

A Masonic Dictionary

ACCEPTED

The Latin accipere, receive, was from ad, meaning "to," and capere, meaning "take," therefore to take, to receive. The passive apprenticeship and initiation, but after the participle of this was acceptus. In Operative Masonry members were admitted through course of time, and when the Craft had begun to decay, gentlemen who had no intention of doing builders' work but were interested in the Craft for social, or perhaps for antiquarian reasons, were accepted" into membership; to distinguish these gentlemen Masons from the Operatives in the membership they were called the "Accepted." After 1717, when the whole Craft was revolutionized into a Fraternity, all members became non-Operatives, hence our use of the word in such phrases as "Free and Accepted Masons."

AFFILIATE

Filius is Latin for son, filia for daughter; the prefix "af" is a form of the Latin ad, meaning to add to. To be affiliated means therefore to be adopted into a family as a son or daughter, a meaning that beautifully covers a Mason's relation to his Lodge once he has affiliated with it.

ALARM

The Latin for weapons, or arms, was arma. Our "art" and "article" came from the same root, art meaning something originally made by the use of the arms, hands and fingers. The English "alarm" goes back directly to the Italian alle arme, and ultimately to the Latin ad arma so that "alarm" means "to arms, signifying that something has happened of possible danger. A knock at the Lodge door is so named because it calls for alertness, lest the wrong man be permitted to enter.

ALLEGORY

The Greeks called a place of public assembly agora; from this they built the word agoreuein, meaning speak, in the sense of addressing a public. When to this is added alia, meaning another, the compound gives us our "allegory," which is the speaking about one thing in the terms of something else. In Masonry we have the allegory of Solomon's Temple, of a journey, of the legend of a martyr builder, etc., in each case the acting and describing of one thing being intended to refer to some other thing. For example, the building of Solomon's Temple is described, not for the purpose of telling how that structure was erected, but to suggest that men may work together in brotherliness at a common task.

ALTAR

Alt, in Latin, referred to height, preserved in our "altitude;" this root appeared in altare, literally meaning a "high place." In primitive religion it was a common practice to make sacrifices, or

conduct worship, on the top of a hill, or high platform, so that "altar" came to be applied to any stone, post, platform, or other elevation used for such purposes. In the Lodge the altar is the most holy place.

APPRENTICE

In Latin apprehendere meant to lay hold of a thing in the sense of learning to understand it, the origin of our "apprehend." This became contracted into apprehendere and was applied to a young man beginning to learn a trade. The latter term came into circulation among European languages and, through the Operative Masons, gave us our "apprentice," that is, one who is beginning to learn Masonry. An "Entered Apprentice" is one whose name has been entered in the books of the Lodge.

APRON

In early English, napron was used of a cloth, a tablecloth, whence our napery, nap-kin; it apparently was derived from the Latin map pa, the source of "map." "Apron is a misdivided form of "a napron," and meant a cloth, more particularly a cloth tied on in front to protect the clothes. The Operative Masons wore a leather apron out of necessity; when the craft became speculative this garment, so long identified with building work was retained as the badge of Masons; also as a symbol of purity, a meaning attached to it, probably, in comparatively recent times, though of this one cannot be certain.

ASHLAR

The Latin assis was a board or plank; in the diminutive form, assula, it meant a small board, like a shingle, or a chip. In this connection it is interesting to note that our "axle" and "axis" were derived from it. In early English this became asheler and was used to denote a stone in the rough as it came from the quarries. The Operative Masons called such a stone a "rough ashlar," and when it had been shaped and finished for its place in the wall they called it a "perfect ashlar." An Apprentice is a rough ashlar, because unfinished, whereas a Master Mason is a perfect ashlar, because he has been shaped for his place in the organization of the Craft.

ATHEIST

The Greek for God was theos; when the j prefix a was placed before it, we get the origin of "atheism," signifying a denial of the god, or gods. The word should be distinguished from "agnosticism," which means neither to affirm nor to deny but to remain in doubt; and from "infidel," which means that one does not believe some doctrine. Christians call Mohammedans "infidels" because they do not believe the Bible; Mohammedans call Christians "infidels" because they do not believe the Koran. Inasmuch as Masonry requires of a petitioner that he believe in God the atheist is automatically excluded from the Fraternity.

BROTHER

This word is one of the oldest, as it is one of the most beautiful, in any language. No-body knows

where or when it originated, but it is certain that it existed in the Sanskrit, in a form strikingly similar to that used by us. In Greek it was phrater, in the Latin frater, whence our "fraternal" and "fraternalism." It has always meant men from the same parents, or men knit by very close blood ties. When associated with "initiation, which has the general meaning of "being born into," one can see how appropriate is its use in Freemasonry. All of us have, through initiation in our "mother" Lodges, been born into a Masonry and therefore we are "brothers," and that which holds us together in one great family is the "Mystic Tie," the Masonic analogue of the blood tie among kinsmen.

CANDIDATE

Among Romans it was the custom for a man seeking office to wear a shining white robe. Since the name for such a color was candidus (whence our "candid"), the office seeker came to be called candidate. In our ceremonies the custom is reversed: the candidate is clothed after his election instead of before.

CARDINAL

In Masonry we have "cardinal points" and "cardinal virtues." The Greeks had kradan, meaning, "swing on," and the Romans had cardo, meaning "hinge." The roots mean that on which a thing swings, or hinges, on which a thing depends or hangs, therefore anything that is of fundamental or pivotal, importance. A member of the Sacred College of the Roman Church is a Cardinal because of the importance of his office, which ranks next in dignity to that of the Pope. The cardinal points of the compass are those from which are determined all other points, north, east, south, west; the cardinal virtues are those which are fundamental to all other virtues.

CEREMONY

The Latin caerimonia referred to a set of formal acts having a sacred, or revered, character. A ceremony differs from a merely formal act in that it has a religious significance; a formality becomes a ceremony only when it is made sacred. A "ceremony" may be individual, or may involve only two persons; a rite" (see below under "ritual") is more public, and necessarily involves many. An "observance" is public, as when the whole nation "observes" Memorial Day. A "Master of Ceremonies" is one who directs and regulates forms, rites and ceremonies.

