

Wishing All Members A Very Happy New Year



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Grand Lodge Bulletin

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A MASONIC RETREAT

What I have to say in this article is not to be taken as a report of the Annual gathering at Banff of the Officers of Western Grand Lodges, but as an inspiration received and a desire to share it with my brethren in the Craft.

Banff is an ideal spot for a conference. This fact is borne out by the number of conventions held there during the year. Of Banff it may be said, to quote the Bible, "Beautiful in situation, the joy of the whole earth". The mountains clothed in their beauty, their peaks white with snow speak of the Majesty and Grandeur of the Great Architect of the Universe. They bring their gift of silence too, a silence that is not empty but is full of vibrant speech. Many a man has lifted his eyes unto the hills which tower so calmly and magnificently above all our human pettiness and by their very grandeur have spoken peace to the unquiet heart. Such was the atmosphere created at Banff, resulting in a contemplative mood, keeping our thoughts from wandering afield, giving a sense of our own littleness in the vast schemes of things. It was an atmosphere set for a Masonic Retreat.

The Masonic Retreat enjoyed by the Officers of Grand Lodge can be duplicated in every lodge in our own Grand Jurisdiction. Something of this Masonic Retreat is experienced at District Meetings, when a number of lodges get together with the Grand Master and his Officers for the afternoon and evening, to discuss questions of Masonic importance.

The question of Masonic Education is a problem that is facing every Grand Jurisdiction and is one that is difficult to solve. Some have gone so far as to say that the education of the whole Fraternity is an almost impossible task to accomplish. If this be so, then ways and means must be found to do the task. Is the printed Bulletin the answer? It would be, if read by the majority of the members of a lodge. These bulletins contain excellent educational material, but unfortunately they are carefully preserved with

the intention to be read at some future time, which rarely comes.

Lodges of Instruction have been suggested from time to time. Perhaps these Lodges of Instruction would be successful if arranged for Candidates just as soon as they are ready to complete their Third Degree work, when they have that interest and enthusiasm of a new entrant. They would then know more about masonry than any of us knew when we completed the Third Degree.

We are building for the future. We must have brethren fully alert to the teachings of masonry, their obligation to the brotherhood and who will keep in good repair our Ancient Landmarks and in their hearts the future use of our beloved fraternity. The candidates of today, who will be running the affairs of Grand Lodge tomorrow, must have the ground-work of freemasons and realize the things that freemasonry can do and the things that it cannot do.

These Lodges of Instruction if properly arranged can be beneficial not only to the candidates as such, but to the Master Masons as well. Addresses given by competent speakers on Masonic subjects; short articles read from bulletins; questions and answers are among the most effective means of Masonic education. It should be clearly understood that their purpose which is general education, will be defeated if the course be too scientific and too highly specialized. They should be so arranged in character as to meet the intelligence of the average brother and at the same time have a decidedly practical application. It has been said that as Masons we have been "endowed, as trustee, with the light of freemasonry that we may lighten the pathway of others". Labors being ended we, "lock up the secrets of Masonry in the safe and sacred repository of our hearts". Let us make good use of the Treasure placed in our hands.

A Masonic Retreat does not mean for us "retrenchment" as has been clearly shown, for

nothing can hold back the onward march of this Ancient and Honorable Fraternity in its search for truth. But it means seclusion, even getting away from the group idea, a time of meditation, a time of being alone with one's thoughts, with one's God.

Masonry is a personal thing. The honor of the fraternity rests upon each one of us. The value of the fraternity to the individual depends upon his personal attitude as a Mason and the appreciation of the great body of truth set forth so wonderfully and strikingly by the Signs and Symbols and the personal appropriation of those truths. As a writer puts it, "It depends upon whether you yourself always face the East, for as no shadows fall upon the countenance of the man who looks towards the morning light, so no dark designs that would mar the character and dishonor the Mason, can lurk in the heart of the man who faces East and always seeks the light of Divine truth".

