

(86)
THE STORY OF THE
ROYAL ARCH

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PREFACE.

A few months ago I issued a little book entitled "The Emblems of Freemasonry Described and Explained." The manual met with instant success, but many brethren who were also companions remarked that it was a pity the handbook did not touch upon the degrees which belong to the Royal Arch. Since then I have been frequently urged to prepare a companion work that would be of use to Royal Arch Freemasons by assisting them to a clearer understanding of the ceremonial by which a brother is exalted. The following pages seek to do this, and I hope the book will be as favourably received as its predecessor. The Supreme Grand Chapter very wisely limits the circulation of the authorised Book of Instruction and this publication does not seek in any way to encroach upon the ground covered by that recognised manual. It has been prepared from sources open to all enquirers, and

my sole aim is to stimulate interest in the history and purpose of those degrees which are comprehended within the Holy Royal Arch.

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THE STORY
OF THE
ROYAL ARCH

INTRODUCTION.

M. E. Companion ALFRED A. ARBUTHNOT MURRAY, Grand Scribe E. of the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland, says, in one of the many Oration with which he has delighted his fellow Craftsmen, that "our Royal Arch Degree is founded upon a story as old as the hills, but as new as every day on which the Sun rises. It is the story of love and veneration for the Land of our boyhood and the home of our youth." Thoughtful Freemasons who see something more

than a mere jumble of signs and ceremonies in our system will give whole-hearted assent to the words of the Grand Scribe E., and will draw much inspiration for the daily round, the common task, from the splendid teaching of the Royal Arch Degree. The captives returned from Babylon after their weary exile of seventy years to find their city in ruins. But faith in their race, and belief in their God, encouraged them to restore their homes, and rebuild their Temple. As the Grand Scribe E. says with eloquence, "there are old foundations in life as well as in cities," and there is a message and lesson of hope and encouragement to be drawn "from the story of the return from the Exile; from the rebuilding of the Temple and from the personal experience which not a single one of us can have missed more or less in our own time. Our inheritance, whatever it may be, is not one to which we require to descend. It is rather a level from which we require to raise a new structure. In clearing away the rubbish of the Past we shall assuredly find a hidden treasure and buried lore which will help us on in the journey of Life, and will be

another course added to the Temple which Man is continually building on this Earth."

THE KEYSTONE OF MASONRY.

Masonic authorities are at one in the view that the Degree of the Holy Royal Arch is the Keystone of Freemasonry. "If we pass on to the Holy Royal Arch," says Bro. G. Oliver in his Lecture on Freemasonry, "we receive a wonderful accession of knowledge, and find everything made perfect; for this is the *ne plus ultra* of Masonry, and can never be exceeded by any human institution." Dermott calls it the root, heart, and marrow of Masonry, and, enlarging upon these words, Bro. Webb writes that the "Degree is indescribably more august, sublime, and important than all which precede it; and is the summit and perfection of ancient Masonry. It impresses on our minds a belief of the being and existence of a Supreme Deity, without beginning of days or end of years; and reminds us of the reverence due to His holy name." "In the Royal Arch Degree," says another, "I beheld myself exalted to the top of Pisgah, an exten-

sive scene opened to my view of the glory and goodness of the Most Excellent High Priest of our salvation. I dug deep for hidden treasures, found them, and regained the Omnific Word." Bro. Hutchinson, writing of the moral value of the Degree says, "As Moses was commanded to put his shoes from off his feet on Mount Horeb, because the ground whereon he trod was sanctified by the presence of the Divinity, so the Mason who would prepare himself for this exalted stage of Masonry should advance in the naked paths of truth, be divested of every degree of arrogance, and approach with steps of innocence, humility, and virtue, to challenge the ensigns of an order whose institutions arise on the most solemn and sacred principles of religion."

THE ERA OF THE R.A.

The era of Royal Arch Masonry commences with the year in which Companions assume that Zerubbabel began to build the Second Temple. This they place in the year 530 Before Christ. Their style for the year 1920 A.D. would be A ∴ Inv ∴, that is *anno Inventionis*,

or, in the Year of the discovery 2450. which they arrive at by the rule of adding 530 to the Christian era, thus— $530 + 1920 = 2450$.

THE ORIGIN OF THE R.A.

The real origin of the Royal Arch Degree has exercised many minds. Some assert that it was imported from the Holy Land by Templars; others maintain that it flourished in the sixteenth century as part of Templar Masonry. Dr Oliver, however, in his "Account of the Schism" says that there "exists sufficient evidence . . . to fix the era of its introduction to a period which is coeval with the memorable schism amongst the English masons about the middle of the eighteenth century."

It is generally admitted by those who have traced Masonic things to their source that the Degree of the Holy Royal Arch was the first of the many additional degrees which have been built upon the basis of what is regarded as "Pure and Ancient Freemasonry." The late Bro. D. Murray Lyon was of opinion that the Degree was fabricated on the continent between the years 1735 and 1740, and

that after its introduction to Britain it was taken up as a Masonic Degree by Brethren who claimed to be representatives of the Grand Lodge of York. Bro. Robert Freke Gould says that, in England, "the degree was certainly worked from about the year 1740, and presumably from an earlier date. The members of the Royal Arch are described by Dr Dassigny, in 1744, as 'a body of men who have passed the chair.' At that date, however, the *degree* of Installed (or Past) Master was unknown . . . and it would therefore appear that the communication of the secrets of the Royal Arch was the earliest form in which any esoteric teaching was specially linked with the incident of Lodge Mastership, or in other words, that the *degree* of the Royal Arch was the complement of the Master's grade."

The degree was worked in regular Lodges in England for many years, but gradually was separated from Blue Masonry into Chapters of Red Masonry and these Chapters were gathered under the guidance and control of the Supreme Grand Chapter of England which was

erected in 1767. So far as Scotland was concerned, the English practice was followed, and until the erection of the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland in 1817 the Royal Arch degrees were frequently worked by regular Lodges. The practice received a certain sanction from the opinion of many Freemasons that the Degree was in earlier days the completion of the Third or Master's Degree. Indeed, so able a student of Freemasonry as Preston speaks of a Lodge in the Third Degree as a chapter; and when the opposing Grand Lodges of England came together in 1813 they declared by their Solemn Act of Union that "pure and ancient Masonry consists of three Degrees and no more, viz.: those of the Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason *including* the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch."

There has always been considerable difference of opinion as to what exactly constitutes the degree or degrees of the Royal Arch. In England it is confined to one degree which, however, consists of a large part of what is contained in two degrees that are practised in Scotland,

viz., those of Excellent Master and Royal Arch. In addition, the Scottish Supreme Grand Chapter recognises the Mark as one of their Degrees, but this is also tenaciously held by the Grand Lodge of Scotland as properly belonging to the Fellow Craft and therefore part of its regular ceremonial. On the other hand the Mark is not known in England. At the meeting of the Grand Lodge of England held on 5th March, 1856 it was unanimously resolved: "That the Degree of Mark Mason or Mark Master is not at variance with the ancient landmarks of the Order, and that the Degree be an addition to and form part of Craft Masonry; and consequently may be conferred by all regular Warranted Lodges, under such regulations as shall be . . . sanctioned by the Grand Master." But the unanimity that prevailed in Grand Lodge was apparently not widespread without, and at the following Communication, when the minute came up for confirmation, it was negatived. As Bro. Gould says, "we find then, among the conflict of laws under the various Grand Lodges, that in England the Royal Arch is recognised,

and the Mark Degree is not ; in Scotland the Royal Arch is not, but the Mark is, and in Ireland both are recognised."

In Scotland the Mark is common both to the Lodge and the Chapter. It had been the subject of much discussion between the two supreme bodies, but at length a mutual understanding was arrived at when, on 19th December, 1860, the following Resolutions were adopted by the Grand Lodge and Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland, and declared to be held as laws and statutes of Grand Lodge:—

1. That all Lodges holding of the Grand Lodge of Scotland shall be allowed to work the Mark Degree in virtue of the Charters which they already possess.

2. That, to prevent confusion with brethren belonging to Lodges out of this Kingdom, or with Sister Grand Lodges, this degree, although held by the Grand Lodge to be a second part of the Fellow-Craft Degree, shall only be conferred on Master Masons, *and the secrets shall only be communicated in presence*

of those who have taken it either from a Lodge or Chapter entitled to grant it.

3. That the Grand Lodge of Scotland and the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland shall adopt the same Ritual in conferring the Degree, being that now adjusted by their respective Committees.

4. That any candidate applying to be admitted to the Royal Arch Degrees—if he has received this Degree in a regular Lodge—shall not require to take it a second time from the Chapter into which he seeks admission; but in the event of his not having received it, he shall be obliged to take it from that Chapter.

5. That as regards the Royal Arch Degrees, this Degree shall be reckoned the Fourth Degree in Masonry.

6. That nothing contained in these Regulations shall interfere with the superintendence which the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter claims over Mark Masonry out of Scotland—or with the Lodges holding of it in England or abroad.

As I cherish the hope that this little book will be found useful by Royal Arch Masons in all parts of the globe, I have decided to deal with the three Degrees, viz. :—

The Mark Master.

The Excellent Master.

The Royal Arch.

THE MARK DEGREE.

The one link that connects the Mark Degree with that of the Royal Arch is the Keystone. The whole of the Degree is built upon the cutting, the rejection, and the recovery of this particular piece of masonry at the time of the building of King Solomon's Temple. The Keystone was intended for the arch of the S——— V———, and almost five hundred years later when the Captives returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, the S——— V——— yielded up its treasures for the good of humanity. It is therefore at the S——— V——— that the two Degrees find their common meeting point, and it may be that that is the reason why the logical Scot insists on regarding the Mark as pertaining to the ceremonial of the Royal Arch.

OFFICERS OF A MARK LODGE.

The following are the recognised officers in a Lodge of Mark Masters:—
Mark Master.
Mark Senior Warden.

- Mark Junior Warden.
- Master Overseer.
- Senior Overseer.
- Junior Overseer.
- Inner Guard.
- Janitor.

APPLICANTS FOR ADVANCEMENT.

Those who would be admitted to the Mark Degree must have been regularly entered Apprentices, passed Fellow-Crafts, and raised to the High and Sublime Degree of Master Masons. They must be able to demonstrate their rank as masons when called upon, and they must be ready to reaffirm their faith in God, and to take upon themselves a further obligation to maintain secrecy with regard to all grips, signs and tokens.

THE CHISEL.

Having expressed his desire to be advanced to the Degree of Mark Master Mason, and having been admitted within the door of the Lodge, the Master Mason is received on the edge of the Chisel an instrument that morally demonstrates the advantages of discipline and education by which means alone he

may become a fit member of regularly organised society.

THE BENEFIT OF PRAYER.

As in all the earlier Degrees the blessing of Heaven is invoked.

“Almighty God, G. and G.O. of the U., we humbly beseech Thy blessing upon this assembly gathered together in Thy name. Do Thou especially bless him who now kneels before Thee. Grant that he may so regulate his daily life that when, at the close of his earthly labours, he comes before Thee, he may be found worthy to receive the mark of Thy approval, and become a perfect stone in that immortal Temple not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.”

TO PROVE HIS RIGHT.

Fortified thus by prayer, the postulant is addressed by the Mark Master who explains to him that since the building of K——— S———’s T——— and the institution of the Degree of Mark Master Mason as now practised, a regulation has been made among the Craft that no one shall be advanced to the rank he now desires unless previously raised to the

sublime degree of Master Mason, and he thereupon requests the postulant to demonstrate to the brethren assembled that he has passed through the earlier degrees.

HOW TO CHOOSE A MARK.

Having satisfied the brethren that he is qualified to receive the Degree, the Mason is next taught how to select his Mark which, once selected and recorded in the Mark Book of the Lodge, cannot thereafter be changed. He is also taught the manner in which to apply for his wages; and thereafter, kneeling at the altar, in the manner sanctioned by long usage, repeats the following

OBLIGATION.

I, A. B., of my own free will and accord, in the presence of the G.O. of the U., and of this Lodge of Mark Master Masons, do hereby, hereat, and hereon, most solemnly promise and swear that I will never reveal any of the secrets, parts or points of a M.M.M. to any one who is not a M.M.M., nor to any one of this Degree, unless he has come by them in as lawful a manner as I am now about to do in the body of a regularly warranted,

and duly constituted Lodge of three or more M.M.M.'s. I further solemnly promise that I will conform to the laws and regulations of the ——— Lodge, which I will always acknowledge to be my mother Lodge of Mark Masters, and that I will obey all signs and summonses sent to me from a regularly constituted Lodge of M.M.M.'s. provided they be within reach of my cable-tow, and do not interfere with my own necessary avocations. I further solemnly promise that I will not unjustly use any F.C.'s mark; that I will receive a brother's mark when offered to me requesting a favour, and grant his request when just and lawful, and in my power to do so, without prejudice to myself or family; and that when presiding over an Operative or Mark Master's Lodge, I will as a Warden, pay the wages that are due, and as a Master endeavour to reward merit and suppress jealousy.

THE BADGE OF A MARK MASON.

Having been obligated and instructed in the secrets of the Degree the brother is invested with the badge and distinguishing jewel of a Mark Master Mason

to signify his advancement in the science. The jewel is a model of the stone which the builders rejected, the Keystone of the Arch of the S——— V——— of K——— S———'s T———. The badge not only points out the brother's rank as a Mark Master Mason, but is meant to remind him that whether he may m——— w——— or i——— his words and actions are observed and recorded by T.G.O.O.T.U. to Whom he must give an account of his conduct through life, and Who will reward or punish according as the brother has observed or disregarded His divine command.

