

political history so perilously divided the people of our State. When we remember, and I am not too young to recall the contentions of the past, we can not but feel that it was through the teachings of Masonry that the difficulties engendered by the passions and prejudices inherent to racial and temperamental dissimilarities were finally smoothed over. And if we can view with satisfaction its activity in the fostering of peace and unity in the body politic, how much more gratifying is it when we contemplate its work within the Masonic family itself; its record merits all our admiration, for here we see and appreciate how in the clash and conflict of contending Rites, it demonstrates that, after all, Masonry is a brotherhood, and that however we may pursue our work, however teach its lessons, the ultimate motive is the same, the ultimate purpose is reached, the end is accomplished, when the only true contention which can ever arise is as to who can best work and best agree.

Looking back, then, to its past, firm in our love for the Order, steadfast in its principles, confident of the purity and patriotism of its purpose, may we not emulate the deeds of our forefathers and cast aside whatever differences may exist between us and work in the spirit of unity. The past and its memories are there to guide us as a beacon. May the record of our future deeds be the light which shall direct those who are to follow us in their labor of love for humanity's cause.

MUSIC.

"ECHOES FROM OPERA" (Mackie Beyer).

ORATION.

M. W. BRO. ROBERT R. REID, Past Grand Master of Louisiana.

When Right Worshipful Brothers Robert R. Reid and John S. Thibaut began comparing notes as to what each meant to say on this occasion it appeared that their minds had run along the same channels, and on account of the peculiar fitness for an historical oration on this occasion from M. W. Bro. Thibaut, R. W. Bro. Reid gave way to him in the matter. Hence the oration delivered by Bro. Reid was extemporaneous, and not having been prepared in advance, he has not reproduced it for the record since.

SONG.

M. MONTANO, first barytone de l'opera Francais.

MUSIC.

"PRAYER FROM FREYCHUTZ" (Weber).

ADDRESS.

M. W. BRO. CHAS. F. BUCK, Past Grand Master.

M. W. Grand Master, Chairmen, Brethren:

As was to be expected, our distinguished brother, the orator of this occasion, has placed before you in complete form, the origin, progress and present condition of Free Masonry as instituted, practiced and cherished in our jurisdiction under the auspices of this M. W. Grand Lodge.

He has, and most appropriately, spoken to you from the standpoint of a Grand Lodge of the York Rite of Freemasonry, which some men call the American Rite, but has also naturally said much of Masonry as a world institution; its mission and influence on the civilization and uplift of the human society.

Permit me to take it up at this point; and as I do so—as you know when we speak of Freemasonry in its broadest scope, both as to its physical existence and its philosophical trend—we have to take in many countries and many nations and view the broad field in the light of the essentials common to all the Rites upon which rest the claims of "universality" and "common brotherhood." Louisiana has always maintained this liberal attitude and tends toward it to-day more than ever.

I find an expression of this broadly fraternal spirit in an address delivered at a session of this M. W. Grand Lodge held in this city on the 26th day of February, 1826, when A. Peychaud, Grand Secretary, closed an address with the following brilliant and suggestive peroration:

"If we take a view of the present state of Europe, we shall see that the principles of our immortal constitution are acknowledged by all enlightened men; we shall find them too widely diffused, too loudly professed, for the united efforts of tyrants and priests to hinder them from gradually penetrating the mass of the people and teaching them their rights. Yes, my brethren, let us accord our belief to the prophetic words of a great orator (Mirabeau): 'The day will come, when liberty, reigning without a rival in the two worlds, will realize the wish of philosophy, will cleanse mankind of the crime of war and proclaim universal peace; will the happiness of the people will be the sole object of legislators, the sole force of the laws, the only glory of governments. Then private passions, converted into public virtues, will no longer tear asunder the bonds of fraternity by their sanguinary quarrels—that fraternity which ought to unite all governments and all men—then, finally, will be consummated the pact of union between the whole human family.'

"As for us, my brethren, let us enjoy, with gratitude to the Almighty, all the blessings He has bestowed upon us. Let us continue to

deserve the public esteem; let us persevere in spreading the light—and, casting its rays from all the altars of happy America, may it become a vast beacon, to direct the nations of the earth on the road to happiness and liberty."

