

THE
LODGE MASTER

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DUTIES, POWERS, . . .
AND PRIVILEGES . . .

BY
ANDREW MACBRIDE.

P. M. Lodge Progress, Glasgow, No. 873

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GLASGOW :

R. E. ROBERTSON, LTD., 198 BUCHANAN STREET.

1931.

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HIS QUALIFICATIONS.

THERE are certain points essential to the making of a good Master of a Lodge, and these are :—

- 1st, Upright Character.
- 2nd, Sound Judgment.
- 3rd, Knowledge of Masonry.
- 4th, Mental Ability.

The full performance of the duties of a Master demands these qualities, and the degree of excellency in a Master lies in the measure in which he possesses them. Let us consider them.

1st, Upright Character.—This is the most important qualification. Without it, knowledge, ability, and even genius are of little value. It directs these to noble ends, and makes them valuable to the individual and to humanity. The Mallet and Chisel are not of much service for the building of the Temple unless governed by the Square. Intellect to morality is as the lever to the hand and as the pulsating engine to the ship's helm. An upright man so directs his life that, although his work may not be great, it will be true; and if his knowledge be limited, he will use what he has for great purposes. What we call capability is constitutional. Knowledge is an acquirement. Uprightness is a development and forms the beautiful in human character. Beauty is not identified with bulk. The microscope reveals beauty; the telescope greatness. Uprightness is not an appendage to great

intellect, and in morals there is no mensuration. It is from the right use of our faculties that we gain real development and power; for the upright in heart build on the eternal rocks, and the infinite power of the Universe works with them. As a man is true to the little he knows, so is his power to know more. If he rules himself rightly, he will be able to govern others wisely, and without this quality no one can be a good Master.

To the young craftsman, who cherishes the laudable desire of becoming a Master, I would say that the development of uprightness, like all human development, can only be attained by effort, and the first thing needful is the true desire for it. If that be cherished in the heart, like seed in the earth, it will seek upwards into the light of day, and grow into flower and fruit. Through darkness and over all difficulties, it will surely, though often slowly, work its way upwards. From desire springs action. Without action, desire burns itself to the dead ashes of vain regret. In action, it develops new life and a higher existence.

Upright growth of character is attained by working true to a higher power than our own. The operative Mason by the plumb-rule keeps in perpetual touch with the great power of gravitation. He cannot deviate from it with impunity. Neither can any one hope to build an upright life-structure unless in his actions he constantly strives to keep true to the divine ideal revealed to him. Uprightness is based on humility—the level line of human dependence on the divine. It is the evidence of the mortal rising to the immortal plane, upheld by the infinite power

that sustains the universe, just as a noble pillar, well founded, rises gracefully upwards, upheld by the force of gravitation. It is attained through earnest aspiration and by working true to divine law.

Genius may be a curse to society. Upright Character is always a blessing. Mental ability may see evil: the upright heart alone will overcome it. The former has no benevolence: the latter is both benevolent and beneficent. Benevolence is a spirit. You may measure a body by bulk, but spirit never. To invest our souls in material things outside of ourselves is poor economy. Our tenure in such things is, at the best, a short one. We lose them often in life and certainly in death. But proprietorship in Uprightness is registered in Heaven. It unites with the just and the true forces, with the pure and the beautiful of the Universe, and links us with that Divine Power outside ourselves that makes for Righteousness.

2nd, Sound Judgment.—Judgment is that faculty of the mind that can properly estimate the value of things. It gives true perspective to our views and just consistency to our actions. It maintains our balance in life, directs our aspirations, and decides our course. When it is sound—that is, healthy and strong—we have wisdom. Uprightness of Character without Sound Judgment may sow seed on stony places, cast pearls before swine, and lose battles gathering straws. Sound Judgment will lose a sprat to catch a whale, will suffer present loss for future gain, and will boldly sacrifice the lesser for greater life. The Judgment is not sound that listens to desire more than to conscience, that is influenced by gain rather than by

honour, and has no faith in the ultimate and eternal triumph of truth and right.

