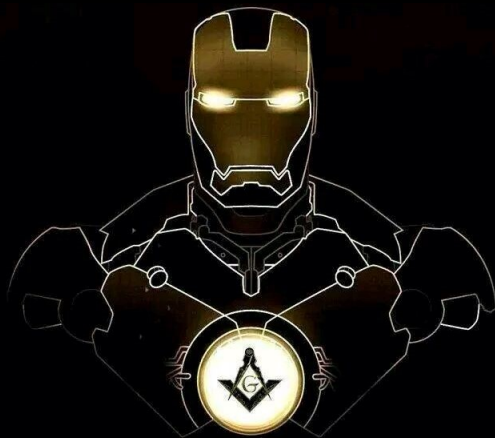


from the Brothers of CDA 20

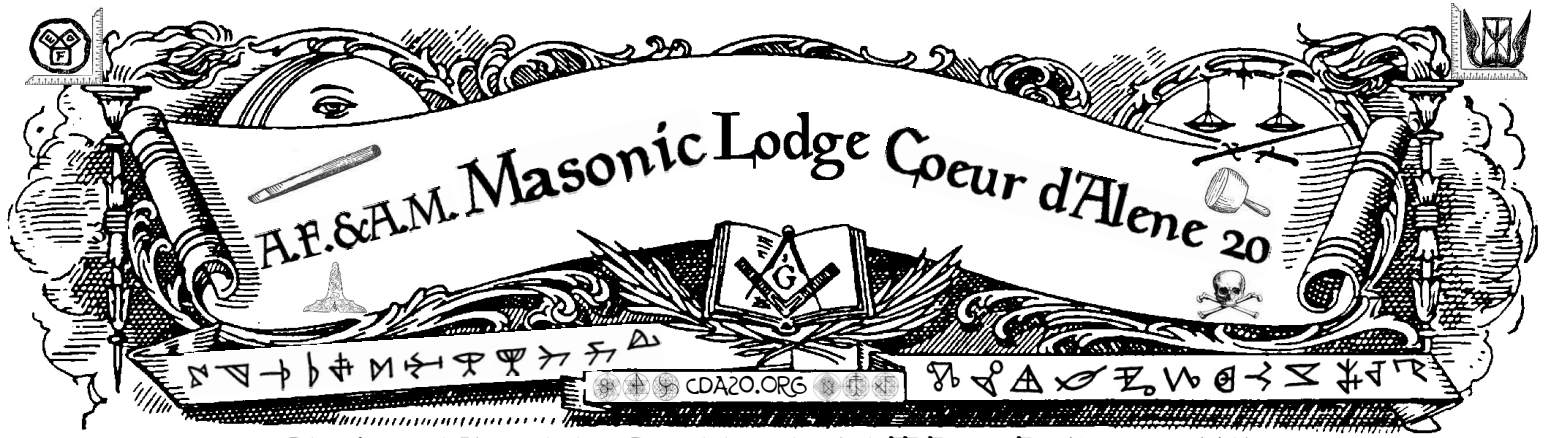


Wishing you and yours a very
Happy New Year!



RAISED IN THE USA





The Seat of Knowledge Trestleboard -Vol. II Issue I - January 6018

The Seat of Knowledge Trestleboard is an education based newsletter extracting articles and knowledge of interest from the past. Freemasonry is a rich and diversified field with world renown scholars who have contributed their knowledge to enhance ours, therein lies the reason for this particular Trestleboard. We are however happy to receive any articles or news including pictures from brothers of CDA 20 as well as recommendations and or suggestions. Please email submissions to: DB Jordan: CDA20.org@gmail.com

"Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's writings so that you shall come easily by what others have labored hard for." ~Socrates

Bro. DB Jordan of CDA 20 was "Raised" December 6, 2017. Much appreciation to the Brothers who helped with the ritual, thank you.

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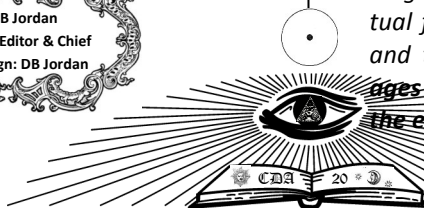
Pg. 10 - **Mithraism: Freemasonry and the Ancient Mysteries**

by Bro. H. L. Haywood, editor, *The Builder*

Pg. 16 - **Humor**

While our knowledge of the Mysteries is not so extensive as we could desire, owing to the fact that they were anciently guarded with the greatest care — the slightest violation of the oath of secrecy being punishable by death — we know that the mystery-side of religion, a knowledge of its highest cult and doctrines, was only attained through initiation. Every great Teacher of antiquity passed through these portals. This one fact in itself makes the study of the Mysteries of the utmost importance to Masons. The Institution of the Mysteries was to be found in all parts of the world. There were the Mysteries of Isis and Osiris in Egypt, the Mithraic Mysteries of the Persians, the Orphic and Bacchic and the later Eleusinian semi-Mysteries of Greece, the Mysteries of Samothrace and Chaldea, the Mysteries of India, the Druidical Mysteries, the Gothic Mysteries, and many others. Thus it follows that the key to antiquity is a knowledge of its Mysteries. The late Gen. Albert Pike, formerly Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council, Southern Jurisdiction, A. A. S. R. illustrates this by saying: "Through the veil of all the hieratic and mystic allegories of the ancient dogmas, under the seal of all the sacred writings, in the ruins of Nineveh or Thebes, on the worn stones of the ancient temples, and on the blackened face of the sphinx of Assyria or Egypt, in the monstrous or marvelous pictures which the sacred pages of the Vedas translate for the believers of India, in the strange emblems of our old books of Alchemy, in the ceremonies of reception practiced by all the mysterious Societies, we find traces of a doctrine everywhere the same, and everywhere carefully concealed. The occult philosophy seems to have been the nurse or godmother of all religions, the secret lever of all the intellectual forces, the key of all divine obscurities, and the Absolute Queen of Society, in the ages when it was exclusively reserved for the education of the Priests and Kings."

REV. CHARLES H. VAIL, 32°





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UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD OF FREEMASONRY
 THE ONLY EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR PERMANENT
 PEACE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Continued from Dec. 17 Newsletter—By Albert Churchward M.D., M.R.C.P., F.G.S., P.M., P.Z., 30°

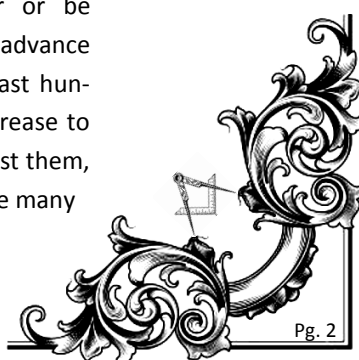
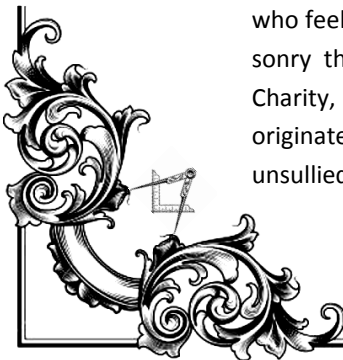
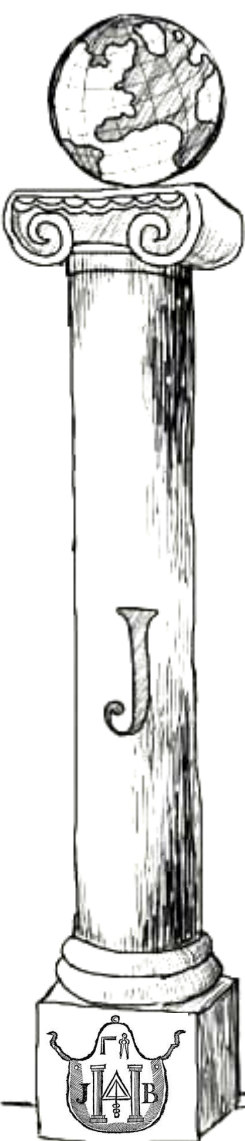
But let that be no excuse for a Brother; he should make himself acquainted with the whole Ritual of Freemasonry and the meaning of the same. If this were done, it would be a convincing proof of that which I write.

