



Grand Lodge Bulletin

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

EDITORIAL

THE WILL AND THE WAY

IT has often been said that if you want something done and done well, go to a busy man. Paradoxical as such a view may appear, it is almost invariably true for the busy man has learned to organize his life and his time, and when he has the will to perform the needed service he will find the time and energy to perform it and do it well.

On the other hand, how many people you meet complain of not having time to do this, that or the other? The fact is they have as much time as the next man. To king and beggar the portion is the same, twenty-four hours in every day, no more and no less. The difference is in will and use.

The point is, will or the lack of it, faith which will move mountains or the dreary acceptance of the apparently impossible without even attempting to marshal forces, visible and invisible, which lie at hand.

Consider some of these apparent impossibles which have been accomplished in the present conflict. Roads are driven through apparently impenetrable wilderness at bewildering speed, colossal sums of money are raised where it was thought none existed, machines have been perfected and put into mass production conquering again and again the apparently fixed laws of physics, mechanics and dynamics. Against all acceptance of apparent human limitation, production has been speeded up to almost incredible heights. The ultimate effect of these accelerations is not for discussion here, but again the point is will or the lack of it.

In Freemasonry we think we see this appalling lack of will. A brother is asked to do this or that. Far too frequently his answer is "No" before he even attempts to assess his time or his capacity. He lacks will. Why?

Desire is a mainspring of will. One wants something or desires to see something done. If he wants that thing badly enough or desires to see that thing done,

his will will tense like a spring, will explode and his desire will be accomplished. Interest too must be a controlling force for if a man is indifferent his will becomes flabby and he will put up with things as they are.

That is the condition of our Freemasonry as we see it. We may realize that it is not functioning with the zest and enthusiasm of yesteryear, we may dimly realize that its effect upon the lives and personalities of its devotees is not now what it once was, but most of us are indifferent. We have, apparently, no will to change nor even to investigate the causes of the present apparent stagnation.

If we admit that we are indifferent to the progress of our Freemasonry we had better be about more important business, but if we assert that we are vitally interested in her future, then now is the time to bolster our wills, "to screw our courage to the sticking-place" and face that future armed and vigilant. To us this is the most important "if" in Freemasonry today.

"While there is a will there is a way." We can think in positive terms as readily as in negative. The apparently impossible has been accomplished again and again by men with no more time or talent than yours. If you are satisfied, well and good. If you are not satisfied and have will enough to set about knowing and doing, the advent of a new year is a good time to begin. Think twice before you say "Yea" or "Nay", but having said it, bend your will to accomplish your purpose and become not weary in well-doing.

A Happy New Year to you all.

A.M.M.

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Whether you can pay your debts is much more a matter of you than of your income.

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Probably the world mess of the moment is due to a worship of salesmanship rather than deep thinking.

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

1. TEMPERANCE

"Temperance and industry are men's true remedies; work sharpens his appetite and temperance teaches him to control it."—Rousseau: "Emile".

THE Entered Apprentice is taught to look upon four tassels suspended from the corners of his Lodge, each representing one of the four cardinal virtues. Certain explanations are offered him but we wonder sometimes if the explanations are such that he can translate them into terms of present day life and living.

To attempt to so translate them, in particular for the benefit of the neophyte, is the purpose of this and the following dissertations on a theme.

Thanks to the efforts of societies of one kind or another—has the particular shade of blue in their ribbons any significance?—"temperance" has come to have the colloquial meaning of abstinence from the consumption of alcoholic liquors. Yet "temperance" has no such meaning. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary tersely labels it "rational self-restraint", and most certainly does not condemn a man to perdition because he enjoys an occasional drink of whiskey in the bosom of his friends!

To be temperate is merely to be decent and capable of being lived with, and as a "cardinal virtue" imposes no prohibition.

Any doctor will tell you that many a man has dug his own grave with his teeth, but he certainly won't implore him to refrain from eating!

Over-reading creates "bookworms" whose mental apparatus soon becomes a rat's nest of undigested ideas and whose reading soon develops into a mere diversion of puzzling along lines of print almost forgetting at the end of one line what was said in the last. More temperate reading with decidedly more understanding is indicated, but certainly no prohibition of the printed page.

Then, too, we occasionally meet intemperate Masons whose sole fraternal life is form, ceremony, and going by the book. To cross every "t" and dot every "i" regardless of time or circumstance is a form of intemperance, masonic or otherwise, which rapidly makes a man a nuisance and a pest. The same stigma is placed, too, on the individual who seizes upon one part of Masonry to the exclusion of all others and harps *ad nauseam* on ritual, education, or "the old way". All develop into bores or worse.

The war has brought an outbreak of an ancient form of intemperance which Mason and profane were wise indeed to avoid. Windbags, critics, and power patriots abound. With little in the way of reasoned thinking to back their particular cure-all, criticism or pet service, they do not hesitate to dip into the ears of the uncritical how the war can be won in five minutes. We fear our newspapers are not

immune from this form of intemperance, clouding reasoned thinking by immoderate statement.

To the young Freemason then, the first cardinal virtue simply means moderation in all things. He should have no part in any form of special pleading designed to prohibit his fellow because he does not like his belief or action. There begins intolerance, and in wartime intolerance, a noxious weed, can cover itself with the flowers of pseudo-patriotism to the confusion of the unthinking. Democracy is the sum of the public conscience and the young Mason can rest assured that when a public habit becomes a public injury it will be removed by common action and not by the pressure of intolerance.

To curb one's appetites, to tolerate the other fellow's views, seem simple rules for conduct. They are the "temper" of "temperance" and the first of the four cardinal virtues of a Mason. So far as the individual succeeds will the Order flourish in Toleration, Moderation and in the difficult art of being an association of gentle men.

