

THE MASTER'S BOOK

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 -- PREPARING TO BE MASTER

PROCEEDINGS

BOOK OF MASONIC LAW

RITUAL

FRIENDS

CHAPTER 2 -- POWERS OF A MASTER

DEBATE

APPEAL

COMMITTEES

MINUTES

VISITS

CHAPTER 3 -- DUTIES OF A MASTER

LODGE NOTICES

FINANCE

PLANS

SPEECHES

HARMONY

PROMPTNESS

DEGREES

BROTHERLY LOVE

THE SICK

ATTENDANCE

THE ABSENT

CHARITY

FUNERALS

IN GENERAL

CHAPTER 4 -- MASONIC LAW FOR A MASTER

WRITTEN LAW

ENFORCEMENT

UNIVERSALITY

LANDMARKS

LAW MAKING

MASTERS SHOULD KNOW

CHAPTER 5 --THE ART OF PRESIDING

MOTIONS OUT OF ORDER

KEEP COOL

GAVEL

A "GOOD SPORT"

SNAP AND SPEED

LET THEM TALK

WELCOMES

RESPECT

SMILE

NERVOUS?

CHAPTER 6 --ENTERTAINMENT AND ATTENDANCE

DIFFERENT

EXTRA LODGE ACTIVITIES

COMMITTEE

A SURPRISE MEETING

A MASONIC EXPERIENCE MEETING

A LODGE DEBATE

PAST MASTERS NIGHT

"TELL US WHAT YOU THINK"

THE QUESTION BOX

THE SONGS OF MASONRY

CLUB

RITUAL

DISPATCH

EDUCATION

BIRTHDAYS

CURIOSITY

DISSECTING A DEGREE

"YOU MUST – YOU MUST NOT!"

CONTESTS

CLIMAX

BE DIFFERENT

CHAPTER 7 -- "SET THE CRAFT TO LABOR"

ACTIVITIES

PAY WAGES

JOURNEYS

SERVICE

FOR LOVE

CHAPTER 8 -- SECRETARY, WARDENS, PAST MASTERS

MINUTES

WHO RUNS IT?

WARDENS

TRIPARTITE

MEANING

DUTIES

USE THEM

WHAT KIND OF MASTERS WILL THEY MAKE?

[PAST MASTERS](#)

[GRAND LODGE](#)

[RIGHT TO PRESIDE](#)

[RIGHT TO INSTALL](#)

[RIGHT TO ELECTION](#)

[JEWEL](#)

["THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE"](#)

[FLEAS](#)

[A PAST MASTER SPEAKS](#)

[CHAPTER 9 -- LODGE FINANCES](#)

[BUDGET](#)

[CHARITY FUNDS](#)

[GRAND LODGE](#)

[TEMPLES](#)

[DUES](#)

[COLLECTION](#)

[RAISING DUES](#)

[HINTS](#)

[PLANS](#)

[CHAPTER 10 -- THE IDEAL](#)

CHAPTER 1 -- PREPARING TO BE MASTER

The greatest honour comes to any brother with his elevation to the Oriental Chair of a Masonic Lodge. Few Wardens but look forward with mingled pleasure and anxiety to that day when in their hands will be placed the gavel of authority. He who early prepares to be a Master in more than name only arrives in the seat of authority with some confidence.

The wise Warden does not wait until elected Master to become familiar with the official books of his jurisdiction; the Proceedings of his Grand Lodge; the book of Masonic law – it has many names, such as Code, Methodical Digest, Ahiman Rezon, Constitution and By-laws, etc.; the Manual in which is printed all that may lawfully be put in type of the ritual and Ceremonies of the degrees, and most especially the by-laws of his own Lodge.

PROCEEDINGS

A Master is not only leader of his Lodge, but a member of Grand Lodge, in which august body he represents his Lodge. Familiarity with the Grand Lodge procedure, questions pending, legislation enacted, etc., gives him a perspective and enables him to act with intelligence and understanding. In the Proceedings of most (not all) Grand Lodges is the report of the Committee on Foreign Correspondence, under which apparently misleading title an official reviewer summarizes the activities of other Grand Lodges. The Master who realizes that he is not only an important cog in his own Masonic machine, but an integral part of a world-wide Freemasonry, early grasps the real importance and responsibilities of his position. Study of the Proceedings gives a perspective on the activities of Grand Lodge, with special reference to its charity, whether exercised in Masonic Home, Orphanage, Hospital, Foundation, outside relief or other form.

BOOK OF MASONIC LAW

To be Master of a Lodge is quite different from being president of a club or society. The Master is called upon to decide questions of law and practice which he cannot leave to his brethren; the honour of leadership carries also the responsibility. That his decisions be wise and just, and of such a character as will draw commendation, not condemnation, from Grand Master or District Deputy, he must know the laws of his Jurisdiction, his own powers and limitations. He can obtain this knowledge only from a faithful study of the book of Masonic law.

RITUAL

In some Jurisdictions only the Master may confer the Master Mason's Degree; in many he may empower either his officers, a Past Master, or a well qualified brother to fill the East during the ceremonies of the three degrees. Never will the Master get the best cooperation in putting on a degree if he himself cannot "do the work." The Master who knows his ritual can lead; he who will not – or cannot – "learn the work" is in a poor position to criticize faulty performances by others. Hence, an early study is important.

The degrees of Freemasonry are among the beautiful ceremonies of the world. They should be inspiring, uplifting, heartening, and lovely to hear. If they fall short of perfection the Master is responsible – aye, even if he have only inefficient helpers, his is the responsibility.

Both Lodge and Master owe service to those elected to receive the degrees. The elected candidate has signed his petition, answered the questions, paid his fees, stood his investigation, come when called, and submitted to proper preparation. Now his brethren-to-be are so to induct him into the mysteries that he may desire with all his heart to become "a good and faithful brother among us." He is entitled to a degree which will impress him; he has a right to hear the grand old words so spoken that they will make a deep and lasting impression on his mind. What he sees and hears should convince him of the age, the dignity, the importance, the solemnity of the Ancient Craft.

All this is a Master's work. The wise Warden lets no time go by before preparing himself for those busy days ahead, and regards dignified degrees, well put on, as important both to Lodge and candidates.

FRIENDS

Few assets are more valuable to a Master than friends. In Freemasonry, as in the profane world, the art of making friends is encompassed in one phrase: "to have friends we must be friendly." Millions of men are so at heart; cold of exterior from no better cause than shyness. Many a man wants to extend his hand, wishes to say a cheery word of greeting, desires with all his heart to be "one of the fellows" ... and does not know how.

Yet it is so simple! For the root of personal shyness is fear of laughter – and laughter, like thunder, has yet to hurt anything living! The shy brother need only assure himself: "I will not be afraid of something which cannot hurt me – I will not think my brethren are more critical of me than I am of them – I will not waste time and strength wanting and not doing, when to say a cheery word and put out my hand needs but a muscular effort!"

Friendliness begets friendliness. The brother who is cordial will find hands springing out to meet his; will see smiles begetting smiles: will learn that genuine interest in a brother produces real interest in him. The Warden who leaves the West for the East interested enough to know all regular attendants by name will enter his year of responsibility with an asset than which there is no greater for the leader of a Lodge.

CHAPTER 2 -- POWERS OF A MASTER

The Master of a Masonic Lodge has more power than the presiding officer of any secular body. The "rules of order" under which business is conducted in other assemblies apply only partially in a Lodge. The by-laws of a profane organization may enclose a president or chairman as with stone walls, fetter him as with chains; in a Masonic Lodge no by-law which restricts the inherent powers of a Master can be passed, or, if passed, will be sustained by Grand Master or Grand Lodge.

A railroad engine is a potent tool for wise use, but who would ride in a train pulled by a locomotive at the throttle of which was a ten-year-old child. A book of matches may kindle the fire which cooks our food or destroys a forest. A thirty-eight calibre revolver may defend one's country or commit a murder. Power is constructive only when used with knowledge. The Master who does not know his powers cannot use them intelligently. The Master who knows what he may and may not lawfully do will lead with wisdom, discretion and success.

Laws differ in the forty-nine Grand Jurisdictions of continental United States, but certain powers of a Master are universally acknowledged. The Master is responsible only to the Grand Master, the Grand Lodge (or the Deputy of the Grand Master) for his acts; consequently he must have full authority and, within limits, be the ruler of his Lodge. But while Grand Masters uphold Masters in all lawful exercise of authority, they are quick to frown upon arbitrary rulings.

With one or two exceptions, only the Master may call special communications of his Lodge. In one or two Jurisdictions the Lodge has power to summons the whole membership, but these but prove the rule.

No one but the Master may preside over his Lodge, in his presence (except the Grand Master or his Deputy) unless by his order.

DEBATE

Masters have full control of debate. A Master may propose a motion, second it, put it, close discussion, refuse to put a motion, at his pleasure ... but let him think carefully before refusing to put any motion. If the proposer of the motion which the Master refuses to put lays the matter before the Grand Master, the Master must have a good reason or may be convicted of arbitrary use of his power and disciplined.

During the war an enthusiastic Lodge member moved that the Lodge sell all its assets and invest in liberty Bonds. The Master refused to put the motion. The brother was incensed and complained to the Grand Master. The Master's reason, that such a drastic performance should have the advice of the Finance Committee before Lodge action, the Grand Master thought excellent. In another Lodge a motion to spend a certain sum for charitable relief was made. The Master refused to put the motion. On complaint being made, he stated that he needed the money for entertainment! The Grand Master reprimanded him severely for arbitrary refusal to permit the Lodge to spend its own money on its own Masonic business. Good reasons for refusing to put a motion may be: that there is not time enough to discuss it, when a degree is scheduled with candidate duly notified and in waiting; that the motion

will disturb the peace and harmony of the Lodge; that the matter requires the study of a committee before being brought before the Lodge, etc.

APPEAL

No appeal lies from a Master's decision, either to the Lodge, to a committee, or to any Past Master. Some Masters are weak, and afraid they cannot sustain an unpopular ruling. These have been known to allow some brother to "appeal to the Lodge" and have then abided by what the Lodge decided.

This is subversive of the dignity of the Master's station. It is not John Smith in the Chair who is thus over-ruled – it is the Master. He is a good Master who insists on all respect being paid the dignity of the office. The brother with the gavel is not only John Smith, but Worshipful (¹) Master. To permit interference with the ancient usages and customs which surround the Master's Chair decreases reverence for tradition.

No motion to "lay on the table," "to postpone, to adjourn," "to close"; for "unanimous consent for a brother to speak,"

for "the previous question" should ever be entertained, much less put. It is only for the Master to say whether this subject is to be discussed now or later. The Lodge is opened and closed at his pleasure (except that he must not do business at a Stated Communication at an hour earlier than that stated in the by-laws; some by-laws in some Jurisdictions provide a stated time for a Stated Communication to be opened; in such the Master should not open before that specified time).

It is for the Master to say who may and who may not speak. He can be responsible for the "peace and harmony" of his Lodge only by controlling its deliberations. But he is also responsible for the Masonic fairness, charity, courtesy and reasonableness of his actions; while his brethren may not appeal to the Lodge for redress for any wrong, real or fancied, they may appeal to Grand Lodge, Grand Master or District Deputy Grand Master. Where an appeal is to be made depends on the law in the particular Grand Jurisdiction; consult the book of Masonic law to ascertain.

The appeal, if sustained, may have serious consequences.

COMMITTEES

The Master has the sole right of appointing committees. The Lodge may refer a matter to a committee, but may not name its personnel. Were it otherwise the Lodge might control the Master, not the Master the Lodge. Too much care can hardly be exercised in appointing the personnel of committees and the minor officers. The sapling of today is the tree of tomorrow; the Master whose appointments are made with care, forethought and particular reference to the fitness, by training and education, of certain brethren for certain positions, will see his appointees grow to greater and straighter stature in the years to come.

The Master fills all vacant offices by appointment; if the Senior Warden is absent, the Junior Warden does not, of inherent right, assume the West. The Master sends him there, or puts another brother or Past Master there, at his pleasure. But if the Master is absent, the

1 "Worchyp," old English for "greatly respect."

Senior Warden does, by inherent power, occupy the East for that period; the Junior Warden, in the absence of both Master and Senior Warden.

MINUTES

The Master may not alter the minutes nor may he spend Lodge money without consent of the Lodge. (Note: many Lodges provide a limit in emergency relief to which the Master may go without authority of the Lodge.) The Master may refuse to permit minutes which he believes contain improper-to-be written material to be confirmed; if any brother insists, it is for Grand Master or District Deputy to decide. The Master may decline to put the motion to confirm minutes which he deems incomplete, but he cannot change the account of facts so that they state that which is not so.

