

Wishing You the Old, Old Wish-- Merry Christmas

Vol. 20, No. 4



DECEMBER

Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.

Pilgrims

"No longer Caesar's legions tramp
The haughty roads of Rome,
No more to Tyre or Babylon
Proud kings coming riding home;
The routes to Nineveh are dark,
No couriers travel them;
But still the heart, star-led, shall find
The road to Bethlehem."

"It isn't far to Bethlehem Town!
It's anywhere where Christ comes down
And finds in people's friendly face
A welcome and abiding place.
The road to Bethlehem runs right through
The homes of folks like me and you."

(Madeleine Miller)

PILGRIMS have always been found in every age and in every land. Man has been drawn by this magnetism of holy places and sacred shrines. Pilgrimages are characteristic of many religions both ancient and modern. Moreover, these pilgrimages have always been symbolic of man's upward look and laborious striving for the holier and better things of life, both in man's journey from the cave-man age through a millenium of years to this age of the twentieth century, as well as the unfolding and challenging adventure of each individual soul from the cradle to the grave—and beyond.

At this Christmastide, as through the long centuries, thousands of pilgrims are wending their way along that ancient road which leads from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, which in the Hebrew tongue means "the House of Bread." The traveller descends to the deep Valley of Hinnom and up the opposite side to the lofty road to the south. They pass the Well of the Magi where the Three Wise Men paused for refreshment and saw the Star mirrored in its tranquil waters. By the Tomb of Rachel the pilgrim wends his way and by the field and plain "that gave rich Boaz yield," until at last he comes to the little Town of Bethlehem. In the Church of the Nativity, he descends to the crypt and there before the altar, lighted by dimly-burning pendent lamps, he sees in the pavement a gleaming Silver Star. Here the Prince of Peace was born. The pilgrim kneels in silent worship. His pilgrimage is accomplished.

But the scene changes. We are in the far East where "spicy breezes blow soft o'er Ceylon's Isle." Here is an endless flow of slowly moving pilgrims with their eyes turned longingly to the City of Kandy and the Temple of the Buddha's Tooth. Thither in devotion and reverence the faithful Buddhist makes his weary way and at last in the inner chamber of the Temple, he gazes on the sacred relic resting on a golden lotus-flower sheltered by nine caskets of gold.

Again the scene is shifted—and this time to the Near East. Camel caravans are carrying the faithful followers of Mahomet to the Holy City of Mecca, for it is the religious duty of every Moslem to make this votive pilgrimage at least once during his mortal span. From Syria by way of Damascus, from Egypt starting at Cairo, over these ancient highways these pilgrims come in ritualistic steps, and having made the circuit of the Temple seven times, kiss the sacred Black Stone. Their vow is performed.

And now the mystic panorama unfolds on English shores. From Southwark through lovely Kent the Canterbury Pilgrims are wending their way to the sacred shrine of Thomas A. Becket. What a motley host of pilgrims! We see the knight, the squire, the yeoman, the friar, the parson, the summoner and the pardoner, the merchant and sailor, the prioress and the buxom wife of Bath—all travelling to present their offerings and to say their prayers.

"Give me my scallop-shell of quiet
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,

My bottle of salvation,
 My gown of glory, hope's true gage;
 And thus I'll take my pilgrimage."
 from "The Pilgrim's Way"

Sir Walter Raleigh.

Wagner, with a master's genius enshrines the eternal quest in the haunting music of the "Pilgrims' Chorus," now far, now near, now far.

But the supreme allegory of our English language, and of all languages is "The Pilgrim's Progress" by the tinker of Bedfordshire, John Bunyan—and he wrote it while in gaol. It is a great book and every Mason should read it. Christian sets out on his pilgrimage to the Celestial City. He has many fellow companions—Faithful and Goodwill, Mr. Standfast and Mr. Great Heart, as well as Mr. Pliable, Mr. Worldly Wiseman and Mr. Talkative. Then at last, after long and patient journeyings, he catches gleams of the White City, "and so he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

"Who would true valour see,
 Let him come hither;
 One here will constant be,
 Come wind, come weather;
 There's no discouragement
 Shall make him once relent
 His first avowed intent
 To be a pilgrim.