CHARITY

The Greeks had a word, charisma, meaning a gift, and a number of words from the same root, variously suggesting rejoicing, gladness. The Latins had a similar word, carus, and meaning dear, possibly connected with amor, signifying love. From these roots came "grace," meaning a free, unbought gift, as in the theological phrase, "the grace of God," and "charity." Strictly speaking, charity is an act done freely, and spontaneously out of friendship, not as a civic duty and grudgingly, as is sometimes the case in public charity. The Masonic use of the word is much nearer this original sense, for a Mason extends relief to a needy brother not as a duty but out of friendship.

CHARTER

In Latin charta was a paper, a card, a map; in Medieval Latin this became an official paper, as in the case of "Magna Charta." Our "chart" and "card" are derived from the same root. A Masonic charter is the written paper, or instrument, empowering a group of brethren to act as a Lodge.

CIRCUMAMBULATION

In Masonic terminology this is the technical name of that ceremony in which the candidate walks around the Lodge. The word is derived from the Latin prefix circum, meaning "around," and ambulare, meaning "walk," whence our ambulate, ambulatory, etc.; a circumambulation is therefore a walking around. In ancient religions and mysteries the worshippers walked around an altar; imitating the movements of the sun; this became known as circumambulation, and is the origin of our own ceremony.

CLANDESTINE

In Anglo Saxon "helan" meant something hidden, or secret, a meaning preserved in "conceal;" "hell," the hidden place, is from the same word. Helan descended from the Latin celare, hide; and on this was built the Latin clandestinus, secret, hidden, furtive. In English clandestine, thus derived, came to mean a bad secret, one that must be indulged in furtively. A secret may be innocent; it is merely something done without the knowledge of others, and nothing is more common; but a clandestine act is one done in such a way as to elude observation. Clandestine Masonry is a bad kind of irregular and unlawful secret society falsely claiming to be Masonic. In the Constitutions a Clandestine Mason is defined as, "One claiming to be a Free and Accepted Mason not having received the degrees in a Lodge recognized as regular by the Grand Lodge of the State of New York."

CLOTHING

In early English cloth was used of garment, dress, and shows up in our clad, cloth, clothe, clothing. Clothing is the set of garments, or coverings, by which the body is protected from the weather and concealed from view. In Masonic usage the meaning is much narrower and more technical; a Mason is clothed when he wears the apron, white gloves, and the emblem of his rank. The apron and gloves are also employed as symbols, though gloves have pretty much fallen into disuse in American Masonry.

COLUMN

The Greeks called the top or summit of anything kolophon; in Latin culmen had a similar meaning; from these origins come our culmination ;" excelsior, colophon, colonnade, colonel, and climax appears to be closely related to it. A "column" is a cylindrical, or slightly tapering, support; a "pillar" is a rectangular support. Either may stand free or be incorporated into the building fabric. The officers of a Lodge are figured as columns because they are the supports of the official fabric of the Lodge. The Great Pillars are symbolical representations of the two pillars, which stood on the Porch of King Solomon's Temple.

COMMUNICATION

There is some dispute as to the origin of this word but usually it is held to have come from communis, a Latin term for general, or universal, whence our common, common wealth, communion, communism, communal and many similar words. To communicate is to share something with others so that all may partake of it; a communication is an act, transaction, or deliberation shared in by all present. From this it will be seen how appropriate is our use of the word to designate those official Lodge meetings in which all members have a part or a voice.

COMPASSES

This is the plural of compass, from the Latin com, meaning "together," and passus, meaning a pass, step, way, or route. Contrivance, cunning, encompass, pass, pace derive from the same roots. A circle was once described as a compass because all the steps in making it were "together," that is, of the same distance from the center; and the word, natural transition, became applied to the familiar two-legged instrument for drawing a circle. Some Masons use the word in the singular, as in "square and compass," but the plural form "square and compasses" would appear to be preferable, especially since it immediately distinguishes the working tool from the mariner's compass, with which it might be otherwise confused by the uninformed.

CONSECRATION

Sacer was the Latin for something set aside as holy. By prefixing con, meaning "together," consecrare resulted, the general significance of which was that by adding to some holy object a formal ceremony the object was declared to be holy to the public, and must therefore be treated as such. The ceremony of consecrating a Lodge room is a way of giving notice to the public that it has been dedicated, or set aside, for Masonic purposes only.

CONSTITUTION

Statuere meant that a thing was set, or placed, or established; when con was added (see immediately above) constituere meant that an official ceremony had set, or fixed, or placed a thing. From the same source come statue, statute, institute, restitute, etc. A Lodge is "constituted" when it is formally and officially set up, and given its own permanent place in the Fraternity.

COWAN

The origin is unknown, but it may be early Scotch. It was used of a man who practiced Masonry, usually of the roughest character as in the building of walls, who had not been regularly trained and initiated, corresponding in some sense to "scab" as used by labor unions. If a man has learned the work by some illegal method he is a cowan. An "eavesdropper" is one who spies on a Lodge, and may be such without having learned anything about it before. A "clandestine" is one who has gone through initiation ceremonies but not in a regular Lodge.

CRAFT

In Anglo-Saxon, craft meant cunning, skill, power, dexterity, etc. The word became applied to trades and occupations calling for trained skill on the part of those practicing it. The distinction between such trades and those not requiring trained workmen, so rigidly maintained, was one of the hallmarks of the Middle Ages. Freemasonry is called a Craft, partly for historical reasons, partly because, unlike so many fraternities, it requires a training (given in the form of initiation ceremonies) of those seeking its membership.

DEACON

Despite the fact that the bloom has been rubbed off by our slangy use of it, this is one of the most beautiful words in our language. In Greek, diakonos was a servant, a messenger, a waiting man. In the early Christian Church a deacon served at the Lord's Supper and administered alms to the poor; and the word still most frequently refers to such a church officer. It appears that the two Lodge offices of Senior and Junior Deacon were patterned on the church offices.

DEDICATION

The Latin dedicatus was a participial form of dedicare, the latter having the meaning of declare, devote, proclaim - the root from which "diction" comes. To dedicate a building means by public ceremony to declare it built for some certain purpose. Dedication and consecration are closely allied in meaning, but the latter is more religious in its purposes.

