



Grand Lodge Bulletin

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THE GOOD SECRETARY

Masonic Enlightener, United Grand Lodges of Germany

The writer, past Secretary of his Mother Lodge, would in all probability still have been the secretary if he had not been called away to serve his country in time of war, takes the liberty by way of the 'Enlightener', to write about Lodge secretaries.

We are used to hearing, during installations, that the Secretary, motivated by love of the Craft and attachment to the Lodge, assumes the duties of observing and correctly recording the proceedings of the Lodge, passing all monies to the Treasurer, and of issuing summonses as directed by the Worshipful Master.

We are told that in performing these duties, the Secretary will merit the esteem of his Brethren, a simple enough task, it may be said, but in practice the successful and efficient discharge of the actual duties requires talents and skills worthy of a statesman.

The Good Secretary must prepare the official reports that go to the District Deputy and to Grand Lodge and see that they are on time and fully complete. Where this is not his own responsibility, he must often take care of it anyway, even though another may get the credit.

What is sometimes more difficult, he must tactfully nudge a forgetful or busy Master. He must be prepared, on an instant's notice, to drop his own business and listen patiently to this Brother or that who would like to talk to the Good Secretary, just for a moment.

He must see that the Master has copy ready for the printer's deadline for the Lodge notice, or, failing that, write it himself. He must accept criticism for the content and appearance of the notice, but he is not to expect any praise in this regard. The notice must be mailed and received on time, not only by the members but by all who are on the mailing list. He must keep up with every change of address, whether or not he has been properly notified.

The Good Secretary must keep the minutes of meetings fully and carefully, yet free from unnecessary details. He must be scrupulously hairsplitting in paying constitutional respect to

each dignitary gracing the Lodge meeting. He must read the minutes with dignity and offend no one, but he must never take offence, or he may be tagged a 'stuffed shirt'. He must see that all committees are appointed and properly staffed. If he fails to suggest names he is unco-operative, when he does he may be accused of 'trying to run the Lodge'. He must check all bills, and whether or not he incurred them he is somehow responsible if they are deemed too high.

The Good Secretary must be the Lodge's gentle representative in all times of trouble, no matter of what nature. When death strikes he must handle all funeral details. He must be the Lodge's glad voice in hours of joy, and woe betide him if some such occasion is overlooked.

The Good Secretary must handle every detail of membership applications, investigation, initiation and advancement. He must be the first guardian of the inner door, and be tactful in the process. He must see that all ballots are taken when required and that protocol and the landmarks are respected in all things. He must see that all necessary motions are made for the benefit of the Lodge's affairs. He must be the balance wheel, gyroscope and governor that keeps all things on an even keel.

He must satisfy the oldsters, who may be persuaded that the younger members have dedicated themselves to tearing down all that is ancient and revered. He must satisfy the youngsters, who may believe that—"wonderful little our fathers knew . . . most of their teaching was quite untrue". He must keep his finger on the Lodge's pulse and know more than anyone else of its strengths and weaknesses; yet he must listen respectfully to every amateur diagnosis.

He must accomplish each of these things with tact, with diplomacy and with restraint, and yet with enthusiasm. If he does all of these things and no more, he is still not yet the Good Secretary; there is more to the job. For the Good Secretary must be the friend of each and all, greeting every member by name. He must keep the counsel of those who turn to him privately,

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EDITORIAL

Within the next few weeks constituent Canadian Rite Lodges will have named the officers who will guide the destinies of the Lodges for the coming year; it is quite rightly considered to be a high honour to have been selected by the members to direct the activities of the Lodge, but we should not forget that, while we elect brethren to positions of trust and authority, we have a duty to them with respect to the support to which they are entitled as they proceed with their duties.

At installation the new officers will be reminded that they are too well acquainted with the principles of Freemasonry and the rules of propriety to exceed the power with which they are entrusted and we who look to them for leadership will be told that we are of too generous a disposition to envy their preferment and if we properly accept these exhortations the advancement of the work of the Lodges in the coming year will be assured.

So far as the new officers are concerned high priority should be given to substantial rehearsal of the ritual and floor work so that candidates may receive the fullest understanding and inspiration possible in all Degrees.

