

GRAND MASTER OF ALL SYMBOLIC LODGES.

THE true Mason is a practical Philosopher, who, under religious emblems, in all ages adopted by wisdom, builds upon plans traced by nature and reason the moral edifice of knowledge. He ought to find, in the symmetrical relation of all the parts of this rational edifice, the principle and rule of all his duties, the source of all his pleasures. He improves his moral nature, becomes a better man, and finds in the reunion of virtuous men, assembled with pure views, the means of multiplying his acts of beneficence. Masonry and Philosophy, without being one and the same thing, have the same object, and propose to themselves the same end, the worship of the Grand Architect of the Universe, acquaintance and familiarity with the wonders of nature, and the happiness of humanity attained by the constant practice of all the virtues.

As Grand Master of all Symbolic Lodges, it is your especial duty to aid in restoring Masonry to its primitive purity. You have become an instructor. Masonry long wandered in error. Instead of improving, it degenerated from its primitive simplicity, and retrograded toward a system, distorted by stupidity and ignorance, which, unable to construct a beautiful machine, made a complicated one. Less than two hundred years ago, its organization was simple, and altogether moral, its emblems, allegories, and ceremonies easy to be understood, and their purpose and object readily to be seen. It was then confined to a very small number of Degrees. Its constitutions were like those of a Society of Essenes, written in the first century of our era. There could be seen the primitive Christianity, organized into Masonry, the school of Pythagoras without incongruities or absurdities; a Masonry simple and significant, in which it was not necessary to torture the mind to discover reasonable interpretations; a Masonry at once religious and philosophical, worthy of a good citizen and an enlightened philanthropist.

Innovators and inventors overturned that primitive simplicity.

Ignorance engaged in the work of making Degrees, and trifles and gewgaws and pretended mysteries, absurd or hideous, usurped the place of Masonic Truth. The picture of a horrid vengeance, the poniard and the bloody head, appeared in the peaceful Temple of Masonry, without sufficient explanation of their symbolic meaning. Oaths out of all proportion with their object, shocked the candidate, and then became ridiculous, and were wholly disregarded. Acolytes were exposed to tests, and compelled to perform acts, which, if real, would have been abominable; but being mere chimeras, were preposterous, and excited contempt and laughter only. Eight hundred Degrees of one kind and another were invented: Infidelity and even Jesuitry were taught under the mask of Masonry. The rituals even of the respectable Degrees, copied and mutilated by ignorant men, became nonsensical and trivial; and the words so corrupted that it has hitherto been found impossible to recover many of them at all. Candidates were made to degrade themselves, and to submit to insults not tolerable to a man of spirit and honor.

Hence it was that, practically, the largest portion of the Degrees claimed by the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, and before it by the Rite of Perfection, fell into disuse, were merely communicated, and their rituals became jejune and insignificant. These Rites resembled those old palaces and baronial castles, the different parts of which, built at different periods remote from one another, upon plans and according to tastes that greatly varied, formed a discordant and incongruous whole. Judaism and chivalry, superstition and philosophy, philanthropy and insane hatred and longing for vengeance, a pure morality and unjust and illegal revenge, were found strangely mated and standing hand in hand within the Temples of Peace and Concord; and the whole system was one grotesque commingling of incongruous things, of contrasts and contradictions, of shocking and fantastic extravagances, of parts repugnant to good taste, and fine conceptions overlaid and disfigured by absurdities engendered by ignorance, fanaticism, and a senseless mysticism.

An empty and sterile pomp, impossible indeed to be carried out, and to which no meaning whatever was attached, with far-fetched explanations that were either so many stupid platitudes or themselves needed an interpreter; lofty titles, arbitrarily assumed, and to which the inventors had not condescended to attach any expla-

nation that should acquit them of the folly of assuming temporal rank, power, and titles of nobility, made the world laugh, and the Initiate feel ashamed.

