



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.

SPRING TIME

*"Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm;
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles;
And every sense and every heart is joy."*

THE long dark winter is over and once again we enter that period of the year known as spring-time. It is the season in which new growth begins, when "Life flows afresh; and young-ey'd health exalts the whole creation round". It is also the season when man must cease to be a dreamer with the poets and become practical, and get busy tilling and seeding the land, for we know that without seed-time there can be no harvest.

It matters not what our private vocation may be, our thoughts turn to those of our brethren whose life's occupation is farming. Although we may live in city, town or hamlet, we are all vitally concerned in the welfare of the farmer and scan the skies for signs of the weather, for we know so much depends upon the frequent showers and sunshine by which the G.A.O.T.U. blesses and rewards the labours of those on the land. And yet, our brother on the farm will tell us that unless the soil is clean, well fertilized, and properly tilled he cannot expect the seed to germinate, grow, multiply, and ripen.

As the sun, at this season, draws out from the soil renewed or awakened life and new wealth of vegetation, so also should the Entered Apprentice degree create in the candidate a thirst or desire for spiritual light in the realm of moral philosophy.

As we listen to and watch a candidate receiving his First Degree we sometimes wonder what the harvest will be in future years. What kind of preparation has taken place in his mind for him to desire to be admitted into the great brotherhood of Freemasonry? He is not invited into the Craft, but must apply for admittance of his own free will and accord, and if his application is approved he comes before us humbly soliciting to be admitted to our ancient mysteries. In a word, the ground must be well prepared to receive the seed of Masonry.

Before the applicant is permitted to take one step on his Masonic journey he must answer certain questions, and from the replies given to these questions we catch a glimpse of the mental character of the man. The seed that is planted in the mind and soul of the Initiate is good seed, and, as with the farmer, so with the Craft, we cannot expect a bountiful harvest unless the candidate is thoroughly prepared within himself to receive our Masonic teachings.

At times it would seem that our brethren residing in the country live and work closer to the realities or plans of the Great Architect. Surely they have a better opportunity of observing all around them in the natural world PILLARS of His works; His WISDOM in the order of the seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter, light and darkness; His STRENGTH or Power in the mighty elements of sunshine and cloud, wind and rain, heat and frost; His BEAUTY in the adornment of the countryside, with its ever changing colours, its fruits, its flowers, and the music of the birds. Truly, "His Beauty shines forth throughout the whole of creation". These brethren know we cannot violate His Eternal Laws without suffering and loss to ourselves.

So it is in the Entered Apprentice degree, the lessons imparted to the candidate are the fundamentals of life, and unless he receives these with an open mind we cannot expect the teachings of the subsequent degrees to grow and prosper.

Many years ago, at the time of the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, there appeared a remarkable cartoon. This showed a long flight of massive stone steps, at the top of which was an enormous door, heavily studded and barred. Written across the door were the blazing letters LIFE. Upon the second or third step stood the figure of a feeble old man representing Science. The idea conveyed by the cartoonist was that although man had climbed a step or two in his search for the secrets of the laws of the Divine Creator

he had a long, long struggle ahead of him, and even after reaching the top of the steps he would still be confronted by that great door leading to the Mystery of Life—the door which could and would be opened only by the Great Architect Himself, and in His own good time.

As an allegory, this may well be likened to our entrance into Freemasonry. We believe it is only by the practice of the three great virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity, that we can ascend those symbolic steps to a fuller knowledge of the will of the Supreme Being.

Just as the farmer sows his seed in faith, believing all will be well, so should the initiate pass the portal of a Masonic lodge, believing the step he is taking will lead him to a richer, fuller life. As he proceeds through the ceremony he may feel bewildered and confused, for he learns for the first time part of the philosophy of Freemasonry, and begins to realize the importance of the step he has taken. He soon discovers that while he may have believed the Craft was just a gathering of jovial, friendly fellows, yet within the lodge the principles inculcated are of the very highest. He hears what is expected of him as a member of this great Fraternity. He learns that the cornerstone of Freemasonry is CHARITY, and how we are constantly admonished to practice this virtue in its most ample sense, not only in the giving of our substance, very important as this is, but in the moderation and manner of our criticism of the views or sentiments of others. For is it not written in the V.S.L., "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

As he tries to absorb all he hears and sees of the impressive ceremony, he perhaps wonders whether he will be able to ascend the next round on the ladder of Freemasonry, for upward, ever upward, should a Mason strive to climb, and the higher one would climb the more one must divest himself of selfish desires and material ambitions.

Looking about him he may see men of divers religious beliefs, and many shades of political opinions, and yet each calling the other "brother", forgetting all their differences both within the lodge and at harmony, in the knowledge that they are fellow servants and workmen of the G.A.O.T.U., and, therefore, all equal under Him, and all equally necessary in the building of His Holy Temple.

And so, the long evening being over and the last handshake given, our newly initiated brother departs for home.