The unfortunate attitude observed by the governing bodies of Grand Lodges renders a closer union of a universal Brotherhood for the government of the world, and obviously universal peace, still remote. But, Brethren, this will come, because there are many Freemasons who are working out the destiny and will of T.G.A.O.T.U. to this end. Because we have many Brothers at the head of our grand Institution who are ignorant of the origin and meaning of our Ritual, even unacquainted with many parts of the whole Ritual of Freemasonry and the working of the same, that is no reason why we should despair or be downhearted.

Consider the great advance that has been made within the last hundred years and the enormous increase to the ranks of the fraternity; amongst them, within the last fifty years, there are many who wish and want to know, who feel and see that there is more in Freemasonry than a just common Brotherhood and Charity, who know that our doctrines have originated and been handed down pure and unsullied from the Eschatology of the Ancient

Egyptians, and that none of the many creeds now in existence — the offshoots from the original — can be compared with the purity and high moral standard, pointing our duty to God and man and as a guide to our action, of the Ritual of our Brotherhood. As our strength becomes greater, as our experience becomes more extensive, you can no longer confine the Brotherhood within swaddling bands, or lull them in the cradle, or amuse them with metaphysical terminology, or But let that be no excuse for a Brother; he should make himself acquainted with the whole Ritual of Freemasonry and the meaning of the same. If this were done, it would be a convincing proof of that which I write.

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Men of the twentieth century cannot govern as did men of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Since then so much experience has been gained, and experience is true knowledge. Will those Brothers who govern the Craft seize this opportunity (in these include all the Grand Lodges of our Empire and those of all our Allies)? And I say such an opportunity for unity and the discussion of such world-wide problems which have now arisen may never occur again. Alas!

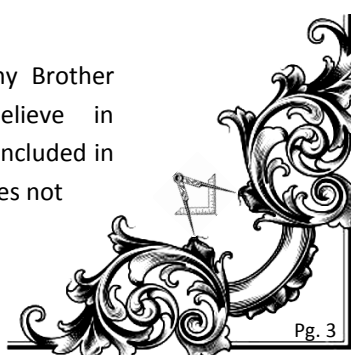
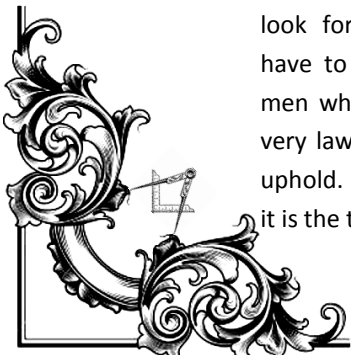
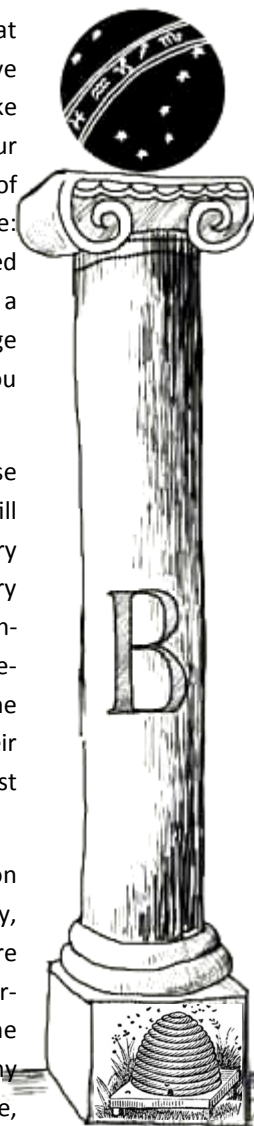
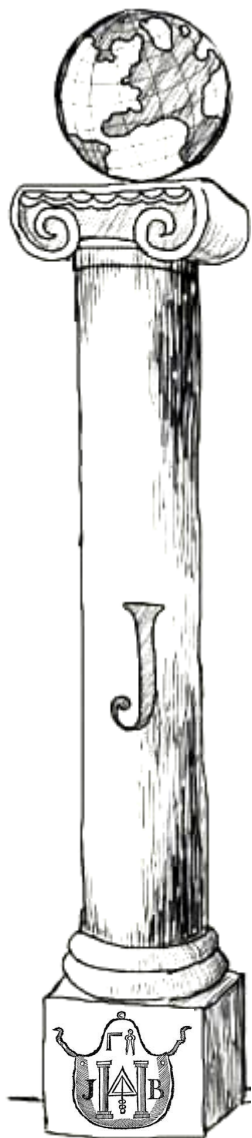
I am afraid we shall look in vain to those who govern the Craft and to whom we are told to look for guidance and direction; we shall have to wait for more enlightened men — men who do not set their faces against the very laws they are supposed to support and uphold. Brothers, these are strong words, but it is the truth we want — truth,

and truth always. Let Brothers judge my words after attending the full working of the 4°. That part of the Ritual alone is proof of what I have written. But Brothers are beginning to take more rational and comprehensive views of our Ritual. We are not, we cannot in the nature of evolution of things be, what our fathers were: we are no more like the men of one hundred years ago; there is a change, and at present a very bloody change, taking place. This change does not end in nothing; therefore see you guide that movement which you cannot stop.

Fling wide the gates to that force which else will enter through the breach. Then will it still be, as it has been hitherto, the peculiar glory of our Constitution to add to our titles of glory the noblest and purest ethics of the attainment of universal peace. Men are apt to deride what they do not understand, and the ignorant, being aware of the weakness of their minds, condemn that which they ought most to venerate.

And what is there to prevent the combination of a Universal Brotherhood who will say, "There shall be no war now, or at any future time"? Nothing that could not be easily overcome. There should be, in the first place, One Grand Lodge for every country. However many Provincial or State Grand Lodges there may be, it would not matter provided they were all under the jurisdiction of the One Grand Lodge of that country.

