



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: Sam Harris, P.G.M.

THE HAPPY WAY

Each year at Installations we are taught that the "Chief Aim of Freemasonry is to endeavour to be happy ourselves and to unite in the grand design of communicating that happiness to others." Hundreds of volumes have been written on Masonry, now styled "Freemasonry," tracing it back to the building of great cathedrals in the Middle Ages, and to the erection of King Solomon's stately and magnificent Temple at Jerusalem to the glory and for the worship of the One True God and constructed after the plan laid down by the Wise Master Builder.

We, as Freemasons, must strive to build a spiritual temple within our own soul and body to the glory and honour of God. We must develop the higher, purer, better part of our natures. We must cultivate those qualities of heart and mind which shall beautify and adorn our lives and characters and fit them as living stones for a place in that spiritual Temple. We cannot become Freemasons by learning the rituals alone. Only by absorbing its philosophies and traditions can we demonstrate its Happy Way of Life. If we succeed in giving happiness to all our Brethren and then send them out into the world as living exponents of what Freemasonry can accomplish in the hearts and lives of its members, we will become the most potent and powerful influence in the world—and what a need there is today for some ray of hope and happiness for oppressed Mankind. In the welter of world conditions we have lost the priceless quality of happiness. We have forgotten to place our trust in the Great Architect of the Universe. Rather, we are relying on force and industrial wealth.

The dark shadows of fear and distrust hover menacingly over the world today. We can disperse these with Faith and Happiness and thus revolutionize Society. We can restore peace to the nations of the world and bring real happiness into the hearts of men everywhere.

There have been dark days in the world's history before our time but, from each night of darkness, a new dawn of hope has risen. From Harper's Weekly, October 10, 1857—almost a century ago—we read this sombre statement:

"It is a gloomy moment in history. Not in many years—not in the life-time of most men who will read this paper—has there been such a grave and deep apprehension. Never has the

future seemed so incalculable as at the present time.

"In France the political cauldron seethes and hub-bubs with uncertainty; Russia hangs, as usual, like a dark and silent cloud over the horizon of Europe, while all the resources and energies of the British Empire are sorely tried and are yet to be tried more sorely in keeping with the deadly Indian insurrection and with distressed conditions in China."

—the progress of truth is slower than the growth of acorns—This article might well have been written of the world of today.

In the 19th Century, Napoleon threatened the peace of the world and, indeed, conquered many of the nations of Europe, but he glorified himself and forgot God and, by a series of events, he eventually met defeat at Waterloo. Napoleon was impeached by the blood of those whom he had sacrificed for his own selfish ambition, by the suffering of widows and orphans and the devastation caused by war. Waterloo was not only a battle. It was a change of front of the Universe and God decided that this vain, ambitious man should fail.

In the first half of the 20th Century, two world wars have been fought to defeat the ambition of men who wished to dominate the world. The War of 1914-18 brought tragedy to many people and caused untold suffering but, eventually, the will of man was thwarted and democracy was given another chance. Sad to relate, however, twenty years later, the world was again plunged into a gigantic struggle. It is less than a decade since Hitler, from his mountain fastness, defied our God and, aided by his satellites, endeavoured to enslave Mankind, but, once again, it was demonstrated that force cannot cope with Omnipotency. We have but to recall Dunkerque and the intervention of Divine Providence on that occasion to prove that Right must prevail.

Today the world is facing the threat of a Godless ideology that would destroy all that we hold dear and engulf Mankind under its dark mantle of subjection and hopeless slavery.

As Freemasons, we cannot be indifferent to world events. We must lend our full strength to preserve the great traditions of our civilization, but we can face the future with happiness and confidence, knowing that our Supreme Leader will again,

in His Own good time, restore peace to the troubled nations of the world and liberty to all Mankind. We have every reason to be happy and to go about our daily work in a spirit of happiness—knowing that, as inheritors of the Wisdom of the Ages, we can be happy participants in every problem that confronts us.

It is our unbounded duty as Freemasons to carry happiness into the hearts of all Mankind and to show to the nations of the world that lasting peace can be established only when it is found in the hearts and lives of men. It can never be achieved by armed conflict.

