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The following CRATION was delivered at Statesville on the 27th of December last, by Mr. Adlai L. Osborne, before the Mount Moriah Lodge.

The difficulty of the task assigned me by my brethren will in some measure excuse the weakness of my efforts to please and to instruct. The path which I am about to pursue is devious, but has been so often trodden, that nothing new can be expected to be pointed out by me. My subject is so lofty, so noble and extensive, I tremble at the difficulty of doing it justice; yet I cannot far err in attempting to give you a distant view of its features. To justify our association would be impertinent; to panegyricise it would be superfluous, for it speaks for itself to the world. Our name purports that we are a distinct association whose origin is in God—we therefore declare our existence from the commencement of time.—Our objects in the earliest ages were the instruction of mankind and the practice of universal benevolence. How far we have succeeded the historians of the world testify. If the wisdom of the universe was concentrated and pointed to one object, I will venture to pronounce, the result would not be of more importance to mankind, than what has flowed from the pure, copious and never failing fount of Masonry. To our order the world is indebted for all the blessings of literature, science and religion. This may be supposed by some unacquainted with our principles as a stride too far; but let us use one moment's calm reflection, and the assertion is altogether reconcilable to sound reason. In earliest time when our first parents fell from that state of bliss in which it had pleased the great master of all to place them, letters and arts were unknown. We have the greatest reason to suppose that there was left on the mind of Adam, some traces of that divinity, which had been breathed into him at his creation. He well knew that the world was to be peopled from him; he must then have felt the strongest anxiety to communicate unsullied, to the latest posterity, the exalted ideas which he had of the parent of all. There could be no means better adapted to this his great end, than through the medium of association. Association in those ages of longevity was the best substitute which could be adapted for the purity and correctness of tradition. In those associations letters had their origin. It was necessary for the preservation of the society, in distinction of all others that there should be established certain signs and figures by which their knowledge of one another, could be communicated. These signs or figures called hieroglyphics, in process of time, as the understanding of men was matured, were brought to that state of perfection in which we find them at this day. Those letters themselves, are not adequate to convey a most distant idea of the utility of their invention. Without them, we could not have advanced one step from our original ignorance; and now were it possible that letters should fall into disuse or be destroyed, barbarism would be the result. What must be our love, admiration and gratitude, to those venerable fathers of antiquity, whose midnight toils have brought us to calculate with almost mathematical precision, nature's vast extent; who have handed down to us a faithful account of the transactions of this society in all ages, thereby conveying to us a knowledge of the human race in every stage of its advancement; but more particularly for having procured to us a knowledge of the holy religion by which we are governed; without which we could not exist.—

We have every reason to believe by referring to the records of our body, that with it many of the most useful discoveries had their origin.

The primitive difficulties of arriving at these improvements in agriculture, commerce, government and private life, which we deem so trivial, and which facilitate our most ordinary purposes, were removed by the exertion of the first association for the good of mankind.—Every instrument of convenience was gained by a species of conquest over ignorance, from the first uncultivated condition of nature.—The first habitations of men were rude caverns or huts, and these unfurnished with any object which was pleasing or convenient; for the invention of man had not formed a model, and their art was as yet unperfected.

We are not governed by conjecture but by fact, when we assert that these things were the peculiar object of Masonic Associations, and from their exertions had their source and perfection. What should be our veneration for an association through whom we can explore the nature of man, in his weakest as well as in his most cultivated state, and appraising

the advantages we have, with a more intelligent sincerity be thankful to our great master, wisely fulfilling the functions of life, and promoting by our knowledge the happiness of others.

It would not be unacceptable to that part of my audience who are unacquainted with the mysteries of the craft, to receive some knowledge of our history. I have heretofore endeavored to impress on your minds the fact, that we have had our origin in the commencement of the world. Our principles are consonant with the first formation of the grand system of the universe, and we have built all our structures agreeable to its laws. Harmony pervades and governs the works of creation; without harmony the most superb edifice of masonry would fall.

It is not to be supposed that masonry was brought to perfection immediately. The nature of the climate previous to the flood, being mild and regular, would prevent the necessity of any great exertions for the improvement of agriculture; as the soil produced spontaneously whatever was necessary to the wants of man. The great portion of uncultivated ground, giving room to each individual to settle himself without the hazard of clashing with the rights of his neighbor, it was unnecessary that much attention should be paid to the science of Geometry. At length the wickedness of man, caused the great builder to sweep from the earth, beings unworthy of the blessings they enjoyed, and by the flood to change the fair fabric of creation.

