

Illustrations of Masonry

Past Master of the Lodge of Antiquity

Acting by Immemorial Constitution

The man whose mind on Virtue bent

Pursues some greatly good intent

With undiverted aim;

Serene, beholds the angry crowd,

Nor, can their clamors fierce and loud,

His stubborn honor tame.

(Blacklock)

Preface

The favorable reception this Treatise has met within the several Editions through which it has passed, encourages the author to hope that its appearance on a still more enlarged scale, will not render it less deserving the countenance of his Brethren. He would be wanting in gratitude to his friends, not to acknowledge his obligations to several gentlemen for many curious extracts, and the perusal of some valuable manuscripts, which have enabled him to illustrate his subject with greater accuracy and precision.

This Tract is divided into Four Books. In the First Book, the Excellency of Masonry is displayed. In the Second Book the Lectures of the different degrees are illustrated, with occasional remarks; and a brief description is given of the ancient ceremonies of the Order. This part of the Treatise, which the author considers most essential for the instruction and improvement of his Brethren, is considerably extended in the present edition. The Third Book contains the copy of a curious old Manuscript, with annotations, the better to explain this authentic document of antiquity. The Fourth Book is restricted to the history of Masonry, from its first appearance in England to the present time, in the course of which are introduced the most remarkable occurrences of the Society, both at home and abroad, with some account of the principal patrons and protectors of the fraternity at different periods. The progress of the Society on the Continent, as well as in India and America, is also traced, while the proceedings of the Brethren of Scotland particularly claim attention. throughout the whole are interspersed several explanatory notes, containing a variety of interesting and well authenticated particulars.

At the end is given a collection of Anthems and Songs; some of which have never appeared in any of the former editions. These being occasionally introduced in our assemblies, must tend to greatly enliven the proceedings.

Thus having endeavored to put the finishing stroke to his Treatise, the success of which has far exceeded the its merit, the author can only observe, that should the additions be considered real improvements, he will be amply gratified for any pains he may have taken.

Dean-fleet, Fetter Lane, Dec 1 1795

Introduction

Whoever, attentively considers the nature and tendency of the Masonic institution, must readily perceive its general utility. (Mr. Arnold, in his Dutch Dictionary, under the word Freemasonry, says, that it is "A Moral Order, instituted by virtuous men, with the praiseworthy, design of recalling to our remembrance the most sublime truths, in the midst of the most innocent and social pleasures, founded on liberality, brotherly love and charity.") From an anxious desire to display its value, I have been induced to offer the following sheets to the Public. Many reasons might have withheld me from the attempt; my inexperience as a writer, my attention to the duties of a laborious profession, and the many abler hands who have treated the subject before me; yet, under all these disadvantages, the persuasion of friends, added to a warm zeal in the cause, have stimulated me to risk my reputation on the fate of my performance.

When I first had the honor to be elected Master of a lodge, I thought it proper to inform myself fully of the general rules of the Society, that I might be able to fulfill my own duty, and officially enforce a due obedience in others. The methods which I adopted with this view, excited in some of superficial knowledge, an absolute dislike of what they considered as innovations; and in other, who were better informed, a jealousy of pre-eminence which the principles of Masonry ought to have checked. Notwithstanding these discouragements, however, I persevered in my intention of supporting the dignity of the Society, and discharging with fidelity the trust reposed in me.

As candor and integrity, uninfluenced by interest and favor, will ever support a good cause, many of my opponents (pardon the expression) began to discover their error, and not only applauded, but cheerfully concurred in the execution of my measures; while others, of less liberality, tacitly approved of what their former declared opinions forbade then publicly to adopt.

This success exceeding my most sanguine wishes, I was encouraged to examine with more attention the contents of our various lectures. The rude and imperfect state in which I found them, the variety of modes established in our lodges, and the difficulties which I encountered in my researches, rather discouraged me first attempt; preserving, however, in the design, I continued, I continued the pursuit; and assisted by a few friends, who had carefully preserved what ignorance and degeneracy had rejected as unintelligible and absurd, I diligently sought for, and at length happily acquired, some ancient and venerable landmarks of the Order.

Fully determined to pursue the design of the effecting a general reformation, and fortunate in the acquisition of the friends which I had made, I continued my industry till I had prevailed on a sufficient number to join in an attempt to correct the irregularities which had crept into our assemblies, and to exemplify the beauty and utility of the Masonic system.