THE MARK.

As a rule the Mark worn by Freemasons all over the world as an indication of their rank in the fraternity assumes the form of a Mark Master's Keystone. It is made generally of pebble, sometimes of mother-of-pearl, occasionally of gold or silver. The Mark should, in addition to the cryptic letters and equilateral triangle, contain the device adopted by the wearer, which device is really the person's own mark chosen by himself, recorded in the mark book of his

Lodge and not thereafter capable of being changed for any other device. The model Keystone is a peculiar pledge of brotherhood and should a Mason in distress present such a badge to another Mason it is the duty of the latter to render such assistance as is within his power.

MASONS' MARKS.

The subject of Masons' Marks has given rise to much controversy. Devices are to be found in all old buildings, often in great abundance. It is not clear what their original purpose was, but there is a belief that they formed a sort of language understood by early operatives and were thus a means of communication. Mr George Godwin, the eminent architect, though a non-mason, took great interest in the subject, and was one of the first to point out that marks were to be found on all important buildings of ecclesiastical or national importance. He contributed a paper to the Transactions of the London Society of Antiquaries, and there he states that, in his opinion, "these marks, if collected, and compared, might assist in connecting the various bands of operatives, who, under

the protection of the church—mystically united—spread themselves over Europe during the Middle Ages, and are known as Freemasons.”

THE WORKING TOOLS.

The working tools of a Mark Master Mason are the Mallet and the Chisel. Every brother in passing through the E——— A——— and F——— C——— Degrees has been made familiar with their uses. They are further employed by the Mark Master Mason to cut his mark of approval and thus to indicate that the finished stone is fitted for its place in the intended structure. But by the brother who is not an operative but a member of the Free and Accepted or Speculative Masonic Body the tools are applied in a moral sense and thus become instruments of wise instruction.

THE CHISEL.

The Chisel morally demonstrates the advantages of discipline. The mind, like the diamond in its original state, is rude and unpolished; but as the effect of the chisel on the external coat soon brings to view the inner beauties of the

gem, so education discovers the latent virtues of the mind, and draws them forth to range the wide field of matter and space, and to display the summit of human knowledge—our duty to God and man.

THE MALLET.

The Mallet morally teaches the thoughtful Freemason to correct irregularities, and reduce man to a proper level, so that by quiet deportment in the school of discipline, he may learn to be content. What the Mallet is to the workman, enlightened reason is to the passions; it curbs ambition, represses envy, moderates anger, and encourages good dispositions, whence arises among good Masons that comely order

Which nothing earthly gives nor can
destroy

The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-
felt joy.

By being reminded of the moral advantages of discipline and education the Freemason is, or should be, led to entertain a firm but humble hope that, by the correction of irregularities and the subjugation of passions, he may be

found worthy to receive the approving mark of T.G.O.O.T.U., as fitted to form part of that spiritual edifice, "that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

THE LEGEND OF THE MARK.

The ceremonial of the Mark Degree is based upon a Legend that has been handed down from time immemorial and, in the form of a Lecture, is usually narrated to the brother on his advancement. Its chief value lies in the fact that it illustrates the meaning and origin of the various s——s and s——s which have been communicated to the postulant, and provides a short account of the industrial organisation which, according to Masonic tradition, was in existence at the building of K—— S——s T——.

At that date, and before the institution of the Degrees of Master Mason and Installed Master, there were eighty thousand operatives employed. A certain number of these were hewers in the quarries at Zeredatha, and the remainder were engaged as builders at the Temple.

Besides these, there were thirty thousand employed in the Forests of Lebanon.

In order that every member of this mighty army of one hundred and ten thousand workmen might be known to his superior officers every part of the workmanship was subjected to the nicest scrutiny, and every faithful labourer received with punctuality the reward of his industry and skill.

The immense multitude was divided into eleven hundred lodges of F——— C———'s, and an equal number of E——— A———'s, the latter being placed under the supervision of the former, who taught them their business. Over the whole presided three thousand, three hundred Overseers, or Mark Masters. There were three such officials in each Lodge and these are to-day represented by the Master and Wardens.

Each F——— C——— had a peculiar mark known to his three Overseers, and the Overseers, though they had but one mark in common by which they stamped their approval of the work of the F——— C———, had other marks by which they denoted the juxtaposition of any two stones. Thus, without any

difficulty, was each individual's work known and recognised as perfect, and its proper place in the building indicated.

The F——— C———s were allowed to select any mark not previously fixed on by another in their own Lodge. It might consist of three, five, seven, nine or any odd number of lines, joined together to form any figure with the exception of the equilateral triangle.

The Overseers, as already indicated, had but one mark, the —— which alludes to the Triune Essence of the Deity. The three thousand three hundred Overseers were divided into one hundred Lodges. There were thirty-three in each Lodge, and each Lodge had three rulers. These were the Mark Masters. They were elected by H.A.B. himself. They acted as Masters and Wardens, and on them devolved the responsibility of paying the others their wages.

When the F——— C———s and their Overseers or Mark Masters applied for their wages, they put in their hands in a different manner and at different wickets, so that if a F——— C——— presumed to put in his hand at the M. M. M———'s wicket, he was instantly

detected as an imposter and the W. J. W. of the Mark Masters was ready with an a—— to c—— off his h—— as a punishment. From this circumstance part of the penalty of the Degree is derived, and both it and the other penalty are believed to have been approved forms of punishment among the Sidonians in ancient times.

The p—— w—— of the Degree is said by Masonic tradition to have originated either in consequence of the Mark Master's Degree having been instituted there by H. A. B., before he reached Jerusalem, or from the fact that the timber, after having been felled in the Forests of Lebanon, was carried there on floats by sea. Tradition informs us that the shore at that place was so steep that it was impossible to ascend from the rafts without assistance from above, and that this was rendered by Brethren who were stationed there for the purpose and who used the s—— g—— called the L—— which is now the p—— g—— of the Degree.

The Master's business was to prove each stone, not only as to its soundness which he did by giving it three blows

with his mallet, and as to its finish by turning it over for careful inspection, but as to its being made exactly according to the working-plan with which each Mark Master was provided. If found perfect in every way, it received the Mark Master's mark and was sent on to the Temple; but if not, it was condemned and thrown over among the rubbish. This was effected, we are told, by two or more F——— C———s taking it between them, and after swinging it backwards and forwards three times, heaving it over. From this circumstance the Freemason gets the h——— o——— s——— of the Degree.

One of the other s———s of the Degree, as it is connected with thanks-giving, may be of an early date but is usually ascribed to an event which took place during the building of the Temple. Every sixth working day it was the custom of the Overseers or Mark Masters to wait upon the Grand Master, H. A. B., to receive instructions and also the necessary plans for carrying on the works and keeping the men employed.

It would appear that part of the working plans had been mislaid, but an in-

genious and intelligent F——— C——— having either seen the portion of the imperfect plan in the Overseer's possession before it was lost, or forming a good idea of it from the nature of the work, perceived that a stone of a very particular form and construction was needed to complete the design. Probably thinking to gain honour to himself for displaying a superior knowledge of his work, he immediately commenced to block out such a stone. After spending much labour on it, he ultimately finished it by putting his own mark upon it.

When the working plans were examined by the Overseers no design could be found for this particular stone, and it was therefore deemed superfluous, and the F——— C——— instead of honour received nothing but angry words and reproaches for having idled away his time. In the heat of passion the Overseer ordered the stone to be thrown over among the rubbish, which was accordingly done by two men who were doubtless well-pleased at what they considered the deserved humiliation of their companion. The sorrowful F——— C——— who had cut the stone, on seeing the

unworthy treatment of his work, assumed that posture from which the F—— — C——— of to-day derives the sign of s———w or l———n.

The stone lay long neglected among the rubbish. At last, however, the time drew near when the keystone of the S——— V——— designed by K——— S——— as part of the equipment of his temple was required, and to which the portion of the working plan alluded to belonged. Search was made at the Temple but no such stone could be found, and on further enquiry it was ascertained that no stone of the requisite form had ever been brought there.

The Overseer of the builders then sent to the Overseer of the hewers in the quarries, who had received the plan and orders for that part of the building, to enquire why the stone had not been sent forward. The latter declared he knew nothing about it. There was no plan of any such stone among those entrusted to his care.

The work now came to a standstill, and the reason was speedily demanded by H. A. B. who not only recollected drawing the plan, and writing instruc

tions about the stone which he wished finished in a particular manner, but also of giving them himself to the Overseer of the hewers. The latter was sent for and sharply reprimanded for his carelessness in losing that portion of the plan.

On learning the shape of the stone required, the Overseer recollected that one of the given description had been cut by one of his workmen. He informed the Grand Master of this, adding that, owing to his not finding it noticed in his plans, he had refused to mark it as approved, and had, indeed, caused it to be rejected. Having elicited the matter so far, Hiram sent for the F——— C——— who had cut the stone, and questioned him concerning it. From the answers given the Grand Master concluded that it must have been the very stone required. He caused instant and careful search to be made for it amongst the rubbish where happily, it was found uninjured.

As the Master Overseer had displayed so much lack of knowledge of his business as not to be able to discover the use of the keystone, the Grand Master deposed him, depriving him of his Lodge

and insignia of office which he conferred on the humble F——— C——— whom he made a Mark Master, and raised to fill the offender's place.

The F——— C———, or newly made Mark Master, was commanded to cut the Mark Master's mark on the stone enclosing his own, and outside of it in a circle the following letters:—

H. T. W. S. S. T. K. S.

There is now much doubt as to the original meaning of the phrase of which these letters are the initials of the words composing it, but they are generally supposed to have been equivalent to the historic statement adopted by modern Freemasons in relation to them. Having been duly marked, the stone was conveyed to the Temple with much pomp and parade. The new Mark Master, delighted when he saw it fixed in its place, clasped his hands together in an ecstasy of joy and, looking-up, employed that prayer of thankfulness to God which is now the accompaniment of the sign of joy or exaltation.

JOPPA.

This town of Palestine which figures prominently in the Mark Degree was the

seaport of Jerusalem from which it was distant about forty miles in a westerly direction. The place is now called Jaffa. Baron Geramb, who visited the Holy Land in 1842, and set forth his impressions in his work entitled a "Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Mount Sinai," has a reference to Joppa that cannot fail to interest Freemasons. "Yesterday morning, at daybreak," he says, "boats put off and surrounded the vessel, to take us to Joppa, the *access to which is difficult* on account of the numerous rocks that present to view their bare flanks. The boats being much lower than the bridge, upon which one is *obliged to climb*, and having no ladder, the landing is *not effected without danger*. More than once it has happened that passengers, in springing out, have broken their limbs; and we might have met with the like accident if several persons had not *hastened to our assistance*." Thus is the Masonic tradition confirmed by modern travellers.

THE KEYSTONE.

Critics of the Royal Arch Degree sometimes challenge the legend of the S——— V——— on the ground that the

arch was unknown in the days of Solomon. The researches of antiquaries and travellers, however, tend to confirm the tradition. Lieutenant Warren, a brother of the Craft, working under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration Fund, saw evidence of the antiquity of this form of architecture; Wilkinson discovered arches with regular keystones at Thebes and these were assigned to a period four hundred and sixty years previous to the erection of the Temple. Further, Dr Clark asserts that lancet-shaped arches to be found in the Cyclopean gallery of Tyrius take us back to the days of Abraham.

ADVANCED.

The brother who receives the signs and secrets of a Mark Master Mason is said to be "advanced." The term is not inappropriate since it is used to indicate that the Master Mason is promoted beyond the degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry and is advancing along the pathway that leads to the Holy Royal Arch.

THE MARK MASTER'S CHARGE.

After he has been admitted to a knowledge of the characteristic secrets of the

Mark Master's Degree the postulant is addressed by the presiding officer, or other worthy and well-informed brother, in the following or similar terms:—

Brother A. B., I congratulate you on having been thought worthy of being advanced to this honourable degree. Permit me to impress upon you that your assiduity should ever be commensurate with your duties, which become more and more extensive as you advance in Freemasonry. In the honourable character of Mark Master Mason it should be more particularly your duty to let your conduct in the Lodge and among your brethren be such that it will stand the test of the G. O's square; so that you may not, like the unfinished and imperfect work of the negligent and unfaithful of former times, be rejected and thrown aside. While such is your conduct, should misfortune assail you, friends forsake you, envy traduce you, and malice persecute you, yet may you have confidence that among Mark Master Masons you will find friends who will administer relief in your distress, and comfort in your afflictions. Above all things, ever bear in mind as a consola-

tion under all the frowns of fortune, and as an encouragement to hope for better prospects, that the stone which the builders rejected (possessing merits to them unknown) became the chief stone of the corner.

AFFILIATION AS A M. M. M.

In Scotland where the Degree of M. M. M. is recognised as a part of Craft Masonry it frequently happens that a brother who is desirous of becoming a R. A. Mason is already in possession of the Mark Degree. In such a case it is necessary that he should be affiliated to the Mark Lodge which works under the Charter authorising the Royal Arch Chapter. The applicant is introduced as a brother desirous of being affiliated, and having proved that he is in possession of the Degree he takes the oath of affiliation:—

I ———, in the presence of A.G., and before these brethren assembled do solemnly promise that, as an affiliated member of this Mark Master's Lodge I will obey the Office-Bearers and Byelaws in all matters that are not inconsistent with my duty to my mother Lodge.