The High Road of Masonry is a Pilgrimage. Masonry is not a religion though it has much in it that is religious. It is based on V.S.L.; it holds aloft the Acacia of Immortality. Neither is it a philosophy, though it does gather together the scattered and strangely shaped pieces of the jig-saw puzzle of life and portrays a reasonable and satisfactory picture. It can best be described as a nobler pilgrimage of man's mind and soul from darkness to light, from weakness to fortitude, from a self-centred inward look to a brotherly love which embraces all mankind, from a selfish aimless wandering to a purposeful and worthwhile objective which reaches to the skies.

The Masonic Pilgrim begins his journey in the search for Truth and for a Wisdom which is greater than Knowledge. It is not an abstract Truth, a miasma of the mind, but a Truth to be lived and revealed in daily acts. On the First Stage (E.A.) of his journey, he turns away from the gilded abstractions of the world and the allurements of fleeting wealth to treasures which moth and rust cannot destroy, which no thief can steal. Poor and penniless, he looks onward and upward to possessions which have an eternal value. And now the Pilgrim reaches the Second Mile (F.C.). Here he pauses to think and to ponder on the powers and possibilities of the Inner Self. By rigid discipline and self-control, he enters the temples of the higher mental life, realizing that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Finally, on the Third Stage of his Pilgrim Way (M.M.), there are revealed to him by symbol and by word, the sublime and immortal Truths which are

as deep as man's soul and as high as man's spirit. He realizes "that men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things." With a trust in God Eternal and by the helping hands of fellow pilgrims, he courageously rises to the Lights of Virtue and Brotherly Love, to Temperance Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. Well shod for the great adventure of life, with spiritual possessions in his purse, with wisdom as his compass, with the Eternal as his strength, with loyal companions at his side, he gallantly and hopefully faces the ringing challenge. He is a Master Mason.

Therefore, at this Christmastide, Masons and all men of good-will, join in this vaster Pilgrimage in the prayerful vision of a world at peace, following the Star of the Christ Child, the Prince of Peace—and though the Pilgrim Way may be long, the pace of the travellers slow, the road at times so very rough and terribly winding, we will never turn back nor falter, but forward ever forward, until "Thy Kingdom come."

Bro. Rt. Rev. A. H. Sovereign, D.D.
 Peace River Lodge, No 89, Alberta.

■ ■ ■

SOME MASONIC REFLECTIONS

The marvel of Freemasonry is that it grips and holds men the way it does, and it grips and holds men of all grades and degrees of knowledge and intelligence. The highest trained men—some of the most brilliant minds I have known—have been gripped by Masonry, and those men are ardent and enthusiastic Masons. Others I have known who are prepared to accept just anything that comes along, and they are equally ardent, and perhaps more so, than the others.

And why? Because Masonry offers something that every man can grasp and every man can understand. The symbols which we use in Masonry are the facts of Masonry, and they have been chosen by those who have built up our system of philosophy.

And so there is room in Masonry for all, and Masonry is one of the grandest and widest and most intelligible systems of philosophy that was ever offered to men. At the same time it is designed for men by men. It is a man's Craft; it is man's teaching and, whether you simply come into the Craft and accept the three degrees, and wear an apron, and attend Lodge occasionally, or whether your Masonry goes with you wherever you go, and claims every thought and emotion of your body, there is something in it to teach you, to hold you, to lift you, to set your feet on the first rung of Jacob's ladder, to stay at your elbow and bring you through all dangers and difficulties, even through the Valley of the Shadow of Death to the Gates of the Grand Lodge above.

Dr. F. A. Maguire, Past Grand Master,
 U. G. L. of New South Wales.

THE CABLE-TOW

We marvel at the inventive genius of Edison, Marconi, and De Forrest. But science, like Masonry, owes much to the past. It has been said that the world's greatest all-time inventor was the unknown primitive man, who, taking two rounded stones, connected them with an axle and so produced the wheel, the principle of which is fundamental to all modern machines. Of like class were the savages who first "made fire" and he who fashioned the earliest cable. Having domesticated the wolf-dog, to keep him near by to guard the cave or take hunting, he plaited reeds or vines to make the first rough rope. From that crude beginning have come the infinite varieties of ropes and cables, so much employed in our modern economy. The larit might well be an appropriate emblem of the livestock industry; without great steel wire cables the world's mighty suspension bridges would be impossible; lacking ships with spreading sails roped to mighty masts, voyages of discovery and world trade would be but dreams.