The search for more "light in Masonry" can be enhanced through individual effort on the part of the true Mason. When a Candidate sees the light for the first time in Masonry, he cannot but be impressed by the things that open up to him. To know the meaning and application of the Sacred Law, Square and Compass that lie before him on the Altar; the Working Tools of the three degrees and the sacred teaching of every Landmark, should be his desire, for they teach the supreme function of Masonry.

Personally, the Stones in the N.E. and the S.E. corners have always fascinated me, perhaps because of the Biblical truth, "And the house when it was in building was built of stone made ready at the quarry and there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building". 1. Kings, 6/7.

Recently I read that about eighty or ninety years ago a discovery was made, or rather commenced in Jerusalem in the Temple area. It all began through a man named Barclay wandering around the Damascus Gate, suddenly discovered that his dog had disappeared. Searching for the dog he found it crawling out of some bushes out of a cavern that seemed to be beneath the city walls. This led to a most remarkable find, "a snow white cavern" huge and lost in further darkness. Here were the quarries of King Solomon, out of which the stones of the Temple had come. Some nine hundred years before Christ the workmen had quarried the stone, cutting huge blocks, dressing them for the Temple in the quarry itself and then taking them up into the sunlight above, fitted them into prepared places. Beneath in the darkness the stone was cut and prepared to emerge into the light of day and history. From the darkness came Solomon's Temple, from beneath came the House of God to stand foursquare in the sight of man.

The quarries are an enormous place and dangerous, because of the darkness and differ-

ent levels of the workings where the Masons toiled cutting and dressing the stones. Everywhere there are the marks of the tools on the rock faces, the chips of stones left in the dressing of them. Here and there on the walls and the floors, the signs of labor, of human struggle to hew and shape the blocks for God's House are still to be seen. You can understand why the stones in the N.E. and S.E. corners are intriguing. The Scriptural verse mentioned above has proven to be absolutely correct and indeed full of meaning.

The stones used in the building of King Solomon's Temple were all in their native darkness. They had to be uncovered, broken off, taken up out of their native resting place and transformed. The rough corners had to be broken off, that is, they had to be divested of all superfluities and irregularities and reduced to a proper level. Then they had to be invested, that is, squared, polished, numbered and marked. Thus they acquired a beauty not their own naturally. This had all to be done before they could fill their place in the building.

Masonry accepts "good men in order to make them better". The work done in preparing the finished stone symbolizes the aim and purpose of Freemasonry. Each of us might be compared to the rough ashlar or stone lying in darkness in the great quarry of the carnal life. Each of us must be lifted up out of this condition of darkness and become through discipline, a perfect ashlar, fit for the Spiritual Temple not made with hands eternal in the heavens, a living stone fit for the use of the Master Builder.
R.W. Bro. Rev. Peter Dawson, Junior Grand Warden, Alberta

THE SAINTS JOHN

Why do we have St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist? We are not Catholics.

Until about 300 years ago the rank and file of ordinary men had no clocks, watches or calendars, did not think of the year as divided into twelve months but into brief periods of another kind, which varied in length and didn't have numbers for days; instead they thought of the year as a succession of periods, most of them of a religious character, such as Lent, and each day of the whole year had a name of its own. This was one of the reasons why the Middle Ages needed so many saints; they had to have enough to give each of the 365 days a name.

Each guild or fraternity in the Middle ages was required by law to have a Patron Saint, which meant that on Saint's day the guild would take a holiday (holy day) and go in a body and in public procession to some chapel or altar dedicated to that saint. The Freemasons of those early times had a number of different Patron Saints, depending on the place and the period of time, but apparently they had St. Thomas a Becket oftener than any other. Nobody knows when or why they settled down finally on the days belonging to the two Sts.

John, but when they did it was for calendar reasons, not for theological reasons. The Baptist's day is the longest in the year in the sense of the most number of hours of daylight; the Evangelist's day was not only the shortest in that sense, but was the turning point of the year when the days began to become longer, and for that reason everybody was happy to see it come.

— Iowa Grand Lodge Bulletin.

