

Masonic Burial Plot at Ottawa.

For some time there has existed amongst the Lodges of Ottawa a desire that some endeavor should be made towards the purchase of a burial plot, to be set aside for the interment of those brethren upon whom the heavy hand of misfortune has been laid. This has at length assumed a practical form by the appointment of a committee comprised of delegates from each Lodge. The question of funds for such an undertaking is of serious moment, particularly as a strong desire was expressed that the committee should, if possible, arrange for the purchase of such a sized plot as would enable members of the fraternity to buy family lots. In order to raise funds, the committee arranged for a moonlight excursion on the Ottawa River on the evening of the 27th, which realized \$138, after paying all expenses,—and are considering other means to raise further necessary sums. They are also about to enquire on what terms the requisite ground can be obtained with a view to eventual purchase. The esteemed D. D. G. M. (R. W. Bro. Kerr) is Chairman of the Committee, and lends his hearty assistance and support to the movement. It is hoped success will ultimately attend the efforts now being made. The Secretary, Bro. H. J. Bronskill, will be glad of any information bearing on the subject from any Lodge or place, which may be of use in guiding the Committee.

For the CRAFTSMAN.]

Opening on the Centre in the Third Degree.

BY R. W. BRO. OTTO KLOTZ.

QUESTION.—*My Dear Klotz*—Here I am, and I had laid out to pay you a visit, but find I cannot spare time to go around your way. I wished very much for a long chat, especially regarding a short, pithy, satisfactory, popular why and wherefore for the "Opening on the Centre in the Third Degree." Why is it thus? Of course one can make a long dissertation on the subject, and bring in a thousand collateral, but I wish for a short reply to the "why?" Will you

kindly help me in this? Excuse brevity. Kind regards to all your circle.

Yours as ever,

AN. PR.—*My Dear*———, Ever ready and happy to discuss Masonic matters, and exchange ideas with so true and bright a Brother as you, my old friend, I shall endeavor to give you a rational definition of the why and wherefore of "Opening on the Centre in the Third Degree;" in doing so, I cannot avoid making a few general remarks, without going into a long dissertation of the subject and then close with a short explanation of the "why and wherefore." Hoping this will reach you in your usual good spirits, and that we may at an early date have your esteemed company in our family circle, I remain, with best regards from us all, fraternally yours,
OTTO KLOTZ.

The origin of the phrase "The lodge is opened on the centre" is like the origin of many festivals, ceremonies and rites, to most people lost in obscurity, and can only be found in the customs practiced in the ancient mysteries among the so-called ancient Pagans. As a large number of the Christian festivals, ceremonies and rites were taken from those Pagans, so also were many of the Pagan festivals, ceremonies and rites adopted by the Masonic fraternity; we have therefore to look to that remote quarter for a solution of the question.

Prominent among the Pagans were the ancient Egyptians, and in later years their descendants, the Druids, who were brought to England by the Phœnician navigators. Both the Egyptians and the Druids, as in fact nearly all Pagan nations, were sun-worshippers; both taught their religion as a mystery by symbols and various rites, and celebrated numerous festivals in honor of their chief deity, the sun.

With the ancient Egyptians and the Druids, the most important religious festivals were the two solstices, on the 21st December and 21st June, (at present 25th Dec. and 24th June), the former being considered as the birthday of Osiris, the sun, the latter as the time of the rising of the Nile and its succeeding overflow; the 12th day following the winter's solstice (now called Epiphany,) and the first day of May were also festivals in honor of the sun, or Belinus as he was called by the Druids; on these occasions the Druids kindled fires on their sacred places, and on the top of