

SMITTEN OF GOD AND AFFLICTED.

Lines of Fraternal sympathy and respect, composed May 10, 1888, and addressed to R. E. Horace January, Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Kentucky, by Eminent Rob. Morris, Poet Laureate of Freemasonry.

(The circumstances under which this poem was composed are novel and affecting. Brother January was holding the office of Grand Generalissimo of the Grand Commandery, in 1886, when he became *suddenly and incurably blind*. Yet, so much was he loved and respected by the members of the Order, that, contrary to all precedent, he was elected, 1887, Deputy Grand Commander, and in 1888, by unanimous suffrage, Grand Commander of this large and most respectable organization of Templars. The feelings of all his fellows were profoundly moved at this terrible misfortune, and the Poet Laureate feels confident that he expresses the sentiment of the fraters in the following imperfect, but sincere lines.)

Oh, sad affliction, *want of sight* !
The earth bedecked with flowers bright,
The starry host ablaze on high,
To kindle the adoring eye ;
The smiles of friends, the lover's glance,
Celestial in its radiance,
Yet all unseen, give no delight
To him, the unhappy, *wanting sight* !

Dear Brother, could you feel the glow
Of sympathy that warms us now :
Could you but catch the pitying gaze
That animates each Templar's face :
Could you but read the earnest prayer,
That moves within each Christian here :
Sad as may seem your lonely lot,
One-half its sorrows were forgot.

Be patient and endure your load,
Believing it is sent from God :
The end is near when HEAVENLY light
Will burst upon your raptured sight :
And in that Temple, far above,
That needs no light of sun or moon,
The MAN of SORROWS, on His throne,
Will make *your sorrows* all His own !

FREEMASONRY IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

Freemasonry, which has been under the ban of Church and State in nearly all the countries of Central America, and hardly able to maintain its organic life, seems now to be regarded with considerable favor. According to the *Panama Star and Herald*, "The government of

Guatemala has officially sanctioned the existence of Freemasons in that republic by recognizing their existence as a corporate body, as customary with all societies, but without having more to do with their operations than it would with those of a commercial firm. Less than twenty years ago the suggestion that such a course should be adopted by the government would have been considered heresy, and the unfortunate suggesters would have been held as objects of suspicion by many of their fellow-citizens. We congratulate the Fraternity on the concession it has thus obtained, but we more warmly congratulate the government on this fresh proof of liberality it has thus afforded." There is now a good prospect of establishing Masonic Lodges on a permanent basis and free from all entangling alliances. Prudence on the part of the Craftsmen in Guatemala is now required, that the recognition accorded may not be withdrawn.

MASONS AND THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.

We are not surprised to learn that considerable dissension has been caused in the jurisdictions of certain Grand Lodges the United States, which have passed laws against the initiating of "liquor dealers," alias "publicans," into Freemasonry, or their affiliation to subordinate Lodges, while some have even gone so far as to pass laws for their expulsion from the Society. Masonry has nothing whatever to do with a man's calling. It is necessary that anyone who seeks admission into our ranks should be a reputable person as regards his worldly circumstances and his character. He must also, and above all things, be a believer in God and a future state, as well as a man of full age and free to act on his own responsibility. But there the restrictions imposed by Freemasonry as regards the qualifications of the candidates end. A man may follow any calling he pleases that is compatible with these conditions, and if the members of a lodge are prepared to admit him he is admitted. We hold that it is an act of tyranny on the part of any Grand Lodge when it enters on such a course of legislation. In the first place it condemns a calling which the law recognizes, and in the next it brings the whole weight of its influences as an organized body to bear in order to compel people to act contrary to the opinions they are free to hold on the sul-