

WHY do we tyle the Lodge? This is one among the many questions asked by many non-masons who are more or less prompted by mere curiosity, but also by some brethren, members of the Craft. The latter, perhaps forgot that tiling the Lodge is one of the most important ancient landmarks of the Institution, — "every Lodge when congregated should be duly tyled". The reason for tiling the Lodge is of course very obvious, — that there should be secrecy, harmony or peace, and so that the brethren therein assembled might not be disturbed in their deliberation.

Secrecy and harmony are forms inherent in the Institution. They exist with it inseparably from time immemorial, even from its very foundation when "our ancient brethren assembled on the highest hills and in the lowest vales, the better to observe the approach of cowans and caves-droppers". If we strip up the Institution of its secret character and harmony, it will no doubt lose immediately its noble identity, and will surely cease to be a fraternal order of Free and Accepted Masons.

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The important duty of tiling the Lodge is incumbent upon the tyler, to prevent the approach of unauthorized persons, although it is said that the first duty of every Mason is to see that this is done before the Lodge is opened. At the opening of a Lodge, after the usual preliminary procedures are said and done in accordance with the ritual, the J.... D.... having verified it from the Tyler reports to the W.... M.... that "the Lodge is tyled". It is at this instant that the Master and all the brethren present at the meeting inside the Lodge are assured that they are free from intrusion, and it impliedly suggests that peace, secrecy and harmony prevail.

The office of the Tyler like those of the Master and the Wardens is one of the many ancient landmarks of the Order that grew out indispensably as part and parcel of it even from its earliest beginning, for from the peculiar nature of our Institution, it is evident that there never could have been a meeting of Masons for Masonic purposes, unless a tyler had been posted to guard the Lodge from intrusion. A very important moral lesson may be gleaned from this, the tyler's duty of safe-guarding the Lodge.

Tying the Lodge is not much different from, and is symbolic of, tying our very own individual selves. Individually, each of us is metaphorically said to be a temple or Lodge of our physical bodies wherein our souls reside. As such temple or Lodge it is our moral duty to tye ourselves accordingly. Tying our individual selves is even harder than tying a Lodge. This duty requires tact, ability, wisdom and perhaps force, just as the tyler of a Lodge strictly enforces the execution of his duties, by virtue of his positio "armed with the proper implement of his office".

Man, from time immemorial instinctively learns habitually to build a strong corral or barricade around him and for himself alone. Soon, around him or within his sphere of influence, he develops and grows into a potential center of wealth, knowledge, power or perhaps of moral and spiritual forces. By proper and methodical way of living a sinful life he has accumulated and piled up so much to provide for himself in time of needs and difficulties to such an extent as to be able to withstand even "the vicissitudes and inclemencies of the seasons." All for himself. — he has more

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than enough! "We cannot blame anyone for providing or preparing for his future". Self-preservation is the first and great law of nature. Incidentally as time marches on he gradually grows into a power potential, a tycoon if not a king-pin in his own right. He may have all the riches that he could amass; with all the bounty that God in His infinite goodness showered and blessed, yet selfishly, not satisfied with all his worldly belongings; "and worried with the burden of his honors" and the power that he could wield in his hand, he becomes more and more a self-centered being. Everybody knows he is not happy despite his worldly wealth and honor; thinking and caring only for his own material welfare and interest! Many such a man can be found among our midst here and everywhere even among Brother Masons. Such a man is indeed tying his own Lodge in the literal sense and meaning of the word, — fortifying himself within the confines of his immediate surroundings with no thought or concern for others and the rest of humanity. This is selfishness pure and simple. This is wrong tying of one's individual self, because he shuns and shuts out from himself much that is virtuous and Godly; much that is noble and beautiful: SERVICE TO OTHERS.