



**The Paul Chater Lodge of Installed Masters  
No. 5391 E.C.**

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**THE ANCIENT PENALTIES**

an Address given by

**W. Bro. K. M. A. Barnett, P.D.G.W.**

on

**Friday, 29th January, 1965**

## THE ANCIENT PENALTIES

Worshipful Brethren—

By Resolution of the United Grand Lodge at its quarterly communication in December, 1964, discretion was granted to Masters of Lodges under the English Constitution to use a modified form of OB; and those of you who attended the December meeting of Foochow Lodge No. 1912 heard our old friend W. Bro. W. L. E. Miller, P.A.G.D.C., give the 2nd degree OB in the official form, which replaces the formula "under no less a penalty . . . than that of having, &c. &c." by that of "bearing in mind the traditional penalty of having, &c. &c."

In this alternative form the penal clauses bear a strong resemblance to those used from time immemorial by Lodges of the Irish Constitution, and my short address this evening — short because we are all anxious not to delay the meeting of District Grand Lodge — will take as its basis the forms of the Irish ritual. For the benefit of those not familiar with that ritual I should first explain that in the Legend of the Third Degree, which corresponds to the Second Part of the Traditional History in English working, the three murderers are overheard in a declivity near Joppa lamenting aloud the part each had played in the crime.

The first ruffian says "Would that I had had my . . . &c., than that I had joined in the conspiracy to slay our good G.M." The second says "would that I had had my . . . &c.," and the third says "Would that I had had my . . . &c., for mine was the hand that struck the fatal blow."

Whereupon they were seized and brought before K.S., who in addition to causing each of the three to suffer his own self-involved penalty, ordered that each should be used as the Ancient Penalty of the First, Second and Third Craft degrees respectively.

Each of the Ancient Penalties involves a special kind of mutilation, invoked for a special purpose. The ancients believed that an incomplete body would rise incomplete in the next world; so the tongueless ghost could not defend itself at the judgment seat; the loss of the heart (believed to be the seat of the memory — we still speak of "learning by heart") made it impossible to seek redress for mundane injuries; while the loss of the bowels (the seat of the affections) would condemn the risen spirit to be forever friendless and unloved. Leaving aside such spurious

accretions as the tide which ebbs and flows twice daily (whoever put that in had forgotten that the Mediterranean tides are imperceptible) the three ancient craft penalties, taken together, condemn the guilty to an eternity of dumb loveless uncomprehended suffering. A terrible fate indeed.

The agencies by which the mutilations are rendered complete are also of interest to Masonic research. The tongue is consigned to earth and water; the heart to earth and air; the bowels to fire and air. The tongue will be devoured by fish, the heart by wild fowl and beasts, the bowels by flame. Thus the First Degree penalty reminds us of our G.M. Moses and of his faithful servant Joshua the sun of Nun. The Second Degree penalty recalls Joshua's associate and successor Caleb the sun of Jephunneh. That of the Third refers to Uri the father of Bezaleel. A full exegesis of these points, which connect here with the last talk I gave to this Lodge, would require more time than I have at my disposal.

Finally, W. Brn., might I express the wish that our United Grand Lodge had prescribed also the concluding clause of these penalties as given in the Irish ritual. Each of the three penal clauses ends with the words "And binding myself under the real penalty of being deservedly branded a wretch, base, faithless and unfit to be received among men of honour should I ever knowingly or wilfully violate, in letter or in spirit, this my most solemn, sincere and voluntary O.B." That is the true penalty of every Masonic oath, by which we are each of us bound whatever the wording which precedes.