

# **THE DREAM OF THE AGES**

An Address for the Observance of  
St. John's Day, December 27, 1920 by  
Crescent Lodge No. 23, A. F. & A. M.  
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by

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## **The Dream of the Ages**

Today is the Feast of St. John, the Evangelist. He and St. John the Baptist, known together as the "Holy Saints John of Jerusalem," have been from its early beginnings the Patrons of our Craft and the Protectors of its perpetuity.

Both of them had companied with the Supreme Master whose teachings of righteousness, of justice, and of truth have come down across the flight of centuries, the foundation of true ethics, the inspiration of the true philosophy of life.

Early in his life St. John the Baptist had fallen victim to the hatred and vindictiveness of those whom he rebuked for sin and called to repentance.

The tragedy of Calvary and succeeding years of turmoil and conflict had eliminated both the Master and His Disciples. All save one had passed from arduous labor and incessant conflict to refreshment and rest.

It is the last year of the first century. On a little island cradled in the laughing waters of the Aegean Sea, St. John the Evangelist is spending the last year of his earthly life.

I shall never forget a morning a few years ago when from the deck of a steamer very early in the day I looked on "Sea-bound Patmos."

We had left the Piraeus and were crossing to Joppa, whence we should go up to Jerusalem.

It had been a night of serene and perfect beauty-the sea tranquil and calm, kissed only by the straying breezes, whose touch made even more beauteous its placid, wide expanse of sapphire blue-an over-arching sky, feckless and clean-an amethystine bowl, in whose deep and velvety expanse there blazed like jewels myriads of sparkling stars.

And then, slow, rising from the cradling deep, the silver radiance of a perfect moon, round as a shield and shimmering with a silver sheen that touched the sky, and caressed the sea, and filled the softly palpitating air with a splendor ethereal and sublime.

Into that silver radiance the ship went, riding languorously over the long full swells of the placid sea, leaving behind her a wake of glory that in the sparkling moonbeams glistened and shone as though she left ten thousand jewels in her train.

To sleep on such a night seemed sacrilege, when one could stand beneath the star-sprent sky and breathe the air that in an earlier day inspired "the glory that was Greece," and with soft zephyrs lulled the sapphire isles of dreams.

When at last, because tomorrow brought a new unfolding of experience, we drifted gently down the tides of sleep, it was with the warning that if all went well by day-dawn we should pass the Island of the Apocalypse.

It was in the first flush of the morning that I stood beside the captain on the bridge, peering forward into the gray scud that, half mist, half spume, whirled like a hoard of dancing phantoms in the train -of insubstantial night.

The morning breezes freshened. Thinner and thinner grew the haze until, as if in answer to the touch of a magic wand, "flames leaped into the forehead of the morning sky," and over the rippling sea and through the arch of heaven the day came forth to greet the world.

Prom the captain, used to this daily miracle of night and dawn, there came a word, as with his finger pointed across the sea he said: "There is Patmos." And between me and the scarce risen sun I saw it like a shadowy throne resting on a sea of golden splendor--around it like an aureole of mystic radiance, the weaving, waving streamers of the light.

And then, as suddenly as it had sprung in sight it faded from our vision as if a curtain had fallen on a stage of yesterday, and it was gone.

On this Patmos, in the year 99, St. John of Jerusalem is banished for his faith. On such a morning, sitting there, his mind tranquilized by the deft and soothing touch of nature's ministry, he is alone with all that is left to age in its closing hours-memory and dreams.

Memory bears him back across the long life that he has lived. He remembers the call that came in his young manhood from the Master beside the Sea of Galilee. He recalls the three years crowded with the events of the world's greatest tragedy. He remembers the day when,

inspired by a compelling spirit, a Band of Twelve went forth from the Temple to carry the Word of the Master throughout the world.

He remembers the ceaseless conflict that had raged through all these years between these two forces, each the other's opposite, exclusive mutually in the dominancy of human thought and action.

On the one side Rome, the Majestic, the Mighty-Rome with her marching legions-her tossing banners and her screaming eagles-Rome with her purpled Caesar and her world-wide domain.

On the other side Bethlehem, with its Shepherds and its Star; Jordan with its mystical symbol and its Dove of Peace; Calvary with its Cross on the Hill. But everywhere the touch of the Eternal-the challenge of Brotherhood-the voice of the soul.

He remembers the mighty conflict that has raged through all the ages between the powers of might and the courage of righteousness - between the black magic and the white-between the Lodge of Darkness and the Lodge of Light.

