



A D D R E S S

DELIVERED TO

Alpha Home Lodge, No. 72,

A. F. & A. M.,

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE

GRAND LODGE OF LOUISIANA,

DECEMBER 18, A. L., 5860.

BY DR. J. C. BATCHELOR, W. M.

PUBLISHED BY THE LODGE.

NEW ORLEANS:
PRINTED BY CLARK & BRISBIN, 19 COMMERCIAL PLACE.

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ADDRESS.

Brethren of Alpha Home Lodge:

The time has now arrived for me to resign to you the important and highly honorable office of W. M., that your partiality has for twelve months reposed in my hands; and I at the same time inform you that it is not my wish to be elected to an office, as it is my desire to close my official connection with the craft, in this department, which is the corner-stone of the fraternity: the Blue Lodge, so styled from its emblematical color—emblematical of Friendship and universal Benevolence; virtues as inseparable from true Masonry as vital air from the life of man.

In delivering to you the honors that you have confided in my charge, I would by no means imply that I expect to become a drone in the hive, but as a private member I expect to exert as much interest and zeal in the welfare of the fraternity as it has been my wish to do while holding a post of honor.

In thus notifying you of my wish to retire from official station, to some it may appear presumption on my part; but to those who know that the preference (perhaps unwise) of my old Lodge (Home No. 142) has kept me in my present honorable position since 1855, and that it has been my wish for two years back to retire from office, I think will free me from a charge of egotism. You have often heard me advocate a certain principle of policy, that I believe to be correct—it is this: Not to continue one member in office for a number of years in succession, when there are others that are qualified to fill the office, because it is calculated to lessen that creditable ambition in younger members that would induce them to study and acquire a preëminence in knowledge, did they know that merit would be appreciated, and meet with the reward that is due to it.

Furthermore, I may state that it was understood last year, when I accepted the honor from the combined Lodges of Home and Alpha, that I should be permitted to retire at the end of this year; and in thus doing, permit me to return to you my sincere thanks for the honor conferred, which I conceive one of the brightest jewels of my Masonic life; for

although I have the honor to belong to every body of the Masonic Fraternity known in our country, yet, as I before observed, I hold the craft degrees to be the corner-stone of the edifice, and as such should receive the earnest support of every Mason who has the good of the fraternity at heart. This it has been my earnest wish to do, for although at times holding office in the higher bodies of the fraternity, I have made it a rule, never, unless on extraordinary occasions, to neglect my Lodge for any other, holding that obligations incurred cannot be put aside or abrogated by others subsequently assumed; and I regret to see it so much the case as it is, that many brethren, after receiving the higher degrees, almost altogether neglecting their duties in the Lodge. This, brethren, in connection with the unprepared state in which candidates are often advanced from one degree to another, will in a measure account for those great evils that we have to contend against—namely, rusty Masons and empty Lodge rooms.

I conceive it a great mistake to advance an E. A. or F. C. before he is well versed in the duties of the degree he has already taken. By doing thus, you, in my opinion, do injustice to both the candidate and the Fraternity, and make hard to acquire, as a whole, that which would be easily attained if taken separately. Was each brother positively required to perfect himself in each degree before advancement, (this is the spirit as well as the text of the law of our Grand Lodge, and therefore binding upon us) you would not witness, as you often do, brethren presenting themselves at our Lodges too rusty to be admitted, and members of the Lodge begging to be excused when temporarily appointed to an office. This latter proves injurious in keeping members away from the Lodge in this way: there are brethren who have their full share of pride, and but little Masonic information, when they happen to be temporarily put in an office, and thereby their insufficiency shown, feel hurt, and instead of immediately applying themselves to acquire the knowledge they lack, will often say to themselves, "I will not go to the Lodge, as I may be put in some other office and make a fool of myself again." Were the requirements of the Grand Lodge insisted on, and the degrees properly conferred by our Lodges, this would not be the case, as each one would be conversant with the work of the Lodge, and instead of seeking to evade an office, would take pleasure in the ap-

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pointment, and our Lodges would be fully attended, and bet-
 ter still, many of those foolish and disagreeable differences
 of opinion that at times prevail, would never exist, as a bet-
 ter knowledge of the work and usages of Masonry would
 undoubtedly do away with them. If the members of the
 craft would, on attaining the degree of M. M., examine into
 and learn to understand what those rights and benefits were,
 that they acquired in becoming such—would they study the
 Constitution and By-Laws, and those esoteric laws that have
 for ages governed the fraternity—would they reflect that
 those rights and privileges were mutual in their action, and
 governed by the Level, especially the right to propose and
 reject, and that ours is a voluntary association, composed of
 various individuals, varying in degrees of intelligence and
 prejudices, then they would not be surprised that differences
 of opinion should occur, but would see that it would be folly
 to suppose that they should all think alike, on all subjects
 and occasions.