VISITS

The Master controls who may enter and who may leave the Lodge. There is a vast difference here between power and right. The Master has the power to refuse to open the door to any one – member or visitor (except the Grand Master or his Deputy). But he must have excellent reasons or subject himself to discipline. How far the "right of visitation" extends is still a moot point. Here the local law upon the subject will probably be explicit. In some Jurisdictions the visitor must be admitted (supposing him to be vouched for or passing a proper examination) unless some member objects; in others the matter is left wholly to the Master. The Master would run a risk of complaint should he admit a visitor with whom some member objected to sit.

The Master who is conciliatory, smiling, friendly and peaceable; who refuses to take offence; who does not exercise his great power unless he must; who rules justly, governing with brotherly love, and who believes that the dignity of his office is best upheld by that "harmony" which is the "strength and support of all well regulated institutions" is wise and successful.

CHAPTER 3 -- DUTIES OF A MASTER

Numerous and diversified, a catalogue might easily be a fear-inspiring document! But with determination to do, and interest in accomplishment, difficulties smooth themselves away and the multiplicity of duties becomes a pleasant experience.

The duties of a Master may be summarized as: duty to the Lodge, duty to the members (including ill, absent and charity cases) and duty to the dead.

The Master's first duty to his Lodge is to lead it to success and prosperity. This requires a combination of diplomat, financier, adviser, councillor, friend, critic – and executive!

Some Masters consider scheduling the work, getting out a monthly notice, and conducting the meetings, as "success." But these are but the skeleton; to clothe such a program with flesh the Master must provide entertainment, instruction, inspiration; his monthly notice should be of sufficient interest to attract attention and draw attendance. Successful presiding requires far more than merely answering salutes and putting motions (see Chapter 5).

LODGE NOTICES

Variously called "Monthly Trestleboard," "Lodge Notice," "Lodge Bulletin," etc., the Craft too often suffers under a plague of dull reading sent out monthly by Masters who then wonder why attendance is small. Certain routine matters must, of course, be in all Lodge notices, but to fill up the balance with alleged humour, pointless personal news and trite platitudes is to consign the Lodge notice to the waste basket in advance. Make them interesting, make them snappy, make them say something, and they will be read.

FINANCE

Careful consideration of, and attention to, Lodge finance is a duty too important to discuss with general statements; some thoughts on financial ways and means are developed in Chapter 9.

PLANS

Masonic entertainment, as opposed to singing, music, vaudeville, motion pictures, lectures on non-Masonic topics, pack the Lodge room whenever fairly tried. The Master must select the entertainment which pleases his Lodge and plan accordingly, or appoint a capable chairman of an entertainment committee to do it for him. Interesting Lodge meetings do not "just happen." Success follows the age-old instruction to Masters – "first program your work; then work your program." Plans for six months ahead (with sufficient elasticity to permit changes for unexpectedly and happily necessary degree work) are wise. To know that on the first meeting in the year a contest is to be held; on the third, a debate; on the fifth, a Masonic spelling match, will cause many a member to plan to attend who otherwise would remain comfortably at home with the evening paper.

It should be emphasized that the duty of a Master is first to the members of his Lodge; the possibility of much "work" on many candidates should be a secondary consideration.

SPEECHES

Few Lodges successfully can compete with picture shows, vaudeville theatres, concert halls or restaurants. A member can see a better program or buy a better meal than his Lodge usually provides. The Master who depends only on amateur or second rate professional, talent for "entertainment" need not wonder why he has empty benches.

One thing and only one thing a Masonic Lodge can give its members which they can get nowhere else in the world.

That one thing is Masonry.

Give the brethren plenty of Masonry and they won't want expensive and hard-to-get secular entertainment.

No, Worshipful Sir, the author does not – Oh, most emphatically he does not! – mean dry-as-dust addresses.

Some speakers can fill a hall to suffocation, electrify an audience, make the brethren gasp with the beauty, humour, and interest of their talks on Masonry. But how many such has the average Master on his staff? Too many "Masonic speeches" are mere words; few men want to be preached at in Lodge. If a speaker has history, law, symbolism, romance, humour, oddities of Masonry at command – yes. If all he has is an exhortation to practice brotherly love, better not use him.

But there is a way to sugar-coat Masonic instruction; to combine Masonry and human interest (see Chapter 7). The Master who provides such "good and wholesome instruction" need never complain of non-attendance.

HARMONY

A Master's paramount duty is to preserve peace and harmony, a matter on which no specific instructions can be given. The majority of Lodges are harmonious, without cliques or factions. Some are sharply divided; in these, criticism is often more fault-finding than constructive. Plain sailing usually follows a sincere effort to steer a middle course. The occupant of the East is Master of the whole Lodge, not just of the group with which his sympathies happen to lie. Ingrained in Americans is a love of justice and fair play. The Master whose rule is just and fair, whether it favours his own convictions or the opponents of his ideas, will gain respect and support even from those who do not agree with him.

No Master can afford a temper, and should not expect courtesy or consideration from his brethren if he does not show both from the East. Luckily, few men attain the East without long experience which generates appreciation of the honour, and creates a desire to rule justly, fairly, impartially, courteously. The Master's great power increases with lack of asserting. The mailed fist is no less potent that it wears a velvet glove.

Alas, at times the velvet glove must come off. For the sake of the Lodge, a Master should not permit his acts to be questioned, his rulings flouted, his authority set at naught. When

necessary, authority should be used fearlessly and firmly. The Grand Lodge is behind and will support such a Master. As a matter of course, a Master will avoid conflicts if it can be done with dignity; if radicals in Lodge must be controlled, Masonic control will be gentlemanly but ironlike in firmness.

PROMPTNESS

A Master's duties to his members – including candidates – are, specifically: to open on time, to plan interesting meetings, to provide dignified degree work, to preserve order and harmony, to promote brotherly love.

Brethren who know the gavel will fall at the specified hour soon get the habit of arriving on time. Those who are morally certain the Master will be late in opening are themselves late. An interested Master will arrive early enough to encourage the Tyler, perhaps to help him arrange the room; to greet by name and handshake every brother.

Similarly, a Lodge meeting should close early, except when a "large evening" of unusual entertainment value is planned. An early closing means much to many brethren who wish to go home to read or retire; those who wish to stay can have an hour of fellow ship after the final gavel falls as well as before.

Of such small details is success composed!

DEGREES

Masters of Lodges which pride themselves on beautiful degree work have an easy time. Many Lodges struggle with but indifferent success to attain that beauty, serenity, perfect coordination which makes a degree ideal.

But no Lodge need be without dignity in its work. Many brethren possess no sense of drama; some workers can but speak their parts like parrots. The Master who can inspire his workers with an ideal, so that they are willing to rehearse; who is willing to step out of the picture whenever he can to let some able Past Master shine in the work he can do best; who is wise enough to intrigue into minor parts some brethren from the benches; he can stage a degree which, whatever it may lack in beauty, will at least be dignified and smooth running. This he owes not only to his members, but to his candidates. Whether he is taking part, or watching his fellow officers do the work, no Master worthy the name will permit levity or talking while a degree is being put on.

No ceremony of any kind can be well done without rehearsals. The wise Master calls rehearsals for degrees and makes them so interesting his officers like them. But the responsibility is the Master's; it is not advisable to ask officers if they "want to" rehearse or "will rehearse" but to say "There will be a rehearsal" and expect officers to come. Most officers will be as proud of the results as most Masters.

BROTHERLY LOVE

How does a Master promote brotherly love? A question impossible to answer except in general terms. But much may be done by a "glad hand" committee of members or Past

Masters. The enthusiastic Master who wants happy meetings, and call inspire a committee with the same feeling, will soon see a difference in the smiles of the brethren. We are simple-minded animals, we humans; it does not take much to please us ! We respond easily to suggestion, and Masons especially are usually easy to please. Give us a cordial word of greeting; see that we know by name the brother sitting next us; ask us to sit with a visitor to play host to him; suggest that we say a word to old Dr. Brown, who is so deaf he can't even hear himself talk, but who has been in that same seat since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, and we respond as men always do respond to leadership.

One of the delightful surprises – and they are many – which the East provides, is the quick response of brethren to any attempt to make them feel at home, or secure their help to make others enjoy their evening.

Brotherly love is not a tangible commodity. We cannot touch it or weigh it, smell it or taste it. Yet it is a reality; it can be created, it can be fostered, it can be made a dynamic power. The Master who has it for his Lodge and his brethren will find that Lodge and brethren give it back to him. The Master too worried over the cares of his office to express friendliness need never wonder why his Lodge seems so cold to his efforts.

As has before been written, to have friends we must be friendly.

THE SICK

Problems presented by the ill, the absentees, the charity cases, are so different in city and small town Lodges that only the fundamentals, the same for all Lodges, may here be considered.

Freemasonry has a standing in the community, and the general public respects it. Respect and standing are predicated largely on the few points of contact which the profane world has with Freemasonry. One of these is the attention given to the ill.

What is too often properly called the "Sick Committee" – which should be a healthy Committee for the Sick – is frequently the reliance of a Master who thinks thus to eliminate from his busy days a duty not always pleasant. As such committees do not always function, the Master is well advised who insists on weekly reports.

At the end of the year he will be better satisfied if he has personally called on every brother reported ill. This is not always possible in a big city and a Lodge with a membership in four figures; it is possible in most Lodges. Only the Master who has devoted his spare Saturday afternoons, Sundays, and many evenings to calling on the ill knows how it redounds to the credit of his Lodge. The sometimes pitiful surprise, the invariable pleasure, and the often lasting joy given by an unexpected fraternal visit are Master's Wages, pressed down and running over. The Master who has the fraternal care of his ill heavily upon his mind and often practiced will join the ranks of Past Masters well beloved.

One tried and proved plan is to call for volunteers for the Committee for the Sick, with the assurance that no member need make more than one visit per month. If the Master has twelve committee members, and four brethren ill, to each committee member he assigns a sick brother, with instructions to call at two day intervals. If he also calls, the ill brother

receives four visits in eight days. Such diversifying imposes a burden on no one, yet assures the Lodge that the ill are properly comforted.

ATTENDANCE

A certain Master appointed six young and enthusiastic members as a Committee on Attendance. The Master divided the Lodge roster into six parts (this Lodge has a membership of three hundred, two hundred and forty nine of whom are resident), crossing off the regular attendants. He instructed his committee to call up, go to see, or write a letter to, every man on his list, advising of the next Lodge function, and asking assistance.

He had difficulty in seating the crowd which responded.

THE ABSENT

The Master of a large Lodge (1200), with some three hundred brethren out of town, made it his business to write four letters during the year to every absent brother. These letters were individually typed, and all personally signed (this Master was a work horse!). The response to the first letter was interesting, to the second encouraging, to the third enthusiastic and to the fourth amazing. Many brethren said they had never heard from a Master before. Half a dozen had been considering demitting to join Lodges in their then locations, but changed their minds because of the touch with the Mother Lodge. Absent members wrote letters of greeting, of homesickness, of appreciation; one brother sent a beautiful gavel as a token of thanks for the brotherly attention. All, apparently, were highly gratified that the Master had remembered them. The Master quoted briefly from many letters in his Lodge Bulletins, that all might recall the absent. One unexpected result of this publication was the bringing together in large cities of several brethren of this Lodge, who did not know any fellow Lodge members were in the same municipality.

CHARITY

Every Lodge is – and should be – a law unto itself in its methods of charity and relief. Some have special charity funds; others have a Committee on Relief; others leave such cases in the hands of the Master; still others want to act in stated meetings on every case. The essential thing from the Masonic standpoint is speed. No charity call should be put off; if a Lodge has "called off" for the hot months (common practice in many Jurisdictions) it is obvious that a widow who has lost her job and needs food cannot wait for the Lodge to decide whether to spend five or ten dollars for flour and eggs! The Master may decide or call a special communication to consider the case. Whatever he does should be done as soon as possible.

Freemasonry is NOT a relief society, and no brother, or his dependents, is promised charity by the lodge. But Masons are charitable, and he belongs to a poor Lodge indeed who goes hungry or shelterless while his Lodge is in funds. Here, as in the profane world, "he gives twice who gives quickly."

It is not here presumed to give advice to Lodges; the statement which follows is merely the result of nation-wide experience. Lodges which loan money to their members usually get

in difficulties. Relief as an outright appropriation rather than a loan is in the end far more satisfactory to a Lodge. A generously inclined Lodge, which might be willing to "loan" a brother a hundred dollars, may hesitate to "give" more than twenty-five. Many Grand Lodges frown decidedly on a Lodge acting as a private bank.

Whatever the attitude of Grand Lodge, the Master's position will be sound if he personally investigates relief calls, and then so guides Lodge action that the Lodge does not suffer, while the brother receives the aid he needs.

