

T H E
F R E E M A S O N S
P O C K E T - C O M P A N I O N .

C O N T A I N I N G

The History of MASONRY from the Creation to
the present Time ;

The Institution of the GRAND LODGE of Scotland ;

Lists of the OFFICERS of the GRAND LODGES of
Scotland and England ;

Their Customs, Charges, Constitutions, Orders and
Regulations.

T O W H I C H I S A D D E D .

A large Collection of S O N G S , many of which
were never before published.

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L O R D P R O V O S T o f t h e C I T Y o f
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G R A N D M A S T E R M A S O N o f S C O T L A N D ;
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A n d m o s t h u m b l e S e r v a n t,
T h e P U B L I S H E R.

A VINDICATION of MASONRY
and its Excellency demonstrated.

I N A

DISCOURSE at the Consecration of the Lodge
of VERNON KILWINNING, on *May 15. 1741.*

By CHARLES LESLIE, M.A. Master-
Mason and Member of that Lodge.

IF a man was placed in a beautiful garden, on a calm survey of its rich collection, would not his mind be affected with the most exquisite delight? The groves, the grotto's, the artful wilds, the whole variegated scene, would sensibly strike him; the flowery parterres, the opening vistas, the big cascades, or the softer murmurs of the falling streams, all would inspire his soul with ideas grand and great; but especially, when he observed the order, the nice symmetry, and beautiful disposition of the whole; when he saw how every part, though seemingly complete in itself, yet reflected surprising and new beauties on the other, so that nothing could be wanting to make one beautiful *whole*. A view of this would naturally lead him to admire the design, tho' human, and raise something more than common veneration to the happy genius of him who contrived it.

THE wise man finds it exactly after this man-

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ner, on a calm survey of nature ; complacency and the best delight attend his searches ; delights which can never cloy, and are ever new. Nature is an inexhausted scene, in every part of which divinity and wisdom appears. The scenes which she displays are indeed too large for a mean mortal to grasp ; yet he can easily comprehend so much as will lead him to that true source of happiness, the grand Architect of all, the one perfect and unsullied beauty ! For besides all the gaities with which our senses are every moment presented, and the symmetry, good order, and proportion that appear in the whole, there is something further that will affect the considering mind, something of a turn nearer to divinity, yea, almost the divinity itself ; that is, the well adapted ties to the present circumstance of things, which link men and societies together. These are the sure cements of the rational world, and 'tis these alone by which the rational world subsist ; and could we think that it was possible for them to be dissolved, nature too, and man the chief work of God, would soon return to *Chaos*, and one universal ruin take place.

If we look around us, we shall find, that in the whole scale of beings, from the most inconsiderable insect, to the seraph that adores and burns, all, according to their proportion in the scale of existence, have more or less this principle of uniting with others of the same species
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with themselves, implanted by wise nature ; and cannot we discern some of these minute animals forming themselves into societies? Need I name the careful aunt, or the industrious bee? insects, which the wisest of men has recommended as a pattern of industry and prudent foresight : But, let us raise our ideas higher, and we shall still find that this innate principle of friendship arises in proportion as they themselves seem to advance nearer to the degree of rational, and there can be no better way of judging of the superiority of one part of the animal brute creation above the other, than by observing what degrees of kindness, friendship, and seeming good nature they enjoy. But that is a disquisition fitter for the philosopher's chair, than that wherein I have now the honour to be.

It is sufficient for us to consider ourselves, to think on these benevolent dispositions, and on that good temper of soul, which indulgent and wise nature has so kindly bestowed upon us. As human nature rises in the scale of things, so do the social affections arise likewise. Do we not feel in our breasts a strong propensity to friendship? Feel we not a pleasure when it is cemented and firm, and a pain when it is on the decline and dead? What sweetens life but friendship? What diverts the cares of time but friendship? What alleviates pain, and makes sorrow smile, but friendship, sacred holy *friendship*?

But as this is either more universal, extending

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ing to the whole human race, whom, as partners of the same common nature with ourselves, we love, and are strongly inclined to favour; or it is more confined, and exerts itself the more vehemently as the objects about which it is versant are nearer or more remote. Thus, the love of one's country fires the soul, and makes it kindle into a noble patriot flame, creates the best and most disinterested virtue, inspires public spirit, and that heroic ardor which engages men to throw life itself away in such a generous and noble cause. No kind of friendship is more commendable than this; it dignifies its happy possessor with true unfading laurels, casts a lustre on his actions, and consecrates his name to latest ages. The warrior's worth consists in murder, and the rude-ravage of the desolating sword, but the blood of thousands stains not the hands of his country's friend: his virtues are open, and of the noblest kind; if he bleeds by tyrant-hands, he dies with that calm satisfaction which a martyr for liberty must surely feel. Should I name the first *Brutus*, the self-devoted *Decii*, or the self-condemned, but unconquerable *Cato*!