The brother is then formally received

into the membership of the Lodge, and is fit to advance to the next Degree.

THE CLOSING OF THE LODGE.

The labours of the day being ended, and all wages so far as due and demanded paid, the Lodge is closed in the manner prescribed by ancient usage. But in doing so, the Right Worshipful Mark Master gives expression to the main idea of the Degree:

Let us, he says, with all reverence and humility express our gratitude to T. G. O. O. T. U. for favours already received, and as the stone, rejected of the builders, became the head of the corner, so may we, by patience in well-doing, be built up as living stones into a spiritual house meet for His habitation.

THE E.M. DEGREE.

In older Masonic works the Degree of Excellent Master was regarded as one of great importance. "None," say these older books, "but the meritorious and praiseworthy, none but those who through diligence and industry have advanced far towards perfection can be admitted to this degree of masonry.

"In its original establishment, when the Temple at Jerusalem was finished, and the fraternity celebrated the cope stone with great joy, it is demonstrable that none but those who have proved themselves to be complete masters of their profession were admitted to this honour; and indeed the duties incumbent on every mason, who is accepted and acknowledged as a Most Excellent Master, are such as render it indispensable that he should have a correct knowledge of all the preceding degrees."

THE CAPTIVITY.

The Lodge in which Excellent Masters now work, and in which they confer the Degree on those who are found worthy, is presumed to represent the Grand Lodge of Excellent Masters which existed at Babylon during "the seventy years of the captivity."

The period began in the third year of Jehoiakim, and ended in the first year of Cyrus which Bishop Lightfoot dates as *anno mundi* 3470. Shortly after the death of the wise King of Israel disaster came upon his dominions. During the reign of Rehoboam, his son and successor, ten of the twelve tribes revolted and as a consequence the Jewish people were divided into the separate Kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The Kingdom of Judah retained possession of the Temple, but presently Jerusalem was attacked from without, and, after a series of stirring events, it was finally captured and looted by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who carried away captive first Jehoiachin, and finally Zedekiah, the last King of Judah. The city surrendered at midnight in the eleventh year of the reign of

Zedekiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the Babylonian Guards.

According to the Masonic tradition this general rifled the Temple of its sacred vessels—other authorities maintain that the treasures of the House of God had been carried off at an earlier date—set the Temple and the city on fire, and carried the citizens captive to Babylon, the ancient capital of Chaldea, situated on both sides of the Euphrates, and once the most magnificent city of the ancient world.

Here, in alien surroundings, the Jewish captives continued for three score years and ten and, during these years they would naturally seek to preserve their identity in the land of their captors; and such of them as followed the mason craft would find a common meeting place in the Lodge. Only those who were descendants of the children of the Captivity, were admitted to membership, and doubtless at their meetings they would frequently sigh for the old home from which they were exiled.

At length in the seventieth year of their captivity, Cyrus on his ascending the throne and commiserating the calam-

ity which had befallen the ancient people of the Lord, issued an edict granting them permission to return to Zion and rebuild the Temple which the earlier king had laid in ruins. This they were not slow to do. Under the care of Zerubbabel, the Prince of Judah, who was assisted by Jeshua the High Priest, and Haggai the Scribe, they returned to the land of their fathers. But previous to their departure they agreed upon certain signs and tokens to mark them out from the rest of their brethren. These were communicated in the Lodge of Excellent Masters which was arranged and furnished after the pattern of a Craft Lodge with this difference that it was divided into separate compartments by four curtains or Veils.

OFFICERS OF AN EXCELLENT MASTERS' LODGE.

The following are the recognised officers in a Lodge of Excellent Masters.

Excellent Master.

Excellent Senior Warden.

Excellent Junior Warden.

Captain of Third Veil.

Captain of Second Veil.

Captain of First Veil.
 Inner Guard.
 Tyler or Janitor.

THE ADMISSION.

All who are admitted to the Degree of Excellent Master must have been duly entered, passed, raised, and advanced to the Mark. They gain admission by means of the p—— g—— and p—— w—— of a Mark Master.

THE APPLICATION.

The Lodge having been opened in due and ancient form, and the routine business disposed of, the I—— G—— intimates that Brother ——, who has been raised to the high and sublime degree of Master Mason, and duly advanced to the degree of Mark Master Mason, is desirous of availing himself of the Decree of Cyrus so that he may return to Jerusalem to assist in rebuilding the Temple, and he now approaches the Grand Lodge of Babylon humbly praying that the Lodge will grant him permission, and furnish him with such tokens as shall be satisfactory to the

Brethren who have already arrived at Jerusalem.

THE RECEPTION.

Everything being found in order the candidate is received on the pentagram applied to his l—— b——. The device represents the f—— p—— of f——, and is therefore intended to remind him of his duties as a Master Mason.

THE PENTAGRAM.

The pentagram is the jewel of the Degree. It is a geometrical figure representing an endless triangle and having five points. It is called "the pentangle of Solomon and is said to have constituted the seal or signet of our Ancient Grand Master, and to have been inscribed on the foundation stone of Masonry." Others maintain that it was the Hexapla or six-pointed star that was Solomon's seal.

Among the Pythagoreans this device of the five-pointed star was employed as an emblem of health "because," says Mackey, "it constituted a figure of five lines and five points." Five is one of the perfect numbers in Freemasonry, and was one of the sacred numbers among

the Hebrews. It is frequently used as such in the V——— of the S——— L———. “This usage,” writes Gesenius, “perhaps passed over to the Hebrews from the religious rites of Egypt, India and other Oriental nations; among whom *five* minor planets and *five* elements and elementary powers, were accounted sacred.”

THE INVOCATION.

After he has been received on the Pentagram the Candidate kneels that, as in the former Degrees, the blessing of Heaven may be invoked. Masonic liturgy supplies a form in the following words:—

O Thou Eternal and Omnipotent God, Who didst appear to Thy servant Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, enkindle, we beseech Thee, in our hearts devotion to Thee, love to our Brethren, and charity to all mankind. Comfort us and all Thy people with Thy divine grace. Guide and assist us in rebuilding a second Temple to Thy Holy service, and grant that when the veil of this earthly tabernacle shall be rent asunder we may be received into that

Holy Sanctuary where Thou reignest
for ever and ever.

So mote it be!

ORIGIN OF E. M. DEGREE.

Up to this point the Candidate is in mental darkness with regard to the Degree, and properly to understand and appreciate the ceremonial through which he is about to pass, the origin of the Degree is explained to him by the Right Worshipful and Excellent Master:—

Brother ——— in order to make clear to you the purpose and meaning of this Degree, I think it right to inform you that this Lodge is presumed to represent the Grand Lodge of Excellent Masters assembled at Babylon about 470 years after the building of King Solomon's Temple.

You will recall that, in the Degree of Master Mason, you were made to personify our Grand Master, H. A. B., and that in the Degree of M. M. M. you were made to typify the young and gifted Craftsman who shaped the Keystone for the S——— V———. In this Degree, your Conductor has introduced you as representing one of the descendants of

the Children of Israel who were carried captive into Babylon. You are presumed to be desirous of returning to Jerusalem to assist in rebuilding the Temple; and with that object in view, you are further presumed to have sought admission to the Lodge.

As you will readily understand, the first three degrees in Freemasonry, as well as that of Mark Master Mason must, during these 470 years that are presumed to have elapsed, have been widely spread; and as the Decree of Cyrus only affects the descendants of those who were brought captive to Babylon, so, as a means of preventing others from sharing in the great and glorious work now commencing, we, previous to the departure of Zerubbabel and our Brethren, instituted a new degree in Masonry. For so doing we have the example of our ancestors who, at every building of importance adopted particular marks of recognition known only to those employed at it. However, since the time when King Solomon reformed the science, and admitted the Gentiles to a participation in our mysteries, no alteration has been made, but we feel that the present circumstances

render this new degree necessary. We only communicate it, however, to those who have been found qualified to preside over Operative or F——— C——— Lodges, trusting that they will take due care whom they take along with them or employ under them.

OBLIGATION OF E. M.

The applicant having satisfied the the Lodge as to his knowledge of the earlier Degrees, and having indicated his willingness to undertake an obligation of secrecy with regard to this Degree is obligated as follows:—

I, ——, in the presence of A. G. and in the body of this legally constituted Lodge of Excellent Masters, do, of my own free will and accord, hereby and hereon, solemnly promise and sincerely swear never to reveal any of the secrets, parts or points of this Degree to any of an inferior Degree, except in the body of a lawfully constituted Lodge of Excellent Masters, not fewer than seven R. A. Masons, myself included, being present, and not even then except to him who is a M. M. M. and is desir-

ous of proceeding to the Degree of the Holy Royal Arch.

THREE SINISTER FIGURES.

In the course of the ceremonial the candidate is informed of three persons mentioned in the Old Testament and who have gained a certain measure of immortality through their rebellion against established order. These are Korah, Dathan and Abiram. The story of the rebellion of these men may be read in the Seventeenth Chapter of the Book of Numbers. The verses that bear most closely upon the matter are these:—

“The Lord spake unto Moses saying,
“Speak unto the congregation, saying,
Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

“And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him.

“And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.

“So they got up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every

side; and Dathan and 'Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children.

“And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind.

“If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me.”

“But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.

“And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them:

“And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

“They and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit, and the

earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation."

The purpose of the allusion to this Old Testament catastrophe is doubtless to impress upon Freemasons not only their duty to God but that, as citizens, it is expected of them that they will obey established authority.

THE PASSING OF THE VEILS.

The candidate having withdrawn from the Lodge, the Veils are extended so as to divide the hall into separate parts, whereupon he is readmitted and conducted through the ceremony of Passing the Veils.

This interesting part of the ritual has its own symbolical meaning. The Veils allude to the veils or coverings of the Tabernacle erected by Moses in the Wilderness, and the ceremony of Passing the Veils may be considered as emblematical of the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness, and of their return from Babylon to Jerusalem.

The Veils—as were the veils of the tabernacle—are of different colours—blue, purple, scarlet and white, or fine linen—and each has its own meaning.

THE BLUE VEIL.

The First or the Blue Veil presents the peculiar colour of the three ancient or symbolical degrees. It is an emblem of universal friendship and benevolence, and instructs the thoughtful and attentive brother to recognise that in the mind of a Mason those virtues should be as expansive as the blue arch of heaven.

THE PURPLE VEIL.

The colour of the Purple Veil is produced by a due mixture of blue and scarlet, the former of which, as already explained, is the characteristic colour of the symbolic, or first three degrees. It teaches us to cultivate and improve that spirit of harmony between the brethren of the symbolic degrees, and the companions of the sublime degrees, which should ever distinguish the members of a society founded upon the principles of everlasting truth and universal philanthropy.

THE SCARLET VEIL.

The Scarlet Veil is emblematical of fervency and zeal, and is the appropriate colour of the Royal Arch Degree. It admonishes the Freemason to be fervent:

in the exercise of his devotions to God, and zealous in his endeavours to promote the happiness of men.

THE WHITE VEIL.

The White Veil is emblematical of that purity of heart and rectitude of conduct which should at all times characterise a Freemason and which are the only passports to the Grand Lodge above.

SYMBOLS OF THE ELEMENTS.

According to Josephus, the Jews understood the different veils to represent or typify the four elements. The fine white linen veil was a symbol of the earth, so understood because it was woven from flax, a product of the earth; the scarlet was the natural symbol of fire; the purple denoted water, or the sea, because its colour was derived from the murex, a shell-fish whose habitat is the ocean: and blue, as reproducing the colour of the sky was held to be a very appropriate symbol of the air.

THE BURNING BUSH.

This great source of true Masonic Light is referred to and occupies a pro-

minent place in the ceremonial of the Holy Royal Arch because it was there that the Tetragrammaton was delivered to Moses.

NOTABLE NAMES.

Certain names linger in the memory as a result of taking part in the ceremony of Passing the Veils and as these names are all of Scriptural origin it is worth while noting their significance.

The first is

RABBONI.

It may be translated as meaning "a most excellent master or teacher," and is more frequently met with in the form "Rabbi" which is described as "the usual form of address with which the learned were greeted" Jahn tells us in his "Biblical Archæology" that the Jews had their seven wise men who were called "Rabboni." John the Baptist is once called "Rabbi" by his disciples. Elsewhere in the Gospels the term is used in allusion to our Lord. Once "Rabboni" is applied to Christ. In the 16th verse of the twentieth chapter of John we read: "Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master."

The next is—

BEZALEEL.

The name is derived from that of the chief architect of the Temple, who was the son of Uri and who was expressly called by Jehovah to superintend the erection of the "tent of meeting." The facts are set forth in the 31st chapter of Exodus:

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

"See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:

"And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.

"To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,

"And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship."

Bezaleel was charged with the construction of the furniture for court and Tabernacle. He also superintended the making of the garments for the priests and the preparation of all necessary oil and incense. We learn further

from Exodus, chap. 35, verse 34 that Bezaleel had the gift of imparting instruction to his subordinates. One of these was—

AHOLIAB.

He was the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, and is generally understood to have had no small share in the work of building the Tabernacle.