OUR GREATEST HERITAGE

"Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord, as King, instead of his father David and prospered, and all Israel obeyed him." The above quotation, taken from the Great Light, is the foundation on which the Masonic Ritual was constructed. The ritual was man made and subject to amendment and change, but the foundation is divine in origin and is unchangeable. Bearing in mind that the word Solomon means peace, the Throne is that of Righteousness, Israel means "ruling with God" and we get the vision of a people ruling with God, obedient to the Throne of Righteousness, enjoying prosperity and the reign of peace. From the report of a royal commission, headed by the Queen of Sheba, we learn that no other nation was so wisely governed, no other so well clothed and fed, and every man owned his own home and the means of producing his living. All this is within our reach by means of the father to son movement; David to Solomon; this is our greatest heritage. This father to son movement, traced to its beginning, brings us to the Fatherhood of God, which in turn establishes the Brotherhood of man on its highest plain.

At this, the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, what could be more fitting for the Masonic Order than to give leadership in obedience to the Throne of Righteousness? Masonry lays down no narrow creed, but instead exemplifies the broad principles of morality and truth as the foundation for a happy and successful life leading to victory over death and the grave.

As keepers of the Throne of King Solomon, the time has arrived when we must become active in defence of that Throne or go down to defeat and slavery.

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed marvelous advancement in science, invention, economics, mathematics and scholarship in general. Our great effort to eliminate distance, time and human labour, and in other ways master the material world has caused us to turn aside from spiritual consciousness as set forth in the Masonic Ritual. A survey of world conditions at the present time would supply ample proof that man is incapable of governing himself successfully. The man on the street is already looking for new leadership. We can continue passive support to the present system of trial and error, or we can become active in building on the foundation provided

by the Great Architect of the Universe, that we might enjoy peace, prosperity and Eternal Life. "CHOOSE YE THIS DAY."

— R.W. Bro. D. H. Galbraith, P.D.D.G.M., Alberta

The presentation of 50 year veteran jewels is becoming frequent but it seldom happens that a 50 year veteran raises his son to the sublime degree of a Master Mason and the son then pins a 50 year veteran's jewel on the breast of his father. This unique occurrence happened recently in Vermillion Lodge No. 24, the veteran and father being W. Bro. John Brimacombe who was initiated in Alpha Lodge No. 384, Toronto, Ont. on June 22nd, 1889 and affiliated with Vermillion Lodge No. 24 on March 2nd, 1909, serving as W.M. in 1914. — G.W.G.M.

THE DUTCH ARE THOROUGH

The criticism has been made that some Lodges turn out Masons in somewhat the same manner that a butcher makes sausage — just as fast as the perspiring operator can feed the raw material into a machine. It might be worth-while for the officers of such Lodges to give some thought to the Dutch method.

To become a member of a Dutch Lodge the candidate is first recommended by a Master. During a period of eighteen months he is examined very closely in all ways by various Brethren as well as by the Council of the Lodge. The Council gathers all the information concerning the candidate. This is done severely and accurately. His entire life's record is scrutinized. If the verdict is favorable he receives the First Degree. For a year the Entered Apprentice then receives instruction nearly every week, and after an examination, he becomes a Fellowcraft. Another year of instruction follows.

The Brother is again judged, and when the results are according to the aims of Masonry, then he becomes a Master Mason. Two years, with systematic instruction, between the First and Third Degrees! And we sometimes put a candidate through in two months! It has been done in two days!

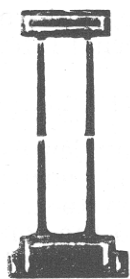
— Masonic World, San Francisco.

HEED YE:

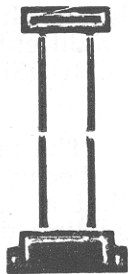
Brother Roscoe Pound, one of the most brilliant Masonic minds America has produced, has a word which is just as appropriate for us in this year of 1951 as it was in 1850 and as it will be in 2050: "I hope Masonry never becomes so up-to-date that it will be out-of-date tomorrow."

Words of wisdom, those and we can do well to ponder on them. Let us take care to see that our Masonry does not become too modern, too streamlined, too high-pressure, too big business, too super-duper, for when that day comes, Masonry will no longer be Masonry.

