



# Grand Lodge Bulletin

## *The Badge of a Mason*



Fig. 1

1. APRON OF ABOUT 1735

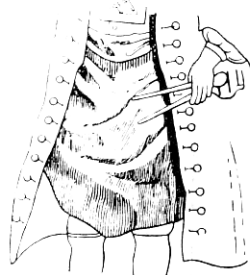


Fig. 2

2. APRON OF ABOUT 1731



Fig. 3

3. APRON OF ABOUT 1762 (long leather)



Fig. 4

4. APRON OF ABOUT 1738

### WEARING OF APRON OLD GUILD CUSTOM IN EARLY ENGLAND

In Vol. 6 of his well-known, ten-volume history of the City of London, Sir Walter Besant points out that not only in the headquarters of the Guild, but in the street, the craftsman of the eighteenth century wore distinctive clothing by which his trade was recognized.

Thus he says: "The carpenter wore a wide apron looped up at the side—there was a fashion in wearing aprons—and a brown paper cap neatly folded in shape; the shoemaker wore a short leather apron, and the blacksmith wore a long leather apron; the fellowship porter, a black hat with a long brim behind; the barber, a white apron with pockets in front to hold the tackle. Besides, he carried a

basin in his hand, and generally ran through the streets in his character of "the flying barber".

The butcher wore a blue coat and apron; the baker was all in white, including his cap; the waterman wore a sailor's kilt, or petticoat, and a woollen jersey; the tapster was in short sleeves rolled up, with a white apron the corner tucked into the waistband; the brewer's drayman wore a leather apron and a red cap; the printer, a stiff apron from head to foot; the shopmen, except those of the draper, all wore aprons. The servants and craftsman, it belonged in varied form to every trade."

—*Masonic Record, England.*

## SOME PLATONIC PARALLELS IN MASONRY

By Wor. Bro. Robert E. Junther

COMMERCIAL LODGE No. 81

(The Second in a series of Research Papers written for the Bulletin)

When examining our philosophies of life—or of Freemasonry—we do well (or at least we think we do) to research the thought processes and findings of the great thinkers of antiquity. It may be well that, at times, we would find it hard to apply certain criteria of knowledge developed around 400 B.C. to situations occurring during our twentieth century while at other times we cannot fail to recognize the undiminished applicability of eternal truths. It is well known that Asia Minor and ancient Greece have produced thinkers of unparalleled genius and, more importantly, of the capability of providing the millenia to follow with more than just "food for thought."

"In this paper, an attempt shall be made at searching for similarities between PLATO'S work and MASONIC usage, mainly because it may be safely assumed that most of our readers have at least a nodding acquaintance with that particular Greek philosopher. The reader will understand that due to the space limitations imposed by a publication such as our Bulletin, we will only be able to scratch the surface; therefore, the writer would welcome what would amount to an "innovation": letters to the Editor, adding readers' thoughts or expressing disagreement, as the case may be, but in any event stimulating further thought.

Plato is believed to have been born in 427 B.C., and it is known that he died in 347 B.C. As a youth he had come under the influence of Socrates who was twenty years his senior. Following the execution of Socrates and twelve years travels in Greece, Italy and Sicily, he founded his school of mathematics and philosophy known as the "Academy," and made it the intellectual centre of Greece. Most of Plato's works were in the form of dialogues, twenty-five of which have been preserved for posterity. Unlike Plato's works, there is no such record of the teachings of his mentor Socrates, simply because Socrates had not written them down, and again we owe our knowledge of these to Plato who had done it for him. In fact, after Socrates had died in the cause of philosophy and clean living, Plato had turned his dramatic abilities to that cause, creating dialogues in imitation of his master's method of inquiry of asking questions rather than of supplying answers.

In a number of his works, Plato has Socrates inquire about definitions of virtues, such as courage and self-control. By precise questioning it is found that no agreement can be reached, and the dialogues end with the question under consideration unanswered. Does this not sound unsatisfactory? To the impatient observer it may seem that Socrates is getting nowhere, and that he may be the wrong person to ask. At least this is so if one thinks that people do know the subjects they commonly talk about, or that the way to find out is to ask those who are said to be knowledgeable. (Any similarities here with seasoned and/or titled Masons?—this writer not excluded). This is what Socrates found out: that most people do not really know what they think they know, that opinions can be countered by other opinions, and that about no single opinion is there total agreement that it constitutes knowledge. A humbling thought, not unworthy of any man, not unworthy of a Mason.

