



No.20

HASTINGS

August 1st 1938

Lecture delivered by Wor. Bro. A. W. Parkinson. P.A.G.D.C., P.M. of Lodge Heretaunga No. 73 on his installation as Wor. Master of the H.B. Research Lodge.

During the past few months the suggestion has been made to me by several of our members that it should be customary for every Master of this Lodge of Research, at his Installation, to give or read an address. Being inclined to agree with this view, I have prepared the paper which I am about to read. It is offered with some diffidence, because I am not at all anxious to be regarded as originator of a practice which, while to some of us may seem desirable, may not commend itself to all of my successors.

May I first, however, be permitted to make a proposal which I think would tend to improve the proceedings at our quarterly meetings. Most of our members will no doubt have observed that at the lectures that have so far been given in this Lodge, there has been little, if any, subsequent discussion on the subjects dealt with. This is, I think, mainly attributable to the fact that we cannot to any extent anticipate the manner in which the lecturer intends to deal with his subject and are thus unable to prepare ourselves in advance for taking part in or promoting subsequent discussion. Could not this difficulty be met by our postponing the discussion until the next regular meeting of the Lodge? In the meantime, the printed lecture would be distributed among the Brethren, and those desirous of doing so would then have an opportunity of considering its subject matter and of looking up any authorities they wished to consult, and thus prepare themselves to take an active part in the discussion.

It is true that in some cases the lecturer would not be present to answer any questions or arguments advanced, but, although his presence would no doubt be desirable, his absence would not, to my mind, materially affect the object aimed at. If this suggestion meets with the approval of the members generally, I trust they will take full advantage of it at every meeting by coming prepared to discuss the lecture given at the previous meeting.

In deciding on a subject for this evening's paper, I have purposely endeavoured to select one which most of the Brethren are fairly familiar and which could therefore be fully and freely discussed without prior preparation. It is one that so far as I can gather has rarely been dealt with and its selection has been made, not so much with the object of furthering Masonic research (although it is surprising to find the amount of Masonic history attached to it), but mainly for the purpose of giving some information and provoking a discussion that may be of practical use to the Masters and Officers of our Associate Lodges. For want of a better title, I have called the paper: **REFRESHMENT AND THE SOCIAL HOUR.**

In our Masonic ritual there appears in several places the expression "to call the Brethren from labour to refreshment and from refreshment to labour", with which we are all familiar. The word "refreshment" is thus used in antithesis to that of "labour" and, as is fairly obvious, has no relation to the proceedings in the refectory after the Lodge is closed.

This is well explained by Mackey in his Encyclopedia, from which I quote the following :-

"In Masonic Language **refreshment** is opposed in a peculiar sense to **labour**. While a Lodge is in activity, it must be either at labour or at refreshment. If a Lodge is finally closed until its next meeting, the intervening period is one of abeyance, its activity for Masonic duty having for the time

been suspended; although its power, and privileges as a Lodge still exist, and may be at any time resumed. But where it is only temporarily closed, with the intention of soon again resuming labour, the intermediate period is called a time of refreshment, and the Lodge is said not to be closed, but to be called from labour to refreshment. The phrase is an old one, and is found in the earliest rituals of the last century. **Calling from labour to refreshment** differs from closing in this that the ceremony is a very brief one, and that the Junior Warden then assumes the control of the Lodge, in token of which he erects his column on his stand or pedestal, while the Senior Warden lays his down. This is reversed in calling on, in which the ceremony is equally brief."

The Brethren will find the ceremony of "calling-off" and "calling-on" given on pages 236 and 237 of our New Zealand ritual.

In further reference to the term **Refreshment** as Masonically used, Dr. Oliver has something of interest to say:

The Lodges in ancient times were not arranged according to the practice in use amongst ourselves at the present time. The Worshipful Master, indeed, stood in the East, but both the Wardens were placed in the West. The South was occupied by the Senior Entered Apprentice, whose business it was to obey the instructions of the Master, and to welcome visiting brethren after having duly ascertained they were Masons. The Junior Entered Apprentice was placed in the North, to prevent the intrusion of cowans and eavesdroppers ; and a long table, and sometimes two where the Lodge was numerous, were extended in parallel lines from the pedestal to the place where the Wardens sat, on which appeared not only the emblems of masonry, but also materials for refreshment—for in those days every section of the lecture had its peculiar toast on sentiment—and at its conclusion the Lodge was called from labour to refreshment by certain ceremonies and a toast technically called "the Charge" was drunk in a bumper, with the honours, and not infrequently accompanied by an appropriate song.