Prophetic words, indeed. The eloquent orator, full of that higher test of Freemasonry by which it lifts itself beyond the attributes of a merely benevolent association to the dignity and significance of a cult for higher civilization, foreshadows the influence of Freemasonry in the ever-present problem of uniting the races of man into a harmonious brotherhood upon the level of political liberty, spiritual toleration and perfect justice. The records of the proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana in these early years of existence and effort are full of evidences that our founders felt that in their work as Freemasons they were planting seeds and gathering fruit in the nurseries of human progress, of liberty, of emancipation and universal brotherhood.

Always and on every appropriate occasion we find the expression of appreciation of this fundamental philosophy of the Order in the proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana in its earlier days.

Tribute is rendered to true greatness and service wherever these factors appeared in the struggles for liberty and "the rights of man."

Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, General Lafayette, the French Mason and patriot, are honored in resolutions and memorials appearing on the records of the early days of this Grand Lodge.

The orator referred to shows that these great men—Freemasons—had contributed largely by their life-work and teachings to the attainment of results in the upward march of a civilization which Masonry stands for, and to the full realization of which it consecrates its loftiest inspirations.

It is to this world-mission of the spirit of Freemasonry to which I shall address myself on this "centennial" occasion. Temporal history never takes Freemasonry into account. We look in vain in profane history for any reference to Freemasonry. Thousands of volumes stacked on the shelves of the libraries of the world on subjects which might be classified as works on the progress of civilization, moral and spiritual evolution, the betterment of the conditions of life in all relations, political, social and religious, but Freemasonry has no existence to the author as a factor in these unsolved and ever-present problems.

Even Masonic writers have never entered upon this broad field of inquiry. Masonic orations and essays teem with high pretensions of Masonic influence and power as a factor in human progress, but nowhere is a concrete fact presented or an application made.

Says a writer in the "American Freeman," July number, 1911: "If—Freemasonry—was meant to be a civilizing force, working throughout the whole world."

Has it done anything, or is it now doing anything to merit this high claim?

When we speak of Freemasonry in this Centennial Anniversary of

our Grand Lodge, we speak of it in all its Rites, its ramifications, in the combined force and efficacy of its name as understood by the world.

The world knows no distinction between different Rites and different Bodies. It does not know anything of the technical organization of distinct bodies, but it looks upon all as members of one organization of Freemasonry. It knows nothing of schisms and contentions and jealousies in our own household. It would be surprised to learn that a Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons should pretend not to know that a Knight Templar, a Royal Arch, or a 32-degree Scottish Rite Mason is not a Mason at all, at any rate, not to the knowledge of the said Grand Lodge!

To the answer of this question I shall briefly address myself at this Centennial celebration.

As I might well have surmised, the orator of the day would necessarily touch upon this phase of our theme, and what I shall have to say may be mere repetition.

To answer the question whether Freemasonry may be considered a factor in the making of the history of nations, I repeat that I have in mind an organization which embraces every recognized Rite of Freemasonry and every active adjunct which exists, labors and flourishes in its name or under its auspices.

Different Rites of Freemasonry have grown as different modes and habits of life develop, but all of them are so thoroughly one in spirit and in purpose that external differences of form become immaterial. As mankind in all its ways and aspirations always looks for improvement, moral and material, so Masonry, true to the fundamental principle on which it rests, is ever present where the welfare of mankind is concerned. The difficulty in the matter is that the highest conception of Freemasonry is an ideal so exalted that the hopes of its realization seems a dream. The extirpation of vice, the elimination of the differences of nationality and creed, the suppression of all tyranny, political and spiritual, the lifting to the plane of a common humanity as equals of all men—this is the Alpha and Omega of Freemasonry.

Has this philosophy exerted its influence on the world at large? Look to the events of the eighteenth century.

True, as York Rite Masons of the symbolic degrees, we are admonished that our Masonic obligations will not conflict with our duties or opinions in matters religious or political. We are, moreover, admonished that Masons must be faithful and obedient citizens, and enter into no "plots or conspiracies." The Rite is sensitively conservative. May I ask what I think about this? We are assembled here to-day as the constituents of Grand Lodge Freemasons; as such we know no locality and no racial or national distinction. What we do and what we say, we do and say as citizens of the universal Republic of Freemasonry, in its name, in its behalf, and for its weal or woe.

