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WORCESTER

GRAND MASONIC BALL

HELD AT

THE GUILDHALL,

THURSDAY, FEB. 19, 1846.

Extracted from the Worcestershire Chronicle.

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# GRAND MASONIC BALL

Hark! I hear the warden call—  
“Masons, to your sports away!  
Join the banquet in the hall;  
Give your hearts a holiday.

Friends of Worcester, fair and free,  
Come beneath our civic tree;  
Though in us which eye you see,  
Yet in us you find no guide.

It is a *cue* in Masons' line  
To hold their cherish'd secret dear;  
To reveal it now we all combine—  
'Tis now to make you happy here.”

Such was undoubtedly the sentiment not only of the warden but of every officer and brother in the Worcester Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, who on Thursday night had the privilege of meeting one of the most brilliant and joyous assemblages that ever graced the fine old rooms of our city guild. From most remote times the company of Masons, “of ancient standinge and good reckoninge,” have been known to the world for their “affable and kind meetyngs at dyverse tymes, and as a lovinge brotherhode use to doe;” our record of to-day will we trust establish the fact beyond disputation that their successors of the present day have caught the mantle of their forefathers, and so applied the hereditary courtesy of the craft as to deserve and receive the benison of all right-minded men as well as “ladyes faire.” This city and vicinity had for a month or two been on the *qui vive*, on the announcement that the Worcester Masons intended to give a grand invitation ball to their friends, before whom they would appear in all the magnificent mystic decorations

and emblems of their order; and the anxiety, especially among the ladies, to procure an *entrée*, was immense. A *carte blanche* was handed to Brother Webb, of the Bell Hotel, which he (assisted by Mr. Mountford) was to fill up at his discretion with first-rate delicacies to load the tables; and the fine old hall, to be bedizened with drapery, insignia, and illuminations, was the building happily selected for the occasion. The night arrived—the gallant Masons flew to their post—the streets were lined with carriages, and the fair and the brave found their way to the festive scene to the number of about 450 (the invitations having been necessarily limited, so as to suit the convenience of the hall).

The company were set down from nine to eleven o'clock, passing under a canopy to the hall steps, thence through the great hall or supper room, (which was then purposely kept in darkness, to conceal its magnificence,) and to up-stairs, to the assembly or ball-room. Here were the stewards and officers of the chapter waiting to receive them as their names were individually announced by the stentorian lungs of a worthy official, whose broad and happy countenance—if it might be taken as an index of what was going on within—seemed to afford a satisfactory assurance that the creature comforts must inevitably form a constituent of any project in which he bore a share. The high officers and stewards were here waiting to receive their guests. The stewards were the following:—Mr. Rising, as worshipful master and third principal; Mr. Bennett, as first principal; Mr. Knight, as second principal; brothers Hyde, Bedford, and Shelton, past masters; Eginton, and W. Corles, scribes of the chapter; H. Powell and E. Corles, senior and junior wardens of the lodge; B. Stable, principal sojourner, and J. Stephens, assistant sojourner; W. D. Gingham, treasurer; C. Griffiths, secretary; J. B. Read and C. Evans, masters of ceremonies; A. C. Hooper, senior deacon; J. Robertson, junior deacon; D. W. Nash, inner guard; Bedgrave and Sterry, stewards; T. Hughes, R. R. Harris, and R. Rea. Among the company we observed the following:—The Earl and Countess Beauchamp, Lord Southwell, and the Count and Countess San Damiano; Hon. W. Coventry and family; Baroness de Thoren, the Misses Lechmere, Sir O. P. Wakeman, Bart., Miss Peel, A. Skey, Esq., J. W. Isaac, Esq., Mrs. and the Misses Farley, J. H. Allen, Esq., W. Dent, Esq., E. Marriott, Esq., and the Misses Marriott, Conyngham Burton, Esq., Mrs. and Miss Hawkes, W. Ellis, Esq., J. M. Gutch, Esq., J. Parker, Esq., J. Owen, Esq., W. Candler, Esq. (who appeared as Master of the Worcestershire Hounds), M. Pierpoint, Esq., and Mrs. Pierpoint, J. P. Sheppard, Esq., and the Misses Sheppard,



Dr., Mrs., and Miss Malden, Dr. J. Nash, E. A. Turley, Esq., E. Sheppard, Esq., and Mrs. E. Sheppard, Rev. T. L. Wheeler, Rev. J. Webster, Rev. C. Allen, C. Sidebottom, Esq., H. B. Peake, Esq., Mrs. and the Misses Kent, J. Allies, Esq., Capt. Marsden, E. Dixon, Esq., &c. This list, of course, does not include any of the Masons, and but few of the ladies. The Masons also, with but few exceptions, from the first Principal down to the E.A.P., had brought a goodly company of their ladies and friends; herein as in all other things being anxious to do reverence to their ancient rules, one of which sets forth and enjoins that "no fellow goe into the town by night, except he have a fellow (or lady, we presume,) with him, who may bear him record that he was in an honest place."

