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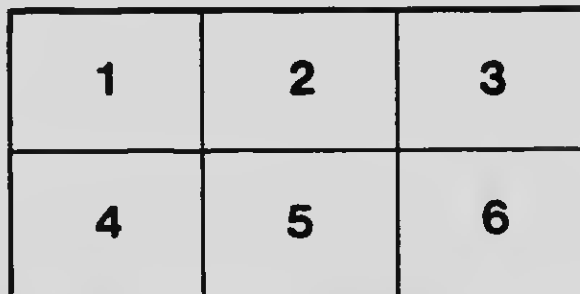
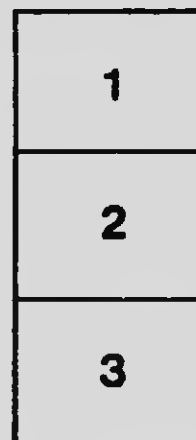
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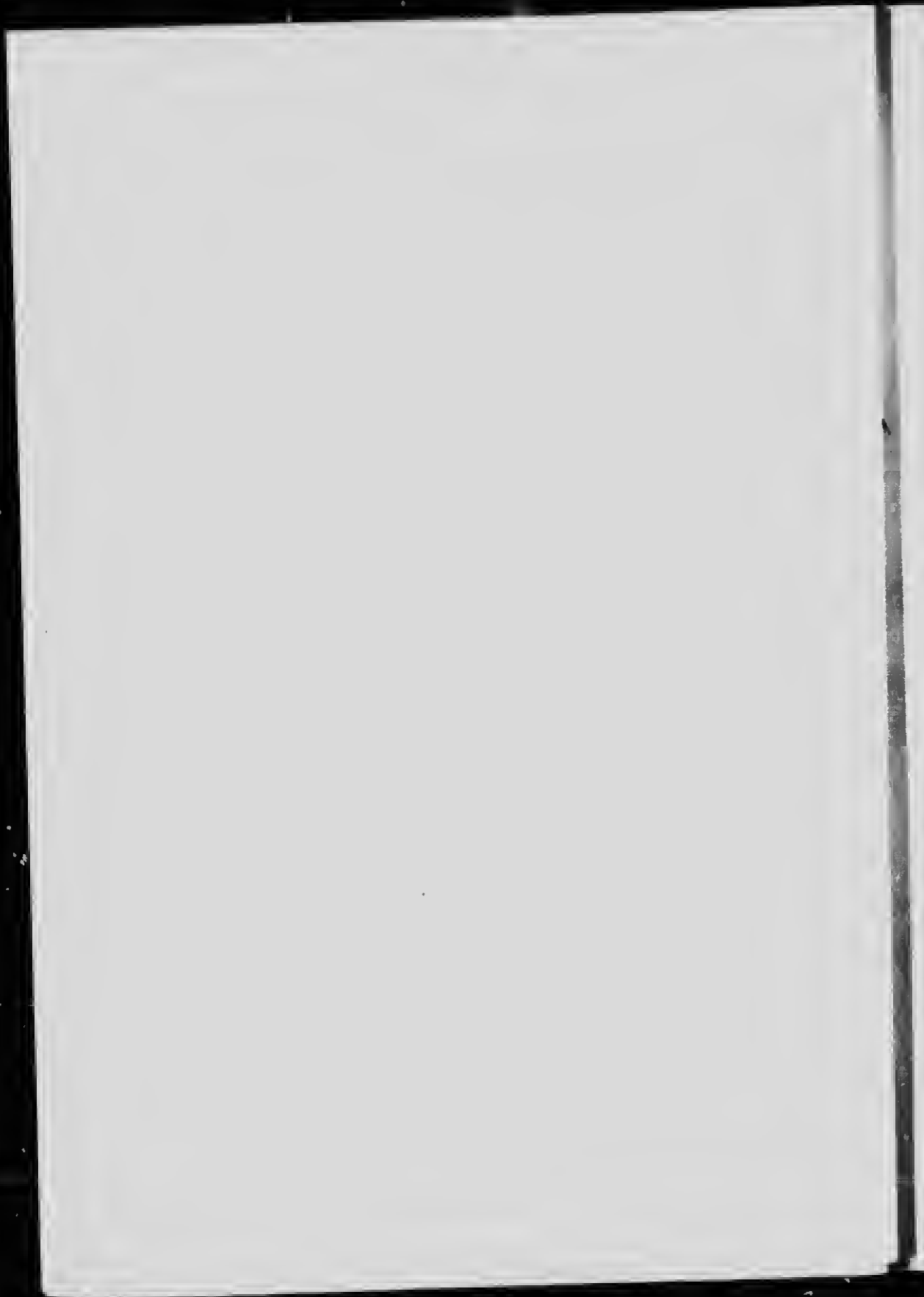
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FREEMASONRY IN THE PRESENT CRISIS

