



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: **SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.**

OUR ANCIENT ORDER

OUR ORDER IS ANCIENT, HONORABLE, AND SECRET.

ANCIENT in that its roots reach back into the earliest dawn of the history of mankind. Its philosophy, in common with many other Orders and Societies, includes gems and selected parts of all that we consider good from many civilizations that have long since passed away.

It is honorable because of its teachings and its members. Its great tenets are aimed at the improvement of the human mind, and to help promote happiness and brotherly love.

It is secret in its modes of recognition and obligations, necessarily so that it is held apart from the world at large, and limited in its membership, but not secret in its teachings.

The actual history of our Freemasonry as it is today, that is, the Speculative Freemasonry, began in the early part of the 18th century. The first meeting of Grand Lodge was held in a London tavern in 1717, and there were only four constituent lodges and a mere handful of members.

Long before this, from the time when early man placed one stone over two uprights to form the arch, we had had Masons, or builders, operative Masons, engaged in the work of building with stones, castles, churches and palaces. Their most renowned works are the great cathedrals and castles of Europe and Great Britain. Some of these were years, even centuries, in the building and, it was only natural that there would be some organization among the groups of workmen. Such organizations were called lodges or guilds, and their purpose was to facilitate their labors, to instruct the workmen, and to provide entertainment and amusement.

We know from old documents that there were various classes of workmen, and that each had its lodge or guild in which workmen received instruction and progressed as they became more efficient and experienced. For entertainment they had plays

and feasts. The players were often priests, monks, or, occasionally, travelling troupes of musicians.

Often times important persons, such as owners, landlords, or local officials, would be invited to many of these meetings, some were even admitted to membership and took part as Master Masons. There were meetings for the reception of apprentices; these were secret and closely guarded against cowans, who were workmen who used rough stones without mortar.

After the Great Fire of London in 1666, there was a great period of prosperity for the Masons. It was the time of Sir Christopher Wren whose masterpiece, St. Pauls, still stands. It was unique among the cathedrals in that it was planned and built to completion by one man in his lifetime. We know there were a number of lodges among the workmen engaged in the construction of St. Pauls, and it is also known that many non-masons visited at these lodges. It is not believed that Sir Christopher Wren was a Speculative Freemason.

After the beginning of the century hard times fell upon the Masons. There were no great buildings started, because there was no money voted for building. As time passed on, the Masons became unemployed, the older ones died and no apprentices were taken on. It was not many years until there were not sufficient numbers to hold the usual meetings. In some lodges more and more non-operative members were to be found, until gradually the lodges passed from operative to non-operative members, and instead of discussion of architectural problems, the meetings were concerned with philosophical subjects.

General conditions in the England of that day were bad. There was much unrest in all walks of life. Wars in Europe involving England had depleted the treasury, and wasted manpower; taxes were high. There had been the rebellion against James 2nd and the Bill of Rights had been made law in an effort to safeguard the common people.

The Church had been at war with itself since the time of Henry 8th—sometimes the Roman Catholics

were in power, and then the Church of England, and each change of leadership was accompanied by persecution with executions and confiscations. The Church was dead as far as the common people were concerned. The higher clergy neglected their duties and the lesser priests were stolid, callous and brutal. Drunkenness was almost universal.

Highway robbers and cutthroats roamed the country; property was insecure and even life itself was not sacred. There was no law enforcement; the ruling classes were indolent and immoral and the lower classes were victimized within the law as well as without. Their goods were seized by church and state, and their women treated as chattels.

It was the wretchedness of the lower classes, the religious intolerance and the corrupt despotic government that inspired the early speculative Freemasons.

There were other groups formed during this period, aimed at the improvement of conditions within the country. The Oxford movement founded by John Wesley, which later became the Methodist, was strictly a religious movement, directed at the improvement of the common people by improvement in the church. Other groups directed their efforts towards improvement through education and we have the beginnings of the Royal Society.

It was with this background that the old Masons lodges became the Speculative Freemasons. The old Masons lodges were the ideal framework for the new Freemasonry. They had a long history and were not associated with the strife of politicians, nor the revolution in the church. Their membership was limited to a selected few; they were secret, so our early brethren naturally gradually took possession and soon developed a philosophy to suit their work, which philosophy was founded on the symbols of ancient workmen, and the legends common to that time. They kept the form of the lodge but expanded it by symbolic teaching. They kept the tyler and the secret methods of recognition because of fear of persecution by civic or church officials, and for self protection they kept the secret methods of recognition.

They took on the symbolic method of teaching because of the limited education of the masses and the fact that it could be kept secret. It also had a universal interpretation regardless of the educational standing of the candidate. The principal legends associated with the Freemasons philosophy are common to many ancient civilizations, thus the search for something that was lost, something that was holy and the loss of which dumped the world into chaos, is found in writings of all ages and of all countries. The Garden of Eden or Tennysons Holy Grail. Similarly with the idea of building and also the great drama of our modern third degree.

