

THE APOCALYPSE OF FREEMASONRY

BY

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A Constructive Scheme of Interpretation
of the Symbolism of the Masonic Lodge

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INTRODUCTORY

THE early expositors of Freemasonry regarded the Latin word LVX, " Light," as synonymous with their science, and they dwelt on the fact that by dividing the Circle into four equal parts they produced a Cross from which they got the outline of the three Roman letters needed to spell this word - **LVX**.

The Circle thus divided contained four right angles, that is, angles of 90° , the angles which we call "squares," as corresponding to the tool by which the operative Mason tries and adjusts rectangular corners of buildings. The lines drawn to do this is a cross, indicating the four directions, the four quarters of the globe, N.E.S.W. And this figure was actually used as a cryptogram for the mystic light which was imparted to the Candidate in Masonic Lodges.

Mosheim, writing some 200 years ago,

confirmed this fact by the most interesting statement that in the secret writing of the Alchemists and Rosicrucians the said sign stood for the word " Light." For we should bear in mind that the Rosicrucians had drunk deep in Masonic fountains, and they, like the Masons, understood by the term *light*, " the knowledge of their science."

As a matter of fact, underlying the Ceremonies practised by the Freemasons of the present day, there is a system of philosophy which is based on the lofty conception of the Most High God as a Being who indwells the Light (compare the classic epithet of *Jupiter Inlustris*), and is Himself " light," as is declared in the V. of the S.L. Masons are taught to think of Him as not only *Omnipresent* and *Omnipotent* but *Omniscient*, and because of the last we speak of " His all-seeing Eye," an expression that we shall see conveys a world of meaning. All things are open to Him, nothing is dark, nothing is hid. And those who are in fellowship with Him, enjoy His light, even in the dark.

If, therefore, we would grasp the meaning and purpose of what is said and done in the Lodge, we must keep this fundamental thought

uppermost in our mind. In His light shall we see light, wherever and however we may be placed, while by tracing back this thought historically, we shall see ourselves brought into partnership with the seers and saints of every age, and we shall find that Masonry does indeed elucidate and clear up many of the problems that have agitated the minds of all great thinkers in the Past.

HOW THE LIGHT CAME

Opening the V. of the S.L. at its first page, we read of the earth as " formless and void." The G.A.O.T.U. was engaged in laying the foundations of His creation in the gloom of the primeval Chaos, when suddenly there issued forth from the Throne, the mighty fiat, " Let there be light ! " and then, lo, a great wonder: what has been done in the darkness is made manifest.

Then, three periods of time are said to elapse, and on the fourth the material Sun and Moon are made to appear in the firmament, which the Masonic Ritual says were created " to rule the day and govern the night."

This raises the question as to the nature of the original light, for evidently it was not dependent on the Sun and Moon.

The R.A. Companion finds the above record in the mysterious scroll of vellum or parchment which he knows of, and our Ancient Brethren read it in former times in their Lodges as an allegory of what was done at every initiation.

Indeed, we may note that from time immemorial it has been customary to make every Initiate to mark these three introductory periods or stages with his feet, after which the W.M. re-echoes from the chair the same creative fiat, which then becomes the signal for two distinct things: the restoration of " the material blessing," and the communication of certain secrets.

By this simple explanation of an impressive ceremony, we are able to understand how it is that our Masonic era has always been styled *Anno Lucis*, " the Year of the Light," which suggests that our science had its starting point in the first dawning of the light.

It was because our ancient Brethren took this view that they referred to all the masterminds that have helped to mould the world, from Adam downwards. as so many Freemasons

and Brothers. One may smile at it when perusing the Old Charges, but what they had in their mind was substantially true. What is all culture but a diffusion of the light in the sphere of the intellect? And what is the aim of our Fraternity but to promote the world's progress and to guide men through the paths of heavenly science up to the Throne of God, the highest source of light, and so most aptly symbolised by the flame of Fire in the Burning Bush that was ever ablaze but never consumed?

THE DARKNESS OF NATURE

In the Universe the light is undoubtedly the greatest, the dominant, force; but in the Ritual we learn that the darkness has also its practical uses. Remember that it was the world's Architect who ordained both. He made the light but did not completely abolish the darkness. All He did was to order that the light should shine in the daytime and alternate with the period of darkness called " the night." The plants were to yield their bloom and their fruit in the light; but, on the

other hand, all the initial operations of nature were to be conducted behind the scenes, in the dark, so that the world would still be full of mysteries, and man would not be permitted to penetrate those mysteries without effort.

Freemasons have always used the Beehive as a symbol; and the industrious bees extracting sweetness from every flower in the field and storing it up in their "properly tiled " and darkened dwelling, present an excellent illustration of Masonic life.

The canopy which the Creator spread over this earth has the effect of limiting our view, but it does not blind us; for at night time it is studded with a multitude of twinkling lights, and the result is a sort of "darkness visible."

Moreover, if the glorious sun at noon-time unfolds a most charming spectacle to our gaze, the starry firmament at night is not less beautiful. The daylight makes the nearer things clear; but, then, the nocturnal gloom widens our view. This was once beautifully expressed by Blanco White in his sonnet to the night, which is one of the finest jewels of English literature. The physical sun shines on our surroundings, revealing the admirable form and hue of everything; but its very

splendour dazzles us and renders the more distant scene invisible, and we have to wait till it has gone down and got dusk - till the night has spread its pall over the world, - to catch sight of the numerous other worlds revolving in universal space; and thereby to realise that this globe of ours is but an infinitesimal fraction of the vast creation ! For, strange as it may sound, the sun hides far more than it reveals, whereas the night (which in some respects reduces the range of our vision) is also the means whereby the veil is lifted up from a magnificent panorama which remains hidden from our eyes during the day.

The darkness, therefore, although commonly regarded as an emblem of man's ignorance, is an effective aid to our science. The " ethereal mansion " of which the Ritual speaks, is said to be " veiled by the starry firmament," and it is " veiled " indeed, but not completely hidden, for the veil is a lighted screen through which we can peer into that boundless Universe where we hope one day to find the unclouded light of absolute truth. We described this " mansion " as made of Ether, to convey the idea of something intangible, but, of course, it is a paradox.

THE DARKNESS OF THE MIND

The limitations under which we labour may be annoying, but they are a blessing in disguise, for they subserve our higher interests; on the one hand they obstruct our path, but on the other they are stimulus to work. The dark hours invite the intellectual man to meditation, and the long nights of winter afford him excellent opportunity for study; for although it is possible to obtain a sudden inspiration in busy hours, as a rule it is in the stillness of seclusion and abstraction that we can best collect our thoughts and formulate our ideas.

It is in a darkened Lodge that we are taught the necessity of "the light which is from above," without which indeed our reason would be utterly inadequate for our wants; for, valuable as the light of human reason is as a means of relieving our natural ignorance, it can never be compared with the Infinite Wisdom of the Most High, any more than the flicker of that feeble ray near the W.M. can be compared to the Sun.

At the time we are told that the darkness of the Lodge is emblematical of the valley of the

shadow of death, and we are supposed to learn " how to die "; but on reflection we find that the new M.M. is in reality a Candidate for membership in " the G.L. above," which is shown to be an ethereal mansion; that is to say, a Kingdom of light: the dead man comes to live in the truest sense.

We all know from experience what help our Masonic arts give us when we come to deal with the great transcendent realities; we may not comprehend, or fathom them, but we are able to formulate a conception of them; that is, we perceive them as facts in a sort of general outline, although the facts themselves remain inexplicable. As an illustration in point, let us remember that although we live in the prospect of futurity, over our prospect there rests " a mysterious veil " - a gloom or veil of mystery - " which the eye of human reason cannot penetrate," but the thought of our immortality remains.

The popular and uninstructed world may waive aside our figures of speech and all our symbols as infantile playthings, but it does so because, at the best, men are as children on the beach, who think that they understand the ocean, when their knowledge is limited to the

sand and the shells and the seaweeds they have collected in puddles of their own making. Whether the world is impressed or not, our symbolism embodies the solution of some of the most serious of the problems that have agitated the human mind. The after-life may still be an impenetrable enigma, but for the M.M. two things are clear, viz., that there is to be a deliverance from the gloomy tomb and a happy re-union with our former associates.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS IN THE MYSTERIES

In the system of learning associated with the name of Pythagoras, the " disciples " were bound to undergo an ordeal known as the " five years' silence "; it was their apprenticeship, in which they had much to learn while remaining quiescent in a state of subordination. And it accords with this, that even the Master, Pythagoras himself, never committed anything to writing; his instruction was imparted orally, and the disciples were urged to lock it up in that same " sacred repository " of which we speak in closing our meetings.

Then we may observe that in all the mystery associations of the ancients, the ceremony of initiation came to a climax with the "illumination" of those who were admitted. Here in Britain, on being received into the Order of Druids, the Candidate was confined in a dark place for nine days. (Note that this number equals 3 by 3.)

In Greece we find the same practice, but the period varies according to the different rites, extending in one case to 27 days, which equals 3 by 9, and is practically a complete lunation. It was in this way that the graphic metaphor of "passing from darkness into light" arose. One of the officers in the Greek Mysteries was called the *Photagogue*, which meant the "Bringer-in of the Light."

In Persia, at the solemn act of Illumination, the Initiate was shown something which was described as the "divine lights."

And coming to later times, everyone knows how in connection with the Orders of Chivalry, the dignity of knighthood was only conferred after the aspirant had spent a whole night in lonely vigil before the altar, when he received the accolade by striking the neck thrice with the sword, this being a sort of penal sign.

(*Accolade* is derived from the Latin *ad collum*, on the neck.")

Surely we can all see that what is done to-day in Lodge is but the counterpart of those ancient rites. We hold our assemblies in the evening, to signify that we live in a world of darkness. But our ancient motto, *Lux e tenebris*, implies that we profess to bring "Light out of darkness." And this must be so, if our symbols stand for anything real.

In many countries, the "convenient room" in which the preliminary preparation takes place is actually a dark chamber; and even with us the Candidate is described as coming into the Lodge in a state of darkness, because, as we know, he is unable to see anything.

Just as the body has been formed in the darkness of the maternal womb, so the Candidate will become a Mason when it is yet dark. Hence the comparison which is drawn between his initiation and his entrance into this mortal existence; a comparison which affords some justification for the familiar expression, "my mother Lodge."

We speak of the Candidate as "prepared" by us; but what we do with him is emblematic of what has taken place before "in the secrecy

of his heart," as he himself admits; something that has gone on, possibly, for many years, until at length he has been found to be ready for the reception of our Masonic light. Now his cherished desire will be realised, but first he must submit to certain indispensable formalities.

THE MASONIC RITUAL

The document which we refer to as the Ritual of Freemasonry has been, and still is, the subject of much controversy; it is, in fact, a mystery. Nobody can tell us who composed it. In reality it is a growth; some portions of it are quite modern.

The earliest printed Ritual known to us is the alleged exposure of 1730, which appeared in *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. It seems to be identical with what Desaguliers had described in England as "a foolish thing, not to be regarded," which implies that it is but a distortion of the real thing, and therefore contemptible. Nevertheless, though it may outrage our feelings, it should not be put aside as worthless. For it is valuable testimony of the

existence at the time of a regular and well-established ceremonial. And such as it is, we may observe that it contains all the main features of the Ritual commonly practised now, and therefore *substantially* the same.

This version of the Ritual takes us back some 200 years, a mere bagatelle. But it is worthy of notice that, however early we may trace Freemasonry, it always claims a great antiquity. There is no time when it can be put down as a new-fangled thing; it is always ancient.

The Ritual which obtains at present almost everywhere, under the jurisdiction of the G.L. of England, goes under the name of "Emulation," and it is the outcome of a compromise arrived at about a hundred years ago, between the two sections of the Order, the "Antients" and the "Moderns." Unquestionably the Antients followed the Mediaeval type more closely than the Moderns, although the latter enjoyed the prestige of the G.L., which they had set up in London. But we submit that the rivalry between these two sections, which during the eighteenth century accused one another of having departed from their original, is a solid guarantee of there having been no material change. Whatever new departures

had been made in 1717, the substance (*as all agreed at the time of the Union*) had remained untouched.

That no material change was effected when the G.L. of London was set up 200 years ago, may be gathered from the Minutes of a meeting held on 3rd November 1722, of the Lodge of Antiquity, which reads as follows: "The Master reported the proceedings of the Grand Lodge and Bro. Anderson's appointment to revise the old Constitutions. It was the opinion of the Lodge that the Master and his Wardens do attend every Committee during the revisal of the Constitutions, that no variation may be made in the Ancient Establishment."

And, again, that the order of things in the Lodge that is, the appointment of the symbols, was practically the same then as now, may be inferred from the use of three lights, which appear to have been characteristic symbols. For in the minutes of a meeting held of the same Lodge the 3rd of June 1723, it is resolved, "The set of (3) Mahogany Candlesticks presented to this Lodge by its worthy old Master, Sir Christopher Wren, ordered to carefully deposite in a wooden case lin'd with cloth to be immediately purchased for the purpose."

In a History of Rhode Island by the Rev. E. Petersen, which appeared in 1853, it is stated that some Jews who emigrated from Holland to the American Colonies in the spring of 1658, practised the "degrees" of Masonry at Newport. And many years after that publication an eminent American Mason made inquiries about this report, but although he found the actual original documents which had been the warrant for that historian's statement, he refused to believe it. The documents read as follows: -

"Th^s y^e (*day and month obliterated*) W^{ee} mett at y^e House off Mordecai Campannall, and after synagog W^{ee} gave Ab^m Moses the Degrees off Maconrie."

This evidence has all the characteristics of authenticity. It has no ulterior purpose and its age is unquestioned; it is long anterior to 1717. It comes to confirm what we might have expected, that Masonry had been practised among the Spanish Jews (*Sephardim*). It helps to explain the Hebrew element in the Ritual. And yet the American investigator, Bro. Thomas Doyle, incapable of conceiving Masonry before it came from England one hundred years after, in 1749, would not recognise this testimony.

As Freemasonry was a Society which had secrets very jealously guarded, prior to the year 1717, we can only discover fragments, bits of information, mere trifles, enabling us to assert the existence of the Brotherhood, without its character or its activities being revealed. There was a Lodge in York in 1705; one at Alnwick in 1701; one at Dunblane in 1698; these were Speculative Lodges, and at the last place, few of the members were operative Masons. In 1691 Robert Kirk wrote a work in which "the Mason Word" was connected with a Rabbinical Tradition, "by way of comment on Jachin and Boaz," and he affirms that the Masons had then a secret sign which was "delivered from hand to hand." The same year, 1691, we hear of a general meeting of the Brotherhood in London, where Bro. Christopher Wren had to be "adopted" in some capacity, the writer could not know because he was not a Mason, though he had heard of their secrets and mysteries. In 1686 Dr Robert Plot informs us that some men of the "most eminent quality" in Staffordshire were Fellows of the Fraternity. On a copy of the Constitutions, dated 1665, there is a rough transcription of the Masonic Pledge, where

the words and signs are referred to as having to be kept secret from all except Masters and Fellows. In 1658 an old parchment records that King James VI was made a Mason, and it speaks of " the Temple of Temples built on this earth," meaning, of course, K.S.T., as giving rise to the Lodges of Kilwinning and Scoon. In 1652, in a Solemn Declaration by the Presbyterian Synod at Kelso, it is stated that some ministers had been Freemasons in the past. In 1646 Elias Ashmole became a Mason. In 1641 Sir Robert Moray was initiated. The Cooke MS., containing the Constitutions of Masons, is dated 1430, but on examination is found to be a composite work made up of still older materials. The Regius MS., in metrical form, is ascribed to the year 1415, but is commonly regarded as a transcript of an earlier one of about 1380.

Is there any evidence to support our claim that Freemasonry is derived from the days of K.S.? The answer to this must depend on the answer we give to another question: Were there any mysteries in connection with the Temple at Jerusalem ? In 3 Maccabees ii. 30, we find an allusion to a man who has been consecrated in accordance with the then

prescribed Ritual; and in the Book of Wisdom of Solomon viii. 4, personified Wisdom is compared to "one initiated into the knowledge of God." It is in this same Book, xiv. 30, that we find the first reference to "the incommunicable Name," the name of which Josephus says "it is not lawful to speak of."

As Bro. Waite has well said, "It is very nearly impossible to unravel the problem of our descent along historic lines." But testing the Masonic Ritual by its own internal evidence, two things are perfectly clear:

(a) That it originated with men who were familiar with the mystic theosophy evolved long since among the Jews; and

(b) That the same men were equally conversant with the Instituted Mysteries of classic times, having followed them in certain particulars, as we shall find presently.

EVIDENTIAL VALUE OF OUR SYMBOLS

Freemasonry is a peculiar system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. As we proceed to make a study of our remark

able Ritual, the first thing we shall have to note is the symbolic character of practically everything that we see and hear in the course of the Ceremonies. Even in those details which at first appear mere trifles, we may discover a hidden meaning. Some of the remarks made by the W.M. seem to be casually made and to be petty minutiae which might be dispensed with; but in the Ritual nothing is trivial, everything is important.

The KK. by which we are admitted, the steps by which we advance, the Ss. or Ts. by which we are known to each other, the Words with which we are entrusted, all have a more or less symbolic import.

The place assigned to certain officers is due to certain facts; the posture prescribed for the E.A. and the F.C. when at the N.E. and S.E. are highly significant, for the W.M. says: " You now stand to all external appearance a just and upright F.M., etc." The W . . . g T . . . s presented to the Candidate at each degree have also a moral application.

The writer of this treatise was the first Initiate of the first Lodge in Manila (Philippine Islands) at a time when it was a crime to be a Freemason; and therefore members of the

Craft had to hide their identity. They did this by adopting a symbolic name, the only one which appeared in official documents; he was then known to his brethren as " Bro. Caesar." This may seem a somewhat quaint practice, but on reflection we find it to be in keeping with the English Ritual. Let us consider some familiar facts.

When the W.M. and the W.'s say to the Candidate: " Pass so-and-so," they are really applying a symbolic name, which varies as the Candidate goes through the various degrees; for in former times it was customary to say, "Pass *Bro. B., J., Sh., or T. C.,*" as the case might be.

Then the Candidate of the Third Degree is made to personate " one of the brightest characters recorded in the annals of Masonry," and for the moment he is regarded as being our M., H.A. himself.

In the R.A. Chapter all the Chief Officers bear symbolic names, and are viewed as representing Z., H., J., E., and N. They are always addressed by these names.

In the Craft, we do not apply any such names to the Officers of the Lodge, but we distinctly affirm that "the three who rule a

Lodge," and who are the nucleus of it, represent " the three G.M.'s who bore sway at the building of the first Temple at Jerusalem," their names being given in the Ritual.

Moreover, in opening G.L. the various Officers are questioned thus: " Whom do you represent? " The idea is that they appear there in the character of B., J., H.A., or the Royal S., as the case may be.

The importance of these facts will be seen if we consider the difficulty there is in tracing the origin of Freemasonry. We certainly cannot discover it in documentary evidence. In dealing with the Craft, we deal with a Society which from its inception has kept certain particulars quite secret. The old " Acception," which met at Masons' Hall, London, does not seem to have kept any records, or if it did they were absolutely secret. Our descent from that body of men is incontestible; it is attested by the name by which we have always been known, of " ACCEPTED, or Speculative, Masons."

One observation made by Bro. Waite is worth pondering over, for it shows how useful these facts may be; he says " any new knowledge will come, however, from analysis of the

symbolical documents rather than from what is understood as direct historical evidence."

THE NEED OF CAUTION

Here we intend to give a consistent scheme of interpretation that will enable us to trace our connection with the past and vindicate the claim to antiquity which the Fraternity makes, and has always made for itself. Our aim is constructive, not destructive; to build up, not to pull down; to explain and harmonise, not to find fault and discredit.

The Masonic Ritual calls for most careful treatment. There is need of discrimination, because words are often used in different senses. We may note, too, that things are presented in different aspects, and therefore there is great danger of misapprehending what is said about them, thereby falling into confusion. For instance, we may distinguish at least seven different aspects of the Freemason's Lodge; we shall enumerate these as briefly as we can:

(1) There is, first of all, the actual, material, tangible but symbolic edifice where we meet

for the purposes of Freemasonry, as when we speak of "modest and correct demeanour in the Lodge," or when we say, "Should you, about to visit a Lodge, etc."

(2) Then there is the mystic Lodge which we imagine as the counterpart of K.S.T., the conception which makes the W.M. say: "I as M. of this Lodge, and thereby the representative of K.S." At his Installation he is made to occupy the chair of K.S. Among the students of the occult during the Middle Ages this conception was much in vogue. And it is also worth noting that all the Ancient Mysteries were associated with some Temple, the distinctive cult of which they promoted in a general sort of way, as syncretists that they were.

(3) Occasionally "the Lodge" becomes but another name for the Fraternity itself, which is compared to a Building. Thus when a man is newly admitted he is said to "figuratively represent" a stone in that Building. We all have been built into that same Building as so many stones. In the Ceremony of Installation the idea occurs again when we speak of "Consecrating this our mansion," which means, of course, the Fraternity.

(4) There is also the wider thought of a universal mystic Temple which has been in process of construction from the beginning of the world. The Knight Templars were credited with the design of re-building Zion, but the Mystics of all ages have aimed at something better than stone and mortar; and it is this which we conceive as being erected on " holy ground." The dimensions which the Ritual gives to " the Lodge " pre-suppose some such conception.

(5) Then, the Lodge is also a counterpart of the material Universe, God Himself being its Architect and Ruler. Our Ancient Brethren had this idea suggested to them by the number of planets, which was seven, the number of a perfect Lodge. Note that the real " Master" of his Lodge is Master of both Sun and Moon, for we tell the Initiate that " The Master is to rule and direct this Lodge," i.e. the Universe. In that particular instance " the Sun " is the Setting Sun, the S.W. at the W.; the Master, however, is always at the E.

(6) Again, we find an astral or astronomical Lodge "emblematically depicted " on the First T.B., which we refer to a group of Seven Stars in the Midnight Sky well known to our

Ancient Brethren. This has not to be confused with the preceding; we shall have occasion to refer to this symbol *in extenso* in another place.

(7) In at least one passage there is the mention of the " G.L. above " to which we shall all be summoned some day. This is something altogether divine, for it is described as, "figuratively speaking, an ethereal mansion veiled from mortal eyes by the starry firmament," and as " a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

But, generally speaking, our Lodge, like the Temple itself, is a type of manifestation. It is in this way that the V. of the S.L. is stated to be "the spiritual T.B. of the G.A.O.T.U." The Most High Himself is the Lodge, that is, the Home of the Soul, and all the various conceptions of which we have taken note are but so many adumbrations of this one central fact.

In that great store-house of Jewish mysticism, the *Sepher ha Zohar*, or " Book of Splendour," K.S.T. is spiritualised and treated as " a House of Doctrine " rather than as material fabric. It is said to have been erected by the Regent of the Secret Tradition in Israel; it is conceived as standing in the world's centre and as

having a Sanctuary - the *Sanctum Sanctorum* - which is mystically speaking the Heart of the World.

All this corresponds exactly with the Masonic conception, for K.S.T. is actually declared to have been " the First Lodge," and in thus describing it we mean that the Temple was the embodiment of our mystic philosophy, everything in it being symbolic of our ideas, and reflecting our light. It is on this account that the Freemason's Lodge is said to stand on holy ground.

The way the Degrees dovetail into each other is truly admirable. At each successive stage the Candidate seems to be well satisfied with what he sees and hears, and if we did not warn him that there are other Degrees in Freemasonry he probably would not expect anything more. This is because at each Degree he receives what the Craft has to give him; the "allowance" of necessities of life made to the E.A.; the "wages in specie" paid to the F.C., which he will have to administer; or the share due to the M.M. and Companion, as the case may be.

But we may note that the Candidate is also granted anticipations of better things bringing

him into touch with later stages. For the moment he may be pleased with the dim outline and the half-truths by which his mind is being prepared, but eventually he discovers the true nature of those foreshadowings, and his horizon is enlarged. The important thing is that our attention should be fixed on the essentials of the Ritual, that is, on what is known as "the ancient landmarks of the Order"; they guide him in his progress.

THE THREE TEMPLES

Historically speaking, the Masons conceive three buildings as dwelling places of the Most High and as historic Lodges, which reflect the Masonic " System of Morality," viz., the Tabernacle, K.S.T., and the Second Temple.

