

APRON CHARGE. I st. DEGREE.

Lodge "Dundee St. Mary."

Brother ----- In the name of the Great Architect of the Universe, and by command of the Right Worshipful Master, I present and will invest you with the distinguishing badge of a Mason. It is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honourable than the Order of the Thistle, or any other Order in existence, it being the badge of Innocence and the bond of Friendship, and I would exhort you ever to wear and consider it as such. It may be that in coming years upon your brow may rest the laurel leaves of victory, upon your breast may hang jewels fit to grace the diadem of an Eastern potentate; nay, more than these, with light added to the coming light your ambitious feet may tread round after round of the ladder that leads to fame in our mystic circles, and even the purple of our Fraternity may rest upon your honoured shoulders. But never again from mortal hands, never again, until your enfranchised spirit shall have passed upwards and inwards through the pearly gates, shall any honour so distinguished, so emblematical of purity and innocence and all perfection be bestowed upon you. It is yours to wear throughout an honoured life and at your death to be placed upon the coffin which shall contain your earthly remains, and with them laid beneath the silent clods of the valley. May its pure and spotless surface be an ever-present reminder of a purity of life and rectitude of conduct, a never-ending argument, your weary feet shall have reached the end of life's toilsome journey, and from your nerveless grasp shall drop for ever the working tools of life, may the record of your life and actions be as pure and spotless as this fair emblem with which I am about to invest you. And at last when your trembling soul shall stand naked and alone before the Great White Throne, may it be your portion to hear from him who sitteth as Judge Supreme the welcome words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." You will observe that this badge is made of lambskin, and as the lamb has been in all ages the acknowledged emblem of innocence and purity, it will remind you of that purity of life and action which should at all times characterise Freemasons. I trust you will live many years to wear this badge (invests candidate) with credit to yourself, usefulness to mankind, and an honour to the Lodge of which this night you have become a member; and I would further exhort you never to disgrace that badge for you can rest assured it will never disgrace you.

*argument for nobler deeds, higher thoughts and greater achievements, and at last your weary feet etc.*



APRON CHARGE      2nd. DEGREE.

Lodge Dundee St. Marys.

In the name of the G.G.O.T.U., and by command of the R.W.M., I now invest you with the distinguishing badge of a F.C. This badge is bestowed in recognition of the progress you have made in the Science, and it is but right that for each degree there should be a distinctive badge, for you have now completed your apprenticeship, and have passed from being a HAND to an intelligent HEAD AND HAND- having learnt the Art of Building, you now turn to the study of the Science of building and design.

The virtues which you should cultivate and exercise with a view to further progress are the intellectual virtues. These you can best employ by making the "Liberal Arts and Sciences" your constant and careful study. From time immemorial the Seven Liberal Arts have been viewed as a means whereby man is assisted to win the mastery over self and circumstances, and to secure the glorious heritage of wisdom and virtue. One of the wise men of the twelfth century wrote a beautiful allegory to show how the soul may be carried to the very gates of heaven with the help of the Seven Liberal Arts. The Arts - so runs the allegory - fashioned a chariot. Grammar formed the pole which goes before the axle-tree, Logic made the axle-tree, and Rhetoric adorned the pole with gems and the axle-tree with flowers. Then Arithmetic constructed one wheel, Music the second, Geometry the third, and the fourth wheel was made by Astronomy. To this chariot there were yoked the five Senses - Sight, Hearing, Smell, Taste, and Touch. Reason mounted with Prudence as a companion and soared off amid the plaudits of all the other gifts and graces.

They flow, past the citadel of the sun, through the regions where Venus and Mercury sing together, and where Lucifer proclaims, with a shout, the advent of the dawn, onward they went, past the Palace of Mars seething with fire and wrath, onward to the glad light and unhurtful flames of Jupiter, onward to Saturn's bright sphere. They ascended the stellar region where the pole-stars contend in brightness, and where they beheld Hercules and Orion, Leda's twins, the Fiery Crab, the Lion, and all the rest of the Zodiac's constellations. Here at length the chariot halted. It could ascend no higher, but it had halted at the gleaming gates of the Celestial Realm. Thus far had Reason and Prudence been borne by the Seven Liberal Arts - even to Heaven's gate.

It is with like purpose that you, as a F.C. are urged to cultivate those Liberal Arts in Masonic symbolism as in the allegory of which I have told you. They are represented as a means of raising men to the altitudes of knowledge. The allegory depicted them as a chariot, but we depict them as a stairway which the eager F.C. ascends, to reach the Middle Chamber of King Solomon's Temple, there to receive the reward of faithfulness and diligence.

The ancient arithmeticians taught that seven was a perfect number - the symbol of completeness; thus the Seven Liberal Arts represent the whole compendium of human knowledge, and in recommending them to your attention we are urging you to acquire all the knowledge you can, for we believe that by so doing you will discover that the vast universe is planned by the Grand Geometrician upon the principles of Order, Symmetry, and Rectitude; and when you realise that these sublime principles dominate the whole universe, and are perfectly expressed alike in the orbits of the whirling masses and in the movements of the tiny atoms, you will desire that the small universe of your own life should reflect the order and harmony of the immense universe within which you are placed, so seeking and striving you will not be disappointed. As the apron you now wear suggests that you are now expected to advance without "let or hindrance", it also suggests that you will receive at the end the due reward of your labour, and into the fold of your apron there will be poured the rich and lasting treasures of Masonic industry and zeal.



In the name of the M.H. and by command of the R.W.M. I now invest you with the Badge of a M.M. While this badge no doubt indicates that you have attained to the Sublime Degree, let it also remind you of the duties devolving upon you. Remember true dignity and honour are best maintained by a faithful study of your Art, by an earnest desire to do your part in the great work of Masonry, and by ever remembering the complete five points of fellowship, these grand connecting links of love and duty which unite Masons one to another throughout the Globe. Masonry regards the man, not the garb he wears, the house he lives in, or the luxuries with which he surrounds himself. The great Fraternity therefore ordains that all its votaries shall be clothed alike - with an apron. For each Mason an apron, for each Apron a meaning. The colour of the apron is white, the perfection of all colour is white, and white and spotless, shining like crystal in the noonday sun must be the hearts and lives of those who wear it. But, Brethren, each of you wear two aprons, - one is visible, and one invisible. One is but a symbolic gift to you, the first gift of Masonry, coming from the lamb, decayed, as all things material are. The other the gift of the Omnipotent, spiritual, undecaying, eternal. Man seeth one, God seeth both. The one which we have given you will, when your life's work is O'er, be worn and stained, tarnished, discoloured, and torn, and honour shall be measured unto you in accordance with the unselfish work which you have given in so soiling it. But look to it, as you value life, and life again, that you keep the unseen (seen only by the M.H.) pure and spotless. For the day shall come when the apron which we have given you, having found its last rest with your earthly remains 'neath the silent clods of the valley, shall be seen no more; but when the unseen garment, with which One greater than I this day invests you, shall be seen by all men, living and dead alike, to your glory or your shame, my Brethren, even as you have worn it.

Strive, therefore, to penetrate the veil which enshrouds the true secrets of our Order, realise the beautiful perfection of its tenets, and realising them you will not fail in your endeavours to live the life of a true Mason.