



GRAND LODGE BULLETIN

Editor: A. M. Mitchell, P.G.M.

The Condition of Masonry

(*Editor's Note:* The figures quoted are from a special Bulletin of the Masonic Service Association of the United States, copyright 1939 and used here by special permission.)

ONCE more at the forthcoming Communication of Grand Lodge we shall be privileged to hear earnest reports from those in the best position to give them on the condition of Masonry in this jurisdiction.

Without in any way venturing to anticipate their remarks, some comment on the condition of Masonry elsewhere may not be amiss at this time of annual reckoning.

The Proceedings, or Reviews of them at the hands of his Brethren, of some fifty jurisdictions have passed before the writer during the last six months and without doubt the predominant note in almost every jurisdiction is that of quiet optimism.

In point of numbers, losses still occur but without exception the losses are shrinking, more applicants are seeking the degrees and in some happy instances small gains are appearing.

It may be that we have taken too serious a view of our losses. None can deny that in the years immediately following the Great War, floods of applicants out of all proportion to normal trends were received and initiated. Their numbers swelled comparative figures and distortions from normal, inevitably resulted.

The Masonic Service Association of the United States recently published a survey based upon anticipated normal growth for the years ahead as compared with actual growth for the thirty years from 1887 to 1917. Statistics for thirty-four of the forty-nine Grand Lodges in the United States were collected and the figures plotted on a graph.

"From 607,000 Masons in 1888, 'the population curve' climbs to 1,914,000 in 1917, then bends sharply upward to the peak of 3,300,000 in 1929, then down again to the 2,500,000 line in 1937."

A median or average line is then drawn across the graph with the general theory that the trend from 1888 to 1917 was average and from 1917 on should normally follow the same trend.

On this basis most Grand Lodges are years ahead of their normal increase trends and the present apparent slump may be charged to the abnormal conditions of the after war years slowly but surely correcting themselves.

The problems incident to losses from the dues problem are likewise being adjusted. Kindly but firmly and in every case with the fraternal generosity one has learned to expect in the Order, the sheep and the goats have been quietly separated. Weak Lodges have amalgamated in stronger combinations, economical unsoundness in Lodge finances and dues rates have been adjusted and steady progress reported as now the rule.

In the words of the Grand Master of Arizona, "from the standpoint of the average member, I would say that his interest is near the surface of his being, ready to be roused to fruitful efforts and accomplishments, if the proper approach is found and made."

"Masonry can be made to truly serve its votaries in spite of the fast tempo and complexities of present day living, in spite of the many counter-attractions."

The Condition of Masonry is good, the trend seems definitely upward, without losing sight of the tradition and accomplishment of the past, Freemasonry is being gently "stream-lined" to suit the present age and the responsibility for the forward march into the future lies squarely upon the officers of today and tomorrow.

There is no reason to doubt that Freemasonry properly presented to carefully selected petitioners will have anything but its old charm, and salutary and permanent effect on its initiates. The task belongs to us and now with the rising tide we must measure ourselves as leaders for the future.

A.M.M.

GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND WARNS MEMBERS TO BE CAUTIOUS

Two matters always of vital importance to Freemasonry were brought before the Grand Lodge of England at its recent communication. One is the care that must be exercised by Masons when speaking of fraternal matters in the presence of non-mem-

bers of the Craft. The other, the need for close examination in admitting visitors to Lodges.

The Board of General Purposes of the Grand Lodge referred to the warning issued at the Quarterly Meeting of the Lodge last June, and again emphasized the need for brethren to be cautious and prudent and assure themselves that those with whom they talk on Masonic matters are in fact members of the Craft.

Reciting the precautionary steps to be taken, the Board further said that too much care cannot be exercised in scrutinizing the credentials of brethren invited to visit Lodges.

THE MASTER'S HAT

Copyright, 1938, by the Masonic Service Association of the United States

Reprinted by permission
(Abridged)

"Why does the Master wear a hat?"

How many times do newly raised brethren ask the question, and how few of the brethren interrogated can give a satisfactory answer! Usually the reply is: "Oh, that's an old symbol," or, "That's one of the Landmarks." But as a matter of fact, wearing a hat in Lodge is symbolic only as all customs with regard to headgear are symbolic, and certainly no custom which has suffered so many changes and reversals as this, can by any stretching of a point, be considered a Landmark.