The difficulties under which the sons of Noah laboured at their issuing forth from the ark, set the whole force of their minds in motion. They found the face of the earth changed, and the climate variable. They were obliged to apply themselves to the improvement of agriculture, to supply those wants which nature at once demanded, and refused spontaneously to yield; and to architecture to shield themselves from the rude blasts of winter.

As labour and improvement, in those days of simplicity, constituted the best title to the occupier of any spot of earth, and population rapidly increasing, it was proper to ascertain the boundaries of each man's possession; therefore the attention of the ancients was early turned to geometry. From the period until the days of Solomon, masonry rapidly spread its influence over the world. Numerous were those societies who professed under the different appellations of Noachadae, sons of light, philosophers, &c. to be guided by the laws of nature, to practice the pure religion of God, and universal benevolence; inasmuch that when Solomon had undertaken to build a temple to the Almighty Father and Grand Architect of the Universe, more than an hundred thousand masons assembled to assist in completing so great a plan. After the completion of the temple, when the builders were about to retire to their respective countries, they entered into the most solemn obligations to each other, to support, aid and relieve, and love one another in all situations of life; and that the benefit of their association should descend to their children's children to the last ages.

To this period we may look for the concentration of all the excellencies of our order, which had been hitherto scattered over the earth. This we may look upon as one of the most important epochs of the brotherhood, as from this period masonry may be said particularly to have flourished. For about a thousand years after the first grand lodge was held in the temple, like all other institutions, masonry had its ebbs and flowings.

At some periods within this time, an impenetrable cloud hung over us, but this was dissipated by the sun of christianity. A star shone forth in the east, whose resplendent orb enlightened the utmost quarters of the world. A league was formed between the primitive christians and ancient masons for their mutual support; and in no time did the principles of the brotherhood exist in such purity as when under the immediate care of the apostles. The doctrine of brotherly love and charity echoed from every pulpit. The essentials of masonry was enjoined by all the followers of Christ.—We now come to that period, when Saint John the Evangelist flourished, in honor of whom we are this day assembled. He taught that which was from the beginning, which he had heard and seen of the word of life. He opened the eyes of men that they might see the light of the gospel of Christ, and he taught them to walk upright in the way of truth and holiness. He manifested to us, that we must have fellowship with one another, to enable us to walk in fellowship with Him, who is light and life eternal. He

bore testimony of the meekness of our master and pointed him out to us, as an example to be followed by all who would wish to walk with him in the celestial lodge on high. He taught us to believe that Jesus was the corner stone of that temple of God, built up by the disciples, and cemented with his blood, into which we cannot be admitted but through him as a redeemer.

From this period masonry spread its influence rapidly over Europe, carrying with it the wholesome truths of christianity. As early as the conquest of Britain by the Romans, we discover the progress of masonry in that island, but until the Emperor Carausus granted his charter to Albanus, one of his generals, we cannot say that it arrived to any degree of perfection. Its seeds once sown, soon brought forth fruit under the warm sunshine of religion; and we therefore find, as the English came more generally to believe in the tenets of christianity, the more was the art cultivated. The great Alfred was a most distinguished patron of our order, which had been interrupted and frequently almost annihilated by the frequent eruptions of the Picts, Scots and Danes.

This excellent prince, although continually harassed by the manifold duties which pressed upon him, from the restlessness of his subjects and the ferocity of his neighbors, had time to devote to the encouragement of the science and restoring our order to its pristine dignity. Edward and afterwards Athelstane, became patrons of masonry. In the reign of the latter a regular grand lodge was constituted at York, under the immediate eye of our grand master Edwin. Under the charter granted by Athelstane to his brother Edwin, all the masons in England were summoned to meet at York in lodges. The ancient records of the order were examined, and from Hebrew, Greek and Roman manuscripts, the book of constitutions was formed. Under these constitutions all the lodges work. From this time regularity and order has prevailed in our institution, as the lights by which we are led are most brilliant.

No material occurrences fell out relative to our history from that time until the commencement of the holy wars. A pious zeal led many devotees of christianity from Europe, on the hazardous pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to visit places made sacred by the presence and death of our Saviour.

From the many revolutions which followed the overthrow of the Roman Empire and the accession of power to the followers of Mahomet, the Saracens had got possession of the holy city; and from their enmity to the christian cause, pilgrims underwent numerous impositions. For the noble purpose of protecting and affording relief to these wretched christians, an association on the masonic principles was formed, called Knights Templars. Such was the popularity of their cause and the excellence of their intentions, that the minds of men were at once fired with a zeal for doing good, and an ambition to excel in heroic deeds. The most powerful monarchs of Europe took upon themselves the insignia of the order, and did not hesitate to subject themselves to all its duties, looking upon it as the most honorable institution which human invention could create.