It had been a losing fight for the Nazarene as men might judge battles. Years were still to pass before an Emperor of Rome should snatch the life-blood from the death wound in his side and flanging it against the arching sky should cry -

"Thou hast conquered, oh Nazarene !"

One after another, his companions in the Apostolate had fought the good fight and finished their course: St. Thomas in far away Malabar where his name. still lingers in the traditions of the-Orient land; St. James in the land where the dark mysterious. waters foamed against the pillars of Hercules to become the St. Iago of Spain; St. Paul to the northern forests, and to the far off Islands of the West to lay there foundations for the England that was to be. All of them had gone save him alone on Patmos.

And Rome was passing from her golden age of might and power. The days of the Caesars had faded into the rebellions and revolutions with which Titus and Vespasian had to deal. The Bolsheviki of two thousand years ago were hammering at the foundations of government and of society where there were already manifest signs of decay.

It was not time for Rome to die; but remember that no nation ever died of old age. They have died one after another in the annals of the ages, all of them from the dry rot bred of luxury and indulgence-the weakness that cankers and spreads from within.

First in Patrician arteries and then as by dilution in, Plebeian veins there was pulsing the fierce virus that betokened the decline and fall of Rome.

St. John may not have known the complex coordinations of his memories, blending as they did into one great universal concordat of human experience"

"Right forever on the scaffold,  
Wrong forever on the throne,  
But that scaffold sways the future,  
For behind the dark unknown  
Standeth God within the shadow,  
Keeping watch above His own."

But to St. John the world was reeling. The heavens were falling. The foundations of the great deep were breaking up. To him as to that ancient world,

"When Rome fell, fell the world."

And so against the background of his memories he turns by natural logic to his dreams.

And he dreamed the dream of the ages-the dream of a new heaven and of a new earth - a world in, which conflict should be abolished; in which wrong should be subdued; in which happiness and concord should be enshrined, and men should live in universal peace, because it should be a new earth "in which should dwell righteousness:"

It is the dream of the ages.

Since history began its record, every -great teacher has dreamed that dream.

A thousand years before, Zoroaster had left a symbolism of his faith in the Sacred Fire, expressive of the power that should destroy the dross and refine the pure metal in the lives of men.

Five centuries before, Buddha had sat in rapt contemplation under the sacred bo tree, and had found his hope for the future in renunciation and withdrawal from the affairs of the world.

Confucius had written his remedy in maxims of obedience, conformity to- law, a fatalistic bending to the powers that dominate the universe.

Plato and Socrates had dreamed their dreams of the ideal state and had found in philosophy and pure reason the basis for the constructive and the preservative philosophy that should save the world.

And yet they had all served their little time, and drifted into the long yesterday of the past.

And once again the world was upside-down, and in his solitude this old man is dreaming the secret of its re-making. And as he dreams, above

him the heavens seem to open and let down. Amid the supernal radiance of sun-lit splendor there hangs before his vision the outline of a city, compact, symbolic, majestic, let down to earth from heaven.

There is significance in the very first glimpse of his vision. It is a city

The earlier masters had never dreamed of that.

Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius; Plato, Socrates had centered their thought around the individual. To save one's self was the aim of philosophy and the final goal of faith.

The vision on Patmos is wider. It sees not the individual but the City - that thing that stands for congested, contending humanity-that thing that while tantamount to man's highest achievement, is yet a synonym of man's lowest lapse from comfort, from virtue, and from right.

Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria, Paris, London, Chicago, New York-the city-the city congested, reeking with selfishness, daubed with degradation, redolent with the myriad stench of depravity; it was the city that was to be redeemed!

Twenty centuries have swept by, and that for which the city stands is the rule of life. Save in the narrowest interpretation of a sordid philosophy, no longer the individual but the community is the central thought of man's philosophy today.

Not even the nation any longer, for internationalism is the measure and scope of plan and purpose.

And strangely enough, not independence any more, but interdependence is the watchword that brings safety-the force that stabilizes civilization.

The vision drew nearer, and as it stood in all of its splendor before his contemplation one appeared as with a measuring rod, and behold ! the city was not only ethereal but mystical - not only visionary but symbolic, for as it stood finished and complete, its length and its breadth and its height were equal.

It is very evident that St. John was no architect. He may have chosen in his vision this strange perfect Ashlar of construction, but there is neither beauty nor utility in such a building as these relations presuppose.

The city whose length and breadth and height are equal is a mathematical monstrosity-an architectural absurdity.

