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THE MASONIC CHAIN.

As Used During The Singing Of The Last Verse Of The Initiate's Song

FORMATION

The Chain is formed by a Brother extending his **Left Hand** to the **Left** and grasping the **Right Hand** of the Brother next but one on the **Left**. Similarly, the Brother extends his **Right Hand** to the **Right** and grasps the **Left Hand** of the Brother next but one on the **Right**.

Two hands are joined therefore across each Brother in the Chain. The chain extends round the room in a form as near a circle as possible.

The Initiate is on the right of W.M. and the I.P.M. is on the left of W.M. Thus the left hand of the Initiate is grasping the right hand of the I.P.M.

EXPLANATION. To be given to the Initiate and made as personal as possible.

As the Chain extends around the room, so does Masonry encircle the World. As you grasp the hands of your brethren of this Lodge, so will you find that over the whole World, brother Masons will be anxious to extend to you the hand of friendship.

You will note that that the brother on your left and right are joining hands across your breast. This could be taken to mean that that they are willing to protect your character in your absence as well as in your presence from the attacks of the insidious.

The chain thus formed is symbolic of our Order. It is a double chain, therefore is doubly strong and has a double meaning.

Firstly. It shows the manner in which the Initiate is received into Freemasonry. All brethren receive him into the circle. The circle has no end. The Initiate is grasping the hand of the I. P. M. across the W.M.. The Initiate is the future, the W.M. is the present and the I.P.M. is the past. Thus the past looks through the present to the future to see the continuance of its work.

Secondly, The chain is a double one, but should it so happen that a link is broken by the calling away to the realms above, or by a brother falling by the wayside, the Chain remains strong by reason of the other links, (*Here it is usual to ask a brother as near directly opposite the Initiate as possible, to step out of the chain, and the loose ends are shown*) The weakness remains until the link is replaced by a new Brother. To-night, you Brother Initiate, are the new link, (*Here request the Brother who has obliged, to rejoin the Chain.*)

In the construction of all chains, part of the construction process consists of testing the Chain from time to time to see if it is strong enough to withstand the strains which will be required of it. It is therefore tested in excess of the required strain. So is our Masonic Chain "Tested". This is shown by a gentle swaying motion of the Brethren during the singing of the last verse by the Brother obliging, and during the repeats by the Brethren. This swaying without the breaking of the Chain, symbolises the strength of the Brotherhood.

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With the Compliments of Bro. T. Goulden.