

tion of all the moneys so applied. The above figures illustrate sufficiently, I think, the sums granted by the Craft throughout the whole jurisdiction for benevolent purposes, and form a pretty substantial proof that this distinguishing characteristic of a Freemason's heart is to be found among the members of our Lodges.

3. I must not weary you by staying to argue the question whether the provision suggested for a stated sum to be paid to a brother disqualified from labor, and to his widow in case of his death, is a fair one or not, or better than the system which has hitherto prevailed, or whether such a scheme would afford an adequate return for the fees exacted for membership; but I do not hesitate to pronounce it as entirely at variance with the fundamental principles of the Masonic Order, and I feel that I cannot better express to you what my views on the subject are than by adopting and quoting from the address of M. W. Bro. Wilson to the Grand Lodge in 1863, when he said:

“MASONRY NOT A MERE BENEFIT CLUB.”

“In the discussions which occasionally take place at our annual meetings, sentiments are sometimes expressed by the younger members of the Fraternity which have led me to believe that they neither fully understood nor appreciated the original design and aim of our institution; but had come to regard it as if the great and sole object of our Association was the mere accumulation of funds for the relief of distressed Masons, for the support of their widows and for the education of their destitute children, forgetting, apparently, the explanations which had been given and the lessons they had received at their initiation into our mysteries. Charity, in its largest sense, in its broadest signification, is a virtue dear to the heart of every true Mason, and that charity which is not only active, but passive, is freely exercised by the genuine brother; he is ever ready to assist the distressed as he is to abstain from unkindness, uncourteousness, or the malicious construction of his neighbor's motives. The inculcation of every virtue, the improvement of our species, the advancement of learning and science, the study of the liberal arts, and especially the cultivation of brotherly love, these are some of the aims of the Craft and of its votaries. If there is to be found in our ranks any individual who has joined us actuated by no higher motive than self-interest, and influenced by the idea that he is thereby making the most judicious investment for himself and family, he will soon discover that he has not only deceived himself, but that he has altogether misapprehended the genius, the scope and the great objects of Masonry; for our Brotherhood is not for a moment to be placed on the same level with those mere benefit clubs which have recently been established, with the sole and avowed intention of making to the contributor or to his legal representatives a full and equivalent return in hard cash for that which he has invested in their hands. Neither is Masonry to be thus shorn of her fair proportions nor is she to be circumscribed or fettered as to the discharge of her numerous duties. We are told that the three great tenets of a Mason's profession are Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth; and to you, my brethren, I now say, cultivate them all.”

4. The vice of intemperance has always been regarded as a Masonic offence, and it requires no declaration on the part of the Grand Lodge to make it such. Temperance is enjoined on every novice, and I rejoice to be able to say that the practice of this and every other domestic as well as public virtue has been exemplified in the daily life and conduct of the members of our Order.

5. It only remains for me to notice the attack made upon the Board of General Purposes, which is characterized as cumbersome and expensive.

The Board is the Committee of Grand Lodge, one half of the number exclusive of the *officio* members, being elected by the Grand Lodge and one half appointed by the Grand Master. The business for them to transact is of such a character that it is necessary for them to meet, not only two days previous to the annual communication of the Grand Lodge, but also during the year between the annual meetings, and it must be born in mind that in addition to the matters specially relegated by the Grand Lodge, the Board is charged, under our constitution, with all the committee work of the Grand Lodge; is to hear and determine all subjects of Masonic complaint or irregularity; has charge of the finances of the Grand Lodge, and is to examine all demands upon the same, as well as inspect and audit the books and papers relating to the Grand Lodge accounts. The Board is also required to make the necessary preparations for the communication of the Grand Lodge, as well as provide for the ordinary expenditure of the Grand Lodge, and is charged with the care and regulations of all the concerns of the Grand Lodge.