



GRAND LODGE BULLETIN

"Who Are You Fellows, and What Do You Do?"

AT Grand Lodge one of our District Deputy Grand Masters reported that he had been asked by a rather callow young man the question: "Who are you fellows, and what do you do?" and had been somewhat at a loss how to answer.

In the discussion which followed, one debater suggested that the best answer, given as kindly as possible should be, "It's none of your business." In the minds of many who heard the discussion this seemed the appropriate answer, but we are not so sure. In the present case the question may have been put in that flippant, offhand manner characteristic of modern youth, but it is a common question asked by intelligent people in less brusque language, and one which we believe we should be at some pains to answer.

It is forced upon us every day that we live in an age of merciless publicity, and that modern youth has been trained to believe that "hiding one's light under a bushel" indicates something queer or of little account, and that the value of reticence is not quite as apparent to the present generation as perhaps it was in ours.

The very nature of our Institution precludes publicity of the kind the young man understands, and accepts. No secret society could survive under the fierce white light, but it seems to us we have far stronger publicity in silence, provided—and this is the important thing—that Freemasons, without labelling their individual conduct, so exemplify the teachings of the Craft that insofar as faith and works are concerned it will silently and subtly advertise itself!

Consider what the average young man sees, hears, and reads every day. Of service clubs, of groups, of study clubs, of organizations for the promotion of this, that and the other, the name is legion. These things are blatantly apparent and by advertisement and propaganda are apparently full of good works. But the good works of service clubs are promoted by the generosity of the public, the groups and study clubs are special pleaders, and in the last analysis every organization has as its object bending public opinion to its special way of thinking.

Freemasonry on the other hand has no public axe to grind, but encourages its devotees to act honorably, live tolerantly and practise charity in every walk of life and in every order of society.

To these devotees and within its own ranks it teaches all that is contained in the one word Brotherhood.

But we may expect the present question in many forms and that it is being asked is evidenced by the comment of Grand Lodge officers in other jurisdictions. M. W. Bro. George C. Derby, Grand Master of British Columbia in 1936-37, answering it to Masons, said: "To those I have endeavored to point out that the Fundamental Principles of Freemasonry are just as necessary to-day as ever, and that it is not any change in Freemasonry that is needed, but Freemasons need to lay greater stress on and practise more in their daily lives those great principles which distinguish our beloved Order from other Societies or Orders."

In an "afterword" to the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Iowa for 1937, Past Grand Master Ernest R. Moore, answers the question in part as follows: "As yet we answer, 'What is Masonry?' but to say that it is a great and active force in our social life that seeks to accomplish in accord with its moral code and to do that which will make for social justice and equity. . . ."

"The good Mason must be a good citizen. To be good citizens, with fair and friendly minds, eager to help in the establishment of that equity and justice . . . should be good Masonry. The field for us is here—all about us. The duty is ours and is clear as sunlight. As an organization we cannot act. The responsibility is individual. As individuals, knowing our traditions and the examples set for us, with minds alert and conscience active we should do our duty. That duty manfully and courageously done will answer the question."

So it seems the grand answer to our District Deputy's questioner will be in proving our individual faith by our individual works. Were Freemasonry as real to us as it was to our forefathers, were we more concerned with bending our lives and actions to its precepts, and less to bending its ancient morality to every effervescence of the passing day, there would be less or no need for any such question. To categorical inquirers we can take pains to answer in the simple story of our origins and traditions, but the real answer must remain as it has always been in the personal and individual character of the Freemason himself.

A.M.M.

THE GREAT TRANSITION

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THAT the origin of Freemasonry is lost in antiquity, is unquestioned as to operative Masonry, but historians have searched the records and thrown great light upon the subject of origins. It is well established that Freemasonry, like other human institutions, has a story of development from simpler forms. As in other cases, such development was not even and regular, but included some long periods with slow progress, other short periods with rapid progress, corresponding to environment and internal efforts for adjustment to that.

It is the purpose to review here one of those periods of rapid progress, probably the most interesting and inspiring of all, during which the transition from operative to speculative Masonry occurred in about fifteen years.

The existence of guilds of Masons can be traced from about the time of the Crusades in England and Scotland, where they developed peculiar organizations and customs. During that time they had no apparent connection with somewhat similar guilds on continental Europe, where speculative Masonry failed to develop.