Secondly, no Lodge shall admit any Brother who does not profess to believe in T.G.A.O.T.U., and no Lodge shall be included in the Universal Brotherhood which does not





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acknowledge T.G.A.O.T.U. To do so would at once shatter the corner stone of the very foundation upon which the Brotherhood has been founded, and to which it owes its existence — not only now, but from its very inception 300,000 years ago. The very foundation of Masonry is the belief in T.G.A.O.T.U. and an after-life, which we know does exist; if, therefore, materialists were admitted, the whole structure on which it has been built becomes a foundation of sand only. We at once do away with the Great Creator of All, and He would do away with us. It has been only because we have believed in Him and kept to His Divine Law that we have prospered and become again a Great Brotherhood.

Therefore, if each country formed One Grand Lodge, holding jurisdiction and alliance over their Provincial or States Grand and other Lodges, it would not be difficult to arrange for all "Grand Masters," with a certain number of G.O., to meet at given intervals and decide the best method of procedure.

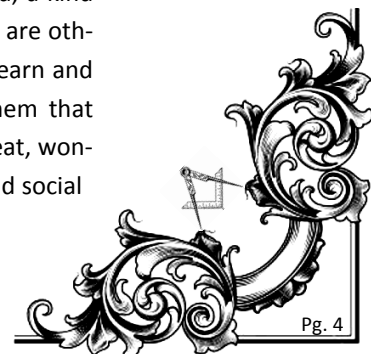
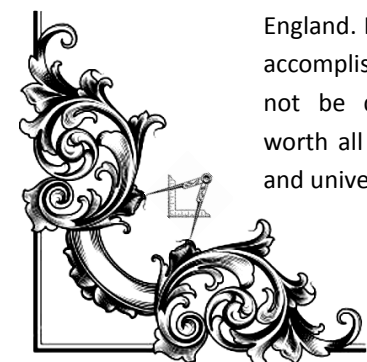
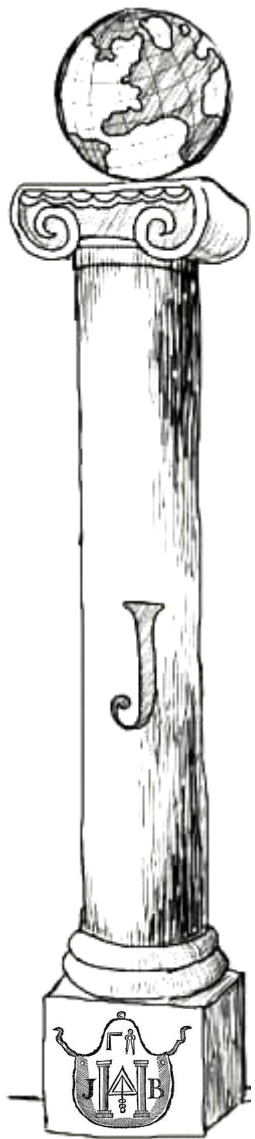
I think if the U.S. of America would follow what I have suggested (supra) and form One Grand Lodge for the U.S., representing all other States' Grand and other Lodges at once, it would be a great inducement for other countries to do the same, and one of the principal difficulties would disappear. It would be founded then as on the principles of the G.L. of England. If this union of the Brotherhood were accomplished, and I see no reason why it could not be quietly accomplished, it would be worth all the navies and armies in the world, and universal peace could be insisted on for all

time. I have suggested this in many former articles in various papers and in my books, and it now rests with the Brotherhood throughout the world to achieve this great end and prevent such suffering and horrors as are still being enacted and have been for the last four years. We see now the repetition of the destruction of Great Nations which have gone against the Divine Periodic Laws, and ours will follow rapidly in their wake if this is not altered. Russia will take a thousand years to recover her state of evolution. What a lesson to those who will learn and take heed of the Laws of Evolution!

Anarchy, murder, starvation, and all the horrors too numerous to write, and all caused by Socialism and Bureaucracy, and so the poor humanity of Russia will return to a dark and degenerate age, to begin again to climb the ladder of light, which will take her a thousand years before she reaches the top.

Another difficulty may arise pro tern, from the cause of lack of knowledge to understand what true Freemasonry is, and all the duties that are incumbent upon the members of the Brotherhood.

The majority of Freemasons know nothing really of what Freemasonry represents. To them it is a charitable Brotherhood, a kind of semi-religious social club. There are others, however, who are striving to learn and to know; their conscience tells them that there is something more in this great, wonderful Brotherhood than charity and social





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club, which holds them together in one firm bond. Let them continue their studies.

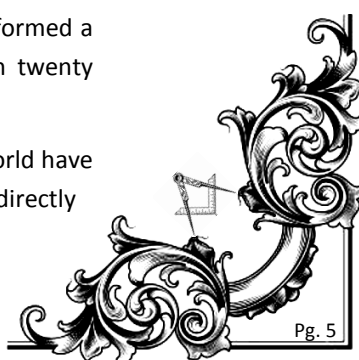
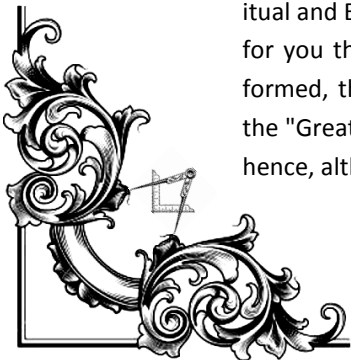
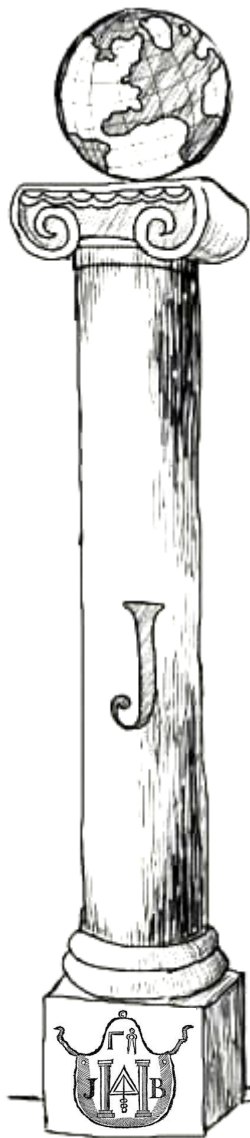
Light will be given them. But nothing comes to him who does not work and strive to gain knowledge. The gaining of the true conception of what Freemasonry was and is will strengthen their belief in the Divine Creator, because they will begin to understand His Laws, and, therefore. His wishes; it will further induce them to carry in their daily lives, outside our Temples, and act with regard to their other fellow-creatures, all those grand principles and tenets that are taught inside the Temples. It will teach them that Socialism, Bureaucracy and Anarchy are all tyranny, and must be put down if they wish to attain a higher state of evolution; because all these phases of Socialism are diametrically opposed to the Periodic Laws, which are the Laws of the Divine Creator — and you cannot serve two masters; you must be true to yourself, to your God, and to man, or you will fail, and ultimately be destroyed morally and spiritually, although probably you may gain much gold ; but what will that serve you eventually? You are born naked into the world, your material life is very short, only a few years at most, and then what for eternity? I tell you all, my Brothers, because after forty years of hard study I have been permitted to know and learn these Divine Truths, both as regards this material world and also the Divine Laws of the Spiritual and Everlasting State, and I therefore write for you the Truth. If the League of Nations be formed, that will not prevent the repetition of the "Great Horror" in fifty or one hundred years hence, although it would be an excellent work

and might have the desired effect for many years. But no guarantee as such "an international combination" could last one hundred years. The Treaty, and even the action, of the League would be treated as "a scrap of paper " or be broken, because the necessary cohesion of all nations could not exist so long on that alone. Greed and other interests would overcome the weakest.

