



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: Sam Harris, P.G.M.

THE SUBLIME CRAFT

What is this society known as Freemasonry, whose branches are spread over the four divisions of the globe? What does it accomplish, and of what value is it to its members?

To the uninitiated these questions may well arise from time to time. One dictionary defines Freemasonry as, "a fraternity for material help and brotherly feeling — secret understanding between like characters, etc."

May we define it as a brotherhood of honourable men, drawn from all walks of life, having a sincere belief in the Supreme Being, and who desire further knowledge of man's relationship to the Divine Creator, as observed or expressed by him on his journey through life. It offers no pecuniary or other material benefits to those seeking admittance into its ranks. Its teachings favour no particular nation, political party, or religious group. Instead, its philosophy inspires the brethren to rise above these divisions and to view humanity as one family, all children of the Divine Father. It is essentially a society that stands firmly for decency, law, and order.

It is not, fundamentally, a social club, although its gatherings naturally promote a feeling of good fellowship. If it had not something deeper, something more satisfying to offer than merely a social gathering of friends, it would not have stood the test of time, nor would it have attracted and held the interest of thoughtful men throughout the ages. No. Freemasonry is a society suggesting to its brethren speculative thoughts of the highest ideals, directing and helping them to place the spiritual values of life before all material things.

For instance, the open Bible is the very root from which Freemasonry feeds and grows, for therein we not only learn the true meaning of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, but also those great precepts, the duty we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves.

This Book, together with the basic freedoms of religion and speech, is tenaciously held and at all times defended by the Craft, for without them man sinks into darkness and slavery and is unworthy of his birthright.

These are not granted to man by any earthly power or combination of powers, but are his

by Divine right, for we learn in the Volume of the Sacred Law that, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness". By being given this free-will from above, the responsibility of guarding these possessions and developing the character remains with man himself, to choose or reject right from wrong, seeking wisdom and help to do the right from Him Who reigns above, the Father of us all.

What does Freemasonry accomplish? This question is often asked, not only by those outside its membership but also, occasionally, by the brethren themselves. From a spectacular or publicity point of view little can be shown that will satisfy those asking this question. The Ancient Charges tell us, "no institution can boast a more solid foundation than that on which Freemasonry rests—the practice of every social and moral virtue". Advertising Freemasonry as a benevolent society is contrary to the very spirit of its meaning. Nevertheless, the practice of charity is repeatedly instilled into the minds of the brethren. If one were to examine the list of contributors to any worthwhile social cause it would be astonishing to see how much is quietly given by members of the Craft. Ostentation is abhorrent to a true Freemason, and yet, in an unobtrusive manner, assistance to those less fortunate, the widows and the bereaved, is uppermost in the minds of the brethren and is freely given. "In the words of an eloquent brother, Freemasonry 'comforts the mourner, it speaks peace and consolation to the troubled spirit, it carries relief and gladness to the habitations of want and destitution'."

What privileges do its members obtain from the Craft? What induces the brethren to travel long distances over good roads and bad roads to attend lodge? There are no fines nor penalties inflicted for staying away. Surely the social side of the meeting is not the only or primary reason for desiring to be present, important as this is. The brethren should feel its philosophy inspires them to throw off the old chains of subservience to the lower self, penetrate through the mists of ignorance, and to rise clear above the powers of darkness, free and unfettered, into the glorious rays of Divine Light emanating from the Courts

of Heaven, the Throne of the Great Architect Himself.

There is something indescribably beautiful, a charm within a Masonic lodge which is unobtainable elsewhere. Within our "peaceful walls" kindness and brotherly love seem to permeate the very air we breathe. There, no rancour, boasting of wealth or position, is thought of, nor permitted by the brethren. The symbolism of the form or design of the lodge suggests to us the creation or birth of the universe from darkness and chaos to light and beauty, thus leading to the belief that a Divine law and order must have preceded its formation. It is the feeling of many that the universe was not an accidental creation or a mass of matter generated from out of the void, but the work of the Master Hand, and that the Great Architect placed man on His earth for a definite purpose. How little humanity has progressed towards the attainment of this Divine purpose is sadly recognized by many.

