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ADDRESS OF  
**THOMAS S. KENAN,**  
ACTING GRAND HIGH PRIEST,  
At Charlotte, N. C., June 5th, 1876.

COMPANIONS:—When this beautiful and prosperous city of Charlotte was selected a year ago, as the place of holding this Grand Convocation, the recollections of the great events that cluster around her history, were revived: We thought of the hospitality which has always characterized the conduct of her citizens. We thought of the fact of our assembling in this magnificent Masonic Temple, erected by your skill and industry. All these reflections tended to increase our anticipations of pleasure. But alas, whatever pleasure we have realized, has been accompanied by corresponding sorrow. Here is the home of our late Companion and Grand High Priest, THOS. W. DEWEY. Here we expected to meet him. But he is gone. He died on Wednesday morning, the 4th day of August, 1876, at his residence in this city, in the 48th year of his age. Intelligence of the sad event was communicated to me; and I felt that the increased responsibility, which your Constitution rendered it necessary for me to assume as his successor, would be more than I could properly discharge.

In token of the high esteem in which he was held by the Companions of this jurisdiction, and in honor of his distinguished position, I issued an official announcement of his death, requesting Subordinate Chapters to place on record, a tribute to his memory, and drape their altars in mourning for thirty days. Many of us have been the recipients of his hospitality, and none of us will ever forget the kindness of him, and his amiable, accomplished and highly respectable family.

I have no doubt that this Grand Body will direct a page, in the proceedings of this Grand Convocation, to be appropriately dedicated to the memory of our deceased friend and Companion, and take such further steps, as may be necessary to pay proper respect thereto.

Since the duties of this office devolved upon me, the following Dispensations have been issued:

December 15, 1875, Raleigh Chapter, No. 10, to elect officers.

February 17, 1876, to organize new Chapter at Farmington, Davie County.

March 17, 1876, Louisburg Chapter, No. 26, granting authority to convene and work, until the Grand Chapter supplied its charter, which was unfortunately destroyed by fire, together with the Hall, records and furniture.

April 29, 1876, Charlotte Chapter, No. 39, to install officers.

Being desirous of adopting some means by which Capitular Masonry in our jurisdiction might be advanced, I issued a circular letter to the High Priests of Subordinate Chapters, on December 15th, 1875, requesting a report of the working of the Chapters, together with such suggestions, as might, to them, seem conducive to the

future health and growth of our Fraternity. To this letter, there were numerous replies. Some indicated activity and prosperity among the Companions. Others were characterized by a tone of despondency. One of the Grand Lecturers made an encouraging report. The others seem to have done but little, either on account of the financial inability of Chapters to compensate them for their services, or the absence of a desire on the part of members to acquire a reasonable amount of Masonic knowledge.

After eliminating the facts contained in these replies, I think unmistakable evidence is furnished to justify the conclusion, that our present condition of apathy may be traced, first, to the condition of the country, and second, to the want of skill in the work by officers of Chapters, and a want of knowledge of the philosophy of the Chapter degrees.

The first of these causes should not be an obstacle. It is true the financial embarrassment of our people is almost universal, but remember, that we have only to do our whole duty, and humbly trust to the Providence of Him, who doeth all things well.

To remove the second cause, it would only be necessary perhaps, to call attention to the requirement of the Resolution of 1856, which is now in force, and of a permanent nature; and to urge upon Chapters the importance of inaugurating a system of lectures and discussions upon Masonic subjects. Secure the services of Grand Lecturers. Provide means to establish respectable Masonic libraries. Make the institution more attractive to men of intelligence and literary merit. Let us all show our appreciation of the labors of our Grand Secretary in his preparation of the Masonic Code of North Carolina, by securing a copy thereof. Though issued by the authority of the Grand Lodge, it is at the same time, an important part of the written law of this Grand Chapter. The MASONIC JOURNAL, which is published at Greensboro, is worthy of our support. It is ably edited; possesses a high degree of merit; and contains, besides Masonic literature, well selected matter, which is calculated to make its visits desirable and instructive.

With these sources of information, there is no reason why every Mason in the State should not thoroughly acquaint himself with the laws of our government. Without their aid, no good work can be executed, and darkness will continue to overshadow us.

There still exists in our jurisdiction, a want of uniformity in the Work; and while "it is impossible that from finite minds, and finite lips, a uniform flow of anything should proceed," yet I apprehend that some improvement might be made in this direction. To the end, therefore, that a remedy may be applied for the removal of this evil, I respectfully suggest, that the "work as taught by Comp. L. L. Stevenson," be adopted by this Grand Body; so that the character and kind of work in Chapter, may conform to that adopted by the Grand Lodge

for Ancient Craft Masonry upon which our Capitular system rests, and without which it cannot stand.

But whatever our work may be, let me remind you, in the language of Past Grand High Priest Hill, that "levity or carelessness in performing any part thereof, is destructive of the very purpose intended, unbecoming in the workmen, and an inexcusable perversion of the most imposing and solemn symbols of truth."

