The CABLETOW

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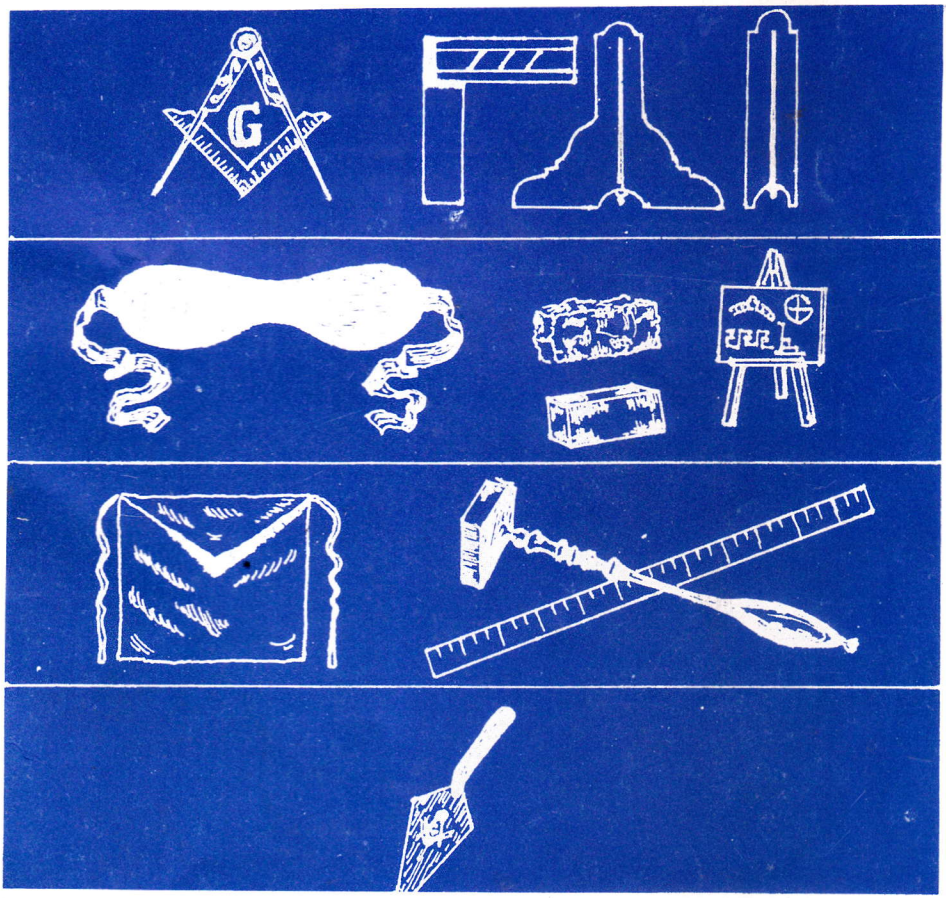

"MASONRY IS A CHAMBER OF IMAGERY"

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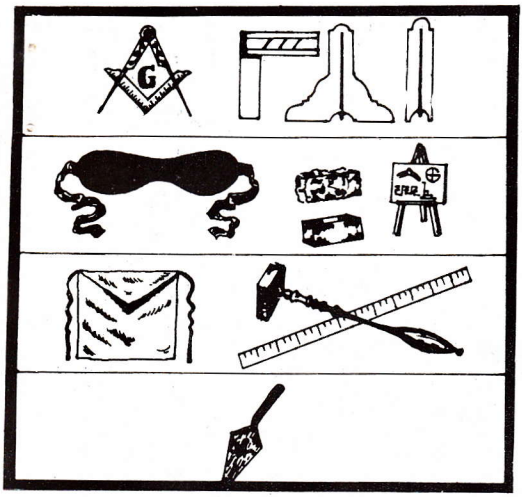

OUR COVER

Masonry is said to be a chamber of imagery. All the implements of masonry, its practices and rituals are pregnant with symbolic understones.

Through the years the MSA has published in the "Short Talk Bulletin" articles tracing the history of these implements and expounding on their symbology. Considering the dearth of masonic literature available to the Brethren in this jurisdiction, we are reprinting eleven of these articles. Hopefully, they will offer our Brethren a clearer understanding of the meaning behind the masonic implements and practices.

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from the GRAND MASTER

WHAT IS TRUTH?

About two thousand years ago, Pilate asked a question which has echoed and re-echoed in the minds of men up to the present time. Face to face with Him who is Truth itself, he asked "What is truth?"

In asking the question, Pilate exemplified the skeptic who sows doubt even as he suppresses the truth which cries out in the depths of his soul. Pilate closed his mind to the truth, denied it and crucified it. He thus immortalized for generations to come the eternal scapegoat which man turns to when he is confronted with the truth. And that is, man's rationalization of truth by determining for himself what is true and making his own definition of truth.

In so doing he slowly allows and tolerates distortion of the truth in the name of practicality and convenience until the dust and cobwebs so blur his vision of the truth that he can no longer distinguish between a truth and a lie.

We Masons are guided by the Masonic truths which the craft has taught us. Let us always cling to those truths. More importantly, let us have the courage to turn these noble truths into deeds.

Let us therefore not only mouth these truths in beautiful language that tickles the ears, but start living them. The Masons truths cannot bring us to the light if it stays merely in our minds or our lips. Indeed, truth has to be lived. And only by living a true Masonic life and being faithful to the tenets of the crafts and having the courage to defend it can we come to the full realization and understanding of the truth – the truth that will make us free.

RUBYARDO V. BUNDA
Grand Master

SEEK AND YOU SHALL FIND

Freemasonry is greater than any man; she is to be sought; she never seeks.

Four men sat in the smoking room of a Pullman, Three wore Masonic pins, and, as was natural, fell into easy conversation regarding their affiliations.

After a while one turned to the fourth and asked "Are you a Mason?"

"No" came the slow answer. "I'm not, I'm sorry to say. My father was . . . but he never asked me to join. Many of my friends are– but none of them asked me. I have often wondered why–what I am or do or say, that they don't want me . . . . ."

There was a moment's silence. Then: "Well, you have a tongue in your head, why not ask?" And then, of course, the non-member was instructed that Masonry never seeks. it must be sought. A man must come to the Order "of his own free will and accord." The strength of the Fraternity is in its *voluntary* association. Presumably, he whose father had never asked his son, he whose friend had never invited him to become a member of their Lodges, went to his home and requested a petition from a friend.

How many good men and true have failed to be Masons because of this unwritten law in Fremasonry can never be known. Undoubtedly, Freemasonry could become, for a little while, a Fraternity double, triple, and even quadruple her present size. If in some miraculous way the unwritten law could be repealed and all Lodge members "put on a drive" for membership, what armies of initiates would crowd Lodge rooms! What sudden, if temporary, prosperity would follow in Lodge and Grand Lodge bank accounts!

But the increase in size would be only for a little while and the prosperity would soon fade, to be succeeded by an interminable period of depression. Once Free-

masonry departs from her ancient principles and practices, she becomes just another organization—of which there are hundreds—and loses, probably never to regain it, that dignity and importance necessarily associated with that which is desirable yet unattainable without effort.

To ask a man to become a member of the Fraternity is not only a violation of one of the unwritten laws, but a positive injustice to the man. He who joins a Lodge, nor because he wants, but because another wants him to, necessarily misses, for life, something in the Ancient Craft which other men possess and hold dear. It is human to value that for which we labor, try strive, get by our own efforts. It is also human to hold as of little value and small worth that which comes unsought, which is easy to get, which requires no effort.

With the most loving intentions and highest hopes, many a father has laid a petition to his Blue Lodge, together with the required fee, at the breakfast plate of his son when the young man reached his twenty-first birthday. And many a father has seen those high hopes dashed, when the son took little interest,gradually lost touch and finally dimitted or was dropped N. P. D. It is one of the tragedies in the lives of ardent Freemasons—without intending it, they killed that which they loved the best!

Freemasonry is greater than any man. or any set of men. In the hearts of thousands of men it shares devotion to family, country, church. Naturally Freemasons who find a deep and inward satisfaction in the blessings of fellowship with their kind, who find meeting on the level and parting on the square with all kinds and degrees of men and an enabling experience, want their friends to share it with them. Yet if the desire to have the friend of one's heart a fellow Lodge member—no matter how ~~unselfish~~—is satisfied by breaking the law and proselyting, injury is done both to him who asks, to him who is asked, and to the Fraternity.

In these troubled times the Masonic Lodge is about the only place in which may gather in peace and harmony men of every shade of political opinion, of every religious belief, of every race. It is not possible to estimate now the profound effect which such association may have upon the world's history. It has had a profound effect before, and history attests the fact. One need go no further back than the Revolution for proof . . . not only was the idea of a union of the Colonies first proposed by Danial Coxe, Provincial Grand Master (New Jersey) but a majority of the signers of and the delegates who adopted the Constitution, were Freemasons. How much a part the Freemasonry which bulked so large in the lives of Washington and Franklin played in that convention cannot be estimated—but he need be no deep student to find Masonic principles set forth at length in the fundamental documents of Americanism and liberty.

Thirteen different sovereign states, each filled with jealous citizens, anxious each to assert its own specific needs and rights, yet joined in a common cause—how much had Freemasonry to do with it? It is on record how much Washington trusted his Masonic generals, and that it was this meeting on the level and

parting on the square which largely helped, if it did not wholly create, the unity of action which resulted in thirteen Colonies becoming one nation.

Had those Masons asked others, non-Masons, to become members, could that fellowship have existed?

Today we compromise with expediency, disregard the future to gain the immediate good. It is seen in all walks of life; in churches which "compete" for attention with movies and radio and sports by adopting the methods of commerce; in "drives" for membership in this, that and the other special association "for" or "against" something ; in government actions which count the immediate present of more importance than the far future. *"After me, the deluge"* is the motto of too many!

And the deluge will come! Mushroom growth dies like the mushroom. What is quickly built is jerry built. Circus stunt "evangelists" have converted multiplied thousands by mass psychology and theatrical appeal—and in a short time the "backsliders" equaled the conversions. Within the memories of all but the youngest Freemason is the meteroic rise and the collapse of the Ku Klux Klan, which grew by leaps and bounds and fell of its own weight.

Freemasonry is guarded against this danger by her strict law that no Freemason is indulge in proselyting. It is not Masonic to ask our friends to join Lodges, for the good and sufficient reason that unless a man *seek* the good in Freemasonry, he can neither benefit from it himself, nor help the Ancient Craft to help others.

There are those—and some in high places in the Fraternity—who have succumbed to the temptation of the times; to consider the immediate good, rather than the long range program. There are those who honestly believe that the old idea is outworn; that changing conditions demand changing ideals, and that what was wise a hundred, two hundred years ago, is not necessarily so now. And, indeed, it is a commonplace of modern thought that many ideas of one and two hundred years ago are out of date; what was good enough for our forefathers is by no means good enough for moderns, and rightly so.

But those who apply this argument to the ancient practices of Freemasonry, confuse ideals with ideas. It was an ancient *idea* to meet in taverns, or even on high hills and low vales. It is the modern idea to meet in a great Masonic temple, with every convenience of central heating, modern ventilation, electric light, elevators etc. It was an ancient idea to meet about a table and to fine members who indulge in too much strong drink; it is the modern idea to hold the banquet before or after Lodge and have no strong drink whatever.

But neither of these, nor a hundred others, are *ideals.*

It is an *ideal* of Freemasonry that it teach the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. It is not possible to conceive of a Freemasonry not so based. This ideal has stood, must forever stand, unchanged and unchangeable.

It is an *ideal* of Freemasonry that brotherhood means help for the helpless, succor for the suffering, a hand stretched out to the fatherless and the widow. It is as strong today as it

ever was, and one cannot think of a Freemasonry which is not charitable, patient, forebearing, mutually helpful.

And it is an *ideal* of Freemasonry that a man must come to it not by persuasion, not by threats, not by pressure, not even by invitation, but of a man's own motion, his own desire, his own free will and accord; "unbiased by friends, uninfluenced by mercenary motives, he freely and voluntarily offers himself as a candidate for the Mysteries of Masonry, etc."

This ideal can no more be laid aside, and yet Freemasonry remain Freemasonry , that can the Volume of the Sacred Law be taken from the Altar, meet ings be held in the public square, elections for candidates decided by majority vote.

With this as a foundation, let it be chronicled that many brethren lean over backward in an endeavor to stand upright! While we do not go about the world proclaiming vociferously "You cannot be a Freemason unless you ask it", there is nothing in any law, written or unwritten, which prevents a brother giving legitimate information to him who seeks it. The man in the smoking com partment did not *ask* to become a Freemason yet he indicated his desire, and told why he was not. There was nothing improper in his acquaintances informing him, as long as *he* had initiated the matter.

Just how far to go is a problem each brother must settle for himself. There is no fear of his going *too* far if he thoroughly understands the reasons for reticence. A case in point: To Brother A came a letter from Brother B in a far state. Brother B had been not only Masonic but blood brother to Brother C, who had died. The dearest wish of Brother C had been to have his son become a Freemason. Brother B thought that the son did not know this. So Brother B asked Brother A if he could do any thing in the premises.

It is no more possible to make rules for the guidance of those who honestly are in doubt as to how far they can go, how much they may legitimately say to a non-Mason about becoming one, than it is to make a rule to follow in how far to go, how much to say, in a kind act. But any such rule should include this; follow, do not lead or initiate the conversation. Tell what you may when asked, but do not offer facts which by any interpretation could be considered proselyting. Remember always that Freemasonry does not seek—she must be sought, not only for her sake, but for the sake of those who do become members.

Brother A called on the young man and read him the letter, saying "Masonry seeks no man. But Masonry tries to help its brethren. I do not seek you as a candidate for my, or any Lodge, but because I feel that your dead father's desire should be made known to you, I pass on to you your uncle's letter."

This was not proselyting; it was, so Brother A believed, a brotherly act.

When any one expresses any interest in becoming a Freemason, even if in the most general terms, it is legitimate to pursue the subject as long, but no longer, as he who has initiated it desires. Thus, the man who says "I've thought of becoming a Freemason, but I just don't know how to go about it" can be told "just how to go about it." But he should not be urged to "go about it."

To the Editor of these pages once came a Naval officer, a learned gentleman of scholarly education.

"I know nothing about Freemasonry" he said. "I ought to know. I want to know. But I don't want you to think I want to join, because I don't. Is it legitimate for you to tell me anything?"

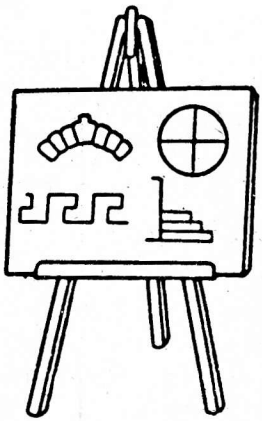
The Editor told him much, gave him books to read, all the information he desired. But the Editor never said "join my Lodge" or offered a petition. It was a month after that the officer came to *ask* for a petition "of his own free will and accord."

Let him who is asked be not *too* full of rules and dignity and ancient custom! To him who says "I'd like to become a Freemason, tell me how," it is perfectly proper to offer a petition, so be it one knows the inquirer as a good man and true.