The greatest uninitiated Mason of all time said: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," which is but another way of saying, "Live happily and communicate that happiness to others." There is no doubt that if the Golden Rule were applied—by all people—it would work in reality. The difficulty is not with the Rule itself but with men who have little or no desire to put it into practice. If we have not, in our hearts, the Spirit of Him Who laid down the Golden Rule, we, as Freemasons, cannot communicate it to others. The New Age of Peace will come only when we prepare the way by being happy in our own souls.

Happiness is not a thing that can be bought with money, position or power. The true wealth of our own nation is not its vast resources of wheat and cattle, oil and gas, lumber and mines, but, rather, in the happiness and worth of its people. It is the inherent right of every individual, no matter where he is placed on Fortune's Ladder, to be happy and it is the work of Freemasonry to make all its Members happy. We must be positive in our actions. We must have a faith in ourselves. There is a desperate need to restore sanity to the world today. There is an enormous amount of goodwill in the world but much of it is inactive. It is our duty, as Freemasons, to make that goodwill effective. The spirit of joyous, selfless living alone can light the way for all people and stem the tide of tragedy and frustration, and thus make this world a better place in which to live. By so doing, Freemasons will bring happiness into the lives of others and doubly enrich their own.

We live in a land rich in material resources. We have everything in the way of material prosperity to make us a happy and contented people. Our Masonic philosophy should afford the medium for the individual members of our Fraternity to demonstrate the larger and fuller life by practising happiness in their own souls and radiating it to others. Live happily, ever practising the Masonic Motto: "Be happy ourselves and communicate that Happiness to others." That is the Masonic Way of Life—The Happy Way.

"Trust not tomorrow's dawn to bring
The dreamed-of joy for which you wait;
You have enough of pleasant things
To house your soul in goodly state;
Tomorrow Time's relentless stream
May bear what now you have away;
Take what God gives, O heart, and build
Your house of Happiness today!"

M.W. Bro. H. B. Macdonald,
Past Grand Master, Alberta

THE BLACK BALL

The question which has received marked attention from Masonic writers seems to be the use and abuse of the black ball. Nearly every Masonic journal that comes to hand gives expression of opinion, either original or endorsed. There is one consideration that should not be overlooked. The black ball is indispensable, and the unanimous ballot should obtain. Were it otherwise, the Masonic lodge would be but a rendezvous for unprincipled schemers and pothouse politicians, a club for high rollers and "jolly good fellows". The black ball is necessary to protect the lodge from the presence of undesirable material, and it should be, and generally is, used for that wise and salutary purpose. Every member of the lodge has an undeniable right to a choice of ballot, and, having that choice, he should exercise his right to cast his ballot according to the dictates of his own conscience. The black ball may sometimes be cast through spite or malice, but the instances are rare. Who shall decide as to a brother's motives? From an experience of nearly forty years of devotion to Masonry, the writer ventures the assertion that, where one good man has been rejected through sheer malice, many unprincipled applicants have been admitted through neglect of duty. When a black ball has been cast, the wise and broad-minded brother remains silent while the superficial brother makes haste to denounce the act—a verification of the old adage: "Still water runs deep, but babbling brooks are noisy."

There are those who seem to think that injustice has been done to the applicant, and they do not hesitate to say so both in and out of the lodge room. In behalf of propriety and common sense the thumb-screws of condemnation should be promptly turned upon such effusive babbling. The applicant has the right of application only. All other rights are vested in the lodge and the brethren. The applicant seeks admission under the solemn avowal that he is unbiased by friends and uninfluenced by mercenary motives; that he desires to receive light and knowledge and to be serviceable to his fellow man. If the result of the investigation by the committee and the brethren proves that his life has been in accord with his pretensions, there will be little doubt as to the welcome that awaits him; but if the investigation be not satisfactory, his request will be kindly and politely denied.

Masonry is not gratifying the vanity of men who are anxious to display its emblems to the world in order that they may reap some supposed benefits, nor is it opening its door to those who wish to use the symbolic lodge as a gateway to so-called "higher degrees". Not a word uncomplimentary to Capitular, Templar, or Scottish Masonry should be spoken. The lessons of their degrees are beautiful and impressive to him who has a corresponding receptivity. But a river can never rise above its source. The superstructure must always depend upon the foundation. The Blue Lodge is the source, the foundation of all, and to cherish its principles and protect its welfare should be the sweetest care of every good Mason. He may have received all the degrees that could be conferred on him, and have trodden the path that leads to sun-crowned heights,

IS MASONRY A RELIGION?