Our early brethren were concerned with the improvement of conditions for their fellow men, and thus in our ritual and lectures, we can trace many

things which they wished to be corrected. It is thus that they kept political and religious discussions from the lodge room, because of the horrors and persecutions, and the unsavory atmosphere in which they were held at that time. Throughout the ritual and lectures there are directions of what the good man shall be and do, and chiefly he is to direct his steps by the Great Light.

Our English histories tell us that after the Restoration of the Stuarts the thirteen judges who had condemned Charles first to the block, were executed with great cruelty, their hearts and bowels were cut from their living bodies.

Thus it can be seen that our Speculative Freemasonry has been built upon the framework of the very ancient and honorable order of Masons. The symbols of the workmen now teach Speculative Freemason, the allegory and legend of the speculative workman. They appeal to the heart or spirit, and each takes the interpretation according to his own sentiment and understanding.

M.W. Bro. W. A. Henry, M.D.,
Past Grand Master, Alberta.

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MASONRY PAST AND FUTURE

Masonry has a great tradition, but it is not enough to sit complacently in contemplation of that fact. Whatever is meritorious in the past and can be made applicable to present-day conditions is, of course, desirable to be preserved and utilized.

However, if Masonry of the present is to keep abreast of the best in its past, then its membership must be selected with due regard to having the type of members who will be a credit to the Fraternity. This means that petitioners must be carefully scrutinized. Furthermore, this means that quality of membership must be regarded as of far more importance than mere quantity of members.

Masonry's doors are open to the good and true, but no one is ever asked to join. Each one who desires to become a member must seek membership of his own volition. But, once admitted to membership, it rests upon each of the older members to make the new members feel what Masonry stands for and to make him feel that he is among friends and not merely one more stone in a vast building. Masonry is vibrant with all that is fine and uplifting in life, and each new members must be made to feel that the atmosphere of Masonry and of the lodge to which he has recently been admitted contains the ozone of health and moral uplift.

—Courtesy of The New Age

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It is not possible for everyone to be great or accomplish great things. But we can all work to the limit of our power, meet and master the problems of the hour, and be thankful for our blessings.

CHALLENGE TO EVERY MASON

There seems to be a growing acceptance of Masonry as an adjunct to life rather than as a governing way of life. Far too many of us think of ourselves as member of the Fraternity and from it seek and expect little more than prestige, contacts and social benefits to be obtained from membership. These doubtless do and will enjoy fellowship and brotherhood with other men of like character, but, so long as this remains their primary interest in the Craft, Masonry will find them weak instruments with which to improve mankind's estate.

It is not contended that Masonry should function as a militant, organized force designed to control and direct the thinking and action of its members. The thinking of Masons may be as diverse as the individuals themselves. Masonry asks only that each shall arrive at decisions governed by his concept of the eternal, basic truths revealed to him in the light obtained through Masonic instruction. It is inevitable that, when problems are approached in this manner, there will not be great diversity in the solutions found. Confusion and complexity are the offspring of selfishness. Simplicity and justice are the fruit of truth and honor.

Life is a great river made up from the rivulets rising in our souls and surging on into the vast unknown ocean of time. Rivers always will be exactly what the small rills bring to them. Some bring precious nuggets and flakes of gold. Others bring the priceless soil to impoverish the life when it came. Still others bring nothing but worthless mud and sand. When all are mixed we have that mighty stream called human life. Today we find it far from being the peaceful, useful stream that it should be. It is too often a muddy, raging torrent, bursting all bounds and flooding the land with devastating ruthlessness.

Too long we have tried to halt the floods by controlling the river, but neglected the rivulets whence come all the waters. If each of those were kept in due bounds and the springs made pure, we would have little trouble with the great river.

This is the true function of Masonry. It makes no attempt to subdue the angry river of life, but it does teach man how to rule the single stream for which he is responsible.

The Ashlar, G. L. of Queensland

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Our sincere congratulations and best wishes are extended to M.W. Bro. John Martland, P.G.M. Alberta, who has been invested as Worshipful Master of the newly formed Aurora Lodge U.D. in Victoria, B.C. We wish Aurora Lodge U.D. a successful and profitable future.

—S.H.

MASONRY WILL CONTINUE TO GROW

From its very inception Masonry has forbidden solicitation as a means of building up a greater membership. The beating of drums in putting on membership drives is not at all necessary. There is something in Masonry which attracts men, and it is for them to decide whether they wish to make an attempt to join or not. It is still the law of the Craft that men must come in of their own free will.

No man, however humble, should be kept out—if his life is clean—and no man should be admitted whose character will not bear closest scrutiny.

It is argued by some that if we keep on waiting for men to knock on our doors, seeking admission, the future will find our ranks depleted. To prove the folly of such a statement we need only to point to a constant growth in numbers year after year, while being governed by the laws which some would like to discard as being obsolete.

There is no need to worry about the future growth of Masonry. As long as its affairs are conducted upon the same high plane as has existed throughout the life of the Craft, men will recognize that here is something good which they need, and they will continue to voluntarily seek admission.