Whereas with the Brotherhood it will be for ever growing in strength and insuperable: there are no opposing principles or interests; all the ties would be strengthened and become firmer. There could be no divergent opinions or interests in any way or any form. Our Laws have been laid down for us from the first, and these are God's Laws. There would always be the one great sacred tie for the life here and hereafter, for the good of all the Universal Brotherhood; this would be an imperishable bond, with every link forged of the sacred "Be metal," unbreakable and untouchable as long as this world lasts.

And how has Freemasonry grown within the last two hundred years ? One has to look back only to the 24th of June 1717, when there met in the City of London an assembly of Freemasons, representing the membership of four Lodges, under the chairmanship of the oldest Freemason then present. The assembly organized itself into a Grand Lodge. Within ten years there was formed a Grand Lodge in Ireland, and within twenty one was formed in Scotland.

All regular Masonic Lodges in the world have derived their authority directly or indirectly





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from one or other of these first three Grand Lodges.

Freemasons now number over two millions through-out the world and are growing in number every year. What was Freemasonry, then, prior to this London Conference in 1717?

It might be compared to little rivers all issuing from an underground "Lake of Knowledge," the source of these little rivers being unknown, except to a few, it being hidden away amongst impenetrable forests and mountains. But the source, or "Lake of the Waters of Knowledge and of Truth," was there nevertheless; that hitherto few had been able to explore these regions and find the Fount was because no one could read the Sign Posts of the Path.

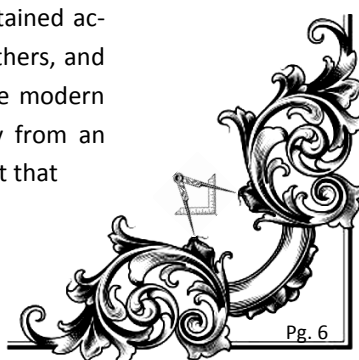
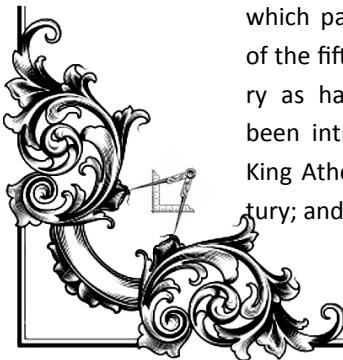
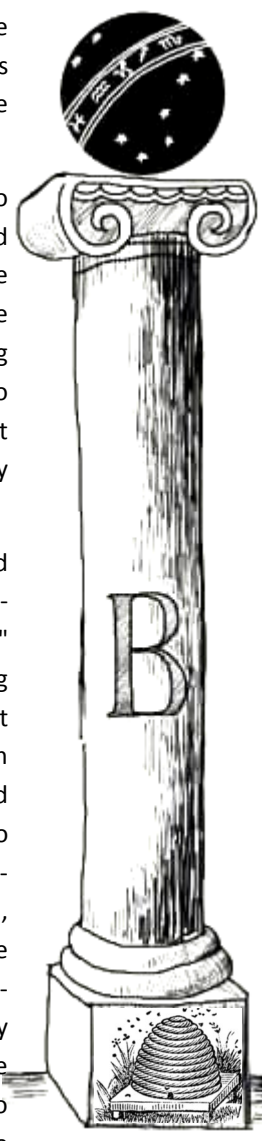
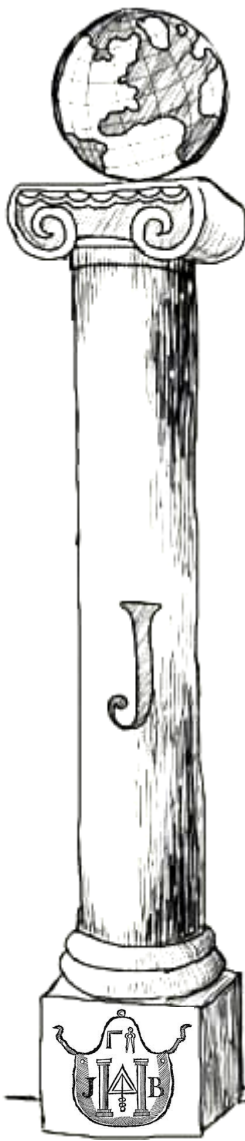
Well, Brothers, I have given you the position in latitude and longitude, and pictured before your eyes "The Fount of all our Mysteries." Therefore, let no one imagine 1717 marks the origin of Freemasonry. There are authentic manuscript copies of old constitutions and charges which prove incontestably the existence of working Lodges as early as the thirteenth century in this country.

The so-called Regius Manuscript of the old charges in the British Museum is definitely known to date from the fourteenth century. Both this manuscript and the next oldest — the Cooke Manuscript, also in the British Museum, which paleographers assign to the early years of the fifteenth century — speak of Freemasonry as having originated in Egypt and having been introduced into England in the reign of King Athelstane who reigned in the tenth century; and, as I have stated and

proved, both the Stellar and Solar Cult were established here thousands of years before that, the former having the Lesser Mysteries and the latter (the Druids) practicing the Greater Mysteries.

Certainly, about two hundred years ago these rivers of "Masonic influence" rushed forth from their concealed sources into the light of day, and it is only by tracing these small rivers back along their "meandering way" mile by mile that I have been able to give you the position and origin of that "Great Lake of Knowledge" from which they issued, with absolute certainty.

Now all should unite in one great river and amalgamate in the "Pool of Universal Brotherhood" to erect amidst the waters that "Great Lighthouse" which has been so long required to brighten the dark and turbulent sea of humanity, so that they may travel in their "Barque of Life" forever in Peace and safety. Brothers, do not be deceived into thinking that cultivating a regular attendance at rehearsals, memorizing the Ritual, paying visits and feeling that by the degree of culture to be obtained through painstaking adherence to these practices you may hope not only to become familiar with the forms and routine of the Lodge, but also to be enabled with confidence to make a speech — is Freemasonry; unfortunately, this, in brief, is the limit to be obtained according to the views of many Brothers, and also this is in accordance with the modern tendency to regard Free-masonry from an external standpoint, with the result that





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a false value is placed on perfection of ceremonial and individual adeptness. Viewed in this light, our Brotherhood can hardly be said to differ from a charitable and social debating club, or any other gathering where harmony and self-improvement are cultivated.

This is not Freemasonry, and the little rivers that follow this course will flow in the desert sand and be lost there.

Unfortunately, "the powers that be" up to the present have not helped much to assist this "unity of streams." I have given you the origins, evolutions and meanings of the Brotherhood of Freemasonry, and I trust I have inculcated in your brains the great Divine principles you have inherited from your old Ancestors — a priceless gift; and it rests with you — every individual Brother — to assist and carry out the great truths and principles with which you are so well acquainted, and to assist in forming that "one great Universal Brotherhood again," which once existed thousands of years ago, for procuring the Peace of the World, and as His servants and instruments establishing a higher evolution of Humanity, as T.G.A.O.T.U. has decreed.