On the 29th of February, 1876, I visited Concord Chapter, No. 1, by request, for the purpose of reconciling some differences of opinion with regard to Masonic law, and correcting some irregularities that had crept into the work and records of the Chapter. I feel grateful to the Companions of this Chapter for the uniform kindness and attention shown me on that occasion. The cheerful manner in which they yielded obedience to the rulings I made on points of law, about which there was a division of sentiment, afforded me reasonable ground to believe that my visit was not in vain.

The decisions made during the past year, are herewith submitted for the consideration of the Grand Chapter.

(1) The ceremonies may be arrested at any time previous to the conferring of either degree, in a Chapter, as well as in a Blue Lodge, *Masonic Code, Page 20, Sec. 5.* While there is no express law on this subject in the Constitution or By-Laws of the Grand Chapter, (except as to qualifications for advancement required by Article 17,) yet we are at liberty to invoke the aid of the Common Law of Masonry, and the rules prescribed for the government of Ancient Craft Masonry, in determining questions of this character.

(2) When a profane petitions a Blue Lodge, it is for the purpose of being made a Master Mason—so when a Master Mason petitions a Chapter, it is to be exalted a Royal Arch Mason. If he is elected and initiated an Entered Apprentice, it does not preclude a member from requesting a ballot to be taken on Passing or Raising, *Masonic Code, Pages 28-26, Secs. 13-2.* This rule is well settled, and its applicability to similar proceedings in a Chapter, is equally clear.

(3) In advancing from one degree to another, the ballot cannot be taken on proficiency alone. The Masonic ballot is general, not special; and must be unanimous either to elect or advance. A rejection of an applicant for advancement may result from want of suitable proficiency; or from recently discovered evidence of immoral conduct; or from official notice of expulsion or suspension from the Blue of which he was a member; or for reasons known only to the member voting the black ball; and which reasons must not be assigned. This is the existing law. It is urged, however, by some Companions, that a change of this rule would be advisable, so that, when one is rejected on application for advancement, he may be informed of the reasons for the same, to the end that further proficiency may be made, or charges preferred for such conduct as may be considered unmasonic, and that the applicant could be heard in extenuation, or the fraternity relieved of an unworthy member.

(4) Reconsideration of a ballot is unmasonic, though a second ballot may be had to avoid mistake. It is secret, and must not be disclosed, *Masonic Code, Page 27, Sec. 11.*

(5) Where an Entered Apprentice or a Mark Master has been estopped from receiving any succeeding degree, he may

renew his application at any subsequent regular meeting of Blue Lodge or Chapter. If a profane is rejected on his application for degrees in Blue Lodge—or a Master Mason on his for the degrees in Chapter—it is expressly provided, that one year must elapse before a second petition will be received: *Masonic Code, Page 28, Sec. 12;* but the authorities do not agree as to the period which must elapse, between a rejection for advancement, and renewal of application for same. Indeed there is no settled rule on the subject. But as the relation of an Entered Apprentice to Blue Lodge, or a Mark Master to Chapter is different from that of one who has received neither of these degrees, it would seem to be sound in principle, as well as reason, that the same disabilities should not apply to both.

It will be observed that the intimate connection existing between Ancient Craft and Capitular Masonry, necessitates the application of the same rules, in settling controversies touching the government of both organizations. It may be further noted, that most of the points above presented are familiar learning, and the fact that doubts should arise, as to their proper adjudication, proves inattention to the requirements of our written law, and forgetfulness of the plainest Masonic principles.

I beg leave most seriously and earnestly, to call the attention of the Grand Chapter to the fact, that our Orphan Asylums at Oxford and Asheville, have not been the recipients of the consideration from organized bodies of Royal Arch Masons, which is due to institutions, so useful, so commendable, so deserving. They are charitable institutions—sustained by voluntary contributions from various benevolent societies, and numbers of our good people. Most of us belong to some Blue Lodge, and through that medium, share the honor of contributing to their support. It has been the pleasure of some Companions to sever their membership in Blue Lodge; and unless they make individual contributions, the Asylums get no assistance from them as Royal Arch Masons. I appeal to you, therefore, to make Capitular Masonry a practical and substantial benefit to the orphan.

The higher branches of Masonry must not be relieved from the discharge of important duties, for as we advance, our duties and obligations become more binding. Then indeed, it would seem, that the benefits derived from a knowledge of the higher degrees, should be coupled with a corresponding increase of burdens.

These Asylums should be the Pride of the North Carolina Mason. We should add to the protecting care of that strong Masonic arm which is stretched over them, and with the help of God, never permit it to grow weak. The widow and orphan are now, and ever have been, the special objects of Masonic bounty, and nothing is more gratifying to the true Mason, than to relieve their necessities, so far as his ability will permit.

Let us then reflect upon the requirements of this most sublime system of moral ethics, and strictly adhere to its symbolical teachings; let us elevate our standard of usefulness, increase the dignity of our profession, and preserve the time honored character of our Order; remembering always, that through the Redeeming merits of Judah's Lion, we may be permitted to pass the ordeal of the Grand Overseer's Square, and gain an entrance into the Grand Council on High.

THOMAS S. KENAN,  
Acting Grand High Priest.