A few years ago when the great cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York was first proposed, a competition was established among architects as to the most impressive and practical design for the building that was to be.

One architect, tired of the eternal sameness of Gothic and Early English, of Italian and Byzantine, caught this vision of St. John as an inspiration and 'attempted to draw the working plans for a Cathedral whose length and breadth and height were equal. It became of course a curiosity among designers and still hangs, I dare say, upon the walls of some Architect's Club, an evidence of what the mind can do when it lends itself to the guidance of a vivid imagination.

Of course the vision is a parable. Its balanced proportions stand to us in the varied similitude of that which represents to a Master Mason his code of life-his canon of activity-the supreme result of his accomplishment-the perfect ashlar hewn from the rough, irregular mass of possibility, until its angles are all right angles, its faces all square and equal-its length, its breadth, and. its height as one.

In individual life it stands for a balanced character.

In mathematics it stands for a proven equation.

In ethics it stands for a perfect moral code..

In political economy it stands for a governed world.

You know there is a weird significance in numbers. These three dimensions that are visioned there are not only the measure of perfection but they exhaust, both symbolically and practically, every possibility of relation and of extent.

In our intensely practical and matter-of-fact age we have swung far away from the esoteric interpretation of the great facts of the universe. Number and color; light and sound; shape and outline-the garments in which existence clothes itself-have to the mind of our day lost the significance that they held in ancient symbolism.

The Three's and Five's, the Seven's and Nine's of ancient architecture, speaking in each appearance with a symbolism that told of hidden truth, are for us mere numbers, significant only as they form steps on which we may tread or stories in which we may live.

And yet this Number Three, appearing as it does again and again in the rich symbolism of Masonic tradition and ritual, is so written into the structure of existence as to be an apparent part of the eternal order of things.

There are only these three possible dimensions-length, breadth, and height. By them all material existence is measured, and even the imagination curbs itself within their restraint.

There is no fourth dimension save in the disordered fancy of mathematical madness.

There are only three forms of matter-liquid, solid, and gaseous. And in these categories all existence is included.

The light ray that streams from our central sun is made up of three potencies-the color ray, the heat ray, and the actinic ray.

You yourselves are made up of three parts-the body, the mind, and the soul.

There are only three possible relations in which you can stand-to God, to your neighbor, and to yourself.

All existence follows in this same division-your time is either yesterday, today, or tomorrow.

By three steps you approach the illumination that reveals to your mind the world of hidden truth.

In the battle of this present life there are three foes that assail the excellence of your endeavor-the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Against them as spiritual weapons, you are given fasting, prayer, and generosity.

If with these you prevail, there may grow within you the saving graces of Faith, Hope and Charity, through which as upon spiritual steps you

may rise into likeness with God, the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Preserver, Three in One.

The mystical meaning therefore of St. John's vision is apparent. He is outlining in allegory the dimensions of life – the mensuration of character.

Exactly the exhortation that your symbolism brings you when you are bidden, with the tools of a Master Mason in your hands, to take the rough, uncouth, and rugged mass of life's possibilities and opportunities, and by dint of earnest effort and sincere endeavor bring them to the outlines of a perfect ashlar whose length and whose breadth and whose height are equal.

Manifestly the first application is to the individual life, the development and 'the forming of the individual character.

Length in this interpretation is the time of individual existence physically speaking, of individual purpose symbolically interpreted. In it are wrapped up all that go to make the assertive, progressive force by which man drives his purpose through. We call it aim, ambition, will-power, dominant purpose.

It is the shortest distance between two given points. It is equally the base upon which all geometrical structures are builded. It has no beauty save that it is a fact. It encloses nothing, for it has merely extent. It begins; it continues; it ends. That is all, and if that is all life would be but a beginning-a continuing and an ending.

The second dimension is breadth. Physically interpreted it means development, enlargement, increase. Symbolically interpreted it means contact, mutuality, brotherhood.

It restrains ambition by reminding it of duty. It curbs aspiration by mutuality. From length, joined with breadth, we form the mathematical square. Instead of a world of straight lines reaching on and on toward a single goal, we have a world of community, with common interests, with common duties, with common obligations.

It is flat, to be sure, and relatively inert. It does not reach the dimension of a Living Perpendicular, but it takes man and turns him from his individualism into a social being. It becomes the basis of civilization.

The third dimension is height—in its physical interpretation the exaltation of mind above matter, the enthronement of a power that dominates and controls. Symbolically it is the enthronement of an ideal—the expression of the fact that neither the ambition of the individual, nor indeed the mutuality of the many can reach their real attainment, until they have realized in the comprehension of a dominating purpose, a meaning in this thing called life.

