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A GREAT INSTALLATION CEREMONY

The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England customarily is a member of royalty or of the nobility and although elected annually usually holds office for life. The active head of the Craft is the Pro Grand Master.

The installation of a Grand Master of the Mother Grand Lodge is usually a rare event. Consequently it is an occasion of much interest throughout the Masonic world and is attended by representatives of *Grand Lodges* from *many* countries. The following is taken from an *address* by M:W: Brother Perry of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, who witnessed the installation of the late Duke of Kent. This took place on June 19th, 1939, at the Olympia in London with 12,003 Masons present. ■

Picture an assembly of some twelve thousand leading men of the British Empire, with Masonic guests from every quarter of the globe, all standing at attention in London's great oval-shaped Olympia. Overhead an arched ceiling of glass festooned with light and dark blue gauze, trimmed with red and gold, through which sun and shadow play on the throng below. In the Grand East, on a red-carpeted dias, the brilliant and varied regalia of Grand Lodges located the world over. In the centre of the dias the heavy gold Masonic throne used during the past century and a quarter by at least four Kings of the British Empire, now occupied by the Earl of Harewood, the Pro Grand Master, and soon to be occupied successively by the King and the new Grand Master. Next to it, on the right, is a vacant chair, eloquent in the part it is soon to play. In front of the *Pro Grand Master* is a pedestal bearing the three Great Lights, and on a stand in front of it, the massive sword of King Gustave Adolphus, presented to the Grand Lodge in 1730.

The crimson carpet that covers the wide steps in the centre of the dais leads straight back for more than three hundred and fifty feet to the canopied station of the Senior Grand Warden. Bordering this central aisle and across the front is a pattern of red formed by the wide red collars of the Grand Stewards, Beside and behind them are fields of dark blue collars worn by the members of Grand Lodge rank. All the rest is a vast sea of light blue collars worn by Lodge officials—a sea that fills the floor, leaps the parapet and rises in successive waves up the sloping sides, up the gallery that circles all four sides, clear to the very roof. Human faces in the foreground, with real human features, blend by the gradual alchemy of distance into diminutive blurs which almost merge into the festoons of light and dark blue gauze which cover the oval ends of the vast hippodrome.

From the rear of the hall, comes the booming voice of the Grand Director of Ceremonies, "M:W: Pro Grand Master, His Majesty the King, Past Grand Master, has arrived and desires to be admitted." From the very top of the rear balcony the long procession of Grand Lodge Officers sent to serve as an escort slowly descends until the King, in the centre of the line, stands alone on a landing midway in the gallery. A fanfare from a dozen trumpeters banked in front of the dais, and the organ plays the National Anthem while everyone stands rigidly, silently at attention.

In the centre of the balcony, at the focus of all eyes, stands the slender, immobile figure of the King. He wears a form-fitted, gold trimmed uniform of the regalia of a Past Grand Master of *the Grand Lodge*, which office was conferred on him in 1937. The distance conceals his features. He seems, as indeed he is, an almost impersonal and mystical symbol of empire. That striking picture, the majestic sweep of the National Anthem, the vibrant fervor of the crowd, combine to make an impression that will outlast the longest survivor of that *army* of men.

The procession resumes its stately tread toward the Grand East to the accompaniment of wave on wave of enthusiastic cheers and applause, and out of the distance there gradually emerge the features and the personality of the man who is King. The escort opens ranks, and a serious, modest, and altogether kindly young man mounts the dais, receives the welcome of the Pro Grand Master and the applause of his subjects, and ascends the throne, not as King, but as a Past Grand Master.

Another fanfare. This time the Grand Director of Ceremonies says, "Most Worshipful Brother, Your Majesty, His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, Grand Master, has arrived and desires

to present himself for installation. The standards of the Duke of Kent and of the Grand Lodge are dedicated by order of the King, and then another trim form soon stands in the balcony, solitary, statuesque, in the distance strikingly similar to his older brother.

