



Authorized as second class mail by the Post Office

Department, Ottawa, and for payment of postage in cash.

Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor S. CARL HECKBERT, P.G.M., Vermilion, Alberta

REFLECTIONS OF A YOUNG MASON

Bro. Jack L. Frost in the Indiana Freemason

It should be noted, first of all, that the author of this article was made a Master Mason on June 8th, 1965. As one of the most recent Master Masons in the State of Washington, I realize that it would be completely and wholly pretentious for me to write as one well-steeped in Masonic lore and tradition. My purpose here is quite the contrary. I hope to present my thoughts as a new Master Mason.

I find myself somewhat alarmed and confused at the suggestion in some quarters at home and abroad that the work which I have recently committed to memory be changed. As I learned the work, and I admit it was a difficult task, I was not struck with the feeling of repetition or exaggeration. On the contrary, I was impressed with the precise manner in which the words are used to convey certain thoughts.

As the work became more familiar to me, I began to sense in it a poetic nature. In retrospect, it seems to be specifically designed for the purpose of gradually erecting a word structure in which each word and thought support and offer foundation to those that follow. The pinnacle of the building is the final phase of the Master Mason's Degree which rests easily and proudly on the well-learned foundation.

When I became a Master Mason I felt very much as a man who had finished a complex solid structure. I stood atop it proud and free surveying all I had done and found it well-made. I found it a structure in which I could live. That day I felt the sunshine of Brotherly Love.

I found no disappointment while constructing, nor do I think I will find boredom or frustration while watching a future Brother cement his own Masonic structure using these same tools, words, thoughts and vows as I and other Brothers and Fellows have done before.

When I sit in Lodge with my Brethren, I see some older than I, some younger, some in better health and some in poorer. I see men of varying political persuasions; I see men wealthier and those not as wealthy. I ask myself, if we are Brethren what makes us so? The answer is in our common experience, an ascension by degrees, based on a succession of words and thoughts,

united in a common structure, a basic meaningful accomplishment to us all. A bond based on a common difficult task is our mutual experience. That, coupled with our faith, brings us together as Brothers. When a man does not finish his Masonic building during the three degrees for lack of motivation or lack of intellect, then perhaps this is best for all concerned.

For many years I spent eight hours a day working with juvenile boys, some were delinquent, some were disturbed and some insane. Over the years, I found one common thread amongst these youngsters: an essential factor is missing in their lives. This factor is a sense of family, they have it not; a sense of identity, they have it not. These young people are products of "disorganization".

We hear of personality disorganization, social disorganization, psyche disorganization, and so on. Disorganization in each of the above senses is a result of change and consequent loss of the previous structure. In this instance, the identity that is lost is the sense of family and family history. Change, of course, is necessary. Each individual and social institution lives only as long as it is flexible and responsive to change. But we must do this only when it is necessary and pertinent to survival. Man's society is certainly a product of change. We have altered our environment immeasurably from that first time of sparking a fire with flint to nuclear fission from the bullock to the jet for transportation.

These are changes in our ways of dealing with our environment, but what of us, have we changed. How are we different from the Masons who erected King Solomon's Temple, are we different from those Christians who chose to die in Rome's arena rather than deny their Christian heritage, I think not.

The basics of man have not changed. Like our ancestors, we can hunger, thirst, protect our loved ones, and reproduce. We also are capable of feeling more complex emotions such as love, compassion, integrity and self-respect. It is these complex emotions which I feel are in jeopardy. These, I feel, are endowed in man only as potentials. They are not endowed in an animal. These

(continued on page 35, column 1)

EDITORIAL

Recently it was my privilege to attend a Lodge meeting at which the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason was conferred upon a candidate of rather unusual ability and it was not difficult to see that he was much impressed by the fine work of the officers of the Lodge in presenting the ritual during the ceremony; the candidate eagerly followed every officer as he carried out his part of the work and when the Degree had been completed and the candidate seated in the customary position for the remainder of the evening it was evident that the candidate felt privileged indeed to be one of the group constituting the Lodge of which he had just been made a member.