After which the Lodge was called from refreshment to labour and another section was delivered with the like result."

The Banquet of a Lodge, although still supposed to be under the charge of the Junior Warden, is now generally held after the Lodge is closed. From the very earliest times it would seem that a Feast formed a part, and in some cases an important part, of Masonic assemblies. Indeed, drinking and smoking in lodge rooms, even during the carrying out of Masonic ceremonies, appears to have become the general rule and to have continued until about the year 1800. Elias Ashmole, in giving in his Diary an account of a Lodge meeting he attended in London in 1682, wrote:

"We all dined at the Half-Moon Tavern in Cheapside, at a noble dinner prepared at the Charge of the new accepted Masons."

Dr. Plot, when writing in 1686, made, the following reference to the Masons— "When they are admitted, they call a meeting (or Lodge as they term it in some places) . . . and entertain with a collation according to the custom of the place : This ended, they proceed to the admission of them".

It seems clear, therefore, that in those early days it was customary among Freemasons to partake of refreshments together either prior to the commencement or during the course of their work. Indeed, this practice was continued in the early days of the Grand Lodge of England, for we read :

"Assembly and Feast at the said Place, 24 June 1713 Brother Sayer having gather'd the Votes, after Dinner proclaimed aloud our Brother George Payne.,Grand Master of Masons"

There is also recorded in the Minutes for 24th June 1721 the following :

"After Grace said, they sat down in the antient manner of Masons to a very elegant Feast, and dined with joy and gladness."

The custom of partaking of a common meal appears to have been firmly established by the year 1723 when was issued the first Book of Constitutions, in which the following appears :

"You may enjoy yourselves with innocent mirth, treating one another according to Ability, but avoiding all Excess, or forcing any Brother to eat or drink beyond his inclination, or hindering him from going when his Occasions call him".

This will be found reproduced in the first part of our own New Zealand Book of Constitutions, under part VI of the Charges of a Freemason. I would here point out that the Ancient Charges are printed in the first section of the Book of Constitutions and, if they were read occasionally in open Lodge, would, I believe, afford a valuable means of instruction and education to the Brethren.

Surprising as it may appear to us now, smoking in Lodges was commonly indulged in in the early days of Freemasonry in England, and tobacco frequently appeared in the accounts as an item of expenditure. It is recorded that in one Lodge the average cost of refreshments was nine shillings every fortnight, allocated thus : Toddy, 8s. 3d., beer, 1d., and Tobacco, 8d.

The following by-law appeals in the By-laws of the Lodge of Antiquity passed in 1760:

"No brother shall offer to smoke at any time during lodge hours, when this lodge is honoured with a visit of a brother who wears a blue apron, without leave first obtained from the master, unless such visitor smoke a pipe himself ; otherwise, the offending brother shall immediately pay one shilling and be obliged to leave off smoking."

In the year 1755 smoking in the Grand Lodge of England was expressly prohibited, and Emulation passed a law in 1802 forbidding smoking in lodges.

The drinking of toasts at banquets appears to have subsisted from time immemorial. It was indulged in by the ancient Greeks and Romans and being introduced into England, became a regular custom in the social clubs and other festive associations in London in the beginning of the 18th Century.

The usual formula of the Toastmaster at an ancient Guild's dinner in London was : "Gentlemen, pray Silence! The Worshipful Master craves the honour of taking wine with you." The extension of the custom of drinking toasts into Masonic Lodges is generally attributed to Dr. Desaguliers about the year 1729, and it soon became the usual practice to drink in the Lodge room during refreshment, frequently accompanied by the singing of songs, such as "The Masters Song", "The Warden's Song", and the "The Entered Apprentice's Song". As these toasts were then given during the course of the Lodge proceedings, they were proposed quite formally by the Master. It was not until a much later date that speech-making was introduced, presumably after Masonic Lodges had adopted the practice, now universally followed of holding the banquets entirely apart and separate from their Masonic work. The toast list gradually became a fairly comprehensive one, and included such toasts as : "To the secret and silent," "To the memory of the distinguished three," "To all that live within the compasses and square."

