

KNIGHT HERMETIC PHILOSOPHER.

17th Degree.

DECORATIONS.—*A Lilac Sash with silver fringe, and six stars; upon it the Hermetic Cross, which is the Jewel of the degree. The Senate should be hung with black. In the centre is a brazier with spirits, to be lit at the proper time. The Officers should be clothed in black gowns.*

OPENING.

SUBLIME GRAND COMMANDER.—(*Strikes וו*.)

To order, Illustrious Knights. Most Learned Junior Knight Interpreter, your duty in this Senate of Knight Hermetic Philosophers?

JUNIOR KNIGHT.—To assist the Sublime Grand Commander and the Most Learned Senior Knight Interpreter, in the opening of the Senate.

S. G. C.—Your duty, Most Learned Senior Knight Interpreter, as a Knight Hermetic Philosopher?

SENIOR KNIGHT.—To guard our mysteries against all indiscretion.

S. G. C.—Let it be done.

S. Kt.—Illustrious Knight Marshal, you will please ascertain if we are prepared to guard against the indiscretions of the profane.

Marshal goes out and knocks on door, וו-וו-וו-ו.

GUARDIAN OF SANCTUARY.—Most Learned Senior Knight Interpreter, there is an alarm at the gate of our Sanctuary.

S. Kt.—Demand the cause.

G. of Sanc.—(*Strikes וו-וו-וו-ו. Opens door*)

Who disturbs the Sanctuary?

Kt. M.—(*Outside.*) It is the Knight Marshal, returning.

G. of Sanc.—It is the Illustrious Knight, our Marshal, Most Learned Senior Knight Interpreter.

S. Kt.—Admit the Illustrious Knight Marshal.

Kt. M.—(*Comes inside*) Most Learned Senior Knight-Interpreter, the vicinity of our Senate is secure from the prying eyes of the profane; none can overhear us.

S. Kt.—Sublime Grand Commander, the vicinity of our Senate is secure from the prying eyes of the profane; none can overhear our mysteries.

S. G. C.—Since it is so, satisfy yourself that all present are Knight Hermetic Philosophers.

S. Kt.—Illustrious Knight Marshal, approach the S. W. angle, and give me the password of this Grade. (*Done.*)

J. Kt.—Illustrious Knight of Introduction, approach the N.W. angle, and give me the password of this Grade. (*Done.*)

S. Kt.—You will receive the pass from the Knight Hermetic Philosophers in the South, Illustrious Knight Marshal.

Marshal does so, and goes up to Sublime Grand Commander.

J. Kt.—You will receive the pass from the Knight Hermetic Philosophers in the North, Illustrious Knight of Introduction.

Knight of Introduction does so, and goes up to Sublime Grand Commander.

S. G. C.—(*Strikes* ☸)

To order, Knight Hermetic Philosophers?

Kt. M.—Sublime Grand Commander, all in the South Valley have given the word.

KNIGHT OF INTRODUCTION.—Sublime Grand Commander, all in the North Valley have given the word.

S. G. C.—Advance, Illustrious Knights, and communicate the pass to me.

Knight Marshal and Knight of Introduction advance and give the pass to Sublime Grand Commander.

S. G. C.—(*Strikes 1. All sit.*) Most Learned Junior Knight Interpreter, at what hour do the labours of the Knight Hermetic Philosophers commence?

J. Kt.—Sublime Grand Commander, the Work is always in progress.

S. G. C.—Why, Most Learned Junior Knight Interpreter?

J. Kt.—Because the Work to which the Knight Hermetic Philosophers are devoted, requires the perpetual action of his powers, and suffers no interruption but during the moments claimed by the infirmities of created nature.

S. G. C.—Most Learned Senior Knight Interpreter, what are the moments that our traditions allow for the repose of a Knight Hermetic Philosopher?

S. Kt.—The hours of perfect darkness.

S. G. C.—At what hour is the Work resumed, Most Learned Junior Knight-Interpreter?

J. Kt.—At the first appearance of light.

S. G. C.—What hour is it, Most Learned Senior Knight Interpreter?

S. Kt.—The ORIENT brightens; it is the hour for labour.

S. G. C.—(*Strikes 3. All rise.*) As it is the hour for the commencement of our labour, join me, Illustrious Knights, in prayer to T.S.A.O.T.U., to bless our Work and make it conformable to His law.

All kneel and face the East.

PRAYER.

Sovereign Master of Immensity, whose throne is in the heavens, receive the homage of our admiration and worship. Thou causest the star of the day and the soft messenger of night to mark the seasons, and to regulate the labours of mortals. We prostrate ourselves before the majesty and wisdom of Thine eternal laws; we invoke Thy name, for we are Thy children. Bless our work; dispel the darkness of our souls; continue to shield us with Thy protecting hand and to guide us unceasingly towards good, the perfection of which resides in Thee.