Yet, Socrates is learning something. He learns that common-sense opinions about certain subjects will not hold up under careful scrutiny. Therefore, he must look elsewhere, and learns to guard against deceiving others as well as himself. So by inquiry, and further inquiry, Socrates finds that the question needs to be asked: "what is virtue in itself"—not what the separate virtues are, but what virtue is in and by itself. What do we mean, in Masonic terminology, when we speak of " . . . the purest principles of piety and virtue?" At one point we mention briefly the four Cardinal Virtues, temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice, at other times, in our rituals, we reflect on other virtues, but at no other time are we admonished to treat them in isolation or put them into some rank order than quoting the apostolic triad "Faith, Hope and Charity", of which Paul says, ". . . the greatest

of these is Charity." On the whole, our teachings direct us to the "principle", or "idea", of VIRTUE, in the Socratic sense: the Form of the Good, or Goodness itself.

Thus, to come to know the Form of Goodness is the ultimate objective of the philosopher as of the Mason. This is why we require education—we call it the making of Masons while Plato maintained that "good men are made, not born". We find the raw material in the petitioner: good men in the ordinary sense of the word are found worthy to be made better, i.e., to be taught to recognize and internalize the principles or Forms, which are eternal, changeless, timeless, and spaceless. Plato himself was unable to define the Form of Goodness. Words could not explain its nature, therefore, he turned to images, myths and allegories, to figurative representations of what he sought to explain. Is it merely coincidence that Freemasonry makes such extensive use of allegories as the vehicles to convey truths? Fairy-tales are not exclusively for children, they place greater strain on the intellect of the recipient of teachings so imparted than concrete examples in everyday language. Indeed, many of us readily admit that only by repeated exposure to ritualistic work, by increased "reading between the lines", can we obtain gradually more understanding of the messages of Masonry.

Under the influence of Socrates, Plato's thought was chiefly bent on the question how society could be reshaped so that man might realize the best that is in him. This is, above all else, the theme of his central work, the "Republic". His ideas of creating an ideal state in which goodness permeates the lives of all, have remained Utopia to this day, and yet, if we feel we have a mission to perform to guide society toward the ultimate of decency and right living, we simply must not disregard the thoughts of this great philosopher even though he lived 2500 years before our time. As he had to contend with government thriving on the three most powerful motives, ambition, fear and interest, so we feel prompted by the lofty ideals of Masonry to put things right.

The three estates of citizens in Plato's imaginary Republic were the Guardians (rulers), the Auxiliaries (civil service types and military), and the Craftsmen (producers of food, clothing, shelter and, probably, the arts and sciences). Their characteristics were those of Wisdom (Guardians), of Courage or perseverance (auxiliaries), and of Temperance or harmonious agreement (craftsmen). They all were subject to the common virtue of Justice, justice in the state as well as justice in the individual. Therefore, the knowledge of what is good for each of the three elements in the state, and for all of them in common, constitutes Wisdom. All of this calls for a high degree of self-discipline, so that the individual may be in constant command over his baser appetites or, in other words, over the pursuit of worldly gain and common pleasures. If we then speak of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty (the latter to be understood as harmony and co-operation), we come astonishingly close to Plato's concepts.

Let us repeat that Masonry strives to make men better, for their own good as for the benefit of all humanity. The duties we owe to God, to our country, to our neighbour, and to ourselves mean just that; the human race will never see the end of troubles until political power is entrusted to the lovers of Wisdom, who do not care for honours but only for the Right and the honours to be gained from that, and above all for Justice as "the one indispensable thing in whose service and maintenance he will reorganize his own state." How can the state be so ordered as to place effective control in the hands of men who understand that one cannot make either an individual or a society happy by making them richer or more powerful than their neighbours? So long as knowledge is misused to gain power, and power to obtain wealth, ambitious men and profiteers will grasp the helm of the ship as they have done in every age. The teachings of our Craft can equip us to become "Guardians" if only we make them our own or, in more modern terms, will make us better leaders in the

community of men—provided that we can successfully overcome the greatest enemy of the human race: selfishness!

