

## THE CHEQUERED CARPET AND INDENTED BORDER.

In the days of our earliest records of Lodge procedure, e.g. when the floor drawing (or Tracing Board) was actually drawn on the floor, there would have been no black and white chequered carpet - probably only bare boards. - and the drawing would have occupied only a small section of the floor. I think we may safely assume that nobody walked on the drawing (except the candidate with his escort in the 3rd Degree)

When around the 1730s the ready made floor cloths came into use, we may be certain that the same rule applied, hence the custom of "squaring the Lodge, and the Brn. stood around the drawing or floor cloth during the ceremonies

The earliest surviving printed illustrations of the Tracing Boards, in 1744 and 1745 show a combined design for the 1st and 2nd and a separate plate for the 3rd. A small part of all these boards is covered with "chequered flooring without border, but each picture is framed with straight lines, e.g. without an indented design and this supports the probability that the indented border was a later addition.

Generally where a black and white carpet covers the whole of the working floor, e.g. up to the S.W. pedestal) the I.G. for announcements and Brn for saluting on entry, will step on to the Western edge of the carpet for that purpose, regardless of whether it is indented or chequered. There is no symbolism involved, (simply convenience, because that is the best position for these purposes

## TASSELS ON THE CARPET.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ One would hesitate to comment on the design without having seen a sketch or the real thing, but a tasselled design all around the carpet is perhaps unusual. Many carpets nowadays have a tassel in each corner, they are said to symbolize the four cardinal virtues .

## MONEY AND METALLIC SUBSTANCES.

What is the origin and significance of our procedure in this part and the preparation of the candidate, I am sure you, like myself have often wondered, here is an attempt to clarify.

The polluting influence of metal is stressed several times in the Bible. Here are two examples.

" And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Exodus XX 25.

And the house when it was in building, was built of stone and made ready before it was brought hither: so that there was neither hammer or ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building I. Kings VI 7.

The idea of pollution by metal seems to have been common in many countries and we find in mythology the myth... The misletoe must /may not be cut with iron.

Although we have descriptions of ritual and ceremonial procedure in a number of documents from 1696 onwards, the earliest hint of this practice appears in the Graham M/s of 1726.

How came you into the Lodge - poor and penniless... Blind and ignorant of our secrets. you  
" How dost <sup>he</sup> ~~you~~ bring him " Neither naked nor clothed, barefoot nor shod, deprived of all metal and in a right moving posture"

A description published in France 1742 is much more detailed. After he has satisfied these questions, he is deprived of all metal articles about him, such as buckles, buttons, rings, snuff boxes etc. There are some lodges where they carry precision so far as to deprive a man of his clothes if they are ornamented with galon ( a kind of gold or silver thread).

Another French exposure.

Why were you deprived of all Metals!

Because when the Temple of Solomon was in building, the Cedars

(2)

/the Cedars of Lebanon were sent all cut, ready for use, so that one heard the sound on no hammer, nor any other tool, when they used them (the timber timbers )

A more extended symbolism 18th century.

Why deprived of metal"

For three reasons, First reason, that no weapon be introduced into the Lodge to disturb the harmony, second reason, that metal though of value, could have no influence in our initiation; third reason, that after our initiation metal could make no distinction amongst Mason's, the Order being founded on Peace, virtue, and friendship."

There can be little doubt that the present day procedure is a survival of the idea of pollution from metal, and since the candidate for Initiation is symbolically erecting a Temple within himself, that is probably the reason why the "deprivation" has remained a part of our practice throughout more than two centuries.

#### SALUTING IN PASSING.

There are times when the normal signs are used as Salutes and the Brn standing should and could take the requisite step. When they are required to "Salute in Passing" however, the particular step is not necessary. At Installations there are often a fair number of Brn taking part in the exercise, and if each of them halts at the proper moment, it would cause a tedious and unnecessary delay. It is suggested that unless the rubric of the ritual requires them to do so, there is no need to do so, but, please remember "EYES LEFT" at the moment of passing.

## THE WARDENS COLUMNS.

If we go back to our earliest documents of the craft, "the old charges" which run from 1400 onwards the two earliest and only pillars in our literature were not those of K.S.T., but the pillars built by the children of Lameck on which were engaved all the then known sciences, to preserve them from destruction if the world was to be destroyed by flood and fire. In all these documents (some 130 separate versions) Soloumns Temple played only a very small part and the pillars do not appear at all.

