling man who is a Mason, keeps that one secret. There is no risk of him. Enrage, punish or expel him, he never tells. If he talks in his sleep, it is not about the secrets of Masonry. Bribe him in his wants, tempt him in his pleasures, threaten or torture him—he is a martyr, but he never tells.

You are aware, my brethren, that the object of meeting in a Masonic Lodge is not exclusively for the purpose of study and of instruction in our most important duties towards the Grand Architect of the Universe, towards our fellow men, and towards ourselves, and of practising the same; but that the object of meeting in a Masonic Lodge is of a two-fold nature: that we also meet for social intercourse, for a mutual interchange of fraternal feelings, for relaxation, for innocent enjoyment and mirth, after first having performed our solemn and important duties for which we assembled. We all fully appreciate that homely old saying, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Therefore we carefully avoid committing that error; we are occasionally called off from labor to refreshment,

and, when need is, again from refreshment to labor, and we enjoy and profit by both.

And where, I would ask, can there be any gathering of men which affords greater enjoyment than the brethren of a Masonic Lodge receive during the hour of refreshment? We have all been at many other social gatherings as well as at Masonic tables of refreshment, but nowhere is real innocent mirth, social enjoyment and pleasure more and better enjoyed than among the brethren of the mystic tie. And what is it that produces the same? It is not in the greater delicacy of the viands, nor in the superiority of the wines; these other assemblies can and do procure as good as our table furnishes them. It is, brethren, in the congeniality of feeling that mutually exists amongst us, by which we are knit together in close ties, cemented by a chain of most sincere and disinterested affection, each and all being determined to give and receive pleasure, to be happy ourselves and a source of happiness to others. By this means, a lodge of true-hearted brethren, during the hours of relaxation and refreshment, is a region of peace, harmony and contentment, and the abode of good temper, of unmixed and innocent mirth and enjoyment.

May the day never come when the custom of such social gatherings of Brother Masons shall be abolished.

Refreshments at a social table after lodge meetings is as ancient a custom among Freemasons as any other praiseworthy custom which obtained among our ancient brethren, and it is hallowed by its antiquity. In England, even in the days of King Arthur and his friend Merlin, after the lodge business was finished, the social gatherings of the brethren around the round table were of regular occurrence, and highly appreciated by the brethren.

We cannot say that Masonic balls are of great antiquity; these have