An Address Recently Delivered
Before the Victoria Lodge, No.
474 (G.R.C.), A.F. & A.M.,
Toronto, Ont., by William Ren-
wick Riddell, LL.D., etc., Justice
of the Supreme Court of Ontario.

The world is in the crucible and is making. Armageddon has come and the last great fight is in progress. Every nation must declare itself on one side or the other and must show its sympathies by word or by deed; every institution is on trial and must give an account of itself, of its principles, its precepts, its tendencies.

And Masonry cannot escape the test. I to-night apply the touchstone, use the test tube, the furnace, the balance—in a feeble and human way and with feeble and human powers, thoroughly recognizing my utter fallibility, I shall write upon her wall "Mene, mene, tekel"; and then, with you, consider whether "Upharsin" is to follow.

I have no great concern with the history of Masonry; much of it mythical as all unwritten history must be, much of it trivial as is the early history of every land and every ancient institution. No doubt, as man retains in his body and, indeed it may be, in his mind, the remains of organs, instincts, which belong to the earlier history of the species, as we still retain in our law, the remains, relics, of the customs of our ancestors, Celt, Saxon, Norman, or their masters, the Roman, whether military or clerical, so in Masonry are the remains, relics, of an earlier state, a state more wedded to mystery, fonder of ceremonial, charmed with ritual, addicted to the bizarre and the surprising. Were it not for our native conservatism, our dislike to "remove the ancient landmarks," there are matters in our

beloved Order which we might desire to see changed; there are oaths which could with advantage lose some of their gruesomeness, some of the "frightfulness" of the penalty invoked for breach of them; there are charges which are in some parts not only of doubtful or of no utility but even positively misleading in the light of modern discovery and thought; there is much which is based upon what we should now consider a wrong view of the aim and end of Masonry, its real significance as a worldwide organization and its true place in society. Much there is which we owe to the parent body adopting the views of William Preston, one of the most ardent of Masons, thoughtful of scholars and whole-souled lovers of his land and his brethren, but in many things not much in advance of his day—and that day was a century ago.

What I examine is Masonry of the present, the active, living organism with vigorous life and vigorous shoots, though amongst them may perchance be found an occasional dying branch or one already become decayed, a branch which the tree shot forth in its earlier days, which did its work for its period but which in the course of time has become withered and useless, it cumber the parent stock and might well be pruned away and cast into the fire. A tree is judged by its present not by its past, by the branches which live, not by the occasional one which is dead. The destruction of the dead would but add to the vigor and usefulness of the living, would but remove an obstacle to the fullest life and fullest development of a noble tree.

How, then, does our Order stand in the present in reference to the greatest of all struggles?

The murder of the Archduke at Sarajevo, of which at one time so much was made, is now almost forgotten; every one now knows, every

one now admits, that it was the merest of pretences for this terrible war. The war had been in preparation for a generation; both subjectively and objectively the German nation had been made ready for it. Commerce, diplomaey, religion itself had all been pressed into service—the German merchant was the German spy, the German diplomat or ambassador was (as he is) the centre of German intrigue, the German missionary was the German emissary to stir up hatred against the coming enemy amongst the non-Christian natives and those converted to his form of Christianity. The army was ready to the last button; canon, machine gun, rifle, all were prepared; uniform, equipment, field-hospital, field-kitchen, everywhere at hand; shot and shell in overwhelming abundance. All this was prudence, the foresight of a government which knew what it wanted, knew what was necessary for its purpose and had ample means to provide everything, however large and however costly.