As he journeys homeward along the quiet countryside, where nature seems so calm and restful, with only an occasional startled cry or scurry of some wild creature to disturb the silence, he meditates over all he has heard and seen, and wonders what it is all about—what change has come over him—has he

acted wisely in joining the Craft? Looking up and seeing the starry firmament of the celestial canopy, he seems to hear faintly the strain of some distant choir singing those familiar words:

*"Clear before us through the darkness
Gleams and burns the guiding Light;
Brother clasps the hand of brother,
Stepping fearless through the night."*

V. W. Bro. M. J. BRODIE,

Past Grand Steward.

● ● ● YOUR TRESTLE BOARD

In the beginning the Trestle Board was a device used long ago by Master Craftsmen upon which were laid out designs by which the temple was built. As we progress in Masonry, most of us reach a better understanding of what the Trestle Board meant then—and now.

The Trestle Board each day bore upon it designs of work to be completed as Operative Masons. But now we think of it as Speculative Masons and we are building a Spiritual Temple. No longer do we draw designs upon the physical board, because lines, angles, and circles cannot express the spiritual work we are to do. At best they can be only symbols.

Yet each one of us, as a Master Mason, has a trestle board and each of us, whether we know it or not, daily presents designs which will have some effect upon the great temple we are building.

Your trestle board is your life. So long as you live you cannot escape making some design upon it. It may be worthless, it may be good. All depends upon how you apply yourself, how much you have learned of the Masonic way of life, and how you conduct yourself among men and brothers. But make no mistake—every day a design will be there. It is your part in the building of the Spiritual Temple toward which we all journey. You are a Master Mason—therefore, you must draw a design. Yourself, your brothers, and the entire order may be judged by what you produce. Therefore take good heed of the lessons you have learned and make the designs upon your life's trestle board such as will do credit to yourself, your brothers, and the whole order.

—Selected.

● ● ● QUEER MASONIC CUSTOMS

It was a custom among English Masons of the middle eighteenth century, when conversing together on Masonry, says the Idaho Committee on Masonic Education, to announce the appearance of one not belonging to the Order by the warning expression, "It rains". Later the same custom was adopted by German and French Masons, with the equivalent expression "es regnet" and "il pluie". When a woman approached the French Masons said "il neige" (it snows).

IN MEMORIAM

We sympathize with our Mother Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodge of Manitoba in the great loss they have recently sustained occasioned by the passing of their Grand Secretary, R. W. Bro. J. H. G. Russell who passed away on February 7th last in Winnipeg at the ripe old age of 84 years. Bro. Russell served the Grand Lodge of Manitoba as Grand Secretary for a period of 11 years. "Uncle" John, as he was familiarly called by his close friends was a friend to all who had the pleasure of knowing him. He was no stranger to Alberta, he having visited us on several occasions and we were always glad to welcome him. On the occasion of our Annual Communication held in 1942 Bro. Russell was elected to Honourary Membership with the Rank of Right Worshipful in the Grand Lodge of Alberta.

We also extend our sincerest sympathy to our Sister Grand Lodge of British Columbia. On Sunday, March 3rd, after an illness of six weeks, their beloved Grand Master, M. W. Bro. William Henry Bland, passed on to that bourne from whence no traveller returns. Bro. Bland passed away in his native City of Victoria where he was born 69 years ago. Having lived all his life in his native City of Victoria, the writer happens to know he was looking forward with more than usual interest to the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia over which he would preside in his native City next June and at which time his Grand Lodge will celebrate its 75th Anniversary. This is indeed a long time in our relatively new Canadian history. Bro. Bland was always active in the affairs of his native City and Province. His death leaves another gap in the ranks of those who watched and helped a growing community in its early struggles for self sufficiency.

These two grand old men and Brothers both links with the past in our Western Canada, have gone from us. We shall miss them but never forget them.

"Farewell, dear voyagers—the river winds and turns

*The cadence of your song wafts near to me,
And now you know the thing all men must learn,
There is no death—there is Immortality."*

S.H.

SCOTLAND

The Grand Secretary reported that the total number of entrants recorded in the books of Grand Lodge between the years 1845 and 1945 was 764,221. The total number of Intrans recorded for the year 1945 is 21,685.

S.H.

members of the Order, who, in their daily contacts with their fellow men, demonstrate that Freemasonry is not merely another society to join, but a life to be lived. A way of life that is so radiant and so desirable that men will be attracted towards it and "of their own free will and accord" seek to be one with those who love and live their Masonry.

MASONRY AS AN INVESTMENT

By most of us, investment has to do with money or its equivalent, but a Mason writes in an English magazine about "Masonry as an Investment". He says:

"You can not buy Masonry—no man ever did or ever will. You do not buy it when you pay your fees or dues. You simply gain by these opportunities to get Masonry. Where is your investment then, you ask. Let me tell you.

"If you become a Mason you put into Masonry more than money, more than anything you have or possess, that you measure by pounds or shillings—you put your life into it. Unless you can and do put your life into it, unless you let Masonry direct your life, you have no investment, you get little or nothing from Masonry.