We commenced our plan by enforcing the value of the ancient charges and regulations of the Order, which inattention had suffered to sink into oblivion, and we established those charges as the basis of our work. To imprint on the memory of a faithful discharge of our duty, we reduced the more material parts of our system into practice; and to encourage others in promoting the plan, we observed a general rule of reading one or more of these charges at every regular meeting, and of elucidating such passages as seemed obscure. The useful hints afforded by these means enabled us gradually to improve our plan, till we at last succeeded in bringing into a connected form the sections which now compose the

three lectures of Masonry.

The progress daily made by our system pointed out the necessity of obtaining the sanction of our patrons; hence several brethren of acknowledged honor and integrity united in an application to the most respectable members of the Society for countenance and protection and so far happily succeeded, as not only to obtain the wished for sanction, but to secure the promise of future support, Since that time the plan has been universally admitted as the basis of our Moral Lectures; and to that circumstance the present publication owes its success.

Having thus ventured to appear in vindication of the ceremonies, and in support of the privileges, of Masonry, I shall be happy to be considered a feeble instrument in promoting its propriety. If I am honored with a continuance of the approbation of my brethren, and succeed in giving the world a favorable idea of the institution, I shall have attained the full completion of my wish; and if my hopes are frustrated, I shall still indulge the not unpleasant reflection, of having exerted my best endeavors in a good cause.

January 18, 1788

Book One

The Excellency of Masonry Displayed

by

William Preston

1795

Sect. 1 - Reflections on the symmetry and proportion in the works of Nature, and on the harmony and affection among the various species of beings

Whoever attentively observes the objects which surround him, will find abundant reason to admire the works of Nature, and to adore the Being who directs such astonishing operations: he will be convinced, that infinite wisdom could alone design, and infinite power finish, such amazing works.

Were a man placed in a beautiful garden, would not his mind be affected with exquisite delight on a calm survey of its rich collection? Would not the groves, the grottoes, the artful wilds, the flowery parterres, the opening vistas, the lofty cascades, the winding streams, the whole variegated scene, awaken his sensibility; and inspire his soul with the most exalted ideas? When he observed the delicate order, the nice symmetry, and the beautiful disposition of every part, seemingly complete in itself, yet reflecting new beauties on the other, and all contributing to make one perfect whole, would not his mind be agitated with the most bewitching sensations; and would not the view of the delightful scene naturally lead him to admire and venerate the happy genius who contrived it?

If the productions of art so forcibly impress the mind with admiration, with how much greater astonishment and reverence, with how much greater astonishment and reverence must we behold the operations of Nature, which presents to view unbounded scenes of utility and delight, in which divine wisdom is most strikingly conspicuous? These scenes are indeed too expanded for the narrow capacity of man to comprehend; yet whoever contemplates the general system, from the uniformity of the plan must naturally be directed to the original source, the

supreme governor of the world, the one perfect and unsullied beauty!

Beside all the pleasing prospects that everywhere surround us, and with which our senses are every moment gratified; beside the symmetry, good order, and proportion, which appear in all the works of creation, something further attracts the reflecting mind, and draws its attention nearer to the Divinity - the universal harmony and affection among the different species of beings of every rank and denomination. These are the cements of the rational world, and by these alone it subsists. When they cease, nature must be dissolved, and man, the image of his Maker and the chief of his works, be overwhelmed in the general chaos.

In the whole order of beings, for the seraph which adores and burns, down to the meanest insect, all, according to their rank in the scale of existence, have, more or less, implanted in them, the principle of association with others of the same species. Even the most inconsiderable animals are formed into different ranks and societies, for mutual benefit and protection. Need we name the careful ant, or the industrious bee; insects which the wisest of men has recommended as patterns of unwearied industry and prudent foresight? When we extend our ideas, we shall find, that the innate principle of friendship increases in proportion to the extension of our intellectual faculties; and the only criterion by which a judgment can be formed respecting the superiority of one part of the animal creation above the other, is by observing the degrees of kindness and good-natured in which it excels.

Such are the general principles which pervade the whole system of creation; who forcibly then must such lessons predominate in our assemblies, where civilization and virtue are most zealously cherished, under the sanction of science and the arts?

