

PYTHAGORAS AND HIS MASONRY.

John Dove, a learned and illustrious Mason of Virginia, has expressed the opinion that Masonry existed before the flood, and that Enoch and Noah were Masons; but his fertile imagination must have supplied him with this conception, as it certainly did with the twenty-nine windows located in one side of Noah's ark. The patriarchs are justly esteemed for their many virtues; but Boaz seems to have been the first man mentioned in history in whom the elements of Masonry shone forth conspicuously. And Masonry, though partially practised in Tyre and Sidon, does not appear to have been generally known and respected as such till King Solomon and the two Hieras organized it for the building of the temple. During the seven years of work upon this magnificent edifice, Masonry grew into a system, and became both a science and an art. Afterwards it was carried to Babylon, to Media (where Cyrus the Great was probably made a Mason) to Persia, to Egypt and to the Islands and Seaports of the Mediterranean. Socrates was a wise philosopher and a good man. Some of his friends advised him to become a Mason; but the advice was disregarded. Diogenes also declined to send in his petition, because a notorious robber had been admitted, while Epaminondas and Agesilaus had never desired to receive the degrees. It can not be denied that some Masons have continued, even down to our time, the practice of driving good men away from its portals by the easy admission of the vicious. But justice requires us to say that, in spite of some errors and exceptions, the Masons from Solomon down to Pythagoras were characterized by industry and virtue, by silence and circumspection.

BIRTH AND BOYHOOD OF PYTHAGORAS.

The exact date of his birth, like that of his death is unknown. He was probably born 500 years B. C., and lived about three-quarters of a century. His father, Mnesarchus of Samos, was a merchant of large wealth, and the son enjoyed the instructions of Pythagoras. He then attended the principal schools in Egypt, Arabia and Persia, and became proficient in all they taught. He also secured the confidence of many learned priests and gained admission to Masonic Lodges, and made himself familiar with all their written learning and all their esoteric wisdom. There were no railroads, nor telegraph lines in his day, and the old men were not so often hurried, nor the young men so dangerously fast as we sometimes see them now; Pythagoras was in no great haste to enter upon his work, and he appreciated the importance of complete preparation, and thoroughness at every step of his progress. He therefore prosecuted his studies and his travels until he was nearly forty years of age. Every young man, who has the opportunity to make thorough work of his education, should learn a lesson from the example of Pythagoras, and equip himself with the best scholastic and educational armor before engaging in the battle of life.

AT SAMOS.

His native island was ruled by a tyrant and selfish rulers gener-

ally look with suspicion on citizens who are highly esteemed for their wisdom and virtue. As the wise man is a standing rebuke to the fool, so the good man, even by his example, is a constant condemnation to the wicked. Hence there is a natural, and there must be a continual, hostility between the just and the unjust. Hence also

"When God erects a house of prayer  
The Devil builds a chapel there."

Pythagoras therefore emigrated and settled

IN CROTONA IN ITALY.

Here he soon presided as master of a Masonic Lodge, and the membership rapidly increased to three hundred. This number was reached in spite of thorough examinations and rigid regulations. When a petition was sent in, the examining committee ate, drank and slept with the petitioner and kept a vigilant watch over his conduct and deportment. He was required to be industrious, intelligent, temperate, upright and benevolent. Then he was required to be perfect in one degree, before he could ascend to the next in order. Pythagoras knew nothing of "cases of emergency." His Masonry was therefore out of the reach of many wealthy, but corrupt, citizens of Italy. The blame of their rejection by the Lodge was charged against the Master, and the number of his enemies was gradually augmented. His influence likewise extended over Italy. Lodges were opened by his disciples at Brundisium, Tarentum and other important points. So attractive were his lectures that the average attendance on daily meetings was about two hundred.

HIS PLATFORM.

He was not one of those who seem to be wise because they

"Can say an unimportant thing  
In such a solemn way."

He was the advocate of progress and the friend of every virtue. His high and lofty aspiration was "to be good, and to do good," and he could have used the language of George Washington who said, "The object of Masonry is to promote the happiness of the human race."

HIS DISCOVERIES.