It is this that in architecture lifted the dull level pave of man's highways on which he trod into the heaven-reaching spires, cross-capped witnesses to man's idealism, on the wings of which he sought the stars.

It is the sum total of life in that it is square piled upon square in infinite progression—a perfect cube, its lines all straight lines; its angles all right angles; each side a perfect square, and the length and the breadth and the height all equal.

As Master Masons we have been taught both the significance of this symbolism and its importance translated into symbols of daily life. However much or however little we may have esteemed its maxims of value, there has been set before it the method by which our individual lives can be builded, after such a pattern.

The great fact of self-determination is characteristic of our humanity. From the very beginning there has been set before the human mind the eternal choice—good or evil; light or darkness; life or death. Excellence does not force itself upon human character, nor does it come by inheritance. To each man is given that power of choice that

self-determines his character. Free Masonry is but another opportunity in the scheme which Divine Wisdom has devised for man's progress and final victory.

What we have done with its admonition and its counsel depends upon ourselves. In the last analysis

"I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul."

But Freemasonry is not merely an individualistic philosophy. It does not cease merely with the development of the individual life or the rounding of the individual character.

It is a system of thought and theory and action that aims at an infinitely wider ideal. It is bound up with the vision of its Saintly Patron, for it, too, seeks a balanced world. It, too, has for its aim a governed society-anew heaven and a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness

Just now the world is upside-down, filled with the wreck and the ruin that war has left behind. Free Masonry is not worth its name, is not worthy of the record of its storied past, if into that ruined world it does not come and with its historic philosophy attempt to rebuild the ruin, to reconstruct civilization.

The world has not made a good reaction. Civilization has not recovered its equipoise.

The whole world is living still upon its nerve, worn threadbare under the stupendous strain.

It is a bewildered world everywhere-a confused world, and until great facts are adjusted and new relations created, this makes it an imperiled world.

It is going to take the wisest and the most patient of statesmanship to steer a shattered civilization across the crisis of the first five years of reconstruction.

The world can never build back what it has destroyed.

It was easy to break and to shatter. That which generations had budded crumbled like a house of cards, before the belching of shrapnel and the rattle of machine guns.

It was easy. to shoot the world up.

We are finding that it is infinitely harder to build the world back

The difficulty is that there is so little to go back to.

Human society is a queer institution. Builded apparently upon substantial foundations, it is in reality constructed out of shreds and patches.

Precedent, prejudice, heredity, and environment are far more potent dynamics in this world than are logic and sound philosophy. It is for this reason that civilization finds itself staggering amid the debris of a shattered and disintegrated world.

When the guns became silent and men began to think, everybody prepared to go back and get down to normal conditions as they had existed before the war. But when people turned and looked back toward what had been they realized to their amazement that it was not there. Stranger than that, they realized that what they thought had been there never was there.

What we had called Christian civilization had failed to avert war.

Professedly Christian nations had turned the world into a slaughterhouse.

Jealousy, greed, and selfish power are not Christianity. These are not the three dynamics of a balanced world.

These are not the length and breadth and height of a perfect ashlar.

Greed is the length, jealousy the breadth, and selfish power the height of a building, not of righteousness, but of injustice and of cruel wrong.

For nineteen centuries the Great Master has stood and knocked at the doors of nations as well as at the portals of human hearts. When those doors open war will cease. The world war is a proof that ethics, commerce, and civil government as they now exist have failed. When this fact breaks in all its grim reality upon the human mind there may come the dawning of the new heaven and the new earth.

Selfishness has all but ruined the world. Unselfishness alone can redeem it.

The world has not learned its lesson though it staggers in the awfulness of its exhaustion., jealousy, greed, and selfish power still assert their right to rule; and pestilence, famine, poverty, and death are the harvest of their planting.

Will unselfishness, pity, service, and sacrifice loom large now in the shattered world and prove that justice and righteousness are possible?

Is love stronger than hate?

Can charity outride avarice?

The answer lies as by divine challenge in the hands of America-the America that came in. last and providentially suffered least; the America that among all the nations of the world today is practically the only one unshattered and unweakened.

Whatever may be said, in the folly of our partisan quibbling, about the ways and means and method and manner in which we carried on during the months that we were in the war; one thing stands universally unchanged.

