



# Grand Lodge Bulletin

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

## "YOU AND YOUR WORK"

**I**N last month's issue of your *Bulletin*, the guest editorial, entitled "What Can I Do?" pointed out some of the things you can do in the work and welfare of your Lodge. Among the things suggested was active preparation for participation in the ritualistic work.

The other evening we attended an initiation in one of the smaller Lodges in the City of Edmonton under rather unusual circumstances. The Lodge had no candidate of its own but through the usual official channels had been requested to initiate elected petitioners from Tennessee and Montana. The Lodge made a minor gala occasion of it and staged a Past Masters' Night with all the chairs occupied by Past Masters.

The actual work was broken up into suitable sections and was, throughout, beautifully done. A feature was the obligation by the father of one of the candidates. He had flown from Great Falls, Montana, to initiate his son.

There is no doubt in the mind of the writer that the degree made a profound impression on the candidates as it did on all who witnessed it. Somehow, more than is usually the case, the spiritual content of the ceremony of the Entered Apprentice found real expression to the everlasting good of all concerned and thereby hangs the moral of this story.

There was nothing exceptional about any of the men who took part, they were of the calibre and temperament of brethren in any Lodge of similar size and fortune.

But they knew their job! It cannot be said that they were book perfect in their rendering but they knew what they were saying, knew what the words meant and, most important of all, quite apparently, thoroughly believed in the practical philosophy they were expounding. You can do the same thing.

It has been reiterated many times that good ritual

working is the backbone of success for any Lodge and skilfully presented work will soon make a lodge well known in its neighborhood and attractive to its members and to visitors.

To be able to present the work in all its essential beauty is not so difficult a task as many presume. An ordinarily good verbal memory, some knowledge of language, a pleasing speaking voice and, above all, a firm belief in the lessons conveyed are the things required. Most men have a good memory which can be improved by practice. Knowledge of the English language can be acquired by study of a dictionary and the occasional peculiar and archaic phraseology of the ritual can be translated readily into everyday usage by consulting one of the many books on *Masonry readily obtainable*. Most men have a reasonably pleasing speaking voice and that, too, can be improved by practice. If you are really in earnest you can take elocution or singing lessons!

Above all, however, you must believe in what you are saying! There is little use in word perfection, skilfully delivered, if it is apparent that you are simply mouthing words from a book or a part in a play. Sincerity is the rock upon which ritual must stand or fall and its absence can be quickly detected even by the newest apprentice.

To really know and believe in your Masonry is the cornerstone of success. Practice will polish your presentation but it takes heart to teach it. Only long consideration of the eternal value of the Good Life for its own sake can prepare your heart for such a task.

But here is something you can do for your Lodge, for those who will come to it in the days ahead and for yourself in providing an anchor and an ark which will never fail you.

A.M.M.

## LANGUAGE OF THE HEART†

(From the *Bulletin* of The Masonic Service Association of the United States. Reprinted by special permission.)

**F**REEMASONRY teaches by symbols.

Why? Why does she veil in allegory and conceal in object or picture a meaning quite different from its name? Why should Freemasonry express immortality with acacia, brotherly love with a trowel, the world by a lodge, right living by a Masons' tools?

That Freemasonry conceals in symbols in order to arouse curiosity to know their meaning is often considered the only explanation. But there are many more lofty ideas of why this great system of truth, philosophy and ethics is hidden in symbols.

It is hardly a matter of argument that man has a triple nature; he had a body, and senses which bring him into contact with, and translate the meanings of, the physical world, of earth, air, fire and water, which is about him. He has a brain and a mind, by which he reasons and understands about the matters physical with which he is surrounded. And he has a Something Beyond; call it Soul, or Heart, or Spirit, or Imagination, as you will; it is something which is allied to, rather than a part of, reason, and connected with the physical side of life only through its sensory contacts.

This soul, or spirit, comprehends a language which the brain does not understand. The keenest minds have striven without success to make this mystic language plain to reason. When you hear music which brings tears to your eyes and grief or joy to your heart, you respond to a language your brain does not understand and cannot explain. It is not with your brain that you love your mother, your child or your wife; it is with the Something Beyond; and the language with which that love is spoken is not the language of the tongue.