They were not common Masons erecting the ordinary brick and stone buildings of town and countryside, though sometimes reduced to such work by lack of employment for their higher skill. They were the builders who translated the designs of eminent architects into splendid cathedrals and other fine edifices that adorn England and Scotland, still inspiring admiration for the artisans. They generally lived in a "lodge" at the site of their work in early times, and adopted that name for their guild. They also developed secret means of recognition which enabled them to travel from one operation to another and be accepted in the lodge, thus becoming known as "Free Masons" and "Accepted Masons."

When the Civil War opened in 1642, the erection of fine buildings practically ceased in England for some twenty years. Freemasons were reduced to the commonest work and their Lodges suffered accordingly. A revival of such building in London followed the Great Fire in 1666 and the erection of St. Paul's Cathedral commenced in 1675. During the thirty-five years of employment on this Cathedral, operative Freemasonry reached its highest attainments.

That vast and magnificent structure was many times larger than Solomon's Temple and the finest artisans were assembled for its construction under the great architect, Christopher Wren. London was not merely the centre of English life and literature but a great cosmopolitan city with ships sailing to all parts of the world. In that environment for many years the ablest operative Freemasons worked in close association with scientists and scholars, giving every opportunity for improvement and advancement. The use of working tools as symbols to imprint upon the mind wise and serious truths

was progressing and this was the germ of speculative Masonry.

Like other guilds in London, the Freemasons had frequently admitted prominent gentlemen as honorary or non-operative members. Such members increased in numbers and influence in the four London Lodges after the Cathedral was completed and the workmen drifted away. Among this class of members were some able scholars who not only appreciated the symbolism and fraternalism developed by operative Freemasons, but recognized serious needs of their times that the organization might supply. We cannot properly understand or appreciate the transition to speculative Masonry without considering the stimulation from those outer needs.

England and Scotland had been rent by sectarian strife for two hundred years, the blood of their people shed in religious wars at home and abroad, their eminent men persecuted, many executed, for mere theological opinions. The Toleration Act of 1689 did not approach religious liberty and its repeal was continually threatened. Those not members of the Established Church were called "dissenters" or "non-conformists," were denied any share in the government and subjected to severe legal discriminations. Among these were Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, Roman Catholics and Jews, but the Presbyterians were the state church in Scotland.

To a large extent, religion had become a matter of politics among the governing classes, whose notorious dishonesty and licentiousness corrupted government and society. Their leaders were caricatured on the stage as pick-pockets or highwaymen, and the public applauded. Such leaders treated sectarian organizations and strife like pieces in a game of chess. When St. Paul's Cathedral was completed, the country was seething with sectarian conspiracies to control the royal succession after Queen Anne. When that was settled in 1713, conspiracies continued to restore the Stuart Pretender with Roman Catholicism as the state religion.

It is difficult for us to understand the religious spirit and disposition of that age. Most men held the conception of a revealed and authoritative religion, hence that there could be only one true religion which should be binding on all men and established as the state church. The principal sects struggled for supremacy in order to impose their views upon others and control the state church with vast properties and revenues.

Many thoughtful men in all these sects recognized and deplored such evils, but they lacked influence in government and were kept at a perpetual distance by sectarian strife. Among these were the Deists, not a sect but a philosophical school, whose writers had recently attracted much attention among scholars. While they usually retained formal church connections to hold their civil rights, they exercised complete intellectual freedom and demanded religious liberty for all, as a matter of right.

They held with Socrates and Plato that reason is the most exalted attribute of men by which they should ever be guided. They analyzed the con-

flicting sectarian claims of religious authority and rejected them on rational grounds, as being matters of opinion on which honest men could and did disagree, therefore binding only upon those who accepted them. They vigorously contended that no sect or government had any right to dictate what men must believe. They also insisted on the freedom of science, already in conflict with theology. Deists recognized the existence of a Supreme Architect of the Universe, rationally reducing from Nature the existence of a Creator, hence their name.