Only a very short time later, during the refreshment hour, a visitor, when asked to address a few remarks to those in attendance, took advantage of the opportunity to inject a story that was, to say the least, of a most dubious character and later another speaker followed suit, telling what purported to be a 'joke', the nature of which was entirely unsuitable for a gathering of members of the Craft, more especially when a newly raised candidate was present.

It was evident indeed that these stories were not greeted with any degree of enthusiasm by those present and it is difficult to understand just why such stories are introduced.

The beautiful Charge delivered in an impressive manner to a candidate and heard with pleasure by all in attendance should have a lasting effect, and for a speaker to inject stories of doubtful value or virtue during refreshments a short time after the delivery of the Charge is a matter of real concern.

A candidate is told, in part, in the words of the Charge—"Duty, honor and gratitude now bind you to your trust; let no motive, therefore, ever make you swerve from your duty, but be true and faithful, and imitate the example of that celebrated artist whom you have once represented. Endeavor, in a word, to convince the world that merit has been your title to our privileges, and that on you our favors have not been undeservedly bestowed."

These beautiful words must necessarily make an impression on a candidate as he is welcomed into a Masonic Lodge; to have so-called jokes told by one who is, perhaps, thoughtless in the choice of his remarks, must surely cause the candidate to wonder about the simplicity and beauty of the words which he has so recently heard and appreciated and it is the purpose of this editorial to remind speakers at Masonic gatherings of the desirability of the most careful selection of remarks which might tend to further impress not only the candidate, but all sincere Masons who are jealous of the high quality of their ritual. The 'shady' story has no place at a Masonic gathering.

S.C.H.

WITHIN THE CRAFT IN ALBERTA EDSON LODGE HONOURS 60 YEAR MEMBER

On January 22nd, the members of Edson Lodge, together with a large number of visitors met to pay honour to a member of sixty years standing in the person of Right Worshipful Brother John Thomson who had attained his sixtieth year of active membership in the Lodge. R. W. Bro. Thomson will reach his 80th birthday in the latter part of this year and is, happily, in good health and spirits.

R. W. Bro. Thomson was raised in a Lodge in his native Dundee, Scotland and became a Charter Member of Edson Lodge in 1911. He has been a most ardent Mason in all of the years since and has left his permanent mark on Masonry throughout a wide area.

Special guests at the meeting were a stepson, Bro. John Murie, who made the trip from Chilliwack, B.C. for the purpose of joining in the tribute to the stalwart of such long standing, Bert Thomson, a son of the honoured guest from Jasper, Bro. George Fowlie, also of Jasper, R. W. Bro. John Booth of Edmonton, P.D.D.G.M., R. W. Hollands of Edmonton attended as the representative of the Grand Master, Chief Constable John MacDonald of Edson, Charles Young of Hinton and Joseph Wynne of the Dept. of Municipal Affairs of Edson, together with R. W. Bro. R. C. Gregg, who gave an interesting and informative outline of the fine record of Bro. Thomson in Masonry.

"John Thomson Night" was an outstanding event in the life of Edson Lodge and it was evident from the numerous and sincere tributes paid to the distinguished guest that the contribution he had made was more than usually appreciated.

Members of the Craft all over Alberta will join with the members of Edson Lodge in expressing the hope that Bro. Thomson will long be spared to continue his splendid work for Freemasonry and the community which he has so richly served. The Bulletin is pleased indeed to recognize the fine contribution of this outstanding Mason.

VERMILION LODGE ESTABLISHES MUSEUM

Vermilion Lodge No. 24 has had a newly established room set apart in the Temple for museum purposes and a start has been made towards conserving items of Masonic interest which might otherwise be lost for the future.

Members of the Craft throughout the Jurisdiction who may have museum pieces are invited to place them on loan with Vermilion Lodge so that their preservation would be assured; proper receipts would be given for such items and they would be available to the owners at any time they might be desired.

Freemasonry is not something which you lay aside when you leave the Lodge room. We come to the Lodge to learn and we go forth from it to teach by precept and example.

feelings flourish when man has a sense of being an extension of something larger than himself—Masonry. When a man feels he is a continuation of a long on-going process such as Freemasonry, then he is a civilized man and capable of being a reproductive element in his society.

