

P/A78

EXPLANATION OF G. L. CERTIFICATE

For more than a century and a half certificates have been given to English F. Ms and now that you have been raised to the degree of a M. M. you are entitled to a certificate issued by the M. W. the G. M. of the U. G. L. of W. These certificates have varied in size and style. The design of the present document dates from the year 1819 and it is known as the "Pillars Certificate". If you will examine it with me I will explain its meaning.

The document is surmounted by the arms of the M. W., G. M., the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Scarborough. The main body of the document is divided by a Central Column. This is of the Ionic Order of Architecture, and signifies Wisdom. It alludes to the wisdom of K. S. in building, completing and dedicating the Temple of Jerusalem to the service of the G. A. o. F. U. Flanking this central column are two others. That on the left is of the Doric Order and denotes strength. It refers to the strength of H. K. of T. in supporting K. S. with men and materials. That on the right is of the Corinthian Order and is symbolic of Beauty. It reminds us of the curious and masterly workmanship of H. A. B. in the beautifying and adorning of the Temple which was the admiration of all who beheld it.

These three pillars rest on the black and white flooring of the Lodge symbolising the Light and Darkness, Joys and Sorrows of our chequered existence. On the floor you will observe the three great emblematical lights in Freemasonry - the V. S. L. the S., and the G's; also the W. T's of the three degrees, the Tracing Board, the Rough and Perfect Ashlars and the celestial and terrestrial globes, alluding to the fact that Masonry is universal. In the left hand panel is a declaration in English, and in the right a translation of it into Latin, certifying to all whom it may concern that the Bro. named in the text has been regularly received into our Order. Not only is the date of his initiation recorded A. D., or year of our Lord, but also A. L. or year of Mas. Light which preceded the Christian era by about 4,000 years. In testimony that the Bro's name has been duly registered in the books of G. L. our R. W. Bro. the G. S., Sir Sydney White, has subscribed his name and has affixed the Seal of G. L. In the centre of this Seal if you examine it closely you will see the Hebrew characters "Yodish La Adonai" signifying "Holiness to the Lord". On the scroll below are the words "Audi. Vide, Tace" meaning "Harken, Watch, keep Silence".

A final clause stated that the possession of this Certificate does not entitle a Bro. to admission into any Lodge without due examination, and it should also be noted that ability to pass any examination does not alone give right of entrance without the production of this Certificate if it should be demanded.

The document is completed by the addition in the margin of your usual autograph over the words "The Varietur" meaning that from this signature there must be no subsequent deviation.

To the Bro. to whom it is issued, this document therefore is of unique value. It is a means of Masonic identification; a proof of membership in case of accident or unforeseen calamity; and a passport when visiting foreign Lodges where the Signs may differ from our own. It is a confidential document and should be kept in a place of safety and never exhibited publicly. I have much pleasure in presenting it to you in open Lodge, and I trust etc. etc.