And they would be better satisfied with the action of the
 law, (known to them before they acquired a membership in
 the fraternity), that upon all subjects, not governed by spe-
 cific laws, that a majority shall govern and decide questions.
 Were these facts fixed in the memory, and acted upon in a
 rational manner, many of those miffs and petty shows of
 childish irritability that is sometimes seen, would be avoided,
 and peace and good fellowship reign where, unfortunately
 for the craft, is sometimes seen a pettishness that would be
 thought a folly, even in a boarding-school Miss. And those
 who are so apt to find fault with the decisions of the W. M.
 would they but make themselves acquainted with the duties
 of a W. M., or reflect that he is, or should always be, elected
 or selected for his knowledge of the laws and usages of the
 craft, and his ability to govern, and that he is responsible
 for the acts of his Lodge; and that, although from a sense
 of right or duty he may differ with one or more of his mem-
 bers, and decide contrary to their opinions, yet, that it is at
 all times unpleasant to the W. M. to do so, then would they
 be less liable to find fault. A W. M. who is qualified for
 the high office to which he is chosen, will at all times be
 strictly correct in his deportment, and especially so towards
 those with whom he may differ in opinion; and though cour-
 teous and affable, yet he should be firm in his decisions.
 This would only heighten him in the opinion of those who

reflected on the position he held as their W. M., that very position implying that he had the good of the fraternity at heart, and therefore his decisions should be courteously submitted to, even in cases where it might be right and proper to refer them to a higher authority, being certain that a W. M. who has a proper sense of the dignity of the office he holds will never be guilty of favoritism in this Lodge, but will at all times take pleasure in rewarding true merit. The opinion that you sometimes hear raised by brethren not altogether *au fait* in the usages of the craft, that the office of W. M. is altogether too arbitrary, I am glad to say, changes as the individual acquires more light and experience. It is seldom, indeed, that the proper exercise of the prerogatives of a W. M. proves a hardship, though the improper exercise of them by an inexperienced or ignorant Master, may do so. This is not the fault of the law, but of him who exercises it. For the good of the craft it is absolutely necessary that the will of the Master should govern. Would a doubt exist as to what would be the result of an opposite principle if applied to a military organization? What would become of it, if, when a commanding officer issued an order to a subordinate to perform a certain duty, that he should neglect or object to perform it, on the ground that he didn't think it good policy, or a proper movement? And will not the precise result take place in a Lodge?

There is but little doubt but that the conduct of the members of a Lodge may, to a considerable extent, influence that of a W. M. and vice versa. If the brethren, during labor, hold private conversations, pass unnecessarily about the Lodge, and are negligent of the work going on or are rude and impolite in their manners—where this is the case, and it does not act injuriously upon the W. M., it would imply the highest possible compliment to him, both as a man and a Mason; or else that he was altogether and utterly unqualified for a W. M., (or, I was going to say, anything else).

At times you hear the W. M. found fault with, because he will not immediately admit a member who has arrived at the Lodge room after the Lodge has opened and labor commenced; and if he is requested to wait until the secretary finish reading the minutes, or until a section of a degree that is being conferred is finished, he forsooth gets in a huff that the Lodge did not stop for him the work on hand, that which it would not have done for any one else, and that

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which the W. M., or even the M. W. G. M. himself, would not have expected, had they been in like situation. Such brethren should remember the first lessons, and rummage their dictionary for the definition of patience and perseverance, and ask themselves in what manner they may be made subservient to practical use in Masonry. Sometimes a brother is in favor of a candidate who is rejected by the Lodge, hereupon he gets vexed, and says he knows the candidate to be as good a man as any in the Lodge, and if such men are to be rejected, that he will never again enter the Lodge—that he would advise all good men to leave such a body, and declares the brother rejecting, as a bad man and Mason, and dares him to make himself and his objections known. Now this is all wrong, such conduct would be reprehensible in any association, much less a Masonic Lodge; the more so, as every man who has had the honor to be made in a body of Masons, in any part of the world, has unquestionably been taught the contrary. In this country the right of ballot is not only maintained, but unanimously supported by each and every Grand Lodge; such a case as above stated, shows in strong colors how carefully each brother on the investigating committee should perform his duty. In regard to the ballot, and the right of proposing and rejecting, every Mason is taught that in these, we all meet upon the level, and are conscientiously bound to act by the plumb, and that each and every brother has the right and is expected to form his own judgment, and in this, to be unquestioned, as each is supposed to be as conscientious as the other.

