

Past Master Degree

Under Canada for 1904 he reproduces the Executive Committees remarks on Washington's unusual action in exacting a fee from visiting Royal Arch Companions for communicating one of the lesser degrees, and says:

"The proper remedy would be for the General Grand Chapter and all State Grand Chapters to expunge from the ritual the Past Master's degree and relegate it to symbolic Masonry, where it belongs."

Again under Iowa and touching the same degree of Past Master, he remarks:

"How any High Priest could work the degree 'in a true, dignified, Masonic manner' when it is admitted there is little in it, is more than we can see."

And expresses hearty agreement with Companion John- stone of the District of Columbia who had written :

"This would seem to be a very reasonable proposition when one reflects that the only excuse for the existence of the Past Master's degree in the Capitular system is the old theory and practice of conferring the Royal Arch degree only on Past Masters, and the degree of Past Master was introduced into the Chapter only because the Lodges did not furnish sufficient material in the shape of actual Past Masters. Both the degree and the tradition as to its necessity ought to be relegated to the lumber room for the storage of the useless things in Masonry."

The Past Master degree in the Capitular system is looked upon by many as a man would regard a wart on his nose. It is probably as old as himself, but he has no use for it. It is part of him yet he would rejoice if it was not there. Whatever claim he might have to good looks is destroyed by its unsightly presence and the decorum he would fain practice is set at nought by the knowledge that his appearance is a signal for hilarity on the part of the boys. In sheer desperation he argues that the blemish is really a necessary ornament and that the human form divine would not be complete without it. The knife is the only remedy but he shrinks from it though he is convinced he will be all the handsomer for the operation. General Grand Chapter, it appears, has whittled the thing down to the bare OB. and "essentials." It is only a matter of time when even these too will go and the dignity of the chair be no longer exposed to ridicule and insult by a useless and meaningless burlesque.

Sources:

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1906, report on Foreign Correspondence - TENNESSEE