

# Grand Lodge Bulletin

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## WHO COMES ?

### TONGUE OF GOOD REPORT

The individual in today's urban society is often more a stranger to his neighbor in the next apartment than a farmer was fifty years ago to his nearest neighbor who lived several miles away. Writers and sociologists have probed this "faceless" life in the big city, recognizing it as a major problem.

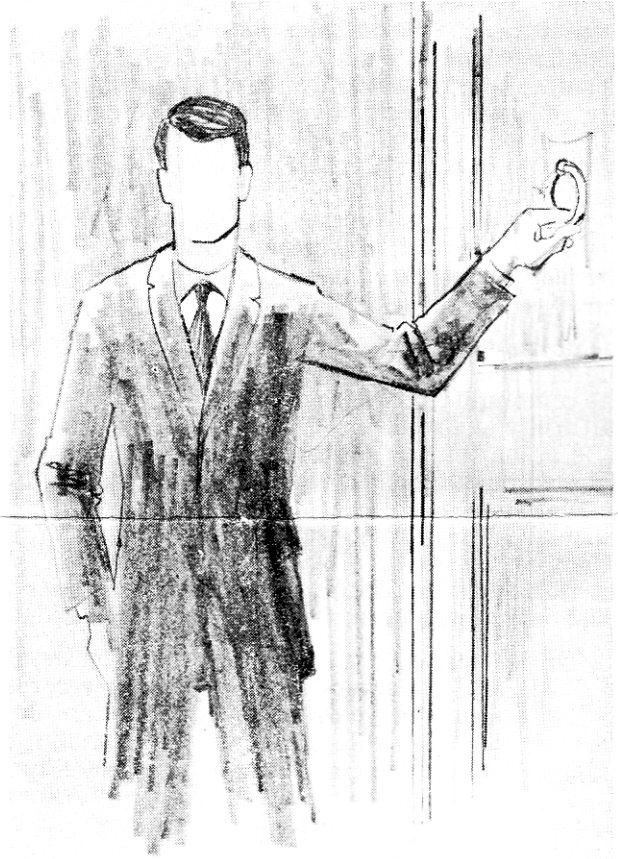
Today, as more and more men seek the Light of Freemasonry and as more and more investigating committees seek to find some real evidence of the character of those knocking at the portals, the Craft must deal with the problem of "faceless" city life. That we have not done so during the past quarter-century accounts for many of today's problems.

In Freemasonry, there is renewed emphasis upon the whole investigative process and the function of the investigating committee, for present conditions makes the investigation a very important responsibility.

Thorough Masonic investigation is an intricate process today, in which an investigator can easily lose himself on trails that simply vanish. We must admit that investigators' reports are often more an admission that nothing outstandingly bad has been found than that something good has been found. Whether such a report fully satisfies the finest traditions of Masonry is open to serious question.

The candidate comes before the Lodge "under the tongue of good report." If this ancient expression is not a Landmark, then it is at least one of the Craft's most venerable practices. Thus, the investigating committee which cannot positively affirm the goodness of a petitioner, yet reports favourably because they have found nothing bad, actually sends the petitioner before the Lodge when no tongue of good report has actually been heard.

Such actions by a committee must stem from the mistaken idea that "something good" and "nothing bad" are the same thing. In other areas that might be true, but it should not be so in the Masonic Fraternity.



The committee often finds that petitioners in the big cities have no real identity as individuals. References know the man in one narrow facet of his life. People who know him in his business probably do not know him socially, do not know his church affiliation or other facets of his life. References often sign to avoid the embarrassment of refusing. References who are related to the petitioner may not be objective.

Information gathered from such references may picture the petitioner to be free of major vices, but it is not enough basis for the committee to recommend the petitioner to the Lodge as a man who comes under the tongue of good report.

When today's investigating committee looks beyond references, it often finds, again, that the  
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## EDITORIAL

Periodically we receive requests from Lodge officers or members throughout the Grand Jurisdiction for the publication of obituary notices of distinguished members of the Fraternity, especially where a major contribution has been made to the welfare of Freemasonry.

It is with the most sincere regret that, in each case, it is necessary to explain that it is not possible to pay the desired, and doubtless well earned tribute, to individual members through the columns of the Bulletin; it will be quite evident, I am sure, that available space in a mere eight columns, could not adequately serve the purpose of suitably acknowledging the passing of an average of some twenty-five members monthly; it will be evident, too, that unless the passing of all members could be properly noted that the way for adverse criticism would be opened for friends and relatives of those who are called to the Grand Lodge above and of whose deaths the Bulletin was not advised.

There can be little question but that there are members who have achieved distinction by virtue of their contribution to the Fraternity or to the community in whose service they have worked faithfully and well for lengthy periods of time and it is a matter for regret that such service cannot well be outlined in each and every case, but to acknowledge the faithful service of one distinguished Mason and to totally overlook that of another, by reason of a lack of information or failure to report the death, would create avenues of dissatisfaction among friends of the deceased.

