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The Antiquity and Genius of Masonry.

The following eloquent address was delivered by Brother, the Rev. Thomas Somerville, A. M., chaplain to Vancouver Lodge, No. 421, on the Registry of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and to Victoria Lodge, No. 783, on the Registry of the Grand Lodge of England, at the inauguration of the new Masonic Hall, on Government Street, Victoria, Vancouver Island, on the 25th June last:—

WORSHIPFUL MASTER AND BRETHREN :

Truly it is my desire that another more experienced in the mysteries of our Order had been appointed for this duty. I have only consented to address you that it may be shown in practice what we assert in theory, that none may refuse the work appointed by the Masters.

The Dedication of the Lodge is one of the most solemn ordinances of our ancient order, and I am certain that as these holy symbols stood unveiled in their new resting place, and your thoughts wandered back through the corridor of ages to the scene of their first introduction, and forward to the rich associations that will be entwined around them in the future, thoughts deep and hallowed could not fail to well up from the springs of your heart. Be it simply mine, then, as one for all, to voice forth these your silent reflections.

The work completed to-day is called "The Dedication of the Lodge to the Holy Saint John," the patron of our order. But strictly speaking, the work has a double purpose—both dedication and consecration. The Lodge is dedicated to virtue, in the name of the Great Jehovah, and consecrated, separated, and set apart to the purpose of preserving the memory of these illustrious names.

It is dedicated to virtue. True masonry is the dutiful daughter of Heaven. The Lodge is the sacred shrine of Almighty Jehovah. By his law every mason must be a good and true man—true to himself, his fellows, and to the Being before whom he has bent in adoring reverence. The "stupid Atheist or irreligious libertine" may make himself a false man, but never a good mason. The mason is pledged to pious virtue. Nor let it be forgotten that virtue originally meant valor. Among the old Romans the most valorous man was esteemed the most virtuous; now while strength should not be all, it must still form an important element of goodness. The good man must ever be a strong man. Mere sentimentalism is silly; like the vapour it appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away. In every "good and true man" there must be a healthy firmness. The feeling of desire must be yoked with

the principle of right, and will must drive them both.

Rugged strength and radiant beauty,
These were one in nature's plan;
Humble toil and Heavenward duty,
These will form the perfect man.

To virtue, strong and beautiful, is this Hall dedicated. Never, then, let careless feet defile its pavement, nor unclean hands touch its vessels; never let angry disputations be heard within its walls. Conscience as a faithful Tyler must guard off the Furies of Discord. Temper must be ever tempered, and feeling chastened. It is that we may become better men than we meet here, and all our labours—the charges, the rituals, the ceremonies, nay, every jewel and ornament, every article of furniture, every emblem and hieroglyphic, tend to this point.

But more, the Lodge is consecrated to the memory of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist; and it is proper that we should shortly recall to our minds their lives and labours. Right too, that their names should have been linked together, not that they were like each other, but just because they were widely different in their temperaments and teachings. They were the exponents of the two extremes in human character—the Baptist being the representative of fiery boldness, the Evangelist of shrinking love. The one was a sturdy Doric column, the other a graceful Corinthian pillar. The one was the complement of the other; united together they combine strength and beauty.

The Baptist was a truly heroic character. The last of all the prophets, he was the greatest of all. Of his life we get only a few glimpses, but these show us what sort of a man he was. The first picture is that of an ardent youth among the solitudes of Israel's deserts. Saddened by the hollowness of life in Israel, and perplexed with the controversies of Jerusalem—the wrangling of Sadducee with Pharisee, of formalist with mystic, of the disciples of one infallible Rabbi with the disciples of another infallible Rabbi, he fled for refuge to the wilderness, to see if God could be found by the earnest soul that sought Him alone. For thirty years he lived in the desert; then came the time when the qualities nursed in solitude burst forth upon the world. The people felt that a King of Men stood before them. The desert swarmed with crowds; warriors, profligates, publicans, the heart broken—the worldly, the disappointed—all came. Even the King's attention is gained; he is taken away from the simple life of the desert and placed among the artificialities of the Royal City. And now comes the question, "Does the stern prophet degenerate into a sweet tongued courtier?" Is the rough ashler of the forest broken into pieces in the process of polishing? Verily no. He stands in Herod's court, the prophet of the desert still, preaching boldly the truth. When Herod