Sect. 2 - The advantages resulting from friendship

No subject can more properly engage the attention, than the benevolent dispositions which indulgent Nature has bestowed upon the rational species. These are replete with the happiest effects, and afford to the mind, the most agreeable reflections. The breast which is inspired with tender feelings, is naturally prompted to a reciprocal intercourse of kind and generous actions, as human nature rises in the scale of beings, the social affections likewise arise. Where friendship is unknown, jealousy and suspicion prevail; but where that virtue is the cement, true happiness subsists. In every breast there is a propensity to friendly acts, which being exerted to effect sweetens every temporal enjoyment; and although it does not remove the disquietudes, it tends at least to allay the calamities of life.

Friendship is traced through the circle of private connections to the grand system of universal benevolence, which no limits can circumscribe, as its influence extends to every branch of the human race. Actuated by this sentiment, each individual connects his happiness with the happiness of his neighbor, and a fixed and permanent union is established among men.

Nevertheless, though friendship, considered as the source of universal benevolence, be unlimited, it exerts its influence more or less powerfully, as the objects it favors are near or more remote. Hence the love of friends and of country takes the lead in our affections and gives rise to that true patriotism, which fires the soul with the most generous flame, creates the best and most disinterested virtue, and inspires that public spirit and heroic ardor which enable us to support a good cause, and risk our lives in its defense.

This commendable virtue crowns the lover of his country with unfading laurels,

gives a luster to his actions, and consecrates his name in later ages. The warrior's glory may consist in murder, and the rude ravage of the desolating sword; but the blood of thousands will not stain the hands of his country's friend. His virtues are open, and of the noblest kind. Conscious integrity supports him against the arm of power; and should he bleed by tyrant hands, he gloriously dies a martyr in the cause of liberty, and leaves to posterity an everlasting monument of the greatness of his soul.

Though friendship appears divine when employed in preserving the liberties of our country, it shines with equal splendor in more tranquil scenes. Before it rises into the noble flame of patriotism, aiming destruction at the heads of tyrants, thundering for liberty, and courting danger in defense of rights; we behold it calm and moderate, burning with an even glow, improving the soft hours of peace, and heightening the relish for virtue. In those happy moments contracts are formed, societies are instituted, and vacant hours of life are employed in the cultivation of social and polished manners.

On this ground plan the universality of our system is established. Were friendship confined to the spot of our nativity, its operation would be partial, and imply a kind of enmity to other nations. Where the interests of one country interfere with those of another, nature dictates an adherence to the welfare of our own immediate connections; but such interference apart, the true mason is a citizen of the world, and his philanthropy extends to all the human race. Uninfluenced by local prejudices, he knows no preference in virtue but according to its degree, from whatever clime it may spring.

Sect. 3 - Origin of Masonry, and its general advantages

From the commencement of the world, we may trace the foundation of Masonry. Ever since symmetry began, and harmony displayed her charms, our Order has had a being. During many ages, and in many different countries, it has flourished. No art, no science preceded it. In the dark periods of antiquity, when literature was in a low state, and the rude manners of our forefathers withheld from them that knowledge we now so amply share, Masonry diffused its influence. This science unveiled, arts arose, civilization took place, and the progress of knowledge and philosophy gradually dispelled the gloom of ignorance and barbarism. Government being settled, authority was given to laws, and the assemblies of the fraternity acquired the patronage of the great and the good, while the tenets of the profession diffused unbounded utility.

Abstracting from the pure pleasures which arise from friendship so widely constituted as that which subsists among masons, and which is scarcely possible that any circumstance or occurrence can erase, masonry is a science confined to no particular country but extends over the whole terrestrial globe. Wherever arts flourish, there it flourishes too. Add to this, that by secret and inviolable signs, carefully preserved among the fraternity, it becomes an universal language. Hence many advantages are gained. The distant Chinese, the wild Arab, the American savage, will embrace a brother Briton; and will know, that beside the common ties of humanity, there is still a stronger obligation to induce him to kind and friendly offices. The spirit of the fulminating priest will be tamed; and a moral brother, though of a different persuasion, engage his esteem; for mutual toleration in religious opinions is one of the most distinguishing and most valuable characteristics of the Craft. As all religions teach morality, if a brother be found to act the part of a truly honest man, his private speculative opinions are left to God and himself. Thus, through the influence of Masonry, which is reconcilable to the best policy, all those disputes which embitter life, and sour the tempers of men are avoided; while the common good, the general object, is

zealously pursued.