One of the great social difficulties of our minority races today is the fact that they are unable and, in a sense, unwilling, to find a pride or a purpose in their heritage. Their common element is negative in that it is disorganization due to the lack of a sense of common history or, perhaps, a shame or even denial of that history.

In order for us to cope with the many social changes which are daily thrust upon us, we must guard and zealously protect those threads of civilization, that heritage, the aged ceremonies which bind us by a spiritual and historical cable tow to the father or our father's father.

There are movements afoot today to change the image of George Washington from the Father of our country to a shiftless bouncer. There is a movement to change the Bible to modern expression and idiom. I challenge any to do this without losing thought, imagery and beauty. Yes, there is a repetition in the Bible. Why not? There is also repetition in the "Star Spangled Banner"! Are we in such a hurry that we cannot afford the effort to repeat a beautiful thought? Perhaps repetition is a luxury which we, in our modern haste have forgotten to appreciate.

Being born free is not an accident. It is the result of great efforts. Through the past, we can gain insight into the future, because of the past we can deal with the present. Let us not forget that the principles of modern architecture evolved because of the basic Corinthian column. Let us never lose sight of the basic fundamentals. When they are mentioned in our work, it reminds us of the importance of a sound beginning in any undertaking.

What, then, of the lack of interest in the Lodge? What, then, of those members who stray? I do not have the experience to respond to this point directly. I do question the advisability of too much stress on bringing the community into the Lodge. When I want to interact with the community, I can attend a PTA or other similar meeting. I would hope that the Lodge would continue opportunity for a man to sit with Brethren whom he can trust and listen to Brethren who speak from their hearts and offer good advice. I would hope that this opportunity to sit with Brethren will be guarded and protected. Where else can it be done?

It has been suggested that we bring in professionals to assist in solving the 'lack of interest' problem. What kind of professional can help me be a better man, a freer man, a better Mason? Perhaps a Brother can do this, but, speaking as a professional man, I cannot see any other professional man bringing me light in these areas.

In regard to Masonic activity with social and political ramifications, I would suggest that first we tidy up our own Masonic house. Do we know

why each and every absent Brother has strayed? Have we used all of our persuasiveness and sound advice to strengthen our own ranks from within?

How many meetings does a Brother miss before we lose interest in him? How many Brethren, now, perhaps, want to return to Lodge, but are anxious about the feelings of those who have remained faithful? This work and effort among Brethren I would call productive, good and worthwhile.

I suggest, then, that we cling dearly to our heritage; that we doggedly pursue any Brother who has fallen aside and provide for him that Brotherly Love he hoped to find in Masonry; that we be informed as to the needs of our Brethren the world over and that we meet those needs as best we can, individually and collectively, as Masons.

I believe that it is this way that we can expand our souls as Christians and as Masons, and as men freeborn.

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON'S DEFINITION OF A MASON

When is a man a Mason? When he can look out over the rivers, the hills and the far horizon with a profound sense of his own littleness in the vast scheme of things, and yet have faith, hope and courage. When he knows that down in his heart every man is as noble, as vile, as divine, as diabolic and as lonely as himself, and seeks to know, to forgive, and to love his fellow man. When he knows how to sympathize with men in their sorrows, yea, even in their sins—knowing that each man fights a hard fight against many odds. When he has learned how to make friends and to keep them, and above all how to keep friends with himself. When he loves flowers, can hunt the birds without a gun, and feels the thrill of an old forgotten joy when he hears the laugh of a little child. When he can be happy and high-minded amid the meaner drudgeries of life. When star-crowned trees and the glint of sunlight on flowering waters subdue him like the thought of one much loved and long dead. When no voice of distress reaches his ears in vain, and no hand seeks his aid without response. When he finds good in every faith that helps any man to lay hold of higher things, and to see majestic things in life, whatever the name of that faith may be. When he can look into a wayside puddle and see something besides mud, and into the face of the most forlorn mortal and see something besides sin. When he knows how to pray, how to love, how to hope. When he has kept faith with himself, with his fellow man, with his God; in his hand a sword for evil, in his heart a bit of a song—glad to live but not afraid to die! In such a man, whether he be rich or poor, scholarly or unlearned, famous or obscure, Freemasonry has wrought her sweet ministry! Such a man has found the only real secret of Freemasonry, and the one which it is trying to give to all the world.