A.M.M.

THE MYSTIC TIE

(Condensed from a *Bulletin* published by The Masonic Service Association of the United States and reprinted by special permission.)

*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.

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 read these lame words but will admit it to himself at least, no matter how vociferously he denies it aloud.

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

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PERPETUAL NEW YEAR

By Bro. L. J. HUMPHREY,
Secretary, Nanaimo Lodge No. 110, G.R.B.C.

THERE is a unique satisfaction in writing this because although it is an article on the new year it is not necessarily confined or restricted to any special date, for the sufficient reason that every day is the beginning of another year.

This is a fact that we Freemasons should be pleased to ponder, since there is a general and quite human tendency for us to concentrate hopes and make resolutions at new year time, only to forget them later.

Now, while it is perfectly natural that we should regard January the first as a focal point in our ordinary relationships, and then remind ourselves that we must be more attentive and kindly to those about us, let us not forget that these thoughts must be translated into action if we would make them effective; that we must render to our brother that sympathy and care expression of which is the real meaning of charity. If we allow noble sentiments to wither for sheer lack of effort or, to use one of our notable phrases—forget that the hand most be prompt to execute the design—then we are guilty of Masonic apostasy, nothing less.

However, since we are frail creatures liable to err over and over again, there is comfort in the thought that every day in every Masonic life is a glad New Year, a new beginning, a time for consecrative action, a starting-point for Masonry-in-practice.

May we all appreciate this and do our best to make real that clarion call of the ages—Happy New Year!

*Confine you not the gen'rous hand
To seasons of resolve;
Take square and compass through the land,
Past negligence absolve.*

*For every day is glad New Year,
Big with a worthwhile end:
Oh, greet them all with selfless cheer
And their true meaning rend.*

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A NOTE FOR SECRETARIES

"There is no officer of a lodge more valuable than a good secretary but there is also no officer of a lodge that can be a greater hindrance to its progress than a secretary who is indolent and inefficient. Better to be over-efficient than the reverse. While the Master of a lodge is supposed to be fully familiar with the rulings of Grand Lodge and should see that the undertakings of his lodge are fully in accord therewith, the secretary of a lodge, on account

of his years of occupancy of the office, should be the one man of the lodge most thoroughly acquainted with the Constitution and the rulings. He should always be in a position to advise the Worshipful Master of the proper procedure. The harmonious co-operation of these two officers is most desirable and will go a long way, when properly functioning, to prevent any unauthorized acts."

(Excerpt from the Grand Master's Address, delivered by M. W. Bro. J. A. Dobbie, Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M., in the Province of Ontario, on July 16, 1941.)

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ON MASONIC SURVIVAL

Our survival can not be taken for granted; even with the defeat of the enemy there will remain the question of Masonry's survival in a post-war world belonging to the democracies. And that question is going to be answered, not by Grand Masters, but by every man of the 250,000 of us now—by whether our devotion to our Craft is deep enough to make us fight for it now, when the going is hard; by whether we measured up to the demands made upon our enthusiasm, our time and our means. For should our devotion fail now we may be sure that the demands made upon us in the new world that will follow the peace will be no less exacting. If we demonstrate to the embattled world today the futility of our professions we may be sure that we shall find little room left for us in a world that will demand of us far more than a hollow recital of ritual, no matter how sonorous its phrases nor how great were the names who in past centuries answered to the name of Brother.

CHARLES H. JOHNSON, Grand Secretary,
in "The New York Masonic Outlook"

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MASTER MASON

By HELEN W. RICHARDSON
(From the Saturday Evening Post)

"**W**HAT are you doing, friend?" I asked of one, And he, while spreading on the mortar thick, Eyed me with a look of mild surprise And answered simply, "I am laying brick."

Another one I watched, and questioned him, "What is this that you do with tireless speed?" His skillful hands worked on without a pause, "I have a wife and little ones to feed."

Then to a third my query still I brought, With trowel poised, he slowly raised his head, A glorious vision shining in his eyes. "I'm building a cathedral, sir," he said.

THE MYSTIC TIE

(Concluded)

cannot "list all the parts", since one man's list and that of his brother would differ. 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.

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 something 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. 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.

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. 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 uninitiated 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.

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 ideologies 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 thoughts of Mother Lodge closely and dearer in his heart than anything else the world may offer him. Its hall may be shabby and decrepit. The pictures on the walls may be faded, the carpets 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. . . .

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.

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EXPERIMENT IN CO-OPERATION

High in the rugged hills of southern Wyoming County, and in the Genesee-Wyoming Masonic District, is to be found an experiment in co-operation and brotherhood worthy of note. Some five years ago a group of earnest and purposeful men—Masonic Brothers—determined to establish a playground and summer colony, where they, their families and friends might mingle in and enjoy the great outdoors. So it was that, in a co-operative effort, they purchased and developed a large tract of land, built roads, developed lakes—Hiram and Acacia—and reforested open lands. The lakes, of sparkling spring water, now teem with brook and rainbow trout, waiting for the sportsman's cast, an example of true conservation and health-giving enjoyment. Here men who have become attached to one another in their Lodges dwell together in unity and brotherly love, governed by the precepts of the Golden Rule.

Fifteen fine camps have been built upon the shores of the lakes. Every now and then a member of the colony determines to have a home here. Soon, in spare time, skillful and willing hands lending their aid, another camp has been developed, thus demonstrating that the pioneer spirit still lives, and that brotherly love can be made more than an empty dream.

When summer activities end, winter sports soon come to the fore, with skating, skiing, tobogganing, etc., with "noses and toes" of week-end parties being warmed at the fireplaces of the cabins, with big log fires kindled for the occasion.

All this is Lake Hiram!