ALL.—Glory to Thee, O Lord! Glory to Thy name!
Glory to Thy works!

S. G. C.—(*Strikes 1. All resume stations.*) Your station in the Senate, Illustrious Knight-Guardian of the Sanctuary?

GUARDIAN OF SANCTUARY.—At the door of the Senate, Sublime Grand Commander; to deliver your orders to the Sentinel who guards our sacred portals. I receive the pass from the Illustrious Knights who enter, after having seen them in proper regalia and duly announced.

S. G. C.—Illustrious Knight Sword Bearer, your place in the Senate?

SWORD BEARER.—In the South Valley, near the Learned Senior Knight Interpreter; and I assist the Knight Captain of the Guard, and am always ready to protect our mysteries, with the Glaive of Honour, against the profane.

S. G. C.—Illustrious Knight Standard Bearer, your place?

STANDARD BEARER.—In the North Valley, near the Learned Junior Knight Interpreter; and I unfold the glorious Standard of our Order, that under its sacred folds the Neophyte may, with confidence, invoke the blessing of T.S.A.O.T.U., when vowing fidelity to our venerated Rite.

S. G. C.—Your place in the Senate, Illustrious Knight Captain of the Guard?

CAPTAIN OF GUARD.—Near the Most Learned Junior Knight Interpreter; to see that the Hermetic Philosophers are at their respective posts; and to make the necessary proclamation at the reception of a Neophyte.

S. G. C.—Illustrious Knight of Introduction, your place in the Senate?

KNIGHT OF INTRODUCTION.—In the South Valley, near the Knight of Finance; I prepare the Neophyte, whose intelligence urges him to knock for admission into our Temples, there to find the intellectual treasures that the Initiate delights to study, and accompany him in search of light in his various journeys toward truth and perfection.

S. G. C.—Illustrious Knight Marshal, what is your allotted duty for the good of the Senate?

Kt. M.—Sublime Grand Commander, it is to obey your orders; to make the responses for the Neophytes; to cheer them on their arduous journeys, that with my assistance they may reach in safety the perfection of Masonic truth.

S. G. C.—Illustrious Knight of Eloquence, your station?

KNIGHT OF ELOQUENCE.—On your right hand, Sublime Grand Commander, as the Orator of our beloved

Masonic rite to faithfully instruct the brethren that happiness may be attained; and to see that the Sacred Book of Laws is duly opened and surmounted with the Sword of Honour and the Myrtle of Initiation.

S. G. C.—Your duty, illustrious Knight Archivist?

KNIGHT ARCHIVIST.—To keep a clear copy of the transactions for the information of the Mystic Temple, 32nd Degree, of the Province of [...], and the Sovereign Sanctuary; to faithfully preserve the rituals; attach the Seal to all documents of the Senate, and to read the Balustre at the opening of the work.

S. G. C.—Your duty, illustrious Knight of Finance?

KNIGHT OF FINANCE.—To receive all funds due to this Senate from the Illustrious Knight Recorder, giving my receipt for the same, to pay them out upon the order of the Sublime Grand Commander, and to use my influence for the prosperity of our Antient and Primitive Rite.

S. G. C.—Your duty, illustrious Knight Recorder?

KNIGHT RECORDER.—To engrave the proceedings of this Senate; to receive all money due, and pay it over to the Illustrious Knight of Finance, taking his receipt for it.

S. G. C.—Most Learned Junior Knight Interpreter, why do you preside in the North West of the Senate?

J. Kt.—That I may defend the Order against the ignorant who revile it; and assist the brethren in establishing an equality of love between those whom human weakness has caused to err.

S. G. C.—Most Learned Senior Knight Interpreter, why is your place at the South West of the Senate?

S. Kt.—That I may assist in the inspection and regulation of the work; aid the Sublime Grand Commander in his duties; return good for evil, that the enemies of the Order may be changed to good and faithful brethren.

S. G. C.—The Sublime Grand Commander's place?

S. Kt.—In the East, to watch the Work, that it be perfectly executed, and fill the Senate with Light and Truth.

S. G. C.—Thanks, Illustrious Philosophers. You will now join in singing the Ode.

ODE. (Air: *Old Hundredth*.)

Where'er the Orien spreads its light;
Where'er our Brethren feel its power,
May they in harmony unite;
In zeal improve each working hour.

Let friendship and fraternity,
Their strengthening influence give;
That in close bonds of union, we,
May prosper whilst we live.