A symbol is a word in that language. Translate that symbol into words which appeal only to the mind, and the spirit of the meaning is lost. Words appeal to the mind; meanings not expressed in words appeal to the spirit.

All that there is in Freemasonry, which can be set down in words on a page, leaves out completely the spirit of the Order. If we depended on words or ideas alone, the fraternity would not make a universal appeal to all men, since no man has it given to him to appeal to the minds of all other men. But Freemasonry expresses truths which are universal; it expresses them in a universal language, universally understood by all men without words. That language is the language of the symbol, and the symbol is universally understood because it is the means of communication between spirit, souls, hearts.

When we say of Masonry that it is universal we mean the word literally; it is of the universe, not merely of the world. If it were possible for an inhabitant of Mars to make and use a telescope which would enable him to see plainly a square mile of the surface of the earth, and if we knew it and desired, by drawing upon that square mile a symbol, to communicate with the inhabitants of Mars, we would choose, undoubtedly, one with as many meanings as possible; one which had a material, a mental and a spiritual meaning. Such a symbol might be the triangle, the square or the circle. Our supposed Martian might respond with a complementary symbol; if we showed him a triangle, he might reply with the 47th Problem. If we showed him a circle, he might set down 3.141659—the number by which a diameter multiplied becomes the circumference. We could find a language in symbols with which to begin communication, even with all the universe!

Naturally, then, Freemasonry employs symbols for heart to speak to heart. Imagination is the heart's collection of senses. So we must appeal to the imagination when speaking a truth which is neither mental nor physical, and the symbol is the means by which one imagination speaks to another. Nothing else will do; no words can be as effective (unless they are themselves symbols); no teachings expressed in language can be as easily learned by the heart as those which come via the symbol through the imagination.

Take from Freemasonry its symbols and you have but the husk; the kernel is gone. He who hears but the words of Freemasonry misses their meaning entirely. Most symbols have many interpretations. These do not contradict but amplify each other. Thus, the square is a symbol of perfection, of rectitude of conduct, of honor and honesty, of good work. These are all different and yet allied. The square is not a symbol of wrong, or evil, or meanness or disease! Ten different men may read ten different meanings into a square, and yet each meaning fits with, and belongs to, the other meanings.

Ten men have ten different kinds of hearts. Not all have the same power of imagination. They do not all have the same ability to comprehend. So each gets from a symbol what he can. He uses his imagination. He translates to his soul as much of the truth as he is able to make a part of him. This the ten cannot do with truths expressed in words. "Twice two is equal to four" is a truth which must be accepted all at once, as a complete exposition, or not at all. He who can understand but the "twice" or the "equal" or the "four" has no conception of what is being said. But ten men can read ten progressive, different, correct and beautiful meanings into a trowel, and each be right as far as he goes. The man who sees it merely as an instrument which helps to bind has a part of its meaning. He who finds it a link with operative Masons has another

part. The man who sees it as a symbol of man's relationship to Deity, because with it he (spiritually) does the Master's work, has another meaning. All these meanings are right; when all men know all the meanings the need for Freemasonry will have passed away.

We use symbols because only by them can we speak the language of the spirit, each to each, and because they form an elastic language, which each man reads for himself according to his ability. Symbols form the only language which is thus elastic, and the only one by which spirit can be touched. To suggest that Freemasonry use any other would be as revolutionary as to remove her Altars, meet in the public square or elect by a majority vote. Freemasonry without symbols would not be Freemasonry; it would be but a dogmatic and not very erudite philosophy, of which the world is full as it is, and none of which ever satisfies the heart.

†Chapter I of "Foreign Countries," by Brother Carl H. Claudy, a delightful and inspiring study of Masonic Symbolism, written for and published by the Masonic Service Association of the United States.

## MASONRY AND FRIENDSHIP

IT has been said, and rightly so, that Masonry, among the great Institutions that has sought for the betterment of mankind, knows better than any other how to weave the ties and bonds of friendship, fellowship and brotherhood between man and man.