It may be well that Plato did not have all the answers, or that we disagree with some of his solutions, even when transposed into terms appropriate to modern conditions; but if we seriously ask ourselves why we disagree and what alternatives we

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**WHAT DOES THE PHRASE "WITHIN THE LENGTH OF MY CABLETOW" MEAN?**

By Wor. Bro. W. A. RATTRAY P.M.

The word 'cabletow' is purely Masonic and not heard of in general use outside of the Lodge room.

In Mediaeval days the cabletow or rope noose was worn when taking an obligation, as a symbol of submission, inferring that it could be used to inflict the penalty if a breach of that contract was committed.

In speculative Masonry it is symbolic of our obligations and teaches restraint, self-discipline, prudence, temperance, etc.

Elsewhere in the ritual 'cable's length' is mentioned. The term cable's length' is a measure of length used at sea defined as being 200 yards.

A ship's cable can vary according to prevailing conditions of sea, wind, size of ship, weight of vessel to be towed and the length is given as 100, 120, 130 fathoms.

The trade guilds of the middle ages were leaders of social life and they drew up forms of apprenticeship and laws to protect their crafts and skills. They assisted the needy, sick and aged, and generally promoted goodwill and fellowship and encouraged church attendance.

Our Freemasonry of today has a strong resemblance to those guilds, and has made symbolic adaptation of their trade customs and skills for moral instruction, and in some respects, there is a close relation to the wording of their apprenticeship obligations.

Indentures of Apprenticeship which no doubt some present will possess have a clause giving the apprentice the right to cancel his Indenture should his employer go out of business and cannot place him with another employer within a distance of three miles in some, in others five miles.

According to ancient laws of Freemasonry every brother must attend his Lodge if he be within the length of his cabletow.

Old writers define the length of a cable length as three miles, others five to fifty miles.

Three miles was generally recognized as a reasonable walking distance.

The M.M. promises to obey all signs and summons sent to him if within the length of my

It might be premised by stating that the general impression, among many Masons, this ceremony is

uninteresting and less dramatically impressive than the previous ceremonial is erroneous; this false con-

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**THE SECOND INITIATION CEREMONY OF PASSING**

(From The Key of Masonic Initiation — By P. T. BURTON)

can propose, then this effort will help us to clear our own minds and Plato's purpose will then be achieved, at least in part, for he never forgot the great lesson of Socrates, that WISDOM BEGINS WHEN A MAN FINDS OUT THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW.

WHAT HE THINKS HE KNOWS.

When we take the full sentence the word 'My'

in this phrase is very important. It is personal, it represents the individual. So the length of each of our cabletows can vary according to each of our own personal commitments — sickness of self or family, work obligations, transport problems.

It is doubtful that in speculative Masonry that the cabletow was ever intended to have any physical length but purely as a means of impressing the individual Mason that he was committed to fulfill his obligation to his Lodge and the Brethren, in regard to his attendance, to the utmost of his ability and not let trivial things prevent him from discharging his responsibility.

The compilers of our ritual were men who saw that it was only by attendance at our Lodge that we as M.M.'s can be instructed in the spiritual and symbolic teaching of our Craft, a fuller realization of the Fatherhood of God and the universal Brotherhood of man, a greater understanding of the principles of Brotherly love, relief and truth. By emulating the virtues displayed in the F.P.O.F., we will find that although our duties and obligations have increased, that which was once a tie has now no longer length or distance lost in the satisfying reward of love, peace and harmony in fraternal nearness and fellowship.

Symbolically the length of the cabletow is the scope of a Mason's responsibility to God, his Neighbor and himself in the light of his ability to discharge that obligation.

This is summed up briefly in the words of an American Brother.

"It is as long as the arm that stretches out a helping hand.

It reaches as far as a Brother's cheering voice.

It goes as far as charity's dollar can go.

It can travel as far as goodwill can travel.

Wherever the mails can carry a letter, it can be carried."

The length of a M.M.'s cabletow is precisely equal to the extent of his influences.

ception arises from the ceremonial being "looked at" and not "through the veil of allegory enshrining it."

Whereas the ceremony of Initiation confines itself to the re-ordering of life and conduct and the laying of a foundation upon which to erect a superstructure this ceremonial directs one to develop intellectual growth in the Royal Art and Science of Cosmic Geometry in order that the higher nature of the mind and imagination may evolve in those taking upward steps when exploring the "upper story" of their being.

Symbolically this degree may be considered to be a half-way house between the senses and spirit, a transitional stage between aspiration and perfection (*i.e.*, mastership).