Ceremonies connected with clothing are very ancient, dating at least from the era in which the first captives in tribal wars were stripped of all clothing, partly as a symbol of the complete subjugation of the slave state. Among some peoples today, stripping part of the clothing is still a sign of respect; the Tahitians uncover to the waist as a sign of reverence to a king; Asiatics bare the feet; Japanese take off a slipper for ceremonious salute. Worshippers in ancient Greece and Rome remove their sandals in a house of worship, as do East Indians today.

During the days of chivalry, knights often wore full armor in public, and usually when going upon private journeys. To open the vizor was a form of greeting which said, in effect: "I do not expect a sword thrust in the mouth from you." A knight removed his helmet before a friend as a token that he feared no blow, and always in the presence of a king, as a symbol that his life was the king's.

Moderns remove the hat as a sign of respect in greeting a friend, always when speaking to or meeting a lady, a survival of the ancient custom of uncovering as a symbol of trust, or subjectivity to a higher authority.

That monarchs wear crowns—or hats—as a right when all others are uncovered, has been sung by poets of all ages.

The king never uncovered. He wore his crown where he would, even in the House of God. All had to uncover before the king, as all had to retreat from his presence by moving backward—a custom which obtains in ceremonial audiences in England—that

none might "turn his back on his sovereign." The very bowing of the head without hat is a survival; the savage who lowered his head in the presence of authority confessed either fearlessness of an unseen blow, or his willingness to receive it from his liege lord.

Not always does the removal of the hat indicate respect. Orthodox Jews remain covered in their synagogues; early Quakers wore hats in their houses of worship; women do not remove their hats in some churches. Romans prayed with covered heads; indeed, Romans forbade the headcoverings to a slave, a wooden cap (pileus) being only for citizens.

Dr. George C. Williamson ("Curious Survivals") says of the House of Commons in London: "A member has to wear his hat when he is to address the House and often there is confusion when the member is unable to find his hat at the moment, and to put it on, before he addresses the speaker, but were he to rise without his hat, he would be greeted immediately with cries of "Order! Order!"

Just when or where originated the custom of a Master wearing a hat as a sign of authority is an unsolved question. It is easy enough to "guess" that it began from operative Masons of the middle ages apeing the customs of the court, and requiring all Fellows of the Craft to uncover before the Master Mason. But guessing is not proving.

Oliver is quoted as saying: "Among the Romans the hat was a sign of freedom and brotherly equality. In English and American Lodges it is now exclusively an attribute of the Master's costume."

Oliver as a historian is open to question; certainly hats are not generally worn by Masters in England now. But this quotation indicates that English Masters formerly did, which is borne out by some notable exceptions of today; Bristol, for instance and Lodge Newstead, 47, in the Province of Nottingham, where the Master wears a silk hat at Lodge ceremonies. In the Royal Sussex Lodge of Hospitality (Bristol) the Master carries (not wears) a cocked hat into the Lodge room. In Lodge Moria the transfer of the hat from outgoing to incoming Master has for many years been a part of Installation.

Writing in 1896, Wor. Brother Gotthelf Greiner states, of German Masons, ". . . it is the invariable custom, for brethren in Lodge to wear high silk hats (which are raised during prayer and when the name of the G.A.O.T.U. is invoked). In that country, it (the wearing of the hat) is not a distinction confined to those of any particular standing." It is to be noted that the Ahiman Rezon of Pennsylvania specified that at Masonic funerals all the brethren should wear black hats.

One of the articles of the Statutes of the Chapter of Clermont (1775) reads: "Only the Master of a Lodge and the Scots Masters are permitted to remain covered."

Confirming this, an old eighteenth century catch question (which survives in some of our Lodges to this day) is: Q. "Where does the Master hang his hat?"

A. "On Nature's peg."

Some fanciful theories have been advanced to account for the Master's hat. Among these may be mentioned this curious idea; because of a supposed unpopularity of the Masons' Craft in the middle ages, the brethren on a cathedral building project were occasionally permitted to hold their meetings in the cathedral they built, or, if that was not sufficiently advanced, in a nearby monastery. The monks, being learned men, were often made Masters of the various builders' Lodges, and continued to wear their mitres, as was their custom. From this is supposed to have arisen the custom of a Master wearing a hat!