So Brethren of the Mystic tie,
Our strength and courage all are one;
As tolerant is the All-seeing Eye,
In tolerance let our work be done.

Thus to his work each faithful heart,
Gives all his intellectual power,
In labour due, each bears a part;
Brothers, it is the working hour.

S. G. C.—(*Strikes* ۞.)

To Order, Illustrious Knights, observe the Orient and attend to giving the S. *17*. Accordingly, in the name of the Sublime Architect of the Universe and under the auspices of the Sovereign Sanctuary of Antient and Primitive Masonry, in and for Great

Britain and Ireland, I declare the labours of this Senate in activity on the Seventeenth Degree of Masonry, Knight Hermetic Philosopher, for the propagation of Wisdom, Science and Truth. Illustrious Knight of Eloquence, attend at the Altar and unfold the Sacred Book of Laws. Illustrious Knight Guardian of the Sanctuary, inform the Sentinel that the Senate is opened, and if there are any visiting Knights, invite them to participate in our labours.

The Orator opens the Bible and places the Sword and Myrtle on it. Guardian of Sanctuary does as instructed.

Illustrious Knight Archivist, you will now read the graven tablets of the last meeting. (*Archivist does so.*)

RECEPTION.

The Knight of Introduction prepares the Neophyte by divesting him of his upper garments, and placing over his eyes a veil of dark gauze; he then strikes וווו-וווו-ו on the door.

G. of Sanc.—(*To Senior Knight.*) An alarm at the gate of our Philosophical Academy, Most Learned Senior Knight Interpreter.

S. Kt.—Illustrious Knight Marshal, attend to it.

Kt. M.—(*Strikes ו on door; opens and asks*) What do you desire?

Kt. of Int.—(*Outside*) To be admitted into your Academy, if you deem me worthy.

Kt. M.—Have you made sufficient progress in the study of the preceding degrees?

Kt. of Int.—I have.

Kt. M.—Give me the Sign and Word of Knight Sage of Truth. (*This is done.*)

Enter this Philosophical Academy.

Music. Neophyte is brought in.

S. G. C.—I shall now proceed to test the progress which you. have made in your study of the hidden mysteries of Nature and Science. If you answer satisfactorily you will be allowed to proceed in your initiation ; but if you are proved guilty of inattention to our Mysteries, we shall remand you back that you may undergo further preparation and instruction.

Tell me what qualities were ascribed by our venerated Patriarchs to the seven Planets?

NEOPHYTE.—(*Assisted by Marshal.*) Saturn, cold and dry; Jupiter, warm and moist; Mars, hot and dry; Sun, fiery and dry; Venus, moist and warm; Mercury, warm and dry; Moon, cold, moist and changing.

S. G. C.—In the Pythagorean doctrine the system of numbers resolved the problem of cosmogony. This science of numbers represented not only the arithmetical qualities, but all grandeur, all proportion. By it we ought to arrive at the discovery of the principle of things, which, in our times, is called the absolute, or unity. The mind of Deity, like the mind of man, is essentially geometrical, and the system of mathematics is found to prevail throughout all nature, therefore an enquiry into mathematics is a research into the mind of Deity. What is the power of numbers?

Kt. M.—(*For Neophyte*) Unity, or ONE, having no parts is not so much a number as the principle generator; it is the symbol of identity, existence and general harmony; it is, said Pythagoras, the essential attribute, the sublime character, the seal even of Divinity. Binary, is the symbol of diversity, inequality, division, or separation, man and woman, representing matter, or the passive

principle. Ternary, image of the Supreme Being, uniting in itself the properties of the TWO first numbers. To the Pythagoreans it represented not only the surface but the principle of the formation of bodies. It applies to the THREE chemical principles, which give animation to the whole world, Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury, belonging to the THREE kingdoms of Nature,—vegetable, mineral, and animal; Spirit, Soul and Body; Birth, Existence, and Death; Dryness, Humidity, and Putrefaction; from all times the ancients held the Ternary in great respect.

The number FOUR is that by which the ancient people represented nature as the number of corporiety; it is found in time and space; there are FOUR Cardinal points, FOUR Seasons, and FOUR Elements. The Gnostics claimed that all the edifice of their science reposed upon a square of which the angles were Sege (silence), Hathos (profundity), Nous (intelligence), and Aletheia (truth).

The number FIVE was considered as a mystic number, composed of the Binary and Ternary, and symbolises the vital essence, the animating spirit. As the Pentalpha, it is an emblem of fellowship.

The number SIX was in the ancient mysteries a striking emblem of nature,—North, East, South, West, the Zenith, and Nadir. The Double Triangle of six points, is the emblem of the sentence of Hermes, who said: "That which is below is like that which is above"; this figure is emblematic of Deity.