We came into the war for the sake of an ideal. We asked no recompense. We sought no conquest. We did not reach with itching fingers: for spoils or dominion. We came with the cry upon our lips that we were willing to sacrifice that the rest of the world might enjoy that which we held as our priceless heritage – "the unalienable right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

If America has a destiny, if she is called to a sacred mission, it is not to grow greater in extent, richer in possession, more dominant in power; but by virtue of all these which Providence has strewn with prodigal hand as a mighty benediction, to carry throughout the world, as a mighty preachment, the gospel of happiness, contentment, and peace that comes through the rule of righteousness, justice, and truth- the measure of a balanced world- a philosophy whose length and breadth and height are equal.

If we conceive that thus there opens before America the fulfillment of her mission, the accomplishment of her destiny, it devolves upon us as men and as Masons to take thought and council how she may be best equipped for a mission so transcendent among the nations of the world.

We are not tonight to enter the broad field of international policies, nor to consider the things that differentiate treaties between states. My thought is rather that we should look at our country as she stands today-bearing her part of the burden, meeting her measure of the problems consequent upon the war, and inquire as to how she measures up to the essential equipment, the national character that she should possess if she is to become thus a potent force in the scheme of a world's reconstruction.

In her equipment; in her organized activity; in her varied processes of life and action, does she approximate the dimensions of a balanced nation? Can we apply the vision of St. John to the America of today and find that its requirements are realized?

The length of a nation – what is that? Manifestly it is continuity; it is physical strength; the strong, persistent efficiency of a people characterized by health and strength, by vigor and endurance.

The breadth of a nation – what is that? Shall we not say the development of mere vital vigor into intellectual potentiality; the thing that stands for education, training, civilization, culture; the power of mind, the potency of thought that makes a people not only virile but wise, not only persistent but crowned with knowledge.

And the height of a nation – what is that? Shall we not say the aspiration of a nation's soul; the realization of a nation's conscience; the writing as upon the very sky of the dominating purpose that fails if it does not lift mankind up to where he stands upon the threshold of the: Infinite itself.

Let us judge our America of today by these dimensions:

I. The length line of America is faulty and frail because we have become strangely indoctrinated with the notion that our duty in life was to look after things – that God had monopolized the task of taking care of people.

During the eighteen months that we were in actual warfare we lost in battle dead 45,000 men.

During these same eighteen months 450,000 children died in America under one year of age-ten children for every soldier, and most of them need not have died save as we in our indifference and carelessness let them go.

Three hundred thousand children die every year before they are twelve months old. One hundred and fifty thousand of them live but a single month.

A child born today in the United States has not as much chance to live a year as a man of eighty; to live a month as a man of ninety.

Last year 1,250,000 people died in the United States of sickness. Probably two-thirds of that death was unnecessary. It was caused by preventable sickness and avoidable disease. It was the result of defective civilization.

Of our present population – if things continue as they are – six per cent at least will die eventually of one disease. We average 150,000 yearly of people who die of tuberculosis. We have a continual sick list of one million and a half and a record of 500,000 constantly bed-ridden from that one disease. Seventy-five per cent of that multitude of death occurs between the ages of sixteen and forty-five – the most useful and productive part of the life of a citizen.

That one disease costs the United States a billion and a half dollars every year.

And yet tuberculosis is not a visitation of God. It is not an unavoidable inheritance from one's ancestors. It is the result of defective civilization – the way that we allow people to live – the things that they wear – what they eat and drink – the selfishness that results in bad housing, poor drainage, polluted water, tainted food. These are the things that cut down the length dimension of our life, and not the wrath of God or the inscrutable wisdom of an over-ruling Providence.

One of the most interesting of all the reports covering our service in the war is that of the Provost Marshal-General, relative to the Selective Draft. Upon the records of that department are written the war histories of nearly 24,000,000 Americans.

It is the first and only record of the manpower of this nation.

Of the first two and a half million men, thirty per cent were rejected from military service because of physical disability.

Up to the time of the Armistice thirty-five and one-half per cent of the men examined were rejected as physically unfit.

A nation can't stand still any more than an atom. Everything in this world must either go on or go back, and the Nation is surely turning backward, lessening the vigor of its life-line, which is content to have thirty-five per cent of its young manhood physically insufficient, and to lose one million of its people every year by preventable disease.

The highest possible duty of the state is the production and development of normal healthy children. The next highest duty is the protection and conservation of human life. And yet here in America we have been strangely indifferent to these facts. We have been spending the greater part of our substance in attempting to create wealth, believing somehow that disease and suffering and death were a necessary part of Providence.