Where a good man is rejected by a Lodge, it debars him the pleasures of the fraternity for six months, but where a bad man is admitted, the whole fraternity is injured, and its status lowered.

In our own Lodge there is a case in point: one of our own brethren, whom the Lodge now delights to honor for his integrity and worth, was some years since rejected by our own Lodge, and more than once; and I considered it much to his honor, that through his perseverance, self-respect and integrity, he has proved the objections to be without foundation, and has taken a rank in the estimation of his brethren, that he might never have attained had no objection been offered. His was the true course of the gentleman, and is much to be commended. It is better that one hundred, yea,

one thousand good men be rejected, than one bad man be admitted; had this rule been strictly enforced for years back, you would not see as you do now, in the address of almost every eminent Mason, from Maine to California, the reiterated caution of, "guard well the doors of admission," and our fraternity would have had a preferable moral standing to what it is now entitled to.

On a trial, whenever there is a doubt, the accused is to have the benefit. Not so in this case; but whenever a doubt of the propriety of admitting an applicant exists, then the fraternity is entitled to the benefit.

If I have spoken freely upon this subject, it is because now in the hour of prosperity and popularity, it is one of material importance to the welfare of the fraternity; this is a great privilege, it should be cautiously used and never abused. Ask the opinion of any intelligent Mason on this subject, and the answer will invariably be, that men are often admitted, who had they been judged by the principles of the square, level and plumb, could never have gained admission. I would not here be understood as advocating a rule that has been advanced by some that are eminent Masons—that none should be admitted but educated men. No, because many of the best men of our own and other countries, have been without the benefit and advantages of an education. I am fully sensible of the advantages that it will give, and readily admit that it would, and does, give the possessor great advantages in the amount of good he may effect, and increase materially the sphere of his usefulness to the craft and the world at large. Yet, there are many good, zealous and upright men, who have not the advantages of an education, that are calculated to become good and efficient craftsmen, and often set an example that might well be imitated by their brethren that have been more fortunate in acquired knowledge or education. But I hold that the standard of admission should, and does require, honesty of purpose, uprightness of character and self-respect, in every case. Neither of these is or can be lacking in the good Mason.

The principle of admitting bad men, and thereby making them better, or good, *is a false one*; for, I emphatically maintain that Masonry was never intended as a Van Dieman's Land, or convict ship, for society at large; but that the proper principle is, to admit alone good men and true, and thereby increase their usefulness and their ability to do good.

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The man of bad or doubtful character can with no more propriety be introduced within the sanctuary than the wolf into the sheepfold. This evil is sometimes caused by the establishment of more Lodges in a place than is proper or required; by unnecessary or profuse expenditure, on the part of a Lodge in creating a show, and making display, or in the neglect of its financial affairs; and sometimes by a misplaced and reprehensible ambition on the part of its officers to acquire the name of making the most Masons, using these as an excuse (especially the want of funds in the Lodge treasury) to introduce within the portal many that, under other circumstances, could not have gained an entrance.

This is an evil that is grievously felt by the craft, and still more so by some of the higher bodies, owing to the opinion (held by many), that if a man is a M. M. that he is consequently entitled to admission into any of the higher bodies. It might as well be argued, and with equal propriety, that if a man were a member of a church, that he was consequently entitled to be a Bishop.

The tendency to make the low state of the funds in the Lodge an excuse for the admission of doubtful candidates, was one of the principal reasons why I advocated a union of the two Lodges—Alpha and Home—as it would give the conjoined Lodge a sufficiency of members that, by paying an amount of dues that every Mason would willingly give, it could meet all of its ordinary expenses, without depending at all upon the fees of initiation, consequently could never have its judgment influenced by a monetary consideration.