We constantly refer to ourselves as "Brothers of the Mystic Tie." Insofar as we have been successful in linking men together in these ties of friendship and fellowship we have done well for our fraternity and deserved commendation at the hands of humanity, for it is upon these foundations that the whole vast pyramid of civilization has been erected. Equally it is not true that the underlying purpose of this thing we call civilization is to bring together all men. What is civilization but a record of all adventures, groupings, searchings, reaching out of hands towards truth. There lies within mankind a "mystical hanker after something higher," which drives him forth to dare the impossible, to sacrifice, to suffer and to toil in order to satisfy that inner spirit which is ever climbing the steps of that long ascending road which leads to God and perfection.

But man is above all a creature of dual personality, a veritable Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. For while he feels within himself the impulse towards higher and finer things, he is also a creature of unruly passions, passions that he has not always been able to subdue and control.

There lies within him a tiger which is easily roused to rend and destroy. Throughout the greater portions of time these agencies which bring man together in the ties of fellowship and friendship have been thwarted, fierce contentions and inveterate hates have usurped the seat of love, might triumphs over

right, crime mocks at mercy, and man over a considerable portion of the world becomes a slave to do the bidding of political masters. One sees through the years—and even today—the seemingly endless struggles for power, the turbulent chaos of wrong, injustice, doubt, want and wretchedness, the fiery flames of the stake, the fears and sufferings endured by the oppressed, these and countless other instances of "Man's inhumanity to Man" affording striking evidence of the lack of fellowship and friendship. Yet all the while man has been in the throes of bloodshed, violence and hatred simply because they are unacquainted with one another.

Masonry seeks to remove this barrier, striving to weld mankind into a league of sympathy, service and good will towards all. All its great history, its vast accumulations of tradition, its faith, its freedom and its friendship is dedicated to the high ideal of bringing men together, curbing the tiger that is in him, and bringing his passions into obedience to the will of the Supreme Being. Towards a great friendship long foreseen by Masonic Faith the world is slowly moving amid difficulties.

There are some, however, contemplating the sorry conditions in which the world finds itself today, might be inclined to scoff, and assert that conditions are such as to justify the utmost pessimism instead of optimism. Considering it from the viewpoint of the individual man, or even from the viewpoint of the particular era or period we might be inclined to agree with them. But if we take the long view of the situation, rather than the short, if we remember that we personally are apparitions—here for today, gone tomorrow—that our efforts, no matter how valiantly we may struggle, are at best but feeble and puny in comparison with the warfare which our venerable order has been waging against violence and hate for ages past, and will continue to wage long after we have fallen into the dust, then we may justifiably hope that we may obtain, if not an easy victory, at least a certain one.

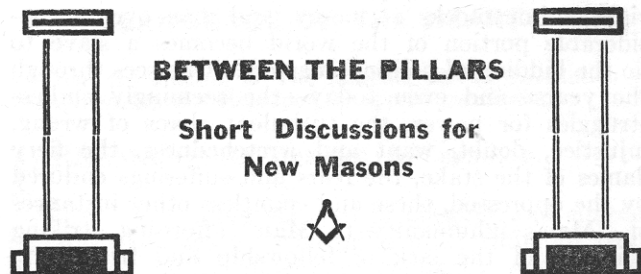
LESLIE W. LEE, Jr. Grand Warden.  
In *Masonic News*, Wenatchee, Washington.

## LITTLE PILGRIMS

We are weary little pilgrims, straying in a world of gloom; just behind us is the cradle, just before us is the tomb; there is nothing much to guide us, or the proper path to mark, as we toddle on our journey, little pilgrims in the dark. And we jostle, and we struggle, in our feeble, futile wrath, always striving, always reaching to push others from the path; and the wrangling and the jangling of our peevish voices rise, to the seraphim that watch us through the starholes in the skies, and they say: "The foolish pilgrims. Watch them as they push and shove! They might have a pleasant ramble, if their hearts were full of love; if they'd help and cheer each other from the hour that they embark; but they're only blind and erring little pilgrims in the dark!"

—Walt Mason.