In my humble judgment, the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of England of 1717, and its amended substitute of 1723, are the products

the English nobility formed to be in harmony with the English form of government and the inviolability of royalty.

The effect, if not deliberate intent, was to reduce Masonry to the innocuous goodness of a moral science—a spirit, moving in space, if you will, stripped of flesh and blood, and ever moving in the same confines without the vigor of growth or the joy of expansion. I believe in the landmarks of Masonry; I believe in the immutability of its essential foundation; I believe in the sublime and inexhaustible significance of its legend; I believe in its awful philosophy that something which was and is perfect and divine has been lost to man, and that all our journeys are one perpetual pilgrimage to recover it; I believe the Masonic idea of unity and universality is a divine inspiration; I believe that the human race from the earliest periods of recorded time has been in possession of its mystic symbolism of immortality; I believe in its broad humanity and its perennial mission to found on the foundation of eternal Truth the Temple of Perfection in which the lost word shall be found; but I am loath to accept unconditionally a ritual and prescribed form which paralyzes its spirit, and like an Egyptian mummy, holds it in perpetual bondage, devoid of the inspiration of progress and the healthful tonic of action. Our ancient brethren on the continent were not satisfied with these conditions.

To them there was something more in Masonry than response to the sentiments of charity and social intercourse. Freemasonry was and is to them, to this very day, the consecrated temple of humanity struggling to emancipate itself from all thralldom and oppression—carrying aloft the beacon of hope and the standards of liberty.

The condition of the masses about the middle of the eighteenth century was degrading and pitiable. England had advanced incomparably beyond the state of Continental Europe. Under the light of the Magna Charta; the genius of the age of Elizabeth; the establishment of the Church of England; the political upheaval which laid the head of royalty on the block, and the tremendous expansion of her commercial combinations, the British Isles had advanced far beyond the other nations of Europe. But the continent lay helpless in the grasp of ignorance and superstition—trayary and oppression.

France, misgoverned by the idle, incompetent and luxurious Bourbons—her wealth, the fruit of the labors of an oppressed peasantry consumed by the nobility, whose sensual living was steeped in coarse and notorious immorality. Germany, worn out, bleeding, and exhausted from numberless wars; her peasantry slaves, serfs attached to the soil and bought and sold with it, plodding along in passive and brutal ignorance. Such and worse were the conditions when Freemasonry began to diffuse its light and make known its mission on the Continent.

And contemporaneously with the growth of Freemasonry spread the revival of the spirit and the energy of revolutions which changed the aspirations of nations and guided the progress of mankind.

The new nation, reared in the forests and along the unexplored

wilderness of a new country, prospered in the promise of the new hope and gave to the world the first proclamation of the inherent rights of man. The trumpet blast of this utterance echoed from shore to shore, calling the nations to the posts of honor. And it is still echoing and re-echoing. It has encircled the globe; and the end is not yet. The final evolution is on. Men are still savage and much more blood may drench the earth before liberty and toleration, proclaimed in the name of universal brotherhood, shall have established their permanent enthronement.

And I see the Masonic Temple rising up in the central hills of the new universe, not of stone, nor mortar, nor iron, nor steel, but held up by the spirit-cement of love and charity and human concord, working at the foot of the throne of one eternal Father of all!

I do not claim that Freemasonry has been out in the open, contending in its name for these things. Such pretense would defeat its own purpose. I do not claim that it has set ambition adrift in the turmoil of human contention to make universal peace and brotherhood the end of civilization.

But I do say that, beginning about the middle of the Eighteenth Century, and about the same time when Masonry under the name of the A. and A. Scottish Rite spread over the nations of the Continent the workings of a new light, in the souls of men began to bear fruit. Old traditions became obsolete. Customs

“With tough and stringy root,
Tied to the people's pious nursery faith,”

lost their sanctity.