The exercise of Sound Judgment by a Master has an immense influence on the well-being of his Lodge and on his personal peace of mind and happiness in the Chair. An unjust or imprudent decision will strip him of that moral authority without which no Master can efficiently rule. Sometimes an unfair decision may be given in haste, and without any intention of being unfair. Smartness is often mistaken for ability and the desire to appear smart may lead to serious mistakes. It is better to be slow and sure than hasty in Judgment. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread," and the small mind is the most apt to damn the consequences of its decisions. Careful consideration should always precede a Judgment delivered from the Chair. Where the subject is one with which the mind is familiar, through knowledge and experience, a prompt decision is an advantage. But, as a rule, careful consideration gives thorough knowledge, and thorough knowledge does not often run with hasty judgment.

The Master who has Sound Judgment is distinguished by Prudence, Proficiency, and Progress. His prudence is shown in what he does, and more in what he does not do. His desires, even when most laudable, he circumscribes within the compass of his power, and he measures his power by the desires of his Lodge. His proficiency is manifested by making the heaviest work appear light and pleasant, and the lightest full of weight and meaning. His progress is rapid, because his steps are slow and sure, because he measures his speed by progression and not by

motion. He is not the fluttering barn-fowl full of furious motion, but the soaring eagle, whose almost motionless pinions carry him swiftly upwards and onwards.

3rd, Knowledge of Masonry.—There is a kind of knowledge of degrees and ceremonies gained by having gone through them. But this kind is more an exercise of the purse than of the brain, and scarcely deserves the name of knowledge. You may go through all the degrees up to the thirty-third, have a lorry load of Diplomas, and more jewels than your coat can carry, and yet be utterly ignorant of real masonry.

Your parchments may be nothing more than the hieroglyphic wrappings round an Egyptian mummy, and your jewels the ornaments of a stage puppet. There is also a kind of knowledge in being able to repeat the rituals and forms of the Order. This gramophone ability, however, does not imply any real knowledge of the truths and principles that underlie its symbols and ceremonies. A parrot may repeat the proverbs of Solomon and be none the wiser thereby.

True knowledge is the perception of the principles underlying anything; for instance, the craftsman who knows the laws that govern the art of building, the lines that give strength and stability, and those that give beauty to a fabric. This kind of knowledge is power. It makes a man a Master. It gives the power of planning and working to a given end and purpose. It enables the Captain to direct the ship, and gives him his right to the quarter deck. It enables the Master of a Lodge to plan his lodge work in perfect harmony with its Constitution

and Mission, and to work out that plan successfully. The Master who has not this knowledge is the blind servant of red tape and mechanical routine. He is full of ignorant childish fears in his work, and the more conscientious he is, the more fearful he will be. He must stick to every word and letter of what he has learned, for he knows merely the words and letters and not the spirit. He has no knowledge of how to take his bearings and shape his course by the sun and stars, and consequently he creeps along the shore, ever fearful of losing his course. He is not a Master of his craft, in the proper sense of the term. He is a slave to it, and knows it not.

4th, Mental Ability.—Strength and skill of mind form mental ability. It is distinguished from genius in being more the product of cultivation and development than of nature. Genius, like beauty, is a natural gift more than a development, although, like the diamond, it may owe much to art. It is also rare like the diamond, and comes not directly into the ordinary service of life. Ability is different. It is not uncommon and can be acquired. It can be developed just as strength and skill of body. The aspiring Master, therefore, should regularly exercise his mind by a serious study of the symbols and history of the craft and the ceremonies of the several degrees. This exercise, to be beneficial, should be regular and not spasmodic. It should also be systematic, beginning at the work of initiation and proceeding on step by step. Each point and symbol should be studied in its relation to the special truth and principle it teaches, and also in its connection and harmony generally with the ceremony or

proceeding of which it forms a part. By this regular and systematic exercise the mental faculties will be strengthened and developed, and skill in the craft attained.

But the Master should not only have the mental ability to understand the craft of Masonry, he should also have the ability of giving expression to his thoughts and ideas in suitable and correct language. Nothing tends more to lower the dignity of the Chair and lessen the Master's authority than stumbling uncouth utterances. It often offends the feelings and convictions of the listeners, as well as their sense of good taste, even when kindly meant.