In almost every Lodge is to be found the overly sympathetic brother who sees only the immediate present. With mistaken but sincere zeal he wants to spend all Lodge funds on relief. He thinks it "wasteful" to spend Lodge money on a "big feed" or "an entertainment" when "hungry mouths need food and the widowed and the fatherless have no homes." Such pathetic appeals not infrequently move other brethren to action which saner counsels would prevent.

A Lodge is not held together with steel bands, but by the silken ties of brotherhood, woven of interest, friendliness, good times, wholesome fraternal intercourse. A Lodge which spends all its money on charity and none on fraternal meetings will soon have no money to spend on anything. During the war battleships needed oil. Had the railroads given all their oil to the navy, the trains which had to carry the oil to sea ports could not have moved. The same principle applies here; relief must be proportioned to treasury, and a fair allocation made to all legitimate Lodge expenses.

FUNERALS

Two important public contacts with the Fraternity are at cornerstone layings and funerals. Many a brother has never seen a cornerstone laying, but to all Lodges and to all brethren comes at times the sad duty of laying away the mortal remains of a brother of the Mystic Tie, under the Sprig of Acacia of immortal hope.

It is important to the family that the Master conduct an inspiring service; because of the many who thus see Freemasonry on public view, it is of interest to Lodge and Master that the ceremonies be dignified.

As words read from a book are never so impressive as those spoken from the heart, the Master who takes the small trouble to learn the funeral services "by heart" just as he learns the work of a degree, embraces an opportunity to help the families of his departed brethren, and impress the general public with the solemnity of Masonic ideals.

If the ceremony has not been committed to memory it will be easier performed if it is read and reread, so that in public there is no hesitation over a difficult word, no misplaced emphasis, no halting delivery.

In Lodges so fortunate as to have little or no calls for funerals, it is wise to rehearse the funeral exercises at least once, preferably early in the year; the call may come at any time. The dignity and beauty of Masonry, in one of its few points of public contact, is the better exemplified after such preparation.

It is one of the privileges of a Master Mason to be laid to rest by his brethren. To perform this last duty well is to be brotherly; to offer what small comfort may come from a noble service, nobly rendered, is to succeed in making brotherhood manifest.

IN GENERAL

Important duties of a Master, in addition to these specified, include:

To obey, enforce, defend, the Ancient Landmarks, the laws, rules, edicts of Grand Lodge and Grand Master, and the by-laws of his Lodge.

To enforce and defend the prerogatives that belong to his office; never to permit any brother to encroach upon these, no matter what feeling of personal modesty may dictate to the contrary. The Master has a duty to those who follow him to hand down the office with its dignity and its rights, its privileges and its responsibilities, unchanged.

To preserve order in his Lodge at all times; it is disagreeable to call a brother to order, but it is unthinkable that any brother be allowed to interfere with the solemnities of a degree.

To see that his officers learn, and perform, their work in a proper manner. The Master is responsible; it is the Master's part to demand and receive enthusiastic cooperation from his officers.

To train all his officers, and familiarize even the minor ones with Lodge affairs. A weekly meeting of all officers, at lunch or some officer's home in the evening, is a splendid way of getting opportunities to "talk things over." Where this is not practical, a half hour officers' meeting before or after a Lodge meeting is a means of providing unity of effort and ideals in conduct of Lodge affairs.

To preserve the secrecy of the ballot. This, not only that the statutory mandates be observed, but to lose no chance of impressing members with the importance of this bulwark of the Fraternity. In some Jurisdictions Lodges have a by-law regarding the secrecy of the ballot, which itself makes its reading mandatory after any unfavourable ballot. For the benefit of those in whose Lodges is no such by-law, one is quoted herewith:

"No one shall inspect the ballot of any petitioner for the degrees or for membership except the Master and Wardens. No member shall make known to another the manner in which he intends to cast or has cast his ballot. No member shall question another respecting the manner in which he intends to vote or has voted, and in case a petitioner is rejected, no member or visiting brother shall inquire into or by any means whatever attempt to discover who opposed his election, under penalty, if a member, of such punishment as the Lodge shall determine; if a visitor, of his never more being admitted to the Lodge. That none present may remain ignorant of this by-law, the Master shall cause it to be read immediately after the rejection of a petitioner."

CHAPTER 4 -- MASONIC LAW FOR A MASTER

It is the business of every Master to see that his Lodge abides by the laws, resolutions and edicts of his Grand Lodge, its own bylaws, and maintains and supports the Landmarks and "ancient usages and customs of the Fraternity."

WRITTEN LAW

The laws of Masonry, like the laws of nations, are both unwritten – the "common law" – and written. The written laws, based on the "General Regulations" and the "Old Charges," are the Constitution and by-laws of Grand Lodge, its resolutions and edicts, and Lodge by-laws. The Ancient Landmarks are written in some Jurisdictions; in others they are a part of the unwritten law.

In a foreign Jurisdiction a Mason is amenable to its laws as well as to those of his own, just as an American residing abroad is amenable to the laws of the nation in which he lives, while also expected to obey the laws of his own nation; for instance, an American residing abroad is not exempt from the United States income tax laws. Neither is a Mason from California exempt from the laws of the Grand Lodge of that state, merely because he happens to sojourn in Maine.

The "General Regulations" set forth in "Anderson's Constitutions of 1723" were adopted shortly after the formation in 1717 of the Mother Grand Lodge in England. The work was first published under date of 1723. Unquestionably it embodied the laws of Masonry as they were known to the members of the four old Lodges which formed the first Grand Lodge, and hence have the respectability of an antiquity much greater than their printed life of two hundred and twelve years.

In general, the "Old Charges" are concerned with the individual brother and his relations to his Lodge and his brethren; the "General Regulations," with the conduct of the Craft as a whole. The "General Regulations" permit their own alteration by Grand Lodge – the "Old Charges" do not.

ENFORCEMENT

Law in Masonry is so much more a matter of the heart than of the head, so much more concerned with setting forth conduct than in assessing penalties, that, thoroughly to comprehend it, a Master must be willing to revise his ideas of law as created by the enactments of legislatures.

Many civil laws are provided with measures of enforcement and penalties for infringement. Masonic law knows but four penalties: reprimand, definite suspension, indefinite suspension, and expulsion. These Masonic penalties for serious infractions of Masonic law may be ordered after a Masonic trial and a verdict of guilty, but mercy is much more a part of Masonic than of civil law. Infractions of Masonic law resulting in trial and punishment are rare, compared to the number of Masons, the vast majority of whom are so willing to obey the laws that "enforcement" is seldom required.

UNIVERSALITY

There is no universality in Masonic law in all Jurisdictions. Different latitudes, different characters of people, different ideas, have all left their marks upon our forty-nine Grand Lodges and their enactments. In the majority of essentials, they are one; in some particulars, they hold divergent views. A large majority of Grand Lodges in the United States adhere to the spirit of the "Old Charges," and – so far as modern conditions permit – to the sense of the "General Regulations."

It is, therefore, of real importance that a Master desiring to understand the laws by which his Lodge is governed, and the legal standards by which Grand Lodge measures its "laws, regulations and edicts," should read both the "Old Charges" and the "General Regulations of 1723." When he reaches the last (thirty-ninth) of the "General Regulations," he will read: "Every Annual Grand Lodge has an inherent Power and Authority to make new Regulations, or to alter these, for the real benefit of this Ancient Fraternity; provided always that the old LandMarks be carefully preserv'd," etc.

LANDMARKS

The "old landmarks" or the "Ancient Landmarks" as customarily called, are those foundations of the law of Masonry which are not subject to change. Had the Grand Lodge which first adopted these "General Regulations" formulated the "Ancient Landmarks" it would have saved much confusion in subsequent Grand Lodges. Apparently, however, the unwritten law of Masonry – the common law – was so well understood and practiced that it was then not thought necessary to codify it.

A great body of unwritten law which Masons customarily observe – "Ancient usages and customs" – are not specified in print. But the Landmarks have been reduced to print and made a part of the written law in many Jurisdictions. Mackey's list of twenty-five Landmarks has been adopted as official in many American Masonic Jurisdictions; others have condensed his list into a lesser number, still keeping all his points; a few Jurisdictions have a greater number of landmarks, including some not specified in Mackey's list. Those Jurisdictions which do not include a printed list of the Ancient Landmarks in their written law, usually follow and practice them as a part of their unwritten law. In a few instances, some of the Landmarks as listed by Mackey are not recognized as such; for instance, Mackey's Eighth Landmark, the inherent right of a Grand Master to "make Masons at sight" was specifically abrogated by an early Grand Lodge in California. In general, however, whether written or unwritten, Grand Lodges adhere to the spirit of all of Mackey's list.

The Landmarks may be regarded as bearing the same relation to Masonic law in general, including the "Old Charges" and the "General Regulations," as the provisions of Magna Charta bear to modern constitutional law. Just as Magna Charta specified some of the inherent rights of men which all laws of all governments should respect, so the Landmarks crystallize the inherent characteristics of Masonry – those fundamentals which make Freemasonry Freemasonry, and without which it would be something else.

LAW MAKING

With these as a foundation, the "Old Charges" for precedent, the first "General Regulations" for organic law, Grand Lodges write their Constitutions and by-laws and particular Lodges write their by-laws, which are usually subject to approval by Grand Lodge, a Grand Lodge Committee, or the Grand Master. Grand Masters. ad interim, formulate edicts and make decisions; often these are later incorporated by Grand Lodge into the written law of the Jurisdiction. All of these together, except where they conflict (as some of the early "General Regulations" necessarily conflict with later enactments made to supersede them) form the legal structure of Freemasonry, to understand which is a duty all Masters should be eager to perform.

Undeniably it is much looser than the similar body of law for the government of a nation. If a Master interpreted Masonic law wholly by the letter – as is necessarily the case in civil law – the government of his Lodge might often be as loose as Freemasonry's statutes. But as a matter of fact, the Craft is well governed. Its "ancient usages and customs" so soon win their way into the hearts of new brethren that there is a great resistance to any attempt to change the old order, unless necessity shows that it is inescapable. Masons much prefer to whisper good counsel to an erring brother, than to subject him to Masonic trial.

The Fraternity in this nation deals yearly with very large sums of money. The Craft erects and maintains numbers of expensive Temples, and Homes for the helpless Mason and his dependents. The Institution disburses a large amount of charity. The majority of its executives serve long and arduous apprenticeship. These very practical matters are all conducted in accord with a more or less loosely woven body of law – and yet the Fraternity as a whole can take great pride in the undoubted fact that it is orderly, well governed, almost completely law abiding, and very reluctant to make any more new laws for itself than are absolutely necessary.

He is a capable Master who recalls the answer to the classic question: "Where were you first prepared to be made a Mason?" and delves enthusiastically into the sources of Masonic law of his Jurisdiction, that he may rule wisely, decide justly and lead his Lodge with real authority.

MASTERS SHOULD KNOW

Specifically, the Master must familiarize himself with Grand Lodge Law upon applications, amendments, ballots and balloting, burial, candidates (residence, qualifications, physical perfection, etc.), charges, correspondence with other Lodges, degrees, dimits, dispensations (especially as to when they are necessary), dual membership (if authorized by Grand Lodge or not authorized by that body), dues, education, elections, examinations, finances, installation, jurisdiction, membership, minutes, motions (when not in order), objections to candidates, offenses, petitions, processions, proxies, rejection, returns of Lodges, special communications, summons, Sunday observances, trials, visits and visitors, votes and voting (when paper ballot required; when majority; when two thirds and when unanimous needed, etc.), waiver of jurisdiction.

Learning all this is not easy, but being a good Master is not supposed to be easy. To have been elected Master presupposes a willingness to labour, and here is labour and plenty of it.

Some Masters never look at the law, to their shame be it said! Grand Master after Grand Master reports decisions in his annual message, plaintively adding: "If Masters would only look up the law in the books provided, ninety percent of the questions need not have been asked."

Not to know the law may plunge the Lodge into real difficulties; knowing the law is like knowing the currents and the channels; the mariner who knows does not run his ship on the rocks.

While study of the book of Masonic law of his Jurisdiction will satisfy almost all need for knowledge, the Master who will read a good volume on Masonic law and practice will have a much clearer vision of his problems (see book list at end of this volume).

CHAPTER 5 --THE ART OF PRESIDING

"Preside – to sit in authority over others." (Standard Dictionary.)

The first principle of successful presiding is to use authority without any one being conscious of it!

The presiding officer elected by a secular organization is amenable to its dictates, and may be removed by the electorate; an appeal may be taken from his decision to the body over which he presides; generally he is supposed to conduct its meetings according to the rules of order (usually Robert's).

None of this is true for the Master of a Lodge. While elected, he is not controlled by the dictates of his Lodge; he can only be removed by Grand Master or Deputy under authority of the Grand Master; no appeal to the Lodge may be taken from his awards; "rules of order," while followed in general, are actually the Master's will and pleasure.