To describe in adequate terms the brilliance of the scene—the imposing grandeur of the Masonic paraphernalia, blending with the magic of female beauty, and the whole heightened by the adornments of art, and with jewellery glistening beneath the mellow light of a wax illumination, would be a task by far too onerous for our descriptive energy. The grand emblematical display, however, was confined to the supper hall, to which we shall presently turn our attention. The first part of the programme *de la danse* consisted of French quadrilles, the Polka, Lancers, Waltz, Guaracha, and Cellarius Waltz—all of which were joined in with a gusto and unanimity which fairly gave the old hall the ague. At the left of the entrance, on a raised platform, was stationed Brother Cox's Cheltenham band—a very excellent one. The two ante-rooms were comfortably laid out, the one for refreshments and the other for cards.

Between one and two o'clock the "march" sounded for supper; and then, on descending the great staircase, first broke upon the admiring spectators the "hall of dazzling light" with its magnificent adornments, its geometrical, Egyptian, and Pythagorean mysteries, each sign and symbol of which was pregnant with moral meaning, though hidden from the divination of the crowd. At the east side of the hall, under a blue and silver canopy, sat the Worshipful Master, and third Principal (Rising), having his own banner as a Knight Templar, with a triangular device, borne exclusively by Templars, consisting of a rainbow proper, springing from clouds and surmounting a cross. On either side the royal banners of the ox and the lion of the tribe of Judah. On the canopy was the motto "Faith, hope, and charity;" above this were the celestial and terrestrial globes, and "union jacks" on the right and left. The Worshipful Master wore the star and cross of the

Knights of Malta, the *rose croix*, and the jewel of the third Principal, R.A. His Knight Templar sword-belt was of black velvet, ornamented with the sacred symbols of the order, in frosted silver, and a sash of watered black silk, with a dove in silver. The Master's supporters were brother H. J. Powell, senior warden, and brother E. Corles, junior warden. Opposite to the chair, the great banner of the lodge was displayed from the balcony; here were also the masonic arms, with the motto "*Audi, vide, tace!*" surmounted by the arms of the city, surrounded by various emblems, over which "the all-seeing eye" presided, and flanked by a brace of "union jacks;" the whole being embowered in evergreens and flowers. On the north wall was a radiated crown, and on its right and left the letters "A. R.," (Queen Adelaide being the patroness of the order), the whole formed by gas burners purposely introduced. Underneath was the Royal arch, raised on Doric pillars, all being gilt, and bearing the chapter word, ΕΥΦΡΑΜΕΝ ("we have found"); beneath its venerated and mystic shade sat a P.M. of the lodge, and the First Principal of St. Wulstan's Chapter (Bennett), having near him the Royal arch banner, as also banners of the eagle and man. He was in the full Masonic costume of Arch Masonry—in purple, crimson, and gold, and wearing the jewels of First Principal, P. Master, Mark Mason, and R. Arch. His supporters were Companion H. Eginton, Scribe E.; and Companion W. Corles, Scribe N. On the south wall were two immense stars, with a *rose croix* in the centre, all formed in brilliant gas. Underneath was a tent of pink and white, emblazoned with a red cross, and here sat the Past Master (Knight), the second Principal of the Chapter, who is also a "Knight" Templar. The second Principal wore the star and cross of the Templars, and the jewels of second Principal and P.M. The sword-belt, sash, &c., were of the same description as those of the Worshipful Master. The supporters were Companion B. L. Stable, principal sojourner, and Companion J. Stephens, assistant sojourner. Near him was a banner emblazoned with his own armorial bearings, and also a Temple banner, argent and sable, bearing the motto "*Beau seant*" (well seeming). The origin of this standard is said to have been, that in the time of the crusades the Templars designed it to signify, with its white side, victory and peace to the Christians, but, with the black, death and destruction to the infidels. Now, however, it served another purpose, as it seemed to look down upon this happy *re-union*, and its pithy motto, of "well seeming," bore testimony to the fairer auspices under which it was once more unfurled. Mr. Knight wore the cross-handled sword of the Templars.