Among a ship's vast equipment of ropes, the cable-tow has a particular place. Its purpose is to fasten and hold securely the ship to the shore. Man needs not only the anchor of faith in God, but the cable-tow of love for his fellowmen, if he is to be certain of fulfilling his Destiny.

The cable-tow varies in length from 100 to 140 fathoms of six feet each, so the area of safety for the ship when moored, extends over at least 13 acres, a generous share of the available port accommodation. The Masonic cable-tow is not unduly restrictive. Within the safe limits of Temperance, Prudence, Fortitude and Justice, the Mason enjoys perfect freedom of choice, and he can expand those bonds indefinitely as he masters the secrets of living.

The cable-tow is strong and durable; woven of many single strands, yet capable of "giving" to adjust to strain and stress. Nevertheless, in a violent storm it sometimes breaks and on occasion the sailors must "slip the cable" and let the ship ride free. As Freemasons, we are wise never to depend too much on our own strength or on man-made theories and philosophies. In stress, trouble or adversity, they may ail us. We will be safe only if under our feet is the great ship of God's love riding out the storm and bringing us to Port at last.

The world's five million Masons, close-knit and co-operating, is like a giant cable-tow holding the world steady "on even keel." It is a symbol of harmony. The Brotherhood of Man, under the Fatherhood of God, has a potential that is well-nigh irresistible.

"United we stand, divided we fall."

D. F. in The Saskatchewan Tracing Board.

■ ■ ■

The first Masonic Lodge in North America was Albion Lodge, No. 17 on the English registry, instituted at Quebec in 1721.

The Texas Grand Lodge Magazine.

(Continued from Page 16)

at a Masonic meeting should regard himself as one of the hosts; he should introduce himself to any visitors that he sees even if he has never met them before. Under these circumstances, visitors who are approached by a stranger who goes up and says, "My name's Tom Brown. What's yours?" will respond with enthusiasm. It is one of the things which make a visitor go away at the ending of the evening saying: "What a fine lot of fellows. I have had a great time with them."

Indeed the same principle can be extended to fellow members of one's own Lodge. Good Masons will see that they don't always sit with the same Brother at every meeting, but move around from Brother to Brother with a word here and a word there, ensuring that we carry out the dictum of meeting on the level.

The Ashlar, Queensland.

■ ■ ■

LODGE TRANSACTIONS SHOULD NOT BE TOLD

The commonest Masonic offense is revealing the transactions of the lodge. This is usually done through carelessness and not through criminal intent. No Mason would reveal our ritual to an outsider and the actions of the lodge in its business or that which takes place in the lodge room is just as sacred.

If a friend has been elected to receive the degree it is the pleasing task of the secretary to inform him of the fact and if rejected it is his unpleasant task to do so. Too many times has a brother told his friend of what has transpired and the pleasure of getting the news from the secretary is lost upon the applicant. The very fact that you do not tell him impresses him with the solemnity of the fraternity.

The Wisconsin Freemason.

■ ■ ■

HOSPITALITY

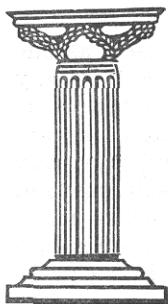
Lodges are like homes. There is something wrong with the household which never receives a guest. If our Lodge is honored by a host of visitors constantly returning, it means that we are gracious hosts dispensing pleasing hospitality. With open arms let us meet the visitor at the threshold of our temple, and make him feel that he is indeed entering his home. By so doing, we will create an atmosphere of friendliness, harmony and brotherly love.

The Masonic News, Illinois.

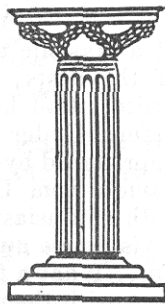
■ ■ ■

The prosperity of a country depends not on the abundance of its revenues, nor on the strength of its fortifications . . . It consists in the numbers of its cultivated citizens, in its men of education, enlightenment and character. Here are to be found its true interest, its chief strength, its real power.