DEGREE

The Latin gradus from which are derived grade, gradual, graduation, etc., meant a step, or set of steps, particularly of a stair; when united with the prefix, da, meaning "down," it became degradus, and referred to steps, degrees, progress by marked stages. From this came our "degree," which is a step, or grade, in the progress of a candidate toward the consummation of his membership. Our habit of picturing the degrees as proceeding from lower to higher, like climbing a stair, is thus very close to the ancient and original meaning of the word.

DEPUTATION

A group of words such as compute, repute, depute sprang from the Latin putare, which meant (among other things) to estimate, to think, to count among. From this came deputatus, to select, to appoint. The idea was that from a number of persons one was told off for a special duty, hence our word "deputy." A deputation is an instrument appointing some man or group of men to act for others officially. Our Deputy Grand Master is thus set apart to act in the place of the Grand Master on need, and a District Deputy Grand Master is so called because he is appointed or told off by the Grand Master to act as his personal representative in a District.

DEMIT

(Also spelled "dimit.") As a verb this hails from the Latin dimettere, to send away, to release, to let go; we have it in our "dismiss." To dimit from an organization is, using the official form, to

resign, to relinquish one's membership. It has this meaning in Masonry.

DISCALCEATION

While this is not as familiar to Masons as the preceding words, it should come into more popular use because it is the technical name to describe an important element in the ceremony of initiation. Calceare was the Latin for shoe, calceatus meant shod. When united with the prefix dis, meaning apart, or asunder, our discalceate was originated, the obvious meaning of which is the removal of one's shoes, as suggested in the familiar Bible passage, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." The ceremonial removal of the shoes is properly called the "rite of discalceation."

DISPENSATION

Pendere was the Latin word for a weight, the root from which came many English words, notably pendent, expend, spend, dispense, etc. With the prefix dis, explained in the preceding paragraph, dispendere meant to weigh out, to pay off, to expend. From this came dispensatus, meaning to manage, to regulate, to distribute. In our usage a dispensation is a written instrument by which authority is made over to a group of brethren to form a Lodge.

DOTAGE

This is not a very beautiful word but it is interesting. It first came into existence among the early English, Dutch, German, and Scandinavian peoples, generally in the form dotten, dutten, meaning to nod with drowsiness, to nap. Since it was old people who most frequently sat nodding in their chairs it became associated with old age. "An old man in his dotage" is one who nods or prattles like a sleepy child, and whose faculties have begun to decay through old age. Old age is never a bar to Masonic membership unless it has reached this stage.

DUES

In Latin debere meant to owe something; it is preserved in our familiar, too familiar, "debt," in debit, indebted, debenture, duty, dues, etc. Related is the French devoir, often employed in English, meaning a piece of work one is under obligation to do. The same idea appears in "duty," which means that which is due, or that which is owed, in the moral sense. Dues represent one's fixed and regular indebtedness to his Lodge which he placed himself under obligation to pay when he signed the by-laws.

EAVESDROPPER

Early European peoples used a word in various forms - evese, obasa, opa, etc., -which meant the rim, or edge, of something, like the edge of a field; it came in time to be applied wholly to the gutter which runs along the edge of a roof. (Our "over" comes from this root.) "Dropper" had an origin among the same languages, and meant that which drips, or dribbles, like water dropping from a thawing icicle. Eavesdrop, therefore, was the water which dripped from the eaves. If a man set himself to listen through a window or keyhole to what was going on in a house he had to

stand so close that the eavesdropping would fall upon him, for which reason all prying persons, seeking by secret means what they have no business to know, came to be called eavesdroppers.

EDICT

The root of this word is the Latin dicere, speak; united with the prefix e, meaning out, to come forth, it produced edicere, meaning to proclaim, to speak out with authority. It came in time to be applied to the legal pronouncements of a sovereign or ruler speaking in his own name and out of his own authority. When a Grand Master issues a certain official proclamation in his own name and out of the authority vested in his office it is an edict.

EMBLEM

This beautiful and significant word, so familiar to Masons, has historical affiliations with the original idea embodied in "mosaic work," on which something is said below. Emblem is derived from the Greek prefix en, meaning in, united with ballein, meaning cast, put. The word became applied to raised decorations on pottery, to inlay work, tessellated and mosaic work; and since such designs were nearly always formal and symbolical in character, emblem came to mean an idea expressed by a picture or design. As Bacon put it, an emblem represents an intellectual conception in a sensible image. It belongs to that family of words of which type, symbol, figure, allegory, and metaphor are familiar members.

ESOTERIC

This is the opposite of exoteric. The root of it is the Greek eso, within. It means that which is secret, in the inner circle. Exoteric is that which is outside. In Masonry the "esoteric work" is that part of the Ritual which it is illegal to publish, while the exoteric is that part which is published in the Monitor.

FELLOW

In Anglo Saxon lagu (from which we have "law") meant that which was permanently ordered, fixed, set; fe meant property; fela suggested properties set together, in other words, a partnership. From this we have "fellow," a companion, mate, partner, an equal, a peer. A man became a "fellow" in a Medieval guild or corporation when admitted a member on the same terms as all others, sharing equally in the duties, rights, and privileges. In Operative Masonry, in order to be a fellow a man had to be a Master Mason, in the sense of having passed through his apprenticeship, so that Masters were fellows and fellows were Masters. Prior to about 1740 "Fellow of the Craft" and "Master Mason" referred to the same grade or degree, but at about that year a new division in ranking was made, and "Fellow Craft" was the name given to the Second Degree in the new system, Master Mason to the Third.

FORM

We speak of the "form of the Lodge," "due form," etc. The word is derived from the Latin forma, which meant the shape, or figure, or frame of anything; also it was used of a bench, or seat,

whence the old custom of calling school benches "forms." It is the root of formal, formation, informal, and scores of other English words equally familiar. The "form of the Lodge" is its symbolical shape; a ceremony is in "due form" if it have the officially required character or framework of words and actions.