"The First Lodge" mentioned in the Explanation of the First T.B. is simply " the First Temple at Jerusalem," as the Craftsman has it in the Explanation of the Second T.B. We are told that " there were but three Grand Masters who bore sway at the building " of it.

But we must not be misled by taking this

statement about "the first Lodge" I as an absolute fact. It was "the first . . . at Jerusalem"; and it was "the first" attempt made to give form in stone to the pattern which those three Grand Masters claimed to have obtained from the G.A.O.T.U.

On the other hand, the R.A. Companions declare, and with good reason, that the Temple erected with stone at Jerusalem was "the Second, or Sacred Lodge." They say this because the place of convocation reared at the foot of another Mount (*where the historic pattern was seen by our G.M. Moses*) is regarded as "the First," and this one is also called "the Holy" Lodge, the ground it occupied being rendered holy by the structure.

In both "Lodges," the Tabernacle and K.S.T., our Ancient Brethren saw a reproduction of the Pattern which had been exhibited to our G.M. Moses, that is, the counterpart of something in the heavens, something in the "celestial canopy," something which in turn was emblematic of a higher Reality.

Eventually the third attempt to reproduce that Pattern was to be made by erecting the Grand or Royal Lodge of which we still have the main outline in the V. of the S.L.

It was part of the Secret Tradition that K.S.T. had not been built in strict accordance with the plans handed down from the days of Moses. The Kabbalists said that it was because the original pattern had not been strictly followed that it was destroyed. The cause of this failure on the part of the Builders is not explained; it is only the Freemasons who know it. The plans and designs were lost, and so an imperfect Temple was erected, which was reduced to ruins to teach the world that nothing imperfect can endure. The loss of those plans and designs was due to the untimely death of our M., H.A.; after his sudden and mysterious disappearance they were no longer forthcoming, and hence something else had to be substituted for them. Some hundreds of years after they were found again, and then another attempt was made to reproduce them.

But from these ruins, still extant, we may learn that every Temple reared by the hand of man (our own Freemason's Lodge included) are at the best imperfect adumbrations of the ideal one.

Our thoughts are illustrated by similes which seem misleading, but so far as we are concerned

they have proved beneficial; they can only deceive the cowan. In the Ceremonies we appear as so many Builders, and we actually speak of work done; but in thus expressing ourselves we are idealising, for " the intended structure " is not to be erected on ground marked out with the skirret. Much as we admire the skilful Architects who have filled the world with noble piles, we claim to do better. Our aim is beautifully stated in the words used in a certain Degree: " Most Puissant Sovereign, for want of territory we build them in our hearts."

That this form of speech is not a newfangled thing, but has come down to us from very ancient times, may be seen by the old brass which some Masons fixed in 1513 on a bridge built by them near Limerick, for it had the following inscription: -

" Strive to Live with Love and Care
Upon the Level by the Square."

The use of Masonic phraseology at that date is enough to give a shock to some destructive critics of the present time.

OUR ORGANISATION

Another matter calling for careful treatment is the organisation of the Lodge. The formula we give to the F.C. is this: " 3 rule a Lodge, 5 hold a Lodge, 7 or more make it perfect."

The two reasons given to a F.C. for requiring the attendance of seven Masons to make the Lodge "perfect," are mere camouflage. The first of these reasons is, "because K.S. was 7 years and upwards in b., c., and d., the T. at I. to God's service," which at the best is putting the cart before the horse. The other is, because that number has " a further allusion to the 7 Liberal Arts and Sciences." The only observation we would make about it is that of the Ritual itself, that it is " likewise," similar in character to the preceding explanation.

But the principle here enunciated is an ancient landmark, that is, " seven make the Lodge perfect." Only it is not opportune to impart the real explanation to a F.C., and we deliberately put him off the scent.

Robert Plot, writing in 1688, said that in these days " five or six *antients* of the Order"

were required (that is, five or six Craftsmen who had themselves been fully initiated) to constitute a Lodge with power to initiate.

This statement lacks precision, but it proves that the matter was the subject of definite regulation, and there was a minimum which was considered indispensable. Plot himself seems to be uncertain; but what could he mean by " five or six "? It might, or might not, include the W.M., but did he take into account the T., " outside the door of the Lodge " ? It was not necessary that the T. should be an " ancient of the Order." And what of the Initiate ? Was he included ? Plot's statement comes sufficiently near to the above formula to assume that after the lapse of 250 years there has been no material change.

Our formula seems to imply that at one time five were permitted to " hold a Lodge," that is, a " F.C. Lodge," such as is mentioned in the traditional history of the Third Degree. And what is more important, the F.C. Lodge had power to initiate; but when there had been two initiations, when two E.A.'s had been added to the former five, the Lodge acquired the status of a " perfect Lodge." Nowadays, we take the safer rule of demanding that every

initiation shall take place " in the body of a Lodge
j . . . *perfect* and r . . . "

There is a third reason for requiring the presence of seven Masons; but this is only hinted at by the symbol of seven stars depicted in the First T.B. For we are informed that those seven stars " have an allusion to as many regularly made Masons, without which no Lodge is perfect, neither can any Candidate (now) be legally initiated into the Order." The true interpretation of our pictogram, then, seems to be that the Seven Masons who constitute a perfect Lodge represent a wonderful phenomenon in the sky, which our Ancient Brethren invested with some significance.

It is not difficult to identify that phenomenon; for as a matter of fact, there is in the midnight sky a constellation consisting of seven stars (known to us as *Ursa Minor*), which is ever revolving around its own extremity, that is, the point marked by the Pole-star, which thereby becomes the visible centre of a circle, and, so to speak, " the Master who rules and directs his Lodge."

Here, then, in those seven stars we may assume that we have the prototype both of our mystic fraternity and of the seven emblematical

lights of the Lodge; these are the three "greater " which are laid before the Candidates, viz., the V. of the S.L., the S. and the C.'s; the three " lesser " ones, the occupants of the pedestals at the E., S., and W., which we associate with the burning tapers by their side; and the Chief Light of all, the one by which the whole place is illuminated, "the Glory in the Centre."

THE NUMBER 7 DUPLICATED

Now, in the midnight sky this symbol is very curiously duplicated. For there is another constellation (known as *Ursa Major*), consisting of the same number of stars and arranged in similar order, which, by rotating around the same Pole-star, describes a second circle much larger than the first, for it takes a much wider sweep of the heavens.

These two constellations dominate the celestial firmament, and our Ancient Brethren took note of them. As from the former they derived their ideal of the perfect Lodge "on the centre," so from the latter (*which is a duplicate or copy of it*), they learned the need

of "emulation," the essence of which is "perfect obedience " to a central Power; that is to say, regularity of motion around the Supreme Ruler.

From this same symbol they must have learned, too, what was always characteristic of Masons, to subordinate the relative to the Absolute and Eternal.

There is no doubt that our Ancient Brethren cultivated Astronomy, for it is one (the last and most important) of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences which Craftsmen are bidden to study. And it is interesting to note that in the R.A. Chapter we have a reference to those Fourteen Stars as the counterpart of another symbol referred to in the Traditional history of the R.A. Remember how the three M.M.'s from B., having been commissioned by our Rulers, and engaged in some research, come to report the discovery of fourteen Pillars, that is to say, of seven pairs; one pair which is said to be " of exquisite design and workmanship " (answering to the two leading stars in the said constellations), and " six other pairs of equal symmetry and beauty."

Obviously, then, the seven stars appearing on the First T.B. have been duplicated. There

are fourteen stars (*or pillars*) which represent the Lodge "on the centre," and an "emulation" Lodge which is the type of every Assembly of Masons, both being, symbolically speaking, concentric.

And this total of fourteen is ultimately increased to fifteen; for when the said M.M.'s from B. pursue their quest, they come upon something like the base of a pedestal or column, which turns out to be far more precious than all the emblems which have hitherto engrossed their minds. About this unique symbol we may note three things: there are certain mystic characters engraved on the plinth; there is a mysterious veil, and then, under that veil, the innermost secret of the Chapter.

In nature the central point is occupied by the Pole- star; and all the other orbs of space, the whole of starland, circles around it. But the mystic seer looks deeper than the material creation, and perceives " a point within a circle " which is invisible, immaterial, and divine. In his efforts to give expression to his ideas, he will devise symbols for this, but that point within a circle stands for the Ultimate Reality, and when we come to it we feel that we are in the presence of the One Uncreate.

Therefore, when the M.M. has attained to this knowledge he is divested of his trappings and is granted the status which entitles him to " the full participation of our Mysteries."

FORM, SITE, AND FABRIC OF THE LODGE.

Consistently with the general character of Freemasonry in dealing with the Lodge, we describe it in figurative language: its form, the site upon which it is supposed to stand, and even the quality of its construction, being expressed by figures of speech which were current ages ago :

(a) FORM

The form of the Lodge is declared to be that of a parallelopipedon; that is to say, a Double Cube. That is not meant literally, but accords with the internal measurements of " The Holy Place," which was the central portion of K.S.T., viz., 40 cubits long by 20 cubits wide (Ezekiel xlii. 1), and 20 cubits high.

The Double Cube may be illustrated by placing our two Ashlars on line, and its mystic

significance must be patent to all. For at the Holy Place the Israelite was supposed to go through a purifying process, whereby it might be said that the Rough Ashlar became a Perfect One.

And this symbol of the Double Cube is fundamental in the Masonic System. It is interesting to note how it follows us into the R.A. Chapter, where it becomes "The Altar of Incense," whereon the M.M. has the happiness of finding what he has been seeking all along.

That Altar has always been the symbol of devotion to an ideal, but now it is much more. For as the Kabbalists used to say, at the Altar of Incense, Michael the Archangel sacrificed the souls of the just, that they might ascend pure and fragrant to Jehovah. But on that same Altar the spirits of just men made perfect acquire the reward of their endeavours, viz., the highest vision.

All this harmonises with the aspirations of the Mason, "that our words and actions may ascend unpolluted to the throne of grace." "By S . . . e conduct, I . . . I steps, and upright intentions, we hope to ascend to those immortal mansions, whence all goodness emanates."

(b) Site

As regards position or emplacement, the Lodge is said to lie four-square, and to be properly oriented; that is, it is "situated due E. and W." For this "we assign three Masonic reasons"; but two only are given in the Ceremonies; for we tell the Initiate that the other is not "to be entered upon now," as it would take too long to explain, although one day he will find a full statement of it "in the course of our Lectures," which we hope he "will have many opportunities of hearing."

The two reasons are: (a) That the E. and W. are the place of the rising and setting of the sun respectively; (b) that, generally speaking, Learning has been diffused from E. to W. But the "third, last, and grand reason" may be summed up thus, that Masons are bound to build their Temple in conformity to the historic original, viz., K.S.T., which "with respect to situation" was to be erected (like the Tabernacle in the Wilderness) in accordance with the pattern shown to Moses by the Lord in Horeb, with which pattern K.S. was well acquainted.

"The First Lodge" mentioned in the

Explanation of the First T.B. was "the First Temple at Jerusalem" as defined in the Explanation of the Second. And it is for the guidance of Masons in all ages to come that the statement is made that it had been duly oriented.

For these three reasons, then, it has always been a land-mark of Masonry that every Lodge "ought to be," and is, in fact, imagined to be, built due E. and W. In the Lodge, therefore, we are travelling from E. to W. The J.W. takes his place in the S. But it is for a special purpose, "to mark the Sun at its meridian"; and it is only for a time. Afterwards they all return from the W. to the E., the place of light.

(c) QUALITY OF CONSTRUCTION

As to the fabric, we are informed that the Lodge is "an ethereal mansion." *Ethereal*, in its primary signification, means something consisting of that mysterious fluid named "aether," in which the entire Universe is supposed to be immersed. But we use this adjective loosely to convey the idea of a Temple which is immaterial, impalpable, and heavenly. Only on this understanding can we justify the

description which is given of it as "a parallelopipedon, in length from E. to W., in breadth between N. and S., in depth from the surface of the earth to the centre and even as high as the heavens."

We give the E.A. two reasons for describing the Lodge as "of this vast extent." First, "to show the universality of the science," which has penetrated every land, and is, in fact, cosmopolitan in character. Secondly, to make clear the wideness of "a Mason's charity," which "should know no bounds save those of prudence."

Still, it is obvious that we could not use such language of any material edifice. The true reason is not given here, but may be found elsewhere. It is that the ideal Lodge is a reflection of God's creation. Hence the statement that the G.A.O.T.U. "crowns His Temple with stars as with a diadem." Hence, too, the saying that "the covering of the Lodge" is a celestial (*alias* "cloudy") canopy of divers colours, even the "heavens." As we are supposed to meet in a place that is not artificially roofed over, the metaphoric "covering" of the starry firmament above us reflects itself on the floor we tread (where our Ancient Brethren

had their "T.B."), whereby the "Border" and the " Pavement " becomes a duplicate of the " Universe," a microcosm.

SPECIFICATIONS

We have already seen that the mystic fabric is too vast to be surveyed by man. On examining its plans and designs, however, that is, on studying " the connection of our whole system and the relative dependency of its several parts," the vision which we obtain is that of a beautiful scheme which is bound to elicit the old time exclamation:

Oh, wonderful Masons !

Nowhere can we find a detailed specification of the various parts of the building, and so we cannot undertake to give an exhaustive description of it in detail. But we have references to this and that section, or apartment, or " ornaments," scattered over the Ritual, and by collecting and comparing the available data, it becomes possible to discuss the significance of the terms used and to see how each part fits into the whole.

In dealing with the matter, however, we must repeat the warning already sounded to exercise caution. We must not take the primary sense of the words as giving us the real or actual meaning. The statements of the Ritual are often intended to conceal as much as they reveal, and if we are not wary we shall be led astray.

In its main outline the mystic Lodge presents a three- fold division, for it has three parts or compartments. And this triplicate division was a very striking feature of K.S.T., where there were: (a) the Porch; (b) the central portion called " the Holy Place," as already described; and (c) the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, which was a perfect cube.

On the ground plan, the Porch appeared as half a square 10 cubits long by 20 cubits wide. The Holy Place was a " Middle Chamber " intervening between it and the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, 40 cubits long by 20 cubits wide, that is a double square; and the *Sanctum Sanctorum* was 20 cubits long by 20 cubits wide, or a perfect square. All this agreeing with the three main stages of the Mason's career (a) the preparatory rite of Initiation; (b) the ordeal of the F.C. in the Middle

Chamber; (c) the raising ceremony by which the Assistant High Priest J. acquires the right to enter the *Sanctum Sanctorum*.

It is noteworthy, too, that practically all the Temples of other nations were similarly divided into three parts.

In our examination of the subject, however, we have adopted a seven-fold division: (1) the Porch; (2) the Pillars; (3) the Pavement with its Border; (4) the Middle Chamber with the Staircase that led up to it; (5) the Central Lamp; (6) the Dormer; and (7) the Grave. This septiform division will give us a bird's-eye view of the Lodge, and it has the merit of being in harmony with its symbolic character.

By scrutinising the Ritual, however, we find that the outline given us comprises no less than fifteen distinct items, all of which will be considered in detail in order to ascertain their practical significance. They are as follows: -

- (1) The Porch by which the Initiate enters.
- (2) B., the Pillar which means so much to the E.A.
- (3) J., the Second Pillar, revealed to the F.C.

- (4) The P. at the E., which has to be approached in due form.
- (5) The Blazing Star seen by the E.A.
- (6) The Winding Staircase of the F.C., entered by the S. side.
- (7) The Border, which is supposed to be round or oval
- (8) The Mysterious and alluring Chamber."
- (9) The Sacred Symbol found in the Middle Chamber.
- (10) The *Sanctum Sanctorum* reserved to the M.M.
- (11) The Square Pavement of the M.M.
- (12) The Bright Morning Star.
- (13) The Dormer in the Adytum or *Sanctum Sanctorum*.
- (14) The Grave of our M., H.A., $6 \times 3 \times 5 = 90$ cubits.
- (15) (*Found in the RA. Chapter.*) *The Altar of White Marble.*

Let us note that the various features here enumerated are unveiled to the Mason's eyes gradually, one after another. The E.A. is only told about five, viz., the Porch; the lefthand Pillar; the Pedestal: the Border, which

he takes to be the edge of the wonderful Pavement; and the Blazing Star. The last two are described as mere "Ornaments," although he will soon find that they are so much more than ornaments.

When he is "passed" he hears about four other things, viz., the Second Pillar, and a certain Winding Staircase which leads to a mysterious "Middle Chamber," where, according to a report from Craftsmen who have been there, a Sacred Symbol has been discovered, the nature of which is not fully defined anywhere.

Again, when "raised" he is informed concerning six other things. They are, the Porch of the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the *Sanctum Sanctorum* itself, the Square Pavement, and the Dormer. (Three of these are also described as "ornaments of a M.M.'s Lodge," but are obviously important features of the structure.) There are also the Bright Morning Star and the Grave.

CONTINUITY OF THE DEGREES

As we have seen, the ground plan of K.S.T. presented three rectangular figures, all

of the same width and arranged continuously, so as to form altogether one single rectangle, the dimensions of which were: 70 cubits long by 20 cubits wide. Taking, then, K.S.T. as the prototype of the Freemason's Lodge, this may teach us that while we advance through various Degrees, although these are kept "separate and distinct," they are by no means water - tight compartments, but successive stages of development within the same Temple, or Fraternity.

There are peculiar secrets restricted to each Degree, and these Degrees are conferred on Candidates according to merit and abilities, but the Candidates are the self- same individuals. And so, too, however we may regard the bystanders, as the Lodge closes and opens at each successive Degree our mystic Mansion remains one and the same; there is indexed a change of scenery, but the scheme of initiation is one, the foundation is one, and it does not alter.

The essential unity of the Lodge is obvious from the fact that one Degree leads to the other, the higher supplementing the lower; and if there is confusion of ideas in this, it can only be because the simplest elements in Masonry are overlooked.

We should observe, however, that the present practice in the Lodge does not always agree with the Masonic tradition. According to the questionnaire used by the W.M. when opening the Lodge, the Principal Officers are at the E., S., and W., and whatever Degree we work in, none of them changes his position; their seats are stationary. But in the traditional history rehearsed in the F.C. Lodge, the J.W. is conceived as standing at the foot of the Winding Staircase; while the S.W. has his appointed station " at the summit," or what the F.C. considers " the summit," of that Staircase. The effect of this description is that the Lodge becomes a high building with at least two floors, rather than a long gallery, as in the case of K.S.T. But this metaphor is intended to give us a different aspect of the Lodge, supplementary to the former conception.

Note how curiously paradoxical is the language used in this connection; we say that " By . . . *level* steps . . . we hope to *ascend* to those immortal mansions, etc." Why, it cannot be done; for if we walk on the level, we shall never rise. And what can " square conduct " do to assist our rising? We know it, but it cannot be put into words.

Again, in the traditions of Third Degree, the Officers are represented as neither on level ground, nor on the Staircase, but in the G., whither they have descended in order to enact a most remarkable drama. They personate, first, the three historic " F.C.'s of that superior degree appointed to preside over the rest," who turned traitors; and subsequently, the " three trusty " ones of whom it is recorded that they performed the task allotted to them by K.S. with the utmost fidelity."

We see, then, that while everything is symbolic, everything, too, is relative, the symbols being mere counters which change colour, so to speak, and have to be interpreted variously according to the occasion; that is to say, in each successive Degree these symbols are modified and made to stand for something very different from what they signified a little while before.

We say that a Brother is an E.A., a F.C., or a M.M., but these titles serve only to indicate the particular stage that the Mason is in for the time being. The Three Degrees are so many stages of development, three separate but consecutive chapters of a story which embraces the three-fold Mystery of Life, Death, and

Resurrection; and gradually, as the Mason moves forward, things are invested with new significance, until at last the supreme lesson is inculcated with dramatic effect.

The E.A.'s have to deal with the J.W., who subjects them to a certain ordeal before he can allow them to pass; the F.C.'s have to deal with the S.W., who enacts a further trial before he lets them penetrate into the Middle Chamber. The M.M., however is regarded as a sovereign ruler, priest, and king, responsible only to the Most High, and for this reason the W.M. will now take him in hand.

The E.A. takes his stand by the Pillar B. with his face turned towards the E., and he obtains a view of the N.E. aspect, where he surveys the great panorama of nature illuminated by the physical Sun. Then, when "passed," he identifies himself with the pillar J., where he gets a view of the S.E. part of the Lodge; but now, having not only changed his position but mounted "five steps " of the mystic Ladder, he gets a more comprehensive view of the surrounding landscape, catching a glimpse of the Sacred Symbol within the precincts of the Middle Chamber, for which he has to look up.

When indoors, in the Lodge, the F.C. does not see either B. or J., but now he finds their counterparts at the N.E. and the S.E. corners, where the Candidates of the first two Degrees are made to stand, that is to say, the material objects yield place to the "two grand parallels" at the extreme points N. and S., which indicate the width of the Lodge, and are supposed to be the diameter of our mystic circle. This circle has a centre where, in the M.M.'s Lodge, we shall one day find a G., although the F.C. can as yet see nothing there but the P., and the V. of the S.L., in the upper part of it. It is only as M.M.'s that we reach that centre; and when we come to it we find that it gives us a full view of the whole area. The M.M. will now have the right to explore every part of that circle.

It is expected that the Candidate will combine his experiences in his progress through the various Degrees, and therefore, even as a F.C., he is taught to "conjoin " the names of the two Pillars. Indeed, in order to learn the meaning of our Ritual he will have to conjoin many other things.

Accordingly, the perambulations that the Candidates go through are graduated; first,

it is a single one, then two, then three. The first one goes ideally around the Border which belongs to the Initiate; then, around the Pavement, which is a large square; lastly, encompassing the four sides of a rectangle, which is the Abode of Death, in the centre of that Pavement. And these three geometric figures are concentric.

The continuity of our Degrees can be shown by the points indicated in the three Ceremonies. They produce on the floor of the Lodge the two interlaced triangles known as the Seal of Solomon. The first of the triangles is formed by B. and J. at the facade (where the E.A. and the F.C. are supposed to stand at the first), with the apex at the P., in the E. And the second is an inverted one, based on the N.E. and the S.E. parts of the Lodge (where the "two grand parallels" are said to be), with its extremity in the W., where the S.W. sits. When at length the newly raised M.M. has been invested, he goes to the centre of this mystic emblem, where our great Luminary sheds its rays on him. It is there that the Hebrew characters connected with that sacred symbol should be; he has therefore come to the Ultimate Reality.

THE PORCH OF THE E.A.

In K.S.T. the Porch was a covered rectangular area at the E. end, measuring 20 cubits wide by 10 cubits deep, or half a square. That was the width of the rest of the edifice. (I Kings vi. 3.) Through this Porch the would- be worshippers passed in order to enter the Temple. And above it there was an imposing structure about which there is some mystery. The writer of the Books of the Kings does not state the height of the latter, but in the Chronicles it is given as 120 cubits (iii. 4). This presents a difficulty not solved by the numerous models that have been produced.

Some of the details about K.S.T. must ever remain unsettled because of the uncertainty that there is as to the meaning of certain Hebrew words. But some modern scholars have objected to the alleged height of the superstructure, on the ground that the proportions 20 X 10 X 120 are " impossible on both aesthetic and statical grounds." But in the Greek translation of 2000 years ago - the Septuagint - the height of the Porch was given as 120 cubits, and the acute minds of

the period did not find anything to object to. Moreover, two modern writers, Perrot and Chipiez, in their *History of Art*, find the statement admissible, and they hold that such a Porch was simply a reproduction of the pylons which the Egyptians used to build in their Temple. At Karnack, for instance, the great Nave rose to a height of 75 feet above the level of the ground, and the pylon stood some fifty feet still higher.

It is thus evident that the frontage of K.S.T. presented the form of a tower or steeple, in which the centre attained a great height. But possibly the height was less than 120 cubits. It is remarkable that in designing the new Temple, Ezekiel usually doubles the dimensions of the old one. Ezekiel does not give the size of the pillars at the Porch, but whereas in the First Book of Kings, vii. 15, they are said to be "eighteen cubits high apiece," the Chronicler (giving us the idea of a later period) asserts that they were "thirty-five cubits high," which is double. The Chronicler was animated with the spirit of Ezekiel, which was to magnify the glory of Israel.