The pilgrimage now becomes an ascent that has to be made by way of the winding stairway—a road that must be climbed by all aspirants, while, at times, the effort may seem arduous and the way darkened, yet glimpses of light will be met with on the way and views obtained of that which is being

cast off and left behind as one mounts higher and higher and approaches the upper chamber wherein one will be able, in silence and meditation, to contemplate those hidden spiritual mysteries of nature and Science. After attaining efficiency and perfecting oneself in those spiritual sciences of the Grand Geometrician and being proved to be a true die square then will one be truly passed and permitted to enter the final stage of the journey which leads unto the Throne of God Himself, symbolised by the "G" in the centre. The intent and spiritual significance of this rite is clearly indicated in many ways—for example the Ear of Corn by the living waters—the perfect ashlar—the penalty which reminds one that it is the heart or mind that must be guarded against alien wills and matters that would defile the soul seeking union with the G.G.O.T.U.

May this "half-way house" enable the seeker to regain and develop his intellectual and spiritual qualities and continue his pilgrimage refreshed.

### CENTRAL MASONIC TEMPLE, EDMONTON

The central Masonic Temple Company Limited are doing an audit on its share issue. These certificates were issued originally in the name of a Mason and his Lodge. Many have gone missing over the years and we wish to update our register, we would be pleased to hear from anyone who holds a certificate but has not been getting an annual notice.

Any Mason who knows where a certificate is being held by a widow, an estate, or brother who at the present time is not in good standing with his Lodge, we would be pleased to obtain any information which would assist us to update our records.

Many Lodges have had shares turned over to them that have not been properly transferred by the Central Masonic Temple Company Limited. It is suggested the secretaries check their safety deposit box or files and contact our office at:

10318 - 100 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta,  
so we may properly transfer these certificates.

### WORKSHOP—GRAND LODGE

As this edition of the Bulletin is being edited for printing over 600 Masons are making their way to the Banff Centre to attend the Tenth Annual Masonic Spring Workshop. The Spring Workshop continues to attract a large number of Masons eager to discuss matters concerning the Craft. The Banff Centre is not large enough to accommodate all those registered and a number were assigned to motels in the town of Banff.

While the attendance at the Workshop is very gratifying to those who work faithfully to make it relevant, Masons should not forget that attendance at Grand Lodge is equally important. Registration for Grand Lodge will commence in the foyer of the Calgary Inn at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, June 20th. The Grand Master, Most Worshipful Bro. G. R. Sterling anticipates that all Lodges in the Jurisdiction will be represented by at least the Worshipful Master and his Wardens. Master Masons will be welcomed. There are several important amendments to the Constitution that will be discussed. Lodge Secretaries have the notice calling Grand Lodge and should read it at the Regular Meeting of the Lodge.

### WETASKIWIN LODGE No. 15

The play "A Rose Upon The Altar" continues to be popular with a number of Lodges. Wetaskiwin Lodge No. 15 visited Forestburg Lodge No. 128 recently when that Lodge held a Ladies Night and presented the play.

### KING HIRAM LODGE No. 21

District No. 18 held its annual District Church Parade in May at Carstairs United Church. Our Past Grand Chaplain, V.W. Bro. Archdeacon C. C. Swanson was the guest speaker. The Shrine Choir assisted with the Music. The service was followed by a fellowship hour.

### UNITY LODGE No. 51

Unity Lodge No. 51 marked its Sixty-Fifth Anniversary in May. It was designated as Old Timers' Night. A number of long time members of the Lodge were singled out for special honours and a very enjoyable program was arranged.

### VICTORIA LODGE No. 13

Victoria Lodge No. 13, Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta celebrated its Seventy-Fifth Anniversary in May. A large number of out of town members returned to be with their Brethren on this memorable occasion.

### ACACIA LODGE No. 11

Rt. Wor. Bro. Dan McAllister and Wor. Bro. E. L. Brooks were presented with Fifty Year Jewels by Acacia Lodge at their Emergent Meeting in April. Bro. McAllister is not only a faithful member of Acacia Lodge but he is widely known in this Jurisdiction for his practice of visiting at Lodge meetings and attendance at Grand Lodge functions.

### Thought for the Month

Let me be a little meeker  
With a Brother who is weaker  
Let me think more of my neighbor  
And a little less of me.