MOTIONS OUT OF ORDER

In any secular body a motion to adjourn, for the previous question, to lay on the table, to refer to a committee of the whole, are always in order; in a Masonic Lodge, never. Only the Master can decide these questions, and even a Master should never permit the Lodge to resolve itself into a committee of the whole, since a committee presupposes a Chairman, and a Chairman is the servant, not the ruler, of the Committee.

With the usual business of Lodge: confirming of minutes, accepting petitions, ordering a ballot, putting motions to expend, etc., Masters have little trouble. It is when difficult questions arise; hard fought battles to raise dues; revision of by-laws; putting standing resolutions on the books; accepting and confirming a report which reflects on some officer, etc., that the Master must temper justice with mercy, and authority with discretion.

KEEP COOL

That rule is usually wise which avoids heated debates. When debaters become so personal as to forget brotherly acts in the warmth of partisanship, a Master is justified in closing debate for the time, to act on the question when cooler moments arrive. A Master may always call from labour to refreshment, to permit "cooling off." If he does this with a smile, and some remark about his own need for a little reflection, he will offend no one.

GAVEL

The Masonic gavel in the hands of a Master is all powerful. Brethren must – and with practically no exceptions always do – obey its mandate. Grand Lodge frowns upon the brother who flouts the authority of Master; a brother not willing to cease speaking when "rapped down," or who insists on speaking when not recognized, is subject to Masonic trial and punishment. Because of the power of the gavel the good Master uses it sparingly; he will never "rap down" a brother if it is possible to avoid it. If a brother insists on doing

something illegal, the Master must, of course. But there is a vast difference in the way this is done by different Masters.

A certain Past Master was offended at the adverse report of a committee on investigation of a petitioner. Securing recognition he began: "I think we should disregard this Committee report unless we know why the committee reported unfavourably; I demand their reasons... "

The Master could have brought his gavel down with a bang and said: "Brother Past Master, you are out of order; a Past Master ought to know better!"

What he did do was bring his gavel down with enough decision to be heard, then said: "Brother Past Master, I regret exceedingly to rule out of order one of my illustrious and learned predecessors. But my understanding of Masonic law is that the reasons for reporting unfavorably by a committee are as sacred as the ballot. I am sorry – "

This seems almost too simple to chronicle, and yet it is just this difference between the hard and fast exercise of undoubted power which men are apt to resent, and the patient brotherly courtesy which Masons appreciate, which marks the successful from the disliked presiding officer.

A "GOOD SPORT"

A finance committee brought in a report which severely criticized a Master's administration, practically accusing him of running wild with the Lodge finances. Shocked but game, without a word of defence he put the question as to the disposition of the report. Brother after brother arose to discuss the report, to delete this and strike out that, to remove that offending phrase and to soften this one. After some ten minutes' debate, one brother, a loyal partisan of the Master, moved rejection of the whole report and appointment of a new finance committee. "I am sorry not to entertain that motion," the Master said with a smile. "I think the committee has rendered a fine report. I do not refer to their opinions, but to the hours of labour and the results in this excellent financial statement. I would be ungrateful indeed if I discharged this committee, or failed to express our appreciation of its efforts."

The Lodge applauded vigorously, and the result was the acceptance of the financial part of the report, with all criticism stricken out. Most important, the members of the committee, sincere and honourable gentlemen, felt that the Master had been just; thus any schism was avoided, the Master was protected, the Lodge satisfied and the committee content.

One wrong word, and a first class Lodge quarrel might have started!

SNAP AND SPEED

Some men think like a lightning flash and others think slowly. Even the slow thinker can speed up his business meetings by having previously written notes before him. The Masters who depend on their Secretaries to tell them what to do next are legion – what would some of us do without those hard-worked and loyal officials! But the Master who lets the Secretary do it all rarely has the respect or veneration of his members.

LET THEM TALK

A good Master remembers that he is Master of all the Lodge – not just those members with whom he is in sympathy. He knows that what is unimportant to him may be vital to some other brother. The member who insists on a bowling match or a golf game with a sister Lodge may feel it just as important as the Master's plans for a Masonic evening – let him talk about it! Of course, there is a limit to all things, and a scheduled degree should not be delayed so as to keep the few faithful up half the night, sending the rest home without seeing it. But, within reason, the Master who encourages his members to speak, who calls on Brothers Smith and Jones for a few remarks about some question, will have a more unified and interested Lodge than he who is anxious to shut off debate.

WELCOMES

They are as different in different Lodges as chalk is from cheese. Some Lodges extend no special welcomes; in others a word of greeting to all visitors is customary, especially those vouched for by a committee after an examination. In some Lodges the Past Masters are known only by their jewels; in others the Master calls on each by name, says a pleasant word and offers him the pretty courtesy of a "seat in the East." Now and then a Master is so anxious to be courteous that he offers the "seat in the East" to every visitor, which rather destroys its value as a mark of special consideration for those who have borne the heat and burden of the day. (The reader, of course, will take this with a grain of salt, remembering it is a Past Master who writes this book!)

One small error many a Master makes with only politeness in his mind; taking off his hat whenever he speaks, especially when he extends a welcome.

The "hat snatcher," however well-intentioned, displays a fundamental ignorance of the meaning of the Master's hat. It is not, strictly speaking, a hat at all, but a badge of office. There is no more reason to remove it when speaking than there is to take off apron or jewel. A Master need remove his hat on but four occasions; when speaking of, or to, Deity; when speaking of a death; when the Grand Master or his Deputy comes into the Lodge room wearing a hat, or when tendering the gavel of authority to another to preside.

RESPECT

It is emphatically the Master's business to insist upon profound respect for his office. Many a modest man refrains from correcting a wrong Lodge action in the mistaken idea that brethren will think he is "high hat." A brother may be plain John Smith, but when John Smith is Master, he should receive the respect which that office demands.

The brother who makes the wrong salute should be smilingly corrected – but he should not go unchallenged. The brother so careless of his manners as to salute with a cigar in his mouth may be privately admonished, but he should hear from the East. The brother who crosses between Altar and East should learn that brethren do not use the space between Master and Great lights for a passageway because, as the Great Lights are in the Master's charge, he is entitled to keep them always in view. The brother who speaks out of turn, the brother who tries to leave the room during a ballot, the brother who forgets a proper salute when addressing the East – all should receive some word of friendly counsel. Whether it be

done before the Lodge, or by sending a message by the Senior Deacon, is for the Master to decide. His brethren in the end will think the more of him if he passes his high station to his successor with its dignity unimpaired.

SMILE

Nothing succeeds in the East like a smile. Two Masters reigned in sister Lodges at the same time; one a brilliant lawyer, smart as a steel trap, wit like a rapier. . . and cold and austere as a lump of ice. The other Master was a railroad conductor; he had not one tenth the education wit or brilliance of the lawyer, but he knew the gentle art of making friends. Whatever pleasant he had to do, he did as if he liked to do it – with a smile. Whatever unpleasant was his task he did as if it pained him, but with a smile. The railroad brother's Lodge was crowded and the brilliant lawyer's all but empty, most of the year.

Smiles, alas, cannot be made to order. Set smiles, machine smiles, mere facial contortions won't work. Effective smiles come from a smiling heart. By all of which it may be seen that the art of presiding successfully has its foundation in sympathy and understanding, and its cornerstone in good nature and tolerance. With these a Master can hardly fail to be a beloved presiding officer.

NERVOUS?

It is only three steps from the Lodge floor to the Master's platform – but what high steps! The brother presiding for the first time in a Masonic Lodge who says he is not nervous is fooling himself, but no one else.

But there is no need to continue to be nervous. In a traffic jam the motorist can always stop – the worst he will get is a lot of horns tooted at him, and perhaps a "bawling out" by the policeman. In a parliamentary jam the Master can always stop to look up the law or precedent, or call to refreshment while he consults some one; he will hear neither horns nor bawlings out. Go slowly; consult the agenda; depend on the Secretary for help; use the gavel sparingly; smile . . . and presiding becomes a pleasure and a Master a joy to his brethren.

CHAPTER 6 --ENTERTAINMENT AND ATTENDANCE

The Master whose entertainment program is strictly Masonic has to send to the basement for extra chairs for most of his meetings.

Most Masters find the attendance problem vexatious; especially is this true in a Lodge in which the members have to some extent lost interest. But attendance, in itself, is of no value if nothing is given those who attend. Ten thousand Masons may stand before a world series score board, but receive no Masonic light. Attendance is not an end, but a means. Any Lodge room can be packed by advertising to exhibit a pair of Siamese twins, or a tattooed man from Borneo, but merely "packing them in" is of no Masonic value. It is when the Master packs his Lodge room with brethren eager for Masonic entertainment, which conceals instruction and information beneath a covering of pleasure and amusement, that attendance is important.

On the average, an attendance of ten percent of the membership is looked upon as a "good" turnout. Yet there are Lodges which have a much greater number at almost every communication.

DIFFERENT

The way to arouse interest is to do something different from what is normally done in Lodge. A Lodge overburdened with degree work can increase attendance by holding special meetings for social and fraternal purposes. A Lodge in which a speaker from another Lodge – and better, another Grand Jurisdiction – is seldom heard may increase its attendance by making such addresses a feature. A Lodge in which Masonic education is unknown may increase attendance by putting on an educational program.

If a speaker is secured from another Lodge or Jurisdiction, particular consideration should be given his comfort. Such entertainers usually sacrifice time and energy for their brethren; Masonic hospitality should see that everything possible is done for their comfort. Particularly if a speaker is brought from a distance with a promise to pay his expenses, should the check for those necessary expenditures be given to him promptly.

EXTRA LODGE ACTIVITIES

All Masters meet, in one way or another, proposals that the Lodge do this or that, support this or that, take part in this or that. And it is often difficult to decide where the line should be drawn between what a Lodge may do, and what its individual members may do.

Two safe tests to apply to any such proposal which involves Lodge activities are these; will acceptance of the invitation cause a difference of opinion among members which may disrupt the harmony of the Lodge? Will it be a precedent which may cause embarrassment in the future?

If either question may be answered in the affirmative, the wise Master will avoid Lodge participation.

COMMITTEE

The Master is faced at the start with two conflicting principles; the more of his own members he can persuade to take part in entertainment, the more interest he can arouse among them and their friends; the more he goes outside the Lodge for amusement, the more he is apt to interest all its members, most of whom have heard the home talent before.

Any program of entertainment or instruction is best put in the hands of a competent chairman of a committee. Give him plenty of assistance, and then let him run it without interference. Some Masters appoint a chairman and then attempt to do all his work, or dictate how it should be done. A chairman should be a willing worker, and in sympathy with the Master's ideas, but unless he has ideas and initiative of his own, he is not qualified to be a chairman; if he has ideas and initiative, he is not properly used unless allowed to employ them.

A small committee is better than a large one; if the plans are elaborate, the committee may divide itself into sub-committees with sub-chairmen, who may call to their assistance all the help they need. But a large central committee is difficult to handle; too many ideas and conflicting desires prevent success. An entertainment committee of three, or five at the most, is sufficiently large.

Masonic dignity and honours are not the first requisite in an entertainment committee chairman. The senior Past Master has not necessarily the most original mind; the Senior Warden may be an excellent officer and a prospective Master of charm and ability, without being constituted by nature to be a good chairman. Use the brains and enthusiasm of the younger members. It is easy to gain the cooperation of the older members, and of those the Lodge has honoured, by asking them to give way to the young and untried that these may show their quality.

A few plans which have been tried and proved successful in increasing attendance.

A SURPRISE MEETING

Advertise to the membership that a surprise awaits them. Tell them there will be "something doing" which they have never seen before. Then arrange with a capable committee to exemplify a dozen or more matters of law and behaviour. Have a new brother deliberately cross the room between Altar and East. Call him down for it. Have a Past Master explain why this is not good Masonic usage. During a ballot have a brother enter the room by way of the West Gate. Declare the ballot illegal and take it over again. Have a Past Master explain why it is illegal. Let some brother move that the Lodge adjourn. Have some one else explain that parliamentary procedure which governs most assemblages cannot apply in a Masonic Lodge because of the powers and prerogatives of the Master, at whose pleasure alone the Lodge convenes and is closed. Get a debate started on something, anything, and have a brother appeal from the decision of the Master to the Lodge. Rule him out of order, and explain that the only appeal lies to the Grand Master, and why. Have some brother give the wrong salute on entering or leaving; correct him, and have some one make a short talk on the reasons for the salute and how the brother may always know by an examination of the Great Lights upon what degree the Lodge is open. Think up half a dozen more matters in which the customs, the etiquette or the law of Masonry may be

violated, and have an explanation and an answer ready for each one. The interest of such a practical demonstration is surprising.