Again, our lodges seem to lift the mind above the anxieties and perplexities of everyday life and give us a glimpse of something finer, a work more noble and more manly to do by contributing our strength of character and ability to the building and adorning of a Temple fit to be a dwelling place for the Spirit of the Most High.

It is only by reflecting or speculating on the symbolisms of the Order and by reading some of the numerous books on the subject that a brother can get a true insight into what Freemasonry means and what is expected of its members.

However, it is not wise nor good for men to meditate too long on the wonderful works of the Almighty, nor to reflect too much on the Divine Mysteries, for, "Faith lights us through the darkness to the Diety", so that when labour is completed and the lodge closed we retire for a period of refreshment.

This pleasant time, together with good-natured talk or music, seems—also—too short, before the Master announces, "Brethren, the hour is getting late!" bring another evening to a close.

Let us stand fast for the precepts and noble ideals of our Sublime Craft, Ancient Freemasonry, and form again the mystic chain, in the words of John Oxenham:

"Join hands, then, brothers of the faith,
Whate'er your race may be;
Who serves my Father as a son
Is surely kin to me."

V. W. Bro. Malcolm J. Brodie,
Past Grand Steward, Alberta.

A sum of approximately £28,131.0.0 pounds sterling was obtained in 1940-1945 from proceeds of melting down jewels surrendered voluntarily by Freemasons of the Grand Lodge of England, and the money was paid to the English Treasury expressly for the relief of the distressed.

The Oklahoma York Rite News

This was the fund to which our M. W. Bro. Canon Crane-Williams, P.G.M., contributed his personal jewels.

S. H.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

Gold is sometimes found on the surface, but those who wish to secure it in quantities have usually to dig for the precious metal. It is that way with knowledge too.

An informed opinion presupposes the securing of information. An enlightened mind is obtainable only at the price of self-enlightenment—at other people candles as well as one's own. An opinion formed without factual knowledge, back of it is only a notion or a prejudice. No opinion at all is just as bad, its a useless vaccum.

Human beings are endowed with the power to reason, some to a greater degree than others, but all require a basis, a starting point for any effectual reasoning they may do. It is necessary for them to find out the facts, or as nearly do so as possible so that they may proceed to build a structure of reason upon a foundation of actuality, strengthened by faith and hope.

Tennyson wrote: "I am a part of all that I have met; yet all experience is an Arch through which gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades forever and forever when I move."

The man who wishes an enlightened mind, however, must not be counted to be just a part of all that he has met, he must go out to melt the information that is requisite to an informed opinion. This is taken from profane literature, but we seldom find anything more applicable to the need of education in Freemasonry.

I fully agree with the sentiments expressed by M. W. Bro. Sam Harris and his committee on lodges of instruction where they say: "Perhaps the most essential method of obtaining a Masonic education remains with the individual member of the Craft, his personal desire for masonic knowledge and willingness to devote a portion of his time in this busy age in obtaining the same."

If a brother sincerely desires to make that progress in our science, which all of us should strive for, he cannot afford to stand still and wait. No one is going to bring knowledge and skill, far less wisdom to him. The attributes of the "Ideal Freemason" come to few men by birth. Most of us have to dig, and dig deep and persistently for the golden lessons Masonry has to offer. Our efforts are crowned by a measure of success when we finally perceive and adopt some of the precious truths of our philosophy, though this is only a start. We must cultivate and practice without weariness or let-up what has come into our grasp. Only by unflinching endeavor can we hope at last to arrive at the place where we shall hear the welcome words "Well done good and faithful servant." In the Charge to an E.A. we read the following: "In leisure hours, that you may improve in masonic knowledge, you should converse with well informed brethren who always will be as ready to give as you to receive instruction." I say excellent advice.

V. W. Bro. Nick Christ,
Grand Steward, Alberta

EXTRACT from a letter written to his lodge in Camrose by W. Bro. John W. Russell who was W. M. of Camrose Lodge No. 37 in 1934. Bro. Russell is 89 years of age and now resides in London, Ontario.