From this view of our system, its utility is sufficiently obvious. The universal principles of the art unite, in one indissoluble bond of affection, men of the most opposite tenets, of the most distant countries, and of the most contradictory opinions; hence in every nation a Mason may find a friend, and in every climate a home.

Such is the nature of the institution, that in a Lodge, union is cemented by sincere attachment, and pleasure reciprocally communicated in the cheerful observances of every obliging office. Virtue, the grand object in view, luminous as the meridian sun, shines resurgent on the mind, enlivens the heart, and heightens cool approbation into warm sympathy and cordial attention.

Sect. 4 - Masonry considered under two denominations

Masonry passes under two denominations, operative and speculative. By the former, we allude to a proper application of the useful rules of architecture, whence a structure derives figure, strength, and beauty, and whence result a due proportion and a just correspondence in all its parts. By the latter we learn to subdue passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity.

Speculative Masonry is so far interwoven with religion, as to lay us under the strongest obligations to pay that rational homage to the Deity, which at once constitutes our duty and our happiness. It leads to the contemplative view with reverence and admiration the glorious works of creation, and inspires them with the most exalted ideas of the perfection of the divine Creator, Operative Masonry furnishes us with dwellings, and convenient shelters from the inclemency's of seasons; and while it displays the effects of human wisdom, as well in the choice as in the arrangement of the materials of which an edifice is composed, it demonstrates what a fund of science and industry is implanted in man for the best, most salutary, and beneficent purposes.

The lapse of time, the ruthless hand of ignorance, and the devastations of war, have laid waste and destroyed many valuable monuments of antiquity, on which the utmost exertions of human genius have been employed. Even the temple of Solomon, so spacious and magnificent, and constructed by so many celebrated artists, escaped not the unsparing ravages of barbarous forces. Freemasonry, notwithstanding, has still survived. The attentive ear receives the sound of the instructive tongue, and the sacred mysteries are safely lodged in the repository of faithful breasts. Tools and implements of architecture, symbols the most expressive, are selected by the fraternity, to imprint on the memory serious truths; and thus the excellent tenets of the institution are transmitted unimpaired, under circumstances precarious and adverse, through the succession of ages.

Sect. 5 - The Government of the Fraternity

The mode of government observed by the fraternity will give the best idea of the nature and design of the Masonic system.

Three classes are established among Masons, under different appellations. The privileges of each class are distinct, and particular means adopted to preserve those privileges to the just and meritorious. Honor and probity are recommendations to the first class; in which the practice of virtue is enforced, and the duties of morality are inculcated, while the mind is prepared for a regular

progress in the principles of knowledge and philosophy, Diligence, assiduity, and application, are qualifications for the second class; in which is given an accurate elucidation of science, both in theory and practice. Here human reason is cultivated by a due exertion of the intellectual powers and faculties; nice and difficult theories are explained; new discoveries are produced, and those already known are beautifully embellished. The third class is restricted to a selected few, whom truth and fidelity have distinguished, whom years and experience have improved, and whom merit and abilities have entitled to preferment. With them the ancient landmarks of the Order are preserved, and from them we learn the necessary and instructive lessons, which dignify the art, and qualify its professors to illustrate its excellence and utility.

This is the established plan of the Masonic system. By this judicious arrangement, true friendship is cultivated among different ranks of men, hospitality promoted, industry rewarded and ingenuity encouraged.

Sect. 6 - Reasons why the secrets of Masonry ought not to be publicly exposed; and the importance of those secrets demonstrated

If the secrets of Masonry are replete with such advantage to mankind, it may be asked, why are they not divulged for the general good of society? To this may be answered; Were the privileges of Masonry to be indiscriminately dispensed, the institution would be subverted; and being familiar, like other important matters, would lose their value, and sink into disregard.

It is a weakness in human nature, that men are generally more charmed with novelty, than with the intrinsic value of things. Innumerable testimonies might be adduced to confirm this truth. The most wonderful operations of the Divine Artificer, however, beautiful, magnificent and useful, are overlooked, because common and familiar. The sun rises and sets, the sea flows and reflows, rivers glide along their channels, trees and plants vegetate, men and beasts act, yet this is unnoticed. The most astonishing productions of Nature on the same account escape observation, and excite no emotion, either in admiration of the great cause, or of gratitude for the blessing conferred. Even Virtue herself is not exempted from this unhappy bias in the human frame. Novelty influences all our actions and determinations. What is new, or difficult in the acquisition, however, trifling or insignificant, readily captures the imagination, and ensures a temporary admiration; while what is familiar, or easily attained, however, noble or eminent, is sure to be disregarded by the giddy and the unthinking.