Joseph Fort Newton 1880-1950



MASONIC OBLIGATIONS

By W. Bro. R. E. Race in the Masonic Record

In these days when there is so much discussion about the penalties of our obligations, let us extend the discussion to consider the broader aspects of the Mason's obligations.

In 1967 the United Grand Lodge of England will celebrate its 250th Anniversary and Canadian Grand Lodges will mark the passing of varied and substantial numbers of years of Masonic service. The form the celebrations will take, as envisaged, is worthy of the support of all. Masonry stretches back over a long time, but from the year 1717 to the present Masonry has survived the wreck of mighty empires and resisted the destroying hand of time. Throughout the same period, however, the image of Masonry has undergone an inevitable change. It has vastly increased its membership and now embraces a very comprehensive range from every walk of life, albeit all well and worthily recommended. The principles of our Order are essentially the same and one can only hope that its influence for good in the world is proportionately increased by the vast number now ranging themselves under its banners.

The "Grand Principles" of Masonry are essentially Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth and the display of these qualities is still the distinguishing characteristics of the real Freemason both in his dealings with his Brethren and in his associations with the "uninstructed" and popular world.

In addition to the above considerations the worthy Mason should remember the ancient landmarks of our Order—the ritualism, the ceremonial and the traditional modes of conduct which all combine to particularly characterise our ancient Order. These will admit no innovations without threatening the very foundations of Masonry. The allegorical practises have been handed down to us from time immemorial and we are custodians of a sacred trust. Our duty is clear, we have an obligation to maintain and preserve, pure and unadulterated, the ancient usages and established customs of the Order. This obligation devolves squarely on every member of the Craft, inasmuch as any departure from or modification of the ceremonial is a step on the downward path—away from our lofty traditions and towards a non-descript organization which has lost its essential character.

It is appreciated that, apart from the general

order of procedure, many Lodges, old and new, have adopted certain traditional practices within the general framework. Let us say at once that it is not the purpose of this article to discourage or interfere with these traditional 'embellishments' which in most cases are commendable. It is rather our purpose to stimulate individuals to practice with greater precision, those things in which they have been instructed. Apathy and sometimes (we suspect) sheer laziness can make a mockery of our symbolic ceremonial. Steps, signs and processional movements, as well as modes of conduct and address can so easily become slovenly, and in this respect the older Mason is not always free from blame. Thereby a poor example is set for the younger brethren who may consider it to be a mark of experience to appear 'casual' like their elder brethren.

Let each brother search his heart and indulge in self criticism. Thereafter let him faithfully observe the rules with meticulous care and with no fear of criticism. His brethren will follow his example and his Lodge become an object of admiration. Other Lodges will hasten to emulate a fine example.

Our final comment is to call attention to an increasing tendency among some brethren and Lodges to abridge the ceremonies by curtailing and sometimes by omitting parts of our beautiful and impressive ritual. The obscure excuse for this is, we suspect, to enable us to hasten to the refreshment room. This is no valid reason as a realistic appraisal of this will often reveal that the mutilation of the ceremony has shortened it by only a matter of moments and cannot, therefore, be justified at such a price.

We are repeatedly charged to "please each other and to unite in the grand design of being happy and communicating happiness." This is plainly of paramount importance but as we shall be better pleased with ourselves if we unite in jealously preserving the dignity and high importance of our ancient and distinctive customs. This is one of the important obligations of Freemasonry today and the penalty of violating it—positively or by indifferent acquiescence—is to undermine the very future of Freemasonry and to destroy its attraction in the eyes of intelligent and worthy man. It is easy to let standards slip. It is difficult to regain a lost position. Let us see to it that our standards measure up to the highest traditions of the great Order of which we are privileged members. Each one of us is a steward to a sacred trust.

GRAND LODGE—JUNE 8 - 9

All Members of the Craft are reminded of the forthcoming Sessions of Grand Lodge to be held in the City of Edmonton on June 8th and 9th.

It is a distinct obligation that Worshipful Masters and Senior Officers attend or to see that their Lodge is represented.

In addition to obligation the fellowship and pleasure of attendance should be a highlight of the Masonic year.