The United Lodge A-H. No. 72 should now possess a membership numbering 75 or 80, which, at \$10 dues, would be \$750 or \$800; the expenses for the rent of Lodge room, \$150; La. Relief Lodge, \$240; Secretary, \$104; Tyler, \$104; and say for incidental expenses \$100, would be \$698—say \$700; so that the dues would cover all the actual expenses outside of or excepting that to members, their widows or orphans. And in order that the payment might be as little onerous as possible, your committee on By-Laws recommended that the amount of the R. Lodge assessment, \$3, and the Gd. Lodge of \$1, be paid the 1st of January, and 50 cts. per month dues to be paid the first meeting in December, thinking by dividing the payment to lessen the

tax and add to its punctuality. Up to this time the new Lodge has had to pay some debts that had not been anticipated at the time of the union, but the debts were just claims, and have been paid. The condition of the Lodge will soon permit it to do what I would earnestly suggest for its future action—that is, to establish a fund of from \$300 to \$500, to be kept to meet any requirements caused by the sickness or death of members, or the requirements of their widows or orphans, as all demands of this kind for members or their widows or orphans, must be independent of the La. Relief Lodge. This fund, I would suggest, should be held sacred for this purpose alone. It has not been necessary for me to draw upon the funds of the Lodge for purposes of charity for individuals of the fraternity, the Relief Lodge having faithfully met all demands upon it for that purpose. The requirements made on the Lodges arising from the death of members having been before you, you are conversant therewith.

The La. R. Lodge No. 1, is an institution that we should be especially proud of, it having met the approval of the craft all over the world, except at home. In this, the old adage of a Prophet receives no honor in his own country, seems to apply. I deeply regret, and am surprised, that one-half of the Lodges of the city of New Orleans, though professing to be governed by the principles of Charity and Benevolence, yet they are not subscribers to its funds, thereby causing those that are, to bear the expense of nearly all the calls for charity made here upon the fraternity. The largest Lodge in our city has in its wisdom withdrawn from it, and this, too, when its labors have received universal approbation wherever its charities have become known. This approbation should be especially grateful to the members of Alpha Lodge, as the originator of the plan of the R. Lodge was for six years its W. M. I allude to P. M. Wm. H. Hutchings.

I would now beg leave to offer you some suggestions referring to the work of the Lodge. I do this hoping it may prove of benefit to the Lodge, and especially add to the convenience of my successor as W. M.

First, as to the officers of the Lodge: They should feel that they are conscientiously bound—should they not have a full and comprehensive knowledge of the work, and the

Up to this time the new that had not been anticipated but the debts were just a condition of the Lodge would earnestly suggest establish a fund of from requirements caused by, or the requirements of demands of this kind for ans, must be independent fund, I would suggest, impose alone. It has not the funds of the Lodge for als of the fraternity, the at all demands upon it for made on the Lodges arising ng been before you, you

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duties of the office which they hold—to immediately acquire the same; not only because it would show a proper appreciation on their part of the honor conferred by the brethren in their selection, but because it would be but an ill return for the favor received. to permit the work of the Lodge to be deranged, or appear to disadvantage, through ignorance of their official duties.

Although there is, and must be, a difference in the grade of the officers of a Lodge, yet it appears to me that there is a very general misapprehension as to the value of certain offices in the same.

For instance, that of *Tyler*. It is, I believe, a very general opinion that this office may be filled without detriment to the Lodge by brethren possessing but a very imperfect knowledge of the usages of the fraternity.

This, in my opinion, is a great mistake, for where is the brother who has been in the habit of visiting Lodges, that has not had cause to note the difference between approaching a Tyler who is unfortunately ignorant of his duties and the usages of the fraternity, that is harsh and ungentlemanly, or boorish in his manners, and one who is fully conversant with his duties, gentlemanly in his deportment, and kind and attentive in his greeting?

And this officer gives more to, or detracts more from, the standing of a Lodge than is usually supposed.

There are the Stewards of the Lodge, who, if well qualified in a knowledge of the work, need by no means be the merely nominal officers that they are generally supposed to be during labor; but if they are such brethren as may be trusted with that delicate and important duty of examining visitors, will be chosen by the W. M. as the head of examining committees—a duty requiring not only the deportment of a gentleman, but a thorough knowledge of the principles and work of the craft, not only of our own country, but that of foreign nations also. Therefore, it is easy to conceive of the importance of an office to which is entrusted the honor of the Lodge and the Sanctuary of the fraternity. I wish there were more among us capable of properly performing this important duty.