Some of these titles we retain; but they have with us meanings entirely consistent with that Spirit of Equality which is the foundation and peremptory law of its being of all Masonry. The *Knight*, with us, is he who devotes his hand, his heart, his brain, to the Science of Masonry, and professes himself the Sworn Soldier of Truth: the *Prince* is he who aims to be *Chief* [*Princeps*], *first*, *leader*, among his equals, in virtue and good deeds: the *Sovereign* is he who, one of an order whose members are all Sovereigns, is Supreme only because the law and constitutions are so, which he administers, and by which he, like every other brother, is governed. The titles, *Puissant*, *Potent*, *Wise*, and *Venerable*, indicate that power of Virtue, Intelligence, and Wisdom, which those ought to strive to attain who are placed in high office by the suffrages of their brethren: and all our other titles and designations have an esoteric meaning, consistent with modesty and equality, and which those who receive them should fully understand. As Master of a Lodge it is your duty to instruct your Brethren that they are all so many constant lessons, teaching the lofty qualifications which are required of those who claim them, and not merely idle gew-gaws worn in ridiculous imitation of the times when the Nobles and Priests were masters and the people slaves: and that, in all true Masonry, the Knight, the Pontiff, the Prince, and the Sovereign are but the first among their equals: and the cordon, the clothing, and the jewel but symbols and emblems of the virtues required of all good Masons.

The Mason kneels, no longer to present his petition for admittance or to receive the answer, no longer to a man as his superior, who is but his brother, but to his God; to whom he appeals for the rectitude of his intentions, and whose aid he asks to enable him to keep his vows. No one is degraded by bending his knee to God at the altar, or to receive the honor of Knighthood as Bayard and Du Guesclin knelt. To kneel for other purposes, Masonry does not require. God gave to man a head to be borne erect, a port upright and majestic. We assemble in our Temples to cherish and inculcate sentiments that conform to that loftiness of bearing which the just and upright man is entitled to maintain, and we do not require those who desire to be admitted among us, ignominiously

to bow the head. We respect man, because we respect ourselves that he may conceive a lofty idea of his dignity as a human being free and independent. If modesty is a virtue, humility and obsequiousness to man are base: for there is a noble pride which is the most real and solid basis of virtue. Man should humble himself before the Infinite God; but not before his erring and imperfect brother.

As Master of a Lodge, you will therefore be exceedingly careful that no Candidate, in any Degree, be required to submit to any degradation whatever; as has been too much the custom in some of the Degrees: and take it as a certain and inflexible rule, to which there is *no* exception, that real Masonry requires of no man anything to which a Knight and Gentleman cannot honorably, and without feeling outraged or humiliated, submit.

The Supreme Council for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States at length undertook the indispensable and long-delayed task of revising and reforming the work and rituals of the thirty Degrees under its jurisdiction. Retaining the essentials of the Degrees and all the means by which the members recognize one another, it has sought out and developed the leading idea of each Degree, rejected the puerilities and absurdities with which many of them were disfigured, and made of them a connected system of moral, religious, and philosophical instruction. Sectarian of no creed, it has yet thought it not improper to use the old allegories, based on occurrences detailed in the Hebrew and Christian books, and drawn from the Ancient Mysteries of Egypt, Persia, Greece, India, the Druids and the Essenes, as vehicles to communicate the Great Masonic Truths; as it has used the legends of the Crusades, and the ceremonies of the orders of Knighthood.

It no longer inculcates a criminal and wicked vengeance. It has not allowed Masonry to play the assassin: to avenge the death either of Hiram, of Charles the 1st, or of Jaques De Molay and the Templars. The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Masonry has now become, what Masonry at first was meant to be, a Teacher of Great Truths, inspired by an upright and enlightened reason, a firm and constant wisdom, and an affectionate and liberal philanthropy.

It is no longer a system, over the composition and arrangement of the different parts of which, want of reflection, chance, ignorance, and perhaps motives still more ignoble presided: a system unsuited

to our habits, our manners, our ideas, or the world-wide philanthropy and universal toleration of Masonry; or to bodies small in number, whose revenues should be devoted to the relief of the unfortunate, and not to empty show; no longer a heterogeneous aggregate of Degrees, shocking by its anachronisms and contradictions, powerless to disseminate light, information, and moral and philosophical ideas.

As Master, you will teach those who are under you, and to whom you will owe your office, that the decorations of many of the Degrees are to be dispensed with, whenever the expense would interfere with the duties of charity, relief, and benevolence; and to be indulged in only by wealthy bodies that will thereby do no wrong to those entitled to their assistance. The essentials of all the Degrees may be procured at slight expense; and it is at the option of every Brother to procure or not to procure, as he pleases, the dress, decorations, and jewels of any Degree other than the 14th, 18th, 30th, and 32d.