To the best of my knowledge, only the deaths of Past Grand Masters have ever been recorded in the Bulletin in years gone by and I am sure that our members will agree that the contribution of those who have been selected for leadership of the Craft should in each case be fittingly acknowledged when the individual who has held the office of Grand Master is called upon to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven and the celestial Grand Lodge above.

There are doubtless many others to whom tribute should be paid if it were possible, but to create varying degrees of distinction and acknowledgement of service would be but to invite criticism of the most serious and unenviable degree.

The passing of members calls for the sympathy of us all and while we are quite patently unable to properly acknowledge each individual loss, we can join with Longfellow, when he says:

*"They never quite leave us, the friends who have passed*

*From the shadow of death to the sunlight above;*

*A thousand bright memories are holding them fast  
To the places they blessed with their presence and love."*

—SCH.

### WHO COMES?—Con't. from page 29

petitioner is a part of a faceless mass. His circle of intimates is small and difficult to identify. His neighbors, perhaps, know him only as a man who goes to work in the morning and comes home at night. His pastor may know him only as a name on the church roll. His creditors may know only that he pays his bills.

Under these circumstances, it is not enough for the committee to conclude that the absence of positive evil is as acceptable as the presence of positive good. The preservation and perpetuation of Masonic ideals and traditions is at stake, and nothing in those ideals and traditions makes it mandatory to admit a man simply because he has filed a petition, paid his fee and nothing bad has been found in a superficial investigation of his character.

Masonry cannot compel a non-Mason to lift himself out of the faceless crowd and make a record of positive good for himself. It can and should, however, insist that no Master Mason sign a petition without the sure and certain knowledge that he can speak of the petitioner with an unequivocal tongue of good report. Masonry can and should require a full and detailed investigation of the motives as well as the morals of petitioners. To Masonry, motives of ambition or curiosity are reprehensible.

Stringent precautions are necessary today if we are to have any assurance that the candidate truly comes under the tongue of good report.

—Adapted from an article by L. L. Walker Jr.  
in the Texas Freemason.

### CHAIN LETTERS

Recently in the Grand Jurisdiction of Alberta there has been a flood of so-called 'chain letters' purporting to bring varying amounts of money to all who co-operate in the distribution of such nonsensical communications.

The Bulletin desires to point out that the furtherance of such schemes is altogether un-Masonic in principle and also doubtless in conflict with the laws of the Province.

The present distribution of such letters is apparently quite widespread, one of them having recently been forwarded to the Bulletin by a Brother residing in Pennsylvania, although still a member of a Calgary Lodge; he has protested the use of such letters by members of the Craft, signed, as it presumably was, by members of the Order.

The distribution of chain letters is a useless and time consuming practice, can serve no useful purpose whatever and we are sure that members, inclined to promote their distribution would, after due consideration, agree that the proper place for such trash is the waste basket.

It is hoped that, at least insofar as the fraternity is concerned, we shall have seen the last of the chain letter and that, immediately on receipt of such letters they may be destroyed and the practice eliminated.

## WITHIN THE CRAFT IN ALBERTA

### Camrose Lodge Honours Member

The members of Camrose Lodge, together with more than twenty members of Bashaw Lodge, in attendance on a specially arranged visit, joined in paying tribute to W. Bro. Carl Johnson recently, by presenting him with a Past Master's Jewel following his year of fine service to the Lodge in his capacity as Worshipful Master. Making the event of more than usual interest was the fact that the jewel presented was the same one which had been presented to the father of the recipient, the late V. W. Bro. Jas. T. Johnson, who, himself, had a distinguished career in Freemasonry in the Camrose area.

The services of V. W. Bro. Jas. T. Johnson, W. Bro. Carl Johnson and a brother, W. Bro. R. V. Johnson, were outlined in an effective manner by V. W. Bro. A. E. Webb as he made the presentation of the twice presented and historic jewel. The tradition established by the three Johnsons in Camrose Lodge is one of which the membership has every reason to be proud.

During the evening W. Bro. T. E. Young was installed in the office of Worshipful Master for the coming year and his fellow officers were invested with the jewels of their respective offices.

## Edmonton Group Elects

The Masters, Wardens and Deacons Association of the Edmonton Lodges recently named their officers for the ensuing year in the persons of;

President, W. Bro. J. Moir  
 1st Vice-Pres., W. Bro. G. Harris  
 2nd Vice-Pres., W. Bro. Muir Jamie  
 Sec.-Treas., Bro. J. A. Lawrence  
 Auditor, W. Bro. G. Bremness

The Association has requested the Bulletin to again advise Brethren throughout the Province of their willingness to visit and assist any Brother who might find it necessary to be in Edmonton for medical treatment.

It is suggested that in such cases Secretary, Bro. J. A. Lawrence of 6411 - 103 Avenue, Edmonton be advised, so that visits may be arranged.