Scholarly members in the London lodges were familiar with all the conditions and controversies of their day. Some of them saw the possibilities of Freemasonry in uniting good men and true of various religions and occupations, to promote religious and civil liberty. Organizing a new society for such purposes would have been dangerous and of doubtful success, while there was Freemasonry, an ancient and honorable society whose fine symbolism could be extended indefinitely. Its last great work in operative Masonry was completed and unless it moved on to nobler things, it must relapse to an ordinary guild of artisans.

It is very improbable that such men had in mind from the first the complete structure of speculative Masonry or the detailed steps of the transition, but they took some steps and drew into the order more men of their kind. Needs and motives guided them aright from step to step until the structure and transition were completed.

Antiquity was important in a time when most men believed that the ancients were the possessors of all wisdom and it served as a convenient screen from hostile attention, so each step in the transition was referred to as a "revival." That convenient term later mystified Masons with others until historians delved in the records after concealment ceased to be important. We cannot trace the detailed steps, even now, but the records show change and progress with here and there an important step, like the organization of the Grand Lodge of 1717, and the revised Constitution and Charges of 1723.

Records of Lodges prior to this time, show the primary concern was operative Masonry and the affairs of artisans, nothing of ritualistic degrees or speculative Masonry as we know them. Then operative Masonry declined in importance in London as more and more non-operative members were admitted, while speculative Masonry developed rapidly. There were extensive additions and enrichment of ritual in accordance with the great change in purpose which was clearly revealed at the close of the transition period. That ritual was the work of scholars, splendid in diction and imagery, much of it unsurpassed in any literature.

There was far more than ritual involved, for when Freemasonry emerged from that transition it had taken its stand with the most eminent scholars and scientists of the age, far in advance of contemporary mass thinking. The primary concern was no longer with the affairs of artisans, but with ethics and philosophy on which important positions were taken, these among others:

It maintained the dignity and rights of men and asserted their equality, except as ability and in-

tegrity entitled them to preferment but increased their obligations.

It set high standards of morality, independent of sectarian authority.

It espoused the sciences, in spite of sharp conflicts with prevailing theology.

It practiced adult education, urging its initiates to improve their minds by useful studies and think for themselves.

It taught freedom of conscience and broad tolerance in religious matters.

It conformed to such teachings by ceasing to be a sectarian or Christian order and by uniting in fraternal bonds men of all sects and religious opinions.

The last made possible the universality of Freemasonry and excluded sectarian controversy. It is splendidly explained and justified as an *expedient change* in the opening paragraph of the Charges of 1723:

"A Mason is obliged by his tenure to obey the moral law and if he really understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine. But though in ancient times Masons were charged in every country to obey the religion of that country or nation whatever it was, yet it is *now thought more expedient* only to obligate them to that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves; that is, to be good men and true, or men of honor and honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasions they may be distinguished, whereby Masonry becomes the centre of union and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance."

It did not advocate any political or social reforms, though its principles led logically and inevitably to civil and religious liberty. The leaders in this movement had the wisdom to understand that men trained in such principles would attend to their proper application, also that "before men should be made free, they should first be made fit to be free."

Freemasons should revere the leaders in that marvelous transition from operative to speculative Masonry. The legend of the Three Grand Masters might well remind us of three such leaders.

John Desaguliers, Grand Master in 1719, was probably the leading spirit. A French Huguenot refugee as a boy, he had suffered from religious persecution. He became an Oxford Doctor of Laws and Clergyman of the Church of England. He was also a distinguished author and scientist, friend of Isaac Newton and member of the Royal Society (scientific).

George Payne, English gentleman, philosopher and antiquarian, was Grand Master twice, 1718 and 1720, an active and zealous worker throughout the transition period.

James Anderson, Grand Warden, then Grand Secretary for years, was Scotch, a Presbyterian Minister, Doctor of Divinity and classical scholar. To his scholarship and writing is attributed much of the correlation of the old and new in operative and speculative Masonry.

It seems appropriate at this particular time to

heed the counsel of Isaiah to his people in time of trouble:

"Look to the rock whence ye are hewn, the hole of the pit whence ye are digged."

Thoughtful consideration of the times and accomplishments of the transition period should renew our zeal and appreciation for speculative Masonry, while a glance at the outer world must convince us that it is as much needed now as two hundred years ago.