FORTITUDE

The key to the meaning of this magnificent word lies in its derivation from the Latin *fortis*, meaning strong, powerful, used in the Middle Ages of a stronghold, or fort. Force, enforce, fortify, fortification, forceful, are from the same root. A man of fortitude has a character built strong like a fort, which can be neither taken by bribe nor over-thrown by assault, however strong may be the enemy, or however great may be the suffering or deprivation within. One is reminded of Luther's great hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God."

FRATERNITY

This the most prized, perhaps, of all words in Masonry, harks back to the Latin *frater*, which is so closely allied to "brother," as already noted in the paragraph on that word. It gives us *frater*, fraternize, and many other terms of the same import. A fraternity is a society in which the members strive to live in a brotherly concord patterned on the family relations of blood brothers, where they are worthy of the tie. To be fraternal means to treat another man as if he were a brother in the most literal sense.

GAGE

Gage (also spelled "gauge") has an uncertain ancestry. Early French and English peoples had *gauger*, *gagen*, etc., which referred to the measuring of wine casks; some believe our "gallon" and "gill" to have been thus derived. Its meaning became enlarged to include any kind of measuring, literally or figuratively. The instrument used to do the measuring came to be called "the gage." Among Operative Masons it was used to measure a stone for cutting to the required "twenty-four-inch gage" is such a measuring rod or stick marked off into twenty-four inches.

GEOMETRY

It is unfortunate that for most men schoolroom drudgery has robbed this beautiful word of its poetry. The Greek *geo* (in compounds) was earth, land; *metron* was measure. The original geometer was a landmeasurer, a surveyor, but his methods became broadened and applied to many other kinds of problems, so that at last his craft became a portion of the art of mathematics. Geometry, that branch of mathematics which deals with figures in space, is associated in every Mason's mind with the immortal Euclid, who figures so prominently in all the ancient Masonic manuscripts. It achieved its great place in Freemasonry because of its constant and prime importance in the builders' art. Symbolically speaking geometry (to it the Letter G originally referred), consists of all those fixed principles and laws of morality and of thought to which a right character and a true mind adjust themselves.

GRAMMAR

The Greeks had *graphein*, to write, or draw (from this we have graphic, engrave, etc.) ; *gramma* was that which was written or drawn. Grammar now refers only to the skeletal framework of language, its parts of speech and their combinations, but formerly it included all forms of learning based on language, such as rhetoric and what is now taught in the schools as English; by the time our Monitor was written, however, grammar and rhetoric had become differentiated, nevertheless the Monitorial portion of the Second Degree makes it plain that a Fellow Craftis expected to be a literate man, knowing something of the arts of language in both speaking and writing. In interpreting the Second Degree this wide meaning of “grammar must be kept in mind.

GRAND

Grandis in the Latin meant great, large, awesome, especially in the sense of imposing; it was afterwards applied to the aged, the ripe in experience, an application easy enough to understand when one recalls the reverence paid by the Romans to seniority, long experience, etc. this latter meaning appears in our grandfather, grandmother, grandsire, etc. In English the word developed in two directions, one toward that which is great, large, awe-inspiring, as in “grandeur,” the other toward dignity, exalted power. Our own use of the term in “Grand” Lodge, “Grand” East, “Grand” Master, harks back to the latter of the two usages. The head of the Craft is called “Grand” Master because he is its most exalted official.

GRIP

Grip, grope, grab, grasp, gripe came the same roots. The Anglo Saxon *gripe* meant to clutch, to lay hold of, to seize, to grasp strongly. A grip means to clasp another’s hand firmly; it differs from a mere hand clasp, which may be a meaningless formality. in that it is done earnestly, and for a purpose—for what purpose in our fraternal system every Mason knows. A grip should be given as if one meant it; half of its meaning lies in the way it is done.

HIGH TWELVE

The Latin *nonus* referred to the ninth hour of the day, that is, nine hours after sunrise. In the Medieval church it referred to the middle hour between midday and sunset, that is, about three o’clock P.M. In the course of time it came to refer to any part of the middle of the day, and finally to twelve o’clock. The origin of our “High Twelve” is uncertain, but it is probable that it goes back to a time before “noon” was generally used for twelve o’clock; the “high” doubtless refers to the sun, which at that time was at its highest point in the sky.

HOODWINK

“Hood” goes back to old German and Anglo Saxon, in which it referred to head covering, as in hat, hood, helmet, etc.; “wink,” in the same languages, meant to close the eyes, “wench,” “wince,” etc., being similarly derived. A hoodwink was therefore a headdress designed to cover the eyes. The popular use of the word is believed to go back to the old sport of falconry, once so popular, in which the falcon had a hood over its eyes until ready to strike at its prey.

INITIATION

The Latin *initium* means beginning, as in our initial"; *initiatus*, the participle from the verb *initiare*, referred to any act incident to the beginning or introduction of a thing. The word came widely into use in mysteries and sacred rites, whence it has come into our Masonic nomenclature. Back of it, as used by us, is the picture of birth, so that the Masonic initiation means that a candidate has been born into the Masonic life, making the same kind of beginning therein that a babe makes when born into the world.

INSTALLATION

Stallum was the Late Latin for place, or seat, or proper position, which meaning is preserved in our English "stall." To "install" therefore means that one has been placed in his seat or station—the "in" meaning here the same as in English. A Masonic installation is a ceremony by which an elected officer is officially placed in the seat to which his brethren have elected him.

LABOR

The Latin *labor* meant toil, work, the putting forth of effort; it appears to be akin to *robur*, or strength, preserved in our "robust." While labor and work are used interchangeably, the latter is a more generic word, and admits of a much wider range of uses. Work may be either hard or easy but labor is always hard; work is used of all sorts of effort; labor refers generally to muscular effort, followed by fatigue. When labor is kept up unremittingly it is toil; and when toil is uninteresting, uninspiring, and poorly paid it is drudgery. When working, one's ambition is to succeed with it; when laboring, one looks forward to resting from it; hence, it is from labor that we seek refreshment, not from work.