It is not until 1700 that we find Solomns Pillars named in our earliest ritual documents. It is said by Masons that they represent Strength and Stability of the Churches in all ages. About 1730 is the first mention of the Three Pillars that support the Lodge Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. There can be no doubt that these were a separate set of three which were purely symbolical, they were not yet part of the Lodge furniture, moreover they had nothing to do with the two in the Old Charges or with those of K.S.T.

It must be emphasized that throughout the period the Wardens were floor officers discharging duties comparable to those of our deacons today. It is very doubtful if they had seats during the ceremony and it is certain they had no pedestals or pillars, the latter were drawn on the floor, or floor cloth and though they had a place in the ritual they were not part of the Wardens equipment. About 1760 we find for the first time that the "Wisdom" pillar represents the Master, in the East, Strength the S.W. in the West and the Beauty in the South implying that these three pillars are something more than a piece of verbal symbolism. It would appear that the furniture manufacturers who turned them into candlesticks, turned them into the "three lesser lights"

## The Assistance of the Square.

There seems to be no doubt, if the words mean what they say, that at some stage either before or during the ceremony the square will have been used to assist the candidate in becoming a F.C. A theory put forward explains that this is. To remind us that we are being obligated within the square, we are afterwards bound to act upon it.

In what form does he appear, With his feet formed into a square, body erect etc. What recommendation does he then receive? That as then he then stood... before God and ~~man~~ and the Lodge a just an upright man and mason, so as to maintain that character through life. So it would seem that in all cases the square was used to inculcate moral lessons by the method which is peculiarly Masonic veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.

Copyright Worcestershire Masonic Library and Museum Trust

3

CANDLES.

The candles in the Lodge are much more than a means of illumination. They are symbols, with a long and attractive history. The candle came into the speculative Lodge not only from the Hall of the Guild, it came from the votive offering, burning before a shrine centuries ago. Its physical light is the emblem of the spritual. The burning candle at the medieval altar and shrine, carried with it, the idea of concecration, of the making and keeping of vows, of gratitude for mercies which had been vouchsafed.

The burning of candles in holy places seems to have a heathen idea originally. Men's superstitious minds in medieval times / days, believed that there was much virtue in the lighted candle. Here are some lines from a 16th century verse.:-

A wonderous force and might,  
Doth in these candles lie,  
Which if at any time they light  
They sure believe that neither storm or tempest dare abide,  
Nor thunder in the skies be heard,  
Nor any devils spite  
Nor fearful sprites that walk by night, nor hurts of frost and hail.

In the 18th century, the Moderns regard their three big candles as the three great lights, The Sun, The Moon and the Master of the Lodge.

The Anctients took a less obvious view. Volounn of the Sacred Law,  
The Square, and the Compasses

Page 40 Taylors Working Explanation of the First Tracing Board.

THE PILLERS.

Early rituals direct attention to three grand pillars. These supported the Mason's Lodge, they are emblematical, of Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty, they were then associated with the pillars of the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders respectively. They also represented Solomon King of Israel, who built, completed and dedicated the Temple to God's Service, Hiram King of Tyre who supported Solomon with men and materials, Hiram Abif, whose curious and masterly workmanship beautified and adorned the Temple.

Here is part of a dialogue between Simon and Philip, taken from a manuscript of approx 1730.

Q. How high is your Lodge

A. As high as the heavens, and low as the earth

Q. How many Pillers had your Lodge

A. Three

Q. What did you call them

A. Beauty, Strength and Wisdom

Q. What do they represent

A. Beauty to adorn, Strength to support, and Wisdom to contrive

We now explain the Pillers differently. The Masters, The Ionic, now represents the Wisdom.

The S. Warden, The Doric, represents Strength, and:-

The J. Wardens The Corinthian, represents Beauty.

THE TYLERS TOAST.

The time honoured toast it was observed in 1762 or earlier. In some Lodges it is regularly proposed by the S.W. followed by the J.W. It is not necessary to give the precise wording of the toast, which is so well known to every Freemason. One of Rudyard Kipling's many Masonic poems takes as its motif "The Widow of Windsor" ( Queen Victoria) " -Ave you heard of the Widow at Windsor, With a heavy gold crown on -er head..... etc.

Ending with the para phase:- Then -eres to the sons of the Widow Whereever, however they roam, -eres all they desire, and if they require, A speedy return to their home. ( Poor beggers - they'll never see one.