— Wisconsin Freemason.



Between the Pillars



FREEMASONRY IS A BALANCE WHEEL

Every nation, in a varying degree, seems to be in a turmoil. It would be necessary to go far back in history to find a time when there was more under-surface fermentation in the social and political composition than at present. Expert observers say that Europe may boil over at any minute. Even our own country, removed from the national and radical jealousies that have rent the continent for many centuries, has changed from a "melting pot" to a "test-tube."

It has been truthfully said that nothing ever stands still — it either goes forward or backward. We of course, want to go forward, but we want to progress on well-founded principles. We do not want to embark on vast uncharted seas without the compasses of Wisdom to guide us; the carefully considered plans and well-founded precedents of Strength to sustain us and carry us on through to the Beauty of worthy accomplishments that will stand the test and justify the effort. There are so many plans and schemes abroad designed to cure all our ills and remedy, almost overnight, conditions some of which have existed as far back as man can remember. Certainly many of these conditions should be remedied, but it cannot be done in the wholesale manner or within a brief period. We cannot digest such large doses of perfection, such liberal portions of happiness and prosperity, without getting prepared for it. Like the tunnel worker, we would get the "bends" if the pressure was reduced too rapidly.

In a world seething with "isms" and unrest and craving to try something — almost anything new and different from the past practices, straining to achieve some Utopian goal, the path towards which is dubious and uncertain, and the Promised Land itself rather vague, there must be people who will be level-headed enough not to be stampeded by all the fanfare and shouting; there must be cohesive body of opinion that will act as a balance wheel, or a steadying influence, to keep the machinery from flying apart from its own wild effort. There is probably no Order or organization better adapted to play that part than Freemasonry.

Freemasonry has come down to us through a long and ancient line, and even in its present speculative form it is well over two centuries old. While it has gradually changed through the ages, in some of its more superficial aspects,

yet these changes have been made slowly and with great care and have developed little by little on the main body of its modes and practices. The progress it has made has been so well grounded on a sound formation that it has not been necessary to cast aside and make false starts. It has taken a little longer, perhaps, but it has been worth the delay, and its continued and flourishing existence is a monument to the value and wisdom of its policy.

— London Freemason.

RUBBISH OF THE TEMPLE

The symbolism of the Rubbish of the Temple is missed by many Master Masons for the very reason that they themselves are so buried in the rubbish of every day affairs, activities, and carefully built up goings and comings that they have not the time to unearth from the ruins of the superfluous the scintillating gems with which Masonry abounds.

How many of us take time to dig and delve into the hidden mysteries? How many, again, try to improve ourselves by getting something more than the superficial and evident things of the Craft? It is, indeed, a rare man who can find and dig out some of the mineral wealth of our Craft which will enable him to live the rest of his natural life with mental, moral and spiritual manna to help wipe away the bitter taste of the will-o-the-wisp materialistic substance which just eludes him, and makes his life miserable in its elusion.

— Selected.

PRESENT DAY FREEMASONRY

What relation has Freemasonry to the day and age in which we live? Freemasonry is existing because it has a right to exist, because its influence is needed in meeting and solving the social, moral and industrial problems which confront us. Freemasonry has a right to exist because of its foundation principles. To secure admission into the fraternity a man must avow his belief in God. At the very threshold of Masonry he is taught the regard which a Mason should have for his God and he kneels in prayer. When brought to light for the first time in a Masonic Lodge, he beholds an altar upon which is an open Bible. Any institution which exacts a belief in God, teaches prayer, and spreads an open Bible on its altar has a right to exist, and the principles, the teaching and philosophy of such an institution are not to be under-estimated in the social economy of our times. But, undoubtedly the philosophy of Freemasonry is yet a hundred years in advance of the times. It is without question that we who wear white aprons and the Masonic insignia and have high-sounding titles are yet Masonic pygmies, groping in Masonic darkness, and we have not yet fully grasped the philosophy of Freemasonry as revealed in our rite and ceremonies.

— Bro. P. C. Somerville in *Masonic News*.