

THE RUSTY MASON.

Once on a time I sought to know
 The mysteries of Masonry, and seeking
 Knocked, and knocking, found the door wide open for me.

And when I looked within
 I saw a band of men all clothed in white,
 Around an altar, and on the altar
 Lay the word of God with square and compass.

Of that band of men,
 I saw one more kingly than the rest,
 For on a throne he sat, and gave to each,
 And all, lessons of wisdom.

He came and gave to me
 A lamb-skin, pure and white, and
 Told its meaning.

He told me, too, that kings and princes
 Long had worn it, and how free it was
 From stain, or spot, or blemish.

He gave me tools to work with,
 A gauge, a gavel, level, plumb and square,
 And last of all, a trowel that had no spot
 Of rust upon it, for earth's noblest sons
 Had used it ages long upon the Mystic Temple.
 He told me, too, I stood an upright Mason—
 He spoke to me of Temperance, Fortitude,
 Of Prudence, and of Justice.

I listened still with wondering ears
 To learn a Mason's tenets,
 And when they sang of Faith, of Hope,
 And Charity, the true steps that lead
 From the level of time to the Grand Lodge on high,
 I pledged myself then, that the tools to me given,
 Should never find rest, till the cap-stone was laid;
 And my lamb-skin, if spotted, should know but the stain
 Of Masonic cement, while on life's rugged road,
 This pledge was freely given,
 For I meant to act as Masons act;

And if my memory serves me right,
 I started for the work, but found the world
 All cold and selfish, and then I feared
 To make the effort.

I never used my tools one hour,
 And all are lost, save this, his rusty trowel,
 It seemed to me it might have kept its brightness,
 If never used, but as I laid it by
 The rust began to gather, and now
 It has no affinity for any save
 Untempered mortar.

I hope some Craftsman true has found
 My gauge, my gavel, level, plumb and square,
 And laid them by for better workmen.

Inactive as I was
 My lamb-skin gathered dust,
 And with gathering dust,
 It lost its whiteness, and now that too is gone.

If I remember rightly, they gave me
 Passes, signs and grips, whereby
 To know my brethren.

Though they were truly given,
 They were not safely lodged,

And now to tell the summing
 Of this matter, this much I know,
I once was made a Mason.