The office of Master of Ceremonies, or Marshal, is of more importance to the Lodge than is usually attributed to it. It is his duty to introduce visitors to the Lodge, and to take

command of the body when in public, therefore he should possess a thorough knowledge of the conventional usages of society and of the fraternity, as well as the manners of a gentleman. The manner in which he performs his duties will effect materially the opinion formed of his Lodge by visiting brethren, and of strangers from abroad who may visit it.

The Secretary is an officer only second in influence in a Lodge to the W. M. He should possess in a preëminent degree, punctuality and business habits, so that his books may show every business transaction fully and distinctly. The value of this office, as well as those of Sr. D., T. and the Wardens, are so well known as to need no comment.

And here permit me to return my thanks to the officers of the Lodge for the manner in which they have aided me in the work. It is a pleasing reflection to me, that it has been my good fortune to have escaped disagreement with any of them, upon matters of importance, they having at all times rendered their assistance promptly, willingly, and with zeal and ability.

With regard to speaking in the Lodge, I would request that the officers and members should speak in a clear and distinct tone, that all may hear what is said; because, to mumble out your words, or hurriedly run them into one another, indicates an unnecessary want of confidence, or ignorance of what should be spoken.

When about to address a Lodge, be careful not to interrupt a brother who may have the floor, before he has finished speaking, as it is not only impolite, but causes trouble and loss of time, and obliges the W. M. to call the brother transgressing to order. The politeness and courteousness of address that characterizes the gentleman, should be the rule of the Lodge room.

No business foreign to the subject under discussion should be proposed, until the matter in hand is disposed of. In speaking to or of an officer of the Lodge, always use his appropriate title. Be especially careful in speaking to visitors or strangers, particularly so if on an examining committee, as strangers will be very apt to judge of the character of your Lodge from the committee. Should the individual being examined be unfortunate enough to become irritated, be careful not to imitate him, but let him see by the suavity

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the candidate. Should the individual
be so much enough to become irritated,
do not let him see by the suavity

of your manners that your Lodge has better taught the first
lesson; for a true Mason is as slow to anger as he is quick
to forgive. Make it a rule not to speak unless you know
well what you are going to say; always address the pre-
siding officer; speak clearly and distinctly, and when
through, yield the floor at once to others.

I would state here, that in doing the legislative business
of the Lodge, I would, had I the choice, prefer to do it in
the E. A. Degree, so that E. A. and F. C's. may be present,
(and although not allowed to vote), yet, they would acquire a
knowledge of the mode of transacting business, and not
have the same to learn after they have acquired the right
to vote; and because it would give young members an
inducement to attend the meetings, as they would not run
the risk of having to go home without entering the Lodge
because of its not working in the degree to which they
belonged. I am glad to say that this opinion of mine
coincides with the opinions of many eminent Masons, among
whom is your M. W. G. M.

Committees—Each member appointed on a committee,
should feel that it was his *duty* conscientiously to fulfil the
service imposed upon him to the best of his ability; and
should he not be able to perform the same by the time the
Lodge expects it, to report that fact and ask for further time,
or to be discharged as the case might require. The chair-
man of a committee is expected to take charge of the business,
to appoint a meeting of the committee, and to see that a
proper report is made in due time; except committees of
investigation, who may act independently, and should make
their individual report as soon as perfectly satisfied, by
writing the same in the book for reports, kept by the Secre-
tary. They should do this, that the business of the Lodge
may not be retarded, should the committee be absent when
the same is called up for consideration, because it would be
ground for censure for one individual to delay and incom-
mode the whole Lodge, by his neglecting to perform a
duty that is incumbent upon him.

Vouching—There is an error or evil of the present day
that I would speak of—that of being vouched for when
unable to work into a Lodge, and of inconsiderately vouching
for others, when you have not made use of all the precautions
required, in order that you might do so with safety to the

craft and honor to yourself. Now in this matter, I would lay down this general rule: that he who cannot stand an examination himself, is incapacitated (from ignorance) to properly examine another; and I feel certain that this rule would have but few exceptions. Many brethren in volunteering to perform this important duty, do not seem to be aware that they are assuming to themselves the position of Tyler to the fraternity at large, or of that of investigating committee to the Lodge, to whom the vouching is made. A brother when making an examination *alone*, should feel that he is bound to take *all* the precautions that he would do, if he were upon a committee sent out from a Lodge. As an evidence of the carelessness in which this duty is performed, I could cite you many instances; two will fully suffice. In one case on investigation, it seemed that the brother vouching, only knew him that was vouched for as an *Odd Fellow*; and in the other, he was only known as a *Secret Monitor*. I am decidedly of opinion that a brother who accepts a voucher to visit any other than his own Lodge, when unable to work his way in, is unfortunately wanting in Masonic zeal and self-respect.