Great was the exertions of the noble few, who first went to the holy land for its recovery, but from a fatality attendant on most human affairs they did not succeed.

The reliques of the order are now settled at the Island of Malta, under the protection of some of the present potentates of Europe.—From Europe, masonry passed into America with its first settlers. The first regular lodge held in North-Carolina, was under a charter from the Duke of Loudon in the year 1736.

Our progress in America has been marked from time to time, by the distinguished characters who have been at our head. A statesman and philosopher Franklin, a patriot-Warrior, and a godlike Washington. Nothing can more decisively give the stamp of perfection to our body, than those remarkable words of General Washington, "that their liberal principles are founded in the immutable laws of truth and justice, and their grand object is to promote the happiness of the human race."

It is now my duty, brothers, to explain to you your duties which arise from the different grades you occupy as masons.

As much, if not all our prosperity depends on the conduct of members of lodges; it is of the utmost importance, that we be careful and circumspect in the admission of applicants. They should be of a sober life and unexceptionable moral character. At least, not hardened and incorrigible in wickedness. Many

there are who from a sincere wish to add to the blessings of society, offer themselves as candidates to assist in our benevolent designs, whose lines would not bear the strictest scrutiny. But if we can safely calculate that by an application of the rules of masonry, there will be room to hope they will be amended, there cannot be any great danger in extending to them the honors of the brotherhood; indeed as one of our great ends is the amelioration of mankind, it may be looked upon as a duty we owe to God and ourselves.

Hardened indeed must be the man, who having beheld the lights of masonry and tasted the sweets of our fellowship, does not reform. Ineffable must be the delight, and great the reward to us, if by our exertions one can be saved. We may be deceived by the external show of some men, fully persuading ourselves that he would be an honorable appendage to the body; I therefore again enjoin it upon you to be watchful. It has been supposed by many, that as there are great difficulties attending the acquirement of masonic information, none but those who have been sufficiently educated to comprehend the whole extent of our science should be admitted.

But this is striking at the fundamentals of our institution. We have more concern with the heart than with the head. Give us but men who are of sound principles, and it will be our care to instruct them in their duty.

When the lodge opens we meet together as brothers of the same family, laying aside prejudice of every kind; it would therefore be improper, pay vicious, to exclude any one worthy of the benefits of the craft, on account of country, religion or politics.—The reason why I have made this last observation, is evident to enlightened masons.

To brothers who are laboring to ascend the steps of this fabric, I will make some observations. As you are fully aware that you do not see clearly through the veil which envelops masonry, it will be a mark of wisdom to speak seldom on the subject. There are artful and wicked men who by argument would irritate you. Pass them by in silence. You are as yet too frail a column to support so mighty a dome. Apply yourselves diligently to the acquirement of the knowledge of that station which you are thought worthy to occupy; so that you may more quickly enjoy greater honors prepared for you. To this end attend closely to the conversation and instruction of enlightened brethren, and faithfully treasure up within your hearts all the knowledge you receive; it will increase in the keeping and at some period you will reap the advantages of it.

You must as yet be content to serve until you are qualified to govern. For this purpose, you should always conduct yourselves with becoming respect towards the superior officers of the lodge, and punctually attend all regular meetings.

To you brothers who are emerging from darkness, and are mid-way the steps which lead to the temple, permit me to address myself. Having labored faithfully in the station you formerly filled and in the whole course of your apprenticeship conducted yourselves worthily, your brethren fully satisfied with your faithfulness, have introduced you to partake of greater benefits and enjoyments than you have hitherto been capable of receiving. But brothers, remember, the greater your honors, the greater are the duties expected from you.—You are not only instructed to exercise all the moral and social virtues, but your views are opened to an extensive range of knowledge, wherein you may feast the soul. You are not only to understand the elucidation of symbolical masonry, displayed before you at your initiation; but when time and opportunity will permit, to make the liberal arts your study. Knowledge of every species it is your duty to seek after. The circumstances and avocation of some may be a bar to the pursuit of those branches of science only to be attained by a course of classic education. But there are none who cannot turn their attention in some measure to the attainment of those branches of knowledge most suitable to themselves.—I deem it the indispensable duty of those who are not laboring under these difficulties, to bend their minds to the acquirement of all useful, liberal and elegant accomplishments; and in as much as in him lies, to promote the information of less enlightened brethren. To specify those particular branches of study which belongs to your grade, brethren, would be a task of ages to fulfil. The volume of nature lies open before you, and whatever you can extract therefrom for the benefit of mankind, it is your duty to bring to perfection for their use. It may appear that the duties enjoined on you are too heavy for the capacity