

ROBERT MORRIS CEREMONY BY HAZEL M. GILBERT

Worthy Matron's Address

Dr. Robert Morris was born in a suburb of Boston, August 31, 1818. He was a direct descendent of Robert Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. His boyhood and early manhood were spent in New York, where he received the best educational advantages.

He became a successful lawyer and was president of some of the finest colleges in the South. While president of Mount Sylvan Academy at Oxford, Miss., he met and married Miss Charlotte Mendenhall, who proved to be an inspiration and wonderful helpmate. Of this union, seven children were born, four of whom lived their allotted time, and were loyal and ardent members of the Eastern Star.

In 1850, Robert Morris moved his family to LaGrange, Kentucky. He became professor of ancient history in a Masonic university there. Their home was a magnet for visitors of intellect, for he was a capable lecturer, kind, charitable, and above all an earnest and devout Christian. Being in perfect atune with our Heavenly father, a wonderful vision was placed in his heart and mind. Immediately he set about to impart the blessedness of this vision. From the Holy Bible, which was his daily guidance, came our ritual with all its beautiful lessons.

In 1850 he invited a Mason and his wife to his home, and taught them the new degree. In 1855 he published the first ritual and under it organized bodies known as Constellations; from this grew Families, then the Order of the Eastern Star. Purity Chapter in Fulton County was the first chapter organized. This Chapter met in a second story of a log schoolhouse, to which Dr. Morris carried his family organ, the only one in the neighborhood. The ceremonies commenced with an earnest prayer to God to bless their efforts. Since then over two million members have come to see the Star in the East, with its great significance. In 1868, he visited the Holy Land, and while there he worked as if in the living presence of the Master. He became one of the best informed Bible students of the day.

While on the shores of Galilee, he wrote his version of Jesus by the sea, the beautiful song: "Memories of Galilee."

Worthy Patron's Address

Dr. Robert Morris was made a ~~Mason~~ Mason while living at Oxford, Miss. in 1846. Presiding at that time was Hon. James Hewry, district judge and rector of the university of Mississippi, a most learned man, who must have recognized in this young man a kindred spirit, for after the ceremonies were over, he said to him: "Brother Morris, Masonry expects much from you.." These words, together with the beauty and spiritual excellency of the first degree, caused the high resolve to dedicate his life to Masonry and all that Masonry

stands for. While visiting in the Holy Land, he became the first Master of Royal Soloman Lodge No.1, in Jerusalem. In all his travels he was loved alike by all. He found great contentment in uttering the noble lays of Masonry, telling all, "How good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." He wrote over 300 poems, edited many magazines, and wrote many valuable works of Masonry. He was the chairman of the committee in foreign correspondence for many years.

The crowning event in his career was his laureation at the Masonic Temple in New York in 1884. Before deciding the question, whether he was worthy of so distinguished a title as Poet Laureate of Free Masonry was submitted to 1000 or more distinguished Masons in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. The answer came back unanimous, saying "Crown him. His single poem, 'We meet upon the level and part upon the square,' demands it." He died July 1, 1888 and from all parts of the globe messages of condolence came. There never has been another man who devoted his entire life to Masonry and what Masonry means. His body lies at rest at LaGrange, Kentucky, over which a huge marble shaft is erected, bearing on one side the square and compass, and on the other, the five-pointed star.

The Star Points, repeating appropriate verse, place flowers at the base of Robert Morris' picture or on the Altar in commemoration. At the close of the ceremony, the song, Memories of Galilee may be sung

Adah places the blue flowers repeating

"In memory of the one who gave to us anew
The blessed vision of love and fidelity true;
Of Jephthah's daughter fair, who saw her duty clear
Went forward unto death, without faltering or fear.
May we ever look to Jesus, for courage to do the right
As gleaned from fair Adah's blue ray of the light."

Ruth places the yellow flowers, repeating

"In memory of the one who gave to us anew
The vision of willing service and constancy true
Of pure, unselfish Ruth, who left kindred, friends and all
To cheer the aged Naomi, thus heeding duty's call.
May our love for one another grow stronger day by day
As gleaned from patient Ruth's shining, golden ray."

Esther places the white flowers, repeating

"In memory of the one who gave to us anew
The vision of supreme courage and loyalty true
Of fair and Queenly Esther, the death hovered near
With her courage and purity, saved all her people dear.
May our lives be true and upright, like a bright , shining
light,
Ever portraying the pureness of Esther's ray, snow white."

Martha places the green flower, repeating

"In memory of the one who gave to us anew
The holy vision of faith in God's promise true;
Of Martha, who knew sweet comfort in hearing Jesus say
Because thou dost believe, thy brother liveth today.
Let us humbly pray to our Father for that deep faith
serene
As gleaned from trustful Martha's living ray of the green."

Electa places the red flowers, repeating

"In memory of the one who gave to us anew
The blessed vision of truth and charity true;
Of Electa , who loved and served with sincere fervency
In affliction or in joy, our Savior of Galilee.
May we seek the truth and live it, with a loyalty that's
due
As gleaned from Fair Electa's glowing, crimson hue."

Worthy Matron repeats in closing

"Tonight, we give thanks to God, for this man of courage
high.
If we keep faith with him, all the way, our Star rays
will never die."

*This name was Rob Morris -
(Not Robert)*