The principle of toleration, equality and liberty for which Freemasonry practiced on the Continent, stood, and stands to-day, were openly espoused. The “voice of the people”—the voice of God—proclaimed them and the storm-cloud which the passionate awakening presage, broke forth in the American and the French Revolutions; and the races of man entered on the “Era” of the new civilization—the open gate of hope, equal rights and equal opportunity.

And let us hope that this broad conception of the essence and mission of Freemasonry will continue to enhance our devotion and stimulate our zeal; that its great promises may expand and ever be a boon and blessing to mankind.

As said above, when we consider the influence of Masonry, in this sense, on the progress of civilization, we do not limit ourselves to any particular Rite. There are many Rites, but Freemasonry is one, a unit independent of forms of expression. So that whatever may be said in connection with any particular Rite, may be said of Masonry generally. I permit myself this digression to quote the language of our Bro. Count de Ternis, who said in a French Grand Body in 1843:

“Man, frail and feeble, should be held up by Scottish Rite Masonry. It should elevate him, without changing his proper nature, or allowing him to become corrupted. It repudiates the dogma that commands the

death of the senses, as it rejects the philosophy that exalts sensualism. It closes alike the book of Zeno and that of Epicurus. It believes in the Grand Architect of the Universe, the immortality of the soul, and in the necessity of moderating human passions to make of them human virtues."

And during the ages to come this philosophy which unites mankind in the circle of one family, which elevates the masses of humanity to the level of equality; which inculcates tolerance and toleration, exacts liberty and insists that all things shall be done, and measured by the standards of justice and morality, will be a guiding light in the ambitions of man and the evolutions of nations.

Under its influence, if ever, peace and harmony may come into the world, and the nations of the earth, freed from thralldom of every kind, and cured of the ravenous greed which impels them to seek to devour each other, born to a new life of brotherhood and common sympathy, having only the welfare and happiness of all in view, will forget hostility, cease wars, engaging only in that rivalry and "noble contention, or rather emulation, of who can best work and best agree."

In this phrase of almost homely simplicity, Masonry conveys the most comprehensive suggestion of the practical, every-day duties which Masons owe to each other, to mankind, and to God.

SONG.

MME. C. FERRENS, contralto de l'Opera Francais.

MARRIANA (Wallace).

BENEDICTION.

W. BRO. BYRON HOLLEY, Past Master.

Almighty God, Supreme Architect of the Universe, we implore Thy blessing upon the Grand Lodge of the State of Louisiana, its constituent Lodges and dependent bodies. We have come from the quarries of the world rough stones and ask that, by the working tools of our profession, Thou wilt fit us as perfect stones for a temple acceptable unto Thee. We have come in peace; we would depart in peace. A thousand years in Thy sight are as one day. Thou hast blest us in the day that has gone. May Thy blessings continue with us in the day that is to come. When storms come into our lives, as come they must, do Thou stretch forth Thy mighty hand and say: Peace, be still! And there shall be a great calm. Amen.

MARCH—"MIXOLOGY."

JERUSALEM TEMPLE BAND.

"OLD HUNDRED."

BANQUET

GRUNEWALD HOTEL, FEBRUARY 5TH, 1912.

The officers of this M. W. Grand Lodge and the Representatives and invited guests assembled at 8 o'clock at night on this the 5th of February, at the Grunewald Hotel, where covers had been laid for five hundred. After the Representatives and guests were placed, the M. W. Grand Master and Grand Lodge officers and the speakers for the occasion and the Rev. Brother Byron Holley, entered the room to the strains of "Dixie" and proceeded to the official table, and after the opening invocation by the Rev. Herman Cope Duncan, Worshipful Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana, the brethren partook of the repast that had been provided, during the course of which toasts were offered and responded to as follows:

TOASTS.

*We pray you speak, high thoughts to apt words fit.
But, speakers, please remember, in brevity lies wit.*

TOASTMASTER

M. W. Bro. A. C. Allen

Past Grand Master of Masons, State of Louisiana.

"THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES"

Bro. William Howard Taft.

"The fabric of our freedom is placed on the enduring basis of public virtue, and will, I fondly hope, long continue to protect the prosperity of the Architect who raised it."

—Bro. George Washington to the Grand Lodge of South Carolina, May, 1797.