Did the essence of masonry consist in the knowledge of particular secrets or peculiar forms, it might be alleged that our amusements were trifling and superficial. But this is not the case. These are the keys to our treasure and having their use are preserved, while from the recollection of the lessons they inculcate, the well informed Mason derives instruction; he draws them to a near inspection; he views them through a proper medium; he adverts to the circumference which gave them rise; and he dwells upon the tenets they convey. Finding them replete with useful information, he prizes them as sacred; and convinced of their propriety, he estimates their value from their utility.

Many persons are deluded by the vague supposition that our mysteries are merely nominal; that the practices established among us are frivolous; and that our ceremonies may be adopted, or waved, at pleasure. On this false foundation, we find them hurrying through all the degrees of the Order, without adverting to the propriety of one step they pursue, or possessing a single qualification requisite for advancement. Passing through the usual formalities, they consider

themselves entitled to rank as master of the art, solicit and accept offices, and assume the government of lodges, equally and assume the government of lodges, equally unacquainted with the rules of the institution they pretend to support, or the nature of the trust reposed in them. The consequences is obvious; anarchy and confusion ensue, and the substance is left in shadow. Hence men eminent for ability, rank, and fortune, are often led to view the honors of Masonry with such indifference, that when their patronage is solicited, they accept offices with reluctance, or reject them with disdain.

Masonry has long labored under these disadvantages, and every zealous friend to the Order must earnestly wish for a correction of the abuse. Of late years it must be acknowledged, that Lodges are in general better regulated, and the good effects of such government are sufficiently displayed in the proper observance of the general regulations.

Were brethren who preside over Lodges, properly instructed previous to their appointment, and regularly apprized of the importance of their respective offices, a general reformation would speedily take place. This would establish the propriety of our government, and lead men to acknowledge; that our honors were deservedly conferred. Till prudent actions shall distinguish our title to the honors of Masonry, and our regular deportment display the influence and utility of our rules, the world in general will not be led to reconcile our proceedings with the tenets of the profession.

Sect. 7 - Few Societies exempted from censure. Irregularities of Masons are no argument against the Institution

Among the various societies of men, few, if any, are wholly exempted from censure. Friendship, however valuable in itself, however universal in its pretensions, has seldom operated so powerfully in general associations, as to promote that sincere attachment to the welfare and prosperity of each other, which is necessary to constitute true happiness. This may be ascribed to sundry causes, but none with more propriety, than to the reprehensible motives which too frequently lead men to a participation of social entertainment. If to pass an idle hour, to oblige a friend, or probably to gratify an irregular indulgence, be our only inducement to mix in company, is it surprising that the important duties of society should be neglected, and that, in the quick circulation of the cheerful glass, our noble faculties should be sometimes buried in the cup of sobriety.

It is an obvious truth, that the privileges of Masonry have long been prostituted for unworthy considerations, and hence their good effects have not been so conspicuous. Many have enrolled their names in our records for the mere purposes of conviviality, without inquiring into the nature of the particular engagements to which they are subjected by becoming Masons. Several have been prompted by motives of interest, and many introduced to gratify an idle curiosity, or to please as jolly companions. A general odium, or at least a careless indifference, has been the result of such conduct. But the evil stops not here. Persons of the description, ignorant of the true nature of the institution, probably without any real defect in the own morals, are induced to recommend others of the same cast, to join the society for the same purpose. Hence the true knowledge of the art decreases with the increase of its members, the most valuable part of Masonry is turned into ridicule; while the dissipation of luxury and intemperance bury in oblivion principles which might have dignified the most exalted characters.

When we consider the variety of members of which the society of Masons is composed, and the small number who are really conversant with the tenets of the institution, we cannot wonder that so few should be distinguished for exemplary

lives. From persons who are precipitately introduced into the mysteries of the art without the requisite qualifications, it cannot be expected that much regard will be paid to the observance of duties which they perceive to be openly violated by the own institution; and it is an incontrovertible truth; that such is the unhappy bias in the disposition of some men, though the fairest and best ideas were imprinted on the mind, they are so careless of their own reputation as to disregard the most instructive of lessons. We have reason to regret, that even persons distinguished for a knowledge in the art, are too frequently induced to violate the rules to which a pretended conformity has gained them applause. The hypocrisy is soon unveiled: no sooner are they liberated from the trammels, as they conceive, of a regular and virtuous conduct in the government of the Lodge, than, by improperly abusing the innocent and cheerful repast, they become slaves to vice and intemperance, and not only disgrace themselves, but reflect dishonor on the fraternity. By such indiscretion, the best of the institution is brought into contempt, and the more deserving part of the community justly conceives a prejudice against the society, of which it is ever afterwards difficult to wipe off the impression.