Our average American community spends two dollars per capita for fire and police protection.

It spends annually from eight to ten dollars per capita on education; and yet the country over last year we spent only twenty-nine cents per capita on the health and protection of the people.

Health should be as tangible an asset as comfort or security, or the well-fed satisfaction that comes from proper housing and proper food.

One hundred thousand people died last year in America as a result of accident, and accidents in our modern life are not dispensations of Divine Providence, but the result of somebody's carelessness.

There lies the trouble of it all.

These things could be avoided if people only knew. They could be prevented if, in addition to knowing, people only cared.

Ignorance, indifference, and carelessness are the foundation of most of our troubles, and absolute selfishness is the other factor in the tragedy.

To make civic health as real an asset as civil government, or public health, or fire protection is one of the great fundamental duties of our American life. It is practically a question of education and the simple enforcement of the law.

Science traces disease to certain distinct causes. Eliminate the causes and the results no longer exist.

Good sewers are more essential for the wholesome community than decorated churches.

A pure water supply is a greater treasure than garnered gold.

The great need of today is to teach people how to keep clean-individually, socially, civically, and morally. The hope of tomorrow lies in making health catching instead of disease.

To save the child of today means to insure the manhood and the womanhood of tomorrow.

France, bled white, and yet following her ideal in the face of bursting shrapnel and crumbling walls, gathered her children in cellars and in dugouts and kept up her schools, for this France said:

"Children are our last reserve. Their task after the war will be doubled; doubled should be their preparation today."

The call that comes to you and to me on this Feast of St. John is to build up, to strengthen and to make secure the length dimension of our national life, that strong and steadfast, healthful and serene, America may turn from the decay and destruction that are the result of defective civilization and face her future fit for whatever calls.

II. The breadth dimension in a nation's life represents its vitality translated into terms of accomplishment. As in the individual so in the nation this translation must apply alike to the bodily vigor, mental potency, and spiritual fervor.

In terms of human experience we call this civilization, culture, enlightenment-the things that constitute in human history an age of erudition and liberal progress.

That America should have made so remarkable an attainment has been the inspiration of a certain boastfulness, excusable perhaps in our national thought and character because of our consciousness of supreme endowment and limitless possibility.

There was no vain glory in our calling ourselves the greatest country on earth.

When we simply glance at our eminent domain, flung from ocean to ocean, endowed with productiveness and blessed with fertility;

practically inexhaustible, dowered with natural resources whose surface had barely been scratched in their present development - a country.- with room and reach and resource, our boastfulness was not merely smug complacency but a consciousness founded in fact.

The marvelous way in which, in spite of our unpreparedness, the nation as by a modern miracle leaped into the flaming field of war and in a burst of intensive speed unequalled in modern history, accomplished the task that she set before herself to do-all this added to our supreme self-confidence and our satisfied complacency.

As the great war progressed, in exact ratio with the exhaustion of the belligerent nations, overseas, we became the market place of the world, and even the preliminary settlements have thrown so vast a balance of credit in our favor that we have become the bank of the world.

All these things were calculated to breed what is perhaps a characteristic American weakness, an exaggerated opinion of ourselves and a complacent pride that is too often the precursor of misfortune.

It was therefore in the nature of a terrible shock to our self-esteem that the reports of the Surgeon-General of the Army should make it possible for General Pershing to say the other day in a public address; "We found as a result of the draft that more than thirty per cent of the young men of the country though physically perfect, were illiterate," and armed,. "To me the thought is shocking that there should be certain localities in this nation characterized by such neglect that one-third of our young men cannot read and write."

And yet, according to the United States Commissioner of Education, the population of this country, comprising one-seventeenth of the human beings on earth, spends annually as much money for education as the other sixteen-seventeenths combined.

And yet among the first three million men examined for service under the Selective Draft more than seven hundred thousand were unable to sign their names or to read the simplest communication in print.

The instant reply to this strange and sinister challenge would be, "What could you expect when our country has filled with millions of illiterate foreigners and when we have among our population upwards of twelve million negroes."

Unfortunately the explanation does not hold.

In 1915 the figures of the Census Bureau showed that there were in the United States upwards of six million persons above the age of sixteen who could neither read nor write.

Fifty per cent of this vast multitude were between the ages of twenty and forty.

Fifty-nine per cent of them were white and thirty per cent of them or more than two million were native-born whites.

The localization of this illiteracy stamps different sections of the country. Iowa leads the van, with the smallest percentage of illiterates of any of our states-less than seventeen persons per thousand of its total population.