Two other names that are made familiar to the postulant as he passes the veils are

AMMI RUHAMAH.

These occur in the first verse of the second chapter of Hosea, which reads "Say ye unto the brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters Ruhamah." Marginal notes in the authorised version of the English Bible define "Ammi" as meaning "my people" and "Ruhamah" as "having obtained mercy." Bishop Horsley commenting upon these terms says:—"Although the Israelites, in the days of Hosea, were in general corrupt and addicted to idolatry, yet there were among them, in the worst times, some who had not bowed the knee to Baal. These were always Ammi and Ruhamah: *God's own people and a darling daughter.* It is

probable that God here commissions these faithful few to admonish the inhabitants of the land in general of the dreadful judgments that would be brought upon them by the gross idolatry of the Jewish church and nation: 'Say ye unto your brethren, O Ammi, (O my people) and to your sisters, Ruhamah (O darling daughter)' As terms indicative of the mercy of God they are potent with meaning to Masons.

HEBREW CAPTIVES FROM BABYLON.

Brethren who pass the Veils and receive the secrets belonging to each are in that way prepared to represent Hebrew captives in Babylon anxious to avail themselves of the decree of Cyrus which grants permission to God's chosen people to leave the land of their captivity and to return to Jerusalem to take part in the work of reconstruction.

The postulant is now told by the master that he may proceed on his symbolical journey. On his arrival at Jerusalem he will meet guards or sentinels stationed for the purpose of keeping off intruders and securing that only properly equipped persons shall be admitted to

the scene of operations. These guards or sentinels will be recognised by the standards which they bear and which shall be either Blue or Purple or Scarlet or White, and each will permit the sojourner to pass onwards to the Sanhedrin on receiving the s——— t——— and w——— of his banner.

The Passing of the Veils practically concludes the Degree of Excellent Master for, when next the candidate is introduced to his fellow craftsmen, he learns that the Lodge has become a Chapter and his brethren have assumed the title of Companions.

It is fitting therefore that he should pause here to consider the meaning and purpose of Masonry as these have again been impressed upon him by the Degree of Excellent Master. He should again recall to memory him who was truly the *most excellent* of masons and who did not hesitate even to part with life itself rather than with honour.

May he ever stimulate his successors to imitate his glorious example, that the essence of virtue may enshrine our moral laws, and like the beautiful rose of

Sharon, in conjunction with the lily of the valley, exalt our intellectual part.

When Death, the grand leveller of all human greatness, draws his sable curtain around us, and when the last arrow of our mortal enemy hath been despatched, and the bow of this mighty conqueror broken by the iron arm of time; when the Angel of the Lord declares that time shall be no more, and when, by this victory, God hath subdued all things to Himself, then shall we receive the reward of our virtue, by acquiring an immortal inheritance in those heavenly mansions veiled from mortal eyes, where every secret of Masonry will be revealed. Then shall the great Jehovah, the Grand Master of the Universe, bid us enter into his celestial lodge where Peace, Order and Harmony eternally reign.

RECEIVED AND ACKNOWLEDGED.

Brethren who receive the Most Excellent Master's Degree are said to be "received and acknowledged." After the completion and dedication of the Temple certain brethren, according to Masonic tradition, agreed to remain to keep the magnificent structure in repair. As

a reward for their devotion they were "received" by King Solomon and "acknowledged" by him as Most Excellent Masters, because the possession of this particular degree implied a more intimate knowledge of the science of masonry than that possessed by those of inferior degrees. Dr Oliver, whose imagination never failed him, asserts that there were nine Lodges with nine Excellent Masters in each at the date of the building of the Temple.

THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH.

Royal Arch Freemasons are called "Companions," and they assemble in a "Chapter." There are nine principal officers and these, together with the lesser officers and the Companions generally, are arranged roughly to form a catenarian arch.

A CATENARIAN ARCH.

Dr Albert G. Mackey, in his "Lexicon of Freemasonry," says "if a rope be suspended loosely by its two ends, the curve into which it falls is called a catenarian arch." Noorthouck tells us that "it is a known truth that a semi-circular arch will not sustain its own weight." He maintains that the crown will crush out the sides unless these latter are supported by abutments. The Rev. A. F. A. Woodford, noticing Noorthouck's remarks in his "Masonic Cyclopædia," argues that "the catenarian arch, if truly constructed, will stand independent of any collateral aid." Masons know that the form of a

symbolic lodge is what is somewhat 'inaccurately described as "an oblong square;" similarly the form of a chapter is roughly that of a catenarian arch.

Zerubbabel, as Prince; Haggai, as Prophet; and Jeshua, as High Priest are First, Second and Third Principals respectively, and these form the Keystones of the Arch. The First, Second and Third Sojourners form the base, and the outline from base to Keystones is filled in by the others present, each according to the position he holds in the Chapter.

THE ARCH OF HEAVEN.

Job compares heaven to an arch supported by pillars. "The pillars of heaven tremble," he says, "and are astonished at His reproof;" and commenting on this passage, Dr Cutbush writes, "The arch, in this instance, is allegorical, not only of the arch of heaven, but of the higher degree of Masonry, commonly called the Holy Royal Arch."

THE TABERNACLE.

The apartment in which the Chapter assembles is sometimes referred to as a

Tabernacle. It derives this name from the fact that it is understood to represent the temporary tabernacle which Zerubbabel erected near the ruins of the Temple so that the Jews while engaged on the work of reconstruction might enjoy the privileges of their ancient faith.

OFFICE-BEARERS OF A CHAPTER.

The following are the recognised officers in a Royal Arch Chapter:—

Principal Z.

Principal H.

Principal J.

Past Principal Z.

Depute Principal.

Scribe E.

Scribe N.

Treasurer.

Recorder.

Chancellor.

First Sojourner.

Second Sojourner.

Third Sojourner.

Sword-Bearer.

Director of Ceremonies.

Superintendent of Works.

First Standard-Bearer.

Second Standard-Bearer.
 Third Standard-Bearer.
 Organist.
 Steward.
 Janitor.

THE OFFICIAL JEWELS.

As in Craft Masonry each officer has his appropriate jewel, so Companions in a Chapter have peculiar decorations and are called to discharge particular duties. The following are the jewels:—

- Principal Z. wears an Eastern Crown.
 Principal H. wears an irradiated eye.
 Principal J. wears an open Bible irradiated.
 Scribe E. wears crossed pens.
 Scribe N. wears crossed pens.
 1st Sojourner wears an irradiated square.
 2nd Sojourner wears a square.
 3rd sojourner wears a square.
 Treasurer wears a key.
 Standard-Bearer wears a standard bearing the triple tau within a double triangle.
 Sword-Bearer wears crossed swords.
 Director of Ceremonies wears crossed batons with a wreath.
 Organist wears a lyre.

Steward wears a triangle.

Janitor wears a sword.

The jewels are of gold or gilt. All are worn depending from a crimson collar, and all except the janitor's are placed upon a triangle.

A PERFECT CHAPTER.

The "General Regulations" of 1875 quoted in the appendix to Mackey's "Lexicon of Freemasonry" gives the following particulars as to what constitutes a perfect Chapter:—

"According to the ancient custom, a complete Chapter of this order of Freemasonry consists of the three Principals (Zerubbabel, Haggai and Joshua), who when in Chapter assembled, are to be considered conjointly as the Master, and each severally as a Master, two Scribes (Ezra and Nehemiah), three Sojourners, and others—making up the number of seventy-two as a Council (the number of the Jewish Sanhedrim), and no regular Chapter can consist of more; but any number may be exalted, and received as companions, though they are not to hold the staff of office, or be considered as counsellors when more than that number are present."

THE THREE PRINCIPALS.

The three Principals typify the three stones removed from the arch of the S——— V——— by the Sojourners in the course of their excavations. The Principals are Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Jeshua. An early catechism says that, just as the drawing forth of the three stones made the discovery complete so, by the passing of the Sojourners through each of the offices of First, Second and Third Principal is the mystical knowledge of a Royal Arch Chapter obtained.

ZERUBBABEL.

Zerubbabel was the son of Sheaitiel and related to the house of David. It is believed that he was born at Babylon, and he was leader of one of the bands that returned from the Captivity. He has sometimes been identified with Sheshbazzar who is described as "the prince of Judah," and is said to have received from Cyrus the sacred vessels of the Temple and to have carried them to Jerusalem. The reason for identifying Zerubbabel with Sheshbazzar is that while in the 3rd chapter of Ezra Zerubbabel is credited with laying the foun-

dations of the Temple, in the fifth chapter this work is said to have been carried out by Sheshbazzar. There are frequent instances of men having two names and this may be the explanation here. Others contend that the men were not identical, and that both may have returned from the Captivity at the same time; and that while Sheshbazzar may have been the chief official, Zerubbabel may have been the moving spirit in the work of constructing the Temple. Zerubbabel was the chosen servant of the Lord and both Haggai and Zechariah point to him as one of those who are to rebuild the Temple. He returned to Jerusalem at the beginning of the reign of Cyrus. The work was not allowed to proceed unhindered. The builders were impeded by the enemies of the Jews and only after a special appeal had been made to Darius were the builders permitted to proceed without molestation. Biblical students infer from a comparison of certain passages in Zechariah that Zerubbabel is the person to whom allusion is made in the fourth 'night vision' of that prophet as the coming Messiah. Zerubbabel succeeded to the governorship of

Judah early in the reign of Darius Hystaspes.

HAGGAI.

Haggai was the first of the three prophets who flourished after the Captivity. The sphere of his labours was the post exilic community, and as far as one may gather from his writings his ministry was confined to a few months of the second year of Darius Hystaspes, B.C. 520. Tradition says that he was born at Babylon, and it is believed that he accompanied Zerubbabel to Jerusalem. A fair start was made with the rebuilding of the Temple, but the assaults of the Samaritans led to a suspension of operations, and the opposition of the enemy, aided by the indifference of the Jews, was responsible for the site of the Temple lying waste for fifteen years. Haggai reproved the people for their neglect and he and Zechariah incited them to work with such effect that the building was resumed and the Temple completed B.C. 516, the sixth year of the reign of Darius. Freemasons present him in intimate association with Zerubbabel and Jeshua, and for this they have the authority of the Volume of the Sacred

Law. In the first chapter of "Haggai" we read:—

"In the second year of Darius, the King, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest saying:

"Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. . . .

"Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet saying:—

"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts;

"Consider your ways.

"Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. . . .

"And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of Hosts, their God."

Haggai is believed to have finished his work as prophet in Jerusalem, and

to have died there. The Rev. A. F. A. Woodford in his "Masonic Cyclopædia" says that Brother Captain H. Warren one of the conductors of the Palestine Exploration enterprise discovered the seal of Haggai during his researches in subterranean Jerusalem.

JESHUA.

Jeshua is another form of Joshua the name applied to several men of more or less importance in the Book of the Law. The one in whom Freemasons are specially interested was the High Priest who along with Zerubbabel headed the first band of exiles on their return from Babylon to Jerusalem. Ezra and Nehemiah refer to him as Jeshua; Haggai and Zechariah call him Joshua. He was one of those who took a principal part in the work of erecting the altar of burnt offering, and also in laying the foundations for the new Temple. He was the High Priest by lineal descent from the Pontifical family; for he was the son of Josedech, who was the son of Seraiah, who held the office of High Priest at the time when the Chaldeans laid the first Temple in ruins. When the prophets Hag-

gai and Zechariah began to stimulate the laggard Jews to rebuild the House of God. Jeshua is frequently coupled with Zerubbabel and this gives the Freemason authority for including him as one of the Principals of a chapter.

EZRA.

Ezra, the Scribe, who acts as Secretary of the Chapter derives his name and calling from "Ezra, the priest, the scribe of the law of the God in Heaven." He is thus described in the 12th verse of the seventh chapter of Ezra. The author of the article on "Ezra" in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible" tells us that Ezra conceived the idea of infusing new life and new ideals into the Judæan community, by leading a fresh band of zealously religious exiles from Babylonia back to Judæa on a mission of reform. Doubtless, through the kind offices of influential Jews, he secured the goodwill of Artaxerxes, the King, and at last an edict was issued permitting all Jews to leave Babylon. Ezra gathered a band around him which is variously estimated at 1496 and 1690 men besides women and children, and after a four months' journey across the desert reached Jerusalem.

Horne, in his "Introduction to the Scriptures," says that the Scribe was the King's Secretary of State, who registered all acts and decrees. The duty of Scribe E. to day is to register all acts, laws, and transactions for the general good of the Chapter, and, like his early name-sake, he is understood to be "well skilled in languages."

NEHEMIAH.

Scribe N., who assists Scribe E. in the Chapter, represents the Nehemiah who was associated with Ezra in the religious life of the people after their return from Babylon to Jerusalem. Josephus describes him as "a man of good and righteous character and very ambitious to make his own nation happy," adding that he "left the walls of Jerusalem as an eternal monument of himself." According to the Book that bears his name, this great Jewish patriot learned of the lamentable state of affairs in the Homeland, and succeeded in getting himself appointed governor of the Province of Judæa. When he arrived at Jerusalem he immediately set about the rebuilding of the walls of the Holy City, accomplishing the work within the space of

two months. The nation then solemnly rededicated itself to the service of Jehovah, the Book of the Law being read by Ezra in the presence of Nehemiah. This early association of these two Jewish leaders is memorialised in the close companionship which exists to-day between E. and N.

THE SOJOURNERS.