"The anticipation that you might be advanced or elected to an honourable position in your Lodge has now been fulfilled. The pleasure of knowing that your election or appointment results from the considered decision of the Lodge, that you are worthy, should be to you a greater pleasure, for, worthiness is the cornerstone of your election or appointment. A beautiful piece of chinaware, to the outward eye, may receive admiration, but, if, on minute examination it is found to be even slightly chipped or cracked, the reflex sensibility of unworthiness is distressfully sad. I would then, very thoughtfully and very affectionately point to the Volume of the Sacred Law which lies open before you on the Altar of the Lodge, where you will find in the Book of Phillipians, Chapter 4, verse 8, these wise words: "Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, or if there be any praise, think on these things."

CLANDESTINE LODGES

In the 57 jurisdictions comprising the United States and Canada, there are only four that have any white clandestine Masonry operating. California, Arizona and Texas are bothered to some extent with Mexican organizations. Three jurisdictions report Chinese Freemasonry in existence. Thirty-eight jurisdictions report Prince Hall affiliations (Negro), while eleven reports no clandestine Masonry of any description. It is realized that this totals up to 59, but that is due to two jurisdictions who have both Negro and Mexican lodges. This information was gathered from all jurisdictions of the United States and Canada.

We have in Illinois a colored Grand Lodge (Prince Hall) which is considered clandestine, and there is another in Texas. Those lodges, however, cause no trouble.

Colorado is the only jurisdiction that has a spurious Masonic organization, which admits both men and women. It is titled "American Federation of Human Rights." The international headquarters for the Western Hemisphere are located in that state, and their "Grand Master," a woman, according to last reports, claims to be a 33rd degree Mason.

The Oklahoma York Rite News

Constituent Lodges under the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana are not permitted to meet during the Annual Communications of Grand Lodge.

Blessed are they who have the gift of making friends, for it is one of God's best gifts. It involves many things, but above all, the power of going out of one's self, and appreciating whatever is noble and loving in another. Selected.

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of need. If it is food, clothing, medicine for those too poor to buy for themselves, the ideal Master makes it his business to know the facts and bring a sympathetic report to his Lodge.

The ideal Master has no trouble preserving the dignity of his office, because brethren respect Masters who respect the East. He hands on the gavel of authority unsullied by defiance to the brother who succeeds him in the East.

The ideal Master is an ideal Mason; Masonry is a part of him, as he is a part of Masonry. With all his heart and soul and strength he strives to live the Masonic life that all brethren may see that here is no mere figure-head but a vital force.

Finally, the ideal Master is humble minded. Not for him the arrogant pride of place and power, though he has both power and place. Not for him the big stick, though it is his to wield but the silken string which leads where ropes may not haul. The ideal Master keeps ever before him the knowledge that although elevated to the most honorable position within the gift of his Lodge, he can really fill the Oriental Chair only if he thinks first, last and all the time of the Lodge and brethren, never of self.

High? Of course it is high! All real ideals are too high to reach until we can reach out and touch the stars. But we can make the effort to reach. . .

Uneasy the Past Master's head which lies on a sleepless pillow, thinking sad thoughts of opportunities missed, of duties undone, of work which now can never be his to do. Happy the Master who lays down his gavel at the end of his year knowing he had done all that in him lies; mortal man may do no more. He it is who may stand in the East for the last time, just before he installs his successor, wearing a sprig of rosemary in his lapel.

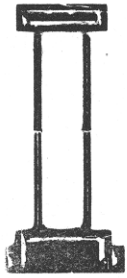
"Rosemary—that's for remembrance."

Masonic Tidings.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE ANNUAL COMMUNICATION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF ALBERTA

Due to many unforeseen circumstances, we find it impossible to hold the Annual Communication of our Grand Lodge in the new Calgary Stampede Corral, and we find it in-advisable to hold a Ball at the close of our traditional banquet.

Therefore our Annual Communication of our Grand Lodge will be held in the Palliser Hotel, Calgary, Alberta, on June 13-14, 1951, with the traditional banquet to be held in the Crystal Room of the Palliser on June 13th, at 6:30 p.m. Our Grand Lodge Communication will include a very informative and interesting program with some very special features added. We expect a large representation from our sister Grand Lodges across Canada and the U.S.A.