In any dispute he is apt to add fuel to the flame, even when he means to be perfectly fair. A few well-chosen words, on the other hand, will generally restrain ill feeling, and direct the debate into a channel leading to a harmonious conclusion. It is, therefore, of importance that a Master should possess the mental ability to speak freely, as well as to think clearly, and to that end the aspirant should study and practise the art of expressing his thoughts in words fitted to the occasion.

While the Master ought to be thus able, he should in any debate speak as seldom and as shortly as possible. This is a point that ought to receive the careful consideration of every Master, particularly those who think they have "the gift o' the gab." In this, as in most things, it is quality and not quantity that tells; for clear expression lies more in the selection than in the volume of words, and that art can only be obtained by study and practice.

Through the endeavour to formulate our thoughts in

words we obtain a clearer view of them. When the architect tries to build and shape his ideas, he realises their imperfections as well as their beauty. The conceptions of the artist are developed and perfected on the canvas.

The inventor's notion becomes plainer to his own mind as he works out his plan or his model; so our thoughts, somewhat vague as they arise in our minds, become more definite and distinct to our vision as we try to formulate and express them in words. We are told that at the beginning of creation "the earth was without form and void, and darkness moved on the face of the deep." Only when He had worked out His thought in substance and form "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good."

By the effort to express our thoughts and clothe them in the form of words, or actions, or matter, we not only benefit others, but also, and even more so, benefit ourselves. Thus, the giving of knowledge does not impoverish, it enriches the giver. The true Master who makes a careful study of the Symbols or Ceremonies of Masonry, and tries to give expression to the truths he finds therein, will find his ideas of them all the clearer, his mental ability all the stronger, and will realise in his experience that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

HIS NOMINATION, ELECTION, AND INSTALLATION.

The election of the Master of a Lodge, so far as records go, has been annual, with I think, the single exception

of the Lodge Dunblane, which, during 23 years ending in 1760, elected their Office-Bearers biennially—see Murray Lyon's History, p. 16. In Mackay's Lexicon (London Edition, 1869), it is stated (p. 87) :—

The *election of Officers* of a Lodge must always take place before St. John the Evangelist's Day, which is with us the commencement of the Masonic year. Should it from any circumstances be postponed, it cannot afterwards be entered into, except by dispensation from the Grand Master. Nominations of candidates are not permitted by usages of Masonry, but a short time previous to the election the brethren should be called off to refreshment for the purpose of inter-changing their opinions. They are then called on, and each brother deposits in the ballot box the name of him whom he deems best qualified or most worthy ; and the votes being counted, the one who has received the greatest number is declared elected."

In p. 209 it is further stated :—

"He (the Master) is elected annually, but must have previously presided as a Warden, except in the case of a newly constituted Lodge, or when every Past Master and Warden, as well as the present Master, have refused to serve, or have died, resigned, or been expelled."

There are three statements in the foregoing extracts, viz. :—

First :—"The Election . . . must always take place before St. John the Evangelist's Day, Etc."

Second :—"Nomination of candidates are not permitted by the usages of Masonry."

Third :—"He (the Master) . . . must have previously presided as a Warden."

Mackay gives no authority for these assertions.

The present office of Master was at one time called Warden, and so far as I know there is no foundation for the two first in the customs or in the Laws observed by Lodges generally throughout the world either at present or in the past. The third statement is applicable to English Lodges, but I do not think it applies to Lodges universally, and certainly not to Scottish Lodges. It is to be regretted that a book, otherwise so useful and informative as this Lexicon, should be marred here and there by loose statements such as these. The rule fixing St. John's Day as the date at which Lodge Wardens were to be elected was not of universal application, for the 20th of December was the statutory date for the election of Wardens of Lodges within the bounds of Kilwinning, the Nether Ward of Clydesdale, Glasgow, Ayr, and Carrick.