A MASONIC EXPERIENCE MEETING

In any Lodge some brethren have had some pleasant, different, unusual experience of Masonry. One has had to borrow money in strange city, and did it through Masonic connection. Another has discovered a Masonic impostor. A third has made a pleasant friend in another city through mutual Masonry. A fourth has found interest in the manners, customs and usages of Masonry in a sister Grand Jurisdiction. Another has seen a funeral service in another Jurisdiction, quite different from his own. Get a committee to ascertain the names of half a dozen such brethren, and persuade them to give their experiences. Advertise it in the Lodge circular and see the increase in attendance.

A LODGE DEBATE

Choose some interesting Masonic subject, on which opinion is divided, appoint two teams of debaters, of two brethren each, and stage a contest to run not over forty minutes. A is given eight minutes for the affirmative, B eight minutes for the negative, followed by C with eight minutes for rebuttal and D, eight minutes for rebuttal. Each is then allowed two minutes to close. The decision is to rest on the vote of the Lodge. A few suggested topics are: "Resolved, that Masonry would be more effective if all Lodges were limited in size"; "Resolved, that perpetual jurisdiction over rejected candidates is unjust"; "Resolved, that a Master's powers should be limitable by a Lodge," etc.

It should be explained that these subjects are debated purely for the information such discussion may bring out, with no thought of attempting by Lodge action to alter existing law or practice. A Lodge debate may be humorous in character: "Resolved, that business should not interfere with golf"; "Resolved, that the Worshipful Master should pay the Lodge a salary for his privilege"; etc. If debaters are ready speakers, such simple entertainment can be made very effective and interesting.

PAST MASTERS NIGHT

Fill the chairs with the Past Masters, in order of seniority, for the conferring of a degree. If no candidate is available, and there is no local regulation against the practice, use a dummy candidate from among the members, or have the degree conferred on the oldest Past Master. Officers who have borne the heat and burden of the day are usually proud of the opportunity again to get into harness, and the membership is usually interested in the performance.

"TELL US WHAT YOU THINK"

Have ten brethren, each with an idea, give four-minute talks on what the Lodge needs. This does not mean a new hall, or new equipment, or more money, but what it requires to be better, more alive, more interesting. Such a discussion will bring out many ideas. Throw

the meeting open to the membership as soon as the arranged speakers have finished; often the unprepared speech will be the most illuminating of the evening.

THE QUESTION BOX

Put a small box with a slot in it in the Lodge, and invite the brethren to submit questions regarding anything Masonic; assure them that as many of the questions as possible will be answered the next meeting. See that half a dozen brethren, instructed in advance, drop questions in the box. As the Master will probably get a number for which he has not arranged, he can have prepared half a dozen answers to the questions he has inspired and these answers delivered to the Lodge in five-minute addresses. Questions and answers both, of course, can be obtained from books. Some questions interesting to most Masons are:

How old is Masonry, and how do we know its age?

What are the ten most Masonic verses in the Bible, not including those quotations from the Great Light used in the ritual?

Who was William Morgan and what happened in the Morgan affair?

In wearing a Masonic ring, should the points of the compass point towards the wearer or towards his finger tips, and why?

What is the origin of the Masonic use of the word "profane," meaning one not a member, and why is he so called?

England permits dual membership. What American Grand Jurisdictions permit it and what are some of the arguments for and against it?

What and where is the oldest Lodge in the world, in the United States, in this State?

THE SONGS OF MASONRY

Good Masonic poetry is scarce. But there is enough to furnish a pleasant and interesting hour of instruction and entertainment. Pick out half a dozen of the best known Masonic poems, and half a dozen brethren who will memorize them, and prepare a little talk upon them. Let each brother recite the poem of his choice, and then comment upon its significance. Good poems for an evening of this kind are Kipling's "The Palace" and "Mother Lodge," Burns's "Masonic Farewell," Goethe's "Mason Lodge," Leigh Hunt's "Abou Ben Adhem," Carruth's "Each in His Own Tongue," Burns's "On the Apron," Meredith's "Ebony Staff of Solomon," Bowman's "Voice of America," Malloch's "Father's Lodge" and Nesbit's "I Sat in Lodge with You."

CLUB

It is often possible to awaken interest in a Lodge by the formation of a glee club, a dramatic club, a study club, all good ways to increase attendance.

RITUAL

A little "stunt" which always holds the attention of the members is having some part of the Masonic ritual – it may be the charge to a candidate in one of the degrees, a section from the Middle Chamber lecture, or perhaps the prayer from the third degree – committed to memory by half a dozen brethren. These brethren then deliver the same work to show how different the appeal may be, as done in different ways. The parts selected should be short. If the brethren are willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of the evening, a prize may be put up for the most effective rendition, the decision, of course, to rest with the Lodge. The vote on the best rendition should be by paper ballot. But do not do this unless the brethren have been previously consulted and are willing to enter into the spirit of the little contest.

DISPATCH

In a Lodge which has much work and much business, the Master will add to the interest and the attendance if he runs the meeting with dispatch. The dragging business meeting, with a great deal of "hot air" from well-meaning brethren who really have little to say, is often sufficiently boresome to keep members away. It is not suggested that the Master shut off debate arbitrarily, or rap any brother down. But it is perfectly possible to run the first part of the business meeting snappily, have a prepared speech or so, very short and interesting, and then have a couple of "planted" brethren comment on the shortness and the snappiness. The round hand of applause which such comments usually draw will keep the prolix and the long-winded off their feet!

EDUCATION

It adds to the interest and, therefore, to the attendance, if the Master always has something to tell his Lodge. "Give them good and wholesome instruction" means what it says. A five-minute talk by the Master upon some matter of interest to Masons generally will prove an interesting feature. The Master must be careful not to "talk the interest to death." Nor should he ever be witty at the expense of his members unless it is that kindly wit which compliments at the same time it brings a smile.

It means work for the Master to get up some twenty little addresses during his year, but Masters expect to work – or else they are much surprised brethren when they get in the East!

Source material for such talks is the copy of the Proceedings of Grand Lodge, which contains much of interest to all members. A clever Master will have no difficulty in finding in this volume enough topics for many five-minute talks.

BIRTHDAYS

An idea which produces results is the sending of letters to brethren on their Masonic birthdays reminding them "On such and such a date you were raised to the Sublime Degree. Our nearest meeting to your anniversary is such and such a date. Will you not come to Lodge that night, to join the other brethren whose Masonic birthday is the same,

and give us the pleasure of offering you our good wishes?" The same is true of real birthdays, especially those of the older members.

CURIOSITY

Man is incurably curious; his desire to know and to understand is the mainspring of invention, discovery, civilization, progress; the driving force which leads men to learn.

Masters can make use of this desire to know to make better Masons of the brethren.

A "sugar-coated" Masonic educational meeting is interesting, intriguing, alive, vital, satisfying a great curiosity. Lodges which have tried the educational experiments here listed usually repeat them, and almost invariably the repetition is to a "packed house."

DISSECTING A DEGREE

Especially recommended for Lodges which have little work to do is the dissection and explanation of the first section of any degree. A dummy candidate is initiated, and the ceremony interrupted at each stage by some brother who offers a little explanation of the symbolism of the part of the degree under discussion; entry, circumambulation, rite of destitution, the antiquity of the apron, origin of the Lesser Lights, etc. Such dissection and exposition require some little study by those who take part, but giving each brother who offers an interruption only one subject minimizes the work of preparation and increases the variety by having many take part.

Inquiry should first be made of the District Deputy, or the Grand Master; in some Jurisdictions the practice of using a dummy candidate has been frowned upon, as derogatory to the dignity of our ceremonies. When it is explained that the purpose of the idea is educational, however, it is probable that no difficulty will be experienced in obtaining enthusiastic cooperation from those in authority.

"YOU MUST – YOU MUST NOT!"

The average Lodge member knows little about Masonic law. The very term "Jurisprudence" seems repellent. Yet Masonic law is intensely interesting, and may be made to appear so to the Lodge by any brother who will devote a little time and attention to developing a talk on those parts of our legal system which most intimately touch the brethren. Masonic law is vastly different from civil law; most Masonic law is a matter of "thou shalt" rather than "thou shalt not." A few salient points chosen for their interest to the average Mason, and explained, first as to their origin, and second as to their use or necessity, will interest any Lodge. It is not an arduous task for a clever brother to arrange such a talk; he may use any good book on Jurisprudence as a foundation, Mackey or Pound for choice, as both are complete and concise.

CONTESTS

The more brethren take part in an educational meeting, the greater the enjoyment. No scheme for an educational meeting yet developed exceeds the Lodge contest in this respect, since it gives every one an opportunity to participate.

The educational contest is conducted by a Master of Ceremonies asking a series of questions, carefully prepared in advance, the correct answers to which can be given in one or two words, a date, a name. Supplied with paper and pencils, the brethren write and number their answers to the questions, as they are asked. Then they exchange papers, the correct answers are read, and the brethren mark the replies "right" or "wrong" according to the facts. The winners, of course, are those who have the greatest number, next greatest number and third greatest number answered correctly. Interest in such a contest is increased by offering prizes. These may be very inexpensive; a good Masonic book, a subscription to a Masonic magazine, a Masonic lapel pin are all appreciated.

The questions should not be complex; answers should be facts, not opinions. For instance "In what Lodge was George Washington raised?" "Who is Grand Master in this State?" "How old is this Lodge?" "How many Lodges in our Grand Lodge?" are all questions needing but a word or two to answer with facts. Such questions as "Do you think Masonry is a religion?" should not be included, since any answer must be an opinion, not a fact. Questions like "Explain the part Freemasonry played in the Revolution" should not be asked, as they require lengthy replies.

In giving out the correct answers, a clever Master of Ceremonies will offer some "good and wholesome instruction" of Masonic value; for instance, if the question be "How many landmarks are recognized in this Jurisdiction?" and the correct answer is "Twenty five," the Master of Ceremonies may explain that some Jurisdictions have less, others more; that many Jurisdictions have adopted Mackey's list, while others have condensed Mackey's twenty-five into a less number, which nevertheless contains all of Mackey's points, and so on.

CLIMAX

In any Lodge entertainment, whether purely amusement or Masonically instructive, arrange the program to reach a climax; when it culminates, close the evening. If the program includes a principal speaker, have him come last. After he has spoken, do not call on half a dozen brethren to talk about the speaker and his address. Nothing makes a fine talk fall flatter than far less able speakers giving short resumes of what has been said and telling the Lodge how good it was. Past Master John Smith and Brother Henry Robinson are good men and true, beloved of the brethren, listened to with respect, but unless they are orators of high calibre, their supplementary remarks on a thought-provoking address usually throw a cold wet blanket which is very chilling to enthusiasm !

The old adage for speakers: "Stand up, speak up, shut up!" may well be applied here; when a program is ended, consider it finished! Far better that the brethren go home wishing the evening had been longer, than with the feeling "I'm glad that's over!"

BE DIFFERENT

Any Master may largely increase interest in his meetings by departing from the custom of previous Masters, doing what they did not do! This does not mean a criticism of previous Masters; what they did may also have been interesting and different. The new is always interesting; that which is interesting usually stimulates attendance. With good reason, depart from the usual order of business; it is a Master's privilege. Have some brother, the more obscure the better, who has done something, anything, escorted to the Altar, and thank him, congratulate him or comment on his work; the more unexpected this is, the more interesting to the membership. Extend a special welcome to the oldest Past Master, or most beloved brother. If the Lodge has no regularly appointed chaplain, or if he is absent, call on some brother to take over the simple duties of Lodge chaplain. Encourage debate; ask for comments on any question which comes up on which no one voluntarily has anything to offer; the more members get on their feet the greater interest there is in the meeting, always providing they are not long-winded about it.

CHAPTER 7 -- "SET THE CRAFT TO LABOR"

The enthusiastic Master usually heads an enthusiastic Lodge.

No one can inculcate enthusiasm in others if he does not possess it. But many a Master is enthusiastic over his Masonry, his Lodge and its activities, who does not know the few parlour tricks of the East which inspire others.

It is trite but true: men like to work when they don't have to!

The Master who puts many brethren to work at something- -just what is not important – will have enthusiastic meetings.

ACTIVITIES

Brethren may be interested in dozens of activities. A glad hand committee, not only for visitors but to greet every member as he comes in, is always an asset. Rival committees – perhaps as many as six – may be asked to provide entertainment, each for one meeting. A prize may be given the committee staging the most popular evening. (Note: different Lodges have different methods. In a Lodge which must count pennies, the Master may offer the prize personally. Suitable prizes are: an evening at the theater for all the members of the committee; a Masonic book for each member of the committee; a Masonic button for each member.)

Very successful are large committees to call on delinquent members; committees to call on the stay-at-home brethren with personal invitations to attend; sojourners' committees, to call on brethren of foreign Lodges temporarily within the jurisdiction of the Lodge; committees on the sick; rival degree teams for each degree.