Let this chat end with the words which began it, that all may know and heed:

"Freemasonry is greater than any man; she is to be sought; she never seeks."

TRESTLE-BOARD AND TRACING-BOARD



Often confused, the trestle-board and the tracing-board are actually alike only in the similarity of their names.

In the Master Mason's Degree we hear, "The three steps usually delineated upon the Master's Carpet are, etc." "What is this Master's Carpet?" is often asked by the newly-raised Mason. He is in a good Lodge the Master of which can give him an intelligent answer!

Among our moveable jewels the trestle-board is mentioned and described last, and with elaboration, but the Entered Apprentice looks long, and often in vain, for a piece of furniture which bears any resemblance to the trestle-board shown on the screen, or pointed out on the chart by the Deacon's rod.

We learn that Hiram Abif entered the

Sanctum Sanctorum at high twelve to offer his devotions to Deity, and to draw his designs upon the trestle-board. On that day when he was found to be missing there was a holiday in the half-finished Temple, because there was no designs on the trestle-board by which the workmen could proceed. But except in the ritual of the Entered Apprentice Degree, no explanation is given in the Lodge as to what a trestle-board may be.

Therefore it is somewhat confusing to find that the Lodge notice of meetings is sometimes called a Trestle-board, and still more so when some Masonic speaker refers to the Great Light as "The Trestle-board."

The tracing-board is a child of the Master's Carpet, which is a descendant of operative designs drawn upon the ground, or on the floors of the buildings used by operative builders for meeting purposes at night, and during construction hours as what we would term an architect's office.

Early operative builders' plans, drawn upon floor or earth, were erased and destroyed as soon as used. When Lodges changed from operative to Speculative, the custom of drawing designs upon the Lodge floor was continued; the "designs" for the Speculative Lodge, of course, were the emblems and symbols for the construction of the Speculative Temple of character.

From their position such plans became known as Carpets—the Master's Carpet, of course, was the design made upon the Lodge room floor during the Master's degree.

Such Carpets were drawn with chalk or charcoal. It was the duty of the youngest Entered Apprentice to erase this Carpet after the meeting, using a mop and pail for the purpose. Doubtless this use of chalk and charcoal first suggested to our ritualistic fathers the availability of these materials as symbols. Incidently, how did it *not* occur to some good brother of the olden days to make a symbol of that mop and pail!

Later it became evident that as no real Masonic secrets were drawn on the Carpet, the essentials of the institution were not disclosed by leaving them where the frofane might see them. For convenience, the several symbols of the degrees were then painted on cloth and laid upon the floor; true carpets, now: Still later these carpets were held erect on easles; in America the chart—in England the tracing-board—is still a commonplace of Lodge furniture, although the more convenient and beautiful lantern slide is often used in this country where Lodge finances and electric light permit.

Old tracing boards (charts) are already objects of interest to Masonic antiquarians, and those early ones which follow almost exactly the illustrations in Jeremy Cross' "True Masonic Chart" (1820) are increasingly valuable as the years go by. Charts or tracing-boards have performed a most valuable service; together with the printed monitors or manuals, they have kept a reasonable uniformity in the exoteric part of American work, thus making for a unity which is sometimes difficult for the newly-made Mason to discover when he compares the esoteric work of one Jurisdiction with that of another.

The trestle-board is so entirely dif-

ferent from the tracing-board that it is difficult to understand how so earnest a student as Oliver confounded them. Such mistakes made the most prolific of Masonic writers somewhat doubted as an authority.

"Trestle" comes from an old Scoth word, *trest*, meaning a supporting framework. Carpenters use trestles, or "saw horses," to support boards to be sawed or planed. A board across two trestles provided a natural and easy way to display plans. Hence the name trestle-board; a board, supported by trestles, on which plans were shown or made.

Mackey observes: "The trestle-board is a symbol; the tracing-board is a piece of furniture, or picture containing the representation of many symbols."

As a symbol the trestle-board is at least two hundred years old; it is found in Pritchard's "Masonry Dissected," earliest of the exposes of Masonic ritual. Here it is called *trasel-board*, but the object is the same, although the spelling of its name is different.

Symbols differ in relative importance according to the symbols of American ideals, but the flag is far the greater symbol of the two. The eagle is the American symbol of liberty—the flag, not only of liberty, but also of government of, for and by the people; of equality of opportunity; of free thought; of the nation as a whole. If one disagrees with Mackey and considers the tracing-board a symbol, it is, at most, one of teaching and learning; the trestle-board, on the contrary, has a symbolic content comparable in Freemasonry to that of the flag in the nation.

From meanest hut to mightiest cathedral, never a building was not first an idea in some man's mind. Never a pile of masonry of any pretentions but was first a series of drawings, designs, plans. From Mt. St. Albans, newest of glorious Cathedrals erected to the Most High, to Strassburg, Rheims, Canterbury, Cologne and Notre Dame, all were first drawn upon the trestle-board. Every bridge, every battleship, every engineering work, every dam, tunnel, monument, canal, tower erected by man, must first be drawn upon paper with pencil and rule; with square and compasses.

The ancient builders erected Cathedrals by following the designs upon the Master's trestle-board. Where he indicated stone, stone was laid. Where he drew a flying buttress, stone took wings. Where he showed a tower, a spire pointed to the vault. Where he indicated carvings, stone lace appeared.

Speculative Freemasons build not of stone, but with character. We erect not Cathedrals, but the House Not Made With Hands. Our trestle-board, "spiritual, moral and Masonic" as the ritual has it, is as important in character building as the plans and designs laid down by the Master on the trestle-board by which the operative workman builds his temporal building.

The trestle-board of the Speculative Mason, so we are told by the ritual, is to be found in "the great books of nature and revelation."

Mackey considers that the Volume of the Sacred Law is the real trestle-board of Speculative Freemasonry. He says:

> "The trestle-board is then the symbol of the natural and moral

law. Like every other symbol of the Order, it is universal and tolerant in its application; and while, as Christian Masons, we cling with unfaltering integrity to the explanation which makes the Scriptures of both dispensations our trestle-board, we permit our Jewish and Mohammedan brethren to content themselves with the books of the Old Testament or Koran. Masonry does not interfere with the peculiar form or development of any one's religious faith. All that it asks is that the interpretation of the symbol shall be according to what each one supposes to be the revealed will of his Creator. But so rigidly exacting is it that the symbol shall be preserved and, in some rational way, interpreted, that it peremptorily excludes the atheist from its communion, because, believing in no Supreme Being—no Divine Architect—he must necessarily be without a spiritual trestle-board on which the designs of that Being may be inscribed for his direction."

Modern scholars amplify Mackey's dictum, rather than quarrel with it. The ritual speaks of the great books of nature and revelation, and by "revelation" the Speculative Freemason understands the Volume of the Sacred Law. But the great book of nature must not be forgotten when considering just what is and what is not the trestle-board of Freemasonry.

For Nature is the source of all knowledge. Without the "great book of nature" to read, man could not learn, no matter what his powers of reasoning and insight might be. All science comes from observation of nature. In the last analysis, all knowledge is science, therefore all knowledge comes from observations of nature: This is as true of the abstract as of the concrete. Philosophy, ethics, standards of conduct and the like, are not products of natural evolution, but created by men's minds. They are the flowers of natural philosophy. Few blossoms spring directly from the earth; the flowers grow upon the stalk which comes from the ground. Indirectly, all that is beautiful in orchid, rose and violet came from the earth in which the roots of the plant find sustenance. So flowers of the mind are traceable back to observations of nature; had there been no nature to contemplate, man could not have imagined a philosophy to account for it.

Therefore modern Masonic scholarship thinks of the Speculative trestle-board as *both* nature—and by inference, all knowledge, all philosophy, all wisdom and learning, wheresoever dispersed and however made available—and the Volume of the Sacred Law, the "revelation" of the ritual.

All great symbols have more than one meaning. Consider again the Flag of our country, which means no one essential part—liberty or equality or freedom to worship as we wish—but all these and many more besides. The trestle-board is a symbol with more than one meaning —aye, more meanings than "nature and revelation."

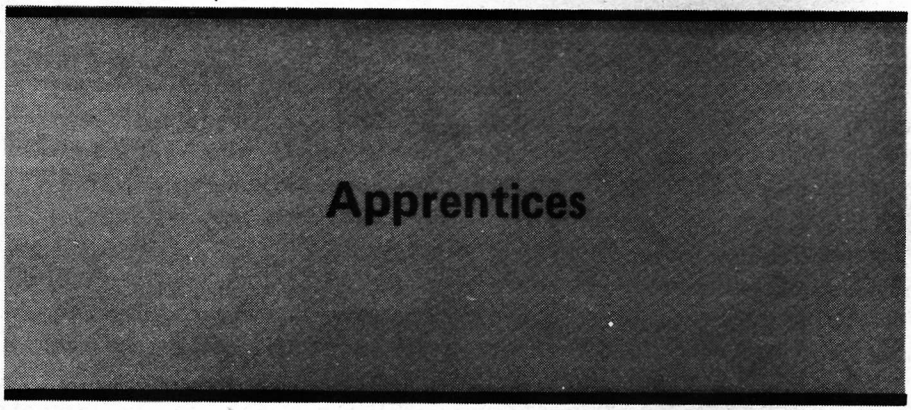
As each ancient builder had his own trestle-board, on which he drew the designs from which the workmen produced in stone the dream in his mind, so each Mason has his own private trestle-

board, on which he draws the design by which he erects his House Not Made With Hands. He may draw it of any one of many designs—he may choose a spiritual Doric, Ionic or Corinthian. He may make his edifice beautiful, useful or merely ornamental. But draw *some* design he must, else he cannot build. And the Freemason who builds not, what kind of a Freemason is he?

Within the Master's reach in every Lodge is some table, stand, pedestal or other structure on which he may lay his papers. Often this is considered the trestle-board because upon it the Master draws the design for the meeting. Any brother has a right to read into any symbol his own interpretation; for those to whom this conception is sufficient, it is good enough. But it seems rather a reduction of the great to the level of the little. A light house is, indeed, a house with a light, but he who sees but the house and the light, and fails to visualize those lost ones who by it find their way; who cannot see the ships at sea kept in safety by its ceaseless admonition that this way lies danger; who cannot behold it as a symbol as well as a structure, misses its beauty. Those who see only the pedestal which supports the Master's plans as a Speculative Trestle-board miss the higher meaning of the symbol.

Lodge notices are not infrequently called trestle-boards, since on them the Master draws the designs for the coming work, and sends them out to the Craftsmen. This, too, seems belitting of the symbol, unless the brethren are led to see that so denominating the monthly notice is but a play on words, and not a teaching.

A freemason's trestle-board, his own combination of what he may learn from man and nature, from the Book of Revelation on the Altar, and the designs in his own heart, is a great and pregnant symbol. It is worthy many hours of pondering; a Masonic teaching to be loved and lived. Who makes of it less misses something that is beautiful in Freemasonry.



The word "apprentice" generally suggests a learner or a beginner. An apprentice is also defined as a tyro or novice, one not well versed in a skill or trade. In the world of the ancient craftsman it denotes "one who is bound by inden-

tures or by legal agreement to serve another person for a certain time, with a view to learning an art or trade, in consideration of instruction therein, and formerly, usually of maintenance by the master," In mediaeval times there were apprentice silversmiths, apprentice coopers, apprentice wheelwrights, apprentice cordmakers, apprentice stone-squarers, etc. In modern times we speak of apprentice electricians, apprentice plumbers, apprentice machinists, etc.

The early mediaeval craftsman was really a serf tied to his employer and to his home locality. The modern apprentice, however, works for wages; his dependency on a master is relatively non-existent. While he has agreed to a certain term of service, usually sufficient to acquire the skills of his trade, he no longer lives with or is dependent upon his employer for food and lodging. By comparison with the mediaeval apprentice, he is really a free agent.

After the Norman conquest in 1066, the construction of buildings was given a great impetus by the kings, nobles, and churchmen into whose hands the ownership of the land had passed. But it was another two centuries before the trade guild system, as we know it, came into prominence. Operative Masonry as a real trade had its rise, we may surmise, in the expansion of building which came to England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, since the erection of castles, fortifications, monasteries and churches became the great industry of the Middle Ages.

The system of craft apprenticeship in England can be traced back to this building period. References to its existence may be found in records dating from the thirteenth century.Possibly the system existed even earlier; but we know that the guild system was evolving at that time, and that its chief purpose was to regulate conditions of employment and the quality of workmanship under municipal and craft authority.

In the earliest days the status of an apprentice was probably of no great concern to anyone except his employer, the master workman. But as the building trades grew in importance and influence, the apprentice, as a prospective master workman and an employer of labor, and especially as a future teacher of newer apprentices, became an important concern to the guild and required considerable supervision and direction by the rulers of the craft. The regulations in the *Regius Poem* (c. 1390) indicate how thoroughly the superintendence of the craftmen had progressed, not merely in the direction on controlling conditions of employment, but also in determining the moral and ethical standards of conduct required of every good workman.

In the early Middle Ages the number of masons, by comparison with other trades, must have been small. Timber was the principal material used in the construction of dwellings in the mediaeval towns; masons probably found their chief employment on a few large undertakings which were widely separated. Consequently, the organization of mason's guilds probably came later than that of other trade associations, but flourished with the glory of the cathedral

builders in the later Middle Ages. The first recorded evidence of a mason's organization is dated late in the fourteenth century. Possible the earliest system of apprenticeship in the stonemason's trade was the father-son relationship, in which the skilled stonesquarer passed on to his son the secrets of his art.

However, we know that in 1319 King Edward the Second granted new articles and conditions to various trade guilds, including workers in stone, and these foreshadowed an increasing control of the system of apprenticeship by the municipal authorities. Some of the conditions established at that time are of great interest to Masons, because they are echoed in the "old charges" and regulations.

Vassalage and serfdom were common to the society of the early Middle Ages. A "bond-man" was really a kind of slave; he was "in bondage" to his feudal lord or master. The children of a bondman belonged to the lord or master of their father. They were not "freeborn", they were born into a condition of villeinage which gave the lord or master a right to their lives and the products of their labors. It was for this reason that masters of craftsmen's lodges were commanded to accept only apprentices who were "free." A "bondman," or the son of a "bondman," was not at liberty to enter into any contractual arrangements with a master. He belonged to his "lord." who could take him away for menial or military services, to cause serious trouble for such an employer in one of the trades. Such vassals were absolutely barred from "the freedom of the city"; and most of the craft ordinances of the fourteenth century insist on free birth as an essential qualification for apprenticeship.

The physical qualifications of an apprentice were also spelled out in most of the guild regulations. The crafts generally required that an apprentice should not be maimed or lacking a limb. Some went even further and demanded that an apprentice be "well-favored", i.e., handsome, as well as "neither crooked or deformed." Speculative Freemasons will recognize the modern residue of such ancient requirements in the "physical qualifications" of candidates.

