



GRAND LODGE BULLETIN

Editor: A. M. Mitchell, P.G.M.

Peace on Earth to Men of Good Will

ONCE more we approach the season which is the traditional festival for the exchange of greetings, breathing the spirit of Peace and Good Will.

Fortunately, owing to a general improvement in crop conditions and returns throughout the southern part of the Province, there has not been the need for repeating the relief effort of last year. The demonstration of spontaneous generosity, afforded by the response of the Craft to the call for aid for the unfortunate, will not soon be forgotten. However, may we all join in the hope that there will not be need for a repetition of that splendid effort for many years to come.

To those who believe, as all Freemasons profess to do, in the loving providence of the Great Architect of the Universe, the world of today presents a sorry picture, War, hatred, bitterness and strife seem to be having unchecked sway in the acts and thoughts of men. The rule of reason is being challenged by unreason. The standards of conduct which it was believed had come to be accepted in the so-called civilized world are being flaunted on every side.

We are reminded of the saying—"Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." There seems to be a determination to bring the whole edifice, which man has erected during the long climb from the jungle, down in ruins about our heads.

But there have been other dark days in human history. And the light has been preserved to shine with greater brilliance on a later day. Such must be our confidence now.

We believe that brotherly love expressed in thought, word and deed offers the only solution for the problems of life and living for the individual, the nation, and the world.

The Christmas festival is much older than Christianity. It was formerly a celebration in honor of the undying sun. It was a time of renewed faith and hope in the continuance of the procession of the seasons. It represented the same idea as that associated with the setting of the rainbow as a token of the covenant described in the Old Testament.

The Christian Church picked up this festival and associated it with the birth of the Prince of Peace.

The annual celebration of the feast dedicated to peace and good will should strike a responsive chord in the heart of every member of the Craft. That we may work as never before for the realization of this great ideal, with faith as expressed by the poet in the words:

*"Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,
But beyond the great unknown
Standeth God within the shadows
Keeping watch above His own."*

is the sincere Christmas wish of your Grand Master.

A. WEST

TIME AND THE FREEMASON

THAT sacred season when we look forward to the coming of a New Year is on us again. High resolve is an exercise of the early days of a new calendar. Highly resolve then to give a little more to Freemasonry!

There is a race of people who, according to their plaint, suffer from the fell disease of lack of time and in their ranks, alas, we find many Masons who lack the time to give a single evening in a month or ten evenings in the year to their Lodge.

Sometimes the plaint is true. The usual vocation may deprive the Mason of the society of his Lodge, but too often it's the poorest kind of excuse. Were the time-pressed brother to say he preferred going to the movies two or three times a week, or comatosely absorbing the ear-wearing blating of the radio, or playing bridge in season and out, or reading the pulps with mind deadening persistence, he might be nearer the truth. But no time. Faugh! He has all the time that any of us have. The identical ration of king or beggarman, twenty-four hours a day—no more and no less.

We can sympathize and understand the man who finds his interests elsewhere. He compares an evening spent in some consuming interest of his own and one spent in the too often dreary routine of his Lodge. But does he ever stop to think that men with consuming interests are precisely those who can make the Lodge consumingly interesting not only to themselves but to the brethren who keep the rusty wheels of routine barely moving. Or is this too much like flattering unction to his soul?

Hail, you Past Masters, Past District Deputies and higher. Did you suffer from lack of time or interest when you were climbing to the purple of our Fraternity? You did not and you know it! Perhaps you think you have served your term, earned the reward and gone your way. Or has success turned to ashes in your mouth and sleep your portion?

Did it ever occur to you that your experience is valuable to your Lodge, that by the very reason of your levelled apron and jewel you should serve?

The admittedly wide attractions offered in our fast moving and entertainment loving world are highly magnetic. The quiet grandeur of the Masonic philosophy and ritual may appear dull by comparison but it is more lasting, more solid, more comforting. Social contacts are not developed in a moving picture theatre, nor huddled up half asleep by a radio receiver, nor hunched over the latest paper covered thriller.

No. The proper knowledge of mankind is man, and you meet man at his best in your Masonic Lodge. Your Lodge is what you make it. You make no contribution by staying away. Freemasonry as a social force may be at a low ebb, but it will not be helped by your empty chair!

Bring your experience, your plans, your ideas, your likes and dislikes, your joys and your sorrows to your Lodge once a month. Match them with those of

your fellows and enjoy the fraternal contact nothing can supply so well.

In 1939 let us highly resolve that we shall give to Freemasonry and so receive the finest of all human relationships, comradeship.

A.M.M.



THE ANCIENT LANDMARKS

By A. E. OTTEWELL

(This is the first of a series of short articles from the pen of a Past Grand Registrar. The next in the series will appear in the January number.—Ed.)

AT an early date the young Mason hears of the Ancient Landmarks. He is warned they must not be encroached upon. Naturally he wonders what they are, whence they have been derived and how they have been established. Furthermore, at a later time he is taught that Masonry is a progressive science. How can the idea of unchanging and unchangeable principles and that of progress be harmonized? Progress seems to imply and require change.