In many countries religious liberty is gone or sadly impaired, while the dignity and rights of men have been sacrificed to make them mere creatures existing for the state. One of the first steps in that course in such countries, has been the proscribing of Freemasonry. On the other hand, wherever Freemasonry flourishes, political and religious liberty are yet secure.

But we cannot rest in that security while half the world champions political and religious despotism. Instantaneous communication has laid every country open to propaganda from without, as well as from within. Even in our own country there are many who would substitute the bludgeon for the square. Sectarian leaders publicly declare that religious authority is waning and morality is declining.

Never was there greater need for teaching and practising high standards of morality, independent of sectarian authority. Never was there greater need of champions for sound philosophic principles that form the basis of correct social and political relations. Truly, the great work of speculative Masonry is unfinished.

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DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

AFTER attending the celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the introduction of Masonry in Canada, by the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia at Halifax and Annapolis Royal, a party of distinguished visitors from the three Grand Lodges of the British Isles toured Canada, visiting the Grand Lodges in the various provinces.

Coming west by way of Edmonton, the touring party were joined there on July 24th by M. W. Bros. Braithwaite and Mitchell, representing England and Scotland respectively, who travelled with them to Jasper. M. W. Bro. John Martland, who with M. W. Bro. West, our Grand Master, had attended the celebration in Nova Scotia, accompanied the party to Edmonton, so that from Halifax to Jasper, Alberta, had escorting representatives. M. W. Bro. Frank Burd, P.G.M. of British Columbia, was also with the party.

The deputations were:

ENGLAND:—

General Sir Francis J. Davies, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., V.L., Deputy Grand Master.

Rev. Thomas T. Blockley, M.A., P.G. Chaplain, Provincial Grand Master for Oxfordshire.

The Rt. Hon. Viscount de Vesci, D.L., Senior Grand Warden.

Major Robert L. Loyd, O.B.E., M.C., Past Dep. Grand Director of Ceremonies.

IRELAND:—

Raymond F. Brooke, Dep. Grand Master.

Lt.-Col. Lord Farnham, D.S.O., Provincial Grand Master of Meath.

Dr. William E. Thrift, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin.

SCOTLAND:—

Brig.-Gen. Sir Norman A. Orr Ewing, Bt., D.S.O., A.D.C., V.L., Grand Master Mason.

T. G. Winning, J.P., Grand Secretary.

Accompanying the deputations were Lady Farnham and Mrs. Thrift.

The party returned to Alberta by way of Field on July 27th, where they were met by a Calgary delegation under the direction of R. W. Bro. George Moore, Deputy Grand Master, and motored to Lake Louise for tea. Continuing on to the Banff Springs Hotel for dinner in the evening, our guests were greatly impressed with the mountain scenery.

The next day the visitors were motored by the same brethren to Turner Valley, where arrangements had been made to show them some of the more important wells in process of drilling. They were also, through the kindness of the officials, given an opportunity to inspect the separating and scrubbing plants. While in the Valley the party had the unique experience of witnessing a large well being brought into production, which was a fitting climax to the trip, impressing our guests with the reality of our Oil Field as nothing else could have done. After lunch at Black Diamond the return to Calgary was made via Millarville, giving the guests an extended view of the beautiful foothill country.

A reception was held in the Sun Room of the Palliser Hotel at 4:30 o'clock, at which over a hundred members had the pleasure of meeting the deputations and a very pleasant hour was spent. The ladies of the party were also entertained at tea by Mrs. George Moore, assisted by the wives of other Grand Officers.

As a memento of the occasion, the visitors were presented with a suitably inscribed souvenir, an artistic photo especially taken from a painting of a characteristic Indian head, by one of our well known Alberta artists.

On their departure that evening they were most enthusiastic in their delight with the magnificent scenery they had enjoyed from Jasper to the Coast and back again, and expressed their gratitude for the attentions bestowed on them by the Alberta brethren. They seemed to be enjoying to the full their contacts with Canada and Canadians, several of them indicating their intention of returning again under more leisurely travelling conditions.

These associations help keep the home ties firm and we are sure that these distinguished and gracious visitors have once again reminded those who had the privilege of meeting them, that the Masons of the Motherland are deeply interested in the fortunes of their overseas brethren.