LANDMARK

In the early Anglo Saxon, German, or Scandinavian languages the noun "land" meant the same as in modern English, although as a verb it meant "come to land," a meaning reflected in our custom of saying a man lands from a ship, etc. "Mark" is found in almost all European languages, and derives from the Latin *margo*, edge, boundary, whence our margin, mark, and cognate terms. A "landmark" is some mark, line or object to indicate a boundary. The landmarks of Masonry are those principles by which the Craft is bounded, that is, marked off from all other societies and associations and without which it would lose its identity.

LEGEND

The Greeks had *legein*, speak; the Latins *legere*, read; from these we have legend, lecture, etc. In the early Christian church the legend was the Scripture selection read in a church service; later the term became applied to stories about the lives of the saints, especially to their wonders and miracles. The famous "Golden Legend," a collection of such stories, was one of the most popular books of the Middle Ages. Legend', as now used, is a story without historical foundations but told in the form of history, hence our "Legend of the Third Degree," a narrative in dramatic form that Masons have long understood to be non-historical.

LEVEL

In Latin libra was a balance, the root of our libration, equilibrium; libella was the diminutive form of the same word, and from it has come our level, an instrument by which a balance is proved, or by which may be detected the horizontal plane. It is closely associated in use with the plumb, by which a line perpendicular to the horizontal is proved. The level is that on which there are no inequalities, hence in Masonry it is correctly used as a symbol of equality. "We meet upon the level" because Masonic rights, duties, and privileges are the same for all members without distinction.

LIGHT

A candidate is "brought to light." "Let there be light" is the motto of the Craft. It is one of the key words of Masonry. It is very ancient, harking back to the Sanskrit *ruc*, meaning shine. The Greeks had *luk*, preserved in many English words, especially such as *leuco* in their makeup, as in "leucocyte," a white blood corpuscle. The Latins had *luc* or *lux* in various forms, whence our light, lucid, luminous, illumine, lunar, lightning, etc. The word means bright, clear, shining, and is associated in its use with the sun, moon, fire, etc. By an inevitable association the word came into metaphorical use to mean the coming of truth and knowledge into the mind. "When a candidate ceases to be ignorant of Masonry, when through initiation the truths of Masonry have found entrance into his mind, he is said to be "enlightened" in the Masonic sense.

LIBERTINE

Liber was the Latin for "free," as in our liberty, liberal, etc. When the Romans gave a slave his freedom he was called *libertus*, so that in Roman history a libertine was a freed-man. In theology a libertine came to mean one who holds loose views, a freethinker; in morality, a licentious person, one who flouts moral laws. Whether the early Masons used "libertine" to mean a "freethinker" or a licentious man, is a point that has never been decided; in practice, they probably used it in both senses.

LODGE

This word comes from the Old French, English and Medieval Latin, and meant generally a hut, a cottage, a gallery, a covered way, etc.; our "lobby" had the same beginning. How the Operative Masons came to employ the term, and just what they meant by it, has never been determined; they had a symbolic Lodge, their building was a Lodge, the group of members was a Lodge, an assembly of Masons was a Lodge, and often times the whole body of Masons was called a Lodge. In our own usage the word has three technical meanings; the place where Masons meet, the assembly of the brethren duly congregated for labor, and a piece of furniture.

MASON

This is a word from the Middle Ages, with an uncertain origin. The old Gothic *maitan* meant to hew, or cut, and it is supposed the word carried that general meaning through Medieval Latin,

English, German, and in the Scandinavian languages. If at first it was used only of a stone-cutter, it came later to mean a builder. Why the Operatives were called “Freemasons” is still an unsolved puzzle; the most likely view is that they were a society of builders free to move from one place to another in contrast to the gild Masons who were confined in their labors to one community. In our Fraternity a Mason is a builder of manhood and brotherhood.

MASTER

The Latin root mag had the general meaning of great—as in “magnitude”; it was the source of the Latin magister, head, chief, principal, the word of which “magistrate” was made. During the Middle Ages it fell into use as a conventional title applied to persons in superior rank, preserved in our own familiar “mister,” always written “Mr”, a colloquial form of “master.” Also it came to be used of a man who had overcome the difficulties in learning an art, thereby proving himself to be greater than his task, as when it is said of an artist who has overcome all the obstacles and difficulties of painting, “He is a master.” A Master Mason is so called because he has proved himself capable of mastering the work; also because he belongs to a Degree so named.

MONITOR

The Latin monere meant to warn; it was the root of our admonish, admonition, etc.; a monitor was the man who did the warning. The term became widely used in early school systems of the senior pupils in a class whose duty it was to instruct his juniors; from this it passed to include the book, the blackboard and other instruments used by him in his teachings. Our use of it carries this last meaning; the Masonic Monitor is a book for teaching a candidate the exoteric work.

MOSAIC

This word has nothing to do with Moses. Its root was the Greek mousa, a muse, suggesting something artistic. The same root appears in our “museum,” literally a place where artistic work is exhibited. Through the Latin it came into modern languages and during the Middle Ages became narrowed down to mean a pattern formed by small pieces of inlay, a form of decorative work much in vogue during the time of the Operative Masons. Our “mosaic pavement is so called because it consists of an inlay pattern, small black and white squares alternating to suggest day and night.

MYSTERY

This word is used in Masonry in two senses entirely different; indeed, though spelled and pronounced the same, they are really two words. “Mystery” in the sense of strange, unknown, weird, secret, hails from the Greek, in which muein meant to close the eyes, lips and ears; from this came musterion, a secret ceremony or doctrine, appearing in Latin as mysterium. The word mystery, thus derived, means secrecy, hiddenness, and is properly used of the esoteric elements in Masonry. But in the phrase “arts, parts and mysteries” the word is from the Latin ministerium, having the meaning of trade, art, craft, occupation, etc., preserved in the familiar metier from the French, often used as an English word, and the much more familiar “minister,” “ministry,” etc.; in this sense -- the sense most often used in our Craft the “mysteries of Masonry” are its

workings, just as the mysteries of Operative Masonry were its trade secrets known only to those trained and skilled in the building arts. In the latter of the two senses “mystery” and “master” (see above) are closely affiliated in origin, a master being one who has become completely skilled in mysteries.