The *Nisi Prius* and Crown courts were divided from the great hall by crimson curtains, headed by Roman drapery, with banner hangings; evergreens and flowers being arranged on the top. The whole of the decorations were tastefully executed under the direction of Brother Freame. The floor was covered with matting, provided by Mrs. Pemberton; and still further to ensure comfort, several stoves had been placed in the hall, to secure dryness and warmth. Three ranges of tables ran the whole length of the hall, except at the centre, where a passage had been left for the company. On the tables were placed "the three great and the lesser lights," the former being arranged at east, north, and south, so as to form "a long triangle." The lighting, independently of the gas, was confided to Messrs. Bell and Hall, and was admirably conducted. On the tables was laid a truly splendid banquet, provided by Brother Webb and Mr. Mountford, with the assistance of a most experienced committee of Masons. We should be accused of dealing in Eastern hyperbole were we to attempt a description of the viands; suffice it therefore to give in detail the bill of fare:—

3 Dishes Stags' Heads.	1 Dishes Turbans of Fillets of Chickens.
8 Dishes Collar'd Eels.	5 Dishes Dindons a la Perigueux, with Truffles.
16 Dishes Fillets of Soles.	12 Dishes Aspie of Eels.
18 Dishes Aspie of Veal and Ham	1 Dishes Aspie of Lobster.
36 Dishes Potted Meat.	12 Dishes Galantine of Chickens
46 Dishes Shell Fish.	16 Dishes Pates de Perigord.
30 Dishes Potted Lamprey.	4 Dishes Boar's Head, with Truffles.
6 Dishes Vol-au-Vent Oyster.	4 Dishes Peacocks.*
24 Dishes Lobster and Italian Salad.	
32 Dishes Tongue.	36 Ornaments.
22 Dishes Hens.	16 Trifles.
18 Dishes Raised Pies.	20 Savoy Cakes
18 Dishes Pigeon Pies.	70 Jellies
5 Dishes Potted Turkeys, with Truffles.	50 Italian Creams
23 Dishes Game.	18 Swiss Tarts.
12 Dishes Lamb.	18 Madelaine Cakes.
60 Dishes Roast Fowl.	12 Charlottés a la Russe.
2 Dishes Beef.	30 Pastries.
6 Dishes Roulard de Veau.	12 Sugar Touts.
4 Dishes Grenade of Fillets of Chickens.	28 Sugar Ornaments.

## DESSERT.

Pines, Peaches, Grapes, &c.

\* The ancient Knights used to make vows "before God, our ladye, and ye peacock."



The Worshipful Master led the Countess Beauchamp to the banquet hall, the Master's lady being led by the Earl Beauchamp. The company being seated, the W. M. called to order by one stroke with his gavel, which was answered by the principals in the north and south of the hall. Silence being obtained, the following grace was given in an audible voice by the W. M.:—"May the great Architect of the Universe give us grateful hearts for these his mercies, and make us mindful of the wants of others." To this, all the Past Masters responded—"So mote it be."

The most fastidious modern Heliogabalus, it will be admitted, could not have failed to select from the above bill of fare something whereon to revel his appetite and indulge the most refined taste. The wines of the best vintages also combined their cogent influence to throw a halo over the splendid scene, which in its overpowering effect rendered by far less doubtful the assumed exaggerations of Arabic tale. The champagne was provided by Mr. J. B. Read, of Broad-street, and the other wines by Messrs. Powell and Son, of the Cross, purveyors to her Majesty Queen Adelaide.

With all this amount of means and appliances it will be readily believed that the Masons and their friends exhibited much more of *operative* than of *speculative* craft, and that the *Ish Chotzeb* (men of "chewing") found their hands full of business. This task, however, was considerably lessened, from the circumstance that the company generally, and the fair sex in particular, were too deeply engrossed in the pagantry of the scene to devote a full and undivided attention to the profusion of delicacies laid out for them. One of the principal sources of attraction was the appearance of the higher officers, who, as they sat in state, richly dight with jewels and devices of the "mystic tie," worthily and ably represented their honourable and responsible posts, as the preservers of the landmarks of the order, and as oracles from whom is derived that fund of information which expert and ingenious craftsmen only can afford whose judgment has been matured by years and experience in masonic mysteries. If to study the beautiful of nature be the true part of a Mason, the brethren could not possibly have acted on sounder or more oracular advice than when they determined on gathering around them so rich a galaxy of youth and female loveliness, and to present to their friends an exemplification of the Great Hiram's tradition in producing a world of beauty from a multitude of chaotic materials. In the banquet hall, the consistency of the masonic body with the canon of their ancient rubrics was more particularly visible, two of their great moral duties being described as follows:—"You are strictly