Another stately procession, another progressive surge of applause, and the Duke of Kent, keen faced younger brother of the King, halts at the centre of the hall, here he *is addressed* by the King, and promises to take on the obligation as Grand Master. Then he resumes his way to the dais, and kneels. Very deliberately, in quiet tones, the King recites, and *the Grand Master* repeats, the brief obligation. The King then reads an address to his brother, in part as follows:-

"Most Worshipful Grand Master, it gives me great pleasure to come here today to install you, my own brother, as *Grand Master* of English Freemasonry. As you know, except for one period of thirty years, a member of our House has occupied the Throne of *Grand Master* for over a century and a half. For the past sixty-five years this Throne has been filled first by our grandfather, King Edward VII, and then by our great-uncle, the Duke of Connaught, who is beloved by men and Masons throughout the world. During this period, English Freemasonry has prospered in a remarkable manner. It will be no easy task for any Mason to follow in their footsteps, but I have every confidence that you will succeed in the office to which you have been elected by your Brethren. This great and representative gathering of recognized Freemasons, who have come from all quarters of the globe to greet you on this occasion, will indicate to you the support you may expect in the future. You know that you have my good wishes, and as a Brother Mason I shall always follow with great interest your rulership of the Craft and the progress of our Order."

And now the symbolism of the empty chair for as the King grasps the hand of his younger brother he yields the Throne and steps down to occupy the empty chair. Now, on a level with his Brethren, he joins in giving the *Grand Honors* to his brother, who, as *Grand Master* of the United *Grand Lodge* of England, outranks every other Mason in the world.

Then followed brief addresses from visiting *Grand Masters* and the addresses of the Pro *Grand Master* and of the *Grand Master* and others.

At last the ceremonies are over and the *Grand Lodge* of England forms a procession to escort the King out of the hall. As

they entered, so they depart,-with slow, stately tread *amid* the plaudits of the entire audience.

The 'procession returned to the dais. The Grand Lodge was closed, and then retired, followed by the delegates from Ireland, Scotland, United States, *Canada* and the other jurisdictions in the reverse order of their first appearance. The slow, measured cadence of the march in and the march out through the centre of those applauding *thousands* seemed endless, but eventually even that came to an **end**, and the Installation was but a memory.

SECRETS OF MASONRY

FUNCTION OF A MASONIC LODGE

It is not the primary function of Freemasonry to initiate candidates, or to enlarge its membership. Were it so, there would be no basis for our laws against proselyting. The primary function of a Masonic Lodge-indeed, the primary function of our Craft, is to train its members to an understanding of the truths which its rituals and its ceremonies are calculated to inculcate, to develop its members as benevolent men, to cultivate the social virtues among men, and to propagate the knowledge of the art.

The chief concern of the Lodge is with its welfare, the happiness,-*the* Masonic development of its members, not with the admission of those who seek entrance to its doors. Its success as a Masonic Lodge cannot be gauged by the length of its membership roll or by the size of its accumulated funds.

The beauty of our ritual, and the good fellowship among the members of our Lodges, cannot be conserved when the chief aim is to make Freemasons and money "for a man's life consisteth not in abundance of things which he possesseth"-and a Lodge's life does not consist of its acquisitions, but in the contribution which it makes to civilization and society through the influence of those whom it has helped to train to what we call Masonic character. Therefore, it should be the duty of every Masonic Lodge to put in action a plan for the education of its members in Masonic history, symbolism and philosophy, devoting more of its meetings to this much-neglected function.

-Wenatchee Masonic News.

THE MASONIC DIGEST is published quarterly for the purpose of giving the Craft the essence of timely articles and addresses on Freemasonry. Distribution is made possible through the co-operation of Lodge Secretaries. Therefore if you receive a copy you are indebted to the Secretary of your Lodge for mailing it with the Lodge Notice of Meeting.