This seeming paradox is as old as human thought. To the casual observer the mountains seem everlasting. A great river seems a permanent physical feature. Yet a little thought shows the mountain slowly dissolving before the eye. The water of the river is in constant flow and change. The materials of our bodies break down and are replaced completely in a few years. One of the constant questions for all men who think deeply about life and its problems is how can permanence and change be reconciled. Indeed, an ancient philosopher concluded everything is changing, or, as he expressed it "all things flow." Presently he concluded that the only unchanging thing is change itself. A modern philosopher discusses at length what he calls the "stream of consciousness." The question is if things and events are in continuous change how do we know it.

At various places in Alaska and the Yukon there are conducted annually sweepstakes on the going out of the river ice. The lucky guesser who comes closest to the actual time of movement takes the pot. In such cases how is this time fixed. Simply by a device which moves with the ice and breaks some connection with the shore when the movement starts.

Now to return to our problem. If institutions come and go, manners and customs change, new information is secured, ways of thinking vary, is there no way by which we can pass judgment upon what is happening and arrive at some satisfying and satisfactory way of life which might be called the good life? Certainly there is. We are not adrift without a compass.

How did the scientists reconcile the contradiction between permanence and change? They found out by repeated tests exactly what was happening and established what are called natural laws. To illustrate, take one of these known as the Conservation of Matter. This law reads something like this: "Matter is neither created nor annihilated." However, it does

undergo changes of form. It is found that if we burn a substance and trap all the smoke, gas and moisture given off and weigh the ashes remaining, nothing has been lost. But the substance has so changed in form we say it has been destroyed.

Now what is there which does not change. Simply the law which governs the change. Unless the foregoing argument has been stupid and vague, what is meant by a landmark should be clear. It is the thing which stands when all around it seems to change. Without the unchanging laws which govern its phenomena, nature would be capricious and unpredictable. We would not know what to do or how to behave. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," so reads an ancient law. It seems to hold good both in the moral and natural fields. Sometimes we think it harsh when it goes against our wishes. But if a farmer sowed elite seed and got a fine crop of nothing but pigweed he would not be so happy. Long experience has taught us that good seed is necessary for a good crop.

So the landmarks of Freemasonry are the principles which, because of their antiquity, proven worth, general acceptability and unvarying beneficial results have been proved to be the fixed laws of the Craft.



THE MASONIC WAY OF LIVING

Condensed from an address by JOSEPH EARL PERRY,
Grand Master, Massachusetts

FREEMASONRY is not simply another society in the congregation of worth-while societies. It has its own special contribution to make, which, if it fails, will be made by no other organization.

This is not a new role for the Order. During the dark ages the Freemasonry of those days was almost the sole repository of the world's mathematical and architectural wisdom. Almost alone it preserved and transmitted the wisdom of the past not only in the arts of mathematics and architecture but also in the art of living. That was a service both priceless and unique which, had Freemasonry failed, would never have been rendered.

In strikingly similar fashion, speculative Freemasonry in these days is called upon to make a unique contribution to the welfare of mankind. It has this exceptional opportunity because of the nature of the present world crisis and because of the extraordinarily apt way in which the teachings and practices of Freemasonry fit the needs of the crisis.

In the somewhat remote future men will look back in wonder at our inability to read the signs of the times, for then the major trends of the present will seem too obvious to be mistaken.

Without doubt the impact of a dynamic Freemasonry on the affairs of the present could be a saving factor. Of a certainty the universal acceptance and practice of the Masonic Way of Living would afford a solid foundation for the solution of today's problems.

Whatever else the present crisis may be, it is clearly a period of transition. All the world is on the

march. There are terrific struggles for supremacy among contending forms of governmental and economic control and of religious beliefs and ethical standards. Whether it be worse or better it will not be the same. Whether it be worse or better we of the present cannot be forgiven for doing less than our best to lessen the evil and increase the good. Whether it be worse or better we of the present must accustom our thinking and our planning and our living to an era of transition.

During this era of transition we find a world strangely adrift in a sea of dislocated relationships, of confused thinking, of desperate anxieties. Perspectives are distorted. Vision is obscured. Frantic pressures crowd for hasty decisions. The lure of the new in discarding the old threatens to destroy the benefits of centuries of hard-won progress.

Liberty is at war with absolutism on a thousand fronts. Ideologies, manufactured and colored by propaganda, are striving against each other. Even those who serve the Prince of Peace bicker and clash over the form of their sacrifices and the names of the altars on which to lay them.

Man is adrift from his God. In this, the most baffling and dangerous era of all recorded history, half the world is worshiping at the shrine of some form of state absolutism, defying the forceful seizure of power by ruthless individuals. Others are muddling in the disbelief of superficial science. Others are so enmeshed in the material that they have ceased to grope for the spiritual. Still others are so obsessed with the idea that all is change that they can discern no eternal principles of right and wrong and no abiding foundations for a faith that looks beyond the transient values of the moment.

In such a transition era there is an imperative need for some sure landmarks.