Between the Pillars



THE MASTER

Great honor comes to any brother when he is elevated to the Oriental chair of a Masonic Lodge. Few Wardens but look forward with mingled pleasure and anxiety to that day when in their hands will be placed the gavel of authority. He who early prepares to be a Master in more than name only arrives in the seat of authority with some confidence.

To be a Master of a Lodge is quite different from being president of a club or society. The Master is called upon to decide questions of law and practice which he cannot leave to his brethren; the honor of leadership carries also the responsibility. That his decisions be wise and just, and of such character as will draw commendation, not condemnation, from Grand Master or District Deputy, he must know the laws of his Jurisdiction and his own powers and limitations. He can obtain this knowledge only from a faithful study of the book of Masonic law.

Specifically, the Master must familiarize himself with Grand Lodge upon application, amendments, ballot and balloting, burial, candidates, residence, qualifications, physical perfection, etc., charges, correspondence with other Lodges, degrees, demits, dispensations (especially as to when they are necessary), dual membership (if authorized by Grand Lodge or not authorized by that body), dues, education, elections, examinations, finances, installation, jurisdiction, membership, minutes, motions (when not in order), objections to candidates, offenses, petitions, processions, proxies, rejection, return of Lodges, special communications, summons, Sunday observances, trials, visits and visitors, votes and voting (when paper ballot required; when majority; when two thirds and when unanimous needed, etc.), waiver of jurisdiction.

Learning all this is not easy, but being a good Master is not supposed to be easy. To have been elected Master presupposes a willingness to labor, and here is labor and plenty of it.

A Master is not only leader of his Lodge but a member of Grand Lodge in which August body he represents his lodge. Familiarity with the Grand Lodge procedure, questions pending, legislation enacted, etc., gives him a perspective and enables him to act with intelligence and understanding. In the Proceedings of most (not all) Grand Lodges is the report of the Committee on Foreign Correspondence, under which apparently misleading title an official reviewer

summarizes the activities of other Grand Lodges. The Master who realizes that he is not only an important cog in his own Masonic machine, but an integral part of a worldwide Freemasonry, early grasps the importance and responsibilities of his position. Study of the Proceedings gives a perspective on the activities of Grand Lodge with special reference to its charity whether exercised in Masonic Home, Orphanage, Hospital Foundation, outside relief or other form.

Few assets are more valuable to a Master than friends. In Freemasonry as in the profane world the art of making friends is encompassed in one phrase: "to have friends we must be friendly." Millions of men are so at heart; cold exterior from no better cause than shyness. Many a man wants to extend his hand, wishes to say a cheery word of greeting, desires with all heart to be "one of the fellows" . . . and does not know how.

The ideal Master looks at his lodge and sees it wholly harmonious. No rifts or schisms develop under him; peace and harmony prevail. He soothes the unhappy and brings together the parted friends. He caters to the cranky and makes them content; he avoids all jealousies. He is friends with every Past Master, every officer, every brother.

The ideal Master pays great attention to the duties which are his in Grand Lodge; he faithfully attends, intelligently takes part in the deliberations, votes with the interests of his Jurisdiction at heart, is a constructive force in the governing body of Freemasonry.

The ideal Master has interesting meetings. He is willing to work, and work hard, arranging programs, planning events which will not only interest but instruct the brethren. They are better masons and therefore better men because of the hours they spend within the tiled doors of the Lodge over which he presides.

To the Craft the ideal Master gives "good and wholesome instruction." No brother goes from one of his meetings without something done or said which leaves a higher thought of Masonry in his heart. His degrees are dignified, well put on. His candidates have not only ritualistic instructions, but are told something of "what it is all about" that they, too, may "become good and faithful brethren among us." His officers are given a mark at which to shoot when the slow wheel of time turns them, too, into the Oriental Chair.

The ideal Master considers the ill and sorrowing as his personal care, as well as that of the Lodge. No widow or fatherless child grieves for one gone to the Great White Lodge, but has the comfort of a word, a tear, from the leader of his brethren. As much as man may do, he does for those bound to him and his Lodge by the Mystic Tie.

No brother or family of a brother in want but is helped, so far as the Lodge may help. It may be that the only help is suggestion, advice, counsel—but it is a friendly touch in the hour

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