A Master may thus put a hundred brethren to work, often with amazing results in the new interest brethren take in Lodge when they have definite tasks.

PAY WAGES

The labourer is worthy of his hire. The only pay a committeeman can receive is Master's Wages. Pay them, pay them generously, pay them often. Make them stand up, tell the Lodge what good workers they have been, thank them. In especially meritorious cases have the brother-to-be-thanked conducted to the Altar, and speak to him there. In the Middle Chamber the workmen received their wages in corn, wine and oil. Do not leave all the oil in the oil fields ! A little poured from the East is good Masonic diplomacy.

JOURNEYS

Most Grand Jurisdictions have some pet project – a Home, a Hospital, an Orphanage, a Charity Foundation, a library – all excellent pegs on which to hang garments of enthusiasm. Get some brother who can talk to visit the institution and tell the Lodge about it. Organize a bus pilgrimage to the Home, at special rates, advertise it well, make a ladies' picnic of it if the Lodge likes to bring its better halves along. Find a successful graduate of the Home School and ask him to tell the Lodge about it. Has the Home a band? Organize a

"Concert Committee" to raise funds to bring it to Lodge; invite the neighbouring Lodges. Probabilities are the Lodge room won't be big enough.

Many Lodges have a sister Lodge, in their own or a neighbouring Jurisdiction, with which we ties of union are unusually close.

Annual visits between such Lodges result in large attendance and fraternal evenings. If no such sister Lodge is tied to a Master's by special bonds, hunt up one and start the ball rolling by inviting that Lodge to visit yours. Pick the newest Lodge, the oldest Lodge, the most historic Lodge, the biggest Lodge, the smallest Lodge; a Lodge with a Master who has your name; a Lodge with the same name as yours – anything will do for an excuse.

If the rules of Grand Lodge permit, ask a sister Lodge in another Jurisdiction to put on a degree. Before sending such an invitation be sure your Grand Lodge looks with favor on such interchange of work; consult District Deputy, Grand Secretary or Grand Master.

Has your State some nearby historic place, marker, monument, park, house, battlefield? Organize a visit of your Lodge. Especially is this worth while if there is a Masonic significance to the place visited. A journey to your local Yorktown, Williamsburg, Valley Forge, Custer's Last Stand, Fort Dearborn, Meeting on the Mountain, etc., can always be hooked up with Masonry, since all such have some associations with great men who were Masons.

SERVICE

Masons are not "men with pins on their coats." Masonry is a vital force in the lives of many; one touch on the right key and Masonic enthusiasm simply pours out of members.

A brother was injured and a blood transfusion necessary. The Master of his Lodge learned it on the night of a third degree. It was his custom to make a little talk before each ceremony on one of its significances. An opportunist, the Master junked his prepared speech and spoke for five minutes on the Five Points – then called for volunteers for the blood transfusion.

Fifteen brethren rose to clamour for the chance to show their Five Points meant something to them.

The Master of a small midwestern Lodge, poor in finances, had a pressing relief case; a brother had lost his home by storm. He had told the Lodge about it. The Treasurer arose to say: "But we have no money, Worshipful Master."

"Who said anything about money?" retorted the Master. "I want volunteers with tools, who will give each a day's work, two days, whatever you can spare. We can't buy Brother Jones a new home, but we are sorry sons of pioneers if we can't build one!"

Thirty-four men rebuilt Brother Jones's home for him, and then pleaded with the Master for "another happy time and good day's outing like that!"

FOR LOVE

Give the brethren a chance to do something, anything, no matter how small or unimportant. A brother convinced that he is helping is enthusiastic. One Master appointed a young

brother as assistant to an old, feeble and forgetful Tyler – who was much beloved. The young assistant did no more than bring out the aprons, sort out and put away the officers' jewels, but he was company for the old man for the half hour before and after the meeting. At the end of the year, thanking the lad, the Master said: "Doubtless you'll be glad that a new Master will give your thankless job to some one else."

"Glad? I'll be all broken up if he doesn't reappoint me!" was the answer. The boy had never missed a meeting and now that he has the habit, probably never will.

A certain old Past Master came only once or twice a year. It was said that "Brother Smith was a very active Master and now that he has nothing to do, feels lost in Lodge."

"I'll give him something to do!" determined the new Master, then offered the old Past Master the Chaplaincy of the Lodge. The old Past Master protested that he was too old; the Lodge had a minister (who could seldom attend); he had not done any work for years ... the Master overrode him. The Past Master took the position, and the storm does not blow that can keep him away from his Lodge. Flagging enthusiasm was aroused by a small job, with something constructive to do.

Will there be a "big night"? Appoint half a dozen assistant stewards to lug in chairs and benches. Is there a "big feed" for some special occasion? Plenty of brethren will gladly give up that evening in Lodge to help prepare the tables and serve the meal. Have you a semi-invalid who cannot easily get to Lodge? Responses will be generous to a request for volunteers to call for him and take him home. The Master may urge many members to watch for opportunities to furnish transportation to brethren residing in their neighbourhood; the Lodge member without a car will appreciate a lift from his more fortunate brother.

A Master does not need much imagination to think up a thousand and one ways to interest his members in Lodge work, nor will he need more than two or three meetings to demonstrate the effectiveness of this simple and easy way to create enthusiasm, increase attendance, and swell to delightful proportions the pride and joy which men thus set to labour for the common good will find in their Lodge.

Try it – you'll be surprised!

CHAPTER 8 -- SECRETARY, WARDENS, PAST MASTERS

A Master's greatest asset is a competent and loyal Secretary. A good officer to his left is a balance wheel, a touch with the past, a compendium of knowledge, a very present help in the time of trouble. Per contra, a lazy, indifferent or incompetent Secretary, or one antagonistic to the Master, is a severe handicap.

MINUTES

It is usual to depend on a good Secretary for much, but it can be overdone. It is not the Secretary, but the Master, whom the Grand Master holds responsible for his Lodge. The Secretary writes the minutes, the Lodge confirms them, but the Master must shoulder the responsibility of seeing that they contain all things proper to be written, nothing not proper to be recorded, are accurate, complete, unbiased.

The Master may not confirm minutes. Nor may he alter, amend, delete or add to them, except as any brother may, by suggestion that something was left out which should have been put in, something put in which had better be unrecorded.

But the Master may refuse to put a motion to confirm improper minutes, and Grand Master or Deputy Grand Master will invariably sustain him if he is right.

Masons are human beings, and therefore not perfect. Occasionally a Secretary stubbornly refuses to record what should be written, or wants improper minutes confirmed. Here the Master can use a Big Stick or the smooth oil of diplomacy, but he must see that his minutes will not draw censure from higher authority.

It is the Master's duty to oversee the Secretary's books, records and receipts. No good Secretary resents this; on the contrary, he knows that the responsibility shared is a responsibility halved.

WHO RUNS IT?

There are Lodges of which it is said: "Oh, the Secretary is really the Master – he runs it."

If true, it is because too many Masters have been content to slide through their term of office in the easiest way. The Master tells the Secretary: "You suggest the names of the committee on that petition," or "Tell me the best arrangement of the work for the next two or three months." The Secretary obliges. After a while he does not wait to be asked – petitions are handed to the Master with the committee names already written; a ready-made schedule of work is handed to the Master. In a few years it is really the Secretary, not the Master, who controls the Lodge.

The Master who avoids responsibilities because the Secretary is willing to shoulder them hurts the Lodge, spoils a good Secretary and must leave the East with the feeling that he has done little.

The Master who is Master; who aids his Secretary wherever possible, asks his advice and receives his suggestions, but who makes his own appointments, schedules his own work, conducts his own Lodge as he sees fit, and lives up to all the responsibilities of his office,

will increase respect for the Oriental Chair and finish his year knowing he was what he was supposed to be – a leader.

It is sometimes difficult for a new Master, perhaps a young man, to take from the hands of an old and respected Secretary work which generations of predecessors have shifted from their fingers to his. But the Master has always the comfort of knowing that Grand Master (or Deputy) is behind him in "all his laudable undertakings" and that a good Secretary respects a Master who lives up to his job. Here, as elsewhere in Lodge, tact, diplomacy, the soothing oil of flattery and good nature, work wonders. While occasionally it is the Secretary's fault if the relations between his desk and the East are strained, as a general rule it is the Master who must be blamed if he cannot 'get along with' a faithful and tried officer to his immediate left.

WARDENS

The Wardens should be a Master's right hand left hands. Perhaps no ancient usage and custom of the Fraternity is more universal than the government of Lodges by a Master and two Wardens. Mackey lists this requirement as his Tenth Landmark; whether they have adopted Mackey's twenty-five landmarks or not, all Grand Lodges recognize the Wardens as essential in the formation, opening and governing of a Lodge.

Not only are the Wardens essential to every Entered Apprentices', Fellow Crafts' or Master Masons' Lodge, but they have certain inherent powers, duties and responsibilities. Mackey sets these forth substantially as follows:

While a Master may use others than the Wardens in the conferring of the degrees, he cannot deprive the Wardens of their offices, or absolve them of their responsibilities.

TRIPARTITE

The government of a Masonic Lodge is essentially tripartite, although Lodges may be legally opened, set to labour and closed by the Master in the absence of the installed Wardens, the chairs being filled by temporary appointments. The Senior Warden presides in the absence of the Master, and the Junior Warden in the absence of both Master and Senior Warden.

No other brethren in the Lodge have this power, privilege or responsibility. The Warden who presides in the absence of his superior officer may, if he desires, call a Past Master to the chair to preside for him, but no Past Master, in the absence of the Master, may legally congregate the Lodge. That must be done by the Master, the Senior Warden in the absence of the Master, or the Junior Warden in the absence of both.

Mackey further states that while the Senior Warden takes the East by right in the absence of the Master, the Junior Warden does not take the West by right in the absence of the Senior Warden. Each officer is installed with a ceremony which gives him certain duties; a Warden in the East is still a Warden, not a Master. It is the Master's privilege to appoint brethren to stations temporarily unfilled. The Master, when elected and installed, or Senior Warden acting as Master in the real Master's absence, may appoint the Junior Warden to fill an empty West. But the Junior Warden cannot assume the West without such

appointment. In the absence of the Master, the Senior Warden, when present, is the only brother who can assume the East and congregate the Lodge.

Thus runs the general law, generally adhered to. Grand Lodges may, and not infrequently do, make local regulations contrary to the Old Constitutions, the Old Charges, even the Landmarks – the fundamental law of Masonry.

If a Grand Lodge rules that in the absence of Master and both Wardens, the oldest Past Master present may congregate, open, and close the Lodge, that law is correct for that Grand Lodge, but it is not in consonance with general Masonic practice.

MEANING

Wardens are found in all bodies of Masonry, in all Rites, in all countries.

Both its derivation, and its translations give the meaning of the word. It comes from the Saxon weardian, to guard, to watch. In France, the second and third officers are premier and second Surveillant; in Germany, erste and zwite Aufseher; in Spain, primer and segundo Vigilante; in Italy, primo and secondo Sorvegliante, all the words meaning to overlook, to see, to watch, to keep ward, to observe.

DUTIES

The Government of the Craft by a Master and two Wardens cannot be too strongly emphasized. It is not only the right but the duty of the Senior Warden to "assist the Worshipful Master in opening and governing his Lodge." When he uses it to enforce orders, his setting maul or gavel is to be respected; he has a "proper officer" to carry his messages to the Junior Warden or elsewhere; under the Master, he is responsible for the conduct of the Lodge while at labour.

The Junior Warden's duties are less important; he observes the time, and calls the Lodge from labour to refreshment and refreshment to labour in due season at the orders of the Master. It is his duty to see that "none of the Craft convert the purposes of refreshment into intemperance and excess " which doubtless has a bibulous derivation, coming from days when "refreshment" meant wine. If we no longer drink wine at Lodge, we still have reason for this charge upon the Junior Warden, since it is his unpleasant duty, because he supervises the conduct of the Craft at refreshment, to prefer charges against those guilty of Masonic misconduct.

USE THEM

The importance of the Wardens has been set forth at length that no Master plead ignorance of their vital importance in Lodge affairs. The Master who considers his Wardens as only less valuable than himself will leave his Lodge a legacy for which it may thank him for years to come.

In the natural course of events, Wardens become Masters. Failing some unusual upset, some local condition different from the general rule, the Senior Warden succeeds the Master, the Junior Warden attains the East the following year.

WHAT KIND OF MASTERS WILL THEY MAKE?

The responsibility is not theirs alone, but that of the present occupant of the Oriental Chair. If he is so swelled in the cranium with the dignity of his position that he is unwilling to consult with his Wardens, they will have the less opportunity to become familiar with important Lodge affairs. If the Master takes counsel with his Wardens on every occasion, asks their advice in regard to Lodge policies, sees that they have all possible information of charity, relief, finances, membership, and puts a reasonable amount of outside work on their shoulders, they will arrive in the East with a broad vision of Lodge work and a Master's responsibilities.

