

Random Thoughts

By Fidel Fernandez

MAN is endowed with the soul of reason that he may have a fair understanding of the purpose of living. By nature man is rude and imperfect. Through a virtuous education he chisels out the rough and superfluous parts of his being and endeavors to reach a state of perfection. Perfection is attained through the knowledge and right performance of the four cardinal virtues: temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice.

"Temperance is that due restraint upon the affections and passions which renders the body tame and governable, and frees the mind from the allurements of vice."

"Fortitude is that noble and steady purpose of the mind whereby we are enabled to undergo any pain, peril, or danger, when prudentially deemed expedient."

"Prudence teaches us to regulate our lives and actions agreeably to the dictates of reason, and is that habit by which we wisely judge and prudentially determine on all things relative to our present, as well as to our future happiness."

"Justice is that standard or boundary of right which enables us to render unto every man his just due, without distinction."

Man should systematize his mundane existence by a rigid application of this code of virtues.

He has to be ardently devoted to God and fervently sincere in his adoration of Him. Hypocrisy shall have no part in his being. Fanaticism shall not get hold of his mind. He must live in, and with, reason; and behave in conformity to his right thinking. He must possess integrity; and consider dignity more lustrous than a highly priced diamond. By refusing worldly possessions, he acquires spiritual affluence. His head is erect over shoulders that are square. He can look at any other man eye to eye; for he has nothing to be ashamed of. He is as complacent to right as he is rigid to venality and unyielding to wrong.

That MAN has in his heart the tenets of FREEMASONRY. So upon becoming a Mason, he becomes a better man; "righteous in the memory of God, glorious forever in the remembrance of men."

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.