However, the regulations of the craft made other qualifications mandatory. While legitimacy of birth was not always insisted on and sometimes was not even stipulated, nationality was a common requirement. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the craft guilds usually required an apprentice to be of English birth. Sometimes there was a ban against Irishmen and Welshmen, and more frequently against Scots, and Frenchmen. Generally there was a ban against all aliens and those born beyond the limits of the King's power. Speculative Freemasonry no longer lays emphasis on the nationality of an applicant, although several Grand Lodges in the United States specifically require United States citizenship of petitioners for the degrees. (On the other hand several American Grand Lodges have declared that United States citizenship is *not* a necessary qualification.)

A definite age, usually twenty-one, is required of modern applicant for Masonry, although it has been permissible in some Jurisdictions for a "lewis," the son of a Mason, to become a member of the fraternity before his majority. In the days of operative masonry no such exact requirements was in effect. However, the masons' guilds were forced to adopt a general requirement of age, because their labors demanded a certain degree of physical strength and maturity to assist in lifting stones and handling some of the tools. Evidence from mediaeval records suggests that seventeen or eighteen was the average age at which apprentices were accepted by the masons' guilds. With seven years' service as the usual requirement for an apprentice, twenty-four was the normal age at which a worker in stone could expect to become an independent craftsmen. In 1556 the London Common Council enacted a regulation that no man was to be admitted to "the freedom of the city" until he reached the age of twenty-four, and that apprentices' terms of service were to be arranged so that they reached that age on completion of the term.

In the masons' lodges, as in other guilds and associations, apprentices became members before the end of their terms of service. They were "entered" in the lodge whenever their progress and skill had reached the point which indicated their eventual success as master workmen. While authorities do not agree on the number of years which apprentices served before they were "entered", four seems to be the generally accepted period of time in which apprentices served before they became members of a lodge. From the records of Mary's Chapel Lodge, it appears that apprentices in that old Scottish lodge were "entered" some three years after their first acceptance as trainees.

Such "entering" was usually accompanied by simple ceremonies, in which the old charges and regulations were read to the newest "entered apprentice." He took an obligation to do good work, to promote the welfare of his brethren and his lodge, and to maintain the secrets of his profession. The majority of any lodge of operative masons was composed of "entered apprentices". A lodge at labor was largely an assemblage of apprentices engaged in the tasks of cutting, squaring, and polishing stone; hence the custom of our earliest speculative lodges of conducting their meetings "on the first degree".

While some of the craft guilds of the Middle Ages made literacy a requirement for admission, the masons' guilds did not insist on such an accomplishment. It was an age when illiteracy was the common inheritance of the masses of men. The builders' art was transmitted by word of mouth and by daily exercise of the skills which are governed by such practical tools as the line, the rule, the plumb, the square, the mallet, and the compasses. Modern Freemasonry assumes a degree of literacy on the part of petitioners; the completion of the application for membership requires the ability to read and write. Nevertheless, the rules and regulations of a few of our modern "speculative" Grand Lodges actually impose a test of literacy upon candidates

for the degrees.

Apprentices were learners in the world of operative Masonry. While much of what they learned is now relegated to the activities of "unskilled labor", they were given the inestimable benefit of a moral interpretation and a moral application of every tool they handled and of every skill that they acquired. The line served not merely to determine the location of a foundation stone; it taught rectitude of conduct in all one's laudable endeavors. The square not only served to correct or prove the workman's efforts to shape a piece of stone; it reminded him that the vices and superfluities of life needed a similar treatment from his moral "angle of the square". Learning by doing was not merely a mechanical skill which the medieval apprentice acquired; it was a thorough absorption of life's fundamental values through the touching and the handling of the great symbols of virtue which he held in his hands. If his moral achievement was not always commensurate with his knowledge or instruction, let us not be hasty in condemning his shortcomings. Speculative Masons still have to demonstrate the effectiveness of their more "literate" instruction on a great number of craftsmen who have really failed "to see the light."

A speculative Entered Apprentice is also a learner, a beginner. In his understanding and knowledge of Masonic organization, customs, ritual, symbolism, and objectives he is genuinely a novice; indeed, he is usually amazed by the first impressions he receives from the labors of a lodge.

Like an operative apprentice he is required to serve for a definite period of time. Generally speaking, this is comparatively short in the Grand Lodges of the United States. The usual requirement is two weeks or a lunar month before an Entered Apprentice can be advanced to the degree of Fellowcraft.

This is not the case in many European or South American Jurisdictions. In some a candidate must wait at least a year before he can be "entered", and another year must elapse before he can be advanced to the next degree. In some South American lodges, which labor on all three degrees at every communication, Apprentices must attend a specific number of meetings on the first degree, twelve to sixteen being the commonest requirement, before they can be advanced to Fellowcraft. These meetings need not be at their own lodges; they may visit others in order to expedite the fulfillment of the requirement.

While this helps to increase attendance at lodge meetings – at least for certain parts of them – and while it insures a ready familiarity with the elements of the ritual and the floor work of the Entered Apprentice degree, it creates some practice difficulties for examining committees and registrars, who must fill out attendance cards for such "travelling" apprentices. It also questionable that such novices are really trying "to learn their trade", when the chief reason for their being present may be another positive notation on their attendance records.

The average American Freemason completes his apprentice training when he has undergone the initiation ceremonies of the first degree and has memo-

rized the required portions of the lectures and the obligation. While the speculative Entered Apprentice undoubtedly learns much more from the inspiration of the ceremonies, and from the charges and the explanations which he hears, it must be admitted that the average Entered Apprentice in our country has a ridiculously easy "service" to complete to entitle him to advancement, i.e., to wait a few weeks and to do a little memorizing!

With so little time to absorb the deeper significance of his initiatory experiences, and with so little "speculative" effort required of him in his Masonic progress, it is not to be wondered at that so many craftsmen have failed to grasp the underlying purposes to which Freemasonry is dedicated. In recognition of this deficiency, most American Grand Lodges today have set up Committees on Masonic Information, Education, or Culture, whose chief responsibility is to see that the newly admitted craftsmen are given more light, a better understanding of Freemasonry's purposes, projects, history, government, and symbolism. Some Grand Lodges, as a matter of fact, are now requiring attendance at lodges of instruction, in addition to the initiation ceremony, before an apprentice can be regarded as duly and truly prepared for the subsequent degree.

In some European Jurisdictions, a positive attempt is made to train apprentices in "speculative" labors. Even before the apprentice is "entered", in the year that must elapse between his petition and his initiation, he is called upon to discuss meaningful philosophic questions at an open meeting of the lodge; reading material is made available to him; and members of the fraternity, not known to him as such, cultivate his acquaintance and share in the growth of his ideas and activities. In the year's waiting period after his initiation, when he actually serves as an apprentice, he undertakes some arduous assignments involving study and reading about Masonry and its achievements. It is no wonder that such Grand Lodges have small and restricted memberships. It takes a long time to become a speculative Master Mason.

Regardless of the differences to be found from Grand Lodge to Grand Lodge in the training of speculative Entered Apprentices, the qualifications for admission are almost universally the same. In this respect the ruling authorities of Freemasonry have tended to preserve the ancient customs and usages of the craft.

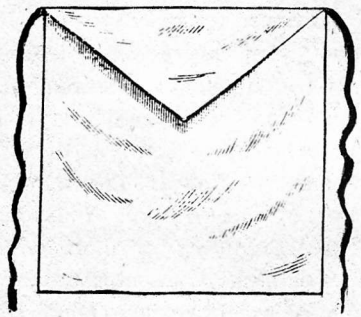
A petitioner for the degrees of Freemasonry must be a man, free-born, of legal age, enjoying a good reputation, and possessed of physical and mental health sufficient to conform to all the ceremonies required in the work and practices of Freemasonry. While definitions of "soundness of limb, without maim or deformity" are subject to varying interpretations today, the tendency in many Grand Jurisdictions is to let the individual lodges determine the extent of that impairment which renders an applicant incapable of becoming a worthy apprentice.

Above all, a prospective Entered Apprentice must have an unshakable faith in God, a belief in immortality, and a conviction that God has revealed his pur-

pose to man in some volume of sacred law.

When a man possess such qualifications, it is possible to "contract for his services" as a speculative Entered Apprentice, who, in consideration for instruction in the royal art of brotherhood, will labor, it is hoped, with fervency and zeal in the spiritual building of a temple which is dedicated to Brotherly Love, Benevolence, and Truth.

The Lambskin



In Masonic symbolism the Lambskin Apron hold precedence. It is the initial gift of Freemasonry to a candidate, and at the end of life's pilgrimage it is reverently placed on his mortal remains and buried with his body in the grave.

Above all other symbols, the Lambskin Apron is the distinguishing badge of a Mason. It is celebrated in poetry and prose and has been the subject of much fanciful speculation. Some Masonic writers have contended that initiation is analogous to birth, or our advent from prenatal darkness into the light of human fellowship, moral truth and spiritual faith. Much ancient lore has been adduced in an effort to show that the Lambskin Apron typifies regeneration, or a new life, and this thought of resurrection may be the cause of its interment with the body of a deceased brother. At least it will serve until a better reason is advanced for this peculiar custom in the Masonic burial service. The association of the lamb with redemption and being born again is expressed by John, the Apocalyptic Seer, who had a vision on the Isle of Patmos, and beheld

the purified and redeemed "of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues." Of them it was said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

By many it has been regarded as a great religious symbol. In our present conception there are three parts of man, body, soul and spirit; what the body is to the soul, the soul is to the spirit, namely, a house or habitation, but in oriental thought there were seven parts of man, four earthly and three heavenly, four physical and three spiritual. The four sides of the square symbolized the four physical and the three sides of the flap, or triangle, symbolized the three spiritual parts of man. The apex of the triangle or point of the flap stood for the sevent part of man which was called Atma and which means the eternal spark, the divine flame, the inderstrucible spirit of the living God in every human being. In this aspect it means that

God is not a looker on
At the life of anyone:
God is under every man,
God is part of every man.

A badge is either good or bad by reason of that for which it stands. Aside from mysticism, I believe there are five distinct things of which the Lambskin Apron is a badge.

Firstly, in its use, it is a badge of service. In his recent book on "Symbolical Masonry," Brother H. L. Heywood has an interesting chapter on "The Apron wherein the Builder builds," and says it "was so conspicuous a portion of the costume of the Operative Mason that it became associated with him in the public mind and thus gradually evolved into his badge." By it Speculative Freemasonry seeks to distinguish the builder and place upon the brow of labor the laurel wreath of dignity and honor.

Secondly, made of Lambskin, it is in its fabric a badge of sacrifice. The Lamb in all ages has been not only an emblem of innocence, but also a symbol of sacrifice, and he who wears this Apron with understanding must be prepared for the time when hard things are to be done, when trials are to be endured, and fortitude glorified.

Thirdly, in its color it is a badge of purity. White is the clean color that reflects most light.

In Masonry there are three great religious rites. One is discalciation, that is, entering a holy place or standing in the presence of God barefooted as a symbol of humility. It comes from a time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, he said, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Another is the rite of circumambulation, that is, going around an altar from east to west by way of the south. Dr. Joseph Fort Newton said: "When man emerged from the night of barbarism his religion was a worship of light; to him light was life and love, darkness was evil and death; to him light was the mother of beauty, the unveiler of color, the radiant, illusive mystery of the world; his temple was hung with stars, his altar a glowing flame, his ritual a woven hymn of night and day." To him the Sun was the greatest of God's creations, it in-

spired his adoration and in all his religious ceremonies he followed its apparent course through the heavens, as though he were walking in the footsteps of the Most High. Through this rite, memories of that religion of the dawn linger with us in Masonry today.

The third is the rite of investiture or purification; that is, the presentation of the Apron. In a qualified way it bears the relationship to the lodge that baptism does to some churches, it is the external symbol of an inner purification. The Psalmist asked: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" and answering his own question said, "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." The Apron when correctly understood is the pledge of a clean life, the testimony that a candidate means to live pure, speak true, right wrong, and reverence conscience as king.

When we turn to the Ritual for its interpretation, we find the Apron to be an inheritance from the past, and so, in the fourth place, it is a badge of antiquity, "more ancient than the Golden Fleece and Roman Eagle." A ministerial brother once said that the Masonic Ritual was couched in stilted phrases and extravagant language, and as an illustration referred to the ritualistic speech used in the presentation of the Apron. Let us see if he was right. The most specific way of conveying thought and expressing truth is by comparison. It is difficult to comprehend an idea unless we can correlate or compare it with something already known. The order of Golden Fleece here referred to was founded in the year 1429, by Philip, Duke of Burgundy; the Roman Eagle became Rome's ensign of imperial power about one century before the Christian era, while the Apron has come down to us from the very sunrise of time. "Hebrew Prophets often wore Aprons," they were used in the ancient mysteries of India and Egypt, they were used by early Chinese secret societies, by the Jewish religious sect called Essenes, they were employed as emblems by the Incas of Peru, the Aztecs of Mexico, and the Prehistoric races of the American continent.

As a badge of antiquity, it emphasizes the value of the past. Blackstone, in his commentaries on the English law, said that in the making of a new law three things must be considered, namely, the old law, the mischief and the remedy. No man can apply an intelligent remedy to an existing mischief without regard to the antecedent conditions out of which it grew. Present progress must be based on the accumulated experience and wisdom of the ages. Albert Pike said, "It is the dead who govern, the living only obey." "Every ship that comes to America got its chart from Columbus, every novel is debtor to Homer, every carpenter who shaves with a foreplane borrows the genius of some forgotten inventor."

As a badge of antiquity the Apron exalts the greatness and glory of the past in its present contribution to human good and happiness.

In the fifth place, the Apron is a badge of honor. It is declared to be "More honorable than the Star and Garter." Here we have another comparison. The Order of the Star was created by John II of France at the beginning of his reign

in the middle of the 14th Century. It was a royal plaything and at the time of its formation its founder was engaged in acts of despotism and destruction.

The Order of the Garter was formed by Edward III of England in 1349. It was composed of the king and twenty-five knights and originated in the false pride and fantastic pomp of medieval manners. Edward A. Freeman, an English historian, says: "The spirit of knighthood is above all things a class spirit. The good knight is bound to endless courtesies towards men and women of a certain rank; he may treat all below that rank with any degree of scorn and cruelty." "Chivalry is in morals what feudalism is in law. Each substitutes personal obligations devised in the interest of an exclusive class, for the more homely duties of an honest man and a good citizen."

Freemasonry is in striking contrast to such conceptions. It stands for the dissipation of discord and dissension, for the promotion of peace, the pursuit of knowledge and the practice of brotherhood, for untrammeled conscience, equality of opportunity and the divine right of liberty in man, for devotion to duty, the building of character and rectitude of life and conduct. Its symbolical supports are wisdom, strength and beauty; the principal rounds of its theological ladder are faith, hope and charity. Its primary tenets are brotherly love, relief and truth; its cardinal virtues are fortitude, temperance, prudence and justice. Its temple is erected to the Master Builder, its Great Light is the Word of Revelation and at its center is an Altar of high and holy purpose. Like the shadow of a rock in a weary land, like a shining light in the window of a home, like a mother's kiss on a troubled brow and the breath of her prayer in the hour of despair, is the spirit of Freemasonry, calling man from the circumference of life to find God at the center of the individual soul.