Let us save the world from a repetition of the horrors that have been enacted in this last Great War and the sufferings of poor helpless humanity

that have been caused as the result of this war. Let us unite and prevent such anarchy and human destruction as is now being enacted in Russia and other countries, throwing these countries and the poor humans back in evolution, and consigning them to a dark and degenerate age again for a thousand years,

and is now threatening this country in an acute form. But do not mistake the means or the way to accomplish this.

There is only one way, i.e. following the Periodic Laws of the Universe, which are God's immutable Laws since the Creation. There is only one means, "A United and Universal Brotherhood throughout the World."

But, mark well, that Universal Brotherhood cannot include members of the Craft who do not believe in T.G.A.O.T.U. It cannot include all those members of the Craft who support those who practice tyranny and oppression, and all those who seek to dominate and control the life, intelligence and conscience of the individual and subject him to personal bondage and servitude so vividly depicted in Socialism and Bureaucracy.

There can be no compromise between these and the Brotherhood who are fighting for freedom for the human race, for their self-reliance, their independent thinking, their individual liberty and happiness, and the spread of love and good will everywhere, for that higher evolution and that freedom without which true Brotherhood amongst men could not survive. To compromise with such would at once destroy the very fundamental principles upon which Freemasonry- was founded a false value is placed on perfection of ceremonial and individual adeptness. Viewed in this light, our Brotherhood can hardly be said to differ from a charitable and social debating club, or any other gathering where harmony and self-improvement are cultivated.





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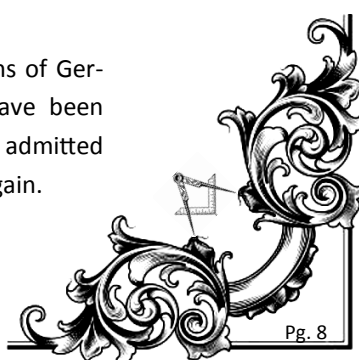
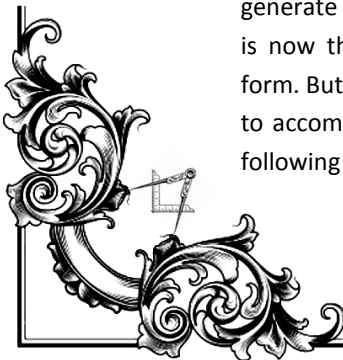
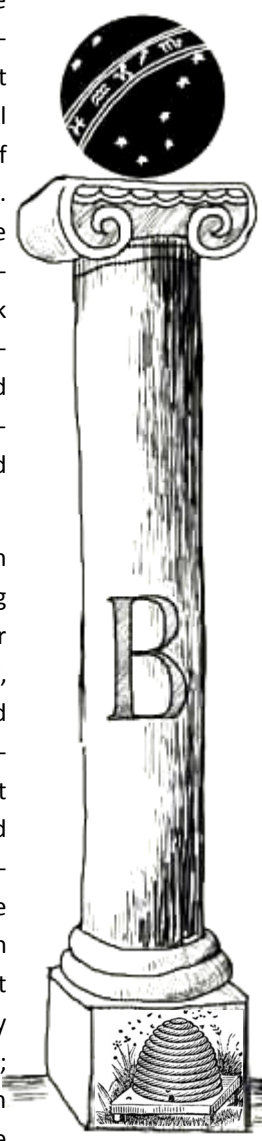
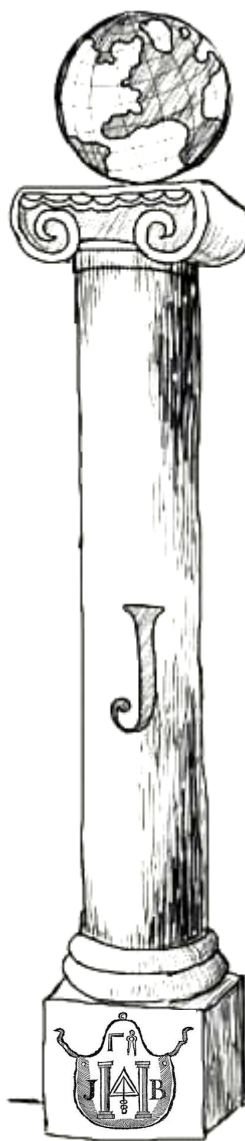
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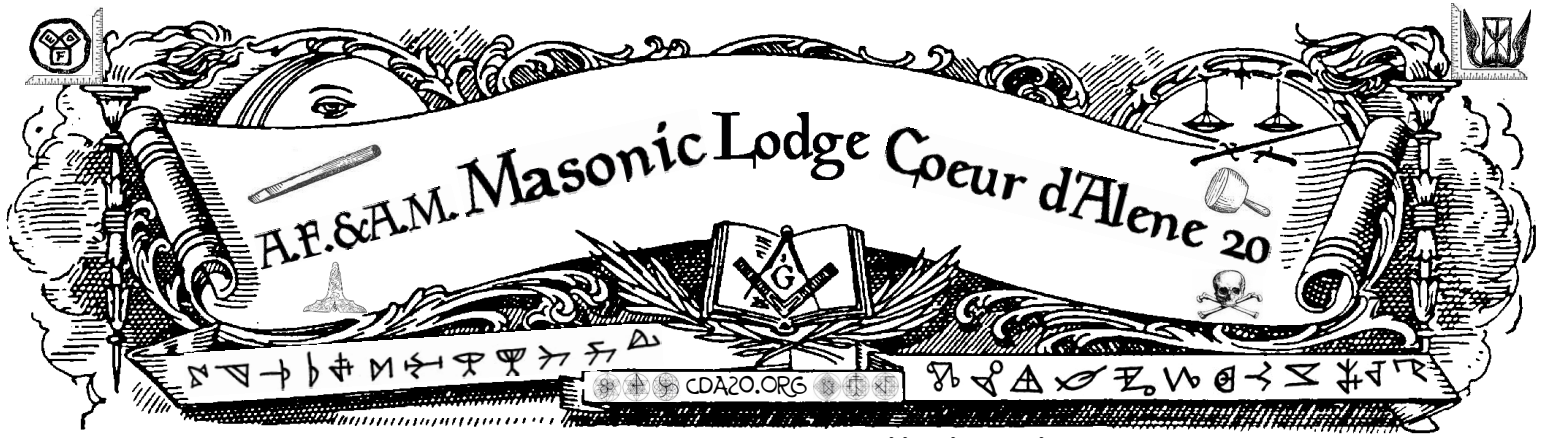
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That is the reason why the Masons of Germany and other countries we have been fighting against should never be admitted into our Lodges or Brotherhood again.