The number SEVEN, according to the Sages, governed the Universe, and was called the perfect number.

The Egyptians considered it as the symbol of life, and Plato says that the soul of the world was generated out of it. It represents the seven eternal principles of nature, attraction, repulsion, circulation, light, heat, sound, and corporiety. It recalls the seven planets, seven celestial spheres, seven primary colours, the seven harmonic tones, seven days of the week, seven periods of creation, and the seven cosmogonical representations of the Egyptians, which resolved themselves into eight in the soul of the world.

The number EIGHT is a symbol of perfection, and its figure indicates the perpetual and regular course of the Universe, it is the first cube. The Gnostic Ogdoade, was eight stars, which replaced the eight Cabiri of Samothrace, the eight Egyptian and Phœnician principles, the eight gods of Zenocrates, and the eight angles of the Cubic Stone.

The number NINE was regarded by the Sages with veneration for reasons already given; being composed of three times three, it refers to the perfection of the spheres, and each of the elements constituting our body is ternary.

The number TEN is most Sublime, as it contains the monad or unity which created all things, with the 0 or symbol of chaos, out of which the world was formed, and it was the foundation of the Hebrew Sephiroth. It comprehends life and nothingness, power and strength, the beginning and end of the divine science.

The number ELEVEN was considered an omen of defeat and death.

The number TWELVE alludes to the twelve months, and the twelve signs of the Zodiac, expressing the twelve operations of nature, spiritually and materially.

S. G. C.—Conduct the Neophyte to the altar.

Leads Neophyte to the altar. Neophyte kneels.

Std. Br.—(*Holds banner over him.*) Brother, kneel beneath the glorious folds of the refulgent banner of the Bite, and re-attest your fidelity to the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Masonry.

S. G. C.—(*Strikes ☐. All rise.*) Let the triangle be formed, illustrious Knight Hermetic Philosophers. (*Done.*)

To the glory of the Sublime Architect of the Universe. In the name of the Sovereign Sanctuary of Antient and Primitive Masonry, in and for Great Britain and Ireland. Salutation on all points of the Triangle. Respect to the Order.

I, A.B., in the presence of the Sublime Architect of the Universe, and this Academy of Illustrious Hermetic Philosophers, renew all my former obligations to the Antient and Primitive Bite of Masonry, and should I knowingly violate my oath, I do most solemnly pray that each and every member of the Rite will look on me with scorn and disgust, as without honour or faith; a man to be despised, unworthy of trust or confidence, as a degraded perjurer. May I crawl as a reptile, unworthy to look for hope, respect, or condolence from all honourable men and brothers of our venerated Rite, should I be so vile as to break this my solemn oath; and may T.S.A.O.T.U. be my help.

ALL.—Amen! Amen!! So mote it be!!!

The Gauze Veil is now removed. The Brazier is lighted.

S. G. C.—I will now invest you with the insignia of your rank. I also entrust you with the Signs and Words of the degree of Knight Hermetic Philosopher. (*Done.*)

I congratulate you upon the high Masonic dignity you have received. Illustrious Knight Captain of the Guard, you will now make the usual proclamation.

C. of G.—(*Gives the Accolade, saying*) To the Glory of the Sublime Architect of the Universe. In the name of the Sovereign Sanctuary of Antient and Primitive Masonry, in and for Great Britain and Ireland. Salutation on all points of the Triangle. Respect to the Order.

Arise, Knight Hermetic Philosopher, which I now proclaim you, and I call upon all present to recognise you in your quality as such, and to render you aid and protection in case of need.

S. G. C.—Join me, Illustrious Knights, in saluting our new made Knight. (*Together: battery וויוו-ויוו-ו. S. G. C. strikes ו. All are seated.*) You will now pass the Sign, Words, and Battery, with the Illustrious Junior and Senior Knights Interpreters, and then return to the Orient for further instruction.

Neophyte is lead to the N. W., and S. W., gives Word, &c., and returns to the East.

S. G. C.—I will now, Illustrious Knight Hermetic Philosopher, explain to you the Hermetic Cross. The Cross represents the tree of science, and mystically corresponds with the secret teachings of the high mysteries, and contains all the sacred numbers: it is the base of Geometry. This symbol existed in the Isle of Cazumel, and on the coast of Yucatan, nearly four

thousand. years before Christ; and was revered as the divinity of rain, allegorical of fertility.

Quetzalcoatl, the legislator of the Indians, was represented in a robe with crosses. It was used anciently to indicate the roads. It was consecrated in China to the adoration of the Sublime Architect of the Universe. The Priests of Mythras made the sign of the T Cross upon the forehead of the initiates, and a similar sign prevails among the Indian Brahmins in touching the five points of the face. Nature often adopts the cruciform in its mysterious operations.