But if some do transgress, no wise man will thence argue against the whole fraternity for the errors of a few individuals. Were the wicked lives of men admitted as an argument against the religion which they profess, the wisest, the wisest and most judicious establishment, might be exposed to censure. It may be averred in favor of Masonry, that whatever imperfections may be found among its professors, the institution countenances no deviation from the rules of right reason. Those who violate the laws, or infringe on good order, are kindly admonished by secret monitors; and when these have not the intended effect, public reprehension becomes necessary; at last, when every mild endeavor to effect a reformation is of no avail, they are expelled the Lodge, as unfit members of the society.

Vain, therefore, is each idle surmise against the plan of our government; while our laws are properly supported, they will be proof against every attack of our most inveterate enemies. Men are not aware, that by decrying any laudable system, they derogate from the dignity of human nature itself, and from that good order and wise disposition of things, which the almighty Author of the world has framed for the government of mankind, and established as the basis of the moral system. Friendship and social delights can never be the object of reproach; nor can that wisdom which hoary Time has sanctified, be subject to ridicule. Whoever attempts to censure what he does not comprehend, degrades himself; and the generous heart will always be led to pity the mistakes of such ignorant presumptions

Sect. 8 - Charity the distinguishing characteristic of Masons

Charity is the chief of every social virtue, and the distinguishing characteristic of the Order. This virtue includes a supreme degree of love to the great Creator and Governor of the universe, and an unlimited affection to the beings of his creation, of all characters and of every denomination. This last duty is forcibly inculcated by the example of the Deity himself, who liberally dispenses his beneficence to unnumbered worlds.

It is not particularly our province to enter into disquisition of every branch of the amiable virtue; we shall only briefly state the happy effects of a benevolent disposition toward mankind, and show that charity, exerted on proper objects, is the greatest pleasure man can possibly enjoy.

The bounds of the greatest nation, or the most extensive empire, cannot circumscribe the generosity of a liberal mind. Men, in whatever situation they are placed, are still, in a great measure, the same. They are exposed to similar dangers and misfortunes. They have not wisdom to foresee, or power to prevent, the evils incident to human nature. They hang as it were, in perpetual suspense between hope and fear, sickness and health, plenty and want. A mutual chain of dependence subsists throughout the animal creation. The whole human species are therefore proper objects for the exercise of charity.

Beings who partake of one common nature, ought to be actuated by the same motives and interests. Hence, to soothe the unhappy, by sympathizing with their misfortunes, and to restore peace and tranquility to agitated spirits, constitute the general and great ends of the Masonic institution. This humane, this generous disposition fires the breast with manly feelings, and enlivens that spirit of compassion, which is the glory of the human frame, and not only rivals, but outshines, every other pleasure the mind is capable of enjoying.

All human passions, when directed by the superior principle of reason, promote some useful purpose; but compassion towards proper objects is the most beneficial of all the affections, as it extends to greater numbers, and tends to alleviate the infirmities and evils which are incident to human existence.

Possessed of this amiable, this godlike disposition, Masons are shocked at misery under every form and appearance. When we behold an object pining under the miseries of a distressed body or mind, the healing accents which flow from the tongue, mitigate the pain of the unhappy sufferer, and make even adversity, in its dismal state, look gay. When our pity is excited, we assuage grief, and cheerfully relieve distress. If a brother be in want, every heart is moved; when he is hungry, we feed him; when he is naked, we clothe him; when he is in trouble, we fly to his relief. Thus we confirm the propriety of the title we bear, and convince the world at large, that BROTHER among Masons is something more than a name.