### 3. "Outside the Door of the Lodge"

CERTAIN qualifications are required of him who seeks to become a Mason and the Ballot Box voicing the estimate of his prospective brethren decides whether or not he has these qualifications. What is more important, however, is that most of the self-same qualifications decide whether a man is qualified to *remain* a Mason.

In derivation the term "qualification" means "value" and in speculative Freemasonry the newcomer rapidly becomes aware that the values required of him are both internal and external.

He comes to the Fraternity "of his own free will and accord" which is simply to say that his petition must not be solicited. To ask a man "to join the Masons" is an offence against our unwritten law and the often quoted remark that a man wonders why he was never asked to join is evidence that the prohibition is respected. What constitutes "solicitation" is a moot question often discussed. The answer seems simple enough and is based upon the requirement that the prospective petitioner should have weighed the value of membership in the Order to him as he has come in contact with it and its effect on his fellows and that he should have been moved to inquire as to the necessary steps to obtain membership of his own volition. It follows that any attempt at suggestion or "selling" the idea of membership is solicitation and forbidden by our ancient law. Therefore, no Mason shall solicit a man to petition for membership.

If, on the other hand, a man suggests *of his own accord* that he would like to petition, it is the business of every Mason to give all the information proper to be given, or, if he lacks full information, to direct the prospective petitioner to proper authority, should he consider, from his own knowledge, the prospective petitioner a fit person likely to become a true and faithful Brother among us.

One more important qualification is required of the prospective petitioner. He must come "uninfluenced by mercenary motives". The meaning of this requirement is apparent. No man should come to Masonry expecting monetary gain for himself. He should not expect his membership to bring him custom or business favors from his Brethren and conversely no Brother of his Lodge has any right to expect his custom or business favor.

Externally, he must be a man of mature years. In this country the legal age of twenty-one years is generally accepted as evidence of maturity and the ability to assume legal responsibility for his acts.

Hence, "a young man in his nonage" and "an old man in his dotage" may not petition. Neither may a woman petition.

He must be sound in body for two reasons. He must be able to comply literally with the forms and ceremonies we require and, what is probably of more importance, he should be able to earn his own living in some honorable trade, business or profession, outside the Lodge room.

Mentally, he must have average intelligence. The mental qualifications are not sharply defined but a fair test is whether he will understand and appreciate the teachings of the Order and has apparent ability enough to meet the demands which will be made upon him.

He must be "under the tongue of good report" which means simply that he must be of good repute among those who know him best as one who is an honest man and a good citizen, who has earned and keeps the respect and affection of his fellows.

His sectarian religious beliefs are no concern of ours but he must not be an atheist. He must not be questioned on the form or mode of his faith, nor shall he question his Brethren. He is required to express faith in the Supreme Being, acceptance of the Volume of the Sacred Law as a "rule and guide to faith," the hope of Immortality and charity toward all men.

Freemasonry proposes to develop such men and such men only, to describe, interpret, foster and satisfy the longings of such men in a common band of Brothers. It seeks men with the basic characteristics described and having found them and proved them by their acceptance at the hands of the Brethren, expressed in the act of balloting, proceeds to impart its ancient teaching.

The Ballot Box is the faithful sentinel of the Mason's Lodge. It stands guard, not on behalf of personal spite or private prejudice but over the qualifications of the petitioner as one who is on all counts likely to accept and fit into the life of the Fraternity not only during the term of conformity with the immediate ceremonies but for the rest of his life.

The Ballot Box is not a judgment on a man's character or his personality but only the decision of the Brethren as to whether his membership is wanted or not. He solicits the Lodge. The Lodge never solicits him and, therefore, should have the full benefit of any reasonable doubt.

If the Committee on investigation has done its work well an adverse ballot should be rare.

No Brother shall discuss his ballot and when he has used his best judgment, free of personal animosity, he is answerable to no man. If present in Lodge he *must* exercise his franchise, thereby discharging his duty and his privilege.

When the Ballot has been declared as favorable the decision is made with complete finality. The petitioner's probationary period ends there. He has been "accepted" and will presently be entered an apprentice.

A.M.M.