This, then, affords reasonable ground for thinking that the height of the Porch (*derived*

from the author of *Chronicles*, which was written later than the *Book of Kings*) has also been doubled, and that the actual height was therefore 60 cubits, and not 120. It might, of course, be that originally the *Book of Chronicles* had " 60 cubits " and that a late editor amended the text in accordance with the ideas of a later age, but the net result is the same. Assuming, then, a height of 60 cubits, there must have been room for three stories of the same height as the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, that is, 20 cubits each. And if so, we shall have a curious result: this tower-like Porch, 60 cubits high, joined to the rest of the building which was 60 cubits long (i.e. the Holy Place and the *Sanctum Sanctorum* combined) gives to the whole Temple the form of a huge Square, the leading symbol of Masonry !

One fact which is worthy of notice is the statement by the Chronicler (I. xxviii. 10) that "the pattern of the Porch" was an integral part of the original design of the Temple handed down from Moses to David and to his son Solomon.

We are not informed as to the practical purpose of that high superstructure. But whether it was 120 or 60 cubits in height, it

would obviously be a landmark for the people of that region. Besides, as it pointed up, it reminded all who went by of the need of considering the claims of the Most High. From the top, too, one would gain a view of the surrounding landscape. But it is doubtful whether any of these things were the primary object in erecting it. Our Ancient Brethren cultivated the art and science of Astronomy, and the top of that lofty Porch would be an excellent place for observing the stars at night, and thus estimating the wonderful works of the Almighty. This presumably was the practical purpose in building it.

The significance of the Porch lies in the fact that the quarry whence our " rough ashlar " are obtained is outside the Lodge, in the wide world; this makes some sort of portal indispensable. Through the Porch we gain admission into the interior, while it also provides a means of exit for those inside. Then, too, it affords the means of ventilating the premises. So, we might regard the Porch as an emblem of the intercourse that has constantly been going on between the fraternity and " the popular world " generally. If, on the one hand. the Craft exercises its beneficent

influence on mankind in general, the events developing outside the Lodge are effectively helping to mould our lives.

The preliminary work of preparing the figurative Stone is done in the world long before it arrives at the P . . . y or Entrance. When the T. or O.G. receives it, ere consenting to its introduction, certain formalities are to be gone through. And here we should note that the present mode of procedure differs slightly from that which obtained two hundred years ago. Then, the interrogatory as to the Candidate's qualifications, instead of taking place inside the Lodge, when "presented " to the W.M., used to be gone through outside, in the presence of " the Stewards of the Lodge," *or the Deacons, as we should say*. So, then, the figurative Stone having been hewn and made ready, was brought to the door of the Lodge, and the questions were put: " Do you seriously declare upon your honour, *before these gentlemen*, that unbiassed, etc." After this ordeal, when the Stewards were permitted to bring the Stone through the Porch in the manner prescribed from time immemorial, they conveyed it to the P. there to be placed under " the hands of the more expert workman " for the necessary manipulation.

THE PORCH OF THE M.M.

The M.M. has another conception of "the Porch," for he speaks of it as "the entrance to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*." As we have seen, in K.S.T. the "Porchway or Entrance" was the approach at the E., and it opened into "the Holy Place." It was from that Holy Place that one passed into the *Sanctum Sanctorum* at the other extreme. The Holy Place, therefore (which in a way answered to "the Middle Chamber of K.S.T." referred to in the Ritual), must be what the M.M. is thinking of, in speaking of the Porch, as the entrance to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*; that is to say, he conceives the Holy Place as an extension of the literal Porch. And, as a matter of fact, the *Sanctum Sanctorum* could not be entered by any other way.

It is not until the F.C. has been properly "squared" (and has become a Perfect Ashlar, so to speak) in that intermediate place, that he is permitted to penetrate further. This operation is performed at the Altar of Sacrifice.

When opening the Lodge in the Third Degree, the W.M. asks the J.W., "Whence

come you?" The answer is: "The E." And as the Porch was in the E., this answer is historically correct. But in modern Lodges we are usually admitted by a door which is somewhere at the end opposite to the symbolic E. The reason for this is to be found in the answer given by the J.W., the second time the W.M. asks: " Whence come you ? " He says: "The W." In some Lodges it is customary to prefix the phrase " As a M.M., whence come you ? "

The direction is inverted, because these M.M.'s who have come to the W. from the E. acknowledge that their quest through the W. has been a failure, and therefore, after protracted wandering in distant lands, are returning from the W. to the E. They had hoped to find "that which was lost " in the philosophy of Europe, but, disappointed in this respect, they revert to the lore of the Orient, where they are convinced that they will get what they want. But what is it that they find in the E. ? The ineffable Mystery of the Dawn, the Sun in all its glory, the Light Divine.

And in studying the direction taken by the M.M. it is well to take note of the important fact that we have reversed the position of

K.S.T. There the Porch was at the E., and the *Sanctum Sanctorum* was at the W. But in the Lodge it is otherwise; for us the E. is everything. We go to the *Sanctum Sanctorum* and find it a place of darkness. But afterwards we return to the E., where we began our career, and there we find the light; the Porch was there at the first, but now we find a Middle Chamber and an Upper Chamber above it.

In K.S.T. there were " three entrances," and this is endorsed by the Ritual. The E.A. is supposed to enter by the E., by the S.E. corner of the Porch, where we locate the first Pillar, where he is acknowledged " a Brother "; afterwards he comes a second time and enters by the N.E. corner of the Porch, where J. is situated, and there he receives recognition in the higher character of a Craftsman. But those Craftsmen who were called " Menatschin " used to enter " by the Porchway at the S. side," and presumably this entrance was the one assigned to those of higher rank, for it had the advantage of giving access to both the sidechambers and the Temple.

In saying that our M., H.A., had been at the Temple, we are to understand that he had gone to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*; this is implied

rather than explicitly stated. Then having finished his devotions, he came out and attempted to return the same way he had come in, that is, " by the S. entrance." Thwarted there, he made for the N. entrance, of which we have no particulars, and then, after finding his retreat cut off at both these points, he made for the E. entrance, the one by which the public were admitted, where he met with a tragic death. Therefore he had not entered by the Common Porch; his "Porch" had really been the " Holy Place," as in the case of every M.M.

The importance of the S. entrance arose from the fact that there, or close at hand, stood the Winding Staircase by which the Masons of high rank had access to the side-chambers. We shall deal with this subject presently.

THE TWIN PILLARS

The preceding study has now prepared the mind for the consideration of the Pillars. Those that stood at the Porchway or entrance of K.S.T. have been the subject of much

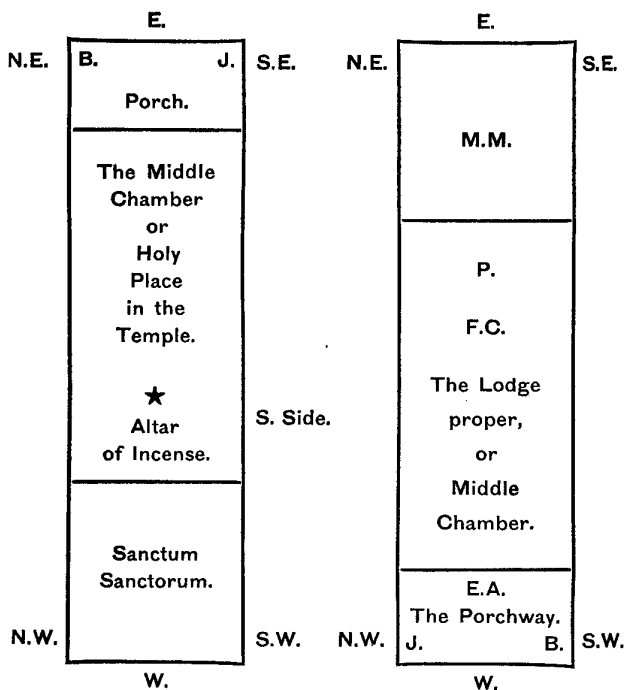
controversy, though the critics have not as yet been able to decide whether they were used as supports or as mere ornaments.

This double symbol is not mentioned in the First Degree. But B. is declared to be " the left-hand Pillar," and this leads us to infer that there was also a right-hand Pillar, and perhaps some other one. Moreover, the W.M. distinctly tells the E.A. that " Our Lodges are supported by *three* great Pillars," by which he anticipates all that Masonry has to teach us on the subject.

In the Ritual the first two are conceived as standing at the facade of the ideal Lodge, but within the Porch.

They were a familiar characteristic of the Semitic Temples, as may be seen by the pictorial representation of the more famous ones; for instance, those at Hierapolis, Tyre, and other cities of the ancient world. There are old coins on which they are depicted as the most conspicuous ornaments of the Temples at Paphos and Cyprus.

Classic writers idealised the two mountains at the Straits of Gibraltar, the " Rock " on the European side and Mount Atlas in Africa, as the two pillars which nature herself had erected



Plans of the Temple and of the Lodge compared.

to mark the gate into the unseen world at the W. And the Phoenicians reproduced them at the entrance of the famous Temple of Hercules at Gades, beyond which they thought there was no more territory, the Straits of Gibraltar being the Gate of the Unseen world.

Nor was this symbol of the twin Pillars exclusively Semitic, for it appears on some Assyrian monuments.

The Hebrews used those Pillars in a way that made them highly interesting, and gave them a moral application. Indeed, everyone seems to have known their significance. For ages the Kings of Israel had been anointed as they stood by the Pillar B.; while the High Priests also went through that ceremony as they stood by J. Hence the allusion to B. by the Chronicler (II. xxiii. 13, "The King stood by his Pillar "), an expression which implies familiarity with the idea. In the Masonic Ritual, B. is also associated by its very name with a certain " Prince or Ruler in Israel "; while J. is said to have been " so named " because of its association with a certain Assistant High Priest "who officiated at its dedication," who presumably was afterwards made " High Priest."

There is a deep meaning, too, in the intimation given to the Craftsman that the names of the Pillars must be " conjoined," or connected. Some have thought that when the Chronicler says that they were 35 cubits long (*instead of* 17 1/2), he was thinking of the two as being placed end to end; but we have seen that there is another explanation. The Mason associates himself successively with both to show that he combines in himself the character of King and Priest. The names are conjoined, therefore, to show that the same thought inspires him in both characters, in his civil and in his religious life. Reading them consecutively, we have " By Him is strength; He will establish." Here it is not specified by whom, or through whom, this will be done; but every Mason knows, and he relies on this promise of stability for the mystic fabric which he is rearing.

Both the E.A. and the F.C. come across the space between the two Pillars; but in the first instance the Candidate, being in a state of d . . s, is unable to notice anything. The second time he sees them both, but is unconscious of their significance. As they form the subject matter of the instruction given in the Second Degree, however, they will come to

loom large in the mental outlook of the F.C. This accounts for the great attention they attract and for the numerous works written by Masons on the subject.

It is not until the Mason is "passed" that he hears anything about J., but then he finds that the two are intimately connected, being, in fact, a twin symbol, and he is eager to hear what we have to tell him respecting details; their situation, their names, the meaning of these names; the place where they were cast, who ordered the casting, who superintended the work; the material of which they were made, their conformation, their ornamentation, their dimensions, length, diameter, girth, and thickness; the purpose served by the shafts, the canopy, and the spherical balls; the three kinds of decorative work, viz. network, lilywork, and pomegranates; the moral significance of these three.

But while the E.A. is only told about B., before he has gone much further he hears that inside the Lodge there are the two mysterious " grand parallels " which mark the width of the Lodge " between N. and S."; and these are, as stated, counterparts of B. and J. Their identity will for a time puzzle him, but by and

by, on reflection, he will see what they are intended to teach.

B. is said to be on the left-hand side; but in K.S.T., as one stood facing the building, it was on the right-hand side. To understand this we must refer to the Diagrams given in the previous section, for we should remember two facts that are frequently ignored. First, that we have turned the Temple back to front; and, secondly, that we view the Pillars from within the building and not as mere beholders at the outside. For the latter, " the left-hand side " would have been the S.E. corner of the Temple; but for one inside, always presuming he did not change his position, the left-hand side would remain left-hand side however we might turn the Temple.

As the twin Pillars were at the E. end, J. was at the N.E. corner of the building. But supposing we were inside the Temple, we should have called that the right- hand side. The *Sanctum Sanctorum* was at the opposite end. This must constantly be kept in mind if we are to avoid confusion.

The Hebrews had reversed the usual position of the Temples adopted by the rest of the world; and in going to their *Sanctum*

Sanctorum they travelled from E. to W. But the Masons have restored the almost universal practice and put the Adytum in the E. instead of in the W. And while we follow the practice of the Gentiles we adopt the language of the Hebrews, reversing the Temple but still speaking of the Adepts, our Ancient Brethren, as making their way to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, which we conceive to be in the E.

The Candidates of the First and Second Degrees, having entered through the Porch which we place at the W., therefore move in the first instance, as an E.A., from the S.W. (where the Pillar B. should stand) diagonally to the N.E., and afterwards, as a F.C., from the N.W. (where J. should be) also diagonally to the S.E. But they are both taking an Eastward direction, missing the door of the *Sanctum Sanctorum*; " it proves a slip."

As Masons we have somehow gone W., but we see the necessity of mystically going to the E. And yet this mystic E. is not at the *Sanctum Sanctorum* but at the Porch, for there at the top, there is something which is exclusively reserved for those who have acquired the right to enter the *Sanctum Sanctorum*; and when the night is past, we shall climb to the

Upper Story of the Porch, and facing the E. (every I.M., as well as every R.A. Companion who has gone through the Chairs, knows something about turning to the E.), we shall behold the Rising Sun and find in it the cause of our illumination.

And now comes the lesson taught by the Pillars. For when the Candidates stand at the N.E. and S.E. parts of the Lodge, and the W.M. says, " You now stand to all external appearance a just and upright Mason," they are only imitating the Pillars, and their counterparts the Parallels; that is, they stand perfectly erect, their feet formed in a S., as every pillar should do. But in their case there is no thought of a material ornament, brick or stone; they fully realise that the symbol is then being applied to their morals. The erect posture of the body indicates an honest and aspiring mind, while the feet signify rectitude of life and actions, of conduct and aim.

Note, too, that by placing one foot across the L., the other down the L., a Square is formed which opens towards the Brethren, so as to embrace the whole of the Fraternity.

At K.S.T. the width of the Porch (which was the width of the Temple throughout) was

indicated by B. and J. And the two grand parallels inside the Lodge are supposed to correspond to the two lateral walls, and so, too, to mark the width of the Lodge.

With the Mediaeval Masons, the two grand parallels seem to have been referred to certain astronomical facts. For, as we learn in our Lectures, they " dedicated " their Lodges to the two S.S. John's, the Baptist and the Evangelist. Not that they wanted particularly to honour those Saints (although as Christians they did so incidentally), but their intention was to mark and commemorate the two Solstices, which divided the year into two equal parts, one being when the Sun attained its extreme point N., in the winter, about 22nd December (*St John Evangelist was on the 27th*), the other when the Sun reached its extreme limit S., in the Summer, about 21st June (the Baptist's day was on the 24th); that is to say, the shortest and the longest days of the year.

It was on account of this ancient practice that the Regulations, issued by our own Grand Lodge in 1720, laid down the important principle that the Brethren of all Lodges acknowledging its jurisdiction should attend an Annual Communication and Feast on either St

John the Baptist's Day or St John Evangelist's Day. From ancient days those had been the customary days for such gatherings.

THE MASTER PILLAR

Here another problem crops up. The Initiate has been distinctly told that, " Our Lodges are supported by three great Pillars." But so far we have discovered only two. Where is the third? We never hear anything about it. But let us note the various statements that are made about the three mysterious pillars: -

(a) They are "emblematical" of three divine qualities or attributes, viz.: Wisdom, Strength, Beauty; this implies that there are representations of them somewhere in the Lodge, as, for instance, in the T.B.'s.

(b) Without prejudice to their real mystic significance, we sometimes " refer them to the three most famous Orders of Architecture, viz., the Ionic, Doric, and Corinthian "; as, for instance, when we carve the three columns of the Principal Officers, which exemplify those three styles.

(c) They are said to represent the three historic G.M.'s who bore sway at the building of the first Temple at Jerusalem, represented also by the Principal Officers.

The conception of three Pillars is unquestionably a landmark of the Order, for it can be traced back to the second oldest Masonic Charge, viz., the *Matthew Cooke MS. (which dates from about A.D. 1430, and is made up of still older materials)*, where we read that the wisdom of the antediluvian world was providentially preserved by means of three Pillars, discovered after the Flood by two eminent Masons, Bro. Pythagoras and Bro. Hermes.

Of Bro. Pythagoras we know that he was initiated into the Mysteries at Samothrace, being cryptically referred to in some of the Old English Charges as "Peter Gower." And as to Bro. Hermes, we believe that the name is simply the Greek form of *Hiram*.

The tradition of the preservation of learning by means of some pillars on which the ideas of an earlier age had been recorded, is found in many other writers, and it tallies with what we ourselves say about B. and J., that they were designed "to serve as archives to Masonry,"

that is to say, as repositories of Masonic knowledge, wherein were deposited the Constitutional Rolls, the V. of the S.L., and other literary treasures which would benefit future generations.

The number "three" corresponds with the general character of Masonry. In K.S.T. there were the three sections already noted: the Porch, the Holy Place, and the Sanctum Sanctorum. And in the Lodge we have the principal Officers at the E., S., and W., who preside over the three Orders of Masons, each of them exhibiting an actual column by his side. If the columns of the two W.'s correspond to B. and J., to what does the one exhibited by the W.M. correspond?

In the Explanation of the Second T.B., the two pillars B. and J. are said to be " a Memorial " of the Pillar of fire and cloud which is there described. And the statement raises a suspicion that this Third Pillar corresponds to the Altar of Incense, represented also by the P. in front of the W.M., and by something else in the Chapter; on the Altar of Incense there was " fire and cloud," or smoke. In K.S.T. it stood in front of the entrance to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*.

The symbol of three allegorical Pillars has been used differently in other systems. Thus, for example, the Kabbalists conceived them as ranged on a line across the middle of their mystic Temple: Wisdom on the S. side, Strength (*or* Fortitude) in the N., and Beauty (*alias* Benignity, which is beauty of character) between the two, that is, "in the centre."

The Kabbalists also pointed out that B. and J. consisted of six distinct parts, viz., two shafts, two chapters, and two entablatures; and they gave symbolic names to all these. But it does not follow that the Master Pillar was constructed in the same way. Rather we must consider it as a single object without chapter or entablature - as we see it in the Chapter, - and therefore adding this indivisible Pillar to the six constituent parts of the Twin Pillars, we obtain a total of seven, a symbolic number.

We have already ascertained the fact that the columns are emblematic of the three offices of Priest, Prophet, and King, and these offices are combined in the M.M. In this respect they teach that it is the knowledge of T.T.A.L.G.M.H. (typified by the Prophet)

that gives strength and consistency to the M.M.'s character.

Nothing definite is said concerning the form, name, or situation of the Third Pillar. But if what has been alleged be more than mere fancy, or a new-fangled invention, or a chimerical notion, there ought to be some indication of their character and function; the matter is too important to be passed over without notice.

Arguing, by analogy, the matter might be put thus: If B. and J. belong to the E.A. and F.C. respectively, then, the third unnamed Pillar must appertain to the M.M.; and again, if B. and J. correspond to the J. and S.W.'s, this other one must relate to the W.M. We might even go further, or look higher, and say: If the first two represent the Sun and Moon, this last must stand for the Master of the cosmic Lodge.

The Kabbalists used to say that by advancing in the study of the V. of the S.L. one learned "to unite the Blessed Name and the mystery of J. and B." Indeed, the Kabbalistic treatise entitled *Gates of Light* contains the following curious statement about J. and B.: "By these two Pillars and by the Living God

(*El Hai*) the mind and souls descend, as by their passages and channels," i.e. they must pass through them in the process of their illumination.

Obviously, therefore, the Third Pillar was taken to be emblematical of the Living God that is, of the Master, the " Master " of the cosmic Lodge, of Light and Life, from whom we derive not only the vital energy but our intelligence. We claim that when we become M.M.'s we are brought into the most intimate fellowship with the mysterious Architect, the Master Builder, H., A.B.; but this is because we then come to share the knowledge that he had of the Most High God.

The Craft Mason might object that we have no such emblem in the Lodge as the Master Pillar; but in point of fact it is foreshadowed from the beginning in the P., to which the Candidate is taught to "advance in due form," which means in the attitude of a suppliant "humbly soliciting" what will presently be granted. The posture prescribed for the occasion is symbolic of the attitude of mind and heart which we expect from him.

The P. in the First Degree is an ordinary material object, a substituted symbol, but as

we discover very soon, it is situated at a point of the compass which is suggestive of light and proves ultimately to be the place where light is obtained. Accordingly, in the Second and Third Degrees, when the Candidates are asked to make their way to that spot, we no longer remember the P., but instead we speak of advancing to the E., where one day we shall find this same Pillar that we are inquiring about.

That point is practically what the F.C. describes as "the middle of the building," and what the M.M. calls "the centre." It is in fact the place where the Sun rises, where the knowledge is acquired.

And passing from the Lesser Mysteries of the Craft to the Greater Mysteries of the Chapter, we shall find that the matter is further elucidated. We may be told that the R.A. is comparatively a new thing, dating only from the middle of the eighteenth century. But the R.A. has preserved for us what is undoubtedly the pith and marrow of the Craft, having protected it from profanation at a time when there was great danger of the Cowans invading the Lodge. The meaning of what the M.M. calls "the

centre" becomes perfectly clear when the three M.M.'s from B. report their discovery of "something like the base of a P. or C.," which eventually turns out to be the key to our whole system. It is when the Mason has discovered the block of white marble, the Altar of Incense, the Double Cube, that he qualifies for exaltation to the high rank which the Chapter confers.

And that the Tradition of the R.A. is not a modern invention can be proved by reproducing what Philostorgius wrote about the year A.D. 364 - *more than 1500 years since* - concerning an old story which had reached him. In one of the various attempts made to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem, he says, while the ground was being prepared, a stone slipped from its place and there was exposed to view a deep cutting or well. One of the workmen being then let down by a rope, he found himself in a subterranean chamber, which proved to be rectangular in form. As this place was flooded, the workman had to wade in water up to the ankles, but he had the happiness of discovering a small column which stood there, and which, when brought to the surface, as he himself was drawn up, was seen to have some inscription,

which began with these words: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* The parallel is sufficiently like our version of it, to make us feel that there is some foundation for what the P.S. rehearses in the Chapter.

THE PLACE OF LIGHT IN THE LODGE

Learning originated in the East, and thence spread Westwards. It has been so, too, with our Craft. The name "Orient," which on the continent of Europe is given to the G.L., means the place of sunrise, where the G.M. is supposed to preside, because he is the fountain of light and power for the whole Order. This explains also why all over the world the seat assigned to the W.M. of a Lodge is at the E. As the sun opens and enlivens the day from the E., so he opens the Lodge from that quarter for the employment and instruction of Masons.

The P. is at the E., and it is there that the candidate obtains the light that will dispel the darkness from his mind. And he can only

reach that point by a certain "method" which calls for instruction from someone who has travelled that way before; this conveying a double lesson, viz., that in our quest for truth, we should avail ourselves of the experience of others, and that we should be most careful to take our bearings, and to proceed in the right direction.

The three perambulations are a representation of our pilgrimage as we seek the light, and as we march up and down N. and E., and S., and W., passing in view of those present not only are we recognised as " fit and proper persons to be made . . .," but we are squaring the Lodge, thereby showing that we have learned to harmonise the varied experiences of our life with a definite ideal.

The steps taken by the E.A. at the critical moment have been said to correspond to the first three stages of the Creation before the Sun began to shine, but they also are emblematic of those strivings of the mind in the past, which have resulted in as many strides forward, each bolder than the preceding, each bringing us nearer and nearer to the light, until it has been attained. For although we speak of the Candidate as in a state of darkness, his darkness

is only relative; the words he repeats in the S.O.,

"Which may heretofore have been known by me,"

imply that we give him credit for a modicum of Masonic knowledge, although most probably it has so far been inarticulate.

In life we are conscious of having been guided by a mysterious Providence, whose ways are inscrutable; and now, too, we are being led by invisible but friendly hands, and something that is done for us has made us feel that "no danger can ensue." All this is very striking to the Initiate.

Our fathers travelled from E. to W., and then back to the E. And similarly we all have to travel; first, with the sun, until it sets, then back to the E. The P. is by no means the Mason's goal; rather, it only marks the starting point of his Masonic career. There he learns much that is new to him, and he makes a great advance; but harder efforts and longer processes will follow in due time, and he will not stop where he stands; he will move on.