Our officers should plan a campaign to acquaint members with the charitable and other worth while activities of the Fraternity and programs of information for the membership should be instituted and maintained to bring more light on the deeper meanings of the ritual and purposes of Freemasonry and to refresh memories and supplement knowledge of the broad scope of activities which form part and parcel of our Craft.

It will be hoped that every avenue of creating interest will be explored so that the tremendous potentialities of Freemasonry for personal and community service will be fully understood and appreciated.

Doubtless many of our Lodges will soon be in summer recess and it would indeed be to the credit of Lodge officers if they were to return to their duties on resumption of Lodge activities refreshed and eager to make a contribution of value. Progress without planning is virtually impossible and it is not enough that officers attend meetings regularly and give mere lip service to the fundamentals of the Order; it is their duty to interest and inspire their fellows; definite goals of achievement should be set and all efforts bent towards their accomplishment. Such being the case the newly elected directors of Masonry will have much on which to compliment themselves and their term of office will, in many cases, mark them for advancement to positions of broader service and unrestricted satisfaction of a job well done. To all a most pleasant vacation period and a happy return to the duties and pleasures which attend responsibility for the effective direction of the work of Freemasonry.

S. C. H.

THE MASONIC ALTAR

From the Maryland Masonic News

The history of the Altar in the life of man is a story more fascinating than any fiction. The earliest Altar was probably a rough unhewn stone in its crude and natural state. Later, as the concept of faith grew, the idea of sacrifice developed, the Altar was replaced with a hewn stone—cubical in form—or carved and often beautifully wrought, on which men lavished jewels and priceless gifts, deeming nothing too costly or precious to adorn the place of prayer. It is stated that Abraham, by Divine command and as a test of his faith, even offered his own son on a sacrificial Altar. His willingness to comply with this extreme command, the release, victory, and blessings that followed, form one of the familiar stories of the Old Testament.

As far back as we can go the Altar was the centre of human society and an object of peculiar sanctity by virtue of the law of association by which places and things are consecrated. It was a place of refuge for the hunted or tormented; criminals or slaves, and to drag them away from it by violence was held to be an act of sacrilege, since they were under the protection of God. At the Altar marriage rites were solemnized, and treaties made or vows taken in its presence were more holy and binding than if made elsewhere, because there, man invoked God as witness. In all the religions of antiquity, and especially among the peoples who worshipped the Light, it was the custom of both priests and people to pass around the Altar on special occasions, following the course of the sun—from the East, by way of the South, to the West, singing hymns of praise as part of their thanksgiving or worship.

From the facts and hints such as these the meaning of the Altar in Masonry and its position in the Lodge become apparent. The position of the Altar in Masonry is not accidental, but profoundly significant. For while Masonry is not a religion, it is religious in its faith and basic principles, no less than in its spirit and purpose. Nor does it attempt to do what the Church is trying to do. If it were a Church, its Altar would be in the East and its ritual would be altered accordingly. The Masonic Altar supports no creeds, nor embraces any particular sect. It is, first of all, an Altar of Faith—the deep eternal faith which underlies all creeds and over-arches all sects—faith in God, in the moral law, and in life everlasting. Secondly, it symbolizes recognition, recognition of that most inspiring and wonderful of all facts—the Brotherhood of Man.

The Masonic Altar is an Altar of Faith, of Fellowship, and of the acceptance and recognition of the Brotherhood of Man.

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

FREEMASONRY IN THE NETHERLANDS

By R.W. Bro. W. K. St. Clair

Freemasonry was first introduced into the Netherlands from England in 1731, when a delegation visited the Hague for the purpose of conferring the First and Second Degrees on the Duke of Lorraine, afterwards the Emperor Francis I. He received the Third Degree subsequently in England. There is a legend that there were several Dutch and English Lodges operating in the Hague prior to 1735, but this has not been confirmed.

On 30th September, 1734, a Lodge was opened by Bro. Vincent de la Chapelle, who may be considered as the originator of Masonry in the Netherlands. This Lodge received a patent from the Grand Lodge of England in 1735 and proceeded to establish several other Lodges. On 30th November of that year the States General issued an edict prohibiting all Masonic meetings. Most of the Lodges ceased to function, but the Lodge in Amsterdam continued to operate in secret. This action by the Lodge was soon discovered by the government authorities and the resulting action led to the cancellation of the edict and the Lodges again resumed their activity.