We teach the truth of none of the legends we recite. They are to us but parables and allegories, involving and enveloping Masonic instruction; and vehicles of useful and interesting information. They represent the different phases of the human mind, its efforts and struggles to comprehend nature, God, the government of the Universe, the permitted existence of sorrow and evil. To teach us wisdom, and the folly of endeavoring to explain to ourselves that which we are not capable of understanding, we reproduce the speculations of the Philosophers, the Kabalists, the Mystagogues and the Gnostics. Every one being at liberty to apply our symbols and emblems as he thinks most consistent with truth and reason and with his own faith, we give them such an interpretation only as maybe accepted by all. Our Degrees maybe conferred in France or Turkey, at Pekin, Ispahan, Rome, or Geneva, in the city of Penn or in Catholic Louisiana, upon the subject of an absolute government or the citizen of a Free State, upon Sectarian or Theist. To honor the Deity, to regard all men as our Brethren, as children, equally dear to Him, of the Supreme Creator of the Universe, and to make himself useful to society and himself by his labor, are its teachings to its Initiates in all the Degrees.

Preacher of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality, it desires them to be attained by making men fit to receive them, and by the moral power of an intelligent and enlightened People. It lays no plots

and conspiracies. It hatches no premature revolutions ; it encourages no people to revolt against the constituted authorities ; but recognizing the great truth that freedom follows fitness for freedom as the corollary follows the axiom, it strives to *prepare* men to govern themselves.

Where domestic slavery exists, it teaches the master humanity and the alleviation of the condition of his slave, and moderate correction and gentle discipline ; as it teaches them to the master of the apprentice : and as it teaches to the employers of other men, in mines, manufactories, and workshops, consideration and humanity for those who depend upon their labor for their bread, and to whom want of employment is starvation, and overwork is fever, consumption, and death.

As Master of a Lodge, you are to inculcate these duties on your brethren. Teach the employed to be honest, punctual, and faithful as well as respectful and obedient to all proper orders : but also teach the employer that every man or woman who desires to work, has a right to have work to do ; and that they, and those who from sickness or feebleness, loss of limb or of bodily vigor, old age or infancy, are not able to work, have a right to be fed, clothed, and sheltered from the inclement elements : that he commits an awful sin against Masonry and in the sight of God, if he closes his workshops or factories, or ceases to work his mines, when they do not yield him what he regards as sufficient profit, and so dismisses his workmen and workwomen to starve ; or when he reduces the wages of man or woman to so low a standard that they and their families cannot be clothed and fed and comfortably housed ; or by overwork must give him their blood and life in exchange for the pittance of their wages : and that his duty as a Mason and Brother pre-emptorily requires him to continue to employ those who else will be pinched with hunger and cold, or resort to theft and vice : and to pay them fair wages, though it may reduce or annul his profits or even eat into his capital ; for God hath but loaned him his wealth, and made him His almoner and agent to invest it.

Except as mere symbols of the moral virtues and intellectual qualities, the tools and implements of Masonry belong exclusively to the first three Degrees. They also, however, serve to remind the Mason who has advanced further, that his new rank is based upon the humble labors of the symbolic Degrees, as they are improperly termed, inasmuch as all the Degrees are symbolic.

Thus the Initiates are inspired with a just idea of Masonry, to wit, that it is essentially WORK; both teaching and practising LABOR; and that it is altogether emblematic. Three kinds of work are necessary to the preservation and protection of man and society: manual labor, specially belonging to the three blue Degrees; labor in arms, symbolized by the Knightly or chivalric Degrees; and intellectual labor, belonging particularly to the Philosophical Degrees.

We have preserved and multiplied such emblems as have a true and profound meaning. We reject many of the old and senseless explanations. We have not reduced Masonry to a cold metaphysics that exiles everything belonging to the domain of the imagination. The ignorant, and those *half-wise* in reality, but *over-wise* in their own conceit, may assail our symbols with sarcasms; but they are nevertheless ingenious veils that cover the Truth, respected by all who know the means by which the heart of man is reached and his feelings enlisted. The Great Moralists often had recourse to allegories, in order to instruct men without repelling them. But we have been careful not to allow our emblems to be too obscure, so as to require far-fetched and forced interpretations. In our days, and in the enlightened land in which we live, we do not need to wrap ourselves in veils so strange and impenetrable, as to prevent or hinder instruction instead of furthering it; or to induce the suspicion that we have concealed meanings which we communicate only to the most reliable adepts, because they are contrary to good order or the well-being of society.