There are three Sojourners who hold office in a Royal Arch Chapter, and each has certain duties to perform according to the rank which he holds, viz, First, Second, or Third Sojourner. The word means a "stranger" or "foreigner"—a man living out of his own country—and in this sense all the children of Israel were sojourners in Babylon. But while the Jewish people were thus, generally, sojourners, the Royal Arch Mason has given special prominence to three who are represented in the tradition as arriving at Jerusalem footsore and weary, and urgently pleading to be permitted to have a share in the great and glorious work of rebuilding the Temple. Their identity is unknown, and history offers no means of tracing them,

but a masonic tradition, entitled, as one author wisely says, "to but little weight" alleges that they were three holy men, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, better known, perhaps, to Bible readers as Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, the trinity of worthies who were so miraculously preserved in the fiery furnace into which they had been thrown by Nebuchadnezzar.

THE STANDARD BEARERS.

There are four officers who carry standards or banners. These are the Captains of the Veils.

The Captain of the First Veil carries a blue banner.

The Captain of the Second Veil carries a purple banner.

The Captain of the Third Veil carries a scarlet banner.

The Captain of the Fourth Veil carries a white banner.

The significance of these colours has already been explained when dealing with the Veils and need not therefore be referred to at greater length here.

THE BANNERS.

While the ceremony of the approach of the Sojourners to Jerusalem to solicit a share in the rebuilding of the Temple demands only the presence of four standard, or banner bearers, the Tracing Board of the Royal Arch Degree, as practised in England, displays twelve banners, being those traditionally ascribed to the twelve tribes of Israel.

They are as follows ;

Judah, scarlet—a lion couchant.

Issachar, blue—an ass crouching beneath its burden.

Zebulon, purple—a ship.

Reuben, red—a man.

Simeon, yellow—a sword.

Gad, white—a troop of horsemen.

Ephraim, green—an ox.

Manasseh, flesh-coloured—a vine by the side of a wall.

Benjamin, green—a wolf.

Dan, green—an eagle.

Asher, purple—a cup.

Naphtali, blue—a hind.

The banner of the Royal Arch Degree which, however, Dr Albert Mackey regards as not peculiar to that Degree but

common to it and Craft Masonry is made up of four of these tribal banners.

The escutcheon, or shield, says Mackey, is divided into four compartments or quarters by a green cross, over which a narrower one of the same length of limb, and of a yellow colour is placed, forming what the heralds call "a cross *vert* voided *or*." Each of the compartments formed by the limbs of the cross is occupied by a different device. In the first quarter is placed a golden lion on a field of blue, to represent the standard of the tribe of Judah; in the second, a black ox on a field of gold, to represent Ephraim; in the third, a man on a field of gold, to represent Reuben; and in the fourth, a golden eagle on a blue ground, to represent Dan. Over all is placed, as the crest, an ark of the covenant, and the motto "Holiness to the Lord."

This banner is a composite of the banners of the four principal tribes of Israel. According to Dr Ashe, when the Israelites were in the wilderness the twelve tribes had four principal banners or standards, every one of which had its peculiar motto; and each standard also

had a distinct sign described upon it. They encamped round about the tabernacle, and on the east side were three tribes under the standard of Judah; on the west, were three tribes under the standard of Ephraim; on the south, were three tribes under the standard of Reuben; and on the north, were three tribes under the standard of Dan; and the standard of Judah was a lion, that of Ephraim, an ox, that of Reuben, a man, and that of Dan an eagle."

The symbolic meaning which the Hebrews gave to these ensigns is not without interest for Freemasons. Vatablus, quoting a Jewish author, says that the man in the banner of Reuben signified religion and reason; the lion in that of Judah denoted power; the ox in that of Ephraim represented patience and toilsome labour; and the eagle in that of Dan betokened wisdom, agility and sublimity.

COMPANION.

A member of a Royal Arch Chapter is called a "Companion" just as a craftsman in a Lodge is called a "brother." The origin of the term is not clear. Dr

Oliver says, and more modern authors—for want of any solution of their own—have been willing to follow him, that the title most probably refers to the companionship in exile and captivity which must have existed amongst the Jews during the years of their residence in Babylon. There is no doubt but that the use of the word is comparatively modern. Still, the idea may have been suggested by the association to which Oliver alludes. Like “brother” it indicates the degree of intimate friendship which ought to govern the members of the Chapter.

THE INVOCATION.

Freemasons are constantly reminded of their duty to God, and never fail to invoke His divine aid in all their undertakings. Royal Arch Companions, true to the instincts which have been fostered in the earlier degrees, call upon Him at the opening of the Chapter to bless the work of their hands, and they express the pious hope that all that is done may be to the honour and glory of His holy name. The feelings of the brethren find

fitting utterance in the following noble Invocation:—

O. G. Thou G. and G. A. O. T. U. at whose word the pillars of the sky were raised and its beauteous arches formed, whose breath kindled the stars, adorned the moon with silver rays, and gave the sun its resplendent lustre, we are assembled in Thy great name to acknowledge Thy power, wisdom and goodness, and to implore Thy blessing. We pray Thee to bless us in our undertaking through life for this great end. Endow us with a competence of Thy most holy Spirit that we may be enabled to trace Thee out in all Thy wonderful works, as far as it is agreeable to Thy divine will, that Thy praises may resound with the fervent love of Thy creatures from pole to pole; and rebound from the vaulted canopy of the heavens, through universal nature.

PEACE, LOVE AND UNITY.

After invoking the blessing of A.G. the Principals pronounce the Chapter open according to the formula customary with the Order. Part of this consists of the time-honoured verse which, though

differing slightly in different localities, is substantially the same all over, and is recognised by R. A. Companions wherever they assemble:—

We three
 Do meet and agree
 In peace, love, and unity
 This Royal Arch Chapter to open
 And not to close the same
 Until we three
 Or three such as we
 Do meet and agree
 In peace, love, and unity.

We three
 Do meet and agree
 In peace, love, and unity
 This Royal Arch Word to speak
 and not to reveal the same
 Until we three
 Or three such as we
 Do meet and agree
 In peace, love, and unity.

AN OPENING CHARGE.

In early days the First Principal of a Chapter was wont, on suitable occasions, to deliver a Charge to his Companions on

the genius and purpose of Freemasonry. As it is not unworthy of a place in the ceremonial of to-day, I venture to quote it:—

Companions, the Masonic system exhibits a stupendous and beautiful fabric, founded on universal wisdom, unfolding its gates to receive, without prejudice or discrimination, the worthy professors of every description of genuine religion or knowledge; concentrating as it were into one body their just tenets, unencumbered with the disputable peculiarities of any sect or persuasion.

This system originated in the earliest of ages, and among the wisest of men. But it is to be lamented, that to the desponding suggestions of some of the weaker minds among our own fraternity, the prejudices of the world against our invaluable institution are in a great measure imputable. Unable to comprehend the beautiful allegories of ancient wisdom, they ignorantly assert that the rites of masonry are futile; its doctrines inefficient. To this assertion, indeed, they give by their own misconduct, a semblance of truth, as we fail to discern

that they are made wiser or better men by their admission to our mysteries.

Companions, I need not tell you that Nature alone can provide us with the ground of wisdom; but Freemasonry will teach and enable us to cultivate the soil, and to foster and strengthen the plant in its growth. Therefore, to dispel the clouds of ignorance, so inauspicious to the noble purposes of our Order, and to hold a moral whereby we may see the power and greatness of the All-wise Disposer of events, the Royal Arch Degree gives us an ample field for discussion, by which we are shewn, in the sad experience of the once-favourite people of God, a lesson how to conduct ourselves in every situation of our existence; and that when fortune, affluence, sickness or adversity attend us, we ought never to lose sight of the Source whence it came, always remembering that the Power which gave is also a Power to take away. Having in itself this grand moral which ought to be cultivated by every man among us, "to do unto others as we would wish to be done by," it imitates in itself every virtue man can possess, and thus aims at

presenting the ultimatum of all terrestrial happiness.

Companions, may we so study virtue as to hand down to posterity a name unspotted by vice and worthy of imitation.

THE BENEFIT OF PRAYER.

The candidate who would proceed from the Degree of Excellent Master to that of the Holy Royal Arch must enter the Chapter in a devout frame of mind and, being duly received by the Companions as one worthy of their privileges, kneel at the entrance or outer Court while the High Priest offers prayer in the following words of our Masonic Liturgy:

Almighty God, sole Architect and Ruler of the Universe at whose command the world burst forth from chaos, and all created matter had its birth, look down, we pray Thee, at this time in a more peculiar manner, on this Thy servant, and henceforth crown him with every blessing from Thine inexhaustible store. But, above all, give him grace to consider well his present undertaking, that he may not proceed therein lightly, nor recede from it dishonourably, but steadily pur-

sue it, ever remembering the intention, which is the acquisition of true wisdom and understanding, by searching out Thy great and glorious works, for promoting Thy honour and glory, for the benefit of the whole creation and his own eternal welfare.

THE QUEST FOR WISDOM.

The student of our mysteries who turns a listening ear to the voice of the Almighty, as that speaks through the V—— of the S—— L—— will find much in the Scriptures of the Old Testament that bears upon the Degree. Especially in this connection, and at this point, when the Candidate is about to approach the Altar to take upon himself the Obligation of a Royal Arch Companion may he be directed to study the words of the All-Wise as these are contained in the second chapter of the Book of Proverbs:—

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee ;

So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding ;

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge,
and liftest up thy voice for understand-
ing ;

If thou seekest her as silver, and
searchest for her as for hid treasures ;

Then shalt thou understand the fear
of the Lord, and find the knowledge of
God,

For the Lord giveth wisdom ; out of
his mouth cometh knowledge and under-
standing.

He layeth up sound wisdom for the
righteous : he is a buckler to them that
walk uprightly.

He keepeth the paths of judgment,
and preserveth the way of his saints.

Then shalt thou understand righ-
teousness, and judgment, and equity,
yea, every good path.

When wisdom entereth into thine
heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy
soul ;

Discretion shall preserve thee, un-
derstanding shall keep thee :

To deliver thee from the way of the
evil man, from the man that speaketh
froward things ;

Who leave the paths of uprightness,
to walk in the ways of darkness ;

Who rejoice to do evil, and delight
in the frowardness of the wicked ;

Whose ways are crooked, and they
froward in their paths ;

To deliver thee from the strange
woman, even from the stranger which
flattereth with her words ;

Which forsaketh the guide of her
youth, and forgetteth the covenant of
her God.

For her house inclineth unto death,
and her paths unto the dead.

None that go unto her return again,
neither take they hold of the paths of
life.

That thou mayest walk in the way of
good men, and keep the paths of the
righteous.

For the upright shall dwell in the
land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

But the wicked shall be cut off from
the earth, and the transgressors shall be
rooted out of it.

THE SEVEN STEPS.

The candidate makes his approach to

the Altar or Pedestal by seven steps. He halts at the third, fifth, and seventh step and makes obeisance as instructed by his Conductor. This manner of advancing is said to derive from a practice of King Solomon who, when daily passing each of the seven pillars which supported the arch of the private gallery on the way to his devotions was wont thus to halt and make obeisance. Seven is one of the sacred numbers in Masonry and with it the brother has been made more and more familiar as he has passed through the various degrees. Here it should remind him of the Divine injunction to keep one day in seven sacred to the Lord.

THE OBLIGATION.

With his heart composed by prayer and meditation, the candidate may approach the Altar as directed by his Conductor and, kneeling there, take upon himself his further Obligation:—

I, A. B., in the presence of A. G. and in the body of this properly constituted R—— A—— Chapter do, of my own free will and accord, hereby, hereat and hereon, solemnly and sincerely prom-

ise, vow and swear that I will never reveal any of the secrets, parts, or points of or belonging to the Degree of the Holy Royal Arch to any one of an inferior degree except in the body of a lawfully constituted Royal Arch Chapter; nor will I aid or assist in the exaltation of any one to this Degree unless at least seven R.A. Masons are present, convened under proper authority for that purpose. I further solemnly swear that I will not pronounce nor assist at the pronouncing of the G—— W—— of the Degree, whether in a Chapter or out of it, except in the manner recognised and approved by the Order; that I will pay all due obedience to the Laws and Regulations of the Supreme Grand Chapter; that I will obey the officers and byelaws of this Chapter, which I will always acknowledge to be my mother Chapter; that I will acknowledge and obey all signs and summonses sent to me from a regularly constituted R.A. Chapter provided the same do not interfere with my other duties and avocations; that I will assist all poor and distressed R.A. Companions to the utmost of my power, in so

far as I may safely do so consistently with my duty to myself and my family. All this I swear to observe without evasion, equivocation or any mental reservation whatsoever under no less a penalty than that of ———; and may the Most High keep me stedfast in this great and solemn obligation.

THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM.

After taking the obligation of a R. A. Companion, the Craftsman is conducted by the First Sojourner through a ceremony the purpose of which is to reveal the method by which the long lost Sacred Word was preserved, afterwards recovered and finally restored to the Craft.

Equipped with the signs, tokens, and words the candidate and sojourner set out on their symbolical pilgrimage to Jerusalem. As they had been informed, they are met by sentinels whom they distinguish by the different colours of their badges. They are able to satisfy these respective Companions of their right to proceed towards the Sanhedrin and in due time they arrive at that Supreme Council.