When we consider the messages delivered by these Orders and the Lambskin Apron—one speaking the language of class distinction, special privilege and the divine right of kings; the other telling the story of exact justice, equality of opportunity, and the brotherhood of man—it is not a stited phrase and an exaggeration of speech to say that the badge of a Mason is more honorable than the Star and Garter.

As a badge of honor, the Lambskin Apron spells out integrity, honesty of purpose, probity of character, and soundness of moral principle.

"Let there be light!" the great Creator spoke,
And, at the summons, slumbering nature woke,
While from the east the primal morning broke,
Back rolled the curtains of the night,
And earth rejoiced to see the light.

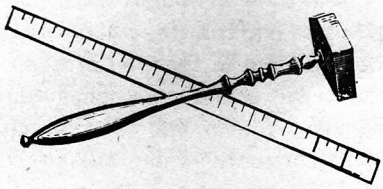
—Thomas W. Davis

TOOLS

Entered Apprentice

The common gavel, used by operative Masons to break off the corners of rough stones, is in Speculative Freemasonry a symbol of power.

The twenty-four-inch gauge is an instrument used by operative Masons to measure and lay out their work, but in Speculative Freemasonry we are taught by its symbolism to divide our time into three equal parts, whereby are found eight hours for refreshment and sleep, eight for our usual vocations and eight for the service of God and humanity. There is an object in view and an end to be attained. It is, therefore, a symbol of purpose.



Power is the ability to act so as to produce change and cause event. Purpose is the idea or object kept before the mind as an end of effort or action.

Modern science has uncovered so much power that thoughtful men fear it will work the destruction of civilization unless a commensurate humane purpose is developed for its direction.

The day and generation in which we live pulsates with power, the world is held in place by dynamic oppositions, the universe is vibrant with force and man is a part of the divine energy. The greatest thing in God's created universe is a man. In him, according to the teachings of Freemasonry, is the eternal flame, the indestructible image of the living God. The power of man cannot be defined, cannot be fenced in, because it transcends all finite standards of measurement.

Power directed by a bad purpose is positive destruction. Alexander the Great was the most powerful man of antiquity. With an army of 35,000 men he flung

himself against a Persian horde of over one million. He conquered the world, but could not master himself. Intent on lust and luxury, dissipation and destruction, his purposes were bad, and at the age of forty-two he died in a drunken fit.

Charles the First of England insisted on the divine right of kings. He had his courts decree that the King could do no wrong, filled the Tower of London with political prisoners, tortured and decapitated his enemies, claimed the right of life and death over his subjects, and exercised the unlimited power of an absolute monarch. His purposes were bad, and under Oliver Cromwell his career was cancelled, the executioner swung an axe and the head of Charles the First rolled in the dust.

These were unusual men occupying exceptional positions, but the power of destruction is terrific in the most ordinary life. Czolgocz, the Polish anarchist, was a man of a low order in the social scale, without wealth, without influence, without education; from the casual veiw point ignorant, insignificant and weak. His mind was the breeding ground of crazy purposes, but he had sufficient destructive power to shoot William McKinley and assassinate the Chief Magistrate of the greatest nation on earth.

Power directed by a good purpose is constructive, and results in achievement. It keeps the cars on the tracks and the wires in the air, it turns the wheels of man's industry and carries the commerce of continents as upon a mighty shoulder.

Warren Hastings was born in 1732; his mother was a servant girl who died when the baby was two days old; his father deserted him, so he grew up as a charity child. He had a hungry mind and obtained an education as best he could. When eighteen years of age he shipped for India, working his own passage. He had a purpose in his life and there came a power that enabled him to establish the Bengal Asiatic Society, to found colleges out of his own funds and in his own name. Disraeli said English supremacy in India was the direct result of this man's work. Today the memory of Warren Hastings is linked with the greatness of the British Empire.

David Livingstone was a humble Scotchman, the son of a weaver and himself a worker at the spinning wheel. Into his sould there came a great purpose of life, and he went to South Africa as a missionary. He was frail of body, never physically strong, but with the purpose there came to him a power to brave danger and endure privations. For a period of twenty years he blazed a trail of light through a dark continent, destroyed the slave trade in negroes, and convinced the world that the salvation of Africa was a white man's job. In that commission he surrendered his life on his knees in supplication to God. His body was carried thousands of miles by a black man through jungles, over rivers, across land and seas; last summer at Westminster Abbey I stood before his mortal remains buried and honored in the sepulcher of Kings.

In his early manhood Abraham Lincoln stood before a slave market in New Orleans. Upon the block was a young woman, stripped to the waist. He heard

the auctioneer describe her fine points and estimate her value. He became conscious, not simply of a black form, but of life divinely given. His soul responded to the challenge of a supreme purpose and he said, "If I have a chance to strike this institution I will strike it hard." Through the years there came to him the power to blaze out the path and light up the way for a new baptism of human freedom, finally to seal that purpose with a martyr's blood and ascend to the throne of God with four million broken fetters in his hands. Now the whole world joins in a myriad-voiced chorus of love and honor to his memory. In every land and under every clime he is exalted and glorified as a mighty champion of human rights.

History preserves in the clear amber of immortality the record of men, who, set on fire by some sublime purpose, dedicate the power of their lives to its prosecution.

The lesson is definite and practical. The twenty-four-inch gauge and the common gavel speak to every Mason the language of constructive purpose and personal power. They mean that a Mason should cherish his ideals, the beauty that forms in his mind, the music that stirs in his heart, the glory that drapes his purest purpose, for out of these things he has the power to build for himself a new world in which to live.

Fellowcraft

The Level is an instrument used by operative Masons to prove horizontals. It is trite to say that it is a symbol of equality. The Declaration of American Independence proclaims that all men are "created equal." With most of us this is a glittering generality, born of the fact that we are all made of the same dust, share a common humanity and walk on the level of time until the grim democracy of death blots out all distinctions, and the scepter of the prince and the staff of the beggar are laid side by side.

It is apparent that men are not equal, and cannot be equal either in brain or brawn. There is no common mold by which humanity can be reduced to a dead level. The world has various demands requiring different powers; brains to devise great and important undertakings; seers to dream dreams and behold visions; hands to execute the designs laid down upon the trestle board; scientists to adorn the mind and reveal the glories of the universe; poets to inspire the soul and play music on human heart-strings; pioneers to blaze out the path, and prophets to light up the way to a land where the rainbow never fades.

The equality of which the Level is a symbol is one of right and not one of gift and endowment. It stands for the equal right of every man to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; the equal right of every man to be free from oppression in the development of his own faculties. It means the destruction of special privilege and arbitrary limitation.

Freemasonry presided over the birth of our Republic and by the skill of its leaders wrote into the organic law of this land the immutable truth of which the Level is a symbol. In a Masonic

lodge George Washington was taught that the Level is a symbol of equality. In the darkest hour of the Colonial cause, the soldiers, in a moment of despair and desperation, would have placed on Washington's head the crown of a king. Hayden says, "The overthrow of the rump parliament by Cromwell, the breaking up of the imbecile directory by Napoleon were difficult tasks compared to the ease with which the divided Continental Congress could have been dispersed." Washington was not fighting for royal rank, nor for coronation. As a champion of human rights, he was fighting for exact justice and equality of opportunity, and so the kingship and the crown were rejected with indignation and contempt.

This symbol means that in a Masonic lodge every man should count for one, and no man should count for more than one. In a Masonic lodge the weak and the strong, the rich and the poor, men of diverse creeds and capacity, meet upon the level, close their eyes to arbitrary distinctions and reaffirm that Freemasonry regards no man for his worldly wealth or honors, that the internal and not the external qualifications of a man recommend him to Freemasonry.

Albert Pike said that Freemasonry was the first apostle of equality. The truth of the Level is woven into the fabric of our free institutions. So by Craft and country we are picked and pledged to the practice of this priceless principle.

The Square is an instrument used by operative Masons to square work. In speculative Freemasonry it is a symbol of morality.

It is white with a nameless age. Centuries before the Christian era a negative statement of the Golden Rule was called the principle of acting on the square. Today the expression "upon the square" stands for truthful statement and honest dealing.

In a superficial sense, morality is the verdict of the majority. The elements of time and geography enter into the conception of moral standards. In some aspects morality is relative; what is moral to one man may be immoral to another, what is moral in one position may become immoral when conditions are changed. The word is difficult of definition, but for everyday use, morality seems to be a correct correspondence between conscience, circumstance and conduct. Within definite limits men have a right to prescribe standards of morality for themselves. In the eyes of the law there are two kinds of wrong. One is called "malum in se," that is, an act which is evil in itself and by reason of its inherent nature. The other is "malum prohibitum," that is, an act which is not naturally an evil, but only so in consequence of its being forbidden. Except where fundamentals are involved, it is dangerous for one man to attempt the application of his standards of morality to another man's life.

I remember reading a story of the great flood that came upon the Ohio. In the gray of the morning some men saw a house floating down the river and on its top a human being. Going to the rescue, they found a woman whose life they wished to save, but she said, "No! In this house I have three dead babies, I will not desert; I am going out with

them." To most of us that act would verge on the immorality of suicide; to her it was the expression of a mother's love deeper than despair and death; her conduct corresponded with her conscience. We cannot place ourselves in her circumstances and in charity should refrain from judgment.

Jean Valjean was a great hulk of a man, young and strong, ignorant and big hearted, tramping the streets of Paris in search of work, trying to care for a widowed sister and her family of seven little ones. There was no work to be had. He could not bear to hear the voices of starving children so he came home late at night, thinking they would be asleep. But hunger gnawed, and when he came in they were wide-awake and cried, "Oh, Uncle Jean, have you any work? Oh, Uncle Jean, we are so hungry!" Madness seized the man; he went to the nearest bakery, broke the window and stole a loaf of bread. Jean was arrested and sent to Toulon as a galley slave. In the eyes of the law he had committed the immoral act of theft. But his eyes saw pinched-up faces, his ears heard cries of hunger and, regardless of consequences, his conduct corresponded with his conscience in a deed of moral heroism.

Back of all the temporary circumstances and conditions of men and the transitory moral codes evolved by human minds are certain positive standards of morality which the Divine Intelligence has impressed on every particle of matter and every pulsation of energy. They are the same for all mankind, regardless of place, time, race or religion. Of these standards the try-square is the Masonic mouthpiece. Freemasonry is defined as a beautiful system of morality. It is a woven tapestry of great moral principles and purposes. Whenever a Mason fails to live up to the best that is in him, whenever he blots out the divine light of his conscience, whenever he is recreant to right as God gives him to see the right, he is false to the trying square of his profession, for by this symbol Freemasonry teaches a morality that masters manners. molds mind and makes mighty manhood.

The Plumb is an instrument used by operative Masons to try perpendiculars. In speculative Freemasonry it is a symbol of righteousness, that is, an upright life before God and man.

It has been said that, in the art of building, accuracy is integrity. If a wall be not perpendicular, as tested by the plumb line, it is a menace to the stability of the structure. Likewise if a Mason is ignorant of this symbol as an active principle in his life, he is a danger to the standing of the Fraternity in the community where he lives.

Righteousness is not a sanctimonious word. It means rectitude of conduct, integrity of character, and deathless devotion to truth. The Psalmist asked, "Lord, who shall abide in Thy Tabernacle?" and this was the answer: "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteourness and speaketh the truth in his heart." When correctly understood, the truth symbolized by the Plumb constitutes a challenge to courage.

In the Sixteenth century Giordano Bruno taught a plurality of worlds; for this he was accused of heresy. He was tried, convicted and imprisoned in a

dungeon for seven years. He was offered his liberty if he would recant, but Bruno refused to stain the sanctity of his soul by denying that which he believed to be true. He was taken from his cell and led to the place of his execution, clad in a robe on which representations of devils had been painted. He was chained to a stake, about his body wood was piled, fagots were lighted and on the spot in Rome where a monument now stands to his memory he was consumed by the flames. Without the hope of heaven or the fear of hell he suffered death for the naked truth that was in him.

The Great Light of Freemasonry contains this promise: "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." Men of tremendous power, men of creative genius, have passed into oblivion, but the righteousness of a pure and noble character, of an unselfish and divinely inspired life finds perpetuation in the clear amber of immortality. Of that righteousness the Plumb is a symbol in Fremasonry.

Unrighteousness has wrought the destruction of peoples and civilizations, but "righteousness exalteth a Nation."

Symbols are not academic play things, they are intended to provoke and sustain thought.

Fellowcraft Working Tools present to the mind basic ideas of equality, morality and righteousness.

Master Mason

All the implements of Masonry are assigned to the use of a Master Mason. The principal one is the Trowel, an instrument used by operative Masons to spread the cement which unites the building into one common mass. In Speculative Freemasonry it is a symbol of brotherhood.

Paul stood on Mars Hill and said to the Athenians, "God hath made of one blood every nation of men." That is not an expression of sentiment but the announcement of a fact, whether men desire or deny it, whether men cherish it in their hearts or crucify it. Man's ignorance does not change the laws of nature nor vary their irresistible march. God's laws vindicate themselves; they crush all who oppose and break into pieces everything that is not in harmony with their purpose. In the light of this truth it can be safely asserted that no nation, no civilization can long endure which does violence to the divine fact of human brotherhood.

Fraternity is the basis of all important movements for the common good and the general welfare of society.

Freemasonry has been called a "society of friends and brothers employing symbols to teach the truth." The Trowel is a Masonic symbol of love, and with it we are to spread the cement of brotherly affection. Next to faith in God, the greatest landmark in Freemasonry is the "Brotherhood of Man." We call each other "Brother," but we sometimes fail to realize that brotherhood is a reciprocal relationship. It means that if I am to be a brother to you, then you must be a brother to me. It is exceedingly practical, it is not only for grateful gifts and happy hours, but for use when the soul is sad, when the heart is pierced

and pained, when the road is rough and rugged, and the way seems desolate and drear.

The sentiment of brotherhood in a man's heart is a futile thing unless he can find avenues for its external expression. So far as I have been able to discover, there are three such avenues.

The first is sympathy. Not intellectual sympathy that passes by on the other side of the street and expresses sorrow, but a red-blooded sympathy that lifts a man up who has fallen down and speaks the light of a new hope into his face. Dr. Hillis said that sympathy is the measure of a man's intellectual power. Sympathy is more than this; it is the measure of a man's heart-throb and soul vision. The great painters, poets, preachers, physicians, and patriots, whose names illuminate the pages of history, excelled their contemporaries in this one quality of human sympathy.

The second avenue is service. I have read somewhere, most likely in one of the writings of Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, a statement that all over the vast temple of Freemasonry, from foundation stone to the highest pinnacle, is inscribed in letters of living light the divine truth that labor is love, that work is worship, and that not indolence but industry is the crowning glory of a man's life whether he be rich or poor. In all the annals of human progress the men who have accomplished works which have lived after them, which have come up through cycles of time a blessing to succeeding generations, had not before their eyes gold or fame or selfish aims or sordid gain, but had hung upon the walls of their minds great ideals of human service to which they remained devoted until the light faded and the day closed.

The third avenue is sacrifice, the most radiant word in the history of our race. The sacrifices of father and mother for the education of the child, the sacrifices of son and daughter for the old folks back home, the sacrifices of the patriot for the homeland and the Flag, the sacrifices of the great servants of humanity, have through the ages made music in the souls of men. He who would take sacrifice out of human life would steal from maternity its sacred sweetness, expunge the wrinkles from the face of Abraham Lincoln, and obliterate the stripes of red in our National Flag.