At the present time in Scotland the date of the election of the Office-Bearers of subordinate Lodges varies according to the custom, bye-laws and convenience of each Lodge. Some Lodges have it on or about St. Andrew's Day, others on or about St. John's Day, and others again on a fixed meeting, such as the first or second meeting in a particular month. The election by ballot was introduced at the time of the erection of the Grand Lodge (1736), and has since been gradually adopted. It is now the mode in which elections are carried out generally, but it is not a Grand Lodge law for subordinate Lodges. The Grand Lodge laws regulate the election. They recognise the distinction between Nomination and Election, and

provide for both as separate acts, which may take place at the same or at different meetings according to the custom or the bye-laws of the Lodge.

A meeting for nomination separate from that for election is desirable so that sufficient time may be given to the members for considering the merits of the candidates. This may be open to the objection that it invites canvassing, the formation of parties, the introduction of outside influences of a social and political character, and the fermentation of strife. But the other method of voting immediately on nomination is apt to result in hasty ill-considered action. There are foolish persons in every society and in every Lodge, and these are apt to make proposals, on the spur of the moment, which the wiser but slower members do not approve, yet do not counteract, and the Lodge is thus too often saddled with incompetent Office-Bearers. Nomination and election at the same meeting gives the opportunity for a *coup d'etat*, an interval gives the time needful to make such efforts futile. It is true that such rash action is rare in the Mason Lodge, yet it is not wise to tempt human nature with the opportunity.

There are dangers in both ways, but my experience is decidedly in favour of an interval between nomination and election.

In some Lodges there is a standing order, or rule, that in all nominations and elections no speaker shall make any reference to the personal merits or demerits of the candidates. This is a very wise and simple rule. It is the duty of each member to ascertain for himself all about

the candidates, and, as a rule, these are well enough known. The praising of one candidate provokes depreciation by those in favour of another one, and as no man is perfect, fault finding is easy. The result is that the personal character and reputation of each candidate is dragged into discussion, and in the momentary heat of controversy, words may be used that will inflict lasting wounds.

The present Master is bound to see that the Laws and Regulations of the Grand Lodge are properly observed in the election of a new Master, and even when he is himself a candidate he cannot divest himself of his obligations and responsibilities, and if he vacates the Chair he is all the same responsible to the Grand Lodge for the proceedings. He should only retire when he has reasonable grounds to believe that the business will be fairly and constitutionally conducted in his absence. If he has good grounds to expect the contrary, then his clear duty is to stay and guide the proceedings to the best of his ability, and if there are any indications of serious objections to him doing so while he is a candidate, he should at once withdraw his candidature, if it is at all possible for him to do so, consistent with a conscientious view of the highest interest of the Lodge and of Masonry. Only under stern necessity should a Master preside over an election in which he is a candidate. By doing so he exposes himself to the charge of taking an unfair advantage of his position, and thus injuring his future reputation and usefulness in the Lodge. When there exists no just cause to fear unfair or unconstitutional action—and this will be so unless in

extremely rare cases—then the Master should hand over the Mallet to the Immediate, or the next Past Master present, and retire. This is obviously a duty he owes to himself as well as to the Lodge.

But this much debated point must be settled by the Master himself, according to the circumstances of the moment, and no general rule can here be laid down for him. Two considerations, however, stand out clearly, and these he should steadily keep in view:—(1) He cannot divest himself of his responsibilities for the proper conduct of the election. (2) The interests of the Craft and the Lodge must be held by him as superior to all those of a personal character.

There is a custom now being adopted in a number of Lodges of the Office-Bearers or the general committee submitting a list of nominations. This has much to commend it. The Office-Bearers should naturally have a fuller knowledge than the members generally of the qualities required for the duties of the various offices, and of those brethren who have shewn evidence of having those qualities. This custom provides a guide to the Lodge Members and does not preclude them from nominating other eligible brethren. When wisely exercised it will prevent ill-considered and hasty nominations and be of advantage to the Lodge. On the other hand, the Office-Bearers should be very careful in the exercise of such a privilege, so as to prevent the formation of an official clique, or even the suspicion of such. Members of a Lodge as a rule will rightly resent any appearance of interfering with their ancient and undoubted right to

nominate and elect their own officers, and the presiding Master at a nominating meeting should be careful to ask for nominations, after the official nominations are read, so that there may be no doubt as to the wish of the Office-Bearers to meet the views of the members generally.