In course of time, owing to the length to which the list had become extended, some of the less important toasts were dropped, and new rules formulated for the recognition of those considered more appropriate to the English speaking fraternity.

In this country, the banquet is now invariably held in the refectory after the Lodge is closed, and the toast list usually compiled according to a set arrangement. It is suggested that the following toast list, adapted from that prepared by the Board of General Purposes of our Grand Lodge, may be regarded as a guide for the refectory proceedings after the usual Installation meeting:

TOAST LIST:

1. **M.W. BRO. H.M. The KING and The CRAFT.**

"Fire" to be given, 3 times 11.

2. **The M.W. The GRAND MASTER.**

"Fire—3 times 11—should not be given unless the G.M. is present. If he is present, no other Grand Lodge officer should be toasted.

3. **The PROV. GM. and OTHER OFFICERS OF G.L., PAST AND PRESENT.**

"Fire"—R.W. Brethren—3 times 7 V.W. Brethren 3 times 5 W. Brethren 3 times 3

4. **"The W. M."**

"Fire"—3 times 3.

5. **The VISITORS.**

"Fire"—3 times 3.

6. **The TYLER'S TOAST.**

At the regular monthly meeting of the Lodge, toasts to the Prov. G. Master and the W.M. will not usually be necessary and for these there will generally be substituted toasts to "The Candidate" to another Lodge paying an official visit and to an individual brother on some particular occasion; one to "Absent Brethren" is also frequently honoured.

When the Brethren have assembled at the festive board, it is the first duty of the Master to sound the gavel and for all to stand in silence while Grace is being said by the Chaplain.

In addressing the Grand Royal Arch Chapter in England in February 1933, when he expressed his dissatisfaction at the Latin form of Grace adopted there, Lord Amthill included in his remarks :

"Freemasonry has without doubt done much to keep alive the custom of saying Grace, both on public and private occasions.

This has been done by that power of example which is always better than precept, and by the force of the traditions of which we are the proud guardians.—I venture to think that, in this matter at any rate, the Craft has rendered an appreciable service to the nation in a matter of vital importance Let us remember that, when we say Grace at a Masonic Repast, we are helping to maintain an ancient custom which is of great value to England, not only from the religious point of view, but also as a social bond and moral exercise."

The form of Grace used by Lord Amthill on that occasion was, "For this refreshment of body and mind, let us be thankful to the giver of all good things." Another form adopted in some English Lodges is, "For what we are about to receive may the G.A.O.T.U. give us grateful hearts,—"and sometimes there is added, "and keep us mindful of the needs of others."

The custom of enjoying a Social Hour at the festive board now universally observed in our Lodges, has I think much to commend it. It gives the brethren an opportunity of meeting in a social and informal way, and it is there that the bonds of brotherhood are strengthened and the foundation laid for lasting friendship and mutual understanding.

Although forming no official part of our Masonic work, the refectory proceedings should be conducted in a proper and dignified manner, and nothing should be introduced there that may offend against good taste or in any way tend to belittle our excellent institution or those principles of piety and virtue on which it is so well and firmly founded.

Within the rights of propriety and decorum, and with due regard to the solemnity of our ceremonies, there is plenty of scope for innocent mirth and conviviality, for good-natured banter among the brethren and for entertainment by appropriate musical and other items. Nothing by way of criticism of the refectory proceedings of our Lodges is here intended.— on the contrary the Lodges generally may well be commended on the exemplary manner in which these proceedings are invariably conducted. It may not, however, be considered out of place for me to. impress on the Masters the desirability of maintaining the high standard that has been reached and to enjoin them ever to be on the alert to suppress any act or word of impropriety.

To many of the brethren the following instructions issued by our Board of General Purposes may not be familiar:-

"Care must be taken in the introduction of Masonic Fires, and anything which may tend to lessen the dignity of the proceedings should be discouraged.

Each toast should be proposed separately, and the custom of bringing forward a second toast prefaced with the words "while we are on our feet" is open to serious objection.

Masonic applause in the refectory should be restricted to one knock, and the Board is strongly against the use of the words "Fourth Degree" in relation to the festive board.