On 25th December, 1756, fourteen Dutch Lodges assembled and formed the Grand Lodge of the United Netherlands. Negotiations were soon started with the Grand Lodge of England for an independent Grand Lodge. Accordingly an agreement was finally signed on 25th April, 1770, which established the Grand Lodge of the United Netherlands as an independent body.

To become a Mason in the Netherlands requires patience and perseverance. First the applicant must obtain the recommendation of a Master Mason. During the next 12 to 18 months he is examined very closely in all ways by various brethren of the Lodge as well as by the Council of the Lodge. The Council gathers all the information it can concerning the candidate. This is done severely and accurately. His entire life's record is scrutinized; if the verdict is favourable he receives the first degree. For a year the E.A. receives instruction nearly every week. After passing a thorough examination, he is passed to the degree of F.C. Another year of instruction follows and the Brother is judged again. If the results are according to the aims of Freemasonry he becomes a M.M.—two years with systematic instruction between the First and Third Degrees.

In addition to the Craft Degrees there are practised in the Netherlands the degrees of the A. & A. Rite and the Royal Arch.

Originally the degrees of the A. & A. Rite were conferred under the control of the Supreme Council of Belgium, but in 1912, a Supreme Council of the Rite was organized in the Netherlands. Official recognition of this body was given by both the Northern and Southern Supreme Councils in the U.S.A. in 1913. The Supreme Council of the Netherlands was formed under the

authority from the Supreme Council of Belgium. The First Degree of the Rite conferred is the 18th and the additional Degrees worked are the 22nd, 26th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, and 33rd. Membership in the Rite is by invitation and the degrees beyond the 18th are controlled by the Supreme Council.

The R.A. Degree has been introduced since the end of World War II. A number of Dutch Masons made a journey to England, where they were exalted into the Royal Arch. They then obtained a Charter for a Chapter to be held in the Hague and have since that time worked in their own country. They use the English method of working and only confer the R.A. Degree in their Chapters.

Neither the Cryptic Rite nor the Order of the Temple operates in the Netherlands.

Netherlands Freemasonry is a great charitable organization. The amount of its charity far exceeds that of many countries with a larger membership. They maintain schools and orphanages for the children and orphans of Freemasons.

—Pennsylvania Freemason.

A great aim is a powerful protection to a youth. It frees him from multitudes of temptations which otherwise would be likely to sweep him into the vice current.

A man with an overmastering purpose is a great elevating, energizing power in a community. People know better than to waste his time or trifle with him. His projectile force shows them that he is in dead earnest, that he has an object in life, and that he proposes to gain it. His face is set like a flint towards his aim. Obstacles melt before such a purpose.

—Orison Swett Marden.

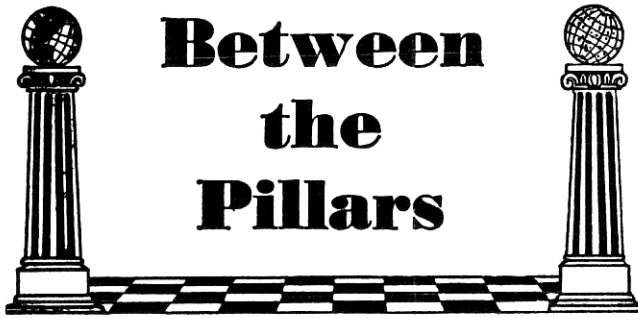
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and yet know when and to whom to turn for help if it is required.

In a world in which men seek to cling together, but are kept apart by shyness and diffidence and fear, he must be the catalyst of together in a brotherly Lodge. This is the Good Secretary, motivated, indeed, by love of the Craft and attachment to the Lodge, and well meriting the esteem and love of his brethren.