to observe your duty to your neighbour, by always acting on the *square*; and considering him equally entitled with yourself to share the blessings of Providence, rendering unto him (or her) those favours and friendly offices which in a similar situation you would expect to receive from him;—and to yourself, by not abusing the bounties of Providence, impairing your faculties by irregularity, or debasing the profession by intemperance.” In this, the brethren were most faithful, and all seemed ready to exclaim with their poet—

Here in Friendship's sacred bower  
The downy-wing'd and smiling hour  
Mirth invites and social song,  
Nameless mysteries among;  
Crown the bowl and fill the glass  
To every virtue, every grace,  
To the brotherhood resound  
“Health!” and let it thrice go round.

The literate eye could also plainly observe that in this large and brilliant assemblage the brethren had in all things sought to illustrate, morally as well as physically, the great utility of their order. The seven liberal arts and sciences, for instance, were in constant and active requisition—*Grammar*, *Rhetoric*, and *Logic*, among the young and ardent, whose talent had been elicited by the fascinations lurking around them; *Arithmetic* and *Geometry*, which treat of the powers and properties of numbers, and of magnitudes in general, where length, breadth, and thickness, are considered, were admirably illustrated in the operations so efficiently conducted on the viands; *Music* found an exponent in brother Jacob's band, which he had kindly lent for the use of the supper-room; and *Astronomy*, or “the observation of the *heavenly bodies*,” could not have been a science altogether unknown to those present who had eyes to see and ears to hear. The science of Mathematics too, which forms the very root and foundation of the Masonic craft, was peculiarly illustrated, and in detail; for in so large a company there were some individuals who, in corporeal bulk, represented only a *point*, or comparatively minute atom; others, a *line*, or continuation of a point, embracing only the single capacity of length; others again, a *superficies*, having two dimensions, length and breadth; and lastly, a *solid*, having length, breadth, and thickness. From these fancies of ours we were soon aroused by the Worshipful Master, who rose and proposed “the health of her most gracious Majesty the Queen.” The toast having been enthusiastically honoured, the band played the National Anthem.

The Worshipful MASTER again rose, and said that he had to discharge the gratifying duty of proposing “the health of

her Majesty the Queen Dowager"—(great cheering)—an illustrious lady, who had for some time past been one of the brightest ornaments of our county. (Cheers.) But while they paid due honour to her Majesty as a resident amongst them, they must not forget that she had been the consort of a beloved King, who himself was a Mason. (Hear, hear.) Her Majesty had always, he was sure, entertained the most kindly feelings and sentiments towards the order; she had ever been a most liberal contributor to its charitable institutions; and her whole life had been a practical illustration of its fundamental principles—virtue, faith, and piety. (Continued cheering.)—The toast was drunk with enthusiasm, and the band played "Rule Britannia."

The Right Hon. Earl BEAUCHAMP then rose and said—Ladies and gentlemen, before we separate I am desirous of giving one toast, in doing honour to which I am sure you will all cordially join with me. (Applause.) I beg to propose the health of the Worshipful Master, Mr. Rising, and the Worcester Lodge of Freemasons, and thanks to them for their splendid and magnificent hospitality extended to us this evening. (Loud and continued cheering.)

The Worshipful MASTER rose amid loud applause, and begged to thank the company on behalf of himself and the Lodge for the very handsome manner in which the toast had been given and received. He further observed that although the decorations of the Masons might perhaps amuse the ladies, or call a smile to their faces, they might be assured that there was nothing connected with "the craft" which was not strictly in accordance with the principles of justice, truth, honour, and brotherly love. (Cheering.)

