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PART IX.

THE ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR.

CHAPTER I.

BY MADELEINE B. CONKLING, MOST WORTHY GRAND MATRON.

THE Order of the Eastern Star, unlike many other orders, does not claim to have existed in any pre-historic age, like all women, our age is uncertain. Masonic historians seem to experience great difficulty in determining our origin, although they ALL take a lively interest in us. The eminent Masonic chronologist, Mackey, tells us that the Adoptive Rite was established in England, in the seventeenth century, under the patronage of Queen Henrietta Maria, daughter of King Henry IV of France and wife of King Charles I of England. After the execution of that unfortunate monarch, the Queen escaped to France, introducing the Rite there in 1730, under the name of "Macconneire'd Adoptione." After many changes and as late as 1838, this same Adoptive Rite was known as "The Five Jewels of the Orient."

In our rapidly increasing progress, we have no time to spend in idle retrospection of so much uncertainty, for we care not whether we were rocked in the cradle of our infancy by the wives of King Solomon or the French Queen. If, as Mackey tells us, we are an offspring of that ancient Adoptive Rite, then we are indeed glad of the many changes which have taken place in the Order, incident to progress.

We have, however, conclusive proof, that in 1850, Robert Morris, the "*Poet Laureate of Free-Masonry*," outlined and founded our present system, and communicated the degrees to his wife. Later Robert Macoy, of New York, revised the manuscript, and put it into book form, known as the "*Book of Mosaics*," consisting of one hundred and ninety-eight pages, from which, after many changes, our present Ritual was compiled. Morris states positively, that his ideas were original, and that the "*Five Heroines of the Order*" were chosen to more clearly represent to the minds of the wives, mothers, daughters, widows and sisters of Master Masons, the "FIVE GREAT PRINCIPLES OF FREE-MASONRY." Be that as it may, most of us at least, prefer to believe that the "EASTERN STAR" was discovered by an American astrologist, in the blue sky of Freedom, and that its first rays shone over the "*Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave*."

The progress of the Order of the Eastern Star has exceeded the fondest hopes and desires of its founder; from one member in 1850, we have grown until now we number 300,000 strong in 1905. The order has passed through the crucible of opposition and prejudice, but like the Masonic Fraternity, it has come forth shining with increased brilliancy.

Although no part of Free-Masonry, yet it is related to it by the dearest ties; and into the warp of the Masonic Mantle of all Fraternal Charity, you will find woven, "*the woof of woman's tenderness, the devotion of the wife, the affection of the daughter, the unchanging love of the mother, the grief of the widow and the confiding faith of the sister.*"

The Order of the Eastern Star is built upon the enduring principles of Fidelity, Constancy, Purity, Hope and Benevolence, and is dedicated to Truth, Charity and Loving Kindness. It scatters sunshine, relieves distress, comforts the bereaved, cares for the sick and dying, admonishes its members to sacredly preserve their lips from slander and evil speaking, and raises the standard of moral purity, by teaching its men to be more manly and its women to be more womanly.

The Order of the Eastern Star, is the best systematized, most progressive and largest Woman's Charitable Fraternal Organization in existence. It is composed of affiliated Master Masons in good standing, their wives, mothers, daughters, widows and sisters. Here they join with the Masonic brothers in promulgating the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

As the Star in the East shone forth to guide the Wise Men to Bethlehem, so have the rays of our Star shone forth, until they have given warmth and light to every spot on earth, where the banner of the Red, White and Blue has been unfurled. England, Scotland, India and Canada have also been glorified by its piercing rays.

There are at present forty-four Grand Chapters in the United States and one in Scotland, with a total membership of 302,696. At this time the Ritual is only printed in English and German.

There is no question but what the Order of the Eastern Star has come to stay, and the longer it stays the more friends it will have and the better you will like it. It does not solicit members, but welcomes all the worthy that knock at its doors, and asks to be written as "*One who loves his fellow men!*"

The Order of the Eastern Star teaches morality, charity, heroism, self-denial and immortality. It opens the way to great possibilities for doing good, and affords ample opportunity of extending the reign of "PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MEN."

THE EASTERN STAR.

BY BROTHER ROBERT MORRIS, MASONIC POET-LAUREATE.

If there be lacking anything within this starry group,—
If there is place for other grace amidst the radiant troupe,—
I'll not go back on history's track to find a model clear,—
But crave *your* light, dear ladies bright, who grace my birthday here;
And so I'll fill the measure of the EASTERN STAR!

The sparkling eye, the fairy form, they shall my muse inspire;
The singing tongue, the sacred song, awake my humble lyre;
The tripping feet in mazes fleet their mystic spell shall cast,
And all shall say, "The present day is better than the past!"
And so I'll add new splendor to the EASTERN STAR!

From mothers here and maidens dear I'll borrow many a grace,—
In all this earth there is no worth like that a woman has;
Last at the Cross,—in lingering hope by Jesus, the adored;
First at the Grave,—in eager haste to magnify their Lord;
From these I'll take fresh brilliance for the EASTERN STAR!

In each home circle, where the wife keeps household lamp alight,—
From sister's vigilant eye that guides the brother's steps aright,—
From mother's knee where childhood learns its one effectual prayer,—
If I indeed a lesson need I'll find that lesson there,
And it will give rare glory to the EASTERN STAR.