The mind of the German was prepared—the monstrous doctrine of the superman, the being of the class above the rest of humanity, who might, indeed, be courteous and might, indeed, owe some duty to his equal, a member of his own class, but who owed neither duty nor courtesy to the ordinary human being—was taught and insisted upon in the schools and universities, in the press and in the pulpit of that central empire. That the German was the superman was of course; that the man of every nation was his inferior followed as a natural consequence.

Now every nation has its own "kultur" of which it is proud, its own self-esteem and self-conceit, its own idea of its superiority to any other. The Greek called all those who did not speak their language Barbaroi—barbarians, stammering, non-articulate, rude, uncultured, inferior creatures. The proud Roman

imitated the Greek, and the Italian his ancestor the Roman—all peoples have thought themselves better than all others. At least in modern times this self-esteem has been in most cases harmless, amusing, recognized as baseless by the best and highest of each people themselves. Prussia is the exception. It is not a pose, an affectation—the Prussian is thoroughly convinced, as sure as he is of his own existence, that he is the highest type of humanity which has ever come upon this earth; and that there can be no higher. All others are uncultured, utterly inferior, they need his guidance and governing hand—he must crucify them for their own good and for his own glory. Just as until a few generations ago most Southerners, and even now some Southerners, looked and look upon the negro, so the Prussian looked upon the Frenchman and the Russian—they had no rights which he was bound to respect and his will should be their law: if he had the power he would impose it upon them; if not, he must submit to the injustice of fate till a favorable opportunity should arise to assert his rights. A striking example of what Germany boasts as her best thought is to be found in a statement to a religious and supposedly Christian congregation. We read that

'Prof. Rheinhold Seeby, who teaches theology in the University of Berlin, said in Berlin Cathedral: "We do not hate our enemies. We obey the command of God, who tells us to love them. But we believe that in killing them, in putting them to suffering, in burning their houses, in invading their territories, we simply perform a work of charity. Divine love is seen everywhere in the world, but men have to suffer for their salvation. Human parents love their children, yet they chastise them. Germany loves other nations, and when she punishes them it is for their good."'

Freemasonry knows no distinction of race or color. Some organizations there are which debar from their membership those not of the Caucasian race, "white" men—that,

they have a perfect right to do. Every body of men have a right to decide who may and who may not join them, with whom they will and with whom they will not associate—that is their affair, and no one has any right to complain or to criticize. All men are born free and equal, but "equal" means "equal before the law"—and nothing more.

Masonry holds with the apostle that God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. She holds that man is man and that no people are so superior to all others that they may interfere with the rights of any other, that they may undertake to compel any other to regard and follow their views of conduct. Masonry rightly abhors the thought that one man may force his will upon another, and that any man may be prevented from being, becoming and remaining a free agent.

The Prussian conception, too, necessarily involves the utter submission of the individual to the State, the destruction of individuality, of individual opinion and judgment in all that pertains to the state. There must in their system needs be a governing class which rules, whose business it is to rule, responsible not to the ruled but to the Supreme Lord, who also is a necessary part of such a system.

The Prussian cannot understand that theory of citizenship which calls upon the citizen to decide as the right or wrong, the wisdom or unwisdom of laws, rules, regulations. The private individual has nothing to do with the laws but to obey them (as an English prelate years ago said of the English common people). All laws and regulations are provided by those whose business it is, Die Obrigkeit, which has its heavy hand on every institution and every person in the whole Empire.

