

## MASONRY AND ITS MISSION.

THE following is an extract from the eloquent and beautiful address of Grand Master Bro. Samuel H. Owens, of Missouri, delivered at the dedication of the new hall, at St. Joseph, Missouri, on the 24th of June last :

"Dissensions, broils, and even separation may occur within the church; parties may arise and hold their sway for a time, and then, like all things human, pass away and be forgotten; empires may fade away, and governments may change, but amid all these scarcely a ruffle is seen upon the calm surface of Masonry. But, surrounded by all these discordant elements of creed and of party, she gently insinuates herself within the notice of all, and kindly and sweetly whispers in their ears that delightful language of the old Psalmist, uttered through inspiration three thousands years ago: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." With these grand and holy words emblazoned upon her banners, and engraved upon the very heart of the institution, she goes forth, not defiantly, but humbly and dependently to do battle for the right, and in her own quiet way, to organize a grand body of soldiers under this banner, pledged not to destroy, but to ameliorate the condition of mankind—not to estrange and alienate brethren, but to unite them in bonds of friendship and unity, for the general happiness and prosperity of their race.

"Before this talismanic motto of Freemasonry, borne by its grand army of millions, throughout every portion of the habitable world, discord and strife are trampled into the dust, jealousy and selfishness are thrown to the winds, and unity and true companionship, and brotherly love, are firmly established upon the foundations of eternal and everlasting truth. This is no fancy picture of the imagination, drawn by me, to flatter and to please, but it is the true legitimate result and consequence of the proper carrying out of this great principle of Freemasonry.

"And I here repeat, that whenever it fails to produce these grand, beautiful results—this happy bringing together of men, and uniting them in one common object, it is because a great and culpable mistake has been made in the material used. It is a want of capacity to appreciate the great object of the institution, and a desire on the part of the individual to use its unity for his own selfish, and perhaps secular, or even political, purposes. For these purposes, Masonry always disappoints the party who seeks to use her. And, my brethren, let me say to you, that whenever you hear a party say that he is disappointed in Masonry—that it is not the thing he expected it was—set this sentence down as true as gospel, that Masonry has refused to violate her principles; that she has refused to be used by that party for some selfish and ignoble purpose. Such men occasionally impose themselves upon the brotherhood and receive the degrees, but they never become Masons. For a few months they are seemingly zealous and active members of the Order; then their visits to the Lodge become like angels' visits to this sinful world. They have failed to use the institution for their mercenary purposes. Finally, some old brother, whose hair has grown white in the work, and whose shoulders bear the marks of many years of service in this great struggle of the truth against error, meets this brother and speaks thus: "Why my brother, I have not seen you at the Lodge of late." The young brother answers: "No, I have not been lately, I am disappointed in Masonry. It does not come up to my expectations. The brethren do not 'stick' to each other as I think they ought, and I do not think as much of the institution as I thought I would. I am disappointed—disappointed, and I think I won't go back any more."

"Now listen to the response of the old, white-haired brother, who had accosted this "thing." He reverently uncovers his head; his few white hairs flutter in the gentle wind; his wrinkled and palsied old hands are clasped tremblingly together; he turns his eyes piously to heaven and says: "Oh! Father and God, I thank Thee in behalf of Masonry that this man before me is disappointed." Now hear the sound that comes like the roaring of many waters—like the distant murmuring of the thunder, From millions of tongues all over the world, wherever the language of man is spoken. or the simplest intelligence is found—comes the grand Masonic response to the old brother's pious thanksgiving—"So mote it be, amen!" Let all join in the swelling response to the old veteran's pious invocation—so mote it be, amen. Thank God that he is disappointed. Thank God that all such as he are disappointed in Masonry. He has failed to use this grand old institution, organized for holy and beneficent purposes, to further his own selfish and infamous schemes. He has failed to enlist her grand army of millions in behalf of something they never agreed to fight for. He becomes disgusted with an order that he cannot use for his own aggrandizement, and turns away from it with loathing, and exclaims, "I am disappointed!" Well, if such men were not disappointed, Masonry would not be worth a single thought."

In conclusion, he paid a deserved tribute to M. W. Bro. John Vincil, by quoting the following eloquent remarks: