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Grand Lodge Bulletin

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What Came You Here To Do?

Freemasonry has existed and flourished for centuries, flourished and grown despite periods of wars and depressions, and even through peace and prosperity. There have been glorious Golden Ages as well as the Dark Ages, but through all, Freemasonry has continued its upward march to its splendid high position in our civilization, where it continues, despite all adversity from without or indifference from within, to spread its beneficent influence abroad to one and all, regardless of station.

Despite all these periods of fluctuation in the world at large, Freemasonry alone has made steady progress upwards and now holds an eminent position among all peoples of the world. Its shining crown is now brighter and more attractive than at any time in its history. I am of the opinion that it is our responsibility and our duty to not only maintain that position, but to definitely increase its influence and see to it that Freemasonry touches the lives of a much greater number of people than it has heretofore done. Freemasonry, not as an institution, but as the individual, must take its place in the very front in the development of our way of life and in the promotion of happiness.

I do not believe that Freemasonry has reached its present high position except by virtue of its value to our communities and its refining influence on our citizens; and not on its beautiful ritual or the perfection of its members in the use of that ritual.

Beautiful and perfect performance of the ritual is most essential and highly desirable, so that it may properly appeal to the candidate. As it is his first acquaintance with the craft, it should be of such character as to awaken his enthusiasm and respect for its teachings. It is only an adjunct of our program. It is the means or vehicle by which the true teachings are taken to the candidate in a

manner, such that, it is hoped he will grasp unto his moral well being, and to which he will cling at all times.

There are those to whom the ritual has a very strong appeal. That is very well, but they should not let themselves be blinded to the true function of that ritual, namely: the teaching of the preparation for those sublime teachings of Freemasonry that develop therefrom.

Social intercourse and goodfellowship are more of our activities that appeal to many of our members. This is well and good. It is a good healthy sign when there is a good attendance of the brethren at the refreshment period. It is also good to have the brethren appear early in the anteroom to fraternize a while before lodge opens. This affords the young Mason an opportunity to become acquainted with the members and the craft. The comradeship and goodfellowship displayed in our lodges is far apart from the cruelty and realism of our unsettled and suspicious world.

One feels much strengthened and satisfied after a pleasant evening with good congenial brethren. This is as it should be and I believe without a doubt has much value, but once again I say this is not the true Freemasonry that we are endeavoring to inculcate in our members.

The establishment of schools, homes and hospitals, while very worthy and commendable objects for our benevolence, are only expressions of our brotherly love and relief. They are good for our morale and create goodwill with our neighbors. They offer something that we can grasp and present to the world as concrete works of the Fraternity, but that is as far as they go. They are not the true work of our Craft. Masonic charity even cannot claim to be our ultimate objective, although it occupies a very

prominent place in our teachings and activities. The amount of good done by the Craft through the practice of this true Masonic virtue is unknown even to the Craft. The boy placed in school and fitted for his life work, or the girl trained for a profession, or again that family of an ailing brother kept together and reared under the family roof, surrounded by all the blessings of good family influence—no one can count the value, public and private, of such good works. Yet even this is only an expression of Freemasonry and it is not the be all and end all of our existence.

These things are only the handmaidens or the settings that surround the great gem of Freemasonry. They alone would not give it the bright place it today occupies. Other organizations practice these same virtues, but they are not in the high position of our beloved Craft. No—these things did not bring Freemasonry to its present high pinnacle, nor would they maintain it there. Freemasonry is something greater and more far reaching than these things. Let us see if we can discover what is the objective of true Freemasonry. The great and essential objective is to teach. To teach to its initiates to live in Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. That is to teach them to apply the working tools of their Craft to their daily activities, thereby making this a strong, virile, healthy, democracy, wherein the greatest number of people share in its good things and no one is forced to accept abuses.

That is to say, Freemasonry deals with the building of character. Aristotle taught that character is a habit, or the daily choice between right and wrong. It is a quality which grows to maturity by constant use, so that the boy is father to the man.

Thus the expression of Freemasonry is from within, and its quality and quantity depend, in direct proportion, upon ourselves, our knowledge, our vision and our ideals. We must desire to be helpful and as our knowledge increases, our vision becomes clearer and our ideals more nearly perfect.

Too many of our members have become too self satisfied or too indifferent to the conditions about them, to take an active part in this great objective of Freemasonry. We must arouse them anew, we must fire them with a great desire to help one and all and to daily promote happiness and to be happy.

A properly prepared candidate has a good general idea of what Freemasonry is, or the character of the institution, before he is admitted to the preparation room. As he progresses he is inspired by the beautiful lessons taught by the ritual, and enthused by the splendid Masonic ideals portrayed to him. He is shown that Freemasonry is a way of life—that we endeavor to be at peace with all men at all times. He is taught not so much how to die, but how to live in peace and harmony with his fellow-men.

The man so inspired and enthused will have a burning desire to know more; to increase his knowledge, for knowledge is the key to power. To this end we meet at stated periods to inculcate our Masonic principles and thus develop to maturity that character so essential in our daily life.

There are many demands upon the time and energy of every Freemason, as there are on every man, but surely if he can find time and inclination to become a Freemason, he can and must find time to seek out what lies behind the ritual and to look into the philosophy and teachings of the Craft, that he may increase his ability to live in Brotherly Love, Relief and Tolerance with his neighbor and his community. Above all he will learn to expect less of Freemasonry as an institution and to accomplish more through his own untiring efforts.

It is our duty to see that every brother has this opportunity. The transaction of the business of the lodge, the exemplification of the ritual, is not sufficient. That meeting is wasted at which no effort is made to bring knowledge to the brethren.

We have no interest in political parties, social or economic reformation of religious organizations. We are engaged in teaching our members the Masonic way of living by inculcating the tenets that will enable them to develop that ability to choose between right and wrong, without the lodge as well as within. It is this man and this ability that the peoples of the world are seeking today. Let us supply them!

Freemasonry places no obligation on a man that prevents him from developing and exhibiting real patriotism, that obedience to the law of his community, faith in Almighty God and a sincere desire to be of use in the Divine Plan by living the Golden Rule.

He is enjoined not to neglect his usual vocation nor to crush the natural desire for material independence and comfort of those dependent upon him. But if he has learned the lessons of the craft, he will do these things by a practical application of his Masonic principles, that is by applying the working tools of his craft to all his daily actions. He will place a proper value on the things he comes in contact with. The material things will not wholly occupy his mind, for he has a true knowledge of the things that come from within. He has been taught to choose right from wrong.

Thus we will not shun our public responsibilities nor conceal them behind a screen of idealism. We will grasp the opportunity to do good by being just good citizens in our own little circle, but we must not let our teachings fall short, in that we fail to interpret our ideals in terms of the problems of today. We must realize that it is only by our own efforts that we can experience the maximum benefits from

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Flashes from the Grand Lodge

Dear Brethren,

As promised you in the September issue we will endeavor to continue giving you information as to what is going on in Grand Lodge.

At this date all the District Meetings are over but one, for which we of Grand Lodge are truly thankful when we see the weather we are now enduring over all the Province. The brethren living in the country would not have any possible chance of getting in to a District Meeting in weather of this kind, neither would your Grand Lodge Officers be able to get to the various town unless they travelled by rail and in some cases it would take many hours to reach their destination.

The District Meetings were very well attended and in many cases a larger attendance was registered than at any previous District Meeting. The 'Open Forum' scheme which was in vogue this year at the District Meetings proved to be a great help to the brethren and many acclaimed the meetings the best they had ever attended. It is to be hoped that the Grand Masters in the future will endeavor to make the District Meetings even more interesting than the ones held this year. The Grand Lodge Officers feel that any brother who missed the District Meetings and the Open Forum missed a great opportunity to gain Masonic education, not so much from the Grand Lodge Officers, but from the brethren who attended. Many grand papers were produced and read at these meetings and in due course the best of them will be reproduced in the Bulletin—be on the lookout for them.—The first we hope will be in the November issue.

The idea of the Boy's Farm has been taken hold of in most cases with great enthusiasm. However, those of us who are working on it realize we have many difficulties to overcome and it will be a great task even when it is set up. Some of the members will have to be on what should be known as a Management Committee. They will have to be prepared to give time and money to see that the Farm is properly operated.

It is hoped before many days that the prospectus on costs and the various angles to be taken into consideration on this farm will be sent to you and certain recommendations. We have already had a few letters from Lodges throughout the Grand Jurisdiction with reference to this scheme, all of them being very favorable, but we would like to have each Lodge discuss this in Open Lodge at every meeting for a few minutes and write the Grand Lodge officers with their various opinions.

Monday and Tuesday of this week I spent in Lethbridge looking over some of the irrigated land

down there where I am of the opinion the first farm should be, and I came across a beautiful set-up for this scheme. It has 640 acres of irrigated land; the house with two distinct living quarters in it complete with bathrooms, kitchens, bedrooms and sitting rooms. A dairy barn capable of holding 46 head of cattle, sheep sheds that will hold 2,000 to 3,000 head of sheep. A horse barn for 25 to 30 head of horses, chicken house capable of housing at least 2,000 chickens; pig sty capable of housing some 15 to 20 brood sows. An ice house with dormitories overhead with sleeping quarters for at least 25 to 30 boys. There is a complete water system through all the buildings with sewerage in them; two deep wells that cannot be pumped dry, one hard water and the other soft water. A nice grove of trees is planted along most of the west side of the section. There are also many other useful buildings such as machine sheds, double garage, etc.

This would make a set-up that could go into operation immediately we took it over. The owner of this farm is very anxious that a boy's farm be established on it. The price asked for the farm is in the estimation of Dr. Fairfield the retired manager of the Lethbridge Experimental Farm, a very reasonable one. He is going to supply us with a complete report which will go out with the prospectus.

As stated in the Bulletin last month, many volumes could be written about this farm but in closing let me say it is located about 20 miles from Lethbridge, 3 miles off the paved highway. The government has built a good grade from this highway to the farm and if the Boy's Farm idea goes through they will gravel it for us so that the farm will be accessible at all times and in any kind of weather.

We of Grand Lodge would appreciate any suggestions from the Lodges throughout this Grand Jurisdiction as to ways and means of raising this money which would be in the neighborhood of \$150,000. for the purchase of the farm and would give us a backlog sufficient to operate the farm for two or three years. Please, brethren, do not be backward at writing your Grand Lodge at Calgary in connection with this scheme. We will be looking forward to your letters.

Fraternally yours,

A. D. CUMMING,
Grand Master.

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Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, these three alone lead life to sovereign power.—Tennyson.

WHAT CAME YOU HERE TO DO ?

(Continued from page 6)

our membership in the craft. It is not the institution but the individual member who must develop those benefits for they develop within and show without by the influence they have made on our character, to meet all circumstances by being happy and promoting happiness.

Too many of our members are quite contented despite their obligation, to remain passive members of the craft, and make no attempt to take their part. We must arouse within them that love of the craft which now appears to be dormant. The usefulness, development, and enjoyment of the craft by a member largely depends upon his interest in the craft, upon the time he spends increasing his knowledge of the true teachings of that craft. Freemasonry, the oldest and best fraternity in the world, has an abundance of the best literature that was ever written, but our members do not use it. It is only by a thorough knowledge of the principles upon which the order is founded, of its glorious history and of its hopes and aspirations for the future, that we can hope to make our members a real practical force in our communities. Just think what a force for good citizenship the masons of Alberta would be if thoroughly activated by such knowledge.

If the tenets of the craft are not demonstrated in our daily tasks, if we put aside our Masonry with the tiling of the lodge, we are not doing our share to keep Freemasonry in its high position. We are mere spectators, or ritualists, and our order is just one other excuse for men to gather in the evening for amusement.

Let us apply our initiative, our ambition, our integrity and our training to our private and public lives, so that we spread wide in the world that beneficent influence which has taken possession of us and so that we promote peace and happiness all about us.

This is what men are seeking and what the world wants.

"To act that each tomorrow,
Find us farther than today."

R. W. Bro. Dr. W. A. HENRY,
Deputy Grand Master.

FAREWELL

It is with regret that we record the passing of M. W. Bro. John Kain, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Montana who passed away on July 27th last, age 79 years and 8 months, the result of an accident whilst at work.

Bro. Kain was well and favourably known to many of our members in Alberta and he was the guest speaker on the occasion of our Annual Communication in 1937.

We have said Farewell to him but his works and deeds will live in our memories for all time.

CONGRATULATIONS

Our sincerest congratulations and best wishes are extended to our Senior Grand Warden, R. W. Bro. Howard B. Macdonald on his being coroneted as an Honourary Inspector-General 33rd degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for the Dominion of Canada. That he be spared to enjoy this honour and distinction for many years is the wish of all his brethren in Alberta.

S. H.

THE PREPARATION ROOM

Being in a Preparation Room when the Secretary is propounding the interrogatories affords an opportunity for reasoning and some contemplation. Every Preparation Room should have the same atmosphere as is maintained in the Lodge Room. Always dignity, quietness and sound common sense should prevail. The two Stewards who have the candidates in hand should let their words, comments and actions indicate that being prepared to have a degree conferred is no frivolous or childish matter. In other words the Stewards should indirectly aid the candidate to be ready for a serious and solemn ceremony. With such conditions, the candidate will be properly prepared mentally when he comes to the door of entrance and he will be eager happy, and wholly receptive. Thus prepared, his initiation will be a real turning point on his road of life and, as he is brought out of a state of ignorant darkness to light, there will break upon him the glory and richness of Masonry.

—R. W. BRO. P. C. SOMERVILLE, 33°.

The world is not a wretched and a worthless one; nor is it a misfortune, but a thing to be thankful for, to be a man . . . We should love earth as the garden on which the Creator has lavished such miracles of beauty, the dwelling place of the wise, the good, the active, the loving, and the dear; the place of opportunity for the development of the noblest passions, the loftiest virtues, and the tenderest sympathies. God hath not taken all that pains in forming and framing and furnishing and adorning the world, that they who were made by him to live in it should despise it . . . One of the many teachings of Masonry, one of the most valuable is, that we should not depreciate this life. It holds that a man may make the best of this world and of another at the same time. It looks soberly and cheerfully upon the world, as the theatre of worthy action, of exalted usefulness, and of rational and innocent enjoyment. It holds that, with all its evils, life is a blessing. The very foundation of all religion is laid on the firm belief that God is good; and if this life is an evil and a curse, no such belief can be rationally entertained.

—Morals and Dogma.