The legends about Hercules teach the same thing. His name (the Latin variant of the

Greek "*Herakles* ") is derived from the Semitic *Ha Rakel*, "The Traveller," and it was given to him because, having started from the E., he reached the utmost bounds of the W., where he erected the famous Pillars that marked both the confines of the physical world and the porchway, or entrance, of the next. Afterwards he returned to the E., and was acclaimed as a God. And this is also our appointed mode of procedure: when the E.A. has emulated that historic example and come to occupy the seat which the S.W. has in the West, he is able to return to the symbolic E. (the place where he first saw the light), and this time he will be installed as W.M.

THE ACT OF ILLUMINATION

Before the Candidate is allowed to see any thing, when he is examined as to his motives, we are careful to ascertain whether he is prompted by a general desire of knowledge; for (the darkness he is in being designed as a preparation for what is coming) we want him to ponder over certain truths and thereby assist him in evoking the inner vision.

It is while the Initiate is at the P., in a very strange position, and after he has declared "the predominant wish of his heart," that the veil - the symbol of his ignorance - drops, and the light comes; but, as we know, with us the posture of the body is at times "an emblem of the mind," and in this particular instance, that which the Ritual prescribes is full of meaning: the Initiate comes not merely as a Seeker but as a Suppliant who is anxious to learn.

When again he stands up, he becomes conscious of a change that has taken place in himself, and this feeling of his is echoed by the W.M. as he greets him: " Rise, newly obl . . d B. among . . ."

And now follows a series of discoveries, for besides the physical light that lightens up the scene, a new sort of light has been kindled within him by which he is able to discern the symbolic character of practically everything around him, and to perceive that he himself has become an integral part of the quaint tableau. The W.M. observes: " You now stand to all external appearance a just and upright Free Mason." And this is true enough, for every upright on level ground produces a perfect S. with its angle of 90° , and that S.

stands for our Rule of conduct. It is only when we live up to our own Masonic principles that we are " acting on the S.," and that is why we apply it to neck and breast, to temple and forehead, that we teach him to form it with hands and feet, with arms and knees. Then, too, the W.M. calls the attention of the Initiate to three objects laid on the P. and to three prominent individuals present who are described as our Greater and Lesser Lights respectively. It sounds odd, but just as in nature it is possible for an opaque body to become luminous, so, too, in Freemasonry our mystic light may be radiated not only by living persons, but also by the material things we handle.

The so-called " Lesser Lights " are associated with certain luminaries of the sky which we personify, as the Sun, the Moon, and a certain " Master-star " which is not expressly identified, but which appears to be Polaris, for Polaris presides over the midnight sky, being the pivot around which the whole of the heavens revolve. And in the Lodge, the Brethren representing those celestial orbs are distinguished by the tapers that are burning by their side.

We know that the light - all light - has dynamic power, but it is surprising to hear that our "Greater Lights" are not living men, but certain emblems, called on one occasion "the furniture of the Lodge." Still, there is nothing unreasonable in this, for though the emblems be inanimate things, their mystic significance is more fixed, more illuminative, and more striking than the light that shines out of human lives, which at the best is variable and uncertain. Even in the case of Brethren occupying the highest offices, their character is liable to change, for either the better or the worse, since they are the children of circumstance like everybody else. Still, every officer may be said to diffuse Masonic Light, more or less effectively, in at least three ways:

- (1) By the functions he discharges;
- (2) By the example he affords to the Brethren;
- (3) By the instruction he imparts to others.

Indeed, everyone of us may reflect some of the light received for the benefit of those around us, in the everyday life; and the Ritual encourages us to hope that whatever our shortcomings, after the vicissitudes of this mortal

life, we shall ascend to a higher plane, there "to shine as the stars for ever and ever."

Figuratively speaking, the Greater Lights may be said to come into operation as follows: -

(1) The V. of the S.L. is a permanent light which has been lighted by the G.A.O.T.U. for the entire world; (2) The S. is the light which the ideal Freemason is supposed to keep burning, and consequently it has always been the distinctive badge of an Installed Master; (3) The C.'s are the light everyone of us (even the humblest Brother) gives out in our attempts to carry the principles of the Order into practice.

OUR MYSTIC LIGHT

The builders of all ages, when erecting an edifice, have ever done as the G.A.O.T.U. did at the beginning by creating the firmament; they have been careful to tile it, that is, to roof it over, partly for privacy, partly for protection from the elements; but, at the same time, in order to avoid excessive darkness, they have inserted dormers, or other openings, that will let in the light.

And amongst us, the Speculative Freemasons,

if our constant care is " to keep the Lodge close tiled," it is obvious that the object is not to exclude the light. We aim at a double effect: first, that the value of our secrets may be enhanced; and, secondly, that we may get into that frame of mind wherein our arts can be unfolded to advantage. For we both veil and illustrate the truth; we impart it to the Candidate, but in such a manner that not only is betrayal made difficult, but we preclude the possibility of our secrets becoming the common property of the profane.

After the numerous " exposures " there have been, the world is as little enlightened about Freemasonry as it was before they were made. Indeed, even the initiated can only claim to be " disciples." For whereas the "material blessing" is restored suddenly, the enlightenment of the mind proceeds by degrees all through life, " Masonry being a progressive science.

In the First Degree, one is only granted a glimpse of our mysteries, and the scene which the Initiate sets eyes on contains far more than he can possibly take in. How unlikely it is, for instance, that he will notice that the tapers at the E., S., and W. form a triangle of light,

the base running East and West so as to indicate the pilgrimage of life ! Still less will he detect the triangle of darkness, for it is only at another stage that he hears of our M., H.A., receiving the fatal blows at the three points S., N., and E., and as these points are not marked out by any outward signs, this triangle must of course remain invisible.

In this part of the Ritual there is some confusion, but unquestionably the Square of the M.M.'s Lodge is conceived as made up of two triangles, and these triangles are antithetical, representing not merely light and darkness, but life and death, and therefore they suggest that ancient symbol known as Solomon's Seal, which consisted of two triangles, seemingly opposed to each other, but harmoniously interlaced.

The points where our M., H.A., was attacked are correctly given in our present Emulation Working, which says: " S., N., and E." But in the versions of the Ritual which were published in the U.S.A. as "exposures" during the nineteenth century, that is, from 1821 to 1861, the points are given as " E., W., S."; and this seems to correspond with American practice at the time. For in the U.S.A., when

our story is re-enacted, the three assaults take place at the three points where the Principal Officers have their places. And therefore the N. is ignored; for as there is no Officer there, nothing happens in that quarter. And so, the idea of the N. as a region of darkness and inactivity remains.

But this does not represent the practice in mediaeval times in Europe. In a Ritual printed in cypher and last published about 120 years ago, of which a copy is to be found in the Library of the G.L., the points are given as S., N., and W. (See Bro. Max Montesole's paper on "The Third Degree," *Transactions of the Author's Lodge*, vol. i.) This Ritual represents the practice of the "unattached " Masons of the eighteenth century, that is, of those Masons who were not under the jurisdiction of the G.L. of 1717, and is known as the " St John's " working. But their points are also inadmissible, because in K.S.T. there was no exit in the W. There were but three entrances, " S., N., and E.," by which our M., H.A., could have attempted to escape. And yet those points have the merit of placing the triangle of darkness in the W.

Now, however, if we make the triangle of

death to be "S., N., and E.," we locate it in the place associated with the light, and we are mixing the E. with the W., the day with the night. But our mystic philosophy does not always go hand in hand with history or with geography. We know that there have been substitutions, and there have been internal changes in the order of the Lodge required for the purposes of symbolism.

The antithesis is between the light and the darkness, and therefore between the E. and the W. But symbolically our lights are arrayed on the side of the Lodge E., S., and W. And therefore the symbolic region of darkness should be the side opposed to this. In the Rose Croix Degree the three Pillars are placed thus: Wisdom in the N., Beauty in the S., and Strength in the W., by which the triangle is made to abut on the W. Our Ritual says that these Pillars "are about His Throne," the Throne of Deity; but we cannot imagine any of them as on the N., which is the symbolic region of darkness.

For the sake of consistency, therefore, if not for the reasons advanced by Bro. Montesole, the points of the two triangles should be given as we have done here: one abutting on the S.,

where the J.W. marks the Sun at its meridian, and then, as opposed to it, one with its apex in the N.

What is seen and heard at an Initiation produces an impression that can never be effaced from our memory, but yet it is only a humble beginning. Need we be reminded that it was not until we were "passed" that "the secrets of nature and the principles of intellectual truth were unveiled to our view"? The Liberal Arts and Sciences are seven great avenues of knowledge, and by them the mental outlook of the F.C. is greatly widened; but our Masonic Light is granted to the Craftsman according to the measure of his requirements and of his capacity to receive it; and therefore his aspiration continues to be all the time "that the rays of heaven may shed their influence to enlighten us in the paths of virtue and science."

The culminating point in the experiences of the Craft Mason will be found to be at the Mystic Centre, but even that is not the final goal. As the sun which, mounting higher and higher, diffuses its light in wider and wider circles, until it bathes a whole hemisphere, so, too, our Masonic Ideal, as it gains ascendancy

over us, illumines and dominates the whole of our life. It is because our Degrees are degrees of light, that we can think of " a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge," or of continual progress by the extension of such knowledge.

THE MASON'S OUTLOOK

Having gone through his ordeal, the newly obl .
 . d Initiate finds that all of a sudden he has emerged out of a world of shadows into a bright and beautiful one in which everything is more or less symbolic and full of meaning. He is asked to assume the perfectly erect posture and to take certain steps; and although this is somewhat puzzling, he feels sure he will presently understand what it is done for.

He is only at the starting point of his career, but already he resembles the Alpine climber portrayed by Longfellow, who has set out on his toilsome up-hill journey, holding in his grasp

A banner with the strange device, Excelsior !

For, like that charming character, he is pressing forward and tenaciously after his Ideal, resolved

at all costs to brave all dangers and difficulties " with a firm but humble confidence " - even unto death ! And he has been told that, like the man of the poem, he must scale the very heavens; to enable him to do which he has at his disposal a certain mystic Ladder which is "composed of many staves or rounds, but three principal ones

The figures of speech used in the Ritual are most graphic illustrations of the reality, the actual fact. Thus, for instance, the light of Reason is symbolised as dawning in man, first of all, as " a glimmering ray." But we learn to trace it from its development, stage by stage, at times somewhat laboriously, until at length, assisted by our mystic arts, we are led up to the source of all intelligence, "even to the Throne of God Himself."

These figures of speech may be quaint, but they are by no means new-fangled, for they have been handed down from very remote times. And we know how inspiring, invigorating, and uplifting they can be to us !

The new-made Brother is represented as standing on the outer edge, that is, on the circumference of the mystic circle, and therefore to him we speak of " the Border' as distinct

from "the Pavement." While there, the Initiate finds himself in a sort of twilight, the dimness of which compels him at times to grope his way. For most certainly we do not show every part of the Lodge at once; but he finds them out in course of time. In Masonry, as in nature, it is impossible to absorb all knowledge by one single sudden flash of the light. We lay claim to all the stores of wisdom that our Ancient Brethren have accumulated by their labour, but in order to assimilate them, there must be much patient study and research on our part.

Some things may appear to us as out of their true perspective, out of line, and perhaps distorted. Some may seem exaggerations, others under-statements. But the Mason loses nothing by having things pointed out to him separately, in gradual order, with a strong emphasis, either to magnify or minimise; indeed, he is all the more impressed; and he realises all the more the didactic value of our way of expressing things by symbols and figures of speech. Eventually he will feel that everything we told him, though couched in strange language, was intensely real.

But what is this centre, this summit, this

goal of our aspirations? Where is it that it all ends? It is referred to as " an ethereal mansion." And this seems to be identical with the "Mount Heredom" mentioned in an old Masonic legend of the Middle Ages. This Mystic name has been traced to Kilwinning, but the conception is found also in Rosicrucian documents, which speak of it as the " Mountain of Initiation," and as *Mons Magorum Invisibilis*, "The Invisible Mount of the Magi."

"Heredom " has been explained as a compound of the Greek *Hieros* and *Domus*, thus making it mean " Holy House," but this can only be put forth as a homonym, scarcely as a serious derivation; the Masons of former times were very much addicted to thus playing with etymology. As a matter of fact, *Heredom* is Hebrew, not Greek.

In the account of K.S.T. which we have in the V. of the S.L., there is a reference to " the Chief of Solomon's Officers," and while the Hebrew Chronicler (II. viii. 10) calls these Officers *Menatschin*, in the Book of Kings they are called *Harodim* (I. v. 16). In our Third Ceremony the former term is defined as meaning " prefects or overseers." But the mediaeval

Masons seem to have preferred the name *Herodim*, which word means simply "they that bear rule." And in consequence we may still find it used in some of the higher Degrees.

Waite makes the following cautious observation: "It is admitted that some kind of Masonic Order or Degree subsisted under the name of *Harodim* in the Northern part of England during the latter part of the seventeenth century, but that there is no information extant as to its nature."

But it is a fact that a Masonic Lodge was established at Winlaton in 1690 under the name of *Highrodiam*, which afterwards removed to Swalwell, and on 21st March 1735 it came under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of London. According to Yarker, there were at that date two Master Grades, viz., that of English Master and that of "Highrodiam," the latter being conferred in a Grand Lodge.

Fragmentary as this information is, it suggests that the name was used by the Mediaeval Masons in reference to a superior order of speculative Craftsmen whose aim was to rear a spiritual rather than a material Temple, although many of them might also belong to the operative building trade.

Our kinship with these men may be proved by the character of our Third Ceremony, which is unquestionably " the foundation and keystone of the whole speculative edifice." For, as Waite has put it, the M.M.'s Degree " is not only of the Hermetic Schools, but of the Schools thereunto antecedent." Indeed, it can be conclusively shown that the said Degree pre-supposes a more fully developed Kabbalism than has as yet been discovered among the adepts of the Hermetic Art in any part of Europe.

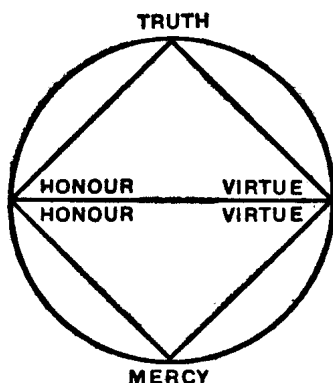
In the meantime we must not lose sight of the fact that the *Harodim* were the same as the *Menatschin*, Craftsmen "of that superior class appointed to preside over the rest." They were considered eligible for the secrets of the Third Degree after they had shown " patience and industry."

THE PAVEMENT AND ITS BORDER

We shall now consider the beautiful flooring of the Freemason's Lodge. As already observed, its width is equal to the diameter of a circle which is called " the Border," one

of the first things which are pointed out to the E.A. Much is made of this symbol, in speaking to him, because the E.A. is supposed to stand on the fringe of Freemasonry.

The Pavement is the first of " the Ornaments " of the Lodge enumerated in the First



Degree; and the Border is mentioned immediately after as something quite distinct from it. They will continue to be of considerable interest to us through our Masonic career. But the two are really one symbol. The Border is mentioned as a thing apart because it has a significance all its own, and because, as already said, the E.A. is then imagined to be on the edge of the Craft. The two are treated

separately to facilitate an analysis and to bring out the separate meaning of each. But the unity of the symbol is clear, and it makes a beautiful design for the floor of the Lodge.

The Border is said to be "indented and tessellated," which signifies that it is made of square tiles or fragments of such tiles, that is, squares or parts of squares, laid to cover a surface. But the Pavement consists of Mosaic, which carries a deeper significance. It lies foursquare within the ring of the Border. (see Illustration).

In modern times we have conventionalised the Border as an ornamental fringe of a carpet, with the pattern just described. But the original Border was a Zodiac, that is, a belt either circular or oval, which from ancient times used to be divided into twelve parts, whereon were depicted the twelve Signs by which certain constellations, or groups of stars, were indicated. This accounts for the statement of the W.M. when explaining the First T.B., that this symbol "refers us to the planets which in their various revolutions form a beautiful Border or skirtwork round the Sun."

And this being so, it follows that when the Initiate goes round the Lodge he is but tracing

the course which the orbs of space are supposed to follow, and like them he is gravitating towards the mystic Sun, this last occupying the central point wherein we conceive to be the source of all light. For the Speculative Mason begins his career on the Border, where we give him a glimpse of that Sun, and of starland generally, that he may admire the beauties of the heavens, as well as of the earth, this latter being typified by the Pavement.

That the Pavement has a cosmic significance is proved by the declaration that it is emblematic of our earthly life, "pointing out the diversity of objects which decorate and adorn the creation, the animate as well as the inanimate parts thereof." Thus, we see that, however large this earth of ours may loom, it is but part of the vast Universe, and the Mason at the centre of the Pavement will find himself brought into relation with that Universe, with stars beneath his feet, stars above him and all around, the whole wonderful panorama of Starland moving forward, each star carrying out its mission of service to the G.A.O.T.U.

Here, indeed, we have a simple but impressive allegory of man's instinctive aspiration, *ad astra*, after the soul of nature. The

numberless orbs of the celestial firmament revolve year in, year out, unceasingly, but the G.A.O.T.U. remains at the centre, unmoved and immovable, the Sovereign Ruler, the Source of all power, reigning over His creation by virtue of His own perfection, unchangeable, without the least wane of His light and power. It is by the realisation of this truth that the human heart is brought into tune with the Infinite.

Even the E.A. learns that the Pavement of this ideal Lodge consists of "Mosaic." *Mosaic* is an elaborate and delicate piece of workmanship, wherein a vast multitude of tiny cubes of different sizes and hues have been carefully combined so as to produce an artistic design of an allegorical character. And accordingly this design is described as "variegated and chequered," which means symmetrically set out and diversified in colour.

But while the Pavement consists of Mosaic, the surface is flat, that is, perfectly level, for in all Mosaic only one of the six sides of each cube is exposed to view. This should remind us that similarly we only know our fellow-creatures by their external acts, their aims and motives being more or less obscure and

problematical. Wherefore any judgment we may pass on them must necessarily be based on a very imperfect and limited knowledge.

As with the Border, we have conventionalised this symbol by a plain rectangular carpet with a pattern of black and white squares which we lay on the floor of our Lodges; it is only where it meets the Border that we see any half-squares or broken sections.

This accords with the cryptic reference to the form of the Lodge when we explain it to the Initiate: " Pendant to the corners of the Lodge are four tassels meant to remind us of the four cardinal virtues, namely: Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice." Thus we see again that everything in the Lodge has its moral application. The four virtues named circumscribe a Mason's sphere of life; their symbols, the tassels, are at the four extreme points.

THE SQUARE PAVEMENT OF THE M.M.

For the F.C., the Pavement is rectangular, all the angles being angles of 90° . But now

the M.M. finds that, in the Third Degree, his Pavement has a most important feature; it is different, being a perfect square. Historically, this agrees with our prototype, for we know that in K.S.T. the Middle Chamber was a double square 40 X 20 cubits, but the *Sanctum Sanctorum* was 20 X 20 cubits, that is, one single perfect square. And this last place was reserved for the High Priest alone; it was " for the High Priest to walk on." This allusion to the High Priest means, of course, that the Lodge is in reality a Temple, a building erected on consecrated ground and properly dedicated, for on it " all glory " has to be given to the Most High, as " all gratitude," too, is for the Most High.

In this assertion, that the Square Pavement is for the High Priest, there is the assumption that now the M.M. has been admitted to fellowship with the High Priest; for the Lodge is the counterpart of the Temple, and the Third Degree stands for the *Sanctum Sanctorum*. Further, there is the assumption that the M.M., as " brother to H.A.," is the Associate, the equal and companion, of both the Priest and the King; all of whom, it is implied, had the right to enter there and offer their adoration to

the Most High. And surely "the Builder" must have been there before the Priest himself, before K.S. himself, and, of course, before H., K. of T.

That historic trio, K.S., our M., H.A., and H., K. of T., were the acknowledged custodians of the "genuine secrets" at the building of the First Temple at Jerusalem, which was set up jointly by them. And when at the Adytum, or *Sanctum Sanctorum*, there was perfect solidarity between them. The communication of those secrets required the consent and co-operation of the three, as every R.A. companion knows. Every M.M. will see this when he, too, comes to re-discover "that which was lost."

Many must have thought it strange that we should declare the Pavement of the M.M.'s Lodge to be "square," seeing that the conventional carpet in our Lodge is always rectangular, the length exceeding the width by at least one-third. The carpet, however, is a compromise between two different things, viz., the cosmological conception of the Lodge represented by the parallelopipedon and the square of the *Sanctum Sanctorum*. We could not be changing carpets in opening the Lodge "on the centre" and on resuming "on the square"; hence the compromise.

Taking the words as they stand in the Ritual and in their obvious sense, we must conclude that the Square of the Pavement lies enclosed within the ring of the Border, the two geometrical figures being concentric, (see Illustration), and that the four angles of the Square touch the circumference at four points, these marking the four quarters of the globe, N., E., S., and W.

That same Square may, however, be viewed as two "conjoined" triangles resting on the centre, the four points of it representing the four main points of a Mason's character. See the allusion made to these moral qualities in the Ceremonies; in enumerating them, they appear to be six; there are first the three Dictates which should be indelibly imprinted on the Heart, "of Truth, of Honour, and of Virtue"; and then there are the three distinguishing characteristics of a good Freemason, viz., "Virtue, Honour, and Mercy." But it should be noted that two of these, "Virtue and Honour," are repeated, because as the two triangles touch and form one Square, there are only four corners, the four points of the Square, and in consequence there are only four qualities mentioned.

The Centre of that Square is also referred to whenever the Lodge is opened in the Third Degree, when we find that, as we told the Initiate, " in all regular well- formed, constituted Lodges, there is a point within a circle (by keeping) round which the Brethren cannot err; this circle is bounded between N. and S. by two grand parallels . . . on the upper part of this circle rests the V. of the S.L." The Mason should move round that point as the axis of Freemasonry, and he should do so with the regularity of the planets, of which the Border is the Symbol.

The matter may now be summed up as follows. On the floor of the Lodge we observe four different things :-

- (1) The central point, which may be variously symbolised by an Eye, or by the letter G. or simply by a point.
- (2) The two Triangles, which put together form a Square.
- (3) The Square, with the four corners, N., E., S., and W., and
- (4) The all-embracing Circle which we call the Border.

The E.A. standing on the Border is an imperfect man, who, as he moves about, is treading on a combination of whole and broken squares. The F.C. has penetrated into the Pavement, but is still a Seeker. The M.M. is the Ideal Man who, having reached the centre, is led by his inner light, and, being animated with definite convictions, takes care to tread only on the squares, or cubes, of the Mosaic, which typify his acts, thoughts, and motives.

In this Ideal Man we may see personified all the excellences of character inculcated by the Craft, and through him we may learn that, if all our actions were done "on the square," and were of a true die, like the cubes of a Mosaic, the result would inevitably be an exemplary model life, "perfect in its parts and honourable to the Builder."

The Mason goes round the four corners of the Lodge to show the need of squaring the whole of his life. Nor is this "squaring" inconsistent with the idea of the circling heavens symbolised by the Border. The orbits on which the planets move are more or less round, but since the Pavement is emblematical of the globe we live in, which we have learned to divide into four quarters, both the

circumambulations around the Border and the perambulations along the sides of Pavement have their own peculiar lessons to teach.

THE LADDER OF THE INITIATE

The Winding Staircase of the Craftsman may be treated in three different ways: as an actual symbol which we see depicted on the second T.B.; as an historical allusion which occurs in the Ritual; and as a philosophical conception.

The only visible representation of the Winding Staircase to be found within the Lodge is in the allegorical T.B. of the F.C. The Masons have always connected this symbol with the actual Staircase in K.S.T., which is represented as a remarkable and a unique piece of architecture.

In K.S.T. there was indeed such a Staircase; it is referred to in our Traditional History. It was situated on the S. side, and gave access to the three rows of Chambers built against the N., W., and S. sides of the sacred edifice. Those of the second row were spoken of as "the Middle Chambers."

Doubts have been raised as to the Staircase having been spiral, but the word employed in the Hebrew original, *Lulim*, means something that "turns round and round "; while the rendering of this word into the Greek *helikte* by the LXX (cf. *it with the Latin helix, whence the English " helical"*) implies that the Jews of 2000 years ago understood the term in the sense we attach to it to- day.

Curiously enough, among the most interesting objects to be seen at St Paul's Cathedral, the work of a great Freemason, there is the famous " Geometrical Staircase."