The laboratories of human living are older and more universal than the laboratories of science. Two billions of humans at this very moment are experimenting with the art of living under all conceivable conditions. For age on age other billions have experimented and passed along to their posterity the results of their experience. Can we not from all this practical research discern any fixed laws, any sure landmarks?

There seems good reason to believe that in all ages and in every race there have been groups of men who have sought to learn the art of living and teach it to their juniors. Usually they were of a religious nature but their object was to teach selected individuals how to live. These partially legendary groups were strikingly similar to modern Freemasonry and can be traced more or less continuously down through the Roman lodges and into the Middle Ages when Operative Masonry emerged with a combination of practical structural arts and religious and ethical teachings and general wisdom in the art of living.

When the rituals of modern speculative Freemasonry were written two centuries ago, they called the gems of wisdom from the best of all previous schools of religion and philosophy and practical living as transmitted by internal tradition and by available history.

Not being the product of any one race or system of government or economics or philosophy or religion, Freemasonry welcomes men of every race and creed if they have sufficient integrity of character to become good Masons and if they believe in Deity. Instead of trying to be a religion Freemasonry deliberately seeks to provide a common meeting place where men of every religion can remain true to their own religions and yet, submerging their differences, can work together in harmony to manifest the finest fruits of all religions. Its approach is not only modest but it is co-operative and conciliatory.

What counsel does Masonry offer to the individual in the management of his relationship with himself?

As suggested by the symbol of the twenty-four inch gauge, the Masonic life should be an orderly life with emphasis first on the spiritual side of living. It should be public spirited life devoted in reasonable measure to the service of God and of mankind. It should be an industrious life in the pursuit of one's usual vocations. It should be a physical sane life with due regard to refreshment and bodily health. A sound body, orderly industry, public spirit, but primarily the building of character—these emerge as major laws of successful living.

What is Freemasonry's counsel as to the wisest relations of man with his fellows?

The entire structure and philosophy of the Order are based on harmony between man and man. Not only is the individual taught to practice self-restraint so as not to trespass upon others, not only should he seek to dwell at peace with others, but he should insure that peace and that harmony by just and straightforward dealing and by active friendship and tolerance and brotherly love.

In a world of selfish greed, of nations struggling with nations, and of class warring with class, Freemasonry both by precept and in practice reminds us that there is a better way, a way of friendship and love and peace.

In a world permeated with the spirit of selfish rivalry it teaches universal brotherhood.

In a world of intolerance and bigotry it teaches tolerance and kindness.

In a world of cynical disbelief it teaches reverence for Deity.

It is important that Freemasonry should adhere strictly to its function of pointing to the eternal principles of its philosophy rather than to attempt as an organization to interpret those principles in terms of the specific. Experience of other countries points to the likelihood that there will be increasing pressure here to make this and all other organizations take sides for or against Communism or Fascism, or in defence of democracy or any of several other issues. However insidious the temptation, however powerful the pressure, that danger must be avoided.

How then shall we meet our responsibilities in these trying times?

As an organization we must use especial care to maintain the quality of our membership. Although

there is strength in numbers, it is the very essence of Freemasonry to seek quality rather than numbers. We seek to promote no civil or religious program. We feel no mission to force our views on others. We seek to mind our own business. But that business involves the maintenance of high standards of membership.

As an organization we must at all times be sure that our Grand Lodge and our particular Lodges fulfil every obligation whether financial or ethical, and that our methods square in all respects with our high professions.

As an organization we must seek every opportunity to co-operate with the rest of the Masonic world.

The real contribution of Freemasonry will be in the quality of the individual lives of its members. In the warfare of olden days the standard bearers were not numerous. They carried no weapons. But they were invaluable as rallying points for entire armies. The lighthouses occupy but a few tiny spots in the vast expanse of the ocean. But they point the way to safe harbors. Even so a single upright character may be the rallying point, the beacon and guide, of a whole community.

But, my Brethren, there is one more *tenet* of our institution. However high our aims they are not morose or sombre. Interwoven throughout the history of Freemasonry is the wise tradition of wholesome, buoyant, joyous comradeship. Let us always practice the art of clean good fellowship. Make it your business in every Masonic meeting to get acquainted with as many Brethren as possible before the day is over. As you give, so will you receive, a friendly smile and an encouraging word. On such tiny morsels great friendships are nourished.

We are custodians of what we believe to be such infallible landmarks in the form of wisdom tested and verified by previous transition eras and by universal experience.

We believe that the practice of that wisdom, the Masonic Way of Living, would tend to enrich our own individual lives and would afford a standard around which to rally the wavering forces of righteousness.



I believe in to-day and the work I am doing, in to-morrow and the work I hope to do, and in the sure reward which the future holds. I believe in courtesy, in kindness, in generosity, in good cheer, in friendship, and in honest competition. I believe there is something doing, somewhere, for every man ready to do it. I believe I'm ready—right now!

—Elbert Hubbard.



To the Brethren everywhere the Editor extends best wishes for a Happy Christmas.

"BULLETIN" SUBSCRIPTIONS

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