

WILLIAM SPEARING

The East Medina Lodge of Odd Fellows (Manchester Unity), Ryde, has sustained a great loss by the death of their worthy and much-respected secretary, P.P.G.M. **William SPEARING**, who was suddenly called away in the midst of his usefulness on Tuesday evening last, in the 52nd year of his age. On the previous evening Mr. SPEARING had been fulfilling his duties at the lodge; and after returning and retiring to his bed-room he was seized with a fit, which soon proved fatal. He was one of the founders of the Order in Ryde, about 21 years since, and it was in December, 1863, our readers must have noticed in these columns the interesting event of the presentation of his portrait to the lodge, of which the brethren must now more than ever feel pleased to possess; and on that occasion a brother of the Order, who a few weeks since passed into eternity, addressing the meeting, said – “Brother SPEARING, I was warmly desired, as one of the founders of this lodge, to discharge the pleasing duty of presenting to you a token of our unanimous esteem for the honesty, fidelity, and industry you have manifested whilst assisting to conduct the affairs of this lodge during the long period of 19 years. I need hardly say that how cheerfully I complied with that desire, though I pointed out the great uncertainty which the state of my health interposed as to fulfilment. It is therefore, with a mingled feeling of pleasure and pain that I re-appear, after a grievous sickness of four years and in a very weak state, at a post where much of my vigorous manhood was spent. Nineteen years, Brother SPEARING, have wrought great changes amongst that original band; some have gone to ‘the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns;’ others are spread over the surface of the earth, even to the Antipodes; others have left us from pride, and (worse still) from adverse circumstances; whilst of those who remain there are only yourself, myself, and Brother BEAZLEY present on this interesting occasion. When we met in 1844 to weigh the claims and merits of Odd Fellowship, and if not found wanting to open a lodge in our loved native town, we were met on every hand with discouragement and jeers; but, undeterred – or, perhaps, stimulated – by those things, we went on our way, and what is the result? We hoisted the flag of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows,’ and as ‘independence’ was our motto, we never cringingly sought for extraneous aid, and no honorary members have spontaneously thought us worthy of support.’ We are, therefore, under no obligations, so owe no gratitude. We never acted as rivals to kindred societies; on the contrary, we always viewed their success with pleasure as having a tendency to raise the industrial classes of mighty and liberty-loving England. As to our lodge, after paying large sums to lighten the hand of affliction -- to secure the most talented medical aid – to provide for decent burial, -- in short, after discharging every demand which either honesty or honor required, we find ourselves with funds in hand to the highly-creditable extent of £1,500, or at £10 a member. The recent influx of young members, although have reduced our monetary average, have also reduced most favorably our average age, and thus given us increased vitality. For this highly-gratifying state of things we are indebted to you, more than to any other brother, inasmuch as it was your sterling integrity, unwearied attendance, and brotherly urbanity which formed the band and kept together this bundle of sticks. Indeed I may truly say that during this long period of 19 years you have never missed a single meeting of the lodge – for the trifling exceptions caused by sickness or duty deserve no mention. This, Brother SPEARING, is not the treacherous and despicable language of flattery, but the honest tribute due to well-merited elevation; and elevation of the highest order – that of an equal raised above and by equals. In bringing these points into prominence, my object is not to put your modesty -- for modesty and merit generally go together – upon the rack, but to hold your character up to the younger brothers present, many of whom were sucklings and in long clothes when our career of Odd Fellows began, as an example to be followed, and to bid them ‘Go and do likewise.’ There is another useful lesson for them to learn tonight, namely that you have attained your honorable and enviable position, not through the possession of extraordinary genius or dazzling abilities, but by a firm performance of duty and a practical application of the homely proverb, ‘Honesty is the best policy.’ There is not, therefore, a single young brother present against whom such a road to honor is shut; and it is the stimulus given to a march upon that road by testimonials like we are about to present to you,

Brother SPEARING, that constitutes their utility, In the name, then, of the whole of the brothers of the East Medina Lodge, I present to you the chastest work of art of the kind which the high talent of our town could produce regardless of expense; and it is a testimonial, I believe, equally worthy of the givers and the receiver.” His memory will long be held in honor among the excellent and philanthropic society for which he labored so many years, and by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. His body was consigned to the silent grave this (Friday) afternoon, followed by a large number of the brethren of the Order. Each as he took a last farewell of the remains threw into the grave – as is their custom – a small branch of thyme, as an emblem of their esteem for the departed.

Born 30.10.1813

Died 31.10.1865

Researched by Ann & Lydia