The Latin word for *Ladder* is used by Lord Bacon as a most telling metaphor. For in outlining his great work, *Instauratio Magna*, he proposes to give part iv. the title of *Scala Intellectus*, " The Ladder of the Mind," which is the very thought behind our symbol; for our Ladder is an ideal thing, with no objective existence, a mere metaphor, embodying the thought that to gain light we must lift up our mind and heart towards the mystic Sun of Freemasonry, the Source of all light, when, assisted by our Masonic arts, we shall be able to soar above the humdrum of our human misery, man's ordinary level.

The original Staircase of Hebrew history has vanished, and we cannot now restore it. But the symbol is still at hand, and it conveys a lesson which may prove helpful to us. Its practical significance becomes abundantly clear when we are told that the Brethren possessed of Charity "in its most ample form" may be regarded as having ascended the mystic Ladder and having "attained the summit of their profession." Altruism must go with knowledge, and even our science, without Charity, would be worth nothing.

The existence of this Ladder is foreshadowed in the method of advancing observed in the First Degree. In the Lodge, the steps seem to be on level ground. In some places they speak of "bold or marching steps." But in Freemasonry we must never imagine any steps as being on level ground. Indeed, the figure of the Ladder implies that from beginning to end we are climbing. Moreover, we should remember that our historic prototype, K.S.T., stood on an eminence, and that therefore those who resorted thither had to do some climbing; they rose with every step they took, however insensible they might be of the fact. And as the Porch stood somewhat higher than the

street level, there were some steps to be ascended before one could enter at all.

This Ladder agrees with the information imparted to the Initiate, that there are "several Degrees in Freemasonry," for the word *Degree* is formed from the Latin *grades*, which means "a step," whence the English word "grade." The prefix *de-* in "Degree" signifies "a descending step," but we employ the word as a general term irrespective of any movement by those who use the Ladder, whether up or down. This word came into the English language through the Normans.

In the Explanation of the First T.B., the steps of the Initiate are compared to the "Staves or rungs" of a Ladder. Those three steps are his first effort to walk, and they are pronounced to be the "principal ones." This statement agrees with the fact that the beginning of a thing is always the most important part of it. Their significance is defined in order that we may see their importance.

The intimation given to the Initiate of such a Ladder is, of course, a mere introduction to the subject. But even while advancing to the P., he may perceive that those first paces signify progress; "a little longer . . . still longer,"

are phrases expressing promotion. And we may note that the proportions are more or less the same as 3 - 5 - 7 of which we speak to the F.C. They signify the three Degrees.

We are told that the Ladder of the Initiate is like the one which Jacob saw in a dream or vision; and this is true in two different ways: first, in that it is not material, but one that leads up to an "ethereal mansion"; and again, in that it is composed of "many staves or rounds." It is like that which Jacob saw, provided we accept the following naturalistic interpretation of the dream. During the day Jacob must have observed the glorious phenomenon of the Rainbow, spanning the sky, bridging heaven and earth; to the Hebrew mind the Rainbow was emblematic of God's reconciliation with man. So at night, although he found himself a fugitive in a desolate spot, homeless, estranged from his kith and kin, as the Rainbow projected itself within his subconscious mind, it brought relief to his feelings, for it helped him to realise that God was with him, as He had been with his forefathers.

This agrees with the fact that the Rainbow was always among the symbols of our Mediaeval Brethren, which to them suggested a Staircase

a Ladder or Scale of light. It was composed of seven colours, viz., *red*, orange, yellow, *green*, blue, indigo, and *violet*, but in that scale there were " three principal ones " - three primary colours, viz., red, green, and violet.

THE STAIRCASE OF THE F.C.

When the Initiate has gone up his three steps, we drop the figure of a ladder and adopt the more dignified one of a staircase. At that point there is a landing where the J.W. bars further progress. And indeed after every advance we are supposed to come to another landing.

The "several Degrees" answer to the "many rounds" of which we have spoken to the Initiate in connection with his Ladder, and this helps to express the plain fact that " Masonry is a progressive science "; a fact which has been a great encouragement to millions in their upward moral and intellectual ascent. There is more to learn ! And the hope of achieving further progress will show itself in our perseverance.

We know that our Ancient Brethren idealized

the Staircase in K.S.T. and made much of it. To them it was a symbol rather than a utility, emblematic of human life, which they viewed as an ascent. Thus, in the symbolism of the Zohar, Man himself, that is, the Candidate or Adept, as the case might be, was the Ladder whereby the soul rose heavenward; the lower extremities of his body, that is to say, his feet, rested on the earth, while the top, his head, "reached to the heavens," the goal of his aspirations.

And this had its parallel in the Ancient Mysteries. For according to Celsus (*as quoted by Origen*), in the Mithraic Ritual, the spirit of man was represented as going up and down through the planetary spheres by "a Ladder with seven gates and at the summit an eighth gate." These seven gates answered to the seven Degrees of Initiation; and these corresponded in turn to the seven planets, through whose spheres or orbits the Candidate was supposed to pass. The last represented the final deliverance of the soul and its re-absorption in the Life Divine. In Craft Masonry there is a survival of this, for the third section of the Mystic Ladder whereby we attain the sublime D. of a M.M. consists of seven steps.

The symbolic significance of the other staves or rounds in the ladder have not been explained to the Initiate, because he was only concerned with the first three. But he was told that there were " many " rounds, too many for a detailed explanation to be attempted.

At first the progress made may seem insignificant, and we may not be conscious of any ascending movement; but as we go on mounting one step after another of the Staircase, we see further and further, great heights come into view away on the horizon, and the ever- widening vision is positive and incontrovertible proof of the fact that we have risen considerably above our starting point. Things may appear as mere shadows, and the way we have to follow may be scarcely discernible, but our experience justifies the W.M, in exhorting us to endeavour to make "a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge." There certainly is plenty of scope for this.

The "due form" prescribed for advancing to the E., in the Second Degree, is " as if ascending a Winding Staircase." This should be no secret for him; for with a little reflection he will see that he is already on the first landing, the point reached by the E.A., and he is now

going up the second section, consisting of five steps.

It is curious how each successive section of the Staircase shows an extension. There are three flights of steps, with 3 - 5 - 7 steps respectively, producing a total of 15, this being a numerical symbol.

When the Craftsman has gone as high as he can, he is informed that he has climbed one half the Mystic Ladder; that is, he is, in fact, "in the midway of Freemasonry." And this is obvious, for he gets up to the eighth step, which is half-way in a Staircase of fifteen steps. Really and truly the symbol goes deeper than either the E.A. or the F.C. can yet fathom, as we shall see presently.

How far this number rests on historic fact we may be able to judge from the following data. In Herod's Temple (the one destroyed by the Romans), in passing from the large area, known as "the Women's Court" (so named because it was accessible to the women) to "the Court of the Men of Israel," one had to ascend a flight of fifteen steps; and the Talmud tells us that these fifteen steps corresponded in number to the Fifteen Psalms, 120 to 134, called by us "Songs of Degrees," or "of the

Steps," because they were sung during the ascent.

Then, too, we may note that in Ezekiel's Temple there were *seven* steps at the main gate at the E., and *eight* more at the Inner Gate leading to the Inner Court, or altogether fifteen (see xl. 22, 26, 31).

But the number may also be traced back to K.S.T., for the three rows of Chambers which we said were built on three sides of the Temple, one on top of the other, were five cubits high, and so the three combined give us a total of fifteen.

In Ezekiel's Temple the entrance for the general public was at the Porch, and according to the Septuagint (Ez. xl. 48) the width was 14 cubits; that of the Holy Place was 10 cubits wide; and that of the *Sanctum Sanctorum* was only 6 cubits wide; that is, they were double the numbers 7 - 5 - 3. And as the width of K.S.T. was 20 cubits throughout, applying these measurements, we shall find that the wall projections, or "side pieces," were in exactly the opposite ratios, 3 - 5 - 7 cubits, to right and left of the three entrances respectively.

From these analogies we naturally infer that

15 was a standard number among the builders of K.S.T. It may have been prescribed by regulations; it certainly was normally accepted for general application. On this ground, then, we may presume that it was also that of the *symbolic* steps in the Winding Staircase. Of course, the actual total of steps may have been more. The Ritual contemplates a few in excess of what was required for the purpose of symbolism; the statement is " 3 - 5 - 7 or more." But it is questionable whether there were many more.

THE HEBREW CHARACTERS

According to the Traditional History of the Second Degree, the Craftsmen " passed " up the Winding Staircase. This, however, cannot mean that they went up to the highest point to which the Mason is permitted to rise. Their ascent is indicated by $3 + 5 = 8$ steps, bringing them to the top of the second flight of steps and the corresponding landing. Here they found a door, the door admitting them to the Middle Chamber; it was " open," that is, it gave them access to the interior and to the

secrets of the F.C. Lodge, but was " properly tiled . . . by the S.W." They had to satisfy him as to their qualifications, but after giving him those " convincing proofs " which we know of, he allowed them to cross the threshold. It should be noted, however, that now they became not mere Craftsmen, but aspirants to the Higher Mysteries.

We are not told what further ordeals awaited them after this; but we know that there still was a flight of seven steps and that if they attempted to go higher they would come across the W.M. himself, who would also have to be satisfied as to the qualifications required for the Higher Mysteries.

The landing suggests an interval in Masonic progress. The door being open wide, however, the F.C. obtains a first glimpse of the great secret. The S.W., stationed there by the door, is mute as to how, or when, that Mystery is to be unfolded. His chief concern is to ascertain whether the Candidate is qualified to enter. In a way the Mystery is already revealed to him; that is, he obtains a glimpse of the emblem in which it is embodied, which is exhibited to his eyes, but without being vouchsafed any explanation of it, except for

the three facts mentioned: (1) that the said emblem has inscribed in it certain Hebrew characters which in modern times have been substituted by the Roman letter G; (2) that those characters have an allusion to the G.G.O.T.U.; (3) and that it is situated in the centre of the building.

This provides the F.C. much food for thought. In common with the Kabbalists, our Ancient Brethren spoke of a mystic Word which was lost long ago, or which for some reason had been withheld from man's knowledge. And they said that whenever this Word came to be restored to men, or recovered, it would be found to make plain the riddle of the Universe, and, by implication, would supply the key to the enigma of K.S.T., which was modelled on cosmic lines. Is it possible that those Hebrew characters may yield the word ?

The F.C. is on his way to the recovery of the lost Word, but, alas, before long he will find that in Craft Masonry everything connected with the Mysteries and the " genuine secrets " has given place to " certain substituted secrets," and that the object of his quest is not to be attained until he has passed through the valley of the shadow of death.

May we not suppose, however, that those Hebrew Characters referred to, have something to do with the Word in question ? Our R.A. Companions could tell us whether this is so; but we dare not anticipate: " Put your fingers on your I . . . etc."

The Hindus have a cryptogram which they invest with peculiar sanctity, viz., *a-u-m*, a word concerning which the Katha-Upanishad says: "Whoever knows this syllable obtains whatever he wishes." This cryptogram of Oriental mysticism has been the subject of considerable speculation; and many hold that it denotes the Spiritual Sun, in contradistinction to *Sooraj*, the Sun of the physical world. Here we would point out, however, that our Mediaeval Brethren were acquainted with this cryptogram, for they used the three essential sounds or letters, in connection with the three Jubals, or Artisans, mentioned in their Traditional History, thus: *JubelA, JubelO, JubelUM*.

The importance of this subject will appear when we remember the expression " Word-perfect." Nowadays we use it as signifying that a Brother is able to rehearse the Ceremonies without the slightest deviation from

the authorised version; but in olden times it meant that he was in the possession of the mysterious "Mason Word." That made him a Mason; and it was considered the most convincing proof "of all.

As far back as 1687 the imparting of this Word was considered the most essential part of the Ceremonies in the Lodge; for in that year the Rev. George Hickes, when describing the Mason Word, said that it was "a secret signal" supposed to be as old as the Tower of Babel or at least as the time of Solomon; by which he leads us to infer (a) that it must have been a Hebrew word, that language being then generally considered the original form of human speech; and (b) that in communicating it, the Masons of that time made use of some signs, gestures or movements of the body; in other words, they gave the Word in a certain prescribed "position." Only thus can the description of it as "a signal" be justified.

THE EAR OF CORN

The immediate quest of the F.C., however, is not a lost word. The idea which animates

him seems to be one which has been allegorised in the Lodge by the curious pictogram which the Pass Word suggests. That Word leads from the First to the Second Degree, and is said to denote P.

And before saying anything about this general idea of P., we might observe that in the Ceremonies we have it symbolised in three different ways, viz., (1) by the distinctive Jewel worn by the Steward, the Cornucopia, which is an ancient design used in architecture and in sculpture, frequently put into the hands of Plutus, Fortuna, and others; (2) then by the Pomegranates on the Chapters of B. and J., which in the Explanation of the Second T.B. are said to signify P., "because of the exuberance of their seed"; (3) and then, most important of all, by the pictogram in the Diagram, called by us the T.B., which illustrates the P.W. of the Candidate, where we see an Ear of Corn near to a fall of Water.

The reason for this last allegory is that the F.C. has come to discover the fact that ultimately all wealth is the outcome of our exploitation of nature. The allegory was suggested by the two acceptations which the Hebrew word has; it means "an ear of corn,"

and also " a water-fall "; and these two acceptations are conjoined to express the one idea of P.; for P. is the result of grain growing in well-watered ground.

Whenever it was that the Word was adopted, its adoption means that our Ancient Brethren were familiar with the fact that the Hebrew word had these two meanings. Otherwise they could scarcely have taught the F.C. to put them together in the pictogram by which the idea of P. is expressed.

It is worthy of note that the ancient Egyptians cultivated a variety of wheat which was many-eared, having often seven ears on one single stalk. The reference to it in the V. of the S.L. (Gen. xli. 5) implies that the Hebrews of King Solomon's time were familiar with it; and we must admit that this kind of corn was eminently suitable as a symbol of abundance.

The primary idea of P. is " abundance, wealth." But men have a different conception of wealth and different standards of value. The man represented by the E.A. thinks chiefly of the necessities of life, "corn, wine, and oil," and " corn," his daily bread, is put first as something indispensable. But the better man - the F.C. - wants his "wages paid

in specie," for, having some knowledge of the credit system, he sees in the coins he handles tokens of value as good as produce, and he has the intelligence to budget for his needs. Now, however, the M.M. aims at a higher reward than either of these two classes of men, something of far greater value, which cannot be expressed in terms of material wealth. His ambition is to be brought into association with the master-minds of the past.

Both the Pass Words leading to the Second and to the Third Degrees convey the same idea, for one is said to denote P. and the other W.P. But this is to show that before the Mason can be admitted to the Degree of either a F.C. or a M.M., he must have gained experience in exploiting nature, as a means of securing a living for himself and his dependents. The man who fails in doing so, will have to struggle in abject poverty, and will not be able to adequately appreciate our idealism. It is only after he has found the means of satisfying his physical wants, and has secured a stable position in the world, that he will benefit from the study of Freemasonry as a speculative science.

But now as regards the esoteric meaning of

the Ear of Corn. It was one of the many symbols which our Mediaeval Brethren used to sketch in their diagrams on the floor of their Lodge, and it was for the instruction and improvement of Craftsmen, that is, it conveyed a moral lesson. This is an important fact, for it reveals another connecting link between the Craft and the Ancient Mysteries. For Hyppolitus (*writing nearly 1700 years ago*) remarked that the Ear of Corn was regarded in his day as "the most perfect mystery of the Eoptae," that is to say, of those who had reached the final grade of initiation into the Mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis. Demeter herself (*Mother Earth*) was known as the goddess of corn, though she had another name, *Ceres*. And the main purpose of this symbol was to set forth (as was done in various ways in all the Ancient Mysteries) the continuity of life. For the reproduction of the grain of corn under the influence of water and the solar energy was a parallel and an anticipation of man's descent into the grave and of his rising again; after he had done so, they said, he would be reunited with the former companions of his toils.

Accordingly we find the Corn-Mother legend of the Death and Resurrection of the Grain of

Wheat, as a Mythos which was staged as part of the Ceremonies in the Mysteries. It culminated in the announcement made by the Hierophant of the birth "of a holy child" (corresponding to our Rising Ceremony), when the said Hierophant bearing the Ear of Corn in his hand, introduced the new-born babe, the Candidate himself. Then, on the ninth and last day of the Rite of Initiation, libations of wine were poured forth from two ewers, one toward the rising sun, the E., whence the light came which fructified the ground, and another towards its setting, the W., whence the rain-clouds came and where the Sun set. In these libations we have an analogy with what we do ourselves after every initiation, which, as we know, is followed by what is familiarly termed the fourth degree."

THE MIDDLE CHAMBERS

Where, or in what part of K.S.T., were the Ancient Mysteries held? This is a problem which bristles with difficulties. In our Traditional History it is repeatedly stated that the F.C.'s had to go into " the Middle

Chamber of the Temple"; and because the Holy Place lay in an intermediate position - between the Porch and the *Sanctum Sanctorum* - one is inclined to conclude that here we have a complete solution and that there is nothing more to be said. In reality, however, this is a half-truth

Indeed, bearing in mind the allegorical character of everything said and done in the Lodge, any room or suite of rooms occupying an intermediate position between two other such rooms or suites of rooms, might with equal propriety have been regarded as illustrations of the ideal chamber we have in mind.

While the Holy Place was indeed a Middle Chamber, some of the statements made in the Ritual about our "Middle Chamber" imply quite a different location. For the Holy Place in K.S.T. was practically on the level of the street, whereas the Middle Chamber in question was reached by a Staircase with two flights of steps; and after that, there was another flight which led to a higher place. Obviously the term "Middle," when used in this connection, implies a place above a lower chamber and with a third chamber above it.

In K.S.T., too, there were three rows of

Chambers built on its three sides, N., W., and S. And forasmuch as in some passages of the V. of the S.L., these Chambers are referred to as "the Chamber" (Nehemiah xiii. 4, *in the Vulgate as well as in the A.V.*) in the singular, it seems reasonable to suppose that here in the Chambers we have an alternative solution of the problem, that is to say, our "Middle Chamber" *may* have been the second row of Chambers.

This idea might be supported by the argument that our Middle Chamber is conceived to be the place to which the Craftsmen employed in K.S.T. had to go "to receive their wages." For obviously this could not be "the Holy Place," not at least if we take the statement literally. But it would apply to these Chambers, or to some of them, seeing that they were outside the Temple. Indeed, we might gather as much from the designation which is given to some of them; for what else are we to understand by the name of "The Treasuries of the House of God," in the plural, and sometimes "The Treasury House" in the singular, but that the said Chambers were actually used for such a purpose? (Nehemiah x. 38-39, I Chron. ix. 26.)

In them were stored all sorts of valuables, not only the costly furniture of the Temple, but also "the Corn, the new wine, and the oil," which the people brought in as tithe for the maintenance of the fabric of the Temple. There, then, we may take it, the Masons went to receive their remuneration, whether it consisted of "wages" which were paid in specie, or, as in the case of the E.A.'s, in a weekly allowance of the necessaries of life, every seventh day.

There seem to have been thirty chambers on each row; so Ezekiel affirms (xli. 6). Some of them were assigned to certain persons: Priests, Singers, Guardians, and Chief Porters, that is, men whose ordinary occupation was in the Temple; and they were in possession, although they did not live in them. (Nehemiah xiii. 4, 7-9, I Chronicles ix. 26.) At one time "the oversight" of the Chambers was entrusted to one Eliashib, who must have been a man of some eminence, seeing that eventually he became High Priest. One of his sons, Johannes, is mentioned as in possession of a certain Chamber (Ezra x. 6); but he allowed the Ammonite Tobaiah to make use of another, and Nehemiah denounced it as an act of

profanation, for which he had to make amends. Evidently the people occupying those Chambers formed an exclusive community.

They existed in Ezekiel's Temple, but in it they were arranged in a different way.

In the Second Temple some of the Chambers were used as places of assembly, those attending the meetings being " the chief of the priests, and Levites and fathers of Israel "; this last expression designating the class of people who would now be described as "independent gentlemen," or simply gentry, the word used in Hebrew being the same as occurs in our history, *Abiv*.

One of the Chambers was used by the " sons," that is, the disciples, followers or adepts, of Hanan, who is described as " a man of God," the common designation for any notable teacher.

These three rows of Chambers agree with our three orders of Masons. And it is remarkable that their size became larger as one went up from one row to another. Those on the first floor were the smallest, 5 cubits high by 5 cubits long and 5 cubits wide; they would naturally be assigned to men of comparatively low rank. Those on the middle row were

slightly larger, that is, they were 6 cubits wide, and they would be for men in a higher position. Those at the top were the largest, being 7 cubits wide, and must have been reserved for men of eminent degree. This increasing width was obtained by the gradual narrowing of the Temple wall.

It is in the Book of Kings (I. vi. 8) that we learn that the Winding Staircase that led to " the Middle Chamber " was on the S. side. The higher Chambers were tyled by men answering to our W.'s. For we read that "the Chamber of the Chief Officers " was situated directly above one occupied by Maaseiah, " the keeper of the door," that is, this latter was immediately beneath, in the lower floor, where the staircase was. There was then a Door of some sort and an Officer stationed at the spot who guarded it, no one being able to pass up the Winding Staircase without his consent. This is in substantial agreement with what we read in the Explanation of the T.B., and therefore we may rightly describe Maaseiah as a J.W., who had been appointed, as ours is, to prevent any unqualified person ascending that Staircase and gaining admission into the Chamber of the

Chief Officers. (Ezra viii. 29, Jer. xxxv. 4.)

These Chief Officers were *Menatschin*, Craftsmen " of that superior class appointed to preside over the rest."

It is equally evident that " the Keepers of the Door " were three in number, which agrees with the number of entrances into the Temple and with that of rows of Chambers. The Winding Staircase was near the porchway or entrance of the Temple on the S. side. There was only one Winding Staircase, and there must have been someone stationed on the second floor, as there was on the first; presumably also on the highest floor.

Nor are we to suppose that these were common watchmen; they were, in fact, responsible Officers, having control of the entire Temple, including these Chambers. Hence it is that when they are mentioned along with other notabilities they are placed next in order of precedence to the High Priest and the Assistant High Priest (Jer. lii. 24, 2 Kings XXV. 18).

All this seems to suggest that we have identified the Middle Chamber of the F.C.'s; but is it really so? The first objection that will

occur to the mind is that even the largest chambers at the top were far too small to accommodate any considerable body of men, let us say a score of them, and therefore too small as the official home of a brotherhood, to say nothing of the space required for the Ceremonies, if we are to suppose anything like the Rites which take place in a Masonic Lodge.

OUR CHAMBER IDENTIFIED

But if this identification be not accepted, where else can we find a place that will more closely fit with the description of the Middle Chamber of the Second Degree ? The answer to this question is, where the Initiate begins his Masonic career, that is, at the Porch. And we think the arguments for this strange answer will be found decisive.

If the Porch at K.S.T. was a tower-like structure, at least 60 cubits high, assuming that the height of the general entrance at the base was the same as that of the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, that is, 20 cubits, there remain 40 cubits more of tower above it. And in

trying to guess what these 40 cubits could be used for, we naturally feel that while there must have been a second room above the portal, it would be absurd to suppose this second room to be anything like 40 cubits high. It is far more likely that the Porch consisted of three parts, viz the portal beneath, a Middle Chamber 20 cubits high, and a Third Chamber at the top. The Septuagint and Syriac versions actually give 20 cubits as the height of the Portal. We would make all the three stories of the same height.

The space was there, and it is inconceivable that it was wasted. The three things must have existed, although they are not referred to anywhere. Indeed, the fact that the two Chambers over the portal are so mysteriously left unmentioned adds to their importance, for this silence suggests secrecy.

Moreover, the threefold division would be in consonance with both the three rows of side-chambers on the sides and with the triple form of the Temple itself, as already shown.

Again, as far as we know, in the Porch there was no staircase by which one could go to the top. This means that we must look elsewhere for some means of access, some way of reaching

that Middle Chamber and the Chamber immediately above it. The only means of ascent in K.S.T. of which we can find any record is the Winding Staircase on the S. side of the Temple. And our Traditional History refers us to it, for we read: " They got there by the Porchway or Entrance on the S. side. After our Ancient Brethren had entered the Porch they arrived at the foot of the Winding Staircase which led to the Middle Chamber . . ." Hence it is evident that there was a means of ascending from the lower to the higher Chambers; from the ground floor to the Middle Chamber of our tradition, and, by implication, from the S. side to the upper rooms in the Porch, in the E.