The legend of the Craft upon which the whole ceremonial is based is an extremely interesting one, and I do not know that it can be better presented than by reproducing an ancient Masonic Catechism for the preservation of which we are indebted, curiously enough, to a non-Mason !

The White Veil having been drawn apart we were admitted into the presence of the Principals.

Q.—What then occurred ?

A.—The M.E.Z. enquired who we were.

Q.—And your answer ?

A.—We replied that we were Sojourners from Babylon, and the following conversation then resulted :—

Q.—What is the nature of your request ?

A.—Having heard that you are about to rebuild the Temple of the Lord, we have come with the hope that we may be permitted to sojourn among you and contribute our best services to forward that great and glorious work.

Q.—We highly commend your intention, but we wish to know more particularly who you are.

A.—We are descended from your own kindred and people sprung from your own tribes, and branches from the same original stock, equally with the descendants of your forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But we have been under the displeasure of Almighty God through the offences committed by our ancestors, who deviated from true Masonic principles and laws, and not only committed numberless errors, but ran into every kind of wickedness: so that the Almighty displeased, gave judgment against them, by the mouth of Jeremiah and other prophets, by whom he declared that the fruitfulness of the Temple should be spoiled, their city become desolate, and an abomination, and that they should feel his wrath for seventy years.

Q.—Our own knowledge of these facts, and the candour with which you have related them leave no doubt as to your sincerity, but we wish to know who were your immediate ancestors?

A.—We are not of the lineage of that

race of traitors who fell away during the siege of the city, and went over to the enemy, when liberty and kindred had most need of their assistance, nor of the lower class of people left behind by the chief of Nebuchadnezzar's officers to cultivate the vineyards, and for other servile purposes, but the offspring of those princes and nobles who were carried into captivity with Zedekiah.

Q.—What has led to your return from Babylon to Jerusalem?

A.—The seventy years of the captivity having expired, and the anger of the Lord appeased, he hath stirred up Cyrus, King of Persia and Babylon, to issue a proclamation that those of the Lord's people who were inclined might return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple, for that he, Cyrus, had discovered the God of Israel to be the only true and living God.

Q.—In what branch of the work do you wish to be engaged?

A.—We deem the lowest service in the work of the Lord to be to us an honour, and therefore only beg employment.

On hearing this the Principal said

that our humility bespoke our merit, and that they did not doubt but that we were qualified for the highest offices. These, however, had already been filled; but he instructed us to report to the Superintendent of Works who would provide tools and direct us what to do. The Principal gave us this one particular injunction, that, if, in the course of our work we should find anything belonging to the old Temple we would instantly report the matter to him.

THE GREAT DISCOVERY.

The Sojourners faithfully obey the instructions of the Principal, and having been supplied with tools, engage in preparing the ground for the foundation of the second Temple. They make a discovery which they deem of importance and at once repair to the Sanhedrin to report. Again I quote the ancient Catechism as to the sequel:

Having been ushered into the presence of the Principals the following conversation takes place:

Q.—We understand you have made a discovery which you wish to communicate to us.

A.—We have M.E.Z. We duly reported ourselves to the Superintendent of Works who directed us to clear the ground for the intended structure. Early this morning on breaking the ground with my pick-axe I struck on something which I judged from the sound to be hollow. I called upon one of my companions to remove the soil with his shovel, and this being done we found a large brazen ring fixed to a broad flat stone with certain words engraved thereon signifying "the way to hidden treasure." We took this as an injunction to search at or around it. We accordingly raised the stone and found under it the crown of a perfect arch. With my crowbar I removed the keystone when we discovered a cavity beneath. Our curiosity was excited to know what it contained, but afraid of danger from foul air or other causes, we drew lots who should descend. The lot fell upon me. I was let down with a c—— t—— round my waist, and reached the bottom without impediment. The sun, however, at that early hour in the morning only peeping from the porticoes of the east, and dart-

ing his beams parallel with the plane of the horizon, and the aperture being extremely small, I found myself enveloped in almost total darkness. Beginning to suffer from the founness of the air I gave the signal on which we had agreed and was drawn up.

Q.—Did you resume your search?

A.—We did. On examining the key-stone we found certain characters which proved to us from the knowledge we already possessed that we had discovered nothing less than the S——— V.——— of K——— S———. We therefore set to work and removed another stone to admit more light and air. One of my companions was then let down. In groping about he laid his hand on something wrought in due and regular form on the top of which was a Roll. Wishing to ascertain what it was he gave the signal and was drawn up. The Roll proved, on inspection, to be the Book of the Holy Law. Naturally we rejoiced at the discovery, and resolved on further search.

Q.—Did you have further success?

A.—We had M.E.Z. Having enlarged the opening by withdrawing a third

stone my other companion was lowered into the V———. The sun by this time had reached its meridian altitude and, aided by its light, he found the place to be a splendid apartment supported on seven pillars. Round the architraves were the twelve signs of the Zodiac, and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. What had formerly been found wrought into due and regular form, proved on inspection to be an Altar of pure white marble. It was in shape a double cube and was erected to the Lord God. At that moment the meridian sun, darting his rays through the aperture on to the top of the pedestal, brilliantly illuminated a circle of gold on which was the grand, peculiar, and mysterious name of Deity. On a triangle of the same metal within the circle were inscribed other characters of which we could not understand the meaning, but we doubt not that they, too, are connected with the Sacred Word. On the front of the Altar were the initials, S.K.I., H.K.T. and H.A.B. which we recognised as those of the three Grand Masters who presided at the building of the Temple.

Being of opinion that we had made a discovery of importance we closed the aperture carefully and have now come, as instructed, to report the facts to you, M.E.Z.

THE BOOK OF THE LAW.

At this point the Sojourners learn the important nature of their discovery. The Roll is indeed no less than the long-lost book of the Holy Law. They are enjoined to return to the S——— V———, accompanied by Scribe E., in case anything may have been misunderstood or unobserved. Having made a further examination they are received again into the Sanhedrin when Scribe E. explains that all had been correctly stated by the Sojourners, and that in addition he had discovered a Jewel at the base of the Altar. This appears to have belonged to H.A.B. and has upon it certain inscribed characters which he is able to interpret.

THE GRAND WORD.

The Jewel is a triangle and on each of its three sides it has a syllable and the three syllables collectively constitute the peculiar and grand word of the Order.

The first syllable of this mysterious compound is Chaldaic and the interpretation thereof is "I am." In Hebrew it signifies "I shall be" and thus, curiously enough refers to the present, future, and eternal existence of ^ G.T.G.A.O. T.U.

The second syllable is Syriac. It means "Lord" or "Powerful," it is also a compound word formed from the preposition "Beth" which in various Eastern tongues signifies "In" or "On" and another expression which implies "Heaven" or "On High." Therefore the syllable may be interpreted as meaning, "Lord in Heaven or on high."

The third syllable is Egyptian, means "Father of All;" and in Hebrew denotes "Strength" or "Power," and expresses the Omnipotence of the Father of All.

The three syllables when combined may be rendered in the following phrase: "I am and shall be Lord in Heaven, the Powerful, the Father of All—

In every clime, in every age
Adored by savage and by sage."

THE WORLD'S DEBT.

The legend upon which the Royal Arch Degree is based maintains the importance of the discovery of the Sojourners and avers that the world is indebted to Masonry for the preservation of the Book of the Law. But for the Masonic wisdom and precaution of the three Grand Masters in constructing under the Temple a vault sufficient to withstand the flames and fury of the enemy the last remaining copy of the Law would have been lost when the Temple was laid in ruins.

And while thus important to the world in general, the discovery of the Sojourners had an added interest for members of the Craft in particular as the characters on the triangle found in the vault furnished a clue to the true and long lost method of pronouncing the sacred word upon the circle, the word which, according to Masonic tradition was lost at the building of the Temple, and would one day be recovered and restored to the Brotherhood.

THE S——— V———

It is not particularly clear from which source the story of the S——— V———

has been imported into Royal Arch Masonry, but "An Historical Catechism," issued not later than 1700, and having reference to attempts that were made to rebuild the Temple, has the following passage which is of more than average interest to Companions:—"At their laying a foundation, there was a stone which slipped from its place and discovered the mouth of a cave cut in a rock. The overseers of the work not being able to see the bottom of it, let down a labourer by a rope. Being come to the bottom, he was up to the ankles in water, and found the place four-square; and laying his hand on a little pillar above the water he met with a book wrapt up in a clean linen cloth. Being drawn up, the spectators were amazed it should be so fresh, lying in such a dark hole. The book being opened surprised both the Jews and Grecians that were present; they found in the beginning of it these words writ in capital letters, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

THE SOJOURNERS' REWARD.

The next step in the careers of the

Sojourners from Babylon indicates that merit and eminent services should be acknowledged and rewarded at all times. The Sojourners are invested with the Sash and the Jewel, they are furnished with the Rod, clothed with the Apron, and are welcomed as brethren and companions who, if they continue faithful and act with honour will receive instruction from their fellow-craftsmen.

THE ROD.

The Royal Arch Mason uses the Rod as an emblem of Power. As such it has been employed by all nations, but the Freemason carries it in commemoration of the Rod with which Moses wrought so many wonders in the land of Egypt and in the Wilderness. The tradition of the Royal Arch hails Moses as an excellent grand master, and says that when in the year of Light 2513 he was tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, at the foot of Mount Sinai, he was called by the Almighty, and commanded to go down into Egypt, and deliver his brethren from their cruel bondage. Moses, then in banishment, greatly hesitated,

saying, "Who am I, that I should go?" The Lord, to encourage him, promised to be with him. Moses, still doubting, asked for a sign to convince him of the Almighty's power, and to confirm the Almighty's promise. Then the Lord said to him, "What is that in thine hand?" Moses answered, "A Rod." The Lord said, "Cast it on the ground." Moses did as commanded whereupon the Rod instantly became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Put forth thine hand and take it by the tail." Moses obeyed when the serpent became a Rod again. With this Rod Moses divided the waters of the Red Sea, and made them to stand as two great walls. With this Rod he smote the rocks in the wilderness whence water gushed out.

THE SASH.

The Sash is a sacred emblem denoting Light, as it is composed of two principal colours, purple and crimson. The purple implies awe and reverence, and the crimson in rays signifies justice tempered with mercy. The irradiated form

is a further symbol of Light; and the combination of colours effected in the Sash has always been regarded as emblematic of royal power and dignity.

THE APRON.

The Apron, like the Sash, is bordered with the colours, purple and crimson, but the characteristic feature of this badge of an R.A. Mason is the Triple Tau, one of the most ancient of emblems. It is translated from the Hebrew, and is highly esteemed as "the emblem of all emblems," and "the grand emblem of Royal Arch Masonry." Like many other details it is traced to a Scripture origin. It is supposed in its simplest form to be the sign or mark referred to by Ezekiel when he commanded the man with the ink-horn to "go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." This sign, says Mackey in his "Lexicon" was to distinguish them as persons to be saved on account of their sorrow for sin, from those

who as idolaters, were to be slain; and its form was that of the Hebrew letter "tau," which, in the ancient Phœnician alphabet, and on the coin of the Maccabees, was the shape of a cross. In early days civil magistrates are said to have placed this mark on the brow of those whose innocence was established; and it is said also that in ancient times, military leaders similarly marked those who escaped unhurt from battle, as evidence that they were in perfect life. It is as a combination of three T's or the Triple Tau that it is most familiar to Royal Arch Companions. The sign, or device has been turned to account in various ways to suit the conceit or invention of the Masonic worker. One body of students incline to the view that it is made up of the initials "T" and "H" and that these indicate the Temple of Solomon as they are the initials of *Templum Hierosolymi*. Others see in it a combination of three T-Squares and argue that it refers to the three similar jewels of the three Ancient Grand Masters. Yet others believe that it is the monogram of Hiram of Tyre. Another group, seek-

ing for a linguistic interpretation, maintain that it is merely a modification of the Hebrew character "shin" which is a recognised abbreviation of the sacred name among Jewish people. One of the lectures favoured by English Freemasons furnishes a mathematical interpretation. The device "by its intersection," says the Lecture, "forms a given number of angles that may be taken in five several combinations and reduced, their amount in right angles will be found equal to the five Platonic bodies which represent the four elements and the sphere of the Universe." But whatever, amid these conflicting explanations, may be the true reading, the Freemason adopts it as a symbol and by wearing it acknowledges himself a servant of the true God who established his worship at Jerusalem and to whose service the glorious Temple of Solomon was erected.

THE GRAND SIGN.

The Grand Sign of a Royal Arch Freemason, like everything else connected with the Degree, has its own peculiar meaning. It alludes to the opening of

the arch by the removal of the three stones by the Sojourners, and the three halts in giving it, and the three arches formed by the three Principals, refer to the three descents of the Sojourners before they discovered the mysterious triangle.

THE FIVE SIGNS.

There are five signs in the degree of the Holy Royal Arch. These correspond to the Five Points of Fellowship in the Degree of Master Mason. Just as, by the Points, the representative of Hiram Abiff is taught the duties which he owes to his brethren, so by the five signs of the Royal Arch is a Companion instructed in a peculiar manner in the relation which he bears to the most High, outcast from the Presence through the sin of his first parent yet received at last into the Grand Chapter as a child of God's mercy.

THE PENAL SIGN.