Voting.—Each member should feel it his duty to vote upon all subjects offered to the Lodge, and he should do so promptly, unless unable to do it from ignorance of the subject. In balloting on petitions, the Gd. Lodge requires that all the members of the Lodge present shall vote. Where a brother has no knowledge of the applicant, he may safely decide in accordance with the report of the investigating committee; for if they have done their duty, a full and fair investigation has determined their report. In the Lodges of our country, the ballot is a secret one, and no brother is justifiable in seeking to expose it in any manner; nor has he the right any more to expose his own ballot than that of another, the same being expressly prohibited by the Gd. Lodge, and is, in my opinion, the best policy that we could pursue. Should a ballot result in a different manner from what is wished by a brother, he should be very careful not to show his regret at the result in an excited or offensive manner, as the same has been determined (for six months at least) upon a principle of a right, acquired by every member on becoming a M. M.; a right that has never been gainsayed or controverted. Our good sense and respect to

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Our general deportment in the Lodge should be such as would make our meetings desirable, so that every member should be able to look forward to that evening as one on which he could count for rational enjoyment, and regret it if unable to attend. Our meetings should be characterized by good feeling, amiability, social intercourse, and a kindness of manners and feelings that would render them agreeable to all present; and out of the Lodge we should be governed by those moral and social virtues that are inculcated in it. The true Mason, without the Lodge, as well as within it, is slow to anger and quick to forgive, thereby showing that the first lesson at least has neither been useless or forgotten; he will shut his ears to slander, for he is no news-monger or tell-tale. You will not find him taking a pleasure in regretting to another (*very privately*) that brother so-and-so has done such-and-such an act—that is, he would not positively assert that it was so, but that he had heard it from what ought to be good authority; and at the same time be telling every brother he meets the same story, *but always very privately*. A Mason should not be guilty of making the great mistake to suppose that his tongue was especially made to tattle about the backslidings of his brethren. His brother's failings should be as sacred in his breast as his own.

The fraternity in this country is probably at this time in a more flourishing and popular condition than it has ever been known. By reference to a very elaborate statistical table, prepared by our R. W. Gd. Secty., I find that there are in the United States 37 Gd. Lodges, having 4736 subordinate Lodges, numbering 209,671 members returned, besides a large (alas! too large) number of unaffiliated Masons. In our own State, we have 111 Lodges, with 4661 members. Our Gd. Lodge, in addition to the 36 Gd. Lodges of the United States, is in correspondence with 37 Gd. Lodges in foreign countries, showing that wherever good men and true exist, Masonry has a home, and glad would we be did our fraternity contain none other; but candor compels us to admit that there are several species of the order that are composed of Hybrids, arising from compound-
 ing Masonry with incompatibles, and thereby producing sev-

eral species, who, though having the same name, and outwardly the same general appearance—and are by the world classed alike—yet, inwardly, they possess little or none of the intrinsic worth of a true Mason.

It was my intention to have described and mentioned the peculiarities of several of these species, but for fear of being thought critical, I will only name a few: There is the Dinner and Supper Mason, the Drinking Mason, the Policy Mason, the Braggadocio or "big-man-me" Mason, the Learned and Philosophic *pseudo* Mason. These last two species are often confounded, but may be easily distinguished by the one paying lavishly on all *public subscriptions*, and the other never paying a cent that can be evaded. The Dues-paying Mason, the Side-degree Mason, the News-monger Mason, and a nasty scrub species yecept the Borrowing Mason. These last three species might be included under one general head, of *On-the-square-Masons*. These all possess positive defective principles, that at once distinguish them from the true members of the fraternity.

There is a habit of some of the above named species that is of late becoming entirely too common: That of the improper use of an emblem of Virtue, and pledging the word of a Mason on all occasions, and in the most solemn manner, even upon the most frivolous subjects. This is exceedingly injudicious and injurious to the craft, and should meet the unqualified condemnation of every good Mason. Not long since I heard one of those brethren who was exceedingly fond of it, checked at once, and, as I thought, in a very appropriate manner: He was exceedingly anxious to convey something of an every-day character in this manner, to another brother, who told him that unless he had confidence enough in him to communicate it in an ordinary form, that he would decline to hear it at all; and from his manner, I do not think he has *squared* that brother from that day to this. It is at times almost disgusting to hear the forms of the fraternity thus debased and made subservient to the petty vanity of a foolish or soft-headed brother, by connecting them with or to matters often contemptible in themselves, and not only having no connection with the principles of the craft, but frequently in direct opposition thereto.