The Association has established an enviable record of service to Masons undergoing treatment in various hospitals. It is evident that assistance cannot be given unless the Association is appraised of the presence of Brethren in hospitals and advice should be sent to the Secretary at as early a date as possible so that the maximum benefit may accrue to the ill Brother. There is a most enthusiastic desire on the part of all members of the Association to be of service to their fellow members and those who have enjoyed assistance have been loud in their praise of the effort.

## A BETTER SERMON

*I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day,  
 I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way,  
 The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear;  
 Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear;  
 And the best of all the preachers are men who live their creeds,  
 For to see the good in action is what everybody needs.  
 I can soon learn how to do it if you'll let me see it done,  
 I can watch your hand in action, but your tongue too fast may run.  
 And the lectures you deliver may be very wise and true;  
 But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do,  
 For I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give,  
 But there's no misunderstanding how you act . . . and how you live.*

—Harold T. Johnson

## LEARNING TO LIVE

*Courtesy of the Masonic Press*

All of us repine at times and wish that things were otherwise than as they are. We wish we had more money, a different home, more congenial work, or that a particularly heavy load might be lifted from our shoulders. Sometimes it is an irritation, sometimes an enduring sadness, but none of us can hope to be altogether content all of the time. And yet we know, as all who have come through adolescence to manhood have discovered, that the mere alteration of circumstances cannot very greatly affect our happiness. Truisms, trite sayings, often simply provoke impatience, but that is for the reason that man perversely tries to refuse a truth which, for the moment, is unpalatable.

To kick against the pricks is an unrewarding exertion. It expends energy, releases pent-up temper for a brief period, but affords no lasting relief. It has probably less value even than an attitude of fatalism.

If things go ill there are positive ways of dealing with them. There are few situations which cannot be made better by dint of taking thought and action of an appropriate means. If this is of no avail or of too little avail, there remains what we might call the subjective approach. Be the evil what it may, it can only conquer us if we allow it to do so. Instead of letting it become a dominating cloud over all our thoughts and actions, we can sometimes regard it as a means to an end, an opportunity for testing our strength, even something that can be turned to good account.

It is written of any army of mercenaries, "Their shoulders held the sky suspended." In the Craft, the celestail canopy of Heaven is supported by three great pillars, they are called Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. Wisdom is to conduct us in all our undertakings; Strength to support us under all our difficulties, and Beauty to adorn the inward man. In the Craft and its teachings we may find the Wisdom to analyze our attitudes, the Strength to deal with them, and the reward of Beauty in a better and happier character, endowed with further Wisdom and Strength from the experience. It is not only the evil things that swirl around in vicious spirals; good can be cumulative too, and character can progress, victory by victory, moving always towards the ultimate — if unattainable — perfection.

The Craft is of little use to us if it does not make us happy, not simply individually, but by brotherly affection and action, as we unite in the grand design. The Lodge is a haven in which we forget the trials and cares of the outside world, perhaps as much as in any other place, a haven where there is no distinction of wealth or position, except the kindly sway of the Master and his

Wardens. The Lodge is a place where we go to play, reenacting ancient happenings, like the players in a commemorative drama; and we do it with light hearts and in happiness, although the events we commemorate are of the most awful significance, and not to be regarded lightly. The happiness comes from the attitude. He, for instance, who contemplates death unaided, as Ajax faced the lightning, is indeed alone, but the Freemason who relies upon aid, and especially aid which we describe in that noble charge, the Light of a Master Mason, may look in death's face without fear, with a light heart and with supreme confidence. The old ethical conception of the good life, the newer religious idea of a benevolent God, have their common meeting ground in the Third Degree of Freemasonry.

It is an historical fact which those of us who have lived through brief periods of apparent equilibrium sometimes forget, that this is the normal state of the world. Security is not a thing mankind has been able to command at all times or even most of the time. We are no worse off than our forbears, but if we choose to do so we can imagine that we are actually worse off.

Today, we live in a period of rush and bustle, the mechanized age of speed and noise. Resting quietly at home we do not have the peace, the leisure for meditation and reflection that men in other times have used to advantage. We have, to some extent, lost the ability to meditate, and without meditation it is hard to arrive at conclusions. We must have some faith and beliefs, whether the simple faith which leads us to the second step, Hope, and so to a comprehension of that Charity which the world so lacks today. If we have no faith, no beliefs, only uncertainty, then the Leveller of all human greatness will be, for us, the grim reaper indeed, and the act of death will be a painful one, the hope of life a small one.

Whatever our religious and ethical conclusions may amount to, we must have them, and the leads provided by Freemasonry, allied to the brotherly aid which the Craft affords, can help us a great deal to live well — and to die well.

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## GERMANY WITHDRAWS RECOGNITION

At its recent meeting held in Bremen the United Grand Lodges of Germany "suspended" fraternal relations with the Grand Lodge of France, but decided to keep such relations with the National Grand Lodge of France. It also "suspended" fraternal relations with Italian Freemasonry "until further developments". It was recommended that fraternal relations be established with the new Grand Lodge of Belgium, but that recognition will have to await the "necessary inquiries".

Masonic Service Association of the United States.