Senior Past Master J. B. HYDE, at the command of the Worshipful Master, next rose to propose a toast which, he said, fortunately needed not the aid of eloquence to ensure it a most cordial and rapturous reception. (Cheers.) He had only to say that the toast had reference to their fair visitors—(Here the worthy Past Master was interrupted by an enthusiastic burst of cheering which continued for several minutes, and in which the remainder of the sentence was completely drowned.) The ladies, continued the speaker, had that evening for the first time seen the Masons in all their insignia and paraphernalia; they had seen their banners, they had seen their Royal Arch, their jewels, their collars, and all the badges of the various degrees in their order; but notwithstanding all that, they had seen nothing, and they knew nothing, of the mysteries of Masonry. (Laughter.) There were secrets in Masonry which ladies' eyes must not pry into too curiously, nor ladies' tongues talk about. (Renewed laughter.) But

although the ladies were precluded from participating in Masonic mysteries, they were not debarred from partaking of Masonic amusements and Masonic refreshments (hear, hear, and cheers); and for his part he thought that the external portion of a Mason's Lodge was never so becomingly adorned and graced as when it was surrounded and enlivened by the fairest and most beautiful works of nature; but there was one point in Masonry he might, without impropriety, be permitted to mention, that a Mason was never so much gratified, his heart was never so light, as when he saw all around him happy and contented, and enjoying themselves in the pursuit of innocent amusement; and if the Masons had, by their entertainment of that evening, caused the hearts of the young to leap with joy, or removed but for a time the weight of care from the sorrowing brow, they had received a Masons' reward. (Loud and long reiterated plaudits.) It had been the earnest and anxious desire of the Master, Officers, and Brethren of the Worcester Lodge to render every satisfaction to their fair friends and guests (cheers); but they were novices in giving balls, and if any defect should be discovered he hoped and trusted that the ladies would observe the principles of Masonry, follow the examples of Masons, and *be silent* with regard to those defects. (Continued laughter.) He knew not who would reply to the toast. If he called upon the eldest unmarried lady to do so he thought there would be considerable hesitation and difficulty about the matter, and a want of nerve to address their Worshipful Master (shouts of laughter); but if he called on the youngest, on the other hand, he feared that too many would be rising at the same time. (Increased merriment.) Should his fair young friend, however, whosoever she might be, find herself nervous, diffident, or in any manner at a loss, he would recommend her not to hesitate, but without delay to call in the assistance of Dr. Malden, who was always prepared at a moment's notice to afford effectual relief in all such cases. (Great laughter.) In conclusion he would propose the health of the ladies—(cheers)—including Dr. Malden. (Shouts of laughter and cheers followed this sally, in the midst of which the worthy Past Master resumed his seat.)

DR. MALDEN, on behalf of the ladies, returned thanks for the kind hospitality and chivalrous enthusiasm which the worthy Masons had exhibited towards the sex for whom he appeared, and in whose name he tendered their most heartfelt acknowledgments for the courteous manner in which they had been received, for the politeness shown to them, and for the agreeableness, elegance, and splendour of the entertainment. He assured the Lodge that the ladies found their words to be



too inadequate to give utterance to the grateful feelings which the Lodge had impressed on their susceptible hearts, (Laughter.) The Doctor concluded by saying that it was customary now-a-days for representatives—well-disciplined representatives at least—to consult their constituents. He had consulted his, and had been commissioned by them to propose the health of Past Master Hyde. (Loud cheers.)

Past-Master HYDE briefly replied, and then (between two and three o'clock) the whole company returned to the hall room, where one-half of the programme remained to be realized, in the shape of French quadrilles, Lancers, Cellarius Waltz, Gallopade, Valse à deux Temps, Guaracha, Polka, and Contre danse. Then

“Fairy forms  
Tripped all heedless of the passing hour  
To soft and dulcet measures.”

The utmost enjoyment seemed to pervade the room, without a single drawback, for one and all seemed to have given themselves up to the *abandon* of the happy and exciting moments. The pleasures of the night were also much enhanced by the unwearied efforts of the stewards to please and oblige, and the most prompt and congenial introductions were skilfully and readily managed on their part. The company did not separate till day-light peered through the curtains.

To conclude our sketch of this magnificent meeting, to which our inadequate powers of description have, we fear, done but partial justice, the public of Worcester, and its vicinity, owe a debt of deep gratitude to the brethren of the Worcester Lodge for their hospitality and munificence, and will ever bear a pleasant recollection of the happiness which greeted them in our old hall on the night of February 19, 1846—“So mote it be!”

We should state that a body of the police were stationed at and near the entrance to the hall, by whose excellent arrangements good order was preserved.

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THE END.

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MASONIC HALL

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