Martin Luther.



Between the Pillars



LODGE MEETINGS

Many of our Lodges, in an effort to do everything just right or even a bit better, fail to realise how they are unduly prolonging the proceedings either inside the Temple or at the Festive Board. In this manner they defeat their own object. It is better to have a short but satisfactory evening than a drawn-out evening and a group of men thinking it is time they went home long ago. When the notices of the Lodge state that the meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m., how often do we see the meeting start at 7:30 p.m.? It is usually a quarter to eight, and sometimes even eight o'clock. In fact, in some dairying districts it is even later.

Never forget that every minute that the Lodge is late starting means another minute late finishing.

To those dairying districts where the cows have to be milked and the Brethren naturally cannot come early, I suggest that it is better to name a late start and stick to it than to name an early start and sometimes be an hour late.

One of the best indicators of the morale and tone of the Lodge is the dress that members wear to meetings.

I don't mean whether dinner jacket or tails are worn. What I do mean is that when you look around a Lodge room and see brethren (and shame to say it—even officers) appearing in light summer suits, coloured ties and coloured socks, one realises that the tone of the Lodge is not what it should be. It is hard to blame ignorance for these matters, although in the case of a young Mason this could be rendered as an excuse.

If a man cannot afford a dinner jacket he can at least wear a dark coloured suit and it is no trouble to have a dark coloured tie and dark socks.

Of course, we would never deny admittance to a Brother because of his clothing, but if everyone goes to the trouble of wearing special clothing, it shows they consider the occasion worthy of recognition as being something more than ordinary. One would not, for instance, appear in court before a Judge in shirt and shorts, or go to church in working clothes. Where the brethren consider meetings important enough to wear suitable dress, one can be sure that that Lodge is active and prosperous. The sponsors of a candidate to a certain extent are responsible for

this state of affairs. The newly-admitted candidate naturally looks to his sponsor to be told about the organisation he has joined. If he doesn't receive this information from his sponsor he generally does not receive it at all.

A wise sponsor will, soon after his candidate has been initiated, arrange a special meeting in private with him to explain what it is all about.

At this meeting he can first of all ensure that the candidate has correctly learned the signs, etc., as nothing looks better in a Lodge than to see the newly-admitted members doing everything correctly. As well as ensuring that the candidate knows the questions on his card, he can also explain to him what dress to wear to Lodge, the privileges of visiting other Lodges and what to do when the candidate attends as a visitor. He can also impress on his candidate the necessity of a regular attendance at every meeting of his Lodge.

Fraternal visits to other Lodges are one of the joys and privileges of the Craft.

If we see a Lodge actively visiting others, we know that it is a good Lodge and that all is well with it. If we find a Lodge that never pays a visit or receives one, we know that things are not right in that Lodge. The Master and to a lesser extent the Director, are mainly concerned in arranging visits. To them I would say: "Make sure your Lodge visits other Lodges at reasonable intervals." It is, of course, a mistake to do too much visiting, as you can easily overwork a willing horse. This particularly applies when Brethren travel by car to another town, and it is generally the one Brother's car which is used. Sooner or later he will think of the cost of all these and will lose enthusiasm. It is suggested that when a number of Brethren visit another Lodge in one Brother's car they could all at least offer to throw in a small amount for the petrol.

At most installations, officers and brethren readily agree to support the Master. One of the best ways they can do this is, when the Master arranges a fraternal visit, to support him by their presence.

Not many Brethren realise that fraternal visits also have favourable effect within the Lodge itself. This occurs partly because there are so many more present at the meeting. Then there is nearly always a return visit, to mutual benefit of all.

The candidate, after he has been newly admitted is often a stranger among strangers. In a good Lodge every member of the Lodge will make it his business to meet the new candidate and to talk to him so that at the next meeting they will recognise him. They will say a word or two just to let him know that he is remembered. Little touches like this are strong ties which bind the new candidate to his new Lodge and the absence of them results in candidates being seen only a couple of times after their entry and then no more. Indeed this principle applies to all visitors and to all other members of the Lodge. Every Mason

(Continued on Page 15, Col. 2)