The charge is frequently made that Masonry has a tendency to set itself up as a religion, a charge which is not in any sense correct or justified. True enough, Masonry will not knowingly accept any man as a Brother who is not a believer in the Supreme Architect of the Universe and an immortal soul—but that does not make it a religion.

Masonry is not designed to supplant the church in any man's life, but its teachings do support and strengthen the influence for good of that institution. It adopts no particular creed or theology. It even forbids, as we are told, any sectarian discussion in its Lodge rooms, yet it urges every man to be steadfast in the faith of his profession. It does advise its devotees to pattern their lives after the light they shall find by study of the Holy Bible, but it does not concern itself with their denominational allegiance, nor, for that matter, whether they belong to or attend any church. It is an arch foe of intolerance in any form.

Any man who lives as a true Mason must necessarily be essentially religious in his heart, but Masonry does nothing to influence him in the choice of a method of expression. It is not an enemy of any church—its ranks are open to men of all faiths. The only requirement is that they have a faith.

No atheist can become a Mason, since a basic requirement for membership is a belief in the Supreme Being. On the other hand, no atheist would want to be a Mason, because of its tenets. Atheism and a belief in an immortal soul do not go together, and Masonry does with all its might support the doctrine of immortality.

The thousands upon thousands of ministers of the gospel who are ardent members of the Fraternity find nothing in its teachings repugnant to their faith. To brand Masonry a religion is to brand them as apostates.

All good men are agreed that within the covers of the Holy Bible are found those principles of morality which lay the foundation upon which to build a righteous life, so Masonry opens this book upon its altars with a command to each of its votaries that he diligently study therein to learn the way to eternal life. Masonry is, perhaps, a recruiting ground for the church—but it is not a religion in itself.

—The Oklahoma Mason

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yet if he loves Masonry for the beautiful lessons that make good men wiser and better, he will turn to his Blue Lodge with a fondness akin to the love he cherishes for his own home.

"The bird that soars on highest wing
Builds on the ground her lowly nest;
And she that doth most sweetly sing,
Sings in the shade when all things rest."

—Courtesy of The Victorian Craftsman

Demands Service

Remind them that Freemasonry demands Service—service to the Craft, to the Lodge, and to the brethren. It demands the development of a benevolent and generous nature, ready response to the calls of Charity, and a cheerful recognition of the opportunities given them in the time of their prosperity, of assisting those who have fallen by the way.

Thus, Brother Officer, you in your little niche will be doing your bit towards the burnishing and strengthening of the link in the Masonic chain which bears your Lodge's name. As the Mark address runs, "Let me remind you that your assiduity should be commensurate with your progress." Strive to fit yourself for advancement in due time to the highest office in various degrees in Freemasonry which may be within your compass, but keep in mind the important consideration, not—"How far have you progressed in Freemasonry?" but "How far has Masonry progressed in you?"

You may call it by any term you please, but Masonic effort is investment, and reward of Masonic effort is character. You may be wealthy and put your money into investment, but no investment will pay you greater dividends than Masonry if you make Masonic effort to build character.—Reprinted from Masonic effort to build character.

—The Western Australian Freemason

NO ROOM FOR LEVITY

One of the most important adjuncts of a Masonic Lodge is the preparation room.

It is there that the candidate is prepared to receive the degrees, and receives his first impression of Freemasonry.

As a consequence, it is there that the question whether he shall become a real, earnest and sincere Freemason, active in Lodge work or merely a "joining" member, is settled.

The candidate should be met and treated with courtesy, delicacy and a feeling of solemnity, due to the ancient and honorable institution of Freemasonry which unculcates the loftiest principles.

These thoughts should be impressed on the candidate from the time he first enters the preparation room until he is raised to the sublime degree of the Master Mason.

The Philalethes.

A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something.—Anonymous.

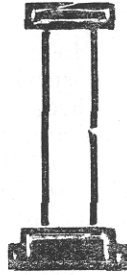
If we choose our friends for what they are, not for what they have, and if we deserve so great a blessing; then they will be always with us, preserved in absence, and even after death, in the "amber of memory."—Sir John Lubbock.