Every advance in civilization involves a victim. Before the progress of the world stands an altar and on it a sacrifice.

Back in the centuries Socrates, with a cup of hemlock poison pressed to his lips, offered himself upon the altar of human sacrifice for the divine right of liberty in man.

The words of Patrick Henry before the Virginia Assembly: "The next gale that blows from the north will bring to our ears that resounding clash of arms. I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death," lifted the soul of Colonial America up to the coronation of a supreme sacrifice and made this Republic of the West a possibility.

In the world crisis, American soldiers and sailors, as the champions of civilization, laid their all, their hopes, their aspirations, their ambitions, their home ties and affections upon the altar of human sacrifice to insure our national safety, defend our national honor.

and vindicate the ideals of American Independence on the battlefields of Flanders and of France.

In a little country school I was taught that our National Flag stands for the graves of men and the tears of women, for untrammeled conscience and free institutions, for sacred memories and great ideals; that its red stands for the blood that bought it, its white for the purity of the motive that caused it to be shed, its blue for loyalty ascending to the sky, and its stars for deeds of bravery brighter than the stars of faultless night. But when I think of George Washington and Gen. Joseph Warren, and Capt. John Paul Jones, and that heroic band of Masonic patriots in the American Revolution, and cast the utility of our Craft against the background of its history, I can see its stripes of red baptized in the sacrificial blood of our Fraternity, and its stars of glory illuminated by the deathless light that shines from a Masonic Altar.

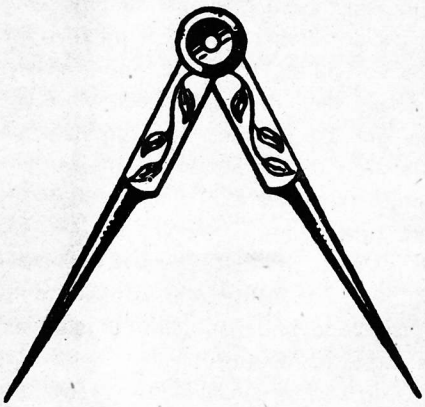
In Freemasonry we are familiar with the ancient drama of scrifice made in the name of faith, fortitude and fidelity.

These three, sympathy, service, sacrifice, are the avenues for the external expression of the sentiment of brotherhood in man's heart.

In proportion as we are inspired by this ideal and use these avenues of expression, our Fraternity will contribute to human good and happiness and answer the end of its institution.

Tools have been called "the evangelists of a new day." They are teachers not less than college and cathedral. Just as the Twenty-four-inch Gauge and Common Gavel stand for purpose and power, and the Level, Square and Plumb present basic ideas of equality, morality and righteousness, so the Trowel is Freemasonry's symbol of unity and brotherhood among men.

In our study of the Square we saw that it is nearly always linked with the Compasses, and these old emblems, joined with the Holy Bible, are the Great Lights of the Craft. If the lodge is an "oblong square" and built upon the Square (as the earth was thought to be in olden time), over it arches the



Sky, which is a circle. Thus Earth and Heaven are brought together in the lodge—the earth where man goes forth to his labor, and the heaven to which he aspires. In other words, the light of Revelation and the law of Nature are like the two points of the Compasses within which our life is set under a canopy of Sun and Stars.

No symbolism can be more simple, more profound, more universal, and it becomes more wonderful the longer one ponders it. Indeed, if Masonry is in any sense a religion, it is Universe Religion, in which all men can unite. Its principles are as wide as the world, as high as the sky. Nature and Revelation blend in its teaching; its morality is rooted in the order of the world, and its roof is the blue vault above. The lodge, as we are apt to forget, is always open to the sky, whence come those influences which exalt and ennoble the life of man. Symbolically, at least, it has no rafters but the arching heavens to which, as sparks ascending seek the sun, our life and labor tend. Of the heavenly side of Masonry the Compasses are the symbol, and they are perhaps the most spiritual of our working tools.

As has been said, the Square and Compasses are nearly always together, and that is true as far back as we can go. In the sixth book of the philosophy of Mencius, in China, we find these words: "A Master Mason, in teaching Apprentices, makes use of the compasses and the square. Ye who are engaged in the pursuit of wisdom must also make use of the compass and the square." Note the order of the words: the Compass has first place, as it should have to a Master Mason. In the oldest classic of China, *The Book of History*, dating back two thousand years before our era, we find the Compasses employed without the Square: "Ye officers of the Government, apply the Compasses." Even in that far off time these symbols had the same meaning they have for us today, and they seem to have been interpreted in the same way.

While in the order of the lodge the Square is first, in point of truth it is not the first in order. The Square rests upon the Compasses before the Compasses rest upon the Square. That is to say, just as a perfect square is a figure that can be drawn only within a circle or about a circle, so the earthly life of man moves and is built within the Circle of Divine life and law and love which surrounds, sustains, and explains it. In the Ritual of the lodge we see man, hoodwinked by the senses, slowly groping his way out of darkness, seeking the light of

realize—by human love, by the discipline of tragedy, and still more by Divine help the divine in him has subjugated the earthly, and he stands forth strong, free, and fearless, ready to raise stone upon stone until naught is wanting. If we examine with care the relative positions of the Square and Compasses as he advanced through the Degrees, we learn a parable and a prophecy of what the Compasses mean in the life of a Mason.

Here, too, we learn what the old philosopher of China meant when he urged Officers of the Government to "apply the Compasses," since only men who have mastered themselves can really lead or rule others. Let us now study the Compasses apart from the Square, and try to discover what they have to teach us. There is no more practical lesson in Masonry and it behooves us to learn it and lay it to heart. As the light of the Holy Bible reveals our relation and duty to God, and the Square instructs us in our duties to our Brother and neighbor, so the Compasses teach us the obligation which we owe to ourselves. What that obligation is needs to be made plain: it is the primary, imperative, everyday duty of circumscribing his passions, and keeping his desires within due bounds. As Most morality and reason. But he does so by the aid of inspiration from above, else he would live untroubled by a spark. Some deep need, some dim desire brought him to the door of the lodge, in quest of a better life and a clearer vision. Vague gleams, impulses, intimations reached him in the night of Nature, and he set forth and finding a friendly hand to help knocked at the door of the House of Light.

As an Apprentice a man is, symbolically, in a crude, natural state, his divine life covered and ruled by his earthly nature. As a Fellowcraft he has made one step toward liberty and light, and the nobler elements in him are struggling to rise above and control his lower, lesser nature. In the sublime Degree of a Master Mason—far more sublime than we yet Excellent King Solomon said long ago, "better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

In short, it is the old triad, without which character loses its symmetry, and life may easily end in chaos and confusion. It has been put in many ways, but never better than in the three great words: self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control; and we cannot lose any one of the three and keep the other two. To know ourselves, our strength, our weakness, our limitations, is the first principle of wisdom, and a security against many a pitfall and blunder. Lacking such knowledge, or disregarding it, a man goes too far, loses control of himself, and by that very fact loses, in some measure, the self-respect which is the corner stone of a character. If he loses respect for himself, he does not long keep his respect for others, and goes down the road to destruction, like a star out of orbit, or a car into the ditch.

The old Greeks put the same truth into a trinity of maxims: "Know thyself; in nothing too much; think as a mortal"; and it made them masters of the art of life and the life of masters of the art of life and the life of art. Hence their wise Doctrine of the Limit, as a basic idea both of life and of thought, and their worship of the God of Bounds, of which the Compasses are a symbol. It is the

wonder of our human life that we belong to the limited and to the unlimited. Hemmed in, hedged about, restricted, we long for a liberty without rule or limit. Yet limitless liberty is anarchy and slavery. As in the great word of Burke, "It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that a man of intemperate passions cannot be free; his passions forge their fetters." Liberty rests upon law. The wise man is he who takes full account of both, who knows how, at all points, to qualify the one by the other, as the Compasses, if he uses them aright, will teach him how to do.

Much of our life is ruled for us whether we will or not. The laws of nature throw about us their restraining bands, and there is no place where their writ does not run. The laws of the land make us aware that our liberty is limited by the equal rights and liberties of others. Our neighbor, too, if we fail to act toward him squarely may be trusted to look after his own rights. Custom, habit, and the pressure of public opinion are impalpable restraining forces which we dare not altogether defy. These are so many roads from which our passions and appetites stray at our peril. But there are other regions of life where personality has free play, and they are the places where most of our joy and sorrow lie. It is in the realm of desire, emotion, motive, in the inner life where we are freest and most alone, that we need a wise and faithful use of the Compasses.

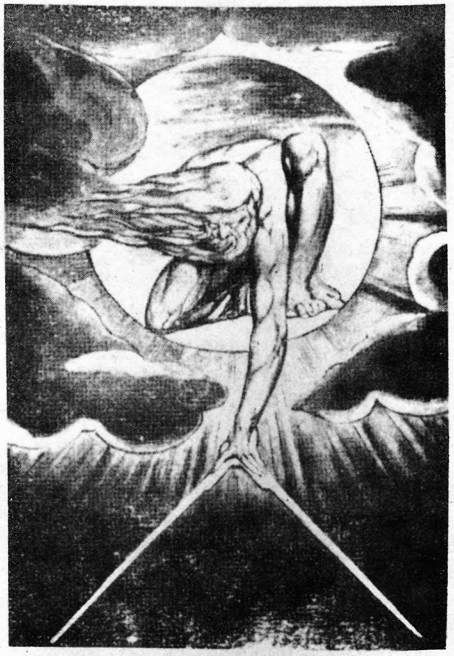
How to use the Compasses is one of the finest of all arts, asking for the highest skill of a Master Mason. If he is properly instructed, he will rest one point on the innermost center of his being, and with the other draw a circle beyond which he will not go, until he is ready and able to go farther. Against the littleness of his knowledge he will set the depth of his desire to know, against the brevity of his earthly life the reach of his spiritual hope. Within a wise limit he will live and labor and grow and when he reaches the outer rim of the circle he will draw another, and attain to a full-orbed life, balanced, beautiful, and finely poised. No wise man dare forget the maxim, "In nothing too much," for there are situations where a word too much, a step too far, means disaster. If he has a quick tongue, a hot temper, a dark mood, he will apply the Compasses, shut his weakness within the circle of his strength, and control it.

Strangely enough, even a virtue, if unrestrained and left to itself, may actually become a vice. Praise, if pushed too far, becomes flattery. Love often ends in a soft sentimentalism, flabby and foolish. Faith, if carried to the extreme by the will to believe, ends in overbelief and superstition. It is the Compasses that help us to keep our balance, in obedience to the other Greek maxim: "Think as a mortal"—that is, remember the limits of human thought. An old mystic said that God is a circle whose center is everywhere, and its circumference nowhere. But such an idea is all a blur. Our minds can neither grasp nor hold it. Even in our thought about God we must draw a circle enclosing so much of His nature as we can grasp and realize, enlarging the circle as our experience and thought and vision expand. Many a man loses all truth in his impatient effort to reach final truth. It is the man who fancies that he has found the

only truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and who seeks to impose his dogma upon others, who becomes the bigot, the fanatic, the persecutor.

Here, too, we must apply the Compasses, if we would have our faith fulfill itself in fellowship. Now we know in part—a small part, it may be, but it is real as far as it goes—though it be as one who sees in a glass darkly. The promise is that if we are worthy and well qualified, we shall see God face to face and know ever as we are known. But God is so great, so far beyond my mind and yours, that if we are to know Him at all truly, we must know Him together, in fellowship and fraternity. And so the Poet-Mason was right when he wrote:

"He drew a circle that shut me out,
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;
But love and I had the wit to win,
We drew a circle that took him in."

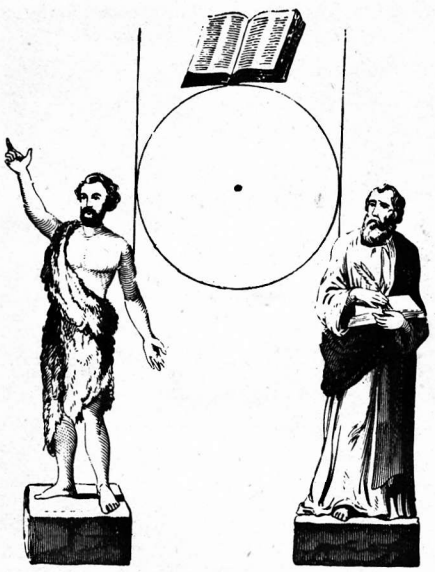


POINT WITHIN A CIRCLE

"There is in every regular and well governed Lodge, a certain point within a circle, embordered by two parallel perpendicular lines. . . ."

Familiar to every Mason, this ancient symbol is too often considered merely as one of many, instead of what it really is, among the most illuminating of the Entered Apprentice's degree.

It is particularly important not only for its antiquity, the many meanings which have been and may be read from



it by the student, but because of the bond it makes between the old Operative Craft and the modern, Speculative Masonry we know.

No man may say when, where or how the symbol began. From the earliest dawn of history a simple closed figure has been man's symbol for Diety—the circle for some peoples, the triangle for others, and a circle or a triangle with a central point, for still others. The closed figure, of course, represents the conception of Him Who has neither beginning or ending; the triangle adds to this the reading of a triune nature. It is to be noted that the Lesser Lights form a triangle placed in our Lodges in that orientation which expresses Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. In some Jurisdictions a Lodge closes with brethren forming a circle about the Altar, which thus becomes the point, or focus of the Supreme Blessing upon the brethren.

Nor must we consider that a reading which is wholly beyond the monitorial explanation of the point within a circle is beyond Masonic conception. A symbol may have many meanings, all of them right, so long as they are not self-contradictory. As the point within a circle has had so many different meanings to so many different people, it is only to be expected that it have many meanings for many Masons.

We find it connected with sun worship, the most ancient of religions; ruins of ancient temples devoted both to sun and to fire worship are circular in form, with a central altar, or "pount" which was the Holy of Holies. The symbol is found in India, in which land of mystery and mysticism its antiquity is beyond calculation. Of its presence in many of the religions of the East, Wilford says (*Asiatic Researches*):

> It was believed in India that at the general deluge everything was involved in the common destruction except the male and female principles or organs of generation, which were destined to produce a new race and to repeople the earth when the waters had subsided from its surface. The female principle, symbolized by the moon, assumed the form of a lunette, or crescent, while the male principle, symbolized by the sun, assumed the form of the lingam (or Phallus) and placed himself erect in the center of the lunette, like the mast of a ship. The two principles in this united form floated on the surface of the waters during the period of

their prevalence on the earth, and thus became the progenitors of a new race of men.

This is the more curious and interesting when a second ancient meaning of the symbol is considered—that the point represents the sun and the circle the universe. Indeed, this meaning is both modern and ancient, for a dot in a small circle is the astronomical symbol for the sun, and the derivation of this astronomical symbol marks its Masonic connection. The Indian interpretation makes the point the male principle, the circle the female; the point became the sun and the circle the solar system which ancient peoples thought was the universe because the sun is the vivifying, the life-giving principle, for all that lives.