From this, then, it is clear that the real Middle Chamber where the secret symbols of Freemasonry were kept, and of which the F.C.'s are supposed to catch a glimpse, was in the second story; and as this Chamber could not have been any of the side - Chambers so far discovered, which were too small, it must have been in the one immediately above the Porch, which measured 20 by 10 cubits, or approximately 30 by 15 feet, and is never associated with particular individuals.

This enables us to understand what happened at the Initiation of a Mason in those days. The Candidate came as an ordinary worshipper by the Porchway at the E. end of the Temple. His faith in the G.A.O.T.U. was a *sine qua non*. He then passed by some passage of which nothing is said, and ascended three steps, which brought him to the level of the first Chambers. (These steps are suggestive of a ladder.) There was a landing, and, on turning round, he saw a long corridor; along which he had to perambulate, thus passing in view before the occupants of the side - Chambers, to show that he was a fit and proper person to be admitted into the Order. He would now be able to fraternise with the Masons in general. We are not told what secrets were imparted to him at that stage, but having gone through that first ceremony, he was now an aspirant to the higher rank of Craftsman.

On coming the second time, he would be permitted to enter by the S. entrance, and not as before by the Porch. He naturally would place himself under the guidance of the J.W., who had to prepare and instruct him. At the S. side he became acquainted with the existence of the Winding Staircase, but he had already

gone up three steps, and those three steps would count as steps of the Staircase. He now went up the second flight, consisting of five steps, these corresponding to the height of the Chambers, which was five cubits. This brought him to another landing, where he met the S.W. There was another turning and another perambulation S., W., and N., for the same purpose as before, and this brought him to the Middle Chamber in the E., that is, to the Hall immediately above the portal. But before he could penetrate into this wonderful " Middle Chamber " the S.W. subjected him to a certain ordeal.

When he had been admitted he would rank as a Craftsman, and he would get a glimpse of a certain mystic symbol, either in the Chamber, or in the sky through the Window, perhaps both; but that would not be the end. There was still another flight of steps to go up, one that consisted of seven steps, another landing, another turn, another perambulation along the corridors on the S., W., and N. sides of the Temple; and that brought him to the roofless Hall at the top of the noble Porch, and on the E. side, where the wonderful works of the Almighty were displayed to his view.

Here he had to go through a most serious trial of his fortitude and fidelity, the supreme lesson of the Craft. Presumably it was done after dark, and when it was over he would see the Bright Morning Star, to inspire him with fresh hope and enthusiasm.

This puts an entirely new complexion on the meaning of the name "Winding Staircase "; obviously, even if it was not spiral, the many turns and winds in it would amply justify that name.

It was now that the M.M. obtained the knowledge which distinguishes him from a F.C. In the roofless Hall he would be able to study the stars, and Astronomy is the last of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences. But as we learn in the R.A. Chapter, what the M.M. finds at the top of the Porch (the highest point reached in the Craft) will have to be supplemented with what he will one day discover in the depth beneath.

For it is a fact that the Freemason's domain comprises the "high hills and low vales . . . and many other secret places." (*Lecture I.*) We may be led to the lofty top of the noble Porch, and culminate in the catenarian arch, or we may be brought down to the bosom of

the earth; indeed, it is not until we have had both experiences that the innermost Mystery is finally and completely made plain to the spirit of man.

Our investigation, then, shows that the symbol of " the Middle Chamber is a highly complex one, combining three distinct historic allusions: one to K.S.T., that is, to the Holy Place as the place where the devout Israelite was purified; secondly, to the Middle Row of Side-Chambers built against the walls of the Temple which were for the use of the Menatschin; and, thirdly, to a mysterious Hall on the second floor of the Porch, that is, just above the entrance, about which nothing definite is on record, as we might have expected if the Mysteries were held there.

THE LIGHTING OF THE LODGE

All along our Masonic career we are told that the light of the Lodge is "light from above," which means, of course, that it is derived from a higher realm. But the mysterious Luminary receives a different designation at each successive stage. First, it

is a " Blazing Star," then a "Sacred Symbol," and lastly a " Bright Morning Star." We shall see that in every case what is meant is substantially the same, although the symbol is diversified in order to bring out new and deeper truths.

A careful analysis of the various passages of the Ritual which affect the subject will show us that, while our Masonic conception is presented under different aspects, the underlying idea is always that of the Sun in its meridian glory.

(a) THE BLAZING STAR

In the First Degree, the Lodge is conceived as illuminated by what we call the Blazing Star. But this name is a metaphor; it is not a common star; it could not be, if it be "blazing." Its identity is made clear by the explicit assertion that it " refers us to the Sun which enlightens the earth, and by its benign influence dispenses blessings to mankind in general."

Our Ancient Brethren made much of the Sun. From the dawn of history men saw that it was impossible to outshine the great

luminary; and owing to this fact, all through the ages they treated it as a symbol of the Deity. For primitive men, judging of everything by their senses, honoured the Sun as a manifestation of God. Hence we should not wonder that in the Ritual it is called both "the glory in the centre" and "the glory of the Lord," the central light in the Universe (*as our Ancient Brethren conceived it*), and the splendour of God's Presence, which rests on us, as the Hebrew mystic saw it resting on K.S.T. in the form of the *Shekinah* glory.

In our Lodges the Blazing Star usually takes the form of an ornament, a plain globe or lamp which, if it be centrally situated, as it should be, answers the purpose very well, for it not only sheds its rays on the whole assembly, but lights up the entire premises.

At one time, it was one of the objects which were sketched with either chalk, charcoal or clay, on the Pavement of the Lodge, that being the real T.B. by which the old Masons received the needed instruction and improvement. But those sketches presented certain variations, according to the Degree in which they were working. To the E.A., the symbol was shown as a radiant Sun with wavering rays to indicate

the so-called "blaze." Then, certain geometrical designs were introduced, as we shall have occasion to explain, for the benefit of the F.C. and M.M. In our modern figurations the rays are always omitted.

The symbols outlined on the Pavement were very numerous and diverse. Among them one might observe, besides the tools corresponding to the various Degrees, some very picturesque things, as, for instance, the lamb, signifying innocence, whence came our apron; the hill with its valley representing the propagation of our science with the letters E-W; the Pentalpha, which was obtained by combining three triangles of 120° ; the Cornucopia, the Rainbow, the Beehive; the 47th Proposition of Euclid, signifying the accomplished Master; the Ladder, symbolic of our ascent towards perfection; the Canopy of Heaven studded with stars; the Three Pillars and the Three Lights; the Hour Glass, an emblem of time; the Cable Tow, emblematic of our relationships; the Scythe; the Altar of Incense, expressive of self-dedication; the Coffin, Skull, and Cross-bones, emblems of mortality, and so forth.

That complex Diagram was enclosed in a Square, answering to the earth with its four

cardinal points, that is, the Pavement, and this was set in what was called the Border, a circular belt, studded with stars, to represent the planets in their revolutions "round the Sun."

The Blazing Star was put in the centre of the Diagram as the most conspicuous object because of its all- dominant importance.

Thus, the Pavement of the Lodge was the real T.B. of the Masons, and most things depicted in it referred to the facts of nature which were sketched to make plain our Masonic conception of the Universe.

As the light of the Lamp in the ceiling fell on the floor of the Lodge, illuminating all those symbols, the bystanders saw that Masonry had much to teach them. The whole ensemble was, in effect, a circle of light, and this was not merely for the recreation of the eye but for the instruction of the mind.

The E.A. is supposed to stand in the Porch at the E., and he is enjoying the spectacle of nature which is unfolded before him. He views the Sun as the main source of light and life. Primitive men always did so; they were like children. But now we teach the E.A. to rise to a higher conception, for he has to mark

the same Sun in three positions: at its rising in the E., "at its meridian," that is, at the highest point attained by it, and at its setting in the W.; and by so doing he obtains the three points that will enable him to project an immense imaginary triangle, which is, in effect, a pyramid of light and the symbol of indwelling Deity. The meaning of that Triangle is that God is immanent in His creation.

This finds expression, too, in the well-known formula adopted by the R.A. Mason when he says: "Point . . . triangle . . . circle. . . 1, 2, 3, 4." The Point is that point within the circle to which we referred before; the triangle is a symbol of God, around which we describe a circle; and 1, 2, 3, 4 stands for N., E., S., and W., the four quarters of the globe symbolised by the Pavement, all of which are concentric figures.

We have already seen that it was because the Mediaeval Masons wished to celebrate the advent of the light to the world that they adopted 27th December and 24th June as the dates for their chief assemblies. The Church commemorated St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist respectively on these days, and on this account the Craft came to be known

as "the S.S. John's Masonry." This had the effect of imparting a Christian colouring to our Order (which must have been quite agreeable to the Brethren at a period when the whole of Western Europe was enjoying religious unity), but this was accidental. The real inwardness of those dates was that, having passed the longest and the shortest days of the year, the Brethren thought it appropriate to signalise those portentous astronomical facts by their half-yearly gatherings. So, after Christmas, as the light returned and the days began to lengthen, the Masons considered it time to re-organise and resume their activities; and when, six months later, they came to the longest day of the year, with its maximum of light and its minimum of darkness, the occasion was thought to call for a joyful celebration, and a Feast which was always marked by good humour and conviviality.

All this will help to explain the significance of that resplendent Orb which appears on the apron worn by the M.W. the G.M. of England; it testifies to the fact that our Fraternity is being led by the Sun of Righteousness, not by the material Sun, but by God (of whom the Sun is a symbol), and He sheds His influence

to enlighten us in the paths of virtue and science.

(b) THE SACRED SYMBOL

Although the Blazing Star is properly shown to the E.A. as a plain globe, occasionally we see depicted on its surface certain emblems which belong to the Higher Degrees. This must be deprecated, for if the Degrees in Freemasonry are to be kept separate and distinct, the E.A. should only be allowed to see what appertains to his rank.

When he gains admission into a F.C.'s Lodge, he will observe that the Luminary of the Lodge is still there, but now it is alluded to as " a Sacred Symbol," and it assumes a different aspect. The idea of symbols giving light is an essentially Masonic one. We emphasise the fact that the Sun is at its meridian, but this is no longer an astronomical fact determining the hour of high twelve, but expresses a mystic conception. For as the F.C. is a speculative Mason, a thinker, his " Sun " is now not a physical Orb producing the daylight, but something that shines within himself, his reason, the intellectual faculty, the science that reveals God in the character

of G.G.O.T.U. And so we say that the Sacred Symbol "alludes" to the Almighty Architect who has produced, and operates, his vast machine in accordance with laws which He Himself has laid down.

The light-symbol of the F.C., then, is not an empty symbol; for it embodies a spiritual and most stimulating reality. It is by no means a new element: it is the same as the Blazing Star of the E.A.; but the F.C. has now got a different view of it. And this new view makes him realise that it belongs to the world of mind, something immaterial, intangible, and invisible. It may seem inconsistent to give it outward form. But our Ancient Brethren sought to illustrate everything by symbols. In the Ritual they distinctly assert that they have discovered this symbol, while they themselves stood in a certain "position," and they have ascertained that it occupies a certain place which is central - "in the centre of the building," that is to say, the same place where the E.A. has seen the Blazing Star, the apex of the imaginary Triangle between E. and W.

It is because the symbol is now made to convey a different idea, that the plain luminous

orb of the E.A. is no longer adequate for its purpose; it has to be modified. " The Sacred Symbol " still gives light, and therefore it must be represented by something luminous; but now the emblem will take a geometrical complexion; indeed, we might have expected it, seeing that it alludes to the G.G.O.T.U. Of old time, therefore, in a F.C. Lodge, " the Star and Seal of Solomon " has been projected on the face of the lamp. Our Ancient Brethren adapted it for this use because they regarded it as the Badge of the Philosopher.

Indeed, as far back as we can trace it, the adepts of the occult take this "Star and Seal " as embodying a double reference: first, to the Macrocosmos, that is, the Universe of God; and secondly, to the mysterious Three that bear record in Heaven, united to the Three that bear record on Earth, for we may see that these powers are represented by the two Triangles of which the symbol consists; the said Triangles are in opposition, but yet harmoniously interlaced, meaning that a reconciliation has been effected. Wherefore, the " Star and Seal " symbol has been pronounced: " The simplest and most complete abridgment of universal science."

In the two Triangles set one against the other, we may see a symbol of the antagonisms of nature, of life and death, of light and darkness, of matter and spirit, etc., forces which are in constant operation everywhere, in ourselves and throughout the Universe, but which have been balanced and harmonised, as is seen at a glance in this beautiful geometric figure and in the conventional hexagon which is sometimes used as a substitute for it.

Let a Brother stand in the " position " of a F.C., squaring his own heart, and he will soon discover the Life that pulsates at the Heart of the World, and the light that irradiates therefrom; for that " position " expresses his attitude as a suppliant for light and his relation to the Soul of Nature.

Our Ancient Brethren are represented as enclosing certain enigmatic "Hebrew characters" within this symbol. The original F.C.'s saw them there, although in modern times we have substituted them with the letter "G." The geometrical design is therefore a sort of frame, or casket, in which the script has been enshrined. The Craftsmen themselves are not able to tell us what is the meaning of those characters. It is something that has been lost,

but anyway they knew " to whom does it (the symbol) allude."

In the Ritual there is a double clue to this: first, in the answer of the S.W., who says that it has to do with the G.G.O.T.U., whom we conceive as occupying the centre of the Universe, as the Sun seems to do; and, secondly, in the moral drawn by the W.M.: " Then, Brethren, let us remember that . . . He is with us and His all-seeing eye observes us, etc."

In the Second Degree, that mysterious script ought not to appear on the Sacred Symbol. Of old it was customary to substitute it for a conventional letter, the outline of an eye or some other design. Indeed, unless this is done, the secret is given away. The reflection made by the W.M. reminds us of the fact that the eye has in some cases been made to serve the purpose; and this eye inserted on the face of the Lamp of the Lodge was then a symbol within a symbol, expressing beautifully what we have in mind, that "His all-seeing Eye observes us."

The G.G.O.T.U. from His exalted central eyrie looks down and beholds all His creatures and all His works. The thought recurs in the

Traditional History of the F.C.'s when we read that as our Ancient Brethren entered the Middle Chamber, their attention was peculiarly drawn to the Hebrew characters written there, on the symbol. This was only when they had gained the summit of the Winding Staircase; not before. And then the symbol was still far above their heads.

Practically every race has thought of the Sun as a token of God's Presence. And the mention of the eye is another link between the Craft and the lore of the ancient world. The ancient Romans referred to the Sun as the eye of Jupiter; and the Greeks called it " the eye of heaven " (*Hemma oetheros*).

The Egyptians used the solar disc as an emblem of Ra, honoured by them as the Creator of all things. They also spoke of the "Eye of Horus," that is, " of the Sky," Horus being the author of the daylight, who made the dawn by opening his eyelids and the night by closing them.

We see, then, that the characters originally inscribed within the mystic figure, the six-pointed Star, or Hexagon, had a deep meaning. But we are forbidden to pursue the matter further. It was in order that this supreme

secret should be kept inviolate that we have replaced the script by the letter G. Those who aspire to the fullness of knowledge must ascend the whole of the Winding Staircase; must make the full journey from E. to W. and back to the E.; must scale the heights; and then, having learned all that the Craft has to teach them, they will have to descend " the depths " beneath, where they will find that the genuine secrets have been preserved. Every R.A. Mason will understand this, because with him it is a matter of experience.

We may, however, explain that at K.S.T., the mode of vocalisation of the Four Letter Name was a secret of the High Priest; in other words, the uncommunicable Tetragrammaton was reserved for those who qualified for admission in the *Sanctum Sanctorum*. And Brother Jachin, being only Assistant High Priest, could not yet be permitted to enter; he had to wait until he was exalted.

What is said and done in the F.C.'s Lodge is, therefore, designed to impress us with the fact that God is the light of the mind, the Sun of the thinker, as well as the illuminator of His physical universe.

(c) THE BRIGHT MORNING STAR

Now, as the M.M. enjoys a loftier view than the F.C., so the reference to his means of illumination raises the subject to a still higher plane. Accordingly, in the Third Degree, the W.M. addresses the newly raised, urging him to

"Lift up our eyes to that Bright Morning Star, whose rising bring peace and salvation, etc."

Some of our Jewish Brethren have scrupled over the use of this epithet, because there have been Masonic writers (as early as 1735) who stated that this was a reference to the Star that guided the Magi of Christian tradition, travelling from E. to W., in their quest for the Great Master. But this interpretation has been given up, although it remains a beautiful illustration.

The demonstrative pronoun *that* - "that Bright Morning Star" - implies that here we have a familiar name rhetorically used, that is to say, not in the familiar sense, but in a secondary way, being applied to something that at the best presents only an analogy.

Any Star, and, for that matter, any object, shining over our heads, would have been equally suitable.

As a matter of fact, this idea of " the Morning Star " is far from being an exclusively Christian one. The author of Revelation borrowed it, as we have done, from the classic writers of Greece. And why should we narrow down its meaning to the Star of Bethlehem, when for ages, and almost all the world over, the name was a popular and generally accepted cognomen for the planet *Venus* ? Whenever the Greeks spoke of " the Light Bringer" (*Phosphoros*) they were referring to Venus, in which they saw the Herald of the Dawn; and that Star was so bright that it became proverbial for its brilliance, something unsurpassed, yea, not ever equalled in the whole galaxy of the midnight sky.

But it matters little whence the name was first derived or how it came to be adopted by the Masons. The important question here is, What do we mean by speaking of the " Bright Morning Star " ? The Freemason's Lodge being what it is, its illumination cannot be due to the physical Sun, nor to the rational faculty, but rather to the Ineffable Essence in

whom we have discovered the ultimate Source of Light, physical, intellectual, and divine.

To see this Star, therefore, we must do more than gaze at a symbol with our bodily eyes; we should lift up our whole nature to the Supreme Reality. It is a metaphor, and our Ancient Brethren did not hesitate to visualise it and make it an emblem of the Lodge; but the reality is super-sensual.

The distinctive device which characterises it is a geometrical figure variously known as the pentalpha, pentagram, pentangle, which many have conventionalised as a Star of Five Points. The occultists have always made much of this emblem. According to Eliphaz Levi, no mean authority, the student of speculative philosophy regarded the five-pointed Star as a sign of the Microcosm, *i.e.* *Man*, which answers to the Microprosopus of the Kabbalah. Among Masons, too, that symbol represents not merely the Universe, but what the Universe centres in, Man, that is to say, regenerated Mankind. For we may observe that every M.M. is taught to project the figure by means of two human bodies, at the moment of being "raised," the Ceremony being called on that account "the raising on

the 5 p. of f." It is the most significant thing in the Third Degree, and it is remarkable how that symbolic number, 5, is found to run through the symbolism of nature, and of religion, as well as of the Craft.

It was not by a mere coincidence that at K.S.T., the entrance to the Holy Place (which answers to the Middle Chamber of Freemasonry) was 5 cubits wide; for not only is the M.M. raised on the 5 p. of f., but the Initiate is told that he may always demonstrate to others the fact of being a Mason by "the perfect points of his entrance." And these points (referred to in the *obligation*) are five:-

The two things promised "to hele and to conceal." (*Hele* is simply "to cover" any object. "Conceal" with us is "to put off the scent, to mislead by half-truths.") And the three things indicated by "Of, At, and On," which re:

- (a) Of my own free will and accord,
- (b) At the door of the Lodge,
- (c) On the point of a sharp instrument presented to my n . . . d l . . . t, b . . . t.

This is very picturesque and more or less

true, but the symbolism of the number 5 and of the 5-pointed Star goes much deeper.

The Bright Morning Star is but another name for the mystic Sun of Freemasonry, which must be "bright" indeed to deserve being contrasted with "the glimmering ray" in the darkened Lodge; and to be regarded as identical with both the Blazing Star of the E.A. and the Sacred Symbol of the F.C., which mark the mystic centre in the First and Second Degrees.

Apuleius, writing in the second century, has left us an account of his own initiation into the Mysteries, and he informs us that in the Ceremonies he was led into the inner recesses of the Temple clothed in a linen garment (i.e. all in white), and when he had come close to the confines of Death (i.e. the grave) he was given a glimpse of the Sun shining at midnight with a great splendour; after which he was granted admittance into the company of the gods.

In other words, although they met at midnight, the Sun was conceived to be at its meridian, in the same paradoxical way of Modern Masonry. Again, the Candidate stood in view of the grave, when he heard something

comparable to our exhortation, " Lift up our eyes to that Bright Morning Star, etc."; and having passed through the gloomy darkness of death he emerged into a new life of glorious light. The similarity is indeed startling.

In thus identifying our " Bright Morning Star," we should observe that the language employed by the W.M. implies that it is something holding the Centre, in the highest heaven, for it is represented as fixed at a point to which every Brother is expected to turn his eyes and his thoughts, as the centre of attraction for the entire Fraternity. From that height, the most exalted place that we can conceive, our mystic Sun casts its beams of light on everything and everybody beneath, being the Source of both our knowledge and our inspiration, as well as the common bond of union and fellowship amongst ourselves. Naturally, when we have placed ourselves under the influence of this Mystic Sun, we feel we must subordinate all other symbols, ideas, opinions, and speculations, thereto.

The reference to the " rising " of the Morning Star, may seem inconsistent with our interpretation; for, of course, a " rising " Orb and one fixed at its zenith seem to be totally

different ideas. This contradiction, however, is more apparent than real. We must not forget that we are dealing with figures of speech; that is, although we are referring to absolute realities, we employ symbolic language. The symbol hoisted up and fixed in the ceiling of our Halls, presents different aspects, but it points to a divine reality, whose influence is felt in every part of the Universe, and about which there is no change. But with men that influence must depend very much on our mental attitude, which sometimes is favourable, sometimes it is not; and hence we speak of the Orb as " rising " or " falling."

Our idea is that of a mystic Sun ideally set in meridian glory. But its power in human life varies from time to time in each individual. So history shows the ascendancy - the "rising" - of this influence to be gradual; it oscillates or fluctuates, according to time and place, but none the less we entertain and cherish the hope that eventually it will establish its power in our hearts and in the world generally, and then the result will be universal peace and happiness, not as mere dreams but as actual facts.

This symbol carries with it a deep moral

lesson. For as the M.M. concentrates his attention upon it, he realises that the Sun of God's Truth has become an inner light that illumines his interior as it does his outlook. He then finds himself in the same case as the High Priest of Israel, when, once a year, he entered the *Sanctum Sanctorum*; he was then in total darkness physically, *for notwithstanding our reference to a "Dormer,"* there was no window to light up the place. Still, in that darkness he realised the fact of the Divine Presence, and that Presence was the light of his spirit. Like the High Priest, therefore, the M.M. enjoys the inner light, being conscious of "the presence of the Most High," irrespective of circumstances or conditions in the physical order; he sees things even though his eyesight be taken away from him; and he proves the truth of the saying that "in His light shall we see light."

MORAL OF THE LIGHT

The preceding shows us the need of caution in dealing with the Ritual, and the danger of going astray in trying to define the import of

the expressions used about the illumination of the Lodge. What we have said so far, warrants the following conclusions:-

In the First Degree we have a representation of the Sun by means of an artificial light which the E.A. beholds with his bodily eyes. It is a symbol of the light of nature, comprising the elements of " truth and virtue."

In the Second Degree, this symbol embodies a reference to the G.G.O.T.U., from whom we derive the light of reason, which makes us conscious of the operation of law and order in the Universe, and leads us to extend our researches into the mysteries of nature and science.

In the Third Degree the mind is led to think of the Most High Himself, the noon-tide Sun being seen to be a mere emblem of the Godhead and our reason only a dim reflection. We come into this Presence as Moses did at " the Burning Bush," and therefore this has always been used as a Masonic emblem.

Obviously, therefore, these light-symbols transcend the sphere of our human life, and have to do with the Supreme Reality. The Sun is to rule the day and the Moon to govern the night, but " the Master," higher up,

Master of Sun and Moon, rules and directs the Lodge, that is, the Universe. Just now we feel that the night is passing and the day is dawning, and we hope that " the Master " will yet cause the light to shine in our hearts, a light purer and clearer than that of the Sun.