Fort, in his "Antiquities of Freemasonry," writes:

"During the Middle Ages, when a travelling Fellow approached a Lodge of Masons in prescribed form, he first exclaimed: 'May God bless, direct and prosper you, Master, Pallirer (Wardens), and dear Fellows!' Whereupon the Master, or in his absence the Pallirer, was instructed by the ordinance of Torgau to thank him in reply, in order that the visiting brother might see who was custodian of the Lodge. And having obtained suitable assistance, the wandering Craftsman removed his hat and thanked the brethren with an established formula. From the preceding ceremony, it is evident that neither the Master nor the Wardens of a mediaeval German lodge were distinguishable by distinctive tokens while at mechanical labor; otherwise, no regulation was essential or obligatory upon the officers to make proper response to a visitor for the purpose of determining the Master.

"Curiously enough, the implication is direct and clear that the Masons of ancient times, when regularly convened for work, and during the formal reception of a traveller, pursued their daily avocation and attended the usual Masonic demands, within closed portals, with covered heads. At the present day the custom has materially changed, and, with one exception, the members of a Lodge at labor noticeably divest themselves of their hats. This is unquestionably a transformation of recent origin, and with it the instruction usually incident to the distinction has been adapted to the innovation.

"When the initiatory rites in the mediaeval Lodge were performed, the Master was not thus prominently contrasted with his brethren. I speak with especial emphasis upon this point, because the esoteric and sublime signification involved in the Master's hat has been recklessly perverted and destroyed. It was typical, during the Middle Ages, of superiority, and was so interpreted in the ceremonies of initiation by the Masons of France at the termination of the eighteenth century, all of whom sat in open Lodge with covered heads."

Turning from history to practice, a question often asked is: "When should the Worshipful Master remove his hat?" The answer must come from taste rather than law. Some Masters are veritable "hat snatchers," pulling off their headgear whenever they speak from the East. There seems little more reason for a Master to divest himself of this badge of office when addressing a brother, than to remove

his apron or jewel. The Master's hat is not used as a head covering designed for warmth and protection from the weather, but as a badge of authority. Good taste would dictate its lifting when the Master speaks of or to Deity, of death, during the reading of passages of Scripture, and in the presence of the Grand Master. In other words, the Master's hat is doffed in the presence of superior authority.

It is customary for Masters to wear their hats when conducting funerals, raising them, of course, during the prayer. But equally common usage makes the Master remove his hat when services are held in a House of Worship.

What kind of a hat should a Master wear? Here also is neither law nor rule except those of good taste. Fashion and custom rule all our clothing, including our hats.

Lodges in which the officers appear in evening clothes, either "swallow tails" or dinner coats, naturally expect Masters to use black silk hats. Lodges where less formality is practiced frequently see Masters in silk hats, but the results are sometimes anomalous. The spectacle of a brother in white trousers, a blue shirt, no coat, black and white shoes and a silk hat, is incongruous, at least. At a Lodge meeting in hot weather in informal clothes the Master is better dressed with a straw hat than the more formal silk. Lodges in which officers wear ordinary business clothes should look with approbation on the felt or derby.

That the Master should wear his hat, and not let the custom go by default, merely for personal convenience, goes without saying.



KING SOLOMON'S SEAPORT

American archeologists have recently discovered by excavation King Solomon's seaport on the northern end of the Gulf of Aquabah, the eastern arm of the Red Sea.

The site, now known to the Arabs as Tell El-Kheleifeh, was a flourishing city of trade and industry in Biblical days upwards of 3,000 years ago.

A Yale (University) professor in commenting on the Bible reference to the splendor of Solomon's reign, said that with the aid of Hiram, King of Tyre, Solomon built a fleet of ships at "Ezion-Geber, which is beside Elath on the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom."

The discovery made at Tell El-Kheleifeh indicates that the chief industries of the city during its most prosperous period from the 10th to the 8th century, B.C., were the manufacture of copper implements and the building of ships, which were used largely in carrying on commerce directly with southern Arabia and, from points there, with India. Fishing was also a principal industry.

It is probable, according to the comment, that the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon was caused by the fear that his merchant vessels would lessen her revenues from the caravan trade that had passed through her country to the north for many years.