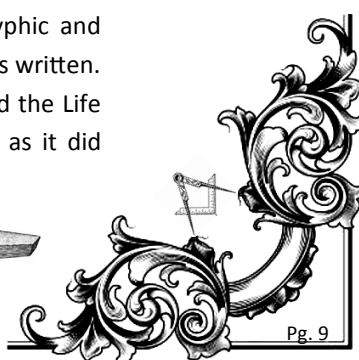
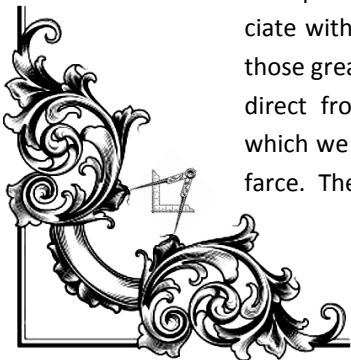
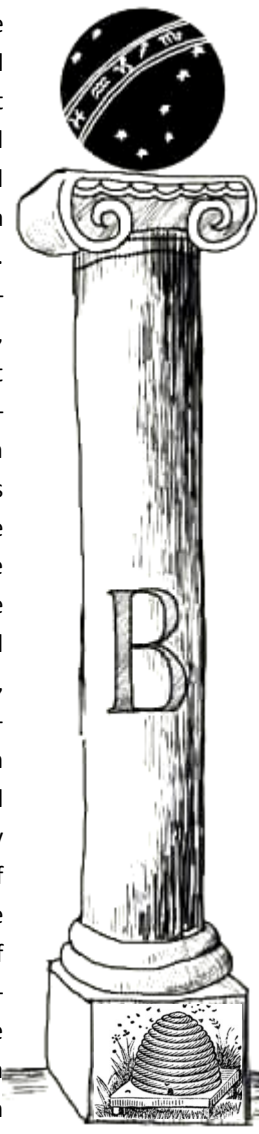
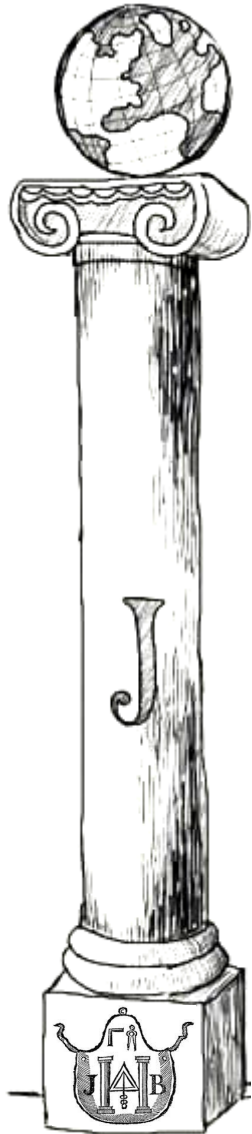


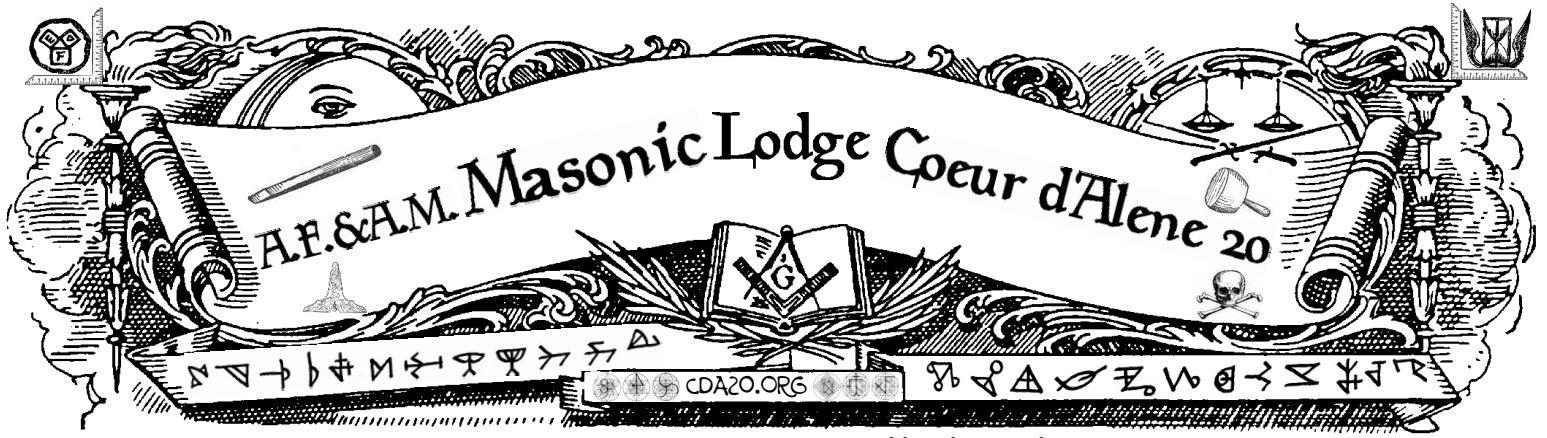


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They have betrayed their trusts and obligations, and if they have not actually assisted in all the horrors that so many poor humans have suffered, they have at least upheld and supported those whose actions have been a thousand fold worse than those of the most degraded savages in past ages. Therefore, to admit and associate with any such as these would reduce all those great principles which we have inherited direct from T.G.A.O.T.U. in past ages, and which we profess to believe and practice, to a farce. There could be no Universal Brotherhood, because there would be elements antagonistic and false in the combination — false to its principles, false to its morality and false to their God — and in the end it would, as a whole, become destroyed again, and the remnants would be scattered over the face of earth and water with only a survival of the few, as it has been before. No, Brothers; we must be true to our obligations, true to our principles of morality, true to all our tenets, and ever fight against those evils which impose tyranny, thralldom of body or mind, and oppression in every form. They have betrayed their trusts and obligations, and if they have not actually assisted in all the horrors that so many poor humans have suffered, they have at least upheld and supported those whose actions have been a thousand fold worse than those of the most degraded savages in past ages. Therefore, to admit and associate with any such as these would reduce all those great principles which we have inherited direct from T.G.A.O.T.U. in past ages, and which we profess to believe and practice, to a farce. There could be no Universal Brother-

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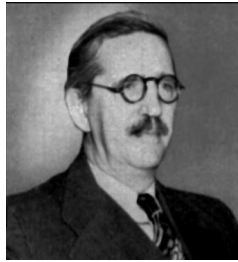




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Mithraism: Freemasonry and the Ancient Mysteries—1923

Bro. H. L. Haywood, editor, The Builder



THE THEORY that modern Freemasonry is in some sense a direct descendant from the ancient Mysteries has held a peculiar attraction for Masonic writers this long time, and the end is not yet, for the world is rife with men who argue about the matter up and down endless pages of print. It is a most difficult subject to write about, so that the more one learns about it the less he is inclined to ventilate any opinions of his own. The subject covers so much ground and in such tangled jungles that almost any grand generalization is pretty sure to be either wrong or useless. Even Gould, who is usually one of the soundest and carefullest of generalizers, gets pretty badly mixed up on the subject.

For present purposes it has seemed to me wise to attention to one only of the Mysteries, letting it stand as a type of the rest, and I have chosen for that purpose MITHRAISM, one of the greatest and one of most interesting, as well as one possessing as many parallelisms with Freemasonry as any of the others.