The two parallel lines, which modern Masonry states represent the two holy Sts. John, are as ancient as the rest of the symbol, and originally had nothing to do with the "two eminent Christian patrons of Masonry." It is a pretty conception, but of course utterly without any foundation. The holy Sts. John lived and taught many hundred years before any Masonry existed which can justly be called by that name. If this is distasteful to those good brethren who like to believe that King Solomon was Grand Master of a Grand Lodge, devised the system and perhaps wrote the ritual, one must refute them with their own chronology, for both the Holy Sts. John lived long *after* the wise king wrought his "famous fabric."

The two perpendicular parallel lines are sometimes thought to have been added to the symbol of the point within a circle as a sort of diagram or typification of a Lodge at its most solemn moment, the point being the brother at the Altar, the circle the Holy of Holies, and the two lines the brethren waiting to help bring the initiate to light.

But this is obviously a mere play of fancy; the two lines against the circle with the point date back to an era before Solomon. On early Egyptian monuments may be found the Alpha and Omega, or symbol of God, in the center of a circle embordered by two upright, perpendicular, parallel serpents, representing the Power and the Wisdom of the Creator.

Mackey reads into the symbol an analogy to the Lodge by observing that as the Master and Wardens represent the sun in three positions in the Lodge, and as the Lodge is a symbol of the world (or universe) the circle can be considered as representing the Lodge, the point the sun at meridian, and the two lines, the Wardens or sun at rising and at setting.

This also seems to many students to be a mere coincidental reading. That deriviation of the symbol which best satisfied the mind as to logic and appropriateness, students found in the operative craft. Here is more to encourage than in all the researches into ancient religions and the symbolism of men long forgotten.

Fully to understand just how the point within a circle came into Speculative Masonry by way of Operative craftsmanship, it is necessary to have some mental picture of the times in which the Craftsmen of the early middle ages lived and wrought.

The vast majority of them had no

education, as we understand the word. They could neither read nor write—unimportant matters to most, first because there were no books to read, second because there was nothing which they needed to write! Skilled craftsmen they were, through long apprenticeship and careful teaching in the art of cutting and setting stone, but except for manual skill and a cunning artifice founded on generations of experience, they were without learning.

This was not true of the leaders—or, as we would call them—the Masters. The great cathedrals of Europe were not planned and overseen by ignorance. There, indeed, knowledge was power, as it is now, and the architects, the overseers, the practical builders, those who laid out the designs and planned the cutting and the placing of the stones—these were learned in all that pertained to their craft. Doubtless many of them had a knowledge of practical and perhaps of theoretical mathematics.

Certain parts of this theoretical knowledge became diffused from the Master Builders through the several grades of superintendents, architects, overseers, foremen in charge of any section of the work. With hundreds if not thousands of men working on a great structures, some sort of organization must have been as essential then as now. And equally essential would be the overseeing of the tools.

Good work cannot be done with faulty instruments. A square and upright building cannot be erected with a faulty square, level and plumb!

The tools used by the Cathedral builders must have been very much what are ours today; they had gavel and mallet and setting maul and hammer; they had chisel and trowel as have we. And of course they had plumb and square and level and twenty-four-inch gauge to "measure and lay out their work."

The square, the level and the plumb were made of wood—wood, cord and weight for plumb and level; wood alone for square.

Wood wears when used against stone. Wood warps when exposed to water or damp air. The metal used to fasten the two arms of the square together would rust and perhaps bend or break. Naturally, the squares would not indefinitely stay square. Squares had constantly to be checked up for their right-angledness. Some standard had to be adopted by which a square could be compared, so that, when Operative Masons' squares were tried by it they would not "materially err."

The importance of the perfect right angle in the square by which the stones were shaped can hardly be over estimated. Operative Masonry in the Cathedral building days was largely a matter of cut and try, of individual workmen, of careful craftsmanship. Quantity production, micrometer measurement, interchangeable parts were words which had not yet been coined; ideas for which they stand had not been invented. All the more necessary, then, that the foundation on which all the work was done should be as perfect as the Master knew how to make it. Cathedral builders erected their temples for all time—how well they built, a hundred glorious structures in the Old World testify. They built well because they knew how to check and try their squares!

Today any school boy knows the simple "secret of the square" which was then the closely guarded wisdom of the Masters alone; today any school boy can explain the steam engine which was a wonder two hundred years ago, and make and use a wireless which was a miracle scarce ten years gone by. Let us not wonder that our ancient Operative brethren thought their secret of a square so valuable; let us rather wonder that in a time in which the vast majority of men were ignorant of mathematics, so many must have known and appreciated this simple, this marvelous, geometrical secret.

Lay out a circle—any size—on a piece of paper. With a straight edge draw a line across through its center. Put a dot on the circle, anywhere. Connect that dot with the line at both points where it crosses the circle. Result, a perfect right angle.

Draw the circle of what size you will; place the dot on the circumference where you will, it makes no difference. So be it the lines from the dot meet the horizontal line crossing the circle through its center, they will form a right angle.

This was the Operative Masters great secret—knowing how to "try the square." It was by this means that he tested the working tools of the Fellows of the Craft; did he do so often enough, it was impossible either for their tools or their work "to materially err." From this, also, comes the ritual used in the Lodges of our English brethren, where they "open on the center." Alas, we have dropped the quaint old words they use, and American Lodges know the "center" only as the point within a circle. The original line across the center has been shifted to the side and become the "two perpendicular parallel lines" of Egypt and India and our admonitions are no longer what they must once have been; . . . "while a Mason circumscribes his *square* within these points, it is impossible that *it* should materially err."

Today we only have our Speculative meaning; we circumscribe our desires and our passions within the circle and the lines touching on the Holy Scriptures. For speculative Masons who use squares only in the symbolic sense such an admonition is of far greater use than would be the secret of the square as known to our ancient brethren.

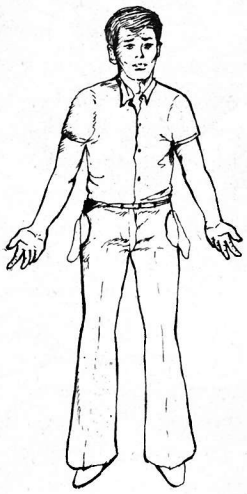
But—how much greater becomes the meaning of the symbol when we see it as a direct descent from an Operative practice! Our ancient brethren used the point within a circle as a test for the rectitude of the tools by which they squared their work and built their temporal buildings. In the Speculative sense, we use it as a test for the rectitude of our intentions and our conduct, by which we square our actions with the square of virtue. They erected Cathedrals—we build the House Not Made With Hands. Their point within a circle was Operative—ours is Speculative.

But through the two-point in a circle on the ground by which an Operative Master secretly tested the square of his fellows—point within a circle as a symbol by which each of us may test, secretly, the square of his virtue by which he erects an Inner Temple to the Most High—both are Masonic, both are beautiful. The one we know is far more lovely that it is a direct descendant of an operative practice the use of which produced the good work, true work, square work

of the Master Masons of the days that come not back.

Pass it not lightly. Regard it with the reverence it deserves, for surely it is one of the greatest teachings of Masonry, concealed within a symbol which is plain for any man to read, so be it he has Masonry in his heart.

THE RITE OF DESTITUTION



NOTHING in Freemasonry is more beautiful in form or more eloquent in meaning than the First Degree. Its simplicity and dignity, its blend of solemnity and surprise, as well as its beauty of moral truth, mark it as a little masterpiece. Nowhere may one hope to find a nobler appeal to the native nobilities of a man. What we get out of Freemasonry, as of anything else depends upon our capacity, and our response to its appeal; but it is hard to see how any man can receive the First Degree and pass out of the lodge room quite the same man as when he entered it.

What memories come back to us when we think of the time when we took our first step in Freemasonry. We had been led, perhaps, by the sly remarks of friends to expect some kind of horseplay, or the riding of a goat; but how different it was in reality. Instead of mere play-acting we discovered, by contrast, a ritual of religious faith and moral law, an allegory of life and a parable of those truths which lie at the foundations of manhood. Surely no man can ever forget that hour when, vaguely or clearly, the profound meaning of Freemasonry began slowly to unfold before his mind.

The whole meaning of initiation, of course, is an analogy of the birth,

awakening and growth of the soul; its discovery of the purpose of life and the nature of the world in which it is to be lived. The lodge is the world as it was thought to be in the olden time, with its square surface and canopy of sky, its dark North and its radiant East; its center an Altar of obligation and prayer. The initiation, by the same token, is our advent from the darkness of prenatal gloom into the light of moral truth and spiritual faith, out of lonely isolation into a network of fellowships and relationships, out of a merely physical into a human and moral order. The cable tow, by which we may be detained or removed should we be unworthy or unwilling to advance, is like the cord which joins a child to its mother at birth. Nor is it removed until, by the act of assuming the obligations and fellowships of the moral life, a new, unseen tie is spun and woven in the heart, uniting us, henceforth, by an invisible bond, to the service of our race in its moral effort to build a world of fraternal good will.

Such is the system of moral philosophy set forth in symbols to which the initiate is introduced, and in this light each emblem, each incident, should be interpreted. Thus Freemasonry gives a man at a time when it is most needed, if he be young, a noble, wise, time-tried scheme of thought and moral principle by which to read the meaning of the world and his duty in it. No man may hope to see it all at *once*, or once for all, and it is open to question whether any man lives long enough to think it through —for, like all simple things, it is deep and wonderful. In the actuality of the symbolism a man in the first degree of Freemasonry, as in the last, accepts the human situation, enters a new environment, with a new body of motive and experience. In short, he assumes his real vocation in the world and vows to live by the highest standard of values.

Like every other incident of initiation, it is in the light of the larger meanings of Freemasonry that we must interpret the Rite of Destitution. At a certain point in his progress every man is asked for a token of a certain kind, to be laid up in the archives of the lodge as a memorial of his initiation. If he is "duly and truly prepared" he finds himself unable to grant the request. Then, in one swift and searching moment, he realizes—perhaps for the first time in his life—what it means for a man to be actually destitute. For one impressive instant, in which many emotions mingle, he is made to feel the bewilderment, if not the humiliation, which besets one who is deprived of the physical necessities of life upon which, far more than we have been wont to admit, both the moral and social order depend. Then, by a surprise as sudden as before, and in a manner never to be forgotten, the lesson of the Golden Rule is taught—the duty of man to his fellow in dire need. It is not left to the imagination, since the initiate is actually put into the place of the man who asks his aid, making his duty more real and vivid.

At first sight it may seem to some that the lesson is marred by the limitations and qualifications which follow; but that is only seeming. Freemasons are under all the obligations of humanity, the most primary of which is to succor their

fellow men in desperate plight. As Mohammed long ago said, the end of the world has come when man will not help man. But we are under special obligations to our brethren of the Craft, as much by the promptings of our hearts as by the vows we have taken. Such a principle, so far from being narrow and selfish, has the indorsement of the Apostle Paul in his exhortations to the early Christian community. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we read: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." It is only another way of saying that "charity begins at home," and for Masons the home is the lodge.

So, then, the destitute to which this Rite refers, and whose distress the initiate is under vows to relieve, as his ability may permit, are a definite and specific class. They are not to be confused with those who are povery-stricken by reason of criminal tendencies or inherent laziness. That is another problem, in the solution of which Masons will have their share and do their part—a very dark problem, too, which asks for both patience and wisdom. No, the needy which this Rite requires that we aid are "all poor, distressed, worthy Masons, their widows and orphans"; that is, those who are destitute through no fault of their own, but as the result of untoward circumstance. They are those who, through accident, disease or disaster, have become unable, however willing and eager, to meet their obligations. Such are deserving of charity in its true Masonic sense, not only in the form of financial relief, but also in the form of companionship, sympathy and love. If we are bidden to be on our guard against impostors, who would use Masonry for their own ends, where there is real need our duty is limited only by our ability to help, without injury to those nearest to us.

A church, if it be worthy of the name, opens its doors to all kinds and conditions of folk, rich and poor alike, the learned and the unlearned. But a lodge of Masons is different, alike in purpose and function. It is made up of picked men, selected from among many, and united for unique ends. No man ought to be allowed to enter the Order unless he is equal to its demands, financially as well as mentally and morally, able to pay its fees and dues, and to do his part in its work of relief. Yet no set of men, however intelligent and strong, are exempt from the vicissitudes and tragedies of life. Take, for example, Anthony Sayer, the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England. Towards the end of his life he met with such reverses that he became tiler of Old King's Arms Lodge, No. 28, and it is recorded that he was assisted "out of the box of this Society." Such a misfortune, or something worse, may overtake any one of us, without warning or resource.

Disasters of the most appalling kind befall men every day, leaving them broken and helpless. How often have we seen a noble and able man suddenly smitten down in mid life, stripped not only of his savings but of his power to earn, as the result of some blow no mortal wit could avert. There he lies, shunted out of active life when most needed and most able and willing to serve. Life may any day turn Ruffian and

strike one of us such a blow, disaster following fast and following faster, until we are at its mercy. It is to such experiences that the Rite of Destitution has reference, pledging us to aid as individuals and as lodges; and we have a right to be proud that our Craft does not fail in the doing of good. It is rich in benevolence, and it knows how to hide its labors under the cover of secrecy, using its privacy to shield itself and those whom it aids.

Yet we are very apt, especially in large lodges, or in the crowded solitude of great cities, to lose the personal touch, and let our charity fall to the level of a cold, distant almsgiving. When this is so charity becomes a mere perfunctory obligation, and a lodge has been known to vote ten dollars for the relief of others and fifty dollars for its own entertainment! There is a Russian story in which a poor man asked aid of another as poor as himself: "Brother, I have no money to give you, but let me give you my hand," was the reply. "Yes, give me your hand, for that, also, is a gift more needed than all others," said the first; and the two forlorn men clasped hands in a common need and pathos. There was more real charity in that scene than in many a munificent donation made from a sense of duty or pride.

Indeed, we have so long linked charity with the giving of money that the word has well nigh lost its real meaning. In his sublime hymn in praise of charity, in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, St. Paul does not mention money at all, except to say "and although I bestow all my good to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Which implies that a man may give all the money he possesses and yet fail of that Divine grace of Charity. Money has its place and value, but it is not everything, much less the sum of our duty, and there are many things it cannot do. A great editor sent the following greeting at the New Year:

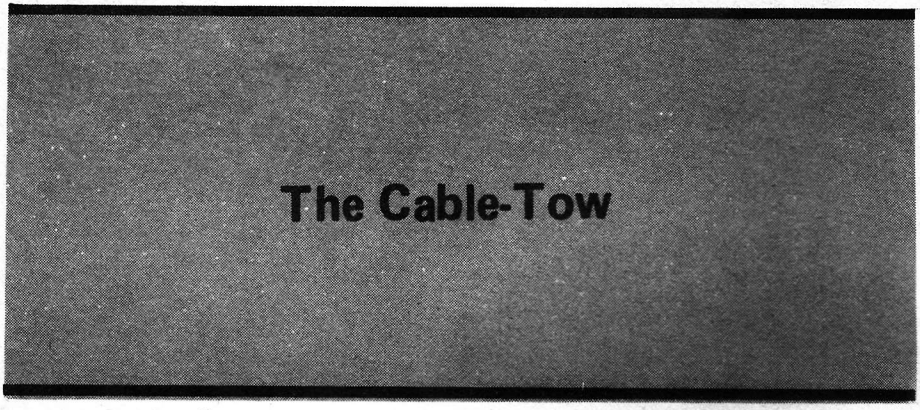
"Here is hoping that in the New Year there will be nothing the matter with you that money cannot cure. For the rest, the law and the prophets contain no word of better rule for the health of the soul than the adjuration: Hope thou a little, fear not at all, and love as much as you can."