The Prussian king, the German Kaiser, repudiates, as he must repudiate, the thought that he is re-

sponsible to his people. His autocratic ancestor nearly seventy years ago refused the emperorship of Germany when it was offered to him in the name of the people of Germany. He would not accept from their hands a crown which he must needs wear as coming from them and therefore to be taken away by them at their will. The Kaiser was foreordained to be emperor, to God alone he owes his throne, to God alone is he responsible, his people have no political rights which he is bound to respect, the constitution is not the work of the people but the gift of the king. It is not alone lèse majesté but it is blasphemy to raise the voice against the Lord's anointed. It is not without significance that Krause, the greatest of the German writers on Freemasonry, teaches that it is for the state to work out the perfection of the individual and of society.

In our system the individual does not exist for the State and as an instrument for the advancement of the State—the State exists for the individual and as an instrument for the advancement of the individual. True it is that during the present colossal war, Britain is more and more learning that in war the individual must give way to the needs of the State, that the forces of the State must be mobilized, systematized, nationalized to an extent in her history wholly unheard of. Heretofore the ordinary Englishman has looked upon a war as something to be paid for, something which did not interfere with his daily life, occupation, amusement—or anything but his pocket. The individualism which runs through our whole thought and system induced him to say, "Let those fight who are willing to fight, I shall pay." Even in that war which was thought so terrible in its time, when it seemed almost as though the sun of the Empire would go down in blood, when hundreds of our gallant Canadians were fight-

ing and suffering and dying on the plains of South Africa, and the mother country was, as she thought, straining every nerve—the ordinary Englishman, Scotsman, Irishman had not his usual routine of business study or pleasure dislocated. He paid a little more taxes, was a little less luxurious perhaps, but that was all.

In the face of the present peril, Britain knows her very life is at stake. It is not whether she will have an increase or decrease in her commerce, it is not whether her splendid career in Africa and elsewhere is to be checked, whether she, the greatest secular agency for good the world ever saw, is to be hampered in her beneficent work, but whether she is to live as a free nation. She is, then, awakened to the tremendous fact that now it is not a question of placing the bank account of the citizen at the command of the State, the man and woman must place themselves at its disposal with all their powers, physical and mental as well as financial.

But this is in time of war and in order "to fight the devil with fire." It is recognized that this is not the normal state, that it will not continue in its entirety when peace is confirmed as it must be some day. Britain may never again be the easygoing, trustful, complaisant nation, generous to competitors for the world's trade, thinking no evil of others, which she was—but so long as Britain is Britain, her subjects will be free, free to live their own lives without State compulsion or State supervision. Her subjects will insist that she exists for them, not they for her. It is not for the State but for the individual to work out salvation for individual and State.

So, too, our King owes his throne not to the grace of God (the official title to the contrary notwithstanding), but to an Act of Parliament—and that Act of Parliament might

be repealed at any time. In other words the power of the King comes from the people: the power of the Kaiser does not.

In Freemasonry, there are Masters and Grand Masters. None of these derives his position from God (except as we all are in the place God intends us to occupy). Every one of them is chosen by his fellows, he owes his position to his fellows and he is responsible to his fellows. He is not above the law, he is under the law and his acts have validity only if they are in accordance with the law.

Freemasonry does not make Freemasonry an end in itself. It recognizes that it exists for Freemasons and through Freemasons for the good of the world: and, recognizing that the State has its true place, a most important place, Freemasonry does not and never did acknowledge that the State has the right to the implicit and servile obedience of citizens, and certainly it never recognized and never will recognize that any mere man has been, is, or can be commissioned by God to impose obedience upon the world or any part of it or to govern it without its free and willing consent.

Masonry admits none superior to her own members; but at the same time she claims no superiority to others; nor does she antagonize, at least intentionally, any who are doing the right.

I have always thought it a calamity that fraternal relations were ever severed with the Grand Orient of France. I am not sure that the alleged reason was the real and only reason for the breaking of the brotherly tie—I think it was not. But however that may be, it is not too much to hope—and certainly it is not too much to wish—that the heroic valor of men of the Grand Orient on the bloody fields of France and Flanders may show that a French Freemason is a man—and

with a man, no Freemason can refuse to fellowship.

