

the press, present us with vivid realities—victories over prejudice, injustice; schemes for the amelioration of human suffering. The expression of true sentiment is to be found, not on a sculptured brow, but in happier homes and in the appliances for the relief of toil from half its weary task, while yet its value is enhanced. As the soldier on his march is naturally most interested in observing that particular portion of the grand army to which his corps belongs, and as he is doubtless quickened into renewed exertion by the sight of evidences of its past achievements, so we, in our capacity as journalists, serving under the old and yet untarnished flag of Freemasonry, look back on the past year proudly, because we see around us evidences of improvement.

That the march from the halting place of 1875 has been a toilsome one it would be useless to deny; but the "hills of difficulty" and the "sloughs of despond" met with on the way, have called forth energy, and have but increased faith in the future. Are there not evidences of the toilsome march on every side, evidences of unwearied exertion, of patient painstaking, of diligent research and inquiry? and these but add to the lustre of the tokens of victories gained despite them all. From far and near come voices telling of the past, and filling the air with promises to march still farther onward. Success is related to *Hope*, who is the handmaid of *Faith*. It is the recollection of past victory that brings pride and defiance to the soldier's eye—

"As rings his glittering tube, he lifts on high  
The dauntless brow and spirit speaking eye,  
Sees in Hope's smile the triumph yet to come,  
And hears her lofty music in the drum"

A glance at our pages at this season of the year, to the observant reader will suffice to illustrate the allegory we have used. The records of lodge meetings held here and throughout the globe, alone speak volumes. True, they may seem dry and uninteresting to many, but they tell of all the qualities we have alluded to.

The eager desire for progress, to excel, has called forth patience, energy, forbearance faith, hope.

There have been volumes of sentimental absurdities written about the poetry of the Mason's life and his pursuits. According to such he goes to lodge meetings, to processions, to inaugurations, to the laying of foundation stones; he is arrayed with brilliant decorations, with gay sashes, and, if a Knight Templar, like the famous Scottish Laird of Cockpen, when he went a wooing, with sword and cocked hat, he listens to the music of organs, harmoniums, and German bands; he obtains and gives tickets to balls, he retires peacefully from all meetings when Luna gives her silvery light to guide him to his home, and all is undisturbed happiness; no cares, no anxieties, for his existence is Elysium. We need scarcely add that the life of the Masonic journalist is that of the ordinary Freemason intensified.

Alas! were such indeed true, we fear that the condition of the craft would have continued as it was any time during the past thousand years. There would have been no meetings, no new lodges, no efforts for mutual improvement in the knowledge of Freemasonry, no appeals for the establishment of homes for aged and distressed brethren, or of asylums for the children of deceased Freemasons, and most dreadful of all to contemplate, no SQUARE to chronicle the struggles, the endurance, the victories of its readers. There is true poetry in the seemingly dry reports of meetings. There is true music in the sound of such bloodless strife as comes leaping from every lodge-room in the intipodes and keeping step to that heard so sweetly throughout the fair land of Columbia. There is more, there is generous rivalry, manly courtesy, engendered throughout the globe; there is the true equality of brethren, there is relief to the widow and the orphan, there is sympathy for the distressed, and pity for the erring; there is hope for the weary and heavy laden, in whose ears are whispered tender words from fraternal lips; there are grateful prayers to the Almighty A. O. T. U.; there is solemn penitence for the past, and there are vows of new obedience; there are lofty aspirations for opportunities of greater usefulness; there are the lessons of experience to be studied and learned from; evils of heart, speech, and behavior to be softened.

Let no one then cast but a hasty look over our columns, devoted, in a great measure to the *outside* of Freemasonry, to notices of meetings; or to dry statistics, and fancy that there are no useful lessons to be learned therefrom. They speak to the observant reader of all that is good and true, of home affections and honest performance of duty; they bid us not be weary in well doing, but that whatsoever our hands delight to do, to do it with all our might.

With such views as to importance of the task before us, we pause on the threshold of another year, and invite our readers to aid us in maintaining the honor of Freemasonry as the best means of promoting its usefulness.—*New York Square.*