In Northern Asia, and in some parts of America have been found large stones in the form of a Cross, adored by the ancient people. Many mythological ruins in Greece have had the same form.

In Egypt the Thos (land-marks), were often in wood, and in the shape of a Cross. On the transverse pieces were inscriptions relative to science and the arts; and to multiply those inscriptions, they sometimes placed two or three cross-pieces, which made double or triple Crosses, which are frequently seen on ancient monuments, as well as single crosses; again it is considered as the key of the Nile, to which river that country owes its fertility. We have seen how general was the veneration for this sign, with different motives.

It is to be remarked, with as much pleasure as interest, how natural good sense knew, 'when science was but little advanced, how to represent by so simple a sign as two sticks laid across at right angles, the course of the sun and the progress of the seasons. It is not astonishing that to fix better the attention of the people

on those great phenomena to which we owe the productions of the earth, and to excite them to a pious gratitude towards their author, this representative sign was made a religious symbol.

The Red Cross is the symbol of the life to come; the origin of this Cross is of the highest antiquity.

The horizontal line represents the Equator, and the vertical, the Meridian; we have thus four extremities of the Equator, and the two solstices of Summer and Winter at those of the meridian; consequently, the four seasons. By analogy, they unite to Spring, youth and morning; to Summer, ripe age and noon; to Autumn, age and evening; and to Winter, death and night.

The Alchymists added to those four points, which they called the four generative elements, Fire, Air, Earth and Water, which they expressed by conventional signs. They constructed a diagram of a circle enclosing a square, within which was a triangle containing a point from which proceeded two lines, and inscribed it thus:— From the first great cause sprang two contraries, from these the three principles, and the four elements, which are resolvable into the quintessence; so that as all things arise from one fixed thing, all matter is reduceable to the dual male and female principle, symbolically termed the sun and moon.

To form our cross commence by tracing a circle of three hundred and sixty degrees, in which design a cross of twelve equal squares, which represent the the solar year; one-half, in ascending from January to the end of June, indicates the progression of the days; and the other half, July to the end of December, the

declination of the sun. This cross essentially marks the line of the meridian from South to North, and indicates at the same time the strong heat of Summer, in opposition to the frosts of Winter.

A horizontal line traverses the entire world from East to West, and shows us equal days and nights in the zone which it divides; this line is called the Equator.

In casting the eye of imagination over the four quarters of the globe we discover in this cross the principle of life, which is the Air, or the East, the beginning of vegetation, or Spring, which announces to us the awakening of Nature; infancy should be placed on this side, for man finds himself in the Spring of life, as the horizon of morning indicates the appearance of day in this quarter of the world, and the sun rising in the East enriches it with its beneficent rays.

Let us now look to the top of the cross; we shall find there fire, which is the soul of life, according to many philosophers, who symbolised by this element the Creator of the Universe. The Summer, by its great heat, characterizes the second part of the year.

Man, in adult age, is distinguished by the desire of reproduction of his kind, and by the strength of his physical faculties.—Noon is naturally found in this part of the cross, because the sun is at its highest point, which makes the meridian.

If we look at the West, we shall find that that part of the world contains more atmospheric humidity. Autumn, which is the third season of the year, shows us that all the productions of the earth have arrived at their maturity. Man, in this division of the cross, is placed in

his decline, which we denominate age—third period of life—that in which he should live happy, if he has known how to profit by the preceding years of his labour. This division of the cross indicates also that the sun descends under the horizon of night in the West; it is the time when man prepares himself for rest.

In the North is found the earth, as being the most material, and consequently the heaviest portion; it is also the reason why we place it at the bottom. Winter, when all is frozen from its distance from the sun, produces the fourth season of the year, when all nature seems to be completely inert. The portion of the globe to the North is found to be less peopled than the other portions of the earth, because it is an almost continual winter. In this part of the cross is indicated the death to which each creature is obliged to submit.

Man, as well as animals, returns to the ground; all of matter is decomposed to be reproduced under other forms, and is annihilated by turns, according to the order of Divinity and Nature. In the bottom of the cross, is the instant of sleep or night; which makes the fourth part of the day, composed of twenty-four hours.

In the centre of the cross is found the Flaming Star, with a Delta in the middle bearing in its centre the simple, but great character of UNUS DEUS, ONE GOD!—the point signifying the Universe, which is governed by invariable rules.