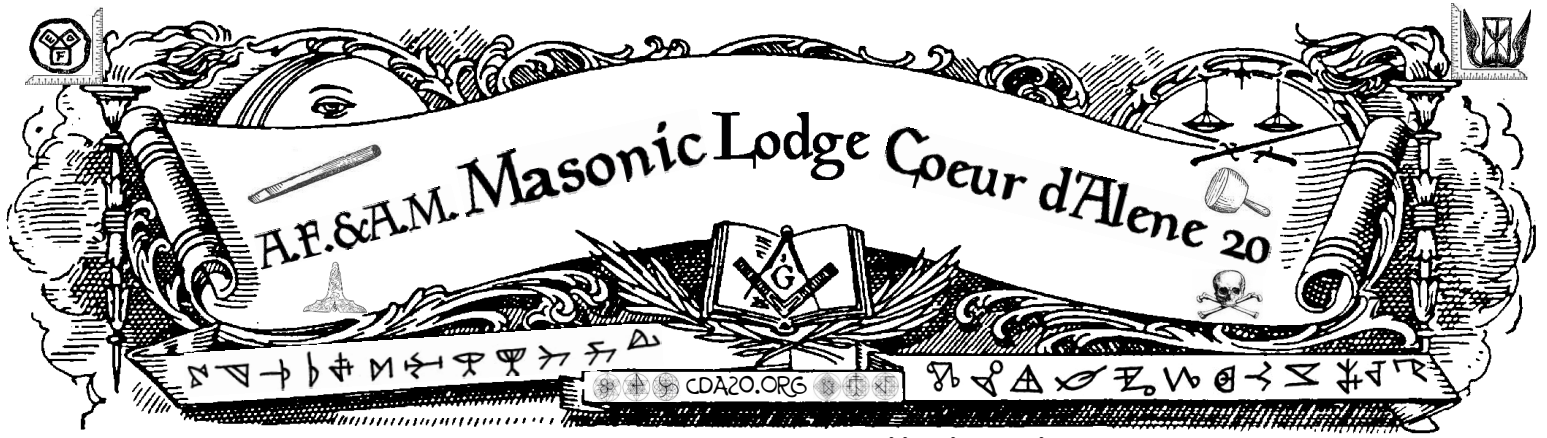
HOW MITHRA CAME TO BE A FIRST-CLASS

GOD

Way back in the beginning of things, so we may learn from the Avesta, Mithra was the young god of the sky lights that appeared just before sunrise and lingered after the sun had set. To him was attributed patronship of the virtues of truth, life-giving, and youthful strength and joy. Such qualities attracted many worshippers in whose eyes Mithra grew from more to more until finally he became a great god in his own right and almost equal to the sun god himself. "Youth will be served," even a youthful god; and Zoroastrianism, which began by giving Mithra a very subordinate place, came at last to exalt him to the right hand of the awful Ormuzd, who had rolled up within himself all the attributes of all gods whatsoever.

When the Persians conquered the Babylonians, who worshipped the stars in a most thorough going manner, Mithra got himself placed at the very center of star worshipping cults, and won such strength for himself that when the Persian Empire went to pieces and everything fell into the melting pot with it, Mithra was able to hold his own identity, and emerged from the struggle at the head of a religion of his own. He was a young god full of vigor and overflowing with spirits, capable of teaching his followers the arts of victory, and such things appealed mightily to the bellicose Iranian tribesmen who never ceased to worship him in one form or another until they became so soundly converted to Mohammedanism centuries afterwards.





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Even then they did not abandon him altogether but after the inevitable manner of converts rebuilt him into Allah and into Mohammed, so that even today one will find pieces of Mithra scattered about here and there in what the Mohammedans call their theology.

After the collapse of the Persian Empire, Phrygia, where so many religions were manufactured at one time or another, took Mithra up and built a cult about him. They gave him his Phrygian cap which one always sees on his statues, and they incorporated in his rites the use of the dreadful "taurobolium," which was a baptism in the blood of a healthy young bull. In the course of time this gory ceremony became the very center and climax of the Mithraic ritual, and made a profound impression on the hordes of poor slaves and ignorant men who flocked into the mithrea, as the Mithraic houses of worship were called.

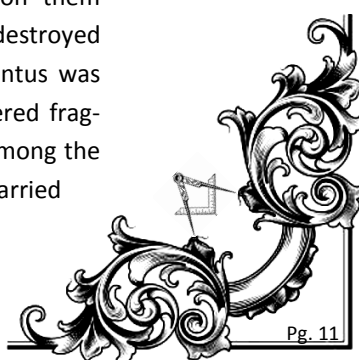
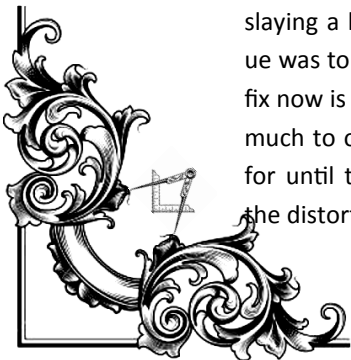
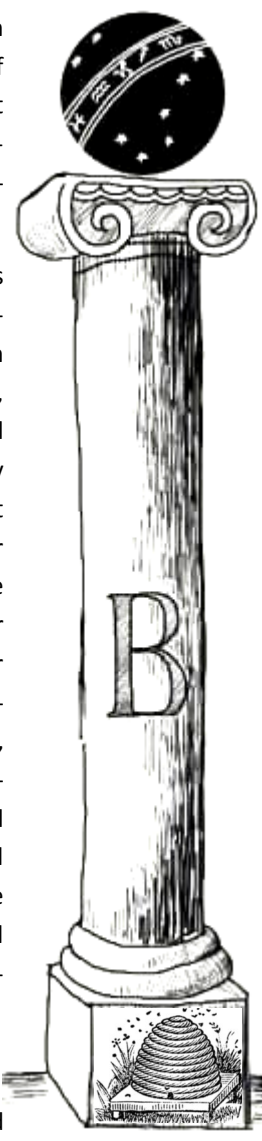
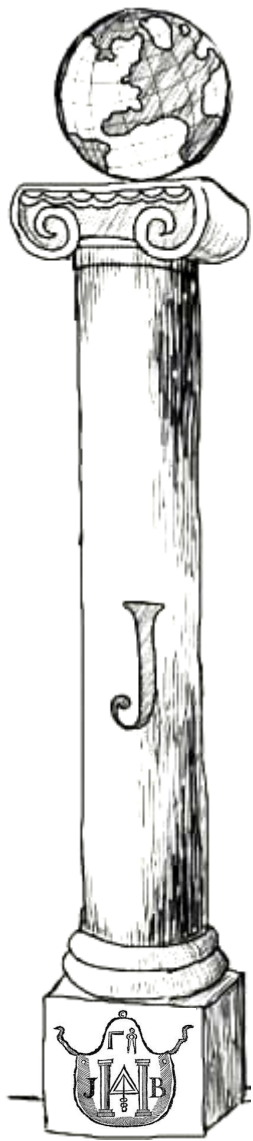
Mithra was never able to make his way into Greece (the same thing could be said of Egypt, where the competition among religions was very severe) but it happened that he borrowed something from Greek art. Some unknown Greek sculptor, one of the shining geniuses of his nation, made a statue of Mithra that served ever afterwards as the orthodox likeness of the god, who was depicted as a youth of overflowing vitality, his mantle thrown back, a Phrygian cap on his head, and slaying a bull. For hundreds of years this statue was to all devout Mithraists what the crucifix now is to Roman Catholics. This likeness did much to open Mithra's path toward the west, for until this his images had been hideous in the distorted and repellent manner