The first is the Penal Sign, and this not only reminds the Royal Arch Mason of the penalty of his Obligation, but also recalls the fall of Adam and the awful penalty thereby entailed upon posterity,

no less than death. By the action itself it is intimated that the disobedient shall be cut off from the land of the living by the just judgment of Almighty God even as the head is severed from the body by the sword of human justice. It is said to have been derived from the act of the Sojourner who thus guarded his eyes from the intensity of the sun's rays when their reflection shone so brilliantly on the gold plate found on the pedestal.

THE REVERENTIAL SIGN.

Having in mind the transgression of Eden, and the ease with which human frailty may succumb to sin, we are taught by the second sign to bow with resignation before the chastening hand of the living God, at the same time engrafting His law in our hearts. Masonic tradition records that in this expressive attitude the father of the human race presented himself before his offended judge and heard the dreadful sentence that the ground should not longer produce in abundance, but that man should earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow.

Masonic tradition further records that this attitude of reverent submission was at a later date assumed by Moses at the foot of Mount Horeb. There the glory of the Lord appeared to him in the burning bush when, unable to look upon the dazzling radiance of the Deity he, by this sign, shielded his eyes from the brightness of the Divine presence and at the same time placed his hand upon his heart in token of submissive obedience, which act was afterwards accounted to him for righteousness. The sign, by a singular co-incidence, agrees with that attitude which according to tradition, was adopted by the Sojourner who penetrated into the S—— V—— and was rewarded by discovering the Book of the Law. Tradition says that, on ascending from the V—— he bound his companions to secrecy by the Penal Sign, but, that, as his right hand was occupied with the Roll, he was under the necessity of communicating the sign with the left hand.

THE PENITENTIAL SIGN.

This, which is the third sign, may not inaptly be regarded as the parent of

the second sign. It denotes that frame of mind and condition of heart without which our prayers and oblations of praise can never be acceptable at the Throne of Grace, before which how should frail and erring creatures present themselves but with uplifted hands and bended knees in token at once of their humility and dependence? In this humble posture Adam first presented himself before his glorious Creator to bless the Author of his being. Thus did he again present himself before the face of his offended Judge when—expelled from the garden of Eden through the sin of disobedience—he sought to avert Divine wrath and conciliate Divine mercy. The expressive form of contrition he handed down to posterity for ever, and it was in this penitential and supplicatory attitude that the chiefs of the Sanhedrin offered thanks to the Most High for the recovery of the long lost Book of the Law.

THE MONITORIAL SIGN.

The fourth sign which is derived from the manner in which it is believed the

Sojourners descended into the S—— V—— reminds us of the weakness of human nature which is unable of itself to resist the powers of darkness unless assisted by the aid which is from Heaven. By the action itself we acknowledge our frailty and feebleness, confessing that we cannot do any good or acceptable service except through the strengthening power and mercy of the Most High, from whom all good counsels and just works proceed, and without whose special favour we must ever be found unprofitable servants in His sight.

THE FIDUCIAL SIGN.

The fifth sign which is derived from the action of the Sojourner in prostrating himself before the Pedestal when he apprehended the sublime nature of his discovery, fitly sums up the humility and reverence which are inculcated by those that have gone before. In this form, which was adopted by our ancestors and practised by the atoning priests, we express our contrition and humility as though we would prostrate ourselves with

our faces to the ground, throwing ourselves upon the mercy of the living God, our Creator and our Judge, and looking forward with humble and sublime confidence to the fulfillment of His gracious promises by which means alone we may hope to pass through the Ark of our redemption into the glorious presence of Him who is the great I am, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Author and the Finisher of our Faith.

THE WORKING TOOLS.

The Working Tools of a Royal Arch Companion are the Crowbar, the Pickaxe, and the Spade.

Our worthy operative brethren use the crowbar to raise materials of great weight and bulk, the pickaxe to loosen the soil and prepare it for digging, and the spade to remove the rubbish.

But, once again, as in the earlier degrees, the Freemason employs the tools as instruments of moral instruction; and thus the Royal Arch Mason is reminded by them that it is his sacred duty to lift from his mind the heavy weight of passion and prejudice which encumbers it,

and hinders him in his progress towards virtue; to loosen the hold which habits of sin and folly have laid upon his disposition; and to remove the rubbish of vice and ignorance which prevents him from beholding that eternal foundation of truth and wisdom upon which he desires to erect the moral and Spiritual Temple of a consecrated life.

The industrious student of our mysteries cannot fail to draw from these simple tools still further food for moral reflection. To the mind of such an one the Crowbar may readily suggest itself as an emblem of uprightness of life, integrity of character, and unyielding devotion to duty. The sound of the Pickaxe may remind him of the sound of the last trumpet at whose call the grave will give up its dead; while the Spade will suggest to his mind the grave itself into which the frail and mortal part of man is laid away from sight.

Nor can he fail to learn further from a diligent contemplation of the moral use of these tools that he must search to the very foundations that underlie all human knowledge if he would under-

stand the great object of his earthly pilgrimage—the end of his labours—the establishment of Truth. Truth may be buried for a time under a mass of error, the ruins of a better civilisation may have been thrown down upon it; indeed its very existence may be forgotten; but the diligent searcher after it will early recognise that the best way to come to it is to examine things as they are and not to conclude they are as we fancy of ourselves, or have been taught by others to imagine.

Truth crushed to earth, shall rise
again,

The eternal years of God are hers.

Above all, a Royal Arch Companion, as a worthy member of our ancient brotherhood, will strive ever to be true to himself,

And it must follow as the night the
day,

He cannot then be false to any man.

EXALTATION.

The ceremony of investing a brother with the secrets of the Holy Royal Arch is described as his "Exaltation." The

term means "elevated" or "lifted up," and according to Mackey "is applicable both to a peculiar ceremony of the degree, and to the fact that this degree, in the rite in which it is practised, constitutes the summit of Ancient Masonry"

THE THREE LODGES

A tradition favoured by Royal Arch Companions is that there were three successive Lodges established at long distant dates, each of them presided over by three Grand Masters. The legend is not historically accurate but is rather a symbol intended to illustrate three important stages in the growth and progress of the science of Masonry.

THE HOLY LODGE.

The first stage or epoch is marked by the founding of the First or Holy Lodge which was established *Anno Lucis* 2415 by Moses with whom were associated Bezaleel and Aholiab. The place selected for its consecration was the foot of Mount Horeb at which spot the record preserved in the V— of the S— L— informs us that the G.A.O.T.U. revealed Himself to His faithful servant, Moses. And here the leader of the

Israelites from bondage to freedom received the forms of those mysterious prototypes, the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant, both of which figure conspicuously in the ceremonial of Freemasonry. Here, too, at the hand of the Most High, Moses received the Sacred Law with its sublime precepts inculcating the moral and religious duties of man.

THE SACRED LODGE.

Nearly six hundred years later—*Anno Lucis* 2992—the Second or Sacred Lodge was opened. The presiding Grand Masters were Solomon, King of Israel, Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff, the widow's son. The legend affirms that these three eminent craftsmen erected their Lodge in the bosom of Mount Moriah under the very centre of the place where the Sanhedrin was subsequently erected. The spot had earlier associations of a sacred character. Tradition pointed to it as the place upon which Abraham raised the altar on which, to prove his constructive faith, he was willing to offer up Isaac, his son, as a sacrifice to the Almighty. It was further believed to be the thrashing floor

of Araunah upon which David offered up the mediatorial sacrifice by which the plague was stayed; and at which, in later days, he saw in a vision the plan of the Temple which Solomon, his son, was afterwards to erect to the honour and glory of the Most High.

THE GRAND OR ROYAL LODGE.

Fully four and a half centuries later the Third Lodge was founded. This was the Grand and Royal Arch Lodge which Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Jeshua established at Jerusalem, *Anno Lucis* 3469 not long after the return of the Israelites from Babylon. It was then that the sovereignty was restored to the royal line of David by the anointing of Zerubbabel as King, and it is to commemorate this restoration that the Third Foundation is called the Grand or Royal Lodge.

THE MODERN CHAPTER.

While the First Lodge is referred to in the Royal Arch ceremonial, and the Second Lodge is familiar to all Craft Masons who become Companions it is the Third Lodge which figures promin-

ently in the Degree of the Holy Royal Arch. The representation of the Grand and Royal Lodge at Jerusalem is acknowledged in the persons of the three Principals, Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Jeshua. The Scribes who expounded the Sacred Law are represented in the officials who bear the names, Ezra and Nehemiah. The general body of the Companions as they were exalted were made to typify the faithful Sojourners whose enthusiasm led them to seek a share in the work of rebuilding the Temple, and whose good fortune in discovering the long lost treasures won for them their places in the august Sanhedrin.

THE TEMPLE OF ZERUBBABEL.

So far as the degree of the Holy Royal Arch is concerned interest in the Temple of Zerubbabel ceases with the discoveries made by the three Sojourners when clearing away the ground for the intended structure. But, as the Second Temple was built at the instigation of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah under the leadership of Zerubbabel, it may not be out of place to deal briefly

with it here since it is as clearly a symbol of the living temple of honour and virtue which the Royal Arch Companions should ever strive to build, as the structure erected to the glory of God by Solomon is a symbol to the craftsman.

The explicit testimony of Haggai clearly points to the fact that the foundation was laid B.C. 520, in the second year of Darius Hystaspes. The work was much hindered by the opposition of the Samaritans whose assistance the Jews had refused, but at length the building was finished and the Temple dedicated in B.C. 516. A Masonic tradition, preserved by Mackey would have us believe that the Temple of Zerubbabel reproduced many of the splendours of that of Solomon, but the impression of Bible archaeologists is that in furnishing and general equipment it was much inferior to its predecessor.

A ROYAL ARCH CATECHISM.

An early book on Freemasonry includes a catechism which was in common use among Companions of a bygone day.

It may be studied with advantage by all who are interested in the symbolism of the Degree:—

Q.—What are you?

A.—A citizen of the world, a brother to every worthy Mason, and a companion for those of our Royal Arch Degree.

Q.—Pray, Sojourner, who are you?

A.—I am of your own kindred and people, sprung from the noble and illustrious race of ancestors whose honours we hope to merit by a steady pursuit of wisdom, truth, and justice.

Q.—Whence come you?

A.—From the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Jerusalem.

Q.—Who were present?

A.—Zerubbabel, the Prince of the people, Haggai, the prophet, and Jeshua, the High Priest.

Q.—What do the Principals of the Royal Arch Chapter represent?

A.—The three Keystones, by the drawing forth of which the discovery was made; and by the passing of the Companions through each of these offices, the mystical knowledge of our Chapter is to be obtained,

Q.—What do the two scribes represent?

A.—The two columns or pillars that supported the entrance of the Arch; and thereby, also, is signified their duty of registering every act, law, or transaction for the general good of the Chapter.

Q.—What do the three Sojourners represent?

A.—The three stones on which the three Grand Masters knelt to offer up their prayers for the success of their work. And hereby we have a lesson that, in everything we undertake, we ought to offer prayer to the Almighty for success.

Q.—Why do we, as Royal Arch Masons, sit in this form?

A.—To represent the Holy Royal Arch, and hereby we have a lesson to pursue unity and concord for, as one stone drawn from an arch endangers the whole, so may the improper conduct of one member endanger the whole Chapter.

Q.—Why was the ceremony of withdrawing the three Keystones observed.

A.—To teach us not to rely on our reasoning and abilities for our conduct

through life, but to draw forth our rules or government from the Law and the Prophets.

THE JEWEL.

The Jewel of a Royal Arch Freemason has many details that are worthy of study by the Craftsman who would be wise in the mysteries of the Craft. The motto inscribed on the scroll at the bottom is the Latin phrase "*Nil nisi clavis deest*," which, being interpreted, means "nothing but the Key is wanting," and which may be taken in a very literal sense by Royal Arch Companions. Then around

THE CIRCLE

is the motto, "*Talia si jungere possis sit tibi scire satis*," which may be glossed as, "If thou comprehendest these things thou knowest enough." To the Freemason, the Circle is a striking emblem of the relation in which every creature of the universe stands towards his creator. As every part of the circumference of a circle is equally near and equally distant from its centre, so every creature from the Divine Hand is equally near and equally distant from God. The

Circle is also an emblem of eternity, having neither beginning nor end. It fitly reminds us of the purity, wisdom, and glory of the Omnipotent, which is without beginning or end.

Within the Circle there is

THE CHEQUERED PAVEMENT.

which represents the uncertainty of life and the instability of things terrestrial. It is an emblem of life chequered with good and evil, pain and pleasure, grief and joy. To-day man may tread in the flowery meads of prosperity; to-morrow he may totter along the uneven paths of weakness, temptation and adversity. By such an emblem the Companion is taught not to boast of anything, but to give heed to his ways, and walk with humility before God.

We next observe

THE EQUILATERAL TRIANGLE.

which to Freemasons, is a symbol of divine union, and an emblem of the mysterious Triune God, equally representing the attributes of Deity and His Triune essence, namely Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omnipresence. As the three

equal angles or sides form but one triangle so these three equal attributes constitute but one God. As the most perfect of figures, the equilateral triangle was adopted by all the ancient nations as a symbol of the Deity. Among the Hebrews, a jod in the centre of an equilateral triangle was recognised as an emblem of Jehovah. The disciples of Pythagoras administered the obligation to the initiate on the tetractys, which "was expressed by ten jods arranged in the form of a triangle." This design was adopted by them as a symbol of Deity Who embraced in Himself the three stages of time, past, present, and future, in other words, He was; He is; He shall be.