The laws are indicated by twelve squares, which bear the names of the months, composing the Solar Year. Outside of this cross there is another, announcing the lunar months of twenty-eight days, two hours,

seventeen minutes and thirty-six seconds, which the Mahomedans still follow; their year is therefore composed of thirteen lunar months, which gives the same number of days as those of the solar year, which is three hundred and sixty-five days, forty-eight minutes and forty-eight seconds. The Lunar Cross is called the Hammer Cross.

The Alchymists of the middle ages wore a ring with the initials I.A.A.T.—*Ignis, Aqua, Aer, Terra*,—Fire, Water, Air, Earth. The Hebrew words for the four elements, were—

Iammim—Water;

Nour—Fire;

Rouahh—Air;

Iabescheh—Earth.

Of these four letters were the following aphorisms

I. "*Ignem naturæ regerando integrat.*"

One restores the fire of Nature by regenerating it.

N. "*Ignе natura renovatur integra.*"

Nature is entirely renewed by fire.

R. "*Ignе nitrium roris invenitur.*"

The dew of nitre is found by fire.

I. "*Indifesso nusu repellanus ignorantiam*"

Repel ignorance by indefatigable efforts.

Alchemy was a branch of learning cultivated by the Egyptian priests and the reduction of the golden calf to powder by Moses is instanced by the Adepts as evidence of his ability in their science, the study of which was general in the East and carried thence by the Arabs to Spain and spread by the Templars. The brotherhood adopted a symbolical language of its own

in order to conceal its secrets under a Ceremonial Rite and binding oath, such as was common amongst the learned at the time, and also to protect the professors from persecution as sorcerers. In Germany a legend was propagated that the order derived its principles from Christian Rosencreutz who was born in 1387 and travelled to the East. The doctrine of the order was established on three principles: first, the perfectionment of man that he may approach the divinity by his virtues; second, the study of the occult virtues of science; third, the study of the secrets of nature, mystic theology, the sacred names of God, of angels, the elements, the seven planets known to the ancients. Their emblems were the sun, moon, double triangles, the rose. As we have already given you in our ceremonials an outline of the hermetic philosophy, you are now prepared to extend your enquiries into the three worlds termed by them the elementary, intellectual and angelic, which correspond in some measure with the three series into which our Rite is divided in the grades of Chapter, Senate and Council.

S.G.C.—(*Strikes 7. All seated.*) You will now listen to the Lecture.

*The Neophyte is seated. The following questions are put by the Sublime Grand Commander and answered by the Senior Knight Interpreter, and may be extended from the Lectures.*¹⁴

Q.—Illustrious Senior Knight Interpreter, what is the first study of an Hermetic Philosopher?

A.—The research of the operations of Nature.

Q.—What idea can you give me of Nature?

¹⁴ [See *Lectures of a Chapter, Senate and Council.*]

A.—It is invisible, though it acts visibly, for it is but a volatile spirit, which does its office in the body, and which is animated by the Universal Spirit which we know in common Masonry, under the respected emblem of the Flaming Star.

Q.—What does it positively represent?

A.—The divine breath, the central and universal fire which vivifies all that exists.

Q.—What qualities should the scrutinizers of Nature possess?

A.—They should be those of nature itself; that is to say, simple, patient and constant; these are the essential characters which distinguish good Masons.

Q.—What is the seed or germ of each thing?

A.—The most perfect decoction of the thing itself.

Q.—Where is it contained?

A.—In the four elements.

Q.—What engenders it?

A.—The four elements, by the will of the Supreme Being and the imagination of Nature.

Q.—What signifies the Flaming Star?

A.—It is an emblem of the Divine fire, of the life-giving light, which renews unceasingly, of the inexhaustible benevolence of the divine source, which from the centre of the universe gives it its laws, rules the course of the stars, pours fertility upon the earth, and is prodigal of ornament, in order that its children may be happy.

Q.—What signifies Masonically the 12 signs of the Zodiac?

A.—The Poets of antiquity styled them the 12 temples of the sun, because in its annual revolution, it seemed to

overrun these 12 signs, one each month, or three each season in its journey; it arrives periodically upon each branch of the Mystic Cross; it is for this reason that the four divisions indicate the four principles of Solary epochs, equinoctial and solstitial. They were hieroglyphical emblems, fixed upon the celestial atlas by the ancient hierophants, of which the meaning was known only to the initiates.

S. G. C.—Thanks, Illustrious Senior Knight Interpreter.

After the details which have been given to you I consider it my duty to impress upon you that, conformably to our ritual there has always existed in the universe, fixity and regularity. God being, there was necessarily a basis for him to be, to live and to act; this life, this action, was necessary before there could be a result. In whatever part there has been an intelligent being, traces of his intelligence are necessarily found. And we may note above all, that ever since intelligence existed there has been increased development in all creation, which is an organisation of matter; and all which exists to-day differs from what was before it, as the present will, in turn, receive alteration. Of all those things which are composed of the four elements fashioned by the hands of the Supreme Being, the stars, suns and systems, nothing is imperishable or constituted for eternity. Thus the father of growth and progress, T.S.A.O.T.U., has willed that as every world had a commencement, so also it will have an end; He only is eternal.