No musical items should be called, or smoking permitted, until after those Grand Officers whose names are mentioned in the toast list have replied.

No item should be permitted in the refectory which is not in complete harmony with the instruction given in the Lodge or which may tend in any way to burlesque the seriousness of that, instruction. Such items as parodies on the Working Tools are objectionable in the latter way.

The Board expects that Masters of Lodges in particular and the brethren generally will see that the proceedings in the refectories are maintained in proper tone, and that nothing is introduced to which exception can be taken by any brother."

I have already indicated that the social hour is, to my mind, a useful portion of our Masonic proceedings. The proposing of toasts affords an opportunity of imparting instruction for which time cannot usually be found in the lodge-room. The social board, being intended to promote good fellowship and to be freely enjoyed, is not the place for lectures or addresses of a profound nature. A toast should however be proposed in such a way that, without being irrelevant, instruction in an entertaining manner may be conveyed and the brethren thus assisted in making their daily advancement. To obtain the best results, it is suggested that the programme be arranged in ample time before each meeting, so that those selected to propose the toasts may have at least some days' notice for preparation ; a brother cannot reasonably be expected to do justice to a toast and to himself if called on without more than a few moments' warning. Every part of our Masonic proceeding° being worthy of the best effort that can be given to it, there is no reason why every brother should not be allowed sufficient time to prepare for anything that he may be expected to do at the social hour to much the same extent as an opportun -ity for careful preparation is usually given in respect of our ceremonial work.

In proposing or responding to a toast, the Worshipful Master, being the host in his Lodge should always be addressed first, whether or not any Grand Lodge Officers be present On ordinary occasions, the opening will be "W.M., and Brethren," and the response, "W.M., the name and title of the proposer, and Brethren", When a Grand Lodge Officer is officially present the opening will be "W.M., and title of Grand Officer, and Brethren," and the response, "W.M., name and title of Grand Lodge Officer, name and title of proposer, and Brethren."

May I here mention, without offence, a practice that, unless checked, may tend to develop into a custom for which very little can be said in its favour. I refer to Brethren leaving the festive board during the course of the refectory proceedings, more particularly to visiting brethren at the Installation banquets. This was specially noticeable at a--Installation— not just recently—where the proposer of the toast to the visitors was obviously embarrassed because a large number of the visiting brethren had previously retired.

This is a practice which, in my view, should not be in any way encouraged.

Brethren should remember that they are the guests of the lodge, the members of which have gone to some considerable trouble to provide for their refreshment and entertainment, and that it is only an act of common courtesy to remain until the close of the proceedings, unless there is some special reason for an earlier departure, in which case the permission of the W.M. should previously be obtained.

In order that the Brethren may be free to depart at a reasonable hour, the refectory proceedings should not be unduly prolonged, but should be proceeded with as expeditiously as possible. This is meant to be regarded, not as an indication that the programme should be so accelerated as to detract from its importance or to mar its enjoyment, but rather only as a suggestion that every care should be taken to avoid any unnecessary delays. The matter is largely one for attention by the D.O.C, and if, after the Lodge is closed, he will make a point of seeing that, as soon as it is conveniently possible, the Brethren are seated at the festive board, and so stage-manage the toast list that the several items are called on with due despatch, no cause will arise for

complaint at the lateness of the hour at which the meeting has concluded. The ideal to be aimed at is, I think, that the proceedings should terminate in ample time to allow every Brother to return to his home not later than midnight, although this, particularly at Installations, may not always be possible in cases, such as occur in this District, where some have long distances to travel.

As the Tyler's Toast gives an appropriate conclusion to the refectory proceedings, so a brief quotation with reference to it may fittingly end this paper : "The Tyler's Toast is both a toast and a supplication, and should be delivered as such, leaving a due interval between the last words and the drinking of the Toast, for the real meaning to be impressed on those present. The Tyler's office bears a symbolic meaning as does his sword, which teaches us to set a watch at the entrance of our thoughts, place a guard at the door of our lips, and post a sentinel at the avenue of our actions. Bro. Tyler reminds us of our duties as Freemasons when we are about to enter the Lodge, and before we part for the night his toast reminds us of our sacred task to be mindful of the needs of others."