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Members of Lodges throughout Alberta can, in many cases, recall the dedicated service of their own Lodge Secretary with the greatest satisfaction and sense of appreciation. Secretaries are much like the rest of us, engaged in business, in farming, in one of the professions, or in industry; they have responsibilities identical with our own, often acting without remuneration. Perhaps the Secretary is the most criticized member of a Lodge simply because he takes initiative in his desire to serve his brethren and actually accomplishes many of those things about which we talk a lot—and about which we do so very little. Three cheers and a tiger for the Good Secretary.



Between the Pillars

THE SHADOWS

Wm. W. Craig in the Empire State Magazine,
New York

It had begun in a strange manner. The brother recalled how he had first received the news that he was to be summoned to The Lodge Beyond the Shadows. At first he had been puzzled—there had been no letter, no telephone call, no visitor. And yet it was so very real—even the instruction to bring only his white leather apron. But where or when or how he was to go remained a mystery. And it had seemed better not to discuss it with his family or friends, because they would not understand.

Time passed as usual for the brother and then suddenly the visitor appeared—human in form, but God-like in spirit. Somehow no one noticed the visitor but the brother. Quickly the visitor beckoned to the brother that they must be on their way. The white leather apron was gathered up and the journey began. Already the shadows had begun to fall away from the brother.

Although the brother was certain that they had travelled a considerable distance, the journey had seemed quickly over. Before them stood the most beautiful structure the brother had ever seen—an edifice whose beauty no earthly cathedral could match. "Behold, Brother, that spiritual house, not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens," said his companion.

Quickly they were received by the kindly Supreme Tiler. The brother's escort bade him good bye, saying that he must now return for another brother—and he assured the brother that all would be well. Now the kindly Tiler pointed to the door of the preparation room. On it there appeared the single word—DEATH.

The brother hesitated. It was not easy to forget the earthly ties. "Perhaps," he said, "I could go back and prepare myself more properly. Then, too, I could tell others the things they must do in order to come here." The Tiler smiled gently but firmly. "No", he said, "you are properly prepared—and they would not listen back there. This is the way the Great Architect of the Universe has ordained. I bid you remember that you have but travelled on the level of time to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns. As your trust was in God in the beginning of your Masonic journey, so let it be now at its consummation.

The brother passed into the preparation room and was received by the kindly Supreme Masters of Ceremony. When the brother had been properly clothed, he was struck by the wonderful atmosphere of the group in which he found himself. There was a rather large number of brothers preparing themselves as he was. As he thought about it, he was certain that every one of them was a true brother, one to another, but he was equally certain that back there they were total strangers, each absorbed in his own thoughts and efforts. At length the brother approached the Masters of Ceremony and spoke of his thoughts. They smiled rather sadly and one said, "This is the miracle that always happens here—men come to know that they are truly brothers. What a pity it is that they cannot know this upon the earth."

Now the brother and his companions were ready for admittance to the Lodge Beyond the Shadows. Once inside, the brothers were awestruck with the beauty of the finished Sanctum Sanctorum. No human could depict its beauty—no earthly hand possessed the skill to have joined in its construction. Now the brothers entered into the degree—not unlike those they had previously taken, but possessed with both truth and beauty never before known.

At length they stood before the Supreme Grand Master and heard the words all good Masons hope at last to hear—"Well done, good and faithful servants, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Now ye are truly joined with me in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Together we shall join in the execution of the designs which I have laid down upon the Heavenly Trestle Board. Grief, pain and tears shall be no more and it shall be as I have spoken for they that wait upon me shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint—from this day forward and forevermore."

Brethren, this has been an humble and sincere attempt to depict the beautiful experience through which our brothers have passed; death is but the curtain between earth and Heaven and is ordained of God; and we, as Masons, trusting in the Almighty, must not look upon it with fear and trembling, or with bitterness that our friends have been taken away. Rather let us be grateful that their lives touched ours for a brief moment and rejoice that they now live in a state of eternal bliss.

Almighty God, our Father, we give Thee thanks that in Thine infinite wisdom Thou hast seen fit to transport our friends and brothers from this earthly scene to the Lodge Beyond the Shadows where they sit at Thy right hand. We pause in remembrance of their lives among us. Our eyes can have no tears, our tongues no word of reproach—for with Thee we know all things are well. Give us the strength and courage to carry on Thy work until at last we can be joined with Thee and them in the great company of Heaven. Amen.