

sonic fraternity, and symbolized proprietorship.

In modern Freemasonry it still survives as an emblematic pledge of a Master's ownership over his lodge. It is true the gavel now is no longer hurled in order to limit the outlaying territory contiguous to the hallowed precincts, but the use of that implement perpetuates the mediæval idea of possession.

The gavel in the hand of the Master of a Masonic lodge, directly alludes to this ancient usage, and when it sounds the decision of a question submitted, that is merely the re-echo of a power current many centuries ago, in the administration of justice.

The judges of our modern courts of law wield the gavel with a no less emblematic power than a Master of Masons. Grimm says that the hammer-stroke which the auctioneer makes to conclude a sale, is derived from the custom referred to. But the mallet, chiefly as a symbol of power, is of the remotest antiquity, which I shall now proceed to trace. In northern mythology, Thor was always represented with a mallet, called *Miolner*. Its origin is as follows:—

Loki, one of the Norse deities, made a wager with a dwarf that he could not forge certain things which would compare with the mechanical skill of other dwarfs. Certain conditions were agreed upon, and the dwarf began to labor industriously at his forge. A suitable time having elapsed, he took from the fire, among other articles, a hammer, named *Miolner*. The things forged were produced before three principal gods of Asgard, Odin, Thor, and Frey, who were selected as arbitrators of their relative value.

After careful test, it was unanimously decided that the hammer was superior to all. This implement possessed the virtue of striking with unerring certainty any object at which it was thrown, and, however severe a blow was struck, no injury ensued to

the person wielding the hammer. The Scandinavian divinities at this time were waging a bitter warfare against rebellious frost giants, and hailed the acquisition of *Miolner* as a powerful weapon of defence, with unaffected delight. To Thor was given the mallet, a gift of especial applicability, as he was, according to the prose Edda, the strongest of Norse gods; and when belted with the girdle of prowess—*meñinjardir*—with hammer in hand, he was irresistible. Scaldic songs recite numerous adventures, in which Thor manifested *Miolner's* divine attributes.

It clearly appears from the preceding proofs, I think, that the Master's mallet has descended to modern Freemasonry, invested with the symbolism of Thor's hammer. As previously stated, this implement, in the hand of a presiding-officer of a lodge, is an emblem of authority, without which he is impotent to rule and govern the assembled brethren. This virtue, inherent in the gavel, is directly derived from the Norse *Miolner*, and made its possessor irresistible. Thus it is with the Master of a Masonic lodge; grasping his mallet, he is immediately clothed with the symbol of resistless force and power over present emergencies.—*Fort's Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry.*

WHO CARES ?

Who cares whether Masonry originated in the Garden of Eden, or before the flood, or at the building of King Solomon's Temple? What does it matter to us, whether Noah was Master of his lodge, or not? Or whether or not Moses was a Mason, because he was versed in Egyptian mysteries? What good would the knowledge of the fact do us, living so many centuries after these worthy men were "gathered to their fathers?" The question for us, as individual members of the Order, is: "Am I a Mason?" Do I practice the purity taught by Masonic lessons? When I