—Orphan's Friend

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SINCERITY

Sincerity is the very foundation stone of true friendliness. It is also a human trait that is hard to counterfeit, as the sincere friendly impulse comes from the soul of a man and not from the calculating mind. Think kindly and friendly thoughts. If you have a heart and soul, why be ashamed of them? Bring them in to the shop, office and your daily life. The hand may be cunning, and the head may contain the brain that can conceive the most brilliant thoughts, but every good and worthy impulse comes from the heart. Strengthen your faith in men; think kindly of them; believe that they are your friends, and in the long run they will be.

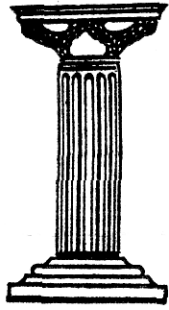
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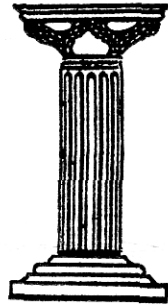
LIVE FOR SOMETHING

Live for something. Do good and leave behind you a monument of virtue that the storms of time can never destroy. Write your name in kindness, love and mercy, on the hearts of those you come in contact with year by year: you will never be forgotten. Your name, your deeds, will be as legible on the hearts you leave behind, as the stars on the brow of evening. Good deeds will shine as the stars of heaven.

—Chalmers



Between the Pillars



FORTITUDE

Fortitude is one of the cardinal virtues, one of the primary sources of strength needed by all men. And that is why consideration of it is included in one of the very first lectures of Masonry. Every Mason must have it. All the way through life situations will arise wherein this basic quality of fortitude must be exercised. These situations will arise in your own intimate home, in your relations with your fellow men and in your duties as a part of the nation in which you live. There is no question that we need fortitude now more than before if we are ever to rise about the conditions which exist in our nation today.

Those who are without fortitude become weak, spineless creatures who drift with the tide, who become the pawns of whatever forces are in control, who never rise to the stature of men and therefore become the tools of others who may wish to use them for purposes undignified and unworthy of beings created in the image of Deity.

Those who possess the quality of fortitude always stand upright, with faces turned forward, able to withstand the blows that may come, and without failing, lift their voices for what is right and what will be helpful to all mankind.

Masonry offers no escape from the world. So long as we live we are in it, a part of it, and should do what we can to make it a livable, kindly, generous, peaceful world in which all may participate with joy, security, contentment, and interest. Masonry is not some secret way by which we avoid the responsibilities of living in a world made complex by the endless machinations of men. Masonry is a way of life; an understanding of the deep meanings of it through which we are enabled to taste to the fullest, the joys of true brotherhood, fellowship and the happiness of living, working, and doing for each other. And that really take fortitude.

As we are so well aware, the world at large is not organized on that basis. Jealousies, hatreds ambitions, greeds, and spites, encompass the earth. To people in the grip of such forces the tenets and teachings of Masonry mean nothing. They laugh and scorn at this Divinely inspired philosophy and hold it in contempt. Our adherence to such principles is reviled. Power — physical or psychological — is the god of such people. Thus, when we speak of the

gentle things, the kindly things, the patience and brotherly love of Masonry, we are apt to meet with laughter and ridicule. Especially is this true now in these days when force and power occupy the centre of the stage. Sometimes there seems little room left for the humble gentleness of our teachings.

We need not be deceived. What we have to offer is what the whole world needs and wants. In times of stress and trouble the quiet things we teach are brushed aside. Yet, always, the scarred and hungry heart of man comes back to them. There is no other comfort, no other relief. Therefore, now, as never before, must we exhibit our fortitude, that strength of conviction, of truth and reality that, after all the turmoil and confusion is over, can and will do so much to heal the wounds and hurts of war and evils.

There are worries, fears, griefs, and sorrows that at times seem to engulf us all. We are gravely concerned about the future of our country and security for ourselves. But, if we give away, what hope is there left? None. Now, of all times, we must be strong and show the world the inner power of our brotherly love and faith. This is one of the reasons why we have been brought together in a common union.

It is both desirable and necessary doing these perilous days to exhibit a true fellowship of brotherhood to each other and to the world, a steadfast fortitude that no danger nor fear can shake. Beholding it, those who might lose courage are supported, given new strength. We all promised to do this and verily we vowed always to be ready to help a brother in distress. One way to do that is to demonstrate before him and then pass on to him the fortitude we all need so much. This quality is one of the standards by which we measure men.

In weakness we can do little or nothing. In strength—no just purpose is impossible for us to achieve. Let us, then, hold fast to fortitude.

Bro. M. A. Stillbaugh, in the
Masonic Chronicle, Wisconsin.



Freemasonry is a continual struggle to see and accept in its normal light. From the hour we are raised to that new life within and around us, to the hour when we lie down to that last long sleep from which there is no more waking to on earth, a true Mason is in search of the right, the good, the pure, the true! That is why he is closely attached to the home, the church, the school, and all those agencies which reach for the noblest ideals of man. That is why you find a true Mason interested in science, art, literature, good government and righteous living.



A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after awhile he knows something.

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