Freemasonry holds the presage of that age of universal enlightenment which has been the dream of poets and sages in the past. That will come to pass when our Mystic " Star " reaches its zenith; for in proportion as it moves up towards that point, the effect is bound to be " peace and salvation to the faithful and obedient of the human race," that is, the welfare of mankind in general. But this happy consummation is dependent on the receptivity of our hearts; at present it may seem to be far off, but the influence of our Morning Star is being felt more and more every day, and as its light is diffusing itself in every direction, we see in it the earnest of its ultimate triumph.

Nor can we admit that we have misread our symbol, for it is fundamental in Masonry that God is the Light of the World, that everything we do and say is the outcome of His inspiration. that our Masonic circle is but an irradiation

of His light. What Longfellow says is true:

Above thy head, through rifted clouds, there shines

A glorious Star; be patient, trust thy Star !

This sentiment agreeing with the exhortation which is given to every newly installed Master:

"As a pattern for imitation, consider that Glorious Luminary of Nature, which, rising in the East, regularly diffuses Light And Lustre to all within its circle."

The Sun does, of course, what " the Master " has ordered that it shall do for our guidance.

Let us note, too, that this idea of the Mystic Sun re- appears in the R.A. Chapter, where the symbol is explained by a threefold ceremony:

(a) The exaltee has barely entered and been obl . . . d, when he finds something. About this initial discovery, however, though he holds the object in his grasp, he confesses that for want of light he does not know what it is. He can only, by feeling it, say what it resembles and its probable use.

(b) Later, this is re-enacted in dramatic form. Our Brethren are exploring the site of

a certain edifice; one of them is enabled to penetrate into a certain place, where it is dark, and as yet he cannot discern things, but having recovered a certain document and brought it to the light of day, he identifies it, and thus obtains valuable information.

Up to this point, ordinary human intelligence has been sufficient. But the success attained gives stimulus to the seeker, who renews his quest.

(c) He now has the satisfaction of finding that the *Sun* has reached its highest altitude; and as its rays dart vertically into the scene of his labours, he is able not merely to see but to understand. He can tell us the form of the P., the material it is made of, the script graven upon it, and, better still, what he beheld when the veil had been lifted, which is really and truly what the Masons have been seeking all the time. In fact, it is here that what was lost long ago, by the untimely D. of our M., H.A., is recovered.

In his narrative of the R.A., there is a striking gradation; first, groping in the dark, guided by *lumen naturae* but judging largely by the senses, that is, by feeling. Then, passing from the mere knowledge of historic facts or the

cultivation of science, to the inspiration of art and the higher wisdom that comes through the V. of the S.L. Finally, the Sun is at its meridian and then everything is made plain, for its rays penetrate the deepest recesses of the heart, the Mason becoming conscious of a full illumination, when he has the happiness of having laid hold of the innermost secrets of the Craft.

THE DORMER

The M.M.'s Lodge is declared to have a Dormer," which, taken literally, means some sort of Window in the upper part of the edifice. Its object is clearly stated in three words: " to give light," that is, to lighten the M.M.'s Lodge (which is regarded as the counterpart of the *Sanctum Sanctorum*) for the benefit of those who come into it. But when the Ritual says that this Dormer is " an Ornament," the meaning can only be that it is a symbol illustrative of some idea, perhaps not a literal Window.

Before dealing with the problem, however, we may recapitulate the many lights which the

Speculative Mason seems to have. It will show how complex the subject is. There are, then, the following :

- (1) The lamp as a material object, by which the Lodge- room is lit up.
- (2) The outline of a Sun sketched on the T.B., on the floor of this Lodgeroom.
- (3) The physical Orb - the Sun of Nature - "marked " by the J.W. at noon.
- (4) The Blazing Star of which we speak to the Initiate.
- (5) The Sacred Symbol of the F.C., that is to say, " The Star and Seal of Solomon."
- (6) The glimmering ray which enables us to perceive things in outline.
- (7) The light of Reason, which we call " the intellectual faculty."
- (8) The Bright Morning Star, i.e. " the Shield of David," or Pentalpha.
- (9) The Dormer of the M.M.'s Lodge, now under discussion.

And finally, there is the Light to which all other lights must be referred, that is, the Most High Himself. whence in the beautiful Masonic

Prayer of the Second Degree we have mention of " the Rays of Heaven."

If this long series of ideas is to be coordinated at all, then, we shall have to exercise great care. It would be easy to make mistakes.

We should bear in mind that the Dormer symbol is by no means a new-fangled thing. It can be traced to Mediaeval times, for in the Manual of the Antients, commonly known as *Ahiman Rezon*, it is referred to in the following terms :

"The fixed lights of the Lodge were formerly represented by three windows, supposed to be in every room where a Lodge is held, referring to the cardinal points of the compass, according to the antique rules of Masonry. There was one in the E., another in the W., and another in the S., to light men to, at, or from labour; but there was none in the N., because the Sun darts no rays from thence."

This symbol of the three lights has its *raison d'être* in the light itself, for we know that all light consists of a combination of three primary colours; and again in those " three

emblematical lights" that are shown to the Initiate. But whatever form the Dormer may take, whether it be one of three lights, or three distinct windows on three sides of the room, or even a single window, its significance will remain the same; for it conveys the idea that the Freemason's Lodge is the Abode of Light, those within it enjoying the light of our mystic Sun, which they see shining through the Dormer. But it would be well to provide our Lodges with a window of three Lights, or, better still, three separate windows, because with this symbol before us, it would be easier to imagine that mystic Sun rising in the E., at its meridian, and then setting in the W., which " the Dormer " is said to signify.

But this statement that the *Sanctum Sanctorum* had a Dormer, creates a big difficulty. For the V. of the S.L. does nowhere mention a Dormer, and, as a matter of fact, there was no window at all. It is only we, the Masons, who say so; but the meaning of the Ritual seems to be that in the M.M.'s Lodge (which is something ideal, and in general answers to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*) we should imagine an opening above us, an emblematic window (which may or may not take the form of a real

one), in order to give expression to a certain fact which is characteristic of the Lodge in the Third Degree, that is, the shining of the Bright Morning Star.

The absence of a Window in the *Sanctum Sanctorum* is disappointing, for it looks as if there was a discrepancy in the Ritual. But before formulating a charge against the Ritual, we ought to ascertain the nature of our symbol, what it is and what it does. Besides, we ought to bear in mind that however valuable historic facts may be as illustrating our ideas, our Masonic conception is not dependent on any particular detail or feature of K.S.T.

The Israelite of old time conceived the great Jehovah as dwelling "in the darkness" as well as "in the light." And therefore the Hebrew mystic said: "He made darkness his dwelling-place"; "Darkness and light are both alike to Thee." (1st Kings viii. 12; Psalms xviii. II, cxxxix. 12.) He, therefore, had no need of windows or of artificial light.

And this conception of a God who dwells in the darkness may be found among other races. For the Yogis (like the Sufis), in the East, teach that if anyone would attain to "the Truth," he must of necessity go through

what they call " the Mystical Night," which consists in shutting out all sense-impressions and letting the interior light alone shine. This undoubtedly is the underlying thought in our Third Degree; for the M.M. is clearly taught that he should not rely on his " human reason," which is incapable of " penetrating the mysterious veil," but on the inner divine light, which is "from above," and which is sent to relieve our night.

We have already seen that the three parts of K.S.T. correspond to the three sections of the Porch. The " Porchway or Entrance " was common to both; the Middle Chamber over it corresponded to the Holy Place; and the room above that corresponded to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*. It was in that roofless apartment where the King, the High Priest, and the Architect met on certain occasions for certain purposes. Is it not here, therefore, in the opening overhead, that the true explanation of the Mysterious Dormer is to be found ?

In the Ritual we are told that " the covering " of a Freemason's Lodge is the " celestial canopy "; and, if so, the said Lodge cannot be roofed at all; instead, it consists only of four walls (symbolic of the four quarters of the

globe), with the wide open sky above us, which gives to those inside a full view of the firmament. Surely, then, this " open sky " is the Dormer meant!

The emblematic Dormer then was not a window at all, but the uncovered top of the roofless Chamber, which enabled those who met there to study and to admire God's wonderful creation.

It is therefore literally true that the ideal Lodge is " even as high as the heavens "; its covering " is the sky.

Through this " Dormer " our Ancient Brethren had an unrestricted view of the whole firmament, and it became possible for them to inquire into " the ordinances of heaven " and " their dominion in the earth," as they claimed from the days of Solomon.

The conditions that obtained in this Third Chamber were very different from those at the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, for here there was complete darkness and no stars were to be seen, but in the Third Chamber there was darkness visible. As we have said, the *Sanctum Sanctorum* at the extreme W. corresponded to the Third Chamber, at the top of the Porch, in the extreme E., which was

admirably fitted to serve as a sort of astronomical observatory.

It may be objected that we have no definite proof of this, that it is mere surmise; but we submit that the evidence adduced is cumulative and that, to put it on the lowest estimate, it gives ground for strong presumption; for, granting that the Chamber was a roofless one, the rest follows logically.

Now, as everything in our Ceremonies has a moral application, the Dormer, too, will be found to convey a moral lesson; in fact, it is a double one.

First, we see that the light of a Freemason is not artificial light, or of man's making, but is derived from above, mystically from the Bright Morning Star, which shines into the Lodge, and represents the Sun in the midnight sky, in our "darkness visible," that Sun which will presently (when the night is past) shine upon us, making everything resplendent and free from shadows.

Secondly, it is equally patent that this light is for the mind rather than for the eyes, and is "from above," in the sense that it comes from "the Centre," from "the Master," from God, as befits our conception of the Lodge as a

Temple. It is something spiritual, and it comes from such a height that it would be impossible to say that it does not reach other people or to claim that we have a monopoly of it.

And here we may note again, that for the M.M. (having attained to the highest grade of initiation) it is always " High Time " - always noon, - when, having gained not merely proficiency in the Craft, but that esoteric knowledge of which the Mediaeval Masons were the custodians, he has exchanged, in the Acception, the implements of labour for the robes of innocence and has acquired a title to the mysteries and privileges of the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, where alone he will experience the true " rest " of mind and heart. In anticipating so much we assume that the M.M. has "completed " his Degree.

In the actual room in which the Brethren hold their meetings, the light may sometimes be seen streaming through a literal window on the wall in the form of a solid shaft. This is, of course, accidental. But if that window were a skylight in the exact centre of the ceiling, and the Sun were at mid-heaven, the shaft of light would illuminate the "Abode of Death"

beneath, for it would fall perpendicularly where our M., H.A., is supposed to lie.

This unfolds a beautiful lesson. For the angle at which the beams of physical sunlight enter the Lodge-room vary according to the apparent movements of the physical Sun. But for the ideal Freemason there are no variations; with him it is always " High Time," that is, " the Sun is always at its meridian," and the thought of this fact should stimulate our minds. It is only a metaphor, but the metaphor cannot fail to inspire us in our Masonic career with courage and determination.

This Dormer of the M.M.'s Lodge may, therefore, be looked upon as symbolising the light which we bring to bear on the problems of existence. This striking moral application was not lost to our Mediaeval Brethren, for they said that the light that came through the Dormer was intended to guide them " to, at, or from labour "; in other words, to teach them the way of life. As it fell on the flooring of the Lodge, it revealed a diagram of remarkable symmetry and beauty which was full of instruction. In the Border comparatively few of the squares were whole; but the center

consisted of Mosaic, that is, of a mass of little cubes, symbolic of our human life. The cubes bore a general resemblance to each other, but were not alike; indeed, they differed widely, some being of one colour, some of another; some being larger than others; some being true cubes, some imperfect ones; some mere chips or fragments, particularly along the edges. And yet the result of this combination was an exquisite piece of workmanship, and a beautiful design.

The Pavement is described as " variegated and chequered," and in it is to be found all the instruction required to make a perfect Mason. Our life is indeed " variegated and chequered," for we see that it presents a combination of joys and sorrows, successes and failures, gleams of sunshine and clouded hours; a great variety of experiences, but yet, taken together, they produce a harmonious result. It is comforting to know, that whatever imperfections we may be conscious of, and whatever conflicts we may have to go through, in the final issue everything will be found to blend perfectly, even the sombre spots helping to enhance the beauty and symmetry of the outcome.

If we realise this, we shall not wonder at the assertion made in the Ritual, that the Square Pavement is " for the High Priest to walk on "; it is what supports our spirit all through life. We speak of the High Priest in the Sanctum Sanctorum, to convey the idea of the M.M. being in the presence of the Most High, for indeed we feel that our life is hallowed by " the Master," the power which not only " rules and directs " the Universe, but over-rules everything for our ultimate good. The Pavement therefore is a constant reminder of His beneficent purpose, which cannot but be an encouragement to follow on "with a firm but humble confidence."

OUR MERIDIAN LIGHT

By the phrase "light from above" we are to understand the light that comes from the noontide sun. All the exoteric statements of the Ritual support this view, as we shall see here.

When on a certain occasion we question the E.A. about his first introduction into Masonry, he tells us that it took place " when the sun was

at its meridian." The statement is not literally true, for we usually meet after dark, in the evening. And yet we not only admit it, but we justify it on the ground that as the Fraternity is spread over the whole globe, the sun can never set in the Masonic world. Of course it is possible that when the veil drops and the material blessing is restored, the Temple may be so brightly illumined that the dazzled Initiate may imagine it is noontide. But, Masonically speaking, the initiation is a sort of dawn, and whatever his emotions, he still apprehends things dimly, as must be the case with everyone of us in the physical sense in the twilight hours.

Much indeed has been made clear, but as most of what is said and done is allegorical, there is still need of explanations. Nay, for all those present, the world remains, as it is called, a "sublunary abode," the moon still ruling our sky, the sun not yet in power; and therefore our cherished symbols are mere adumbrations which will be valueless if not rightly interpreted. Don't forget that the first sign with which we are entrusted is one by which we can recognise a Mason "by night as well as day." On the other hand, observe

what the W.'s do with their columns in opening and closing the Lodge: when the S.W. puts up his, the J.W. puts his down; the sun having risen above the horizon, the moon sets; later on it will be the sun that will set, and then the moon will rise again, which will be shown by the W.'s reversing their action. From this we are to learn that, day or night, the Mason is never left altogether without light.

The paradox about the sun at its meridian may be well suited to one who as yet can only see the surface of things, but it is a half-truth, and, as we know, it is intended to suggest something else. It is only in a mystic sense that our light comes from the sun in its zenith, and this can easily be shown to be the true sense of the paradox.

Remember to this end the highly significant fact mentioned in the Ceremonies that it was the custom of our M., H.A., when occupied with K.S.T., to go into that place every day "to pay his adoration to the Most High at the hour of High Twelve," which means, of course, when the sun was at its meridian. According to this, then, if the J.W. is to watch for that moment when the sun will attain to

that point it must be because the Speculative Mason begins his activities at High Twelve, when the Operative Mason, having ceased labour, goes to " refreshment." It is remarkable, too, that the Greek word for " mid-day," *Endios*, is from the same root whence the name for God is derived in the principal classic languages, the Latin *Deus*, the Greek *Theos*, and the Sanskrit *Devas*, all of which forms have, therefore, the same import, viz., " the Shining One."

The idea we find underlying the paradox of the E.A. persists in the Second Degree; for the S., the distinctive sign of the Craftsman, is also an emblem of the sun at its meridian, seeing that any upright set up at an angle of 90° must point at mid-heaven. Historically, the sign of the F.C. was derived from a well-known episode, mentioned in the V. of the S.L., "when it was in this position " that a certain leader prayed fervently to the Almighty " to continue the light of day, that he might complete," etc. Standing to order as Craftsmen, therefore, we are in effect praying for the continuance of meridian light and the success that must come from it. Such is, indeed, the nature of the " aid " which we

solicit from the G.G.O.T.U. every time we meet for our "improvement" as Masons.

Owing to the perfect regularity of its apparent movement, the physical sun has always been used for measuring and counting time. But in the Ritual the sun is an emblem, and, therefore, it is conceived as fixed in midheaven, always in its meridian glory, and accordingly we are fully justified in describing, not only the initiation ceremony, but everything else done in "open Lodge," as done when the sun is at its meridian, that is, while our mystic luminary is shining upon us from above.

No R.A. Brother will have any difficulty over this interpretation if he remembers how at the time of his exaltation, one of the sojourners explains the way the M.M. from Babylon succeeded in "distinguishing those objects which before he had so imperfectly discovered." The explanation is briefly that the Sun, having by that time attained its meridian, its beams fell perpendicularly into the deep recess, and therefore everything was now plainly revealed to the beholder, who saw clearly and distinctly what before was dark and enigmatic.

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

Having surveyed the Freemason's Lodge, it should now be obvious to everyone that in it we have the embodiment of a lofty conception of the Universe presided over by its Architect and Ruler.

But this Universe is overshadowed by the mystery of Death, and, strangely enough, this fact has never been referred to in any of the passages of the Ritual so far quoted or discussed. A G., however, is to be found in the Lodge, and we know that the darkness of the Third Degree alludes to the d . . . of D. This the last, but by no means the least, element of our symbolism, will therefore engage our attention now.

Neither the E.A. nor the F.C. know anything of the G.; it is only the M.M. that is allowed to catch a glimpse of it, and that occurs at what is practically the end of our progress. Up to that moment he has no premonition, not the slightest hint, of what is coming. And this silence on our part, far from being accidental, is deliberately planned, the G. being kept out of view, covered and hid away, until

the climax in the Ceremonies of the Degree is reached, when a tragedy taken from the Annals of Masonry is re-enacted, which is sure to make a deep and lasting impression on all who witness it. It is then, and not before, that the secret is disclosed. It comes as a surprise, but it occasions no shock, for although the scene be weird, the W.M. has prepared the Candidate for what was coming, and he has led him almost insensibly to act as the protagonist of the story.

It is, indeed, a solemn moment when the Candidate of the Third Degree is made figuratively to descend into the G. and to become the representative of our M., H.A. A few moments later, however, when he is raised on the 5 p.o.f., he finds his heart expanding with a new hope. For as he stands on the bri . . of the g . . . he receives valuable instruction on the subject of the Great Beyond, and this no one can hear without being impressed. The trend of it is to assure him that the last and deepest problem has been solved and disposed of. And so the incident does not frighten nor depress, but has a stimulating effect.

After being raised, the mental outlook of

the M.M. undergoes a complete change. He now realises, as he never did before, that the tomb is simply the gate of life, a dark passage opening out into a world of everlasting day, wherein, having braved his many trials, which may perhaps include a cruel martyrdom, he will be re-united with the former companions of his toil.

The dimensions of the G. are given, and they confirm our interpretation, - they are 3 x 5 x 6 feet; the product of which is a total capacity of 90 cubic feet, the number of the perfect square. We square death as we square everything else; and the Square in the G. conveys to a Brother going through that Ceremony the thought that in death, as in life, all is well with the M.M., and there is for him no need to be afraid of the Hereafter.

The question has been asked, Whence did the Masons derive this last grand symbol, the core and kernel of the Craft ? Our answer is that there is a mixture of history, mythology, and philosophy in it.

A great scholar of 200 years ago, Dr Stukeley, F.R.S., who was initiated in 1721, made an entry in his diary, in which he expressed his conviction that Freemasonry was " the remains

of the mysterys of the Antients." He was steeped in the classic lore of Rome and Greece, and he therefore knew what he was talking about. His opinion, then, was invaluable, for it implied that the ordeals which the Candidates of that time had to go through in the Lodge, presented points of similarity with what was done in the Mysteries of the ancient world.

And all the Masonic scholars that flourished in the eighteenth century were equally persuaded of this, asserting with remarkable unanimity that the Craft was a survival of the Mysteries of Antiquity, basing their opinion no doubt on the fact that in those Mysteries the Candidate used to go through a figurative death, teaching him the lesson of immortality, that is, of " more life and fuller."

Indeed, the analogies between our Raising Ceremony and the Ancient Mysteries supply matter for a book. Here we can only touch on the subject briefly and superficially.

In Egypt, the Candidate was supposed to go through the experiences of Osiris, who, having been trapped by Typhon into a chest and thrown into the Nile, his body was recovered by Isis, and, after some vicissitudes, he was restored to life: but not on this earth, for he

became Judge of the Dead. Hence the valedictory formulas employed in the Funerary Rituals were: "Thou hast gone to Osiris alive "; "The promise of life in Osiris." In the Dyonesian Rites, the traditional history related the murder of Bacchus by the Titans; and the Candidate was said to return to life in some extraordinary way.

In the Kabiric Rites of Samothrace, the Candidate was figuratively slain by the Presiding Gods, but afterwards he was restored to life, and he became a member of that august body.

In the Mysteries of Eleusis, the mythos was based on " the rape of Proserpine " (*alias* Persephone), daughter of Demeter, the Goddess of Corn. The Athenian writer Isocrates informs us, however, that the aim of the mythos was to " instruct the Initiate how to entertain the most agreeable expectations concerning death and eternity."

In this case the Ceremonies occupied nine days; the third day was one of mourning; on the seventh there was a great darkness, with the staging of Tartarus and a vision of Elysium. Then followed " the Sacred Marriage " of Demeter and Zeus, Earth and Heaven, and, after an interval, the protagonists having

retired, the Hierophant appeared before the assembly bearing " an Ear of Corn " (symbol of fertility) in his hand, to proclaim the birth of a new and holy Child, who was the Candidate himself, now regenerated.

In other Greek Mysteries the prototype was Adonis, who, after being killed by a wild boar, was granted by Jupiter the privilege of a new life to be spent half (*six months of the year*) in the bowers of the earth, and half (*the other six months of the year*) in the underworld, this being an allusion to the order of the seasons, with the open-air life of spring and summer, and the comparative seclusion that followed in the trying seasons of autumn and winter. Nature seemed dead during the latter, but came to life again in the spring and bore fruit in summer.

Coming nearer home, the Druidic Rites were also concerned with the re-birth of the Candidate, who was told that he must experience three births: first, the entrance of all men on this, their mortal existence, of which the Initiation Ceremony was an emblematical representation; secondly, when he was admitted to the rank of Druid, that is, when he was initiated; and finally, when he was " born of Ceridwen," in whose cauldron he found the

waters of the coveted mystic lore, which quenched the thirst of his spirit. This final grade of initiation was sometimes described as being "born of the coracle," as thereby the Candidate acquired the full knowledge of God and the Universe, and seemed transported to another world: he then became an epopt.

THE MORAL OF THE G. IN THE THIRD DEGREE

The moral of the legend preserved in the Masonic Ritual, which is rehearsed at every Raising, is fairly obvious, and harmonises with all the Ancient Mysteries here reviewed. In it we see a picture of life overshadowed by the spectre of death. And, charming as the world may be, it is a disagreeable fact that the ground we tread will one day open to receive this mortal coil into its cold bosom. On the other hand, despite this gloomy outlook, we have the light of nature (represented by the glimmering ray), which enables us to apprehend the eternal realities, reflected on our consciousness, and we find these most comforting.

The point is vividly stressed by the recital

of the experiences through which the Prince of Architects passed. It is a tragic story, but it does not upset us, because of the explanations given, which help us to realise that it is possible to go through such an experience and still be a conqueror. One thing is now made clear: the grim enemy, Death, can have no terrors to be compared to the stain of falsehood or dishonour.

And if we meet the contrarities of life in that spirit, death itself will be a victory through which we will see ourselves raised to a higher plane. The world will point out the G., but that G. will have become a monument, a trophy. The gruesome tokens of mortality - the c., s., and c-b-s -will be left behind and be gazed on by the public, but we shall now account them mere facts of nature, historic relics, evidences of what happened while the M.M. was on the physical plane.

Now, therefore, we no longer mourn or fear what we know is impending. The mystic Sun shines and illumines not only our daily path but the Abode of Death into which we have figuratively descended. And this means that a double truth has been vindicated, and has forced itself on our minds, to wit, that the G.

is not the goal, and that what is commonly called " Death," far from being the extinction of all life, is only a transition, a transfiguration, an apotheosis.

This symbol raises also an important historic problem. For the G. which we discover in the M.M.'s Lodge is that of our M., H.A., and we naturally ask: Where was it that H.A. was buried? The Ritual denies that it was in the *Sanctum Sanctorum*. It cannot have been there, because the Israelitish law did not permit the introduction of dead bodies into the sacred precincts of the Temple, nor any intramural interments. All we are told is that he was buried "as near the *Sanctum Sanctorum* as the Israelitish law would permit."

This historic allusion becomes clear in the R.A., where that which was lost above ground is seen to have been preserved in the depths. The vaulted chamber is no doubt the place. The M.M. hopes to find " that which was lost " with the centre. But what can this mean ? Not " in " the centre; but rather " by means of, guided by the centre, taking his bearing from it." While in the depths below, he must take his directions by what there is on the surface.