We will look at the question locally, in the region embraced by our senses, in the stars which surround

and enlighten us, and try to penetrate to the origin of things. In the state of Chaos, it is probable that the substance was not compact, that it was a mixture, or single element which comprised within it four elements, submitted successively to vital force, the creative spirit determining the points for concentrated action. If there was a first nation or a first amongst beings, there was doubtless a first born amongst the multitude of stars which roll over our heads.

We will now inquire whether matter has a limit. To this we answer, yes, in its weight and volume, which neither augments nor diminishes; but no, in its extension which is bounded only by immensity, in which it can delate infinitely. Matter then exists everywhere in space, a void nowhere, or if such void exists it is only partially and for a time. The creative spirit finds matter everywhere, for its organising labour, in which to individualise itself and perform a work. The faculty or will of this spirit, being continuous, each instant sees newly created worlds, and if eternity is there to produce them there is immensity of space to contain the production. In proportion, as the organizing principle operates the new worlds concentrate by their inherent attraction; the confused chaotic matter separates, and the lighter parts float, whilst the heavier sinks to form the hard base or centre, whilst the fluids, composed of air, water, fire, and earth, delated to excess, form the four distinct elements.

The first of the elements to rise from the mass should be fire, and it is perhaps that which produces the separation of the others; then follow air and water; the

solid mass was not at the beginning such as it is to-day; for the constituent elements, as they now are, were produced by the application of heat and the modification of cold. The first ray of warmth, or perhaps the first electrical spark, penetrates the mass in space, producing movement and confusion, fermentation, boiling, and dissolution. At times, stars explode, or fly off like the breaking of a revolving millstone, or they dilate into impalpable essence; we have, in this way, a series of planets arising from a pulverised or broken-up star of greater magnitude. These fragmentary agglomerations, frozen or burning, rounded by rotatory movement, cooled by immobility, or warmed by the shock, become, ere long, fitted to serve as the basis of life; that is to say for the soul or vital essence to constitute organic forms, suited to act upon the same matter.

The cooling of a star, which loses the heat proper to it, or its internal caloric, is sometimes arrested by another in its neighbourhood which commences an attraction with it, for these spheres aid or retard each other, in proportion as they are extinguished wholly or in part; fire can no more produce annihilation than the other elements, it only changes the form, place, action, or aliment. Warmth and light appear to be but one and the same thing; the fire of the sun is identical with that of the earth; and the combustion which we can produce by means of a spark drawn from flint is absolutely the same as that given out by a burning glass when it is used to concentrate the sun's rays. You will now listen to the discourse of this degree.

DISCOURSE.

Brother, the Antient and Primitive Rite of Masonry is founded on Religion, Science, Knowledge, and Virtue. Sweet Religion unfolds to man his brilliant destiny; it occupies his mind with its promises; it is a protector which guides him amid perils; it shows the spirit of loved ones hovering around him; applauding his good deeds, and rejoicing when he shuns the path of passion or of crime. It supports him as he falters amidst precipices; and amid the darkness of ignorance and error, it consoles him who is dying upon the bed of pain. If man, the monarch of nature, is loaded with chains, religion breaks them; her sublime inspirations elevate him even to the Deity.

This is exemplified in the allegorical discourse of this degree.

It was Cain, the first born of Adam, who gave to the Angel of Death his first prey. Cain killed his brother, but the soul of the victim flew to the celestial dwelling, where it was thus challenged by the Great Eternal:

“Mortal, whence comest thou? Thou hast not yet been summoned!”

“I come,” answered Abel, “because thy work is incomplete. Thou gavest man an organized intelligence. At the moment when thou gavest him breath, thou gavest him place over the rest of creation. This being, *par excellence*, is thy interpreter and thy delegate upon earth; and thou hast subjected him to the eternal laws of matter, and made him the most helpless of all thy creatures, over whom he exercises supremacy. Thou hast neither given him the strength of the lion, the stature of the elephant, the agility of the gazelle, the dexterity of the ape, the

piercing sight of the eagle, the splendour of the peacock, nor the melodious voice of the nightingale.”