The bee hive has its special place in Masonry, but members of the Lodge at Gilead, Peru, Ind., believed that the walls of their building was not the right place, so they set a member to removing several swarms of bees. Nearly a thousand pounds of honey has been taken over the protests of the busy little fellows who put it there and the bees are reported to be discouraged and in the mood to seek more hospitable quarters.



ROYAL MASONIC INSTITUTION FESTIVALS

The Royal Masonic Institution for Girls in England held its 151st Anniversary Festival on May 11th, 1939. The purpose of the Festival is to accumulate funds to maintain nearly 1,300 girls who are receiving the benefits of this Masonic Institution, which is one of three supported by the United Grand Lodge of England.

The scheduled Chairman of the Festival is Ernest Dixon, Provincial Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham.



The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution of England, for dependent old people, held its 99th Annual Festival Thursday, February 23rd, 1939, in the Masonic Peace Memorial, London. The President of the occasion was the Provincial Grand Master for Essex, Brig.-Gen. Kenneth J. Kincaid-Smith. Some 1,200 persons were present including the Pro Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master and the Assistant Grand Master.

The result of the Festival was announced as totaling over £110,093. As usual the Province whose Grand Master presides at the Festival made the largest single contribution. The total in this instance was over £54,042. The London Masons accounted for £31,867; the rest of the Grand Lodge areas, over £24,182.



According to schedule the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys will hold its 141st Anniversary Festival at the Connaught Rooms, London, on Wednesday, May 31st, 1939. More than usual interest is being manifested in the occasion as the Duke of Kent, the new Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, will preside. He will do so however not in the role of his new office but as Past Provincial Grand Master of the Province of Wiltshire. Some 1,200 boys are now receiving benefits from the institution. The annual expenditures are over £111,000, less than £15,000 of which comes from invested funds.



CANADIAN LODGE ESTABLISHES LOAN FUND FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

At its Twenty-fifth Anniversary, celebrated recently, Mount Sinai Lodge No. 522, Toronto, Can., presented the University of Toronto with \$2,000. The money was raised by voluntary contribution from members of the Lodge for loans to under-

graduates of the second year medical course, specializing in Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy, who are in need of financial assistance.

Formal presentation of the fund was made to the Board of Governors of the University in the absence of H. J. Cody, President of the University.



ARE YOU A PHILATELIST?

A new three cent stamp depicting George Washington taking the oath of office was placed on sale in New York City April 30th, the day the World's Fair opened.

The World's Fair Stamp has a special significance to Masons. The Bible on which Washington took the oath of office was taken from the altar of St. John's Lodge No. 1, F.&A.M., New York, N.Y., and is still the prized possession of that well known Lodge.

The more distinct historical figures on the stamp were nearly all Masons, particularly Washington, Livingston, Steuben, Knox, Sherman and very probably Hamilton who is believed to have been a member of a military Lodge. Chancellor Livingston was at that time Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York.



OUT FISHING

By HARRY LEE BURGESS

A feller isn't thinkin' mean—out fishin';

His thoughts are mostly always clean—out fishin';
He doesn't knock his fellow-men,

Or harbor any grudges then;
A feller's at his finest when—out fishin'.

The rich are comrades to the poor—out fishin';

All brothers of a common lure—out fishin';

The urchin with the pin and string;

Can chum with millionaire and king;
Vain pride is a forgotten thing—out fishin';

A feller gets a chance to dream—out fishin';

He learns the beauties of a stream—out fishin';

An' he can wash his soul in air

That isn't foul with selfish care,
An' relish plain and simple fare—out fishin'.

A feller's glad to be a friend—out fishin';

A helpin' hand he'll always lend—out fishin';

The brotherhood of rod and line

An' sky an' stream is always fine;
Men come real close to God's design—out fishin'.

A feller isn't plotting schemes—out fishin';

He's only busy with his dreams—out fishin';

His livery is a coat of tan

His creed to do the best he can;
A feller's always mostly man—out fishin'.

"BULLETIN SUBSCRIPTIONS"

The subscription price for the *Bulletin* is two cents (2c) per copy, mailed to Lodge Secretaries for distribution.

Suitable binders can be supplied at seventy cents (70c).

Communicate with Grand Lodge Office, Calgary.