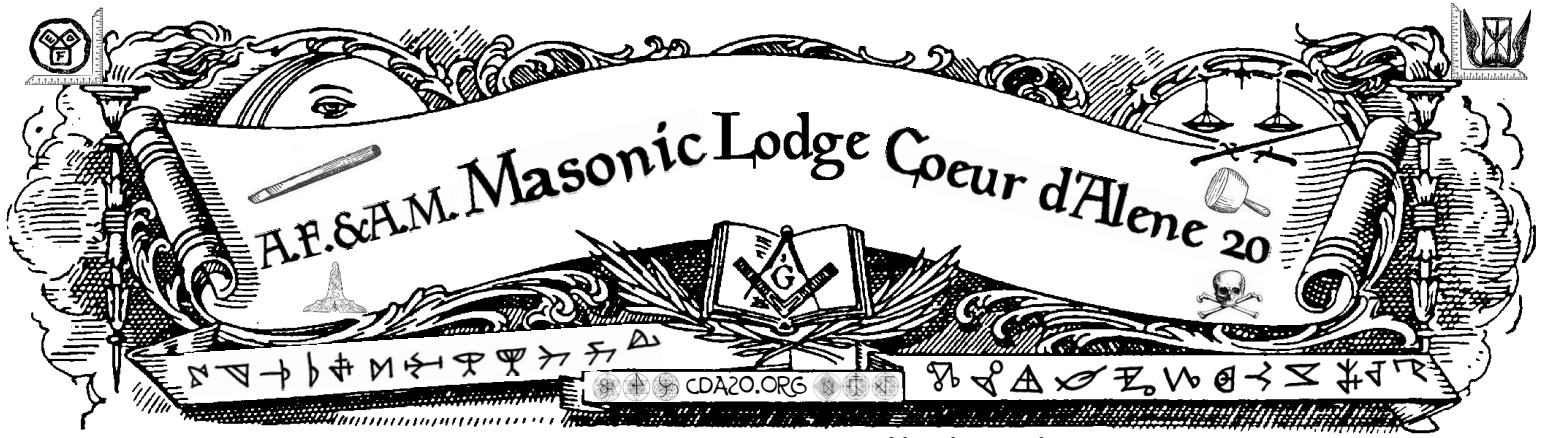
so characteristic of Oriental religious sculpture. The Oriental people, among whom Mithra was born, were always capable of gloomy grandeur and of religious terror, but of beauty they had scarcely a touch; it remained for the Greeks to recommend Mithra to men of good taste.

After the Macedonian conquests, so it is believed, the cult of Mithra became crystallized; it got its orthodox theology, its church system, its philosophy, its dramas and rites, its picture of the universe and of the grand cataclysmic end of all things in a terrific day of judgment. Many things had been built into it. There were exciting ceremonies for the multitudes; much mysticism for the devout; a great machinery of salvation for the timid; a program of militant activity for men of valour; and a lofty ethic for the superior classes. Mithraism had a history, traditions, sacred books, and a vast momentum from the worship of millions and millions among remote and scattered tribes. Thus accoutered and equipped, the young god and his religion were prepared to enter the more complex and sophisticated world known as the Roman Empire.

HOW MITHRA FOUND HIS WAY TO ROME

When Mithridates Eupator - he who hated the Romans with a virulency like that of Hannibal, and who waged war on them three or four times - was utterly destroyed in 66 B.C. and his kingdom of Pontus was given over to the dogs, the scattered fragments of his armies took refuge among the outlaws and pirates of Cilicia and carried





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with them everywhere the rites and doctrines of Mithraism.

Afterwards the soldiers of the Republic of Tar-sus, which these outlaws organized, went pil-laging and fighting all round the Mediterrane-an, and carried the cult with them every-where. It was in this unpromising manner that Mithra made his entrance into the Roman world. The most ancient of all inscriptions is one made by a freedman of the Flavians at about this time.

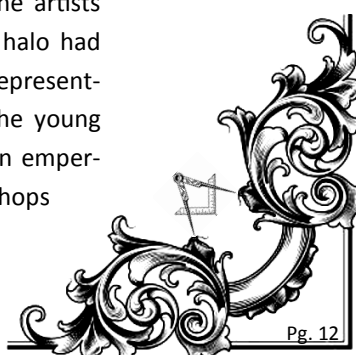
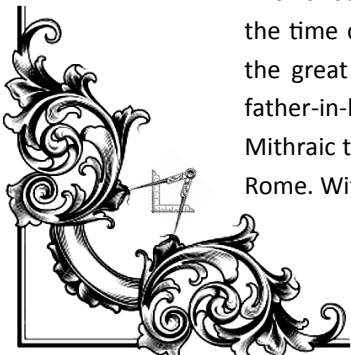
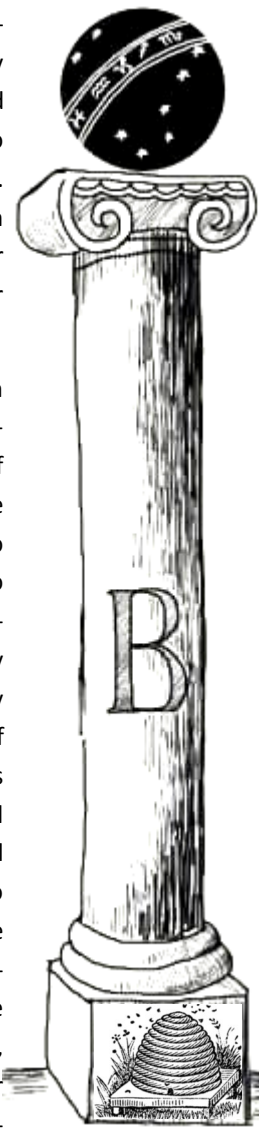
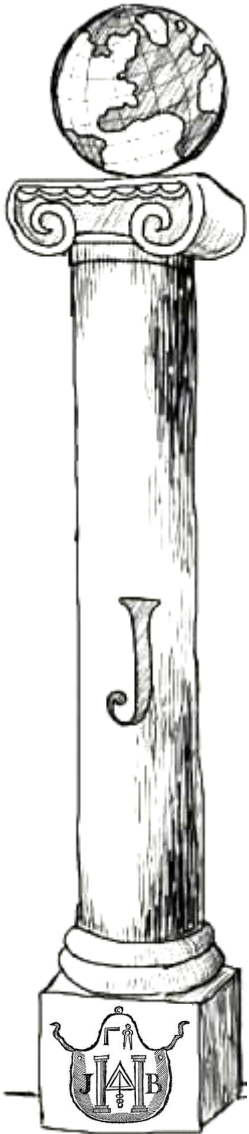
In the course of time Mithra won to his service a very different and much more efficient army of missionaries. Syrian merchants went back and forth across the Roman world like shuttles in a loom, and carried the new cult with them wherever they went.

