

THE USE OF MASONRY

This is a question which is often asked by the non-Mason when at a loss to understand the enthusiasm with which the Freemason pursues his Craft. Moreover, it is a question which sometimes the Freemason finds recurring to himself, long after it has been asked. It is also a question which it is eminently desirable that he should be able to answer. Not only for his own satisfaction and to prove to himself that his time, money and talent are being profitably expended; but there can be no reason why the world at large shall not receive some small enlightenment on the subject. He may not canvass. Nothing more un-Masonic can be conceived. But, on the other hand, we cannot expect persons to become candidates knowing absolutely nothing of what they may be plunging themselves to, or what benefit they are to derive from membership of the Order.

Such information as the candidate acquires previous to his actual reception is of the negative type. He is told that nothing will be required of him incompatible with the due discharge of his civil and religious duties. His proposer has probably told him, in reply to a very probable query, that the Order is not a friendly or benefit society. With this he generally has to be content, and he enters the Order full of curiosity.

A not uncommon result of this is that as soon as the curiosity is satisfied, indifference succeeds; or if not indifference, the social side of our proceedings acquires undue prominence. It is worth, then, considering if there is not some way of explaining what the Order is, and at the same time obtaining from infraction of the landmarks.

In the first place, Freemasons are a body of men who have entered into certain guarantees of conduct which, if duly observed, will help to make them better citizens and better members of Society. The basis of progress in any enterprise, good or bad, is co-operation; and, therefore, it really makes for the good of the State in which Freemasons congregate, that there should be wealthy, powerful and well organised combinations pledged to discountenance any proposal that has for its object the subversion of the good order of



society.

Freemasonry is also pledged to help those who have fallen, and to uphold their good name in their absence as well as in their presence, to protect them in all their lawful undertakings, to acquire new friends, and thus provide society with the germ of progress and development.

To be a Freemason means that a man is in good standing with a very influential section of the community, and actuated by motives which, until the contrary is proved, do him credit. The stay-at-home Brother may not appreciate altogether what this means, but the Brother on his travels has many opportunities of finding it out if he is so disposed. A Freemason need never be without friends.

If there is any virtue in age, Freemasonry has it, for our principles are old and unchanging. The Freemason never excites himself with the feverish desire of being "up-to-date". With all its progress and with all its up-to-dateness, the world has never been able to get beyond the great principles so dear to Freemasons - Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

If the principles of the Order have been accepted by members of the Royal House, men eminent in science and literature, men who have shone in diplomacy, distinguished representatives of the Services, and all admitted to have added a new interest to life, then meaner humanity may well feel honoured to be members.

All that is best in human nature is appealed to, and no one has gone wrong because of his membership of the Order. If there are those among us who have strayed, it is spite of - not because of - the Craft.

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