It is sometimes said that Masonry is antagonistic to the Church of Rome. If that were so, I should not be addressing you. There may be organizations whose objects or one of whose objects can fairly be said to be opposition to Roman Catholicism. Masonry is not one of these. She has no antipathy to the Catholic. She opens her doors wide to the Catholic. She ignores the opposition of the Church of Rome and refuses to allow herself to be placed in a false position. It may be that from the point of view of his Church, no Catholic can become a Freemason and remain a Catholic. I do not know,—that depends upon the rules of the Church with which I am not familiar; but from the point of view of his Order, a Freemason may become a Catholic and remain a Freemason—that depends upon the laws of Freemasonry, with which I am.

To return to our subject. As a necessary consequence of the Prussian theory, when the State composed of supermen desires anything, it must have it. No bargain previously made can be considered binding. Every treaty becomes a scrap of paper when it seems profitable for the State of supermen so to consider it. A Belgium standing in the way of a successful drive by Prussia is trodden under foot, ravaged, destroyed, its people tortured and butchered. The command "the innocent and righteous slay thou not" is laughed to scorn, and the unutterable meanness is perpetrated and gloried in, of blackening the character of the innocent that some sort of justification may be made to appear for all this devilishness. It needs not that I should remind Masons of the sanctity with which their institution clothes a promise, the tenderness it teaches towards the weak, the imperative command it gives to protect the innocent. No

true Freemason could have perpetrated the awful infamy of Belgium—an infamy which will stain the escutcheon of Germany till time shall be no more and which will weigh her down to the hell of the oppressor, the liar, the thief and the murderer.

And what of the conduct of Britain? Even Germany admitted at first, that Britain did all that she could to prevent the outbreak of war; until Germany saw that Britain would not play the part of the contract-breaker, would not assent to the infamous propositions of Germany, even Germany gave Britain high praise, and justly so. Of course, when the full extent of German treachery and ambition was disclosed and Britain took her stand for the right, the tune was changed and Germany tried to throw upon her some part if not the whole of the blame for the war. No one believes Germany—except a few Germans at home or abroad, if even they. Britain did all that was humanly possible, all that Germany would permit her to do to avoid this fearful conflict—but in vain. And when the voice of wronged Belgium came across the channel, imploring the fulfilment of the promise of assistance, Britain sprang to arms as one man to defend the innocent and succor the unfortunate.

With which cause does Masonry sympathize? With the "blond beast," trampling all in his way, sparing nor old nor young, nor man nor woman, nor priest nor layman—laying waste and destroying garden and field and church and cottage—levying a toll of blood and agony and death and worse than death—or the new St. George against fearful odds rushing to defend the innocent and destroy the monster? To ask the question is to answer it. And if actions speak louder than words, let the tens of thousands of dollars sent by the Masons of the Grand Register of Canada in this one

province of Ontario, to King Albert of Belgium, give answer in clarion note.

And our Canada, the brightest gem in Britannia's crown, the home of millions of free and happy subjects of Britain's King and her own, what more has she to say? Proudly she throws herself into the fray; loving peace, hating war—for with us war is no national sacrament—we are not ashamed to be at war but proud that we may take our share of the burden of supporting and defending democracy and justice. But the other day I had a letter from an American friend, in which he said: "I want to assure you of the sympathy which we Americans have for you Canadians in this titanic war." I sat down immediately and wrote: "I thank you for American sympathy for us in this war. Are you quite sure you do not mean *envy*?" I had no reply for some days, and then it came: "Yes, I do mean *envy*." What freeborn man but must exult in the chance to strike a blow for freedom? What red-blooded native or resident of this continent but must be proud to be allowed to assist the best in the other hemisphere in the defeat of the worst enemy to mankind either hemisphere has ever seen?

Canada has found her soul, never to lose it. She has voluntarily taken her stand, and come weal, come woe, she cannot be moved from it. Canadian Masons unanimously approve her course, and there can be no true Mason who does not. I do not need to tell Masons that Masonry stands now as she always did for freedom, political as well as social and religious.