Surely it was a good and wise wish, if we think of it, because the things which money cannot cure are the ills of the spirit, the sickness of the heart, and the dreary, dull pain of waiting for those who return no more. There are hungers which gold cannot satisfy, and blinding bereavements from which it offers no shelter. There are times when a hand laid upon the shoulder, "in a friendly sort of way," is worth more than all the money on earth. Many a young man fails, or makes a bad mistake, for lack of a brotherly hand which might have held him up, or guided him into a wiser way.

The Rite of Destitution! Yes, indeed; but a man may have all the money he needs, and yet be destitute of faith, of hope, of courage; and it is our duty to share our faith and courage with him. To fulfill the obligations of this Rite we must give not simply our money, but ourselves, as Lowell taught in "The Vision of Sir Launfal," writing in the name of a Great Brother who, though he had neither home nor money, did more good to humanity than all of us

put together—and who still haunts us like the dream of a Man we want to be.

"The Holy Supper is kept indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need;
Not that which we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who bestows himself with his alms feeds three:
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me!"



HE word Cable-tow, we are told, is purely Masonic in its meaning and use. It is so defined in the dictionary, but not always accurately, which shows that we ought not to depend upon the ordinary dictionary for the truth about Masonic terms. Masonry has its own vocabulary and uses it in its own way. Nor can our words always be defined for the benefit of the profane.

Even in Masonic lore the word cable-tow varies in form and use. In an early pamphlet by Prichard, issued in 1730, and meant to be an exposure of Masonry, the cable-tow is called a "cable-rope;" and in another edition a "tow-line." The same word "tow-line" is used in a pamphlet called *A Defence of Masonry*, written, it is believed, by Anderson as a reply to Prichard about the same time. In neither pamphlet is the word used in exactly the form and sense in which it is used today; and in a note Prichard, wishing to make everything Masonic absurd, explains it as meaning "the roof of the mouth!"

In English lodges, the cable-tow, like the hoodwink, is used only in the first degree, and has no symbolical meaning at all, apparently. In our American lodges it is used in all three degrees, and has almost too many meanings. Some of our American teachers—Pike among them—see no meaning in the cable-tow beyond its obvious use in leading an initiate into the Lodge, and the possible use of withdrawing him from it should he be unwilling or unworhty to advance.

To some of us this non-symbolical idea and use of the cable-tow is very strange, in view of what Masonry is in general, and particularly in its ceremonies of initiation. For Masonry is a chamber

of imagery. The whole Lodge is a symbol. Every object, every act is symbolical. The whole fits together into a system of symbolism by which Masonry veils, and yet reveals, the truth it seeks to teach to such as have eyes to see and are ready to receive it.

As far back as we can go in the history of initiation, we find the cable-tow, or something like it, used very much as it is used in a Masonic Lodge today. No matter what the origin and form of the word as we employ it may be—whether from the Hebrew "khabel," or the Dutch "cabel," both meaning a rope—the fact is the same. In India, in Egypt, in most of the Ancient Mysteries, a cord or cable was used in the same way and for the same purpose.

Its meaning, so far as we can make it out, seems to have been some kind of a pledge—a vow in which a man pledged his life. Even outside initiatory rites we find it so employed, as, for example, in a striking scene recorded in the Bible (1 Kings 20:31,32), the description of which is almost Masonic. The king of Syria, Ban-hadad, had been defeated in battle by the king of Israel and his servants are making a plea for his life. They approach the king of Israel "with ropes upon their heads," and speak of his "brother, Ben-hadad."

Why did they wear ropes, or nouses, on their heads? Evidently to symbolize a pledge of some sort, given in a Lodge or otherwise, between the two kings, of which they wished to remind the king of Israel. The king of Israel asked: "Is he yet alive? he is my brother." Then we read that the servants of the Syrian king watched to see if the king of Israel made any sign, and, catching his sign, they brought the captive king of Syria before him. Not only was the life of the king of Syria spared, but a new pledge was made between the two men.

The cable-tow, then, is the outward and visible symbol of a vow in which a man has pledged his life, or has pledged himself to save another life at the risk of his own. Its length and strength are measured by the ability of the man to fulfill his obligation and his sense of the moral sanctity of his obligation—a test, that is, both of his capacity and of his character.

If a Lodge is a symbol of the world, and initiation is our birth into the world of Masonry, the cable-tow is not unlike the cord which unites a child to its mother at birth; and so it is usually interpreted. Just as the physical cord, when cut, is replaced by a tie of love and obligation between mother and child, so, in one of the most impressive moments of initiation, the cable-tow is removed, because the brother, by his oath at the Altar of Obligation, is bound by a tie stronger than any physical cable. What before was an outward physical restraint has become an inward moral constraint. That is to say, force is replaced by love—outer authority by inner obligation—and that is the secret of security and the only basis of brotherhood.

The cable-tow is the sign of the pledge of the life of a man. As in his oath he agrees to forfeit his life if his vow is violated, so, positively, he pledges his life to the service of the Craft. He agrees to go to the aid of a Brother, using all his power in his behalf, "if within the

length of his cable-tow," which means, if within the reach of his power. How strange that any one should fail to see symbolical meaning in the cable-tow! It is, indeed, the great symbol of the mystic tie which Masonry spins and weaves between men, making them Brothers and helpers one of another.

But, let us remember that a Cable-tow has two ends. If it binds a Mason to the Fraternity, by the same fact it binds the Fraternity to each man in it. The one obligation needs to be emphasized as much as the other. Happily, in our day we are beginning to see the other side of the obligation—that the Fraternity is under vows to its members to guide, instruct and train them for the effective service of the Craft and of humanity. Control, obedience, direction or guidance—these are the three meanings of the cable-tow, as it is interpreted by the best insight of the Craft.

Of course, by Control we do not mean that Masonry commands us in the sense that it uses force. Not at all. Masonry rules men as beauty rules an artist, as love rules a lover. It does not drive; it draws. It controls us, shapes us, through its human touch and its moral nobility. By the same method, by the same power it wins obedience and gives guidance and direction to our lives. At the Altar we take vows to follow and obey its high principles and ideals; and Masonic vows are not empty obligations—they are vows in which a man pledges his life and his sacred honor.

The old writers define the length of a cable-tow, which they sometimes call a "cable's length," variously. Some say it is seven hundred and twenty feet, or twice the measure of a circle. Others say that the length of the cable-tow is three miles. But such figures are merely symbolical, since in one man it may be three miles and in another it may as easily be three thousand miles—or to the end of the earth. For each Mason the cable-tow reaches as far as his moral principles go and his material conditions will allow. Of that distance each must be his own judge, and indeed each does pass judgment upon himself accordingly, by his own acts in aid of others.

Recently a man of science said that if the earth were held in its orbit by iron bars, they would have to be close together, not more than a foot apart, covering the entire surface. If, he said, these bars were twisted together into one gigantic cable, he doubted if it would be as strong as the invisible bond, or cable, by which the earth is held to its vast orbit. It was a striking way of teaching us that the cables that reach the longest and hold the strongest are invisible, and formed of forces with which men do not reckon, just because they are noiseless and unseen.

Just so, when the cable-tow of each Mason is joined with that of every other Mason, and all are united in one Cable of Kindness, it makes a bond of brotherhood the might of which no mortal together. It holds when other ties break, as it did in the Civil War in America. It is one of the holiest assets of humanity —a far-stretching Tie, mystical and unseen, yet more unbreakable than bands of steel, in which the obligation and loyalty and love of each of us is a strand.

There is an unseen cord that binds
The whole wide world together;

Through every human life it winds,
This one mysterious tether.

There are no separate lives; the chain
Too subtle for our seeing,
Unites us all upon the plane
Of universal being.

Such is the Divine cable-tow by which the world is held in its moral orbit. To discover that cord running through our own lives—your life and mine—uniting us with all the seekers after truth, all lovers of right, all servants of God and man, is the mission and blessing of Masonry. What is the length of our cable-tow? Who knows how far it reaches?

Adieu! A heart-warm, fond adieu!
Dear Brothers of the Mystic Tie
Ye favored, ye enlightened few
Companions of my social joy!

The immortal verse of Robert Burns, written in his farewell to his brethren of St. James Lodge, Tarbolton, Scotland, first popularized, if it did not originate, the three words now universally recognized by all English speaking Freemasons as expressing the very essence of the Fraternity.

But to recognize is one thing; to define is quite another, as any man may discover who attempts to describe a perfume, a sunset, a symphony, so another may smell, see, hear with the speaker.

What IS the Mystic Tie? Is it an obligation, taken before an Altar? Is it a Covenant, entered into between a man and men, before God and his fellows? Is it a thing that one can hold in his hand and see with his eye? Is it a matter of that land of the inner life, in which a man thinks the thoughts he never tells and learns the truths he cannot teach?

To every man, even the most extrovert and obvious-minded, comes at times a spiritual experience. Tongue-tied in the grip of emotion, few phrase it. But it

happens; and none who reads these lame words but will admit it to himself at least, no matter how vociferously he denies it aloud.

It comes in as many ways as are men to whom it comes. One man stands before a mighty mountain—his eyes follow its rocky fastnesses up, up, up to where austere saw teeth of stone cut into the blue. Something in the might, the majesty, the aloofness, the dignity, the timelessness of the mass passes from rock to heart and sings therein a harmony which never quite dies away. Another cultivates a rose garden and in the pure beauty of the blossom which bursts forth under his ministering hands sees a vision not of the earth, earthy. A third kneels in a cathedral and as the organ's deepest diapson sounds a note so low it is hardly heard, so profound nothing else can be heard, and a shaft of sunlight strikes through stained glass to pick out a bit of stone carving, feesl himself close to the eternal verities . . .

And others sit in a Lodge; a familiar, everyday, ordinary fact of brotherhood's experience. They hear familiar ritual; they see familiar faces; they engage in familiar actions. There is no element of surprise, or drama, or great event, yet there is something present which is found nowhere else something that men come, and come, and come again, often all their lives through, to get . . .

As illusive as a half-memory of childhood, as hard to catch as a sunbeam, as intangible as the hint of spring that sets the birds to flying north, it is as strong as steel, as permanent as the earth, as certain and dependable as gravity.

Brother Arthur E. Powell comes as near as may be to saying what is not sayable:

"What strand is it that tugs at our hearts, taut when so many threads are broken in the rough ways of the world?" he asks, then answer: "Ask what it is in the wild that calls to the little wild things? What sacred secret things do the mountains whisper to the hillmen, so silently yet so surely that they can be heard above the din and clatter of the world? What mystery does the sea tell to the sailor, the desert to the Arab, the artic ice to the explorer the stars to the astronomer? When we have answered these questions, mayhap we may divine the magic of Masonry. Who knows what it is, or how, or why, unless it be the long Cabletow of God running from heart to heart?"

We learn in school that a whole is the sum of all its parts. If, then, we might list all the parts which compose the Mystic Tie, their sum should be the definition of the whole. But it is not. Firstly, we cannot "list all the parts," since one man's list and that of his brother would differ, even as our brother's differ from ours. And secondly and finally, a whole which is the sum of all its parts is material—and the Mystic Tie is not made of matter.

We all have the same number of letters in the alphabet; we all have access to the dictionary which contains every word in the language—but we do not know how to take of these and write a Psalm of David, or a Sermon on the Mount. We have the bricks and the stone and may even possess the plan—but the mortar of the spirit to build them into something deathless—that escapes us. Modern musicians have more notes to the scale

than were known to Brahms and Beethoven and more strings and brass and woodwind to sound them—but who writes symphonies as the Masters wrote?

Still, we may try, knowing in advance that we must fail . . .

Ritual is a part of the Mystic Tie. How or why man must make rituals and learn them, love them, preserve them, is as mysterious as anything in life—but it has always been so. There is someting deep within us which demands a set form of expression; we *may* say the thought in a thousand ways, but we *do* say it in unison and in a special way. And this is true whether it be Freemasonry or Church or everyday life, which is filled with a ritual so common that we do not think of it as ritual. "Good morning! How are you?"—ritual. To smile on seeing a friendly face—ritual. The clasp of hand to hand; the familiar gathering of family about a table; school, business, earning a living—all are rituals without which life would be unlivable. The lover's kiss and the words which all the world knows but which are invariably whispered as a secret—these, too, are ritual. And so the ritual of the Lodge, with its old, old truths phrased in stilted old-fashioned words and teaching anew every time it is heard what is already known of all who hear it—this golden chain of sounds which die even as they are born, and yet which never cease sounding once they have been taken into the heart—they are a part of the Mystic Tie.

Teaching and learning ritual is a part of it. Long ago, answering some question regarding the oral and answering some question regarding the oral and the cipher method of teaching ritual, Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, beloved and inspired brother, wrote:

"What is efficiency in the teaching of Masonry? Surely it is someting more than accuracy of the letter, valuable as that it. It is also the communication of a spirit, and we submit that this highest and most precious result is better achieved by oral instruction. It goes deeper, it stays longer, it touches parts of our nature which are not reached by decoding a cipher. For example, *we* were intructed in Masonry by a noble and gracious man to whom Masonry meant very much—long since gone to join the white and silent people we call the dead—but the impress of his spirit lingers still. He gave us something which no books can give, because the finest truth is communicated only through personality—it passes silently, mystically, from soul to soul. It is so in all education The best thing a lad gets at college is not from books, but from his contact with strong men—as when Garfield said that the best university would be to sit on one end of a log with Horace man on the other end. Inaccuracies may be corrected, but we cannot think that the hours which we spent in fellowship with the gracious man who instructed us in the days that come not back, were wasted. Never! Perhaps we are sentimental. If so, we are glad of it. But we do feel that to abandon the oral teaching of Masonry would mean the loss of something unique, particular, and fine, and we know of nothing to take its place."

Friendship is a part of the mystic tie; that glory of life in which man finds a man in whom he can trust, for whom

he would labor, with whom he would live. Not the greatest poet who has yet lived has been able to define friendship. We know what it is, but we cannot explain it. Yet it is there, alive, vital, a part of Lodge life, an integer in the whole, and so a part of the Mystic Tie.

Mystery is a part of it—indeed, is it not named for mystery? And Freemasonry is so filled with mysteries! From whence came it, this chain of fraternity which began we know not when and grew we know not how? And whither does it go? The one as much a mystery as the other. Why do men seek that which does not advertise, which is known so little, (and that little, so badly) by the outside world? What unknown millions of men once trod its halls? Their names, their lives, their acts, their influence—we know them not. True, we can sup with Ashmole and enter St. Peter's with Wren; we can kneel with Washington in a Lodge in Fredericksburg, and we can touch the hand of Lafayette in a Masonic procession—at least in reading and in imagination. But the millions of unknowns who stepped as we have stepped, who spoke as we have spoken, who pledged as we have pledged, who lived and loved and died in Freemasonry, as we live and love and will die—they are a mystery; a dear, bewildering, unknown and forever to be unknown mystery but—a part of the Mystic Tie.