A knowledge of these things, my brethren, though

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they are facts, is not by any means a very satisfactory sub-
 ject to dwell upon, and I have therefore treated the matter
 in a concise, if not a very lucid manner. I have mentioned
 them under the impression that it is not at all times unwise
 to examine and weigh these evils that we labor under, more
 especially if they are susceptible of amelioration or eradi-
 cation; the more so, as our fraternity is at this time exceed-
 ingly popular, and may be said to resemble, in many re-
 spects, a garden with a rich soil, which, with labor and
 proper attention, is capable of producing in abundance the
 most desirable and valuable products; but which, if neg-
 lected, is, by the very principle that rendered it valuable,
 soon overrun with grass and weeds, and becomes utterly
 worthless for its products. The very popularity that our
 fraternity now has, if not attended to by the Lodges in
 making proper selection of the materiel introduced, and
 having the same properly worked, and of eradicating from
 our Lodges the worthless and effete matter they now con-
 tain, will result, like the neglected garden, and become
 worthless in its production.

It becomes us, as members of the fraternity, to see that
 no bad seed is introduced, or to allow the ground to remain
 encumbered with useless weeds. In doing this, I would not
 that the possession of an education should alone be the stand-
 ard of admission; but integrity of character, moral worth,
 and good natural acquirements, should never be lacking;
 and those members that are useless or detrimental, should
 be cut off, thus at once relieving the craft of its worst in-
 cumbrances, and give it a higher moral standing, and make
 it more nseful and desirable.

Those among us that think that a knowledge of the rou-
 tine, lectures, and the work of the Lodge is all that is re-
 quired in Masonry, are lamentably mistaken. Is there no-
 thing more to be done?

"Does one brother no longer proceed by law against an-
 other, in regard to matters that could easily have been set-
 tled within the Masonic circle?"

"Has the *duello*—that hideous heritage of barbarism, that
 is interdicted among brethren by our fundamental laws, and
 denounced by the municipal code—yet disappeared from the
 soil we inhabit?"

"Do Masons no longer form uncharitable opinions of their

brethren—judge themselves by one rule, and their brethren by another?

“Has Masonry a well regulated system of charity? Has it done what it should have done for the cause of education? Where are its schools, its colleges, its hospitals and infirmaries?”

“Are political controversies now no longer conducted with violence and bitterness?”

“Do Masons always refrain from defaming and denouncing their brethren who differ with them in religious or political opinions?”

“What grand social problems or useful projects engage our attention at our communications? Where in our Lodges are lectures habitually delivered for the real instruction of the brethren?”

“Do not our sessions pass in the discussion of minor matters of business—the settlement of points of order, and questions of mere administration and the admission and advancement of candidates, whom, after their admission, we take no pains to instruct?”

“In what Lodge are our ceremonies explained and elucidated, corrupted as they are by time until their true features can scarcely be distinguished? Where are those great primitive truths of Revelation taught, which Masonry has preserved to the world?”

When these questions can be properly and favorably answered in favor of the fraternity—when our debates are but friendly conversations—when we have in our Lodges perfect union, concord and peace—when we no longer keep among us men who excite rivalries and jealousies—when our words and our acts all agree—then, and then only, will the Mason have no more to learn; but, until then, no Mason has the right to content himself with the mere husk, and refuse the kernel. Let him who is satisfied with nominally being a Mason, urge this doctrine, but never let him put any claim to the title of bright or true Mason. “But let him who desires to understand the harmonious and beautiful proportions of Masonry, read, study, reflect, digest and discriminate.”

“The true and enlightened Mason is an ardent seeker after knowledge; and he knows that books are vessels which come down to us freighted with the intellectual riches of the past,

and that in landing these Argosies, is much that sheds light upon the history of Masonry, and proves its claims to be regarded as a great benefactor of mankind."

"Knowledge is the most genuine and real of human treasures; for it is light, as ignorance is darkness. It is the development of the human soul, and its acquisition the growth of the soul, which, at the birth of man, knows nothing, and therefore, in one sense, may be said to be nothing. It is the seed, which has in it the power to grow, to acquire, and by acquiring, to be developed; as the seed is developed into the shoot, the plant, the tree.