The dignity of the office of Master adds to the stature of any man: no man is so important that he can add to the dignity of the office. No man may take from the dignity of the office of Master, although he may abuse it. Therefore no consultation with Wardens, no sharing with them of the problems of the East, can in the slightest take away from the importance, the dignity, the solemnity of the Master's position. The Master who plays a lone hand because he fears that Wardens other than figureheads will detract from his leadership displays a fundamental ignorance of the invulnerability of his position. He who uses his Wardens as they were intended to be used not only has secure props for his administration on either hand, but benefits his Lodge by providing well instructed – educated, if you will – candidates for the East a year, two years hence.

PAST MASTERS

Fortunate the Lodge which has many; poor that body of Masonry in which Past Masters have lost the interest with which they once presided in the East !

The honourable station of Past Master is generally considered as second in importance only to that of the presiding Master. He is a good Master who sees that the brethren in his Lodge understand that "Past Master" is no empty title, but carries with it certain rights and privileges, certain duties and responsibilities.

GRAND LODGE

A Past Master has no inherent right of membership in the Grand Lodge, such as is possessed by the Master of a Lodge. But in many American Jurisdictions, by action of the Grand Lodge, Past Masters are members of the Grand Lodge. In some Jurisdictions they are full voting members; in others they have but a fraction of a vote, all the Past Masters of a Lodge having one vote between them on any Grand Lodge question to be decided by a vote by Lodges. That a Past Master may receive such recognition at the hands of his Grand Lodge must be considered as one of the rights and privileges of a Past Master.

RIGHT TO PRESIDE

Past Masters are said by Mackey to possess the right to preside over their Lodges, in the absence of the Master, and on the invitation of the Senior Warden, or, in his absence, the Junior Warden.

According to the ancient laws of Masonry, any Master Mason may be called to the Chair by a Master. Here the question is as to who may be called to the Chair by a Warden, who has congregated the Lodge in the absence of the Master. The great Masonic jurist gives unqualified endorsement to the idea that under such circumstances only a Warden, or a Past Master with the consent of the presiding Warden, can preside over a Lodge, and counts this as among the rights of a Past Master. However true this may be in this specific case, the practice and the law in many Jurisdictions give to the Master the right to put any brother in the Chair for the time being, remaining, of course, responsible for the acts of his temporary appointee, and for the acts of his Lodge during such incumbency.

RIGHT TO INSTALL

The right to install his successor is inherent in the office of Master; the privilege of delegating that duty to another is within his power. He should not delegate the installing power to any brother who has not himself been installed, in order that the succession of the Oriental Chair be unbroken, from regularly installed Master to Master elect, regularly to be installed. Therefore, in most Jurisdictions, the installation power, which is a right of the Master, may be considered also a privilege of Past Masters.

RIGHT TO ELECTION

A very important right of all Past Masters is that of being elected to the office of Master, without again serving as Warden. Perhaps no regulation is more jealously guarded by Grand Lodges than this, which dates in print from 1723 (Old Charges), that no Mason may be elected or installed a Master who has not been regularly elected, installed and served as a Warden. There are exceptions; when a new Lodge is constituted, a brother who has not been elected and installed as Warden may be elected and installed as Master.

JEWEL

Only a Past Master has the right to wear a Past Master's jewel, or a Past Master's apron. He may possess neither, but he has the right to wear both, and these rights cannot be taken away from him except by Grand Lodge or as part of an act depriving him of other rights, as when he may be suspended, expelled, excluded from the Lodge, or dropped N.P.D. The giving of a Past Master's jewel by the Lodge is a beautiful custom, a recognition of devoted service, but it is not mandatory on a Lodge to present such a jewel if it does not desire to do so. No Lodge, however, would take from a Past Master the right to wear such a jewel if, for instance, he bought it for himself! But a Grand Lodge may rule against either or both.

"THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE"

So much for law and custom. Far beyond these go the spiritual rights and privileges of the Past Master, great or small as the man is small or great. These are valued by the brethren as the Past Master values them; and he must value them by a plumb line, like that which the Lord set "in the midst of my people Israel," erected within himself.

If he has been a hard-working, able, conscientious Master, sincerely desirous of the welfare of his Lodge and its brethren, thinking only of their good, of his opportunities for service, of the humility with which he should assume the East and the dignity and wisdom with which he should preside, the honourable station of Past Master will be honoured by its possessor, honoured by those who know that he has earned it.

If he has been but a "title hunter," a Master who has "gotten by" with the least effort, his work poor, his presence in the East a brake upon the Lodge, he can hardly look with real pleasure upon his Past Master's jewel nor can his brethren give him much honour in his station.

One of the unwritten usages of the Fraternity, it is well known to all the Craft that the honours of Masonry are in the wearer, rather than in the conferring. The Past Master who has earned his title by loyal, faithful service will be honoured for it all his life, though he wear no apron or jewel to show his rank. He who has failed to earn it may wear the largest and most expensive of jewels, the most be-decorated of Past Master's aprons, and receive from his brethren no recognition beyond that of formality.

FLEAS

There are – whisper it! – Past Masters who come to Lodge only to sit like buzzards, looking for what they may devour, ready to pounce on any act of the present administration, critical and fault finding. David Harum's famous saying "A certain number of fleas is good for a dog; keeps him from broodin' on being a dog," may be applicable; perhaps one or two such Past Masters are good for any Lodge. As a general rule, however, brethren who have served long years in the chairs, presided in the East and stepped forward to join the ranks of Past Masters, have a broad tolerance, a humility, an understanding to add to their experience, which makes them very present helps in times of trouble.

The Master who makes it his first business to pay due honour to his predecessors, who consults with them, uses them, puts them on committees, works them, is reasonably certain of success.

A PAST MASTER SPEAKS

We are a jealous lot, we Past Masters! But our jealousy is not of the Master but for the Lodge we have loved and served. We want to see her succeed, go forward, grow bigger, better, finer, more useful to our brethren. Most of us count no personal sacrifice comparable to the good of the Lodge; most of us will go to great lengths to serve again in any capacity, if by so doing we can help the old lodge another mile forward on what we hope will be always an honourable path to glory.

Therefore, Worshipful Sir, use us, we who have had our little hour in the East. We have experience – make it count for you. We have learned to work – make us work for you. We have understanding of Lodge and membership problems – make it yours. Give us a job to do, a committee membership, a minor appointment; aye, give us the hard and unwanted jobs, and most of us will jump at the chance. And if you are reasonably gentle about it, and treat us with even a modicum of fraternal courtesy – such as the young should always offer

the old ! – some day we will welcome you as Immediate Past Master and make you one of the charmed circle without which no lodge can function at its best !

CHAPTER 9 -- LODGE FINANCES

If all Lodges had charity funds; if all Lodges put all fees for the degrees in special funds, and had dues sufficient to run the Lodges without recourse to fees; if all Lodges had budgets and lived within them; if all Lodges had members, all of whom paid their dues in advance, Masters would have little need to consider finances. Needless to say, all Lodges do not have such utopian arrangements!

A few Lodges are so well provided with high dues and large fees that they do not have to worry about money. The majority of Lodges, like other organizations, must plan expenditures to be within income.

A Master can do much in these matters; even with a wise and experienced Treasurer, a capable Board of Trustees, a hard-headed Finance Committee, a Lodge may spend more than it should if the Master does not keep his hand on the tiller which guides the ship between the Scylla of parsimony and the Charybdis of extravagance.

BUDGET

Consider the advisability of a Lodge budget. The Master who goes into office knowing what the Lodge faces in fixed expenditures – Grand Lodge dues, rent, heat, light, taxes, salaries, average charity appropriations, average entertainment appropriations, and so on – can calculate just where he must cut corners, if any. It is some trouble to make a Lodge budget – but a Master gets accustomed to trouble. Most Masters have either a Finance Committee, or a Board of Trustees, or both; usually these are wise old Past Masters, who will like nothing better than to help prepare a budget! The wise Master, of course, will see to it that the budget is advisory, not mandatory, since sudden calls may come to any Lodge.

Particularly is this true of the charity and relief calls. An average of what has been spent in relief for the last ten years as the sum budgeted for charity may be upset past all righting with one unusual case.

Freemasonry is not a mutual benefit society, insurance organization, institution for relief of the indigent. In no words of the ritual, in no law nor edict, is a promise given or implied that the Lodge give relief to the needy. Charity is an individual matter.

Not as a right to be demanded, but as a free gift gladly offered, does a Lodge disburse its funds in helping members in need. As this is one of the real privileges of Freemasonry, no budget should be so iron-clad that it cannot be changed when the need arises.

CHARITY FUNDS

Methods of handling charity are as different as the some sixteen thousand Lodges in the nation. In the main, however, Lodges may be divided into those which handle relief from the general fund, and those which keep a special fund for the purpose.

It is not here presumed to advise which is better, since circumstances alter cases. But it may be noted that Lodges occasionally have to resist a well-meant raid on the treasury of charity funds.

Some brethren like to spend first and think from whence will come the money afterward. The Master can rule such motions out of order, or he can use a little device familiar to most presiding officers. John Smith gets the brilliant idea that because the Lodge will be twenty-five years old next month, it should take five hundred dollars from the charity fund and stage a big "home coming night" for all members. If the Master refuses to entertain this motion, he may probably will- -offend John Smith and his friends.

Instead, try this: "I am in sympathy with my brother's idea of a celebration. I think, however, we should have advice from wise financial heads on such an important matter. I refer this motion to a special committee on celebration, which I will appoint later in the evening."

The Master appoints three brethren in whom the Lodge has confidence, and whom he knows will report adversely on the idea of throwing charity money away on a "big feed." When that committee reports at the next meeting, the Master has support for his contention that conservatism is more important than filled stomachs. As he appoints all committees he will entertain no motion that the proposal to spend be referred to a committee composed of Brothers Jones, Smith and Brown.

GRAND LODGE

The importance of payments of dues and assessments to Grand Lodge can hardly be over-emphasized. In some Jurisdictions the Lodge pays dues or assessments to Grand Lodge; in others, the financial responsibility is direct from brother to Grand Lodge, the Lodge acting only as a collection agency. In either case, out of what Grand Lodge receives, that body finances the Grand Charity of the Jurisdiction – Home, School, Orphanage, Hospital, Foundation, what have you – pays its salaries to its employees, prints its Proceedings, pays all expenses of the upkeep of Freemasonry in the Jurisdiction.

Lodges occasionally get in arrears in Grand Lodge payments, sometimes through misfortune, sometimes through mismanagement. The Master who inherits such a condition may not be popular, but he will be brotherly, if he bends every effort to get his Lodge out of debt to Grand Lodge. The Master who comes to the East of a Lodge which does not owe Grand Lodge, and leaves her in any less comfortable position, must have a real reason or a troubled conscience.

TEMPLES

Lodges which have Temples to pay for have problems all their own. Like Grand Lodge dues, this should come first in Lodge finances. The credit of Masonry before the public is of greater importance than entertainment, aye, even than most charity and relief disbursements. A Lodge which defaults on its interest on real estate notes to the bank is no breeder of community respect. A Lodge which pays its obligations on the nail, no matter how it hurts, is doing a real Masonic service in the interests of Freemasonry. He is a good Master who puts his shoulder to this wheel, even if it makes his muscles sore!

DUES

Most Masters are plagued by the dues question; collection, on the one hand, remission on the other, often trouble sleep. A few Lodges have such by-laws as make both problems easier, but it is a Master's part to take the by-laws as he finds them, not remake them to his heart's desire.

There are just two classes of brethren as regards dues; those who can, and those who cannot, pay. Those who won't pay until compulsion is exerted are still members of the "can" class.

The Master who continually emphasizes to his Lodge that Masonry is a privilege, that Lodge membership is a valuable property which members have bought and which is well worth preserving, will have less "won'ts" among his "cans."

No Lodge wants to drop brethren for N.P.D. Most Lodges make strenuous efforts to make this unpleasant duty unnecessary. At times Lodges lean too far backward for the good of the brother being "carried." A brother suspended for one or two years N.P.D. does not face an insurmountable obstacle when he wants to return; he who has been "carried" for longer periods owes so much that it is often impossible for him to ask for reinstatement.

The Master who goes over his delinquent list with a fine tooth comb and the help of all his Past Masters can usually determine which brethren, because they are really unable to pay, deserve to have dues paid by the Lodge, and those who could pay but are just careless, indifferent, or need drastic treatment.

COLLECTION

Collection of dues is too often left entirely to the Secretary; that official usually does his best and his best is often very good indeed. But with a large Lodge and far-flung membership, the Secretary can do little personally. The Master, through a committee, can do much. One Master appointed his Senior Warden as Chairman of Dues, Suspensions and Remissions, gave him twenty assistants and had the smallest number dropped N.P.D. and the smallest number of remissions of any year in the history of the Lodge, and this in the middle of the depression.