The "secrets" of Freemasonry are a part of it. Granted that those secrets are of use and value only to the Freemason, the fact remains; men love that which is secret, that which sets them off from their fellows; that which the unitiated cannot share. Passengers on a liner exclaim at the huge size of an iceberg, seldom realizing that there is eight times as much ice below the surface of the sea as is visible above. So with the power of the secrets of Freemasonry; the bond that lies within them is eighty times eight tighter than is tied by their mere possession.

Quoting again from the so-very-quotable Dr. Newton, writing in *The Builder:*

"In the Old Charges of Craft Masonry the initiate was obligated to keep the secrets of the Craft, by his honor as a man on the 'contents of this Holy Book.' What were those secrets in the olden time? They included the technical secrets of his art—which have become symbolical secrets to us—and the signs and tokens by which he made himself known as a Master Mason when he went ajourneying. Those secrets protected both the artist and his art. What are the secrets of a Master Mason now? Not the wise and noble truths which the Order teaches. Our fundamental principles are the common possession of thinking men and are the foundations of the higher human life everywhere. No, what is secret in Masonry is not the truth which it teaches, but the method by which it teaches it—its ceremonial and symbolism, and the signs and token by which it protects the privacy of its Lodge room that it may teach more impressively. Also, those signs and tokens serve as a cover under which charity, brotherliness, and the busy heart of love can work without ostentation—enabling us to serve a brother in perplexity or need without wounding a heart already sore. Therefore, if those secrets were surrendered,

something beautiful and fine would be lost. In other days it required some courage to be a Mason, and those old pioneers who faced obloquy for their Masonic faith and fellowship, knew what they were about when they took no risks of having their sacred secrets violated, but kept them warm and tender and true, passing them from mouth to ear adown the years!"

Of the Mystic Tie, too, the universality of Freemasonry is a part. Two and a half million brothers in this nation—five million in the world. In every civilized country Freemasonry has grown and thrived—until, alas, the ideaologies of Dictators who revere only force struck down the gentle Craft in conquered countries. To be a part of anything important is always a bond: to be a part of anything so universal, so widespread, so essential to so many peoples in so many lands and times—surely this is a part of the Mystic Tie.

"My Mother Lodge!" Next to his family and his God many a man keeps thought of Mother Lodge closely and dearer in his heart than anything else the world may offer him. Its hall may be small and old. Its furniture may be shabby and decrepit. The pictures on the walls may be faded, the carpet worn, the physical side wholly drab. But the Mother Lodge itself is neither shabby nor drab; it shines with a gentle radiance in the hearts of brethren who love it and the light it sheds they will follow far. Surely it, too, is a part of the Mystic Tie . . .

So these pages might run on for volumes and still the story would not be told, nor the parts listed show forth the truth of the whole.

None who have known it would think of denying the strength of the Mystic Tie. None who have its cord about their hearts would loose it. None can wholly comprehend it; none define, describe it. It exists; it works its gentle miracles; it is as mighty as it is intangible. Perhaps that singer of Freemasonry had a partial vision of it when he wrote "The Road":

So many men before thy Altar kneel
Unthinkingly, to promise brotherhood;
So few remain, humbly to kiss thy rood
With ears undeafened to thy mute appeal;
So many find thy symbols less than real,
Thy teaching mystic, hard to understand;
So few there are in all thy far flung band
To hold thy banner high and draw thy steel.
And yet—immortal and most mighty, thou!
What hath thy lore of life to let it live?
What is the vital spark, hid in thy vow?
Thy Millions learned, as thy dear paths they trod,
The secret of the strength thou hast to give—
"I am a way of common men to God."

The Northeast Corner

Surely no Mason ever forgets the moment when he is placed in the North East Corner of the Lodge, and hears the Master say that he there stands a just and upright Mason. It is one of the thrills along the great journey of initiation, a point at which the idea and purpose of Masonry begin to take shape in the mind.

A thrill of joy is felt in the Lodge, not only by initiate but by the Master and the Brethren, as if a son had been born, or a new friend found; a note of exaltation on having arrived at so happy a climax, as when a pilgrim pauses to rejoice in so much of a journey done. And naturally so, because the Corner Stone of a Masonic life has been laid.

Always, as far back as we can go in the story of mankind, the laying of a Corner Stone has been a happy event. It has always been celebrated with solemn and joyous rites. It is the basis of a new building, the beginning of a new enterprise; and the good will of God is invoked to bless the builders and the building.

How much more, then, should it be so when a man takes the first step out of Darkness toward the Light, and begins the adventure of a new life! More important by far than temple or cathedral is the building of a moral character and a spiritual personality. Stones will not and temples crumble under the attrition of time, but moral qualities and spiritual values belong to the Eternal Life.

The initiate stands in the North East Corner on a foundation of Justice, the one virtue by which alone a man can live with himself or with his fellows. Without it no structure will stand, in architecture, as Ruskin taught us, much less in morals. In the Rite of Destitution he has learned to love Mercy, and at the Altar of Obligation prayer has been offered, in fulfilment of the words of the prophet:

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!"

In the North East Corner the initiate stands midway between the North, the place of Darkness, and the East, the place of Light, whence healing, revealing rays fall upon the life of man. Such is his position, symbolically, and rightly so. He is an Entered Apprentice, a beginner in the Masonic art, neither

in the Dark nor in the Light. He has come out of the Darkness, his face set toward the Light, and his quest is for more Light, with yet much light to dawn upon him.

What is life for? To live, of course; and only by living it do we learn what it is for, much less how to live it. It is ever an adventure, a new adventure for each man, despite the millions that have opens a window into things quaint, curious, and even awful, and all sorts of explanations are offered us, some of which may be named.

For example, Albert Pike spread out the map of the old world of the East—the mystical territory whence so many of our symbols and legends have come—and found that "the Apprentice represents the Aryan race in its original home on the highlands of Pamir, in the north of that Asia termed Orient, at the angle whence, upon two great lines of emigration South and West, they flowed forth in successive waves to conquer and colonize the world."

Well, what of it, interesting though it may be as a fact of long ago, if a fact it is? What truth can it teach us to our profit, beyond the suggestion that the House of Initiation took the form of the world as it was then mapped in the mind, and that the procession of initiation follows the line of march of a conquering race? It may be valuable, as preserving the dim outline of ancient history—but not otherwise.

Another student, seeking the secret of Masonry in solar symbolism and mythology, looks at the same map of the eastern world, in the frame of an Oblong Square, studying the movements of the Sun from season to season. He finds that the point farthest North and the point farthest South on the map mark the Summer and Winter Solstices, respectively. In other words, the North East Corner of the world, as then mapped, is the point in the annual course of the Sun when it reaches the extreme northern limit; the longest day in the year, which in Masonry we dedicate to St. John the Baptist, the prophet of righteousness.

Then, turning to the history of religion, he finds, not unnaturally, many rites of primitive peoples—magical rituals and Midsummer Night Dreams—celebrating the Summer Solstice. Many hints and relics of the old Light Religion are preserved for us in Masonry—rays of its faiths and fictions—one of them being that the North East Corner of the Universe, and so of the Lodge of which it is a symbol, is the seat of the Sun-God in the prime of his power.

So, too, the North East Corner, as the throne of God in the hour of his majesty, became a place unique in the symbols of man, having special virtue and sanctity. As we read in the Institutes of Menu: "If he has any incurable disease, let him advance in a straight path towards the invincible northeast point, feeding on water and air till his mortal frame totally decay, and his soul become united with the Supreme." What more appropriate place from which to start an edifice, or to place an Apprentice as he begins to build the temple of his Masonic life?

Also, because of such magical ideas associated with the North East Corner, it was a cruel custom for ages to bury a living human being under the corner

stone of a building, to mollify the gods, and, later, as a token of the sacrifice involved in all building. Horrible as the custom was, here no doubt was a crude sense of the law of sacrifice running through all human life, never to be escaped, even by the loftiest souls, as we see on a dark cross outside the city gate.

In crude ages all things were crude; even the holiest insights took awful shapes of human sacrifice. Life is costly, and man has paid a heavy price for the highest truth. For there is a law of heavenly death by which man advances—the death, that is, of all that is unheavenly within him—that the purer, clearer truth may rise. Evermore, by a law of dying into life, man grows—dying to his lower, lesser self and releasing the angel hidden within him.

Thinking of all these strands of thought and faith and sorrow woven into the symbolism of the lodge, how can any one watch without emotion as the Apprentice takes his place, upright and eager, in the North East Corner. There he stands, against a background of myth and symbol and old sacrifice, erect before God, and one thinks of the great words in the book of Ezekiel:

"And God said unto me, Son of Man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me."

Such is the challenge of God to the manhood of man, asking him to stand erect and unafraid, and commune as friend with friend. Alas, it is not easy to keep the upright posture, physically or morally, in the midst of the years with their blows and burdens. At last, a dark Ruffian lays us low in death, and only the Hand of God, with its strong grip, can lift us from a dead level and set us on our feet forever. So, at least, Masonry teaches us to believe and live:

Lord, I believe
Man is no little thing
That, like a bird in spring,
Comes fluttering to the Light of Life,
And out of the darkness of long death.
The Breath of God is in him,
And his agelong strife
With evil has a meaning and an end.
Though twilight dim his vision be
Yet can he see Thy Truth,
And in the cool of evening, Thou, his friend,
Dost walk with him, and talk
(Did not the Word take flesh?)
Of the great destiny
That waits him and his race.
In days that are to be
By grace he can achieve great things,
And, on the wings of strong desire,
Mount upward ever, higher and higher,
Until above the clouds of earth he stands,
And stares God in the face.

". . . . and in his hand
He took the golden compasses, prepared
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
This Universe, and all created things.
One foot he centred, and the other turned
Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said, 'Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
This be thy just circumference, O World!' "

From Milton's "Paradise Lost"

FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN –

TO THE MASONS OF OLONGAPO

It is my pleasure to greet the Free and Accepted Masons of Olongapo City. Unquestionably, your fraternity has a distinctive history. It has contributed many of our heroes in the struggle of our country for independence against the yoke of colonialism. Its endearing record cannot be over-emphasized but bears repeating over and over again for such efforts are a constant source of inspiration to all of us.

But this is not all. Your fraternity has not stopped working for the attainment of a better future for our country by influencing man to think, act, and live according to the highest ideals of his religion, ethics and morality. Your invitation speaks well of your continuing concern for our community. You have asked me about "opportunities" – but a different kind of opportunity. You did not ask for opportunities by which you can improve your organization. You did not ask for opportunities by which the material welfare of your members can be enhanced. What you asked for are opportunities by which you can assist the government efforts to improve the lot of our masses. Indeed, rarely does a public servant like me receive such offers. I have been in the public service for sometime now – 10 years as Solicitor General and 2 years as Governor of Pampanga – and let me say that perhaps 8 out of 10 of my callers burden me with problems such as the need for employment, the need for public work improvements, the need for competent counsel and others. In other words, most of them seek to be helped. Your request is different: you do not seek to be helped, you seek to help others. I take it that service is the essence of your fraternity, the simple secret of its success, the reason why it has survived the ages, and has flourished in all civilized countries. If so, then, I could very well understand the call of one of your illustrious grandmasters, the late Senator Camilo Osias when he said that there should be more men in masonry and more masonry in men.

You ask me about government efforts to improve the lot of our masses. If I were to be detailed on this topic, I will consume your whole program without even scratching its surface. Constraints of time will therefore limit me to deal with just the thrust of these efforts.

I am informed that as an organization, masons have taken a strong stand in favor of disarmament, and against the

further proliferation of nuclear weapons. In this regard, you can be sure that your position is in line with the government posture. In all world forums, the Philippine government has espoused the uncompromising stance that the super powers should not delay in entering into an agreement that there should be no further escalation of the armament's race and that the proliferation of nuclear weapons should be immediately arrested. The gravity of your concern is understandable. The armament's race poses the biggest threat to the survival of mankind and needless to say to the existence of our masses. Indeed, last week, the Bulletin Today prominently carried in its front page, the news item – Nuclear War Would Kill 750 M people. Let me read part of this frightening news:

> The researchers xxx studied the results of a nuclear world war. They decided to limit the war geographically to the northern hemisphere and based their calculations on the Soviet Union possessing 11,300 strategic nuclear missles with a firepower of 4,140 megatons against the US 12,840 missiles equivalent to 3,510 megatons.
>
> Main targets would be 145 European cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants followed by cities of more than 100,000. The initial nuclear firepower, equivalent to 1 m Hiroshima A-bombs would annihilate 1/3 of Europe's population or in other words in less than 24 hours of warfare there would be 750 M dead and 350 M wounded. The latter would be mostly victims of radiation and many of them would be unable to survive for long.
>
> Survivors of wrecked cities would flee into the countryside but would find all food tainted by radiation . . . Entire forests would be destroyed with all their wild animal and plant life. Only rats would resist radiation relatively well and they would breed at a horrifying pace . . . Lack of pesticides would drag agriculture back to the middle ages.

You strong stand against any nuclear contest is thus commendable and deserves concurrence. It is consistent with your tenet that there must be harmony among men and peace among nations.

The ideal that harmony should prevail among men is also pursued with vigor by government. Martial law was imposed in 1972 precisely to prevent disharmony among our people. The country was then in complete chaos and confusion. It was wracked by divisions induced by different factions – the far left, the extreme right, and the other criminal syndicates. Today, the danger of division of our country has considerably been diminished. Our government is in the thick of the task of reconciling our past differences. It has taken decisive steps to lift our poor from their poodles of poverty basically thru its urban and rural land reform programs. It has also initiated programs in the South designed to help our Muslim brothers develop

their potentials within the context of their own culture.

The process of healing wounds is a long and arduous one. It is in this area where masonry can make an indelible contribution. Your fraternity is known for fostering the brotherhood of man. You only accept in your fold God fearing men regardless of their religion, their creed or their color. You have always sought what in man unites, not that which divides men. As a public official, I ask of you to assist in this difficult job of instilling unity among our people. Your assistance will be valueless.

I also take notice of the well known fact that charity is a cornerstone of masonry. Along this line, your organization can again support government efforts to diminish the chagrins of scarcity that continuously dehumanize some of our masses. Our government is waging an all out war to eradicate the poverty of our people. The KKK program is designed to provide opportunities for our people to improve the quality of their economic existence. Government efforts to fight poverty need the support of the more progressive sector of our people. It is only when both the government and the progressive part of our society join hands that we can pull up our masses from the morass of poverty. It is my hope that masonry will continue to extend its benevolence to the have nots among our countrymen. Again your assistance in this regard will be written in the hearts and minds of all men.

Let me end by greeting the Past Masters of the Free and Accepted Masons of Olongapo City. I hope that as Past Masters you will continue to provide your organization with your skill, your wisdom and your experience. May you continue to enjoy the blessings of God.

ESTELITO P. MENDOZA
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