"To learn, to attain knowledge, to be wise, is a necessity for every truly noble soul; to teach, to communicate that knowledge, to share that wisdom with others, and not churlishly to lock up his exchequer, and place a sentinel at the door to drive away the needy, is equally the impulse of a noble nature and the worthiest work of man. To attain truth, to serve mankind, our country and our fellows—this is the noblest destiny of man," and the object of a true Mason.

To do this, and not to be satisfied with a few lessons upon the rudiments of Architecture, a few ordinary maxims of Morality, and a few unimportant and unsubstantiated traditions, or the mere work of the Lodge, is the natural tendency of the true Mason. To you, who would acquire, "the way is long and toilsome. If you would advance, then gird up your loins for the struggle. Pleasure, all smiles, will beckon you on one hand; and Indolence will invite you to sleep among the flowers, upon the other. Prepare, then, by Secrecy, Obedience and Fidelity, to resist the allurements of both."

But with all the advantages that educational knowledge unquestionably gives, a true Mason is not known by it alone. He has a high sense of honor; he is true, delicate and polite; he will never take mean or unworthy advantage of those with whom he has dealings; he has charity—is tolerant to a brother's faults; he puts the best construction that circumstances will admit, and with kindness seeks to bring back the erring to the fold; and when, giving alms, "gives, looking for nothing again; gives without future advantages; gives to children, to old men, to the unthankful and the dying, to those whom he will never see again, for else, he considers it not charity, but traffic and

merchandize." He feels that Masonry is useful to all men ; to the learned, because it affords them the opportunity of exercising their talents upon subjects worthy of their attention ; to the illiterate, because it affords them important instruction ; to the young, because it presents them with salutary precepts and good examples, and accustoms them to reflect on the proper mode of living ; to the man of the world, whom it furnishes with noble and useful recreation ; to the traveler, whom it enables to find friends and brothers in countries where else he would be isolated and alone ; to the worthy man in misfortune, to whom it gives assistance ; to the afflicted, on whom it lavishes consolation ; to the charitable man, whom it enables to do more good, by uniting him with those who are charitable like himself ; and to all who have a soul capable of appreciating its importance, and of enjoying the charms of a friendship founded on the principles of religion, morality and philanthropy." And, greater still, teaching them how to meet in a proper manner the last demand made on them in this life—how to die. For, although Masonry claims not to be religion, yet all its principles are founded upon, and all its teachings governed by that foundation of all true religion—the love of God, and doing unto your fellow man as you would that he should do unto you. It would teach us that the various evils, distresses, and troubles that we suffer from in this sphere, are not the direct visitations of God's wrath upon us, but the result of infractions of those great and harmonious laws of nature by and through which everything is to be conducted (in His good time) to a good and perfect end.

And, when the last great demand is made by death, and we are called upon to surrender existence in this sphere, that a firm, faithful, and abiding trust in His mercy, (Him whose wisdom and love are equally infinite) will dispel the gloom and dread of dissolution. In this we feel that we will not be disappointed in our hope, nor find our faith a delusion. The teachings of Masonry leads not its initiate (like Infidelity) to look upon death as annihilation ; but to the contrary, to view it as a change from this world of ignorance and vice, to one infinitely more beautiful and lovely, where his faculties will become so expanded and refined that he will learn to know the G. G. A. O. T. U. through a thousand senses, that his imperfections while here deprived him of :

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and he will glorify God in the magnificence of his creation, that will then become known to him. This, my brethren, will be the result of the study and practice of the principles taught by Masonry ; and may the Great Father above, in the plenitude of his mercy, teach each and all of us, and every Mason, to study aright, comprehend, and practice those principles.

My brethren, in the junction of the two Lodges of Alpha and Home, you have adopted a proud and noble name. The *First Home*—Masonically speaking, a distinguished title ; see to it, that you make it all you claim.

To do this, we need a settled determination to do our duty ; a little more sociability and love of our profession ; which would induce that brotherly love and affection that should be the main-stay and pride of the fraternity. This we may do and have, and then we will be entitled to the proud appellation we have chosen.

And now, my brethren, in bidding you officially adieu, permit me again to thank you, one and all, for the assistance you have rendered me in conducting the affairs of the Lodge, and the compliments you have tendered me.