There are states where two hundred and ninety out of every thousand are illiterate.

New York with all the vast foreign population of its great metropolis showed only sixteen per cent of illiterates among men of draft age, while South Carolina registered forty-nine and one-half per cent of its draft men unable to read or write.

The army of illiterates in America equals the total population of fourteen of our states. The number of those above the age of twenty-one who can neither read nor write would out-vote the cities of New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia combined, or any single state in the Union outside of New York.

What shall we say then of the figures that prove that the United States spends twice as much each year for chewing gum as it does for school books; that it spent last year more for automobiles than for its entire primary and, secondary education; that the average teacher's salary is less than that of the average day laborer, and in country districts not more than half as much; that a thoroughly good house maid here in Cedar Rapids is paid more for her services than is the average rural teacher who after years of preparation has devoted herself to the training and the educating of the children of America?

These figures show that either we are not spending enough money on education, vast though our annual outlay is for this purpose; or that we are not getting our money's worth.

The fact that we pay more than all the other people in the world put together is of small consequence. The fact of greatest importance is that in spite of that expenditure these facts can exist.

Intelligence and the capacity for absorbing and digesting accurate information is the basis of useful, rational, and discerning citizenship- the only type that can insure the stability and the perpetuity of a democratic government.

Both tyranny and anarchy thrive upon ignorance. A nation of intelligent free men can never be dominated by either.

We have been called the melting pot of the nations.

Fifteen million of our present population are foreign-born. Led by varied circumstances they came here seeking in some form or other that "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" which has been written down as the charter of this nation.

We have professed ourselves glad to have them come. We have thought ourselves an asylum for the distressed and oppressed of the world.

And yet despite the high-sounding syllables with which we tell of this purpose we have been letting these multitudes pass through our ports of entry and with the passing we have abandoned them to the snares and the devices of the labor contractors, the political bosses and the radical agitators.

That we and our institutions have not been overwhelmed long ago has been by no means the result of our precaution or any intelligent plan. We have taken no pains to afford these people instruction in American thought, American ideals; or even in the English language. It has been impossible hence to teach them the true meaning of America and Americanism.

Thousands of American-born children have all their lives read the Declaration of Independence and Lincoln's "Gettysburg Speech" in German or some other alien tongue.

We are now face to face with the eminent danger that has come from this hurried, ill-assorted, undigested influx from overseas.

Fed upon revolution and rebellion in their days of tyranny and oppression, they have brought with them to our shores a type of mind that we in America cannot visualize and cannot understand - a mind that in, sullen ignorance takes leave of all standards and denies all law, so that liberty, becomes license, justice degenerates into impulse and individualism in its starkest nakedness, vaunts itself to heroic outlines and calls itself mutuality and brotherhood.

It is in such soil as this that anarchy, Bolshevism, and all their train of decadent philosophies make speedy growth.

Europe today is facing these perils in a form augmented by disaster, privation, idleness, and despondency.

We are facing them, not so much as an immediate menace for today, as in the light of the future. The only inspiring thought is that amid all these problems we find strength and confidence in adhering to the ideals that our fathers builded when they laid the foundation of this nation of ours.

If liberty, freedom and happiness were the crowning towers on the superstructure that they created, beneath that Democracy lay great substantial facts as so many cornerstones. These were equality, the right to private possession, freedom of religion, the sanctity of the home, and education as the universal duty and privilege of citizenship.

We shall never come to the measure of the breadth dimension of our nation's possibility until we realize that for an American, illiteracy is the darkest of all foul blots-that we owe it not simply to the children of our land, but to the multitudes of the foreign-born who have become part of the community life of the nation-that there shall be expressed to each of them the thought of the nation conveyed in syllables that alone can express its meaning.

All Americans must be taught to read and write and think in one language out of which there shall come the loyalty and the philosophy that underlies our struggle for our ideals. And they who will not read and write and think in that language have no place in America-the exemplar, the synonym of Democracy.

III. There is left the third dimension - that of height.

Shall we say that in our interpretation tonight it stands for the spiritual side of a nation's life – the great ideal conception that is alike the inspiration and the goal of activity.

It is a peculiar thing that every conceivable explanation of the unrest, the dissatisfaction, the disorder that prevails throughout the world has been proposed except the real one—the one that is deepest and most important. Centuries ago the man who, whatever he may have been, was at least wise in his comprehension of the human affairs of his day, wrote:

"Where there is no vision the people perish."