And Masonry, too, loves peace, but she recognizes that in July, 1914, peace could not be the part of Britain or of Canada without the loss of honor. I do not mean the kind of honor which is supposed to flow from military prowess, from naval victory, from mighty armies

or crowded marts, but that honor which consists in freedom, in keeping pledged faith, in protecting the weak and the innocent. Peace was impossible unless Britain was willing to debase herself, fling aside as not worth retaining the splendid name she had made by centuries of effort, sometimes mistaken perhaps, but in the main for the right—unless she ignored her real position in the world won at such cost a hundred years ago. And now we hear rumors of peace. Long ago it was confidently prophesied by those who knew Germany that once she found her course checked, once the tide began to turn against her arms, she would begin to whimper about peace. She would express her desire for an honorable peace, and endeavor to throw the blame for a continuation of war upon the Allies and especially upon Britain. That prophecy has been fulfilled to the letter. Germany has failed in her tiger-spring, time is against her, her resources dwindle, her men die, she knows her end near—and just as foretold, she whines. Lying, she began the war, blaming Britain for it; lying, she desires to end the war, blaming Britain because she cannot end it in her own way.

It is idle crying peace, peace, when there is no peace. There can be no peace now. Were the Allies to consent to peace on any such terms as the Prussian desires, it would simply give time for him to gather munitions of war, raise further troops, increase his navy, and await a favorable opportunity to strike. He would at once by lying and fraud, stir up suspicion between the Allies, he would set one proud nation against another, for I say deliberately that every nation knows facts about all the other nations sufficient, if adroitly and unscrupulously used, to rouse angry passion and to justify any nation declaring war against any other if it is seeking for a pretext.

Now, when Britain and France,

Russia and Italy and Japan are at one, nothing can prevent Germany's overwhelming defeat. That would not be certain if France were detached or Russia, perhaps, nor if Italy or Japan were on Germany's side.

Another score of years, or two score, or more, the world would be watching the treacherous giant—whose word is as naught, whose heart is of stone, whose conscience is seared as with a hot iron—preparing, preparing, at first with obsequious and pretended friendliness and frankness, then becoming more and more confident, and as a consequence more and more insolent. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." The Prussian spirit is as natural and necessary to the Prussian as the dark skin to the Ethiopian or the spots to the leopard. The sword soon begins again to rattle in the scabbard, shining armor is again the glorified costume of Germania, Attila and his Huns again the object of admiration, held up as an example to follow. And when the right time comes, when "der Tag" is arrived, then the bound of the beast of prey, fearing nothing indeed, but sparing nothing, the superman run amok.

Better fight it out now once and for all. Better this generation suffer more and longer than that the next and the next and the next should share our Gethsemane. Some time the horrible spirit must be dominated, the spectre laid; and there is no time like the present. Freedom and democracy must eventually con-

quer and bear beneficent sway—let that, most devoutly to be wished for, come as soon as possible. Let us clear out of the way the fiend of militarism that the world may settle down to the ways of peace, every nation large and small may work out its own destiny without the eternal fear of brutal interference and domination by the power which has made itself the very nightmare of the world. So long as Germany is not beaten down in arms or so long as she does not repent her present state of mind, it will be impossible that the nations can "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into reaping hooks, that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more

Masonry free and democratic, cannot but uphold the hands of those who are bringing on a real peace, a lasting peace, based as it must be and can only be on the signal and utter defeat of the Hun—who desires neither freedom for other nor democracy for himself. "If Germany conquers nothing else in God's world matters."

Or if this be not the position of Masonry, "Mene, mene, tekcl, Upharsio": she is weighed in the balances and found wanting, and her kingdom must be divided and given to others more worthy.

This shall not be. Masonry will stand for the right, give of her means for the right, give of her sons for the right. Serene she will wait, caring for no wind or tide of sea, in the sure and certain hope that right will prevail.