"He who has a good purpose in mind, needs no road map to success. Let him go straight ahead and, at forks in the road, keep always to the right."

The shortest way to do many things is to do only one thing at a time.—Cecil.



Between the Pillars



ON FIRST TAKING OFFICE

(To the Brother fortunate enough to be appointed to office in his Lodge, the following viewpoint of his responsibilities, lest there may not be full awareness of them on his part, is from the pen of the District Grand Secretary of the Punjab, Wor. Bro. G. Reeves-Brown, P.A.G.D.C., who has held the position since 1928 to date, and taken from the Punjab Masonic Year Book for 1935-6, has been found reprinted of late in a number of our Masonic contemporaries overseas. Its purpose, he declares in his introduction of his subject, is not to refer to the correct and efficient performance of his ceremonial duties, these being gained from the study of his ritual with the guidance of instructors.

Today, Freemasonry is a society which, by means of its many Lodges scattered over the four quarters of the globe, is having a more far-reaching effect in the civilized world than we sometimes imagine. We are progressing slowly but surely towards the day when Freemasonry in the fulfilment of its destiny will play a very big part in guiding public thought along the lines of the high ideals of moral and social excellence which it endeavors to teach. English-speaking Freemasonry has outlived many institutions of a somewhat similar character and is so well-founded today that if the Landmarks on which it rests are kept secure we can look forward to a steady advance and a growing influence.

Now the chain of Masonry which engirdles the world is composed of many links. These links vary in brightness and strength, and the failure of any to hold together can have disastrous effects on the whole chain.

The links are represented by the individual Lodges, which are composed of men who meet together not merely as a loosely-knit body of casual acquaintance, but as a body of men bound together by close ties of brotherhood and pledged to the practice of the ideals which our Order teaches, and so one can see that the strength of the link depends as much on the individual as the Lodge itself.

It is right and proper that all Brethren with natural ability to perform the duties of office in Lodge should aspire to office rank, but let that aspiration come from the desire to serve the Lodge and Craft and not merely from desire of personal advancement.

More Important

The further you advance in Freemasonry and the higher the rank to which you are elevated, the

more important are the duties and the greater the services expected of you.

And a realization of this is called for from each office-holder.

It is of great importance that you now take a serious interest in Masonic matters other than your book of ritual, for it is now that you should further prepare yourself for higher office, so that when, in due time, you reach the Eastern Chair, you can respond in all sincerity to the inspiring address which will be recited to you on that happy occasion and can feel in a position to advise and instruct your Brethren.

Delve into the history of the Craft during the past 250 years, read of its development from the momentous meeting of the four Lodges in a London tavern to the present day and realize all that your forebears have done in the past to hand on to you the glorious heritage you now possess.

Appreciate Courage

Appreciate the courage and high ideals of those few men who in the early days of the 1700's, in an age when religion counted for little, when drunkenness and loose living were openly applauded and benevolence and charity were ridiculed and the humanitarian termed a crank, when bigotry and intolerance prevailed, dared to stand against these abuses and by formulating our Ancient Charges established a code of moral and social conduct which sets the standard today.

In an age when it took courage to be religious and of high moral character, Freemasonry set an example by confirming the old Landmarks of the Order, chief of which may be said to be a firm and sure belief in the G.A.O.T.U., the V.S.L., and a belief in a future life, Temperance in all things and Charity to all men. Such were the Landmarks then and such they are today, and you, Brother Officer, in your present position, should be by the example of your own conduct, maintaining them in your own Lodge.

Recalls Responsibility

The Charge to the Master, given at all installation meetings, reminds us of our responsibility to maintain the honour and reputation of the Craft, accompanies us out of Lodge as in it, so that we may "prove to the world the happy and beneficial effects of our ancient institution."

One of the striking characteristics of Masonry is that it includes in its ranks men from every station in life, all built in different moulds and with different individualities.

Some have joined our ranks with probably mistaken ideas concerning our Society. A few from unworthy motives hoping and expecting personal gain and pecuniary advantage from membership, or may be expecting nothing more than the social pleasures of an ordinary club. If any such be in your Lodge, it will be your duty to endeavour to direct their thoughts to the deeper and more serious aspect of Masonry.