Embraced within the Triangle and resting upon the Chequered Pavement we see

THE SACRED PEDESTAL.

It is of pure white marble, cut into the form of the altar of incense, being the true double cube. One of the legends of the Craft gives the Pedestal a venerable pedigree maintaining that it was the

stone on which Adam made his offerings to God. "This stone," says Mackey, "is called 'the masonic stone of foundation,' and our traditions very minutely trace its history. When Jacob fled from Esau to his uncle Laban, in Mesopotamia, he carried this stone with him, and used it as his pillow on the occasion of his memorable dream, the foot of the ladder appearing to rest on the stone. It was subsequently taken by him into Egypt, and when the Israelites departed from that country, Moses conveyed away with his followers the stone of foundation, as a talisman, by which they were to be conducted into the promised land. In the battle with the Amalekites he seated himself on the stone. Afterward this stone was deposited in a secret crypt of the Temple, and there remained hidden until, at the rebuilding of the Temple by Zerubbabel, it was discovered by three zealous sojourners, and made the corner-stone of the second Temple."

From early times a cube has been universally regarded as the symbol of equality, purity, and justice; and it is believed that the double cube was there-

fore selected by the Jewish people as the shape of the altar of incense, being a type—in a superlative degree—of the purity, excellence and eternal stability of the Divine Power.

On the front of the Pedestal are inscribed—sometimes in Hebrew and sometimes in English—the initials

S.K.I.

H.K.T.

H.A.B.

which allude to the names and designations of the three Grand Masters who presided over the Sacred Lodge, who superintended the building of the Temple, and who were parties to the depositing of the Pedestal within the Vault—namely, Solomon, King of Israel, Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff, the Widow's Son.

The top of the Pedestal displays a plate of pure gold which exhibits a Circle and a Triangle with the symbolic significance of which to Freemasons we are already familiar. The characters in the Circle represent the great and awful name of God which, because it is made up of four letters, is called the *nomen*

tetragrammaton, or quadrilateral name. It is not in the power of mortal adequately to analyse the import of this word; and even its utterance was considered unlawful by the Jews by whom it was pronounced only on one occasion in every year, and even then by the High Priest within the Holy of Holies who uttered it amid the crash of cymbals, and the blare of trumpets so that it might not be heard by the people. Josephus writing upon the subject says that "God declared to Moses his holy name which had never been discovered to men before; concerning which," adds Josephus, "it is not lawful for me to say any more." The historian's reticence was common to the Jewish people who, whenever they find the word "Jehovah" in their reading refrain from pronouncing it and substitute "Adonai," which means "The Lord." The word expresses the self-sufficient power of the Omnipotent; typifies the eternal duration of the Almighty Author of the Universe; denotes the eternally unchanged and unchangeable existence of the living God; and conjures up the vast futurity in which

the same great and living Being will work His mighty Will, and before Whom Our little systems have their day, They have their day and cease to be.

The characters on the sides of the Triangle are the three sacred syllables which taken together, constitute the peculiar and grand word so full of meaning and importance to the Royal Arch Freemason. Writing of the varieties of the sacred name in use among the nations of the earth, Brother Albert G. Mackey in his invaluable "Lexicon of Freemasonry" says "three particularly merit the attention of Royal Arch Masons," and he then gives the following explanations:—

"1. JAH.—This name of God is found in Psalm lxxviii., 4: 'Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name Jah.' It is the Syriac name of God, and according to Gesenius is still retained in some of the Syriac forms of doxology.

"2. BEL or BAAL—This word signifies a *lord, master, or possessor*; and hence it was applied by many of the nations of the East to denote the Lord of all things, and the Master of the world. Baal was worshipped by the

Chaldeans, the Moabites, the Phœnicians, the Assyrians, and sometimes even by the Hebrews. It has been supposed that the first Baal was the Chaldean Nimrod. This word is repeatedly met with in the Scriptures, both in allusion to the idolatrous worship of this god, and in connection with other words, to denote the names of places.

“3. ON.—This was the name by which Jehovah was worshipped among the Egyptians. It is this God of whom Plato speaks in his *Timæus*, when he says, ‘Tell me of the God On; which is and never knew beginning.’ The Egyptians gave to this god the same attributes that the Hebrews bestowed upon Jehovah, and though we are unable to say what was the significance of On in the ancient Egyptian, we know that this word in Greek has the same signification of being or existence as the substantive verb ‘I am’ in Hebrew. The Hindoos used the word Aum, or Aun.

“I have made these remarks on the three names of God in Syriac, Chaldaic, and Egyptian, JAH, BEL, and ON, in the expectation,” says Dr Albert Mackey,

“that my Royal Arch Companions will readily recognise them in a corrupted form, and thus be enabled to understand a mystery which, I confess, was to me, at first, unintelligible.”

THE SACRED SYLLABLE.

There seems no doubt but that in ancient days it was regarded as a mark of supreme reverence either to reduce the name of the Deity to a single syllable, or to pronounce it in such a way as to pause between each syllable. The Hebrews regarded the name “Jehovah” as too sacred for common use and therefore reduced it to the single syllable JAH. Similarly the Brahmins evolved one syllable AUM to indicate their god, and this was made up of the initial letters of the three words which expressed to them the attributes of the Supreme Brahma whom they recognised and worshipped as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer.

THE SIX LIGHTS.

There are six lights in a Royal Arch Chapter which are placed in the angles

and centre of the double triangle, and which, without reference to the double triangle, trace the outline of a triangle themselves. These six lights are sometimes divided into two groups—the three greater and the three lesser—and are explained in terms of the symbolism of the first degree; others adhere to the division into two groups but give them a different interpretation, maintaining that the three lesser together symbolise the Light of the Law, and by their number allude to the Patriarchal, Mosaical and Prophetical Dispensations; while the three greater are a symbol of the Sacred Word itself. A third group of students assign to them yet a different meaning, telling us that the Jew regards the three great lights as symbolical of Wisdom, Truth and Justice, while the Christian sees in them a symbol of the Trinity. Jew and Christian alike, borrowing something from the teaching of the Entered Apprentice, regard the three Lesser Lights as symbolising the Principals Z. H. and J. The whole taken together, and with reference to the triangle which they outline, are a striking emblem of the beauty

and harmony which adorns and characterises Nature in all her wondrous works.

THE SEVENTH LIGHT.

The seventh light is that emitted from the brazen bowl that gleams upon the Pedestal. It is the central beam and alludes to the jod in the centre of the Triangle which the Hebrews recognised as an emblem of Jehovah.

BIBLE, COMPASSES AND SQUARE.

These, which are regarded in the earlier degrees, as the three great lights in Masonry occupy a prominent position in the degree of the Holy Royal Arch. Here they are esteemed as appropriate emblems of the three Grand Masters who presided at the building of the first Temple.

The Bible symbolises the wisdom of the wise King of Israel, our Grand Master, Solomon.

The Square is an emblem of the power of Hiram King of Tyre, the friendly sovereign whose resources and enthusiasm did so much to forward the great plan of Solomon.

The Compasses denote the exquisite skill of the gifted Craftsman, Hiram, the Widow's son, who was sent from Tyre to assist the King of Israel.

While, however, they are so accepted as symbols of these three eminent Companions, the Mason who regards them in a speculative sense will not fail to esteem them as fitting symbols of the Wisdom, Truth, and Justice of the Almighty Creator.

The Holy Bible as the treasure of His revealed Will, and the record of His mighty acts is a fit emblem of His Wisdom.

The Square as the acknowledged symbol of Strength and the criterion of Perfection is a meet memorial of His Truth.

The Compasses enable us to ascertain the limits of all geometrical forms and to reduce our ideas of proportion or equality to a certain standard and therefore fitly remind us of God's unerring and impartial Justice which, having defined the limits of good and evil, will reward or punish according as man obeys or disregards His Divine commands.

THE SWORD AND TROWEL.

The Entered Apprentice learns the symbolism of the Sword, and the Master Mason is acquainted with the use of the Trowel. These two implements—one of War and the other of Industry—are introduced into Royal Arch Freemasonry to commemorate the valour and handicraft of those worthy brethren who, while engaged with the trowel in rebuilding the Temple, had a sword girt by their sides so as to be ready at any time to defend the city and the sanctuary from sudden assaults of the enemy. In commemorating the action of our early Companions we learn that it is our sacred duty at all times to advance the cause of truth and justice, and to repress the invader of our domestic, civic, and national sanctities.

THE KEY.

The Royal Arch Freemason recognises the Key as a symbol of silence and circumspection, and, as such, gives it a place in his Tracing Board. "The Key," writes Oliver, "is one of the most important symbols of Freemasonry. It

bears the appearance of a common metal instrument, confined to the performance of one simple act. But the well-instructed brother beholds in it the symbol which teaches him to keep a tongue of good report, and to abstain from the debasing vices of slander and defamation."

UNION AND HARMONY.

In the Royal Arch Degree, Purple is the symbol of union and harmony. It is a combination of Blue and Scarlet. Blue is characteristic of Craft Masonry while Scarlet is the distinctive colour of the Royal Arch. The colour, therefore, which is produced by a combination of these two is, appropriately enough, a symbol of that union and harmony which should at all times exist between brothers of the Blue and Red.

THE INTERSECTING TRIANGLES.

Occasionally the Jewel of a Royal Arch Companion does not exhibit the Pedestal but displays two intersecting triangles. These denote the elements of fire and water and bear a Latin motto which sets forth that the wearer is de-

sirous of doing his duty, and of filling up with justice that link in the chain of creation wherein his Great Creator had thought proper to place him. Within is another triangle, with the sun in the centre, its rays issuing forth at every point, an emblem of the Deity represented by a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere, denoting His Omnipresence and Perfection. It is also an emblem of Geometry. In it we find further the perfect emblem of the science of agriculture—not a partial one like the Basilidean, calculated for one particular climate or country, but universal, pointed out by a pair of compasses issuing from the centre of the sun, and suspending a globe, denoting the earth, and thereby representing the influence of that glorious luminary over both the animal and vegetable creation; admonishing us to be careful to perform every operation in its proper season so that we may not lose the fruits of our labour.

THE HEXAGON.

The double triangle, otherwise the Hexagon, is sometimes referred to as

“the Seal of Solomon.” It is a very old Hebrew cabalistic symbol and played a conspicuous part in magical formulæ. It is formed geometrically of six sides and six angles. Certain Masonic students maintain that it is a symbol of universal creation; others that it denotes the Deity. Imported into Christianity, it is adopted as a symbol of the two-fold nature of our Lord. It is sometimes confused with the Pentalpha or Pentagram from which it is geometrically distinct.

TO CLOSE THE CHAPTER.

As the blessing of Almighty God is invoked at the opening of a Chapter, and upon the ceremonial by which a brother is exalted to the Companionship, it is fitting, and in keeping with the genius of Masonry, that the Chapter should be closed with prayer or benediction. Few passages in the V——— of the S——— L——— are more appropriate than Psalm cxxxiv which is the recognised form in many Chapters:—

Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the House of the Lord.

Lift up your hands in the sanctuary,
and bless the Lord.

The Lord that made heaven and earth
bless thee out of Zion.

A CHARGE IN CLOSING.

Companions and Brethren, the lessons of the Royal Arch Degree, reinforced by the emblems of the Tracing Board, are intended to remind us that Life is pilgrimage and that we are all Sojourners. Like the ancient Israelitish captives in Babylon released by the decree of Cyrus, we are free to take part in the work of erecting a Temple to the Lord of which the successive structures raised by Solomon and Zerubbabel are but the Symbols. That Temple is to be built out of kindly deeds, generous thoughts, and noble aspirations; and every Royal Arch Companion may be strengthened for the work by what he learns within the sacred walls of his Chapter.

At the Altar he solemnly promises to exercise charity towards his brother—not, I venture to assert merely the charity of his purse, but the charity of his heart, that he will look with a kindly eye

upon a brother's short-comings, and that, if a Companion offend, he will be charitable in judgment and lenient in condemnation. Thus the outer world—which is ever quick to sneer and hastens to be cynical—will be impressed with the conviction that brotherly love is not an empty phrase.

Nor, Companions, will the Freemason who would be true to his faith, confine his good offices to the circle that is traced by the Royal Arch Degree. As a citizen of the world who rightly appreciates the symbolism of the sword and trowel, he will recognise that it is his constant duty to assist in serving the altar of the nation's righteousness, so that the Empire of which he is a member may find favour in the eyes of the Almighty. In this way he will esteem every man as a brother, extending to him such kind offices of love and mercy as occasion may require. Thus he will become the friend of every man, and every man will look upon him as one worthy of the profession which he makes. It has been well said that there is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship;

and indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue. Like rivers, and the strand of seas, and the air, Friendship is common to all the world. Life should be fortified by many friendships; and where, one may reasonably ask, is the spirit more likely to be fostered than in the halls of Masonry?

Brethren and Companions, may it be ours to cultivate the friendly attitude, and to extend the friendly hand, never forgetting that it is the duty of every man to do what in him lies to advance the cause of Truth. Let us take Blake's famous lines as our inspiration:—

I will not cease from mental fight
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In Britain's green and pleasant land.

By building to noble purpose we shall prove to the world that there is virtue in our venerable institution, and win the "Well-done" of Him who is the Perfect Friend.

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