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THE SPIRITUAL SIDE OF ODD FELLOWSHIP

By Rev. E. R. Dille, D. D., Past Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of California.

San Francisco Call: One of the chief results of the social revolution which has made the spirit of human brotherhood dominant in this age is the development of the great fraternal organizations. There are 212 fraternal orders, with 6,000,000 members, in this land and the white banner of Odd Fellowship leads this vast army.

There are two classes of these orders—the purely fraternal orders and the life beneficiary orders. The former represent a membership of 3,010,000, the latter a membership of 3,020,000, a total of 6,030,000. These various societies paid out as benefits last year in round numbers \$75,000,000. One hundred and two of these societies have paid in the last 30 years \$570,533,851.

Last year the fraternal societies of America paid in benefits \$30,000,000 more than the Standard Oil Company pays to all its employes—and it pays \$45,000,000.

The influence and benefit of this vast amount can best be appreciated if we divide it into two parts. Let us say that \$50,000,000 was paid in death benefits and \$25,000,000 as weekly benefits. The former at \$2000 a policy would mean 20,000 families placed for a time at least above the fear of want; the latter would mean 250,000 families receiving \$10 a week for 10 weeks of the year, and that means aid in tiding over a crisis and the keeping of actual want from the door.

Take Odd Fellowship alone. It has 14,000 subordinate lodges, with 1,970,000 members; 2900 encampments, with 156,000 members; 6100 Rebekah degree lodges with 450,000 members; and 18,000 patriarchs militant.

It has disbursed in relief in its nearly 86 years of life \$100,000,000, and it has invested funds amounting to \$32,000,000, and gives relief annually to the extent of \$4,000,000.

In our own California jurisdiction we have 362 subordinate lodges, with 35,386 members; 93 encampments, 6100 members; 252 Rebekah degree lodges, with 24,000 members; and while California has only one-twenty-eighth of the membership of American Odd Fellowship, it pays one-twelfth of the relief disbursed.

The chief objects of Odd Fellowship then are to promote brotherhood and fraternity among men; to establish upon the mutual plan a fund for the relief in sickness and disability of members and their families and the widows and orphans of deceased members; to assist the spirit of co-operation in all departments of labor and commerce; to aid the unfortunate and relieve the distressed. Could our founder, Wilkey, revisit the earth, his great heart as large as humanity would throb with joy to see the little one become not 1000 merely but more than a million in membership and to know that last year it disbursed four millions of dollars in relief and to know that that princely sum is but a tithe of its munificence.

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