“Man and matter,” replied God, “thy complaint is unjust. I have bestowed upon thee three eminent gifts, which more than recompense thee for thy natural feebleness, and given thee empire over all the creatures thou hast mentioned. I have given thee intelligence, to invent, language, that thou shouldst associate with thy fellow man; hands to execute; whilst the animals remain circumscribed within the limits of their respective organizations, slaves of a blind instinct. Thou alone hast received the eminent gift of power to know thyself, to perfect thy nature, and to measure the extent of thy rights and duties. Man, thy complaint is unjust; thou hast sought and thou hast found the divine sciences. Thou hast asked, and I have given thee bread for mind as well as body, in the mysterious laws of nature. Thou hast knocked, and I have opened unto thee the door of eternal happiness, whence thou hast been able to contemplate my work—the Creation! Plunge, then, oh, mortal, thy regard into chaos; cross these thick darknesses, and thou shalt be initiated, which is to say, thou shalt learn the first cause and the second.”

Thus spake the Almighty, and placing his finger upon the forehead of the Neophyte, he permitted him to see the mysteries of the eternal work.

The first object which struck the sight of the new initiate, was the still virgin earth, red with blood, newly spilled. From the black and smoking spot arose a fetid vapour, which, condensing in the air, gradually assumed the form of a gigantic figure, covered with a black veil; it

was Repentance just brought forth by Crime, and there Cain, the fratricidal Cain, prostrate upon the earth, his bosom torn by remorse, and striking his breast, raised his eyes, red with weeping, towards the skies, henceforth the immortal dwelling place of his victim. But God was inexorable to his supplications.

At this withering sight, Abel, moved by the most generous pity, could not restrain his tears, but addressing the All-powerful Being, to whom all hearts are open, said: "Eternal Benefactor of Nature, pardon for my brother, or let me redescend to the land of suffering and console him."

At this touching prayer, all the celestial harmony of heaven broke forth; all the heavenly chorus, which surrounds the throne of the Eternal, saluted Abel; all creation gave forth the hymns of mercy and forgiveness; and God looked kindly upon the sinner, and upon the Elect. This benevolent and refulgent look, no mortal can depict; but the just, like Abel, will comprehend it.

This magnificent allegory, of such majestic simplicity, is perfectly Masonic ; have we not, for one of our emblems, the trowel; and does not the trowel hide, repair, and reconstruct what vice and crime would sometimes destroy? Neither can we assign a more noble origin to PARDON AND REPENTANCE.

CLOSING.

S. G. C.—Illustrious Knight Recorder, you will please read the graven tablets of this day's work.

Knight Recorder reads the minutes.

S. G. C.—(Strikes יי.) Illustrious Knight Guardian of the Sanctuary, you will now call upon all present that each

member may have an opportunity to contribute something for the aid of the unfortunate.

Done. S.G.C. strikes ❧

If any Illustrious Knight has a proposition to bring forward for the benefit of this Senate and our Antient and Primitive Bite, now is the time to speak.

Most Learned Senior Knight Interpreter, at what hour do the Hermetic Philosophers suspend their labours?

S. Kt.—When the sun disappears from the azure vault of heaven.

S. G. C.—What hour is it, Most Learned Junior Knight Interpreter?

J. Kt.—The sun is at its inferior meridian, and it is time for the suspension of our work.

S. G. C.—As it is the hour of rest and perfect darkness, join me, Illustrious Knight Hermetic Philosophers, in prayer to T.S.A.O.T.U., that He may continue to bless us, our labours, and our Venerated Rite.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, Father of Immensity, who, with a word, hast created the world, and whose look gives Life to every thing that breathes, we thank Thee for the favours which Thou hast deigned to shed over us this day. Thine is the Glory of all that has been done. Continue to extend over us Thy Protecting Hand, and to direct us towards that Good whereof all Perfection resides in Thee.

ALL.—Glory to Thee, O Lord! Glory to thy Name!
Glory to Thy Works!

S. G. C.—The illustrious Knights will join in singing the closing ode.

The Orient pales its light,
And darkness gathers round;
So let the lonely hours of night
In Faith and Hope abound.
Our labours now are at a close,
Rest calmly with the night,
And with your soft and sweet repose
Be visions fair and light.

S. G. C.—(*Strikes* 𐄂𐄂.) To order, Illustrious Knights, observe the Orient and attend to giving the S. *17*. Accordingly, in the name of T.S.A.O.T.U., and under the auspices of the Sovereign Sanctuary, in and for Great Britain and Ireland, I declare this Senate of Knight Hermetic Philosophers duly closed. Illustrious Knight of Eloquence, attend at the altar, and close the Sacred Book of Laws. Illustrious Knight Guardian of the Sanctuary, inform the Sentinel that the Senate is closed. And now, Illustrious Knight Hermetic Philosophers, depart in peace, and may the Spirit of God watch over you!