MYSTIC

In the Greek, muster was one who had been initiated. Originally, so Jane Harrison believes, the root word referred to pollution; but inasmuch as the Greek mysteries had for their aim the removal of moral pollution, the word became generally associated with the mysteries themselves, and at last was used to signify a man who had gone through them. Mystic in our own use of it, as in “Mystic Tie,” refers not to the mysterious in Freemasonry, or to any mysticism in it, but to the fact of our being a secret society, practicing initiation.

OBLIGATION

Obligate and oblige are sister words, deriving from the same Latin root, ob, a prefix meaning before, or about; and ligare, meaning bind, as in our ligament. An obligation is a tie, or pledge, or bond by which a man is tied to his fellows, or gives his word to perform certain duties. Accordingly we have obliging, referring to one who is willing to bind himself to do something for you, obligatory, etc. The obligation is the tie, or bond, itself; in Masonry a formal and voluntary pledge on the candidate’s part by virtue of which he is accepted as a responsible member of the family of Masons.

OBLONG

This has long been a puzzle word in Masonic nomenclature. How, it is asked, can a square be oblong, when a square is equal on all its sides? The answer is that in this connection “square” is used in the sense of rectangle; the angles are squared, not the sides. Oblong is derived from ob, near, or before, and longus, long; that is, it means something approximately long, so that the main axis is much longer than the others, as a slender leaf, a shaft, etc. An “oblong square is a rectangle of which two opposite sides are much longer than the other two. The Lodge symbolically is an oblong square in this sense.

OPERATIVE

We distinguish Operative Masons, builders of the Middle Ages, founders of Masonry, from Speculative Masons, present members of the Fraternity, using the builders’ tools as emblems and symbols. The Latin for toil, or work, was opus, still used in that form in English to signify a musical or literary achievement. Opus was the root of operari, to work, whence we have our operate, operative, operation, opera, operator, and many others. The Operative Mason was one who toiled at building in the plain, literal sense of the word. “Speculative” will be explained farther down.

ORNAMENT

Ornare was the Latin verb meaning to adorn, to equip, of which the noun was ornament, trappings, embellishment, furniture, etc., from which was derived our “adorn-ment” and “ornament.” In church usage “ornaments” was the name given to all the equipment used in the services of divine worship. We speak of the mosaic pavement, the indented tessel, and blazing star as “ornaments of the Lodge;” whether the term was used by Lodges originally because they were considered to be adornments, or because they were part of the Lodge equipment it is impossible to say, though the latter alternative appears to be the more likely.

PASSWORD

The Latin passus meant pace, step, track, passage; it contains the picture of a path, road, aisle, or door through which one can make his way, hence our “pass,” derived from it. From it also we have our word “pace.” A password is any agreed word or counter-sign that permits one to pass through an entrance or passage otherwise closed.

PENALTY

It is significant that our “penal” derives from the Latin for pain, paena, the root of our penance, penalty, penitence, penitentiary, punish, primitive, pine, and a circle of similar English words. It has the meaning of pain inflicted for the purpose of correction, discipline, or protecting society, never the infliction of pain for its own sake. Our own penalties are symbolical in form, their language being derived from early English forms of punishment for heresy and treason.

PILLAR

The Latin pila was a pile,—such as a pile under a house—a pier, a pillar, or a mole,— the last named a massive stonework enclosing a harbor. In ancient times pillars were used for all manner of religious and symbolical purposes, as when Jacob erected a pillar at a grave, or Solomon set up two great pillars— the prototype of ours—on the Porch before his Temple. (See in connection with this the notes on “column” given above.)

PLUMB

Plumbum was the Latin for lead, and was used also of a scourge with a blob of lead tied to it, of a line with a lead ball at its end for testing perpendicularity, etc., the source of our plumb, plumber, plunge, plump, plumbago, plummet, etc. A plumb-line is accordingly a line, or cord, with a piece of lead at the bottom to pull it taut, used to test vertical walls with the line of gravity, hence, by a simple expansion of reference, an emblem of uprightness.

Up means up, right means straight; an upright man is one who stands straight up and down, doesn't bend or wobble, has no crooks in him, like a good solid wall that won't cave in under pressure.

PROFANE

This has a technical meaning in Masonry, nevertheless it adheres closely to the original

significance of the word. Fanum was the Latin for temple; pro meant “before,” in the sense of “outside of.” It is the picture of man standing on the outside, not permitted to enter. It has the same sense in Masonry; the “profane” are those men and women who stand outside of Masonry. The word here, of course, has nothing to do with profanity in the sense of sacrilegious language.

QUALIFICATION

Qualify comes from the same word as quality. The root of it is the Latin qua, preserved in our “what.” The quality of a thing was its whatness, the stuff of which it was made, its nature. The “fy” in “qualify” is from facere, to make, so that “qualify” means that a thing is made of the required stuff; and qualification means the act by which a thing is made of the required nature, or is declared to have it. The candidate for the Degrees of Masonry must possess certain characteristics in his nature; must be a man of lawful age, etc., and these are his qualifications.

QUARRY

The Latin quadratum was a square; originally, quadrate and quarry meant the same. The word became applied to the pit from which rock is hewn because the principal task of workmen therein was to cut, or square, the stones; hence, literally a quarry is a place where stone-squaring is done. In Masonry “quarry” sometimes refers to the rock pits from which Solomon’s workmen hewed out the stones for his Temple; at other times it refers to the various arenas of Masonic activities, as when it is said of an active Lodge member that “he is a faithful laborer in the quarry.”

RAISE

In the Anglo Saxon arisan was used of any motion up or down, but in English it became used only of an upward motion, as in arise, rising, raise, rear, etc. Raise means to hoist, or carry, or lift, a body upward in space. There is no need to explain to a Mason why it is said of a candidate who has completed the Third Degree that he has been “raised,” or why the climactic ceremony in that Degree is described as “raising.” One is “initiated” an Entered Apprentice, “passed” a Fellowcraft, “raised” a Master Mason.

REFRESHMENT

Friscus, or frescus, in the Latin had the meaning of new, fresh, recent; the re meant again; so that refresh means to renew, to make over, to undo the ravages of use and time, in Shakespeare’s phrase, “to knit up the raveled sleeve of care.” To “pass from labor to refreshment” is to find rest and recreation so as to undo the wearing effects of toil, as when a laborer knocks off at noon to eat his lunch and have a rest.