Previous to the election of Office-Bearers meeting, the present Master should carefully read over the Grand Lodge Laws and the Lodge Bye-Laws on the subject, so that he may have everything done in accordance with these. The following are a few points to be specially noted:—

- (1) That the candidates nominated are in "good standing."
"Good Standing" means a Master Mason registered in the books of the Grand Lodge, a clear member on the Roll of the Lodge, and not under any sentence of suspension or expulsion.
- (2) That the proposers and seconders are also in "good standing."
- (3) That the election is in the 3rd degree.
- (4) That the book of the Laws and Constitution of the Grand Lodge is laid in front of the Chair.

POWERS AND PRIVILEGES.

The work of the Master of a Mason Lodge naturally arranges itself into three Main Divisions, viz. :—

- 1st, Administrative Work.
- 2nd, Legislative Work.
- 3rd, Educative Work.

A Mason Lodge is at once the most democratic and the most autocratic of institutions. The Master is elected

annually by the suffrages of his brethren to *rule and govern the Lodge*. Within certain defined limits his word is Law. The Lodge elects him as Master, but he can only be deposed by his compeers in the Grand Lodge. (The words here, "Grand Lodge," include Provincial and District Grand Lodges which are bodies delegated, within limited areas, to act for the Grand Lodge.) The Master is not responsible to his Lodge, but he is responsible *for* his Lodge. His power is great in directing, but he cannot perform any work by himself alone. He can order, but he cannot execute. He may draw the plan, but it is the Craft that works. On account of these circumstances it is of prime importance that there should be a hearty mutual love and respect between the members of the Lodge and the Master. Let the Master keep clearly in view the relative rights and privileges of the Members. By keeping in close touch with them, and taking them into his confidence, he will have their esteem and respect.

Hints to Masters.

1. The Master should not be labourer, builder, and everything. His function is to superintend and direct the work.
2. Allocate various parts to your Depute and Substitute Master, so that they may assist and relieve you.
3. Have a meeting of office-bearers as soon after the election as possible to arrange your work, and to enter your duties enthusiastically.
4. Remember it is the Master's work to plan and to draw out the plan.

5. Give encouragement to anyone who wishes to work, and bear in mind that your own Members have the first claim on your assistance and encouragement.
6. Don't parade your authority, but prove yourself worthy of the power placed in your hands by using it as seldom as possible.

In the Constitution of a Lodge an Ideal Condition is implied, for everything in Masonry is Ideal. In practice, of course, this ideal condition is not attained, but there are three things essential towards the attainment of it. There must be (1) the earnest desire on the part of the Members and the Master for this ideal state; (2) a knowledge of their relative rights and powers; (3) an endeavour to bear and forebear with each other in all things.

These and a sincere desire for brotherhood will enable them to overlook the imperfections, the failings, the frailties of each other with a charitable eye.

A true knowledge by a Master of his powers and privileges will form the basis of harmonious working, for ignorance is the prolific Mother of contentions and strife. A just conception of our own rights dispose us to respect the right of others and a true idea of the limits of our powers render us more free to acknowledge the powers of others.

Let us enquire briefly. What are the Powers and Privileges of a Master, and what are the limits of these?

Powers and Privileges of the Master.

1. The Lodge cannot sit in judgment on him.
2. Any charge against him by any members of the Lodge or the Craft must be formulated by petition to the Grand Lodge.

