

MASONIC LITERATURE.

A Brother who does not read fails to get all that he might out of his membership of the Order. He also fails in his duty to "make some daily advancement in Masonic knowledge."

A certain amount of mental culture is rightly presupposed in all who are admitted to the Order, and possibly the ignorance of everything that concerns Masonry outside their own Lodge, which characterises many Brethren, may be due to the fact that they scarcely know where to begin.

In the first place there are certain things that the Craft has a right to expect of every Brother. For instance, the Book of Constitutions is put into his hands at his admission, and surely that means that he is expected to study it. He is shown the warrant, and surely that means that he is expected to read it. He receives the Lodge by-laws, and he surely fails in his duties if he does not make himself familiar with them. And lastly, his Lodge may possibly have a published history, which it is also his bounden duty to read. Masonic study up to this point ought to be regarded as a point of honour, and even if the Brother concerned gets no further, he will have a very good foundation and be able to be a useful member of the Society. The Constitutions ought to be his first care. It is only when he has understood the structure of our governing bodies, and the perfect order and symmetry that prevail, and that bind together every unit - it is only then that he has acquired a proper conception of the dignity and comprehensiveness of the body he has joined. The Antient Charges which form a part of the Book of Constitutions will help to discipline him and will give him a reverence for our traditions, and even if he makes no further progress, the Brother who has got thus far is well qualified to perform his Masonic duties. But every right-minded Brother aspires to office and fixes his eye on the chair of K.S., and the rank and file have a right to expect that Brethren appointed to govern and direct them shall be well informed in all



that concerns the Craft; and therefore, some additional course of reading may be suggested.

The history of the Order to which he belongs is the first subject that should engage the thinking Brother, and the history of the Craft naturally falls into two divisions, which, for want of better terms, may be called political and moral. Current history is quite as interesting from a political point of view and, therefore, every Brother ought to keep himself informed of what transpires, not only in his immediate circle, but in the Craft at large. A judicious course of visiting will suffice for the former, but the latter demands periodical literature. The quarterly reports of Grand Lodge come first, and Brethren entitled to receive them can be supplied by Grand Lodge at a nominal annual charge.

Too much praise cannot be accorded to Masonic journalism for the manner in which the sacred cause of Charity is kept to the front. The records of our great institutions, those in the provinces as well as those in London, are quite as much part of Masonic history as the records of Lodge meetings, and inasmuch as appeals on behalf of the various charities are continually coming before our Lodges and have to be considered intelligently, those Brethren to whom the Lodge looks for guidance cannot afford to be ignorant of anything that affects their welfare.

A study of the records of service of distinguished Brethren is a part of a liberal Masonic education, as well as notices of the careers of notable Brethren, and, as a rule, these cannot be found except in the pages of the Masonic periodical.

These references may be considered as a form of elementary education, but the possession of such knowledge creates a foundation upon which the earnest Freemason may raise a superstructure which shall be perfect in all its parts.

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