REGULAR

The Latin rex, king, sovereign, ruler, was a root from which many words have sprung, regal, royal, etc.; the Latins themselves had regula, or rule, and regere, to rule or govern. From this source has come our “regular.” It means a rule established on legitimate authority. In Masonry

“regular” is applied to those rules which have been established by Grand Lodges and Grand Masters. A “regular Lodge” is one that conforms to Grand Lodge requirements; a “regular Mason” is the member of such a Lodge who conforms to its laws and by-laws.

RIGHT

This, one of the noblest words in the English language, is also one of the oldest, being found in the very ancient Sanskrit in the form raj meaning rule. It appeared in Latin as rectus, meaning direct, straight, a rule,— rule being used in the sense of our ruler, a device for drawing a line which is the shortest distance between two points. Such words as regent, rail, direct, rector, rectify, rule, came from this Latin term. Right means “straight,” as in a “right line,” a “right angle,” etc.; through a familiar metaphorical application it has come to stand for conduct in conformity with moral law. Our “rights” are those privileges which strict law allows to us. A “horizontal” is a right line on the level; a perpendicular” is a right line up and down, or at right angles to the horizontal. “Right” and “regular,” discussed just above, originally were close together in meaning.

RITUAL

A ritual is a system of rites. “Rite,” like “right,” is very old; it has been traced to the Sanskrit riti, meaning usage, which in turn was derived from ri, meaning flow, suggesting the regular current of river. In Latin this became ritus meaning in general a custom, more particularly a religious custom, or usage. In taking over this word the church applied it to the acts in solemn religious services which had to be performed according to strict rules. In Masonry the ritual is the prescribed set of ceremonies used for the purpose of initiation. It should be noted that a set of ceremonies does not become a ritual until it has been prescribed by some official authority.

SEAL

This, like our words “sign” and “insignia,” is derived from the Latin sigillum, diminutive of signum, meaning a mark, or sign. It is some kind of device affixed to a document in place of a signature or in close connection with a signature for the purpose of showing that the document is regular or official. A document bearing the seal of a Lodge shows that it is officially issued by the Lodge, and not by some irresponsible person or persons. The word is also used of the tool by means of which the device is stamped into wax, or whatever similar material may be used for the purpose.

SECRECY

From Se, apart, and cernere, separate, the Latins had secretum, suggesting something separated from other things, apart from common knowledge, hidden, covered, isolated, hence “secrecy.” There is a fundamental difference between “secret” and “hidden,” far whereas the latter may mean that nobody knows where a thing is, nothing can be secret without at least one person knowing it. The secrets of Freemasonry are known to all Masons, therefore are not hidden; they are secrets only in the sense that they are not known to profanes. A similar word is “occult,” which means a thing naturally secret, one, as it were, that secretes itself, so that few can know

about it. See also the paragraphs on “clandestine” and “mystery” in the preceding pages. There is also another less familiar word in Masonry meaning hidden, covered up, concealed, secret; it is pronounced “hail” but is spelled “hele.”

SECRETARY

The present use of this word has departed widely from its original meaning. The Latin *secretus* meant secret, private; *secretarium* was a conclave, a caucus, a council behind closed doors, consequently a *secretarius* was some very confidential officer, and was used of a secretary in our sense, of a notary, a scribe, etc. Since the handling of correspondence and the keeping of records is usually a confidential service the man who does it has come to be called a secretary. The secretary of a Lodge cares for all its correspondence and its records.

SIGN

This comes from the Latin *signum*, a word which appears in a dozen or more English words, as signature, signet, signify, consign, countersign, resign, etc. Where a seal is used principally on documents and for the purpose of showing them to be official, sign is used much more variously and widely; it is some kind of gesture, device, mark, or design which indicates something, or points to something, and which often has a meaning known only to the initiated. Masonic signs are gestures that convey a meaning which only Masons understand, and which most frequently are used for purposes of recognition.

SPECULATIVE

The Latin *specere* meant to see, to look about; *specula* was a watchtower, so called because from it one could look about over a wide territory. It came to be used metaphorically of the mental habit of noting all the aspects of a subject; also, as applied to theo-retical knowledge as opposed to practical skill. “Speculative Masonry” was knowledge of the science, or theory, of building; “Operative Masonry,” trained skill in putting that knowledge into practice. ‘When Operative Masonry was dropped out of the Craft in the eighteenth century, only the speculative elements remained and these became the basis of our present Fraternity. It is for this reason that we continue to describe it as Speculative Masonry. The word has nothing to do with philosophical speculation, or with theorizing merely for its own sake.

SQUARE

As noted in the paragraph on “quarry” the Latin *quad ratum* was a square. *Quatuor* meant “four;” from it we have square, four, quad, quadrangle, squadron, etc. In geometry a square is a four-sided straight-lined figure having all its sides equal and all its angles right angles; and since early carpenters and Masons had to use an instrument for proving the angles to be right, they fell into the habit of calling that instrument a square. In Masonry the square is used in at least three distinct senses; as a sharp instrument, as a working tool, and as a symbol, the last named when used with the compasses on the Holy Bible. As a symbol it refers to the earth, for so long a time supposed to be square in shape; as a working tool, it refers to all those forces by means of which one prepares himself to fit into his own proper place in the Brotherhood, like a Perfect Ashlar in

a wall.

STEWARD

This came into general use through the church, in which it was adopted as the name for an important official and also for an important theological doctrine; the doctrine of stewardship. The word itself had a peculiar origin. In Anglo Saxon stigo was a sty or place in which domestic animals were kept; I weard (see “warden” on following page) was a guard, or keeper; therefore the steward was the keeper of the cattle pens. Its meaning became enlarged to include the duties of general over-seer, one who is in charge of a household or estate for another; and still more generally, one who provides for the needs for food, money, and supplies. In the history of Masonry the office of steward has performed a variety of functions; the caring of funds, distribution of charity, preparing for banquets and similar services.