Sect. 9 - The discernment displayed by Masons in the choice of objects of charity

The most inveterate enemies of Masonry must acknowledge, that no society is more remarkable for the practice of charity, or any association of men more famed for disinterested liberality. It cannot be said that Masons indulge in convivial mirth, while the poor and needy pine for relief. Our quarterly contributions, exclusive of private subscriptions to relieve distress, prove that we are ever ready with cheerfulness, in proportion to our circumstances, to contribute to alleviate the misfortunes of our fellow-creatures. Considering, however, the variety of object, whose distress the dictates of Nature as well as the ties of Masonry incline us to relieve, we find it necessary sometimes to inquire into the cause of misfortunes; lest a misconceived tenderness of disposition, or an impolitic generosity of heart, might prevent us from making a proper distinction in the choice of objects. Though our ears are always open to the distresses of the deserving poor, yet our charity is not to be dispensed with a profuse liberality on impostors. The parents of a numerous offspring, who, through age, sickness, infirmity, or any unforeseen accident in life, are reduced to want, particularly claim our attention, and seldom fail to experience the happy effects of our friendly association. To such objects, whose situation is more easy to be conceived than expressed, we are induced liberally to extend our bounty. Hence we give convincing proofs of wisdom and discernment; for though our benevolence, like our laws, be unlimited, yet our hearts glow principally with

affection toward the deserving part of mankind.

From this view of the advantages which result from the practice and profession of Masonry, every candid and impartial mind must acknowledge its utility and importance to the state; and surely, if the picture here drawn be just, it must be no trifling acquisition to any government, to have under its jurisdiction, a society of men, who are not only true patriots and loyal subject, but the patrons of science and the friends of mankind.

Sect. 10 - Friendly admonitions

Having explained the principles of the Order, and endeavored to demonstrate the excellence and utility of the institution, I shall conclude my observations with a few friendly admonitions to my brethren.

As useful knowledge is the great object of our desire, let us steadily adhere to the principles it inculcates, check our progress, or damp our zeal; but let us recollect, that the ways of wisdom are beautiful, and lead to pleasure. Knowledge is attained by degrees, and cannot every where be found. Wisdom seeks the secret shade, the lonely cell designed for contemplation. There enthroned she sits, delivering her sacred oracles. There let us seek her, and pursue the real bliss. Though the passage be difficult, the farther we trace it, the easier it will become.

Union and harmony constitute the essence of Freemasonry: while we enlist under that banner, the society must flourish, and private animosities give place to peace and good fellowship. Uniting in one design, let it be our aim to be happy ourselves, and contribute to the happiness of others. Let us make our superiority and distinction among men, by the sincerity of our profession as Masons; let us cultivate the moral virtues, and improve in all that is good and amiable; let the Genius of Masonry preside over our conduct, and under her sway let us perform our part with becoming dignity. Let us preserve an elevation of understanding, with a politeness of manner, and an evenness of temper. Let our recreations be innocent, and pursued with moderation; and never let irregular indulgences lead to the subversion of our system, by impairing our faculties, and exposing our character to derision. But, in conformity to our precepts, as patterns worthy of imitation, let the respectability of our lives be supported by the regularity of our conduct, and the uniformity of our deportment. Thus, as citizens of the world, as friends to every clime, we shall be living examples of virtue and benevolence, equally zealous to merit as to obtain universal approbation.

EULOGIUM

Masonry comprehends within its circle every branch of useful knowledge and learning, and stamps an indelible mark of preeminence on its genuine professors, which neither chance, power, nor fortune can bestow. When its rules are strictly observed, it is a sure foundation of tranquility amidst the various disappointments of life; a friend that will not deceive, but will comfort and assist, in prosperity and adversity; a blessing that will remain with all times. Circumstances, and places, and to which recourse may be had, when earthly comforts sink into disregard.

Masonry gives real and intrinsic excellencies to man, and renders him fit for the duties of society. It strengthens the mind against the storms of life, paves the way to peace, and promotes domestic happiness. It meliorates the temper, and improves the understanding; it is company in fortitude, and gives vivacity,

variety, and energy to social conversation. In youth, it governs the passions, and employs usefully our most active faculties; and in age, when sickness, imbecility, and disease have benumbed the corporal frame, and rendered the union of soul and body almost intolerable, it yields a fund of comfort and satisfaction.

These are its general advantages; to enumerate them separately, would be an endless labor: it may be sufficient to observe, that he who cultivates this science, and acts agreeably to the character of a Mason, has within himself the spring and support of every social virtue; a subject of contemplation, that enlarges the mind, and expands all its powers; a theme that is inexhaustible, ever new, and always interesting.