3. Grand Lodge cannot suspend or censure him without a regular process.
4. He can summon special meetings of the Lodge.
5. He is *Ex-Officio* member of all committees, and unless he has agreed to another Convener being appointed he is Convener of all committees.
6. He plans the order of Lodge Business, and of Lodge Labour, unless where that is pre-determined by the Lodge or its bye-laws.
7. In all points of order his decision is final, and all must work according to his Plan and Instructions.
8. He can call on any Brother to work for him, but unless the Brother is an Installed Master, he cannot occupy the Chair.
9. He can refuse to put to the Lodge any motion which he considers contrary to the Laws of the land, the Landmarks of the Order, or the Grand Lodge Laws.
10. He can order any Brother to retire from the Lodge.
11. He can personally bring any dispute between him and the Lodge under the consideration of the Grand Lodge.
 - (a) By raising a question of privilege.
 - (b) By regular motion on the matter, or
 - (c) By petition against certain members of the Lodge.
12. To the Lodge he is the Interpreter of the Laws of the Grand Lodge, which he is bound to interpret to the best of his ability.
13. For the due execution and administration of the Grand Lodge Laws and the Lodge Bye-Laws he is responsible to Grand Lodge, and is armed with full authority. Any interference with the proper exercise of that authority can be dealt with as per Par. 11 above.

Limitations of the Master's Powers.

1. At the end of twelve months the Lodge may elect another Master, and on the installation of the Master-elect the authority of the Master retiring ceases.
2. He is responsible to the Grand Lodge both for his own acts and those of his Lodge.
3. Without petition from his Lodge the Grand Lodge may call him to account, and by regular process proceed to try him.
4. He is bound to observe strict morality of personal life and conduct; to conform to the Laws of the realm; to respect the Landmarks of the Order; and to order himself and the Lodge according to the Laws of the Grand Lodge and the Bye-Laws of the Lodge.
5. For Lodge business he cannot hand over the mallet unless to the officers of the Lodge according to precedence.
6. For Lodge work he cannot hand over the mallet unless to an Installed Master.
7. In his absence from the Lodge the Chair is filled according to precedence, and he cannot appoint any other by commission or letter.
8. If a Master wants to do some work or to do some business which in the circular calling the meeting the members do not wish to consider or to do, they adopt the following legal means of obstruction:—
 - (a) By not assembling in sufficient numbers to enable the Master to open the Lodge, or
 - (b) by motion of adjournment of the business, or
 - (c) By retiring so as to leave less than a quorum, in which case all business and work ceases, or
 - (d) If they have time through a petition by obtain-

ing an order from the Grand Lodge getting an interdict to the proposed proceedings until the dispute has been adjudged.

9. If a Master wants to stop a certain business or work, refuses to allow a motion, or to do the work, or proceeds to close the Lodge against the wishes of the majority of the members present, the members can constitutionally proceed :—
 - (a) By a motion that the certain business or work be proceeded with immediately, or
 - (b) That the Master retire, and the next present, according to precedence, do take the Chair, while the said business or work is proceeding, or
 - (c) By petition to Grand Lodge, or
 - (d) By refusing to stand to order so as to enable the Lodge to be closed.
10. He cannot shift the date and hour of the regular Lodge Meetings.
11. He cannot refuse permission to a Brother to retire when the Brother pleads (a) the necessities of nature, (b) the call of public or family duty, or (c) his dissatisfaction with and protest against the proceedings of the Lodge or Master, or (d) his disagreement with some Brother or Brethren with whom he cannot sit in harmony.
12. The interpretation of its own Bye-Laws lies with the Lodge and not with the Master.
13. His decisions and conduct are subject to appeal to Grand Lodge.

Duties of a Master.

The first and all important duty for a Master is to enlighten himself. Unless he has the light in him he cannot impart it. In the installation ceremony he is charged in the following or similar words, that : " As the sun rises in the East to open the day and dispense his

cheerful light over the earth, that profit may result from the labour it enlightens, and pleasure from the beauty it reveals, so is the Master placed in the East to open his Lodge, to enlighten the brethren, and to set the craftsmen to work with proper instruction, so that there may be profit from the labour and pleasure from the beauty of our Ancient Craft." Again his attention is drawn to the Jewel of his office, and he is reminded that he is to take that great luminary as a pattern in the performance of his duties. The view here expressed is that on the Master doing his duties well, the profit and pleasure of the brethren depend. If he does not enlighten, there can be little profit or pleasure resulting, as there can be no good harvest if the sun does not shine. Get the aid and assistance of experienced Past Masters. A cultured Past Master, with his experience, will guide the Master in the work of the Lodge, and will influence his mind towards high ideals of the symbolism and ceremonies. The young Master should study also the best Masonic Authors.