The ringing of the hammers in the shop of a smith suggested to him the musical scale. He took hammers of different sizes and on their sounds when suspended, and on the sounds of the strings which held them, he founded the science of music. He discovered that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles; that any angle may be measured by the arc which subtends its sides, and that the square of the hypotenuse is always equal to the square of the other two sides of a triangle. His astronomical system bears a very strong resemblance to that now taught in our schools. His discoveries in geometry were his own, and he incorporated them into his Masonry and made them a part of his lectures. Masons now consign geometry to the care of the schools; but mention it as "the first and noblest of sciences." Pythagoras thought it better to require every Mason to acquaint himself with the elements of geometry. His pupil, the accomplished Plato, entertained the same opinion.

MISUNDERSTOOD.

Lord Macaulay, in his justly famous essay on Lord Bacon, severely blames Plato (and of course Pythagoras with him) for being unwilling that all mankind should enjoy the benefits of geometry. He does not seem to

have known that these philosophers believed that geometry would be most useful to mankind when made a part of their esoteric instruction.

Pythagoras was the Grand Custodian of Masonry, the keeper of the work. Though living in Italy, he delivered his lectures in Greek. His disciples settled their disputes in regard to the work by saying, "Ipse dixit," he said so himself. The people of Italy supposed that mere reverence for their teacher made his word the law, and to this day we are so informed in our Latin Readers.

The learned Charles Anthon, LL. D., mentions that Pythagoras, when delivering his lectures (conferring degrees), wore a crown and flowing robe. These articles of dress had a meaning well known to Masons; but it seems never to have occurred to Dr. Anthon.

An English writer whose knowledge of geography was limited to his own Island, mistook Pythagoras for an Englishman and called him Peter Gower.

So the great philosopher, giving his lectures in secret, was misunderstood by the outside world; but his inventions have been of inestimable benefit to every succeeding generation of the human family. The time and place of his death will remain unknown; but his works and his wisdom will elevate and bless mankind till heaven and earth shall pass away.

We answer several letters in this paper to avoid the repetition of the same thing to so many parties.

NEWTON, N. C., April 20th, 1875.

J. H. Mills, Superintendent

Orphan Asylum.

I think it would be a good thing to appoint a general agent in every county in the State. Persons do not like to act without authority, and men do not often give without being personally asked. I make this suggestion for your consideration, having the greatest confidence in your judgment.

Yours Respectfully,

J. M. Brown.

The foregoing is a good suggestion; but there are some objections to it:

1. The Superintendent is not sufficiently acquainted in every county, and would sometimes appoint improper persons. Thus the cause would suffer.

2. The Grand Lodge has not mentioned the appointment of general agents among the duties of the Superintendent. He could not require them to serve, nor hold them to a proper responsibility.

3. The Grand Lodge has provided for the appointment of agents all over the State by those who know them and who have authority to hold them to a strict responsibility. Here is the plan:

"Resolved, That the Master of each subordinate Lodge appoint a Standing Committee upon raising funds for the Orphan Asylum, and require said committee to report in writing each month, and that said reports and the funds received be forwarded monthly to the Superintendent of the Asylum and that the support of the Orphan Asylum be a regular order of business in each subordinate Lodge at each Communication."

4. All churches and benevolent organizations are requested to cooperate with us in the orphan work and to collect and forward contributions through their own proper officers. Here are the resolutions:

"Resolved, That the sincere thanks of this Grand Lodge are hereby tendered to many benevolent

ladies and gentlemen, to the ministers of the gospel, to churches of various denominations, to Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Good Templars, Friends of Temperance, and other benevolent societies, whose hearty cooperation and liberal contributions have rendered timely and valuable assistance in the great work of ameliorating the condition of the orphan children of the State.

Resolved, That all benevolent societies and individuals are hereby cordially invited and requested to cooperate with us in providing funds and supplies for feeding clothing, and educating indigent and promising orphans children, at the Asylum in Oxford.

LEASBURG, N. C., April 22, 1875.

J. H. Mills.—Dear Sir:—I write you to inquire if you can take some orphan girls in the Asylum, ages from 13 to 17 years. There are 3 of this class in this neighborhood whose father and mother both died within a week of each other, about two months ago, and the children are left in quite a destitute and dependent condition. None of their relations are able to take care of them. Their mother, who was a christian woman, was in her last moment deeply concerned for their spiritual and temporal welfare; and as no suitable home has been secured for them, I write you to know if you can take them, and if so, upon what terms, whether there will be any expense attached to it or not, and what facilities they will have for obtaining some education, and what their employment will be, &c. Please write me. Yours truly,

Wm. Paylor, Jr.