"Life is a constant conflict between good and evil. Masonry aids the Mason to choose the good rather than the evil. Dominating the Mason's life Masonry creates the habit of choosing the good, with the result that it helps him to develop character. Is there a more desirable dividend on effort than character?

"You may call it by any other term you please but Masonic effort is investment, and reward of Masonic effort is character. You may have wealth and put your money into paying propositions but you can make no investment that will pay you greater dividends than Masonry will, if you make Masonic effort to build character."

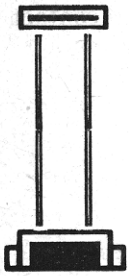
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Give me a man, not too good and not too bad; a man who works for the interests of the many in preference to the few; a man who makes strong friends and powerful enemies; a man who makes his position clear on questions without fear of criticism; a man who would rather fight clean, but who is willing to use a little fire when fighting the devil; a man who can win with charity to the vanquished and lose with bitterness toward none. Such a man I am proud to call my friend.

—Selected.

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No man is ever cheated out of an honorable career unless he cheats himself. Believe in yourself. Do your work the best you know how and you will not be cheated—your efforts will bless all who come in touch with you.—Emerson.



Between the Pillars



SOLICITATION

R. W. Bro. L. Healey, P.D.D.G.M., who is the Editor of the Masonic Bulletin for the Grand Lodge of British Columbia, was asked the undermentioned question, his reply to which is quoted in full. I am of the opinion that solicitation is more prevalent than a large number of our members are aware of and it is unfortunate that it should be necessary for a member to ask this question. We certainly have no place for solicitation.

A BROTHER CHAPLAIN in the Armed Services writes:—"A very devoted Brother at this Hq. was greatly disturbed when an outsider, noting his Masonic insignia remarked, 'I see you are a Mason. I twice turned down membership in the Masonic order'.

"Now this Brother is greatly concerned that a fellow can go around and say he was asked to join our Order and refused to come into it. Is it not against all Masonic principles even to approach an outsider and ask him to come into the Craft?"

"Will you please take this matter up through the Question Box? There is evidently misunderstanding somewhere."

The Editor is inclined to think that the gentleman concerned may have been a little boastful, perhaps to cloak a sense of inferiority in the presence of the wearer of our time-honoured emblems. If any Brother should be so lacking in understanding of the principles of our Institution as to solicit an outsider to join, then there is a greater need than we realize for a more vigorous programme of instruction and study in all our Lodges.

Freemasonry asks no man for his petition, whether he be prince or peasant, king or commoner, but greater than any man, it honours those who knock upon its doors. Churches, commercial associations, clubs and similar organizations seek to win new adherents by membership drives and publicity campaigns, and the members are expected to invite their friends to join. But a man comes to the door of a Masonic Lodge "of his own free will and accord," and he can come only through a petition for which *he must ask* a member known to him. This is not just some arbitrary ruling of Grand Lodge, but is part of the fundamental principles of the Institution.

A candidate for the mysteries of Freemasonry must first of all be prepared to receive them—prepared in his heart. Unless the desire for knowledge of the Masonic mysteries has its origin in the deeper well

springs of his life Freemasonry can have no real meaning for him. It will be but a waste of his time and money as well as the labours of the Lodge, as without that sincere desire in his own heart and mind no succession of ceremonies, however perfect the ritual, can ever make him a Mason.

To the initiate, also, there are "solemn and weighty ties" which bind him to the Order, and whatever may be his relationship to the Craft in the succeeding years he can never escape the moral responsibility of the obligations which he *voluntarily* assumes. If he had been solicited he could always excuse himself for failure in his solemn engagement by saying he was persuaded to join and had come in under a misapprehension.

The man who might be asked or persuaded in any way to join is placed in an impossible position from the very commencement, for he must sign on his petition and declare many times during his progress through the degrees that the act is of his "own free will and accord". Not only is the declaration required but he must swear to it in all his obligations.

In most of our workings, the candidate, before he can proceed beyond the preliminary stage of the ceremony, is called upon solemnly to declare on his honour "that unbiassed by the improper solicitation of friends, and uninfluenced by mercenary or other unworthy motives you freely and voluntarily offer yourself, etc."

There is only one answer that can be accepted, and no Brother of the Craft worthy of the name would ever place his friend in the position where he should be obliged to compromise with his conscience at this point and commence his Masonic career with a lie on his lips.

If it is considered necessary to stimulate the interest of a prospective applicant so as to create that "favourable opinion preconceived of the Order" there are many ways to influence his thinking. The magnificent record of the Craft the world over in the field of charity and benevolence is well known. There is nothing secret about such matters, they are printed in the Proceedings of the various Grand Lodges, and in the older Jurisdictions of England, Ireland and Scotland they are given considerable space in the leading newspapers.

The many volumes of Masonic books and other literature are available to anyone interested. Excellent, informative books such as "The Builders", by J. Fort Newton, "Vision and Call", by J. Johnson, and the works of Mackey and others are to be found in lending libraries and book stores all over this continent. Many Masonic magazines and newspapers are likewise available.

But after all the best and most effective impression, in fact the only true impression, that can be made on the outsider is the conduct and actions of the

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