The M.M.'s from Babylon, having examined the ruins of K.S.T., descend into certain deep recesses, where they find beautiful architectural relics, on which is enshrined an Ineffable Mystery; and the Principal Sojourner distinctly asserts that one of these relics, the P., stands " in the centre . . .," that is to say, not merely the centre of the place, but directly beneath another centre on the surface. According to J., a certain " Lodge " was opened " in the bosom of the holy Mount Moriah, *on the very centre* of the ground on which the Sanctuary . . . was afterwards erected." These relics were connected with the Architect of that Sanctuary, and presumably this is the spot where K.S. ordered that his chief artist should be re-interred. On the P. there is evidence that all these finds had to do with the historic trio that we know of: the three G.M.'s who bore sway at the building of the first Temple at Jerusalem.

The passage to that subterranean place was discovered accidentally among the debris of the Temple, and " the compact mass of masonry " which gave the clue to it must have been built before the Temple itself; it lasted longer than the Temple for very good reasons.

When the Masons of K.S.T. saw that, owing to the calamity that befell our M., " the plans and designs " which hitherto had been regularly supplied were no longer forthcoming, they had to rely on their ingenuity, and to complete the structure as well as they could. But those who came after held that it was in consequence of the departures then made from the original pattern, that this Temple perished. The plans and designs then substituted proved to be quite imperfect and unworthy of that great work, wherefore the Most High could not endure them. Still it must not be thought that " those plans and designs " were the " genuine secrets " which were lost through his untimely death.

The reference to the death of our M., H.A., might be treated as signifying only a moral death which Masons have to go through. But this is inadmissible. The need of a moral death is inculcated in the Second Degree, where the Candidate is " in the Temple," but in the part of it called " the Holy Place "; he represents the active man, and is regenerated and purified by the offerings there made. But the Third Degree takes us beyond this by giving us what is actually recorded in the

Annals of Masonry. Our Master comes into "the Temple" and makes a sacrifice of his life. There is a literal death, not a voluntary one, and an interment, and another highly significant ceremony which follows immediately and which we read as historic fact.

In 1879 an Oxford Professor, Dr Marks, discovered in the Bodleian Library an Arab MS. of the fourteenth century, which contained a reference to the finding of " Our Master Hiram." He mentioned this to another Professor at the time, but apparently they thought the matter unimportant. But it so happens that their testimony does not stand alone. Some years before a similar statement was made by a Jewish Rabbi in London, who thought it was an extinct tradition. He did not know how much the Masons made of that story.

Nor need we fret because the Old Charges made only slight allusion to the Chief Artificer of the Temple, and then by the use of such pseudonyms as *Amon*, *Aymon*, *Aynone*, *Dynon*, *Benaim*, etc. These names were not arbitrarily chosen; they are not fanciful, but have a meaning. They were intended to avoid mentioning the man, and so they are a deliberate effort to conceal what no doubt was the subject

of some instruction to the Brethren at other times.

Benaim is the plural of the Hebrew word for "Builder," that is, the word which occurs in " M . . . *ben* or . . . *ben*." This must therefore be a reference to the " Three who bore sway at the building of K.S.T." *Amon* and the other forms of that name are the Hebrew *ha Amon*, " the Artificer," in one place (Song of Solomon vii. 2) rendered " cunning workman." Another derivative from the same root, *Emun*, would mean " the Trusty One." As for *Dynon*, it is either a corruption of *Aynone* (the initial A being mistaken for D), or it is a variation of *Adon*, " the Master," this being the first part of a name used in the Ceremony of Installation, viz., *Adoniram*, which is the equivalent of *Adon Hiram*, " the Master Hiram."

Our M., H.A., was slain at noon, that is, when the Sun was at its meridian, because " in the midst of life we are in death." It was typical. He was slain with some of the W.T.'s of the operative Mason, the P., L., and H.M., because the worst enemy of the " speculative " man is the " operative." (*The square was not used.*) He had gone into the Temple, " as was

his wonted custom," for aims higher than those which the "operative" pursues, when the tragedy took place; but, as the narrative suggests, his life was far from a failure.

But although this is given as true history, it may also be read as an allegory, and it is intended to teach a moral. As the Sun, which, after reaching its zenith, loses its warmth and seems to die, declining and disappearing over the horizon, so our M., H.A., laid down his life after he had finished his devotions at noon, that is, when he had done that which most exalts man, the worship of the Most High.

And as the Sun goes through its annual course, travelling N. in summer, and S. in winter, lingering for a while at those points as if it received a check, so our M., H.A., attempted to escape by the entrances at the S. and N. gates. Then, having reached the furthest point S., in the winter solstice, on 22nd December, the Sun seems to renew its life, whence the ancient Festival of *Invicti Solis Natalis*, which in our time has been substituted by *Christmas*. And it is even so with H.A., for he did not go out by either N. or S., but he came to an end at the E.; and he went down into the G.; where he was lost to the

world. He sank into the depths, but while there he recovered the lost secrets; his vitality was renewed, and he was brought into fellowship with the kindred spirits of past ages, re-emerging in the E., as the Sun does, a regenerated man.

H.A. descends figuratively into the G. to teach the M.M. an important lesson. Our Ancient Brethren regarded him as going like the Sun to the nether world. Up till then he has been travelling from E. to W., but now he will change his direction, going Eastwards, in the hope of recovering what he has been seeking. So now his progress is from W. to E. It is because of this hope that people were buried with their feet towards the E. And his following H.A. through the d . . . of d . . . is a prelude to his obtaining a participation in what is reserved for those who, like H.A., have " lost their life." He now learns his lesson, and becomes much more than the Craftsman he has been; he is " canonised "; he is admitted into the "sublime " circle of those who have toiled not for self but for the welfare of the race.

Thus in our Ceremonies the end and the beginning, the E., of the W., are brought

together. At first there have been " substituted " secrets of a symbolical character, but later these yield place to the " genuine " ones, the real thing; this is done emblematically in the R.A. Chapter, for which purpose the Candidate has to descend to the depths.

Men are apt to think that our destined end becomes an accomplished fact when they attain the highest point in this life; but even that is only a phase; the real climax is to be found after we have gone through the G.; when we cast off this mortal coil, when the chrysalis becomes a butterfly, so to speak. Then, with life renewed, we go to be counted among the Immortals.

The M.M. dies, as it were, in the presence of the Gods; and these are represented by the seven planets and the seven regular officers of the Lodge; his apotheosis taking place with their approval and good-will, for they welcome him. All this is in agreement with the statement that the Lodge is opened " on the centre "; for he goes through those experiences in " the centre," surrounded by the rest. First of all, he will see a symbol in that centre, then he will realise God; first,

the letter G., then life; first, an eye, or certain Hebrew characters, or a point, then the Bright Morning Star shining in all its meridian glory.

THE FULNESS OF LIGHT

Although the Freemason is represented as a pilgrim of the night, he is none the less the follower and apostle of the light, enjoying the highest form of knowledge that it is possible for man to attain to in this world of shadows.

We have often been told that the Masonic "System of learning " is illogical, that our allegories are not only unscientific but extremely childish. But however feeble our figures of speech may seem to be, they certainly are not new-fangled; we claim for our symbols and our practices that they are a precious heritage, bringing us into partnership with the wise men who in bygone ages have tried to give expression to their philosophical speculations.

Let us illustrate this. From the dawn of history it has been customary, in performing ritual acts of piety, to turn towards the rising

Sun. Men have always realised that the Sun was the source of light, and hence they adopted it as a symbol of God, who is the light of our spirit. At even the Sun sank in the West, and then all nature was covered with a dark pall; but the idea of the Glory of the Lord lingered in the mind; and, linking one idea with another, that of the Sun with the Star Polaris, they took the latter as symbolising their hope. The Pole-star was followed by its six companions, and that seemed to them to represent their case, the seven Masons of a perfect Lodge who wait in the prevailing gloom of the night for the dawn of day. From earliest times those stars attracted much attention and were the subject of much speculation; it was the most striking spectacle in the midnight sky; and as Polaris appeared to be the pivot around which not only the other six, but the whole of the heavens revolved, she was regarded as "the Master."

This constellation shows the cosmic origin of the most important symbol we have, that of our seven emblematical lights; the practical application of which may be traced far back in human history, if not *ab initio*. For the Seven Stars at the centre of the planisphere

have given to the Craft the basis of its organisation, being the prototype of the perfect, that is, of the ideal Lodge in the condition of " darkness visible " in which we find ourselves.

Some 1200 years ago, in the eighth century of our era, as the Christian priest came out of the vestry into the body of the Church for the celebration of " the Holy Mysteries," he was followed by seven acolytes, each of whom carried a lighted taper in his hand; and on arriving at the Sanctuary they divided, three of the acolytes going on one side and four on the other.

Then, about 1000 years earlier, in Persia and other countries, the adepts of Mithras did substantially the same, for they kept the sacred fire burning perpetually on seven distinct altars, as their Ritual prescribed.

And going to a still more remote period, we find that in the Holy Place of K.S.T. (which has been shown to correspond to our mystic Middle Chamber) there stood the Golden Lampstand with the Seven burners that lighted up the precincts, and particularly the central part thereof, where the two altars of showbread and of incense were. The law provided that those seven lights were to burn day and night,

and there were priests whose duty was to trim the wicks and maintain a regular supply of oil.

This ancient symbol has been handed down not only among Masons, but among Christians generally, for there are many Churches where we still see the seven symbolic lamps hung up in front of the Altar, and they are kept alight as emblematic of " the seven gifts of the spirit," or of " the seven spirits of God," whatever that may mean.

But if we want to know the true significance of the seven lights, we must go to the V. of the S.L., where we find Moses constructing his Golden Lampstand according to a pattern which the Elohim (A.V. " God ") had shown him during his retirement on Mount Sinai; for this means that the Seven Lights are a symbolic representation of the group of Seven Stars, known to us as *Ursa Minor*, which is one of the wonders of the sky. As our G.M. Moses saw that constellation turning round the Master Polaris, he adopted it as a symbol, and afterwards our Ancient Brethren took it for an emblem not merely of the heavens in revolution, but of the celestial Lodge - a Committee of Gods, or semigods - the "seven spirits of

Elohim," which the Hebrews spoke of, or " the grand Lodge above," as we call it. It is because we view our Lodges as so many reflections of that one, that the Seven Stars have become emblematical of " the perfect Lodge of the present time.

We may see, then, how this idea came to assume its different aspects: seven actual lights; seven distinguished Brethren called " the regular officers "; seven stars depicted in one of the T.B.'s; seven symbolical lights; seven Liberal Arts and Sciences; seven Jewels, which are, the three called " movable " or portable ones (S., L., and P.R.), as being transferred from one to another, and the three called " immovable " (T.B., the R., and P. Ashlars), which are always at the same place; and the light of lights, i.e. "the Glory in the centre.

And obviously, the application of this symbol of our illumination calls for cautious treatment. For the number seven should not be regarded as an arithmetical quantity, but rather as a figure of speech indicative of "fulness or completeness "; and therefore the seven lights must be taken to signify the condition of perfect illumination which we are supposed to enjoy

after we become complete Masters of the Craft, that is, after we have attained the centre.

In the Supreme Degree, the R.A. Companions, acting on the knowledge which they have derived from the Craft, arrange the symbolic lights in the centre of the Chapter in a peculiar manner, and they " advance " in a way which is reminiscent of the three flights of 3, 5, 7 steps of the W . . . g S . . . e, each landing in the figurative ascent being marked by a peculiar movement, which helps to show that the R.A. is part and parcel of the Craft. The Companion is already at the summit of the Ladder, but in his progress he now sees how each Degree has brought him nearer and nearer to the goal of his aspirations.

In the Chapter, however, the lights are six, and the seventh, answering to the Master-star Polaris, has yielded its place to another symbol, which occupies the centre, while those six lights form an equilateral triangle emblematic of the Deity and of the three G.M.'s who bore sway at K.S.T. Within this all-embracing Triangle of Light, there are certain points marked by us, by the three lesser lights bisecting the three sides, by means of which we obtain *four* more triangles, all equal and

equilateral. The principal triangle represents the Absolute, the latter four stand for the Relative; the former is ideal, symbolical of the *Three*; the latter is practical, denoting *four* quarters; the whole stands for a combination of Faith and Knowledge, of Heaven and Earth.

Here some will ask: But why this multiplicity of lights, if we have already secured that of the Most High, which is what matters most ? The explanation is that we, insignificant creatures of earth, can only receive the " rays of heaven " by reflection. In our vanity we may boast of our penetrating vision, our sagacity, our eagle-eyed intelligence, but as a matter of fact the human mind is like our optical organs, which are unable to gaze at the brilliant Sun, and need something that will subdue or tone down its light: shades, screens, blinds, or stained glass, as the case may be.

When after the gloom of winter there comes the bright sunshine of summer, warmth and life are infused into nature. But the resplendent Sun at midsummer is a challenge; for we cannot fix our eyes upon it, the intensity of its light compelling us to turn them away

therefrom. And the Hebrew mystic learned from this that no man could see " God " and live. From the Sun, he learned something of the nature of God.

God can only be partially known or realised by us in this life. And to do this we must have recourse to the minor luminaries of nature and science. The direct contemplation of God is impossible, because our intellect is not strong enough to bear the full radiance of that mystic Sun. Its rays reach us mediately, through the many reflectors which the Craft and Science and Religion supply; and this is to our benefit.

It sounds paradoxical, but it is true, that all human knowledge is simply reflected light. Leibnitz (in 1684) divided knowledge into two kinds, viz., "symbolical " and " intuitive." For what is " sight " but the apprehension by the mind of the images projected on the retina by external things ? And we may go further than Leibnitz and ask, What are even our intuitions but mere reflections of the general facts of life on the inner consciousness ? This will help us to understand why men do not seek wisdom by a direct call on the Omniscient, but always by indirect means, by experimental

tests, by comparisons and symbolical illustrations, instinctively believing that their inductive and deductive processes are the most useful for beings constituted as we are, even though they involve a slow and tedious toil occupying a whole life.

With the assistance of our Masonic arts, we often make great discoveries. But however much we may learn, we shall never overcome the limitations imposed by the physical world on the human mind. At times, in our search after truth, we become conscious of some advance, and we feel disposed to cry *Eureka* - "It is found ! " But although for the moment we are satisfied, it usually turns out that what has been found is but a formula pointing to something else, there being no finality about anything human.

In our presumption we fail to see that everything here is relative, and that after every fresh discovery a new horizon, and another, and yet another, must arise further away, where our estimates of the wonderful works of the Almighty have to be revised, according as new light is being vouchsafed to us. But as the d . . . of d . . . in the M.M.'s Lodge is followed by a scene of light and life, so, too,

we cherish the hope that one day the Freemasons will attain to the fulness of knowledge in a higher plane of existence.

THE PARADOX OF THE M.M.'S LIGHT

We have seen that Freemasonry brings the promise of Light, and that the promise is fulfilled in a way which is very different from what the adept has been expecting.

When the M.M. is raised, he will probably think that the moment for full illumination has at last come; but, if so, he must be disappointed. For whatever light may be granted to him at that moment, he will receive a significant admonition. Just then he can only see a glimmering ray by the P., and the W.M. declares that-

" The light of a M.M. is (but) darkness visible."

Now this phrase is not peculiar to the Masonic Ritual, but was used long ago by two great masters of English, viz., by Milton and Alexander Pope. The former, writing some 300 years ago, said of the first spirit to rebel

against the Most High, that he was thrown into
. . . a dungeon on all sides round

As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames,
No light, but darkness visible, etc.

This metaphor suggests the interior of a vast sphere full of a fire that gives "no light," and therefore those inside have no clear vision, but they apprehend the main facts of their situation by mental perception, being acutely conscious of a sense of guilt, the feeling of remorse, anguish, and misery. With Milton, evidently, "darkness visible" meant this general intuition of the spirit when detached from physical conditions, a mind's penetration into the realm of the ethereal.

Then, a century later, Alexander Pope employed the phrase in the Fourth Book of *The Dunciad*, composed in 1740. There dread Chaos is urged to indulge "one dim Ray of Light," and the effect of this is anticipated in this sentence:

Of darkness visible, so much be lent
As half to show. half veil, the deep intent.

We regard this quotation as highly significant,

because the poet was a Mason, and because the phrase in question is used in exactly the sense it has in the Masonic Ritual. In the Third Degree the scene is dark, and there is but "one dim Ray of Light," producing the " darkness visible " which only permits us to see things in their outline; it illustrates and veils, it reveals and conceals, it lights up and obscures, just as Alexander Pope says his " dim Ray " did.

We shall not attempt to explain the coincidence, but the fact is worthy of notice. In the Lodge, our allegories are decidedly enigmatic, mystifying and puzzling the Cowan. But they serve their purpose well, for they illustrate and clarify, making things relatively clear to our minds. Things are veiled, but the veil is for us a transparent one.

The Dunciad is a poem composed as a skit on the age in which the author lived. But Book iv. contains two lines, 572, 573, which show the trend of his mind: he says:

The Queen confers her Titles and Degrees,
Her children first of more distinguished sort,
Who study Shakespeare at the Inns of Court,
Impale a glow-worm, or Vertu profess,
Shine in the dignity of F.R.S.
Some, deep Freemasons, join the silent race
Worthy to fill Pythagoras' place.

He ridiculed the methods by which those men sought to advance science, such as dissecting literary works, collecting curios, and investigating what he considered trifles. He may seem unduly severe in this, but he was attacking the wiseacres, the pedants, the "dunces " of his time. " Some " of them, not many, he says, shone with the lustre which membership in the Royal Society conferred; some, too, were Freemasons well versed in their Craft, but they were pompous and pretentious; he therefore castigates them as they deserved.

But his words:

Some, deep Freemasons . .
Worthy to fill Pythagoras' place,

are highly suggestive. For we have to recollect that Alexander Pope was a Brother, as already remarked, having been initiated some twenty years before. His Masonry does not blind him to the faults of his fellows; and he cannot in fairness spare the sophists, the dilettanti, who imagined themselves so very clever, who wrote F.R.S. after their names, and in "some " instances might even be fellow-Masons. His criticism does, indeed, give matter for reflection.

It implies that in those days the Craft stood, not merely for a new-fangled scheme of symbolism, but for some sort of occult lore comparable to that which had made Pythagoras famous. Among the men he attacks there were Masons "of the most distinguished sort," who made themselves ridiculous by imagining themselves as good as their reputed Master, Pythagoras himself. But this is by no means an attack on the Craft. Such men might be found in Masonic circles even now; we have met them.

To appreciate this view, we should recollect that in the period separating Pope from Milton, in the seventeenth century, the Rosicrucians, having discovered that the Freemasons possessed some sort of occult lore, and employed some mystic symbols, endeavoured to acquire them for their own ends, by being initiated into the Fraternity. It was never questioned that some of those symbols had been used by Pythagoras, and that as a matter of fact our Ritual, and all our old Charges, claimed Pythagoras as a Brother. One notable example of that class of men was Elias Ashmole, the great virtuoso, who succeeded in being initiated in 1646.

Pope's idea, therefore, would seem to be that the influence of these Rosicrucians had not been at all good, because they misrepresented, if they did not misuse, Freemasonry.

This reading of Masonic history may be confirmed by recalling another fact. Some years before Ashmole's initiation, that is, in 1638, Henry Adamson published an account of Perth, and there we find this highly significant couplet:

For we are Brethren of the Rosie Cross,
We have the Mason Word and Second Sight.

The Rosicrucians had come into possession of "the Mason Word," that is to say, the same Word with which the newly raised M.M. of to-day is entrusted. Bro. Waite in his *Encyclopaedia* says that we do not know what the Word was. But we should remember how tenaciously the Antients and Moderns disputed the correct way of pronouncing the M.M.'s Word, and how at the time of the Union they finally agreed to pass on both alternative readings of it to the Candidates. That controversy takes us back to the early days of the Grand Lodge of 1717, when it was inconceivable that the Mason's Word could have

been changed. The fact that the two sections of Masons disputed over such a thing and that they were nevertheless substantially agreed (*for they did not advocate two different words, but two variants of the self-same Word*) compels us to conclude that the word in question was the same as has been handed down to us, "M . . . n or M . . . a."

Moreover, we have the statement made in 1678 by the Rev. George Hickes, that the Mason's Word had been derived from the age of K.S., if not from that of the Tower of Babel. At the time it was commonly believed that the original tongue of the human race had been Hebrew, and therefore that statement implies clearly that the Mason's Word was Hebrew. But having been transmitted orally from generation to generation by people who did not know that language - in many cases illiterate people, - it had been slightly altered, and both the pronunciation and the proper spelling were uncertain; the meaning, however, was correctly given, and a little modification of the Word would have put it right.

We know what the Word is supposed to mean; but the Rosicrucians who had come

into the Order may have had some fanciful interpretation of their own; possibly they took it as embodying some mysterious formula relating to " the triumph over old age and the grave " which they thought could be achieved by their arts.

OUR CLAIM TO PENETRATION

But why should " the Mason Word " be mentioned in the above quotation in conjunction with " Second Sight " ? This phrase does not mean clairvoyance as now understood, but is presumably the skill of seeing objects that are invisible to other people. The ancients believed that some persons had this gift; and the ancient Gauls spoke of it as "shadow sight " (*taischitaraugh*).

Possibly some Rosicrucians may have pretended to possess this power literally, but our Ancient Brethren never did. The only claim which the Masons ever preferred (*and which we still maintain*) is that they were able to discern and interpret those things that for ages have been "veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols" amongst us. They are "veiled"

indeed, screened, heled, and concealed; the world at large is puzzled, but we can see their meaning.

The words of the W.M. to the newly raised concerning " darkness visible," therefore, are intended as a caution. They are a paradox, and, like every paradox, they are easily misunderstood, because what is said clashes with our experience or involves a contradiction in terms.

The claim which has been made before to full illumination resolves itself to this: that as Craftsmen we enjoy the freedom of the entire field of human culture, which we conceive as comprising all the *Liberal Arts and Sciences* (a phrase which originated with the Schoolmen in the Middle Ages), these being in effect so many avenues of learning. They were said to be seven, and the number harmonises with that of the symbolic lights just considered; they enable the Mason to form his individual convictions.

Ordinarily, the word " darkness " is taken to involve the complete exclusion of light, and we usually fail to realise that it is a relative term, there being degrees of darkness, as there are of light. Indeed, absolute darkness in both the

physical and intellectual sense is something of which we have no experience, and which we cannot conceive except in non-existence. For even in a room which would be called "quite dark," there is enough light to reproduce the image of things on sensitised plates, provided that sufficient time is allowed for this operation. Hence, whenever someone remarks that it is "dark," we are to understand that there has been a reduction or diminution of light.

Light, much light, may be obtained under the guidance of the Craft; but however much we may benefit thereby, human life will remain a mystery. The riddle of existence will one day be solved, but it will not be here, for we mortals are destined to pass our days in the condition of "darkness visible," in a sort of intellectual twilight.

At present we are enjoying the benefit of the mystic light which has been vouchsafed to us, and all that we can say of it is that it does not spring from ourselves but from an external source; it does not come as an instantaneous flash, but by degrees; it does not break out as a sudden inspiration, but is conditioned on assiduous study of the things symbolised in

nature and mirrored in our personal experience; we do not get it by direct intuition, but as the result of much patient observation, prolonged research, and laborious analysis.

Realising this, then, we should be cautious in estimating our attainments; we should not exaggerate our merit; we should not indulge in false and senseless self-conceit; we should not be carried off our feet by presumption, rash dogmatism, or foolish self-assertion. A sense of proportion is needed at every stage of our intellectual development.

The Paradox of the Third Degree, therefore, is designed to be a warning to our own heart, that while we claim to be the heirs of all that is best in the world, while we paint everything blue, while we appropriate all the accumulated learning of the ages, we should not stultify ourselves with inordinate pride or pose as vain wizards before the world. And if this paradox be somewhat humiliating, let us remember that it is also a measure of prudence, intended to make us cautious, diligent, and humble learners, that thereby we may observe a modest and correct demeanour as we work beside other seekers after truth.

The poet Charles Tupper has beautifully

expressed what our Masonic Art teaches us,
in these words:

All things being are in mystery, we expound
mysteries by mysteries,
And yet the secret of them all is in one simple
grandeur;

Oh Mysteries, ye all are one, the mind of an
inexplicable Architect
Dwelleth alike in each, quickening and moving
in them all.

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