Lastly, I'll seek the happy dead,—that grave, I know it well,
How fondly loved my Ella was, ah me, no words can tell,—
I know the answer that will come from you bright maiden blest,
"They who with JESUS suffer here shall have eternal rest."
This overfills the radiance of the EASTERN STAR.

WILL THE ORDER LIVE?

BY BROTHER WILLIAM F. KUHN, MOST WORTHY GRAND PATRON.

The order of the Eastern Star, like her elder brother, Freemasonry, must stand the test of utility and give a sufficient and satisfactory reason for living. In this age of practical realizations and demands the world as well as the devotees of an organization demand practical results. Will our order stand this test? The Order of the Eastern Star is still in its formative period, in the morning of its life. Are there signs of promise? Are there inherent forces that will carry it onward in a glorious mission and to a triumphant end? Or will it fail and pass into forgetfulness, like many other human agencies that have flourished and passed away? The answer is readily found in what may be your conception of the order. If your conception does not mean a willing sacrifice for one's good; a sublime devotion to a principle that takes hold of humanity here and places it on a higher and loftier plain yonder; if the work of the order does not consider others and is purely selfish, then it will die, and ought to die. If your conception is that the order is purely social, then it will prove a failure. If you think it is an arena for purely intellectual combat, it will prove a sorry spectacle. If it is a field for theological and philosophical discussion, it will be a disappointment. If it contains no more for you than the ceremonial of the degrees, what a disastrous conception! If it is mere official position and a few days of glory, the dregs of the official cup will indeed become bitter.

The possibilities of the human soul make life a pleasure and its destiny eternal. The possibilities of the soul, the spirit of our order, will make it a pleasure to its members, a great factor in the world's progress and infinite in its influence and fruitage.

Principles live, ceremonials die; selfishness is an ogre of destruction. Altruism, to live for others, an angel of peace.

Our order should be social, it should be intellectual, it should be a moral agency, a family circle to which only the kind-hearted should come; where the ignorant and illiterate cannot enter, where the scandal monger cannot intrude his or her unsightly carcass, where love to humanity shall reign. Will our order live? Will it meet the demands of the world and the lofty conceptions of the heart? Yes. The two points of our Star reach out towards the east like extended arms, as if to grasp the rising sun, emblem of Light, Purity, Joy. In this receptive attitude our Star must stand facing the coming sun of charity as it gilds the mountain tops in iridescent glory; face the glow and heat of self-sacrifice; face the rising sun of every opportunity; face the golden rays of love as they, by magic touch, brighten and illumine the dark recess of despair and misery; face the dawning of a new morning, of a newer and brighter age, the morning of progress, of advancement to higher ideals, a day dawn of triumphant hosannahs.

The principles of our order find their best fulfilment in humanity's needs, and point to a higher destiny. Mortality and immortality, the beginning and the ending. Shall the order live? I would build a Star whose two points rest on the foundations of Love as exemplified in Electa, and Devotion to duty as exemplified in Adah. Love, Charity, two words—let us make it one word—love-charity; the stone on which the weary in life's battles may rest; the pillow from which the tired sleepers see the heavenly ladder with the angelic throng. Devotion, the willing sacrifice, a foundation stone

laid centuries ago in fair Judea, which time has not destroyed, and the ages cannot cause it to crumble or decay. As long as human hearts love the heroic and true devotion, so long will Adah live; a life based upon charity and devotion. An order whose foundation is love-charity and devotion cannot end. Here a superstructure must rise adorned with the attribute of immortality.

From these two fundamental principles will arise two more points as represented in Ruth and Esther—doing one's duty whether it be among the lowly or exalted. Whether it be for me to glean from the fields already reaped with but a handful as my reward, unseen, unknown, yet labor on, or whether I stand clad in the robe and crown of worldly wealth and honor, duty, my duty; for one knows not but that "Thou hast come into the kingdom for such a time as this." Duty, duty the only mandate; duty in hovel or palace; duty in field or on the throne, for these are beautiful attributes founded on Devotion and Love. Aye, more, from these must come one more, as the unfolding of the flower brings its fragrance, so the unfolding of Love to humanity, of fidelity to vows, of doing our duty where'er our lot is cast, there will come in its beauty and glory, to the breathing of every soul, to the prompting of every heart, the ever-green ray of Immortality pointing upward to our destiny—*Home*. "Believest thou this?"

"If Peace is thy prompter and Love is thy guide,
And white-robed Charity walks by thy side—
If thou tellest the truth without oath to bind,
Doing thy duty to all mankind—
Raising the lowly, cheering the sad,
Finding some goodness e'en in the bad,
And owning with sadness if badness there be,
There might have been badness in thine and in thee,
If Conscience, the warder that keeps thee whole,
Had uttered no voice to thy slumbering soul—
All God's angels will say, 'Well done!'
Whenever thy mortal race is run.

"If thou art humble, and will not scorn,
However wretched, a brother forlorn—
If thy purse is open to misery's call,
And the God thou lovest is God to all,
Whatever their color, clime and creed,
Blood of thy blood, in their sorest need—
If every cause that is good and true,
And needs assistance to dare and do,
Thou helpest on through good and ill,
With trust in Heaven and God's good will—
All God's angels will say, 'Well done!'
Whenever thy mortal race is run."

I have a firm faith in the immortality of good deeds, of the eternal triumph of an order whose foundation is Love. Yes, our order will live!