Lodge Business and Work.

It will be useful for the Master clearly to distinguish between Lodge Business and Work. Business refers to matters of Minutes, Records, Reports, Finance, Laws and Bye-Laws, everything connected with the Lodge as a Machine, its upkeep, preservation, and efficiency. *Work* refers to the various ceremonies, instruction, lectures, all that matters for the building and enlightenment of its members in Masonry. The first appertains to the organisation of the Lodge, the second to the teaching of Masonry.

The Business of the Lodge is to keep itself fit and efficient so as to enable it to work well in building up its members in the principles and truths of the Craft.

After all the chief end of the Lodge is the making of Masons and a furtherance of Masonry. The true Mason is a builder, building morally the eternal temple, by cutting and carving himself as a living stone for the structure, working with his brethren and helping them in the labours of the Lodge, so that through the Lodge they may radiate an influence on human society. In this sense the Lodge is workshop or machine, organised and fitted to make Masons.

In arranging the order of Business and Work, precedence should be given to the more important items. How often have we experienced the time and attention of the Lodge wasted in trivial, paltry business for a lengthy period, and all the time in the adjacent room candidates, who have been asked to attend, are wearily waiting for initiation. The Work for which the Lodge exists is consequently begun at a late hour and hurried through in a perfunctory manner in the presence of a limited number of members. This sort of thing produces evil effects. The candidates are wearied at waiting so long, and they receive a bad impression of the Master by that and the slovenly haste of the ceremony. The members of the Lodge also get disgusted with trivial discussion and bad working, and cease attending regularly. There may be times of course when business must take precedence. This should not take place unless after careful consideration. In planning his work the Master should remember that the Lodge is a means to an end,

and the work of Masonry is of higher importance even than the Lodge itself.

Only when it is essential to the machine doing its work should the business of attending to the machine take precedence of the real "work."

From the foregoing the Master will see that the first claim on his attention is to plan the business and work of his Lodge. The question as to precedence of Lodge business and Lodge work is often a disputed one. It seems to me that the way to settle the matter is to ascertain which is the greater in importance—not from the view of greater convenience either personally or to the Lodge, but from the higher and broader view which should never be lost sight of, that of the interest of Masonry generally.

Installation.

Previous to 1872 the Installation was a very simple ceremony. At the February Communication in 1872 the Grand Lodge of Scotland first recognised the Installed Masters' Rite or Ceremony. This Installation Ceremony is somewhat elaborate in character. This primarily was no doubt elaborated so as to impress the dignity of office on the members of the Craft generally. It ought to be carefully, seriously, and deliberately carried through. Nothing will tend more to lessen the importance of an office and to cheapen it in the eyes of the ordinary member than a bang through, slap dash style of Installing. While there should be no haste, however, the work should not be done slovenly, but should be carried through in a manner prompt and alert so as to produce in the Lodge an atmosphere of combined dignity, discipline, and diligence.

The Master of a Lodge has full authority until his successor has been regularly and completely installed, and may, if he chooses, instal the Master-Elect himself. The Installing Master must therefore be invited by the Retiring Master to occupy the Chair. Sometimes the Master-Elect, through ignorance of this rule, invites an Installed Master to instal him, and the Installing Master, through equal ignorance, accepts. Unless, however, the Retiring Master consents, nothing can be done.

CONCLUSION.

Besides studying the Ritual, you must understand the Spirit that dwells in our Ceremonies and Symbols.

The verbiage of the Ritual, however good it may be, is mere sound, and just as a good singer puts soul into his song, so you must put soul into your words, if they are to be effective. This you will never do, until you assimilate and feel in your own soul the truth and beauty that the words enfold.

When you have caught the true spirit you will be able to detect and reject all that does not harmonise with it. There are unfortunately in the work of some Lodges things antagonistic to that spirit, contrary to truth and offensive to good taste and common sense. Be not afraid to use your judgment, and after due deliberation give such things the "heave over."

Absorb the spirit of true Masonry by a constant study of its Ceremonies and Symbols, and its light will shine more and more in your Lodge, and become a living moral force in the hearts and minds of your brethren.