ANSWER.

1. We receive orphans from six to twelve years of age. We can not receive a girl 17 years old, because she is able to make a living and it is too late to begin her education.

2. If the girl, who is 13 years old, is not developed into a woman, and is anxious to learn, we could make her an exception and receive her.

3. We charge no tuition, and furnish board and clothing free.

4. Our Orphans have facilities for obtaining a good English education, and they are also taught such work as they will probably be expected to do when grown.

5. This paper contains a form of application and other information about the orphan work.

6. There was once a large Masonic Lodge at Leasburg. If it is dead or dormant, please ask the brethren to revive it and let it cooperate with us in feeding, clothing and teaching the poor and fatherless.

A Good Letter.

Dear Sir:—Enclosed please find one dollar for the Orphan Asylum. I think of the little orphans very often, and now I have the means and opportunity, I feel like I must do something for them. This is but a "mite," I know, but I give it heartily, and wish I could do more.

Please accept my heart-felt sympathy and earnest prayer for yourself and orphans.

KATE HOLDEN.

Near Hillsboro.

The Masonic Hall at Frankinton, was sold on Thursday last, to the highest bidder; it was bought by Mr. Reams, who intends converting it into a tobacco factory.—Franklin Courier.

A sad statement! One year ago we attended a meeting in that Hall. A committee was appointed to provide for a homeless widow, and the brethren handed in \$106 for the orphans. Now the Hall has been sold at auction and is to be occupied by tobacco, the present tyrant of our province and people. On several occasions we have seen school-houses first dedicated to learning, and then

diverted to the use of preparations for the pipe; but here is a Masonic Hall first dedicated to brotherly love, relief and truth, and then sold at auction and— we drop the subject.

The proverb, "knowledge is power," has been improperly attributed to Lord Bacon. An exchange attributes it to Aristocrates. We shall be grateful to any friend who will give such information as will enable us to verify the quotation.

The Raleigh Daily News inserts a cut of the Orphan Asylum at Oxford and says:

Above we present a cut of this building, an institution which may be regarded with mingled emotions of pride and mortification—of pride because North Carolina has such a refuge for the destitute orphan—of mortification, that its support should be dependent upon the chance gifts of charity, or on sudden and unreliable outbursts of sympathy.

For the backwardness of the State in withholding its aid, there is a reason urged to which we will not allude, but which has an imperative force. We have urged here and elsewhere the obligation of the State to regard this as one of its public charities whose interests are as much its care as that of the Deaf, the Dumb and Blind, or the demented tenant of the Insane Asylum. To this there is sent back in reply an answer that is unanswerable.

The maintenance of the Asylum devolves upon private charity, or the maintenance of benevolent institutions. They have not faltered in their duty and have met their responsibility. But is not necessarily an unreliable support, and we would be glad to see, until the State feels itself justifiable in assuming control, and providing means, efforts made to procure endowments. The institution can never be considered on safe ground until it has found permanent means of support.

But every demonstration has been made of its value. It has already rescued hundreds from poverty and degradation. It has christianized those who were growing up in heathenism. It has enlightened those who were enshrouded in intellectual darkness. It has taught industry to those who were being hopelessly engulfed in indolence and vice.

Shall this be stopped, all for the pitiful and painful admission of a pecuniary disability? Shall all this great interest be overriden by a want of means?

We hope not, but that the liberal, the charitable, the benevolent will rouse themselves to make some secure provisions for the support of the institution.

(The paragraph concerning the Superintendent is omitted.)

The Institution is the property of the Grand Lodge of Masons, and its benefits are offered to the most needy orphans, whether their fathers were Masons or not, and the design of the Institution is to train, protect and educate indigent and promising orphan children, to be received between the ages of 6 and 12 years, who have no parents or property or near relatives to assist them.

The Asylum is at Oxford, about 45 miles North of Raleigh and 12 miles West of the R. & G. R. R. The buildings, of brick, are large, commodious and handsome.

There are 602 convicts in our penitentiary and not a student in our University. It is time to calculate our latitude and longitude!