The Duties of the Class of *Instructors*, that is, the Masons of the Degrees from the 4th to the 8th, inclusive, are, particularly, to perfect the younger Masons in the words, signs and tokens and other work of the Degrees they have received; to explain to them the meaning of the different emblems, and to expound the moral instruction which they convey. And upon their report of proficiency alone can their pupils be allowed to advance and receive an increase of wages.

The Directors of the Work, or those of the 9th, 10th, and 11th Degrees are to report to the Chapters upon the regularity, activity and proper direction of the work of bodies in the lower Degrees, and what is needed to be enacted for their prosperity and usefulness. In the Symbolic Lodges, they are particularly charged to stimulate the zeal of the workmen, to induce them to engage in new labors and enterprises for the good of Masonry, their country and mankind, and to give them fraternal advice when they fall short of their

duty ; or, in cases that require it, to invoke against them the rigor of Masonic law.

The Architects, or those of the 12th, 13th, and 14th, should be selected from none but Brothers well instructed in the preceding Degrees ; zealous, and capable of discoursing upon that Masonry ; illustrating it, and discussing the simple questions of moral philosophy. And one of them, at every communication, should be prepared with a lecture, communicating useful knowledge or giving good advice to the Brethren.

The Knights, of the 15th and 16th Degrees, wear the sword. They are bound to prevent and repair, as far as may be in their power, all injustice, both in the world and in Masonry ; to protect the weak and to bring oppressors to justice. Their works and lectures must be in this spirit. They should inquire whether Masonry fulfills, as far as it ought and can, its principal purpose, which is to succor the unfortunate. That it may do so, they should prepare propositions to be offered in the Blue Lodges calculated to attain that end, to put an end to abuses, and to prevent or correct negligence. Those in the Lodges who have attained the rank of Knights, are most fit to be appointed Almoners, and charged to ascertain and make known who need and are entitled to the charity of the Order.

In the higher Degrees those only should be received who have sufficient reading and information to discuss the great questions of philosophy. From them the Orators of the Lodges should be selected, as well as those of the Councils and Chapters. They are charged to suggest such measures as are necessary to make Masonry entirely faithful to the spirit of its institution, both as to its charitable purposes, and the diffusion of light and knowledge ; such as are needed to correct abuses that have crept in, and offences against the rules and general spirit of the Order ; and such as will tend to make it, as it was meant to be, the great Teacher of Mankind.

As Master of a Lodge, Council, or Chapter, it will be your duty to impress upon the minds of your Brethren these views of the general plan and separate parts of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite ; of its spirit and design ; its harmony and regularity ; of the duties of the officers and members ; and of the particular lessons intended to be taught by each Degree.

Especially you are not to allow any assembly of the body over which you may preside, to close, without recalling to the minds of

the Brethren the Masonic virtues and duties which are represented upon the Tracing Board of this Degree. That is an imperative duty. Forget not that, more than three thousand years ago, ZOROASTER said: "*Be good, be kind, be humane, and charitable; love your fellows; console the afflicted; pardon those who have done you wrong.*" Nor that more than two thousand three hundred years ago CONFUCIUS repeated, also quoting the language of those who had lived before himself: "*Love thy neighbor as thyself: Do not to others what thou wouldst not wish should be done to thyself: Forgive injuries. Forgive your enemy, be reconciled to him, give him assistance, invoke God in his behalf!*"

Let not the morality of your Lodge be inferior to that of the Persian or the Chinese Philosopher.

Urge upon your Brethren the teaching and the most untentious practice of the morality of the Lodge, without regard to times, places, religions, or peoples.

Urge them to love one another, to be devoted to one another, to be faithful to the country, the government, and the laws: for to serve the country is to pay a dear and sacred debt:

To respect all forms of worship, to tolerate all political and religious opinions; not to blame, and still less to condemn the religion of others; not to seek to make converts; but to be content if they have the religion of Socrates; a veneration for the Creator, the religion of good works, and grateful acknowledgment of God's blessings:

To fraternize with all men; to assist all who are unfortunate; and to cheerfully postpone their own interests to that of the Order:

To make it the constant rule of their lives, to think well, to speak well, and to act well:

To place the sage above the soldier, the noble, or the prince; and take the wise and good as their models:

To see that their professions and practice, their teachings and conduct, do always agree:

To make this also their motto: Do that which thou oughtest to do; let the result be what it will.

Such, my Brother, are some of the duties of that office which you have sought to be qualified to exercise. May you perform them well; and in so doing gain honor for yourself, and advance the great cause of Masonry, Humanity, and Progress.