SUBLIME

Sublimis, in Latin, referred to something high, lofty, exalted, like a city set on top of a hill, or an eagle’s nest atop some lonely crag. It refers to that which is eminent, of superlative degree, moral grandeur, spiritual exaltation. Inasmuch as the Third Degree is at the top of the system of Ancient Craft Masonry, it is known as “The Sublime Degree.

SUMMONS

Like the word monitor, explained some pages back, summons is derived from the Latin term of which the verb was monere, meaning to warn, or to remind, as in “admonish ;“ the “sum” is the combining form of sub, under, or privy to, in the secret of, as in the old phrase “sub rosa.” A summons is an official call sent out by persons in authority to some person acknowledging that authority to appear at some place, or to perform some duty; in other words a person who is “on the inside,” who is a member, is admonished by his superiors, and must obey under penalty. The duty involved and the penalty attached distinguishes a summons from a mere invitation. A Lodge, Grand Lodge, or some official issues a summons; a fellow Mason not in official position makes a sign; a Mason is under obligation to respond to either, if it be due, official, or regular.

SYMBOL

It is interesting to compare this word with “emblem” with which it is so often confused. The Greek symbolon was a mark, or sign, or token, or tally; it is derived from sun, together, and ballein, put, or throw, from which we have ball, ballistics, etc. Symbolon indicated two things put together, thrown together, or matched together. If, for example, the numeral 9 is matched to a pile of marbles, one to one, the 9 is a symbol of the number of marbles. From this came the custom of calling a symbol some object, device, design, picture, etc., used not for its own sake, but for the purpose of referring to some other, and perhaps very different, thing with which it has been associated. It is any visible, audible, or tangible object used to typify some idea, or truth, or quality, as when a wedding ring is made the symbol of marriage, the square is made the symbol of the earth, or the cross is made the symbol of Christianity, the crescent of Mohammedanism, etc.

TEMPLE

The Greeks had temenos, a sacred enclosure, a plot of ground marked off to be a holy place; the Latins had templum, a consecrated place. A temple is a building set apart because it is holy, dedicated to religious uses. It has its place in Masonry largely because of the prominence of Solomon's Temple in the Ritual. It is interesting to note that in Masonic nomenclature the ideal life, here and hereafter, is described metaphorically as a temple, one of a thousand examples of the extent to which Freemasonry is saturated with religious language and emotions.

TILER

Also spelled "tyler." In the Latin tegere (from which came "thatch") meant cover, roof; tegulae were the tiles, pieces, slabs, used for roof-coverings. A tiler, therefore, is one who makes, or fastens on, tiles. Since in Operative Masonry the tiler was the workman who closed the building in, and hid its interior from outside view, the guardian of the entrance to the Lodge was figuratively called by this name. It was once supposed that "tiler" came from the French tailleur, a cutter, a hewer (from whence we have "tailor"), and it was accordingly spelled "tyler;" that, however, is incorrect, "tiler" being the correct spelling.

TOKEN

This is from the Greek deigma.. meaning example, or proof—the origin of the word "teach," and in its original sense had much the same meaning as sign and symbol, for it was an object used as the sign of something else. It is generally used, however, in the sense of a pledge or of an object that proves something. In our usage a token is something that exhibits, or shows, or proves that we are Masons—the grip of recognition, for example.

VOUCH

This harks back to the Latin vocare, to call, to summon, and is the origin of voice, vouchsafe, vocation (in the sense of a "calling"), vocal, etc. To vouch is to raise one's voice in testimony, to bear witness, to affirm, to call to witness. If we vouch for a brother we raise the voice to testify that we know him to be a regular Mason.

WAGES

Wage, of which wages is the collective plural, remotely descended from the Latin vas, having the meaning of pledge, security, pawn, or a promise to pay backed up by security. After it entered into modern languages it had a peculiar history; it became "gage," a pledge or pawn, appearing in our engage, disengage, etc., but having no relation with gage, one of our Working Tools; "wager" in the sense of a bet; in another context it became "wed," the act of marrying, so called because of the pledges given; and "wage" in the sense of compensation for service given. An "allowance" is a one-sided form of payment, depending on the will of the giver; a "stipend" is a fixed sum, usually nominal, and is supposed to be paid as per a permanent arrangement; a "salary" (from sal, or salt, the old pay given soldiers) is an amount fixed by contract, and

estimated over a relatively long period of time, year or month; “wages” are paid to laborers over short periods of time, or at the completion of the required task. In Speculative Masonry the Master Mason symbolically receives “wages,” rather than salary, because they represent the rewards that come to him as rapidly as he does his work; and, as the etymology of the word suggests, they are certain, something one may bank on.

WARDEN

“Ward” is of Medieval origin, having been used in early English, French, German, etc., always in the sense of to guard something, a meaning preserved in warden, guard, guardian, wary, ware, ward, etc. A warden is guardian of the west gate of the Temple, the Junior Warden of the south gate.

WARRANT

This also derives from the same source, and carries the general meaning of “to de-fend,” “to guard.” Warrant is sometimes used as a pledge of security; in Masonry it is a document officially issued to authorize the formation of a Lodge, and consequently acts as the pledge, or security, for the future activity of it.

WORK

The idea behind this noble old word is one that has powerfully appealed to all European peoples and is found in nearly every Euro-pean language. The Greek ergon meant work, organ on. was the instrument by which work was done; from this source we have energy, organ, erg, and it appears in combination in such words as metallurgy. To work means to put forth effort in order to accomplish something; play is also a putting forth of effort, but in that case the effort is its own end, and is done for its own sake. Work has an end beyond itself. The official ritual of the Lodge is called the Standard Work; it came to be so called by analogy, the ritual of Speculative Masonry corresponding to the daily labor of the Operative Masons.

WORSHIPFUL

The Anglo Saxon worth was something honorable, deserving of respect, a meaning that shows up in worth, the value of anything, also in worship, which is deference paid to some object or person of great importance. Worshipful describes something full of the qualities calling for such deference. It was used in Medieval times of one’s parents, officers of the state, prelates, etc., signifying that such persons were of high station or entitled to deferential respect. It is so used in our term, “Worshipful Master.”