A personal contact will work wonders with the man who has not paid his dues but who really can pay. Of course, it all depends on the kind of contact. This Senior Warden Chairman's idea is set forth for what it may be worth. To his committee members he said: "We are not to go to brethren in the attitude of bill collectors. We are not to demand, coerce, threaten, turn up our noses! We are going to those who owe dues as one brother to another, for help in our mutual problem. Tell him of some of our charity cases (no names, even if you know them). Tell him of some of our members who are much worse off than he, whom we are helping. Ask him to help us by paying his dues promptly – if he can't pay them all, let us get what we can now and the rest later. Let's remember we are all brethren, and talk as if we were...."

And it worked!

Whatever his method, dues collection is of real importance, and he is living up to his obligations in the East who takes his share of this often hard and disagreeable labor.

RAISING DUES

Occasionally comes the problem of raising dues. Conditions change; what was enough in the past is no longer sufficient; Grand Lodge has raised the per capita; charity demands have become too heavy for Lodge income; fees have fallen off with a dearth of candidates. Whatever the rationale of the practice, it is a melancholy truth that many Lodges do depend partly on fees for current expenses!

Raising dues is always a hard job.

But it can be done.

The easiest, least painful way is that of education. Ascertain what brethren, influential preferred, Past Masters doubly preferred, are in favor of the raise. Appoint them all on a committee. Meet. Describe the problem. See that all understand that unless the dues are raised from six to eight, or sixteen to eighteen dollars, or whatever the sum may be, the Lodge will suffer, charity will suffer, brethren will suffer. Then divide the roster of the Lodge among the committee members, giving to each the names of brethren he knows best.

If the committee honestly works, calling on, calling up, writing to, the names on their lists, they will persuade enough to come to the meeting at which the new by-law will be passed or the old one retained, at least to make a good showing.

Faced with this problem, one Master had the raise in dues by-law introduced three times in his year. It requires two-thirds majority in that Lodge to change the by-laws. Forty percent voted for the change the first time, fifty-two percent the second and seventy percent the third, showing that education and pertinacity will win.

HINTS

Sometimes when a permanent raise cannot be passed, a five-year plan can; that is, the by-law is made to read that the dues shall be raised from the present to the increased amount for the succeeding five years, the increase to be applied to some particular purpose; retirement of a note, payment of back taxes, whatever the need may be.

In one Lodge in which this was done, near the end of the five years a far-sighted Master appointed a committee to revise the bylaws. The committee brought in revised by-laws with the dues stated as those then being paid. Accustomed after five years to the larger sum, no one questioned the old bylaw or asked to have the amount reduced.

A man owed a bill of seven dollars which the store to which it was due could not collect. A bright collection man sent him a bill for seventeen dollars. A wrathful customer appeared at the store to complain, protest, declaim! He owed no such sum. He owed only seven dollars. That was what he owed and that was all he was going to pay.

The collection man apologized: " Very sorry, mistakes will happen!" He mollified the debtor. The debtor then paid what he owed – human nature.

In a certain Lodge it was necessary to raise dues from seven to nine dollars. The Master persuaded the proposer to make it ten dollars. In the midst of the hot discussion in which most brethren were against the drastic change, a planted brother amended the proposed by-

law from ten to nine dollars. The Lodge of course passed the amendment; with this as a background, and feeling it had won a victory, it then passed the raise. Human nature.

PLANS

"There ought to be a law" is a national belief. In Lodge it often expresses itself in a new idea, plan, scheme which its proponents think financially desirable.

It is not the province of these pages to discuss the pros and cons of life membership, sustaining memberships, perpetual rolls, remission of dues to all who have been in good standing for twenty-five or any number of years. Ideas which are good for Lodge A will fail in Lodge B. But it is the province of any Master who faces a sudden proposal to do something different and drastic with Lodge funds, or who is opposed to some life membership or remission idea, to know how to meet it.

First, let him postpone action until "further light" can be had. Second, let him write to his Grand Secretary to learn what, if anything, Grand Lodge has said on the subject, and what other Lodges in the Jurisdiction have tried this or a similar plan. Third, let him learn the nation's experience; recourse to his Grand Lodge Library is indicated, or correspondence with those who will know. The Fraternal Correspondent of Grand Lodge will doubtless be able to put any inquiring Master immediately in touch with information regarding any one of dozens of financial schemes which have been tried in various Grand Jurisdictions.

"Don't!"

As a general rule, Punch's advice to those about to marry applies to any proposal which has, as even a remote possibility, the reduction of the income of a Lodge. A new Lodge, just chartered, in the enthusiasm and ignorance of youth, proposed a by-law that, when it was twenty-five years old, all who were charter members should become exempt from the payment of dues. It appeared very easy to what was then "today" to remit the dues of loyal brethren twenty-five years in the future. It was supposed that some would have died, some dimitted, some be dropped, and that only a few of the original eighty one charter members would be eligible for this reward for fidelity.

Saner counsels and good advice prevailed and the Lodge did not adopt this by-law. The Secretary was among the charter members who survived, and at the end of twenty five years made a calculation. Of the original eighty-one members, forty-three were living. The Lodge had grown but slowly, and its total membership on its twenty-fifth birthday was one hundred and thirty-seven. Had the original proposal gone through, more than thirty-one percent of the members would have gone on the free list, reducing the Lodge income by much more than one third, since the Grand Lodge dues would still have to be paid.

Brake!

Let the Master faced by any revolutionary or startling financial proposal put it off, refer it to a committee, say he does not wish consider it at the time – then let him get competent and factful advice; then, and only then, should he let it come before the Lodge. Sentiment should never interfere with properly safeguarding Lodge funds. The same audits, bonding, double signatures, familiar to good business, are also indicated as wise protections for Lodge funds.

One of the important items in a Master's list of duties is to act as a brake upon the runaway enthusiasms of the well-intentioned !

CHAPTER 10 -- THE IDEAL

An ideal is the perfection towards which we stretch eager hands – but never grasp.

The ideal Master has never presided in any East, for the ideal Master would be perfect and perfection is not given to human beings.

But the clearer and more attractive is the ideal before us, the more strenuously we may strive towards it, and the nearer we may approach it.

The ideal Master knows his Masonry. He has spent many years with many books. To him the romance, the history, the high lights of adventure, the great men who are Masons, the great Masons who have led the Craft are familiar. In spirit he has stood beside the king's Master Mason at the construction of one of the great cathedrals of Europe. He has supped with Ashmole and breakfasted with Sir Christopher Wren. He has sat in Lodge with Preston, Desaugliers, Hutchinson, Jeremy Cross, a thousand others. He has assisted at the initiation, passing and raising of Washington, and knelt with him at Valley Forge. He has learned Masonic Wisdom at Ben Franklin's feet. He has traveled westward with Freemasonry, from its first beginnings in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, to the Pacific coast. Through Revolution, War of 1812, the Mexican campaigns, the Civil War, the Spanish War, the World War, he has seen Masonry work her gentle miracles.

He knows something of Masonic literature, what books to recommend to his brethren, where to find the answer to the questions which will be asked him; the ideal Master has had a Masonic book in his pocket or at his bedside for years before he attained the East.

The ideal Master looks at his Lodge and sees it wholly harmonious. No rifts or schisms develop under him; peace and harmony prevail. He soothes the unhappy and brings together the parted friends. He; caters to the cranky and makes them content; he avoids all jealousies. He is friends with every Past Master, every officer, every brother.

The ideal Master leaves his Lodge better off financially than he found it; he spends less than the income and for what he spends the Lodge receives full value.

The ideal Master pays great attention to the duties which are his in Grand Lodge; he faithfully attends, intelligently takes part in the deliberations, votes with the interests of his Jurisdiction at heart, is a constructive force in the governing body of Freemasonry.

The ideal Master has interesting meetings. He is willing to work, and work hard, arranging programs, planning events which will not only interest but instruct the brethren. They are better Masons and therefore better men because of the hours they spend within the tiled doors of the Lodge over which he presides.

To the Craft the ideal Master gives "good and wholesome instruction. " No brother goes from one of his meetings without something done or said which leaves a higher thought of Masonry in his heart. His degrees are dignified, well put on. His candidates have not only ritualistic instruction, but are told something of "what it is all about" that they, too, may "become good and faithful brethren among us." His officers are given a mark at which to shoot when the slow wheel of time turns them, too, into the Oriental chair.

The ideal Master considers the ill and the sorrowing as his personal care, as well as that of the Lodge. No brother takes to his bed or calls the doctor but the Master sees him to bring what cheer he may. No widow or fatherless child grieves for one gone to the Great White Lodge but has the comfort of a word, a tear, from the leader of his brethren. As much as a man may do, he does for those bound to him and to his Lodge by the Mystic Tie.

No brother or family of a brother in want but is helped, so far as the Lodge may help. It may be that the only help is suggestion, advice, counsel – but it is a friendly touch in the hour of need. If it is food, clothing, medicine for those too poor to buy for themselves, the ideal Master makes it his business to know the facts and to bring a sympathetic report to his Lodge.

The ideal Master has no trouble preserving the dignity of his office, because brethren respect Masters who respect the East. He hands on the gavel of authority unsullied by defiance to the brother who succeeds him in the East.

The ideal Master counts not his personal pleasure, his social engagements, his hours of rest, recreation, aye, even his sleep, when his Lodge calls. He puts his Lodge and its needs before anything and everything in his life for this year, save only his family and his God. He is Master of the Lodge, but, in a very real sense, is servant of his brethren, and takes pleasure in his service, knowing it to be honourable before all men.

The ideal Master carries a watch and uses it. If fifty brethren wait ten minutes past the hour for a late Master, he wastes more than eight hours of fraternal time – which he has no more right to do than to waste Lodge money. His degrees start at a reasonable hour that they may be conducted unhurriedly, and he requires promptness of his officers as he himself is prompt.

The traditions of his Lodge and of the fraternity are hallowed in his mind and practice. The Ancient landmarks are preserved, the laws, resolutions and edicts of Grand Lodge lived up to, the by-laws meticulously observed. The records of his lodge are kept so as to draw commendation from authority.

The ideal Master is guide, philosopher and friend to many brethren for many troubles; brethren turn to a Master, at times, when they will go to no one else. He is, perhaps, mediator in a domestic trouble, he counsels with a father over a wayward boy, he helps a widow invest her money wisely, he obtains employment for those without work; he does almost everything for every one, aye, even to washing a child's face and painting a porch, one Master's contribution to the household of a sick brother!

The ideal Master keeps constantly before him the need for seeing his problems through a tolerant smile of understanding. If he ever had a temper, he lost it for the year before he entered the East. He has constantly before him the thought that many men have many minds, and that two brethren of directly opposite views may both be honest and sincere. He does not take sides but is a balance wheel; he rules firmly and justly, but the firmness is tempered with kindness and the justice with mercy.

The ideal Master is enthusiastic about his work, and prayerfully conscious of his own limitations; hence he is quick to seek counsel and advice, and as slow to take it until he has thought it through.

The ideal Master is eager for suggestions – but he does not follow those which seem to him unwise, no matter how important the brother who makes them. His is the responsibility, therefore his must the decision be, but he knows that two heads are usually better than one, and welcomes counsel when it is offered, seeks it when it is shy.

The ideal Master is primarily concerned with policies rather than details, and delegates the latter to carefully chosen committees. But he keeps ever before him his responsibilities, and knows what is going on. Too many Masters have become bogged in details, and thus lost the path to success. The ideal Master does not lose his way!

The ideal Master is an ideal Mason; Masonry is a part of him, as he is a part of Masonry. With all his heart and soul and strength he strives to live the Masonic life that all brethren may see that here is no mere figurehead, but a vital force.

Finally, the ideal Master is humble minded. Not for him the arrogant pride of place and power, though he has both power and place. Not for him the big stick, though it is his to wield, but the silken string which leads where ropes may not haul. The ideal Master keeps ever before him the knowledge that although elevated to the most honorable position within the gift of his Lodge, he can really fill the Oriental Chair only if he thinks first, last and all the time of the Lodge and brethren, never of self.

High? Of course it is high ! All real ideals are too high to reach until we can reach out and touch the stars. But we can make the effort to reach....

Uneasy the Past Master's head which lies on a sleepless pillow, thinking sad thoughts of opportunities missed, of duties undone, of work which now can never be his to do. Happy the Master who lays down his gavel at the end of his year knowing he has done all that in him lies; mortal man may do no more. He it is who may stand in the East for the last time, just before he installs his successor, wearing a sprig of rosemary in his lapel.

"Rosemary – that's for remembrance."

End of 'The Master's Book' by Carl H. Claudy