And by that vision the wise man meant, of course, the comprehension and the following of an ideal, of some great plan upon the trestle-board of the ages—the building out of which should produce alike in the individual and in the aggregate of individuals that which we call human 'society—the constant result of peace and happiness among men.

For I may perhaps remind you that peace is not an ideal at all. Happiness is not an ideal. Contentment is not an ideal. They are states of mind attendant upon the achievement of an ideal. The ideals that produce peace, happiness, and contentment are another three in that strange group of threes of which I reminded you a little while ago. They are liberty, justice, and righteousness, the conduct of an orderly human society.

Without them as creative forces peace is but an iridescent dream.

You can't make peace by act of Congress.

Treaties and pacts and covenants are mere scraps of paper unless behind them there lies a compelling spiritual force.

The prophet who sang the glories of the millennial dream found its dynamic in the conjunction "Righteousness and Peace have met each other."

If the ruin of war is to be rebuilt; if the revelation of war is to be understood; if civilization is to recruit its tottering forces; if it is to go on at all toward the framing of a constructive policy, either at home or abroad, it must move in harmonic chords if it moves at all. The old

one string melody of national egoism has vanished with the economic crudities of yesterday.

It took four years of fighting; it cost the world twenty million lives; it practically exhausted the economic possibility of the earth to trample the mad delusions of selfishness that all but wrecked the world.

We are going to have some strange experience adjusting things before we are through with this aftermath of war. The fallacy of much that has been deemed essential has been demonstrated. Expediency must give way to duty. Profit must become secondary to principal. Selfishness must yield to altruism.

There can be no cure for the ills, the confusion and the unrest of the world until faith in righteousness and the rule of universal justice are restored and unselfish altruism is made supreme in the life of men and nations.

No man can live unto himself alone.

No nation can live unto itself alone.

Not in theory but in absolute practice, mutuality is the world's single solvent—the one ideal that can produce lasting peace. Of this one thing we are sure.

The world can no longer be half bond and half free; half clothed and half naked; half hungry and half fed. I doubt if we can much longer say that the world can exist half rich and half poor; half master and half serf in any way or shape or form that human cooperation can remedy.

Who impresses that great truth upon the conscience of mankind preaches the evangel that alone can save the world.

It is not too much to say that as she shapes her own ideal this America of ours is framing the picture of the years to come for civilization and for the world. We have lost, alas, the moral value of the tremendous sentimentalism with which we flung ourselves into the world conflict. It was a chance for the development of a stupendous force that might have led and saved the world.

It has gone down into the mist of the slimy tides of personal selfishness and grasping greed; and yet America knows, because the

story of the world's past tells but the single tale, that in the grand Assize both men and nations shall be judged, not by what they get out of the world but by what they put into the world, and leave there as a monument of their having lived.

Service is the loftiest aspiration of human endeavor-the real, the lasting victory of a nation is when it learns that true greatness lies not in rich abundance nor in pampered selfishness, but in the devotion that loves itself last; that labors for the common good; that lives for all mankind.

It is a dream you say. I fear I must grant you that.

But remember that it is the dreamer who has always led the world. Even in the most sordid chapters of the world's history that lie behind us men have followed the "signs upon the skies and not the footprints upon the sands."

My brethren, these are no new thoughts that I have come suggesting to you tonight. They are but the application of the great fundamental, principles of our Craft to the problems of this present age.

Truth never changes. Whether in the Holy of Holies of Solomon's rising Temple; whether on the Island of Patmos in the sun-kissed seas; whether through the long flight of the centuries with their contentions and their confusions; or whether now in the midst of a distracted and a ruined world, the old eternal truths are always true.

Civilization, law, order, happiness, contentment, peace, the things for which men long and for which in their best moments they strive rest upon three conditions

That men should meet ever upon the Level of equality and common brotherhood.

That they should live by the Plumb of Justice.

That their lives should be bounded and circumscribed by the Square of righteousness.

These are the conditions out of which there comes, in men and in national life, the hewing of the perfect ashlar stone, whose length and breadth and height are equal.

Countless ages may come and go and yet the vision may not reach its full completion. But as Masons we believe in progress. We look ever toward the East whence comes the Light. And in that light we have faith in the final attainment of mankind.

After the Tempest comes the Fairy Arch  
Men call the Rainbow, and in every hue  
We see the promise of Man's upward march,  
That must continue the long ages through.  
The seer may study and the sage may search,  
And hopes may fall, and wars may come anew,  
But surely as the Night for Morn prepares,  
Mankind is climbing, and the years are stairs