But friendship not only appears divine, when employed to befriend the liberties of one's country, but likewise makes its heavenly extraction appear in the more calm hours of life; before we saw it mount into a noble flame, aiming destruction at the heads of tyrants, thundering for
liberty

liberty and exposing life itself in the good cause; now, we shall see it calm and moderate, burning with an even glow, improving the soft hours of life, and heightening that relish which we have for virtue. Thus it is, that private societies are formed, and from this principle they meet, and with a chearful innocence employ each vacant hour of life with agreeable friends.

And now, we can trace from reason itself, and the very nature of things, one of the main designs of MASONRY which is to improve friendship, and teach men to become good members of society. Vain then is each idle surmise, which our enemies meanly scatter round! They little think, that by decrying MASONRY, they reflect upon human nature itself, and on the wise constitution of things, which by a secret and sweet attractive force, disposes the human heart to social virtue; they little think, that by such a conduct they reflect on that good order by which the wise Architect of nature supports the moral system. Can friendship and social delights be the object of reproach? Can that wisdom which hoary time has sanctified be the object of ridicule? How mean and contemptible must these men be, who pretend to censure what they do not know? The generous heart will pity ignorance so abandoned.

I shall now proceed, and consider in what shapes MASONRY is of universal advantage to mankind, how it is reconcileable to the best policy,

licy, why it deserves the general esteem, and why all men are bound to promote it.

Now, abstracting from the particular pleasures which arise from a friendship so well contrived to last, and which 'tis scarce possible entirely to erase, let us consider, that it is a science confined to no particular part of the globe, but diffused over the whole; where-ever arts flourish, there MASONRY flourishes too; and add to this, that by those secret and inviolable signs which we preserve amongst our selves, and which are one and the same throughout the world, MASONRY becomes an universal language. By this means, how many advantages are gained? We unite men of all religions, and of all nations. Thus, the distant *Chinese* can embrace a brother *Briton*; thus they come to know, that besides the common ties of humanity, there is a stronger still to engage them to friendly and kind actions; thus the spirit of the *damning Priests* may be tamed, and a moral brother, tho' of a different religion, engage his friendship; thus all those disputes, which imbitter life and sour the tempers of men, are avoided and every face is clad in smiles, while they pursue the general design of the CRAFT, which is the common good of all. Is it not then evident, that MASONRY is an universal advantage to mankind? For sure, except discord and harmony be the same, it must be so. Is it not likewise reconcileable to the best policy? For it prevents that heat, and these animosities

mosities which different interests but too oft create. Does not MASONRY teach us to be faithful to our king and to our country, to avoid sordid politics, and to submit to the decisions of the legislative power? And sure it is no mean advantage to any community or state to have such a body of men within itself, whose passions ought to be divested of that sourness and ill-nature, which too often attends the best of men. Therefore, does not MASONRY of itself command the highest regard? Does it not claim the greatest esteem? Without-doubt, if aught that is good and amiable, useful to mankind or society, be worth a wise man's attention, then MASONRY claims it in the highest degree. What lovely ideas does it inspire? How does it open and enlarge the mind? And how does it create a noble fund of satisfaction? How does it recommend universal benevolence, and every virtue which can endear one man to another? How particularly is it adapted to create in the mind the most disinterested and generous notions? *Masons* are brethren, and amongst brothers there is no inequality. Thus a king is put in mind, that altho' a crown adorns his head, yet the blood in his veins is derived from the common parent of mankind, and no better than the meanest of his subjects. Thus men in inferior stations are taught to love their superiors, when they see them divested of their grandeur, and condescending to trace wisdom's paths, and
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follow virtue, assisted by those of a rank below them. Virtue is true nobility, and wisdom is the channel by which it is directed and conveyed; and wisdom and virtue, amongst *Masons*, are the sole distinctions.

Masonry, not only teaches universal love and benevolence, but likewise disposes the heart to particular goodness, when a brother claims it: For this end they create funds, and endeavour to make their charities last as long as the science itself. When a brother is in distress, what heart does not ache? When he is hungry, do we not convey him food? Do we not cloth him when he is naked? Do we not fly to his relief? Thereby we shew that the name of brother is not merely nominal.

Now, if these are not sufficient to recommend so generous a plan, such a wise and good society, so happy in themselves, and in the possession of every social virtue; nothing which is truly virtuous can prevail, and a man who resists arguments that are drawn from such topics, must himself be lost to all sense of virtue.

Nevertheless, tho' the fairest and the best ideas may be thus imprinted in the mind, there are brethren (*hinc ille lacrymæ*) who, disregarding the beauty of the science, and all that virtue which it is designed to teach, give themselves up to loose lives, and by this means disgrace themselves, and reflect dishonour upon MASONRY in general. It is the stupid wickedness of such
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has occasioned these severe reflections upon the CRAFT, which is now in the mouth of almost every old woman: But let such brethren know, if I may call them by the name, that they are unworthy of their trust, and that they are in reality no masons. MASONRY consists in virtuous actions, in chearful innocent hours; not in lewd debauchery or excess.

Now, tho' unhappy brethren may thus transgress, 'tis no objection against the CRAFT, nor can a wise man draw any argument from it against our society; for if the wicked lives of men was an argument against the religion which they profess, Christianity itself, with all its divine beauties, could not be true; therefore, let us endeavour to reform ourselves, to reform these abuses which have crept in amongst us, and then MASONRY shall again shine out in its primitive lustre, and discover itself to be of a truly divine original.

Bear with me, *my worthy and dear brethren*, while I insist upon this, which can alone retrieve the ancient glory of the CRAFT. Let your generous and good actions distinguish you as much from the rest of mankind, as the beauties of the principles from whence they flow; avoid whatever can give offence. If the world admire your sanctity of manners, it will effectually reconcile it to true MASONRY. As your order is founded upon harmony, and subsists by proportion, so let every passion be smoothed and subservient to

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reason: Let the soft pleasures of friendship harmonize your minds, banish sourness and ill nature; live like brethren, and let good humour prevail; let no little party-jarrs divert your attention from brotherly love, or spirit you up against one another; mark such as create divisions; they are unfit members of society; all good order and all good laws oblige you to expel them: You are to cultivate your minds and store them with useful true knowledge: How beautiful are the ways of wisdom, and what pleasure attends the pursuit! You ought to search into nature, the advantage you will reap will soon recompense the pain; knowledge must be attained by degrees, nor is it every where to be found: Wisdom seeks the secret shade, the lonely cell designed for contemplation, there enthroned she sits, and there delivers her oracles; seek her, pursue the real bliss; tho' the passage be difficult, the further we trace it, the easier it will become. You ought particularly to study that first and noblest of the sciences, I mean GEOMETRY; by this we shall improve ourselves indeed; by this we curiously trace nature thro' her various windings, and to her most latent recesses; by this we can discover the power, wisdom, and the goodness of the Grand Parent of the universe, and see the beautiful proportions which connect and grace this vast machine; by this we see how the planets roll, and why they move round the sun, their centre; by this we
find

find the reason of the beautiful return of spring, and of the varied scenes in summer, autumn, and winter. Numberless worlds are around us, all framed by the same divine artist, which roll through the vast expanse, and are conducted by the same unerring laws of nature. What grand ideas then must such knowledge fill our minds with, and how worthy is it of the attention of all, but especially of such who profess themselves promoters of such a valuable science? It was a survey of nature, and observing its beautiful proportions, that first determined man to imitate the divine plan, and reduce things into symmetry and order; this gave rise to societies, and birth to every useful art. The architect began to design, and the plans which he laid down, being still improv'd, produced some of these excellent works which will be the admiration of future ages. I might here trace the history of the CRAFT, and shew, that since ever order began, or harmony admired, it too behoved to have had a being; but as this is so well known, I judge it to be altogether needless.

Then, let us unite our hearts, and our society must flourish; let us promote the useful arts, and by that means distinguish ourselves; let us cultivate the social virtues, and improve in all that is good and valuable; let the genius of MASONRY preside, and let us endeavour to act with that dignity which becomes men as well as masons.

Now,

Now, is MASONRY so good, so valuable a science? Does it tend to cultivate the mind, and tame each unruly passion? Does it expel rancour, hatred, and envy? Does it reconcile men of all religions, and of all nations? Is it an universal cement, binding its devotees to charity, good will, and sacred friendship? Is it calculated to promote the truest freedom? Does it teach men to lead quiet lives? In short, are its precepts a complete system of moral virtue? Then, HAILL, thou glorious craft, bright transcript of all that is amiable! HAILL, thou blest moral science, which sets such fair copies of virtue! WELCOME, ye delightful mansions, where its happy sons enjoy a life almost divine! WELCOME, ye blest retreats, where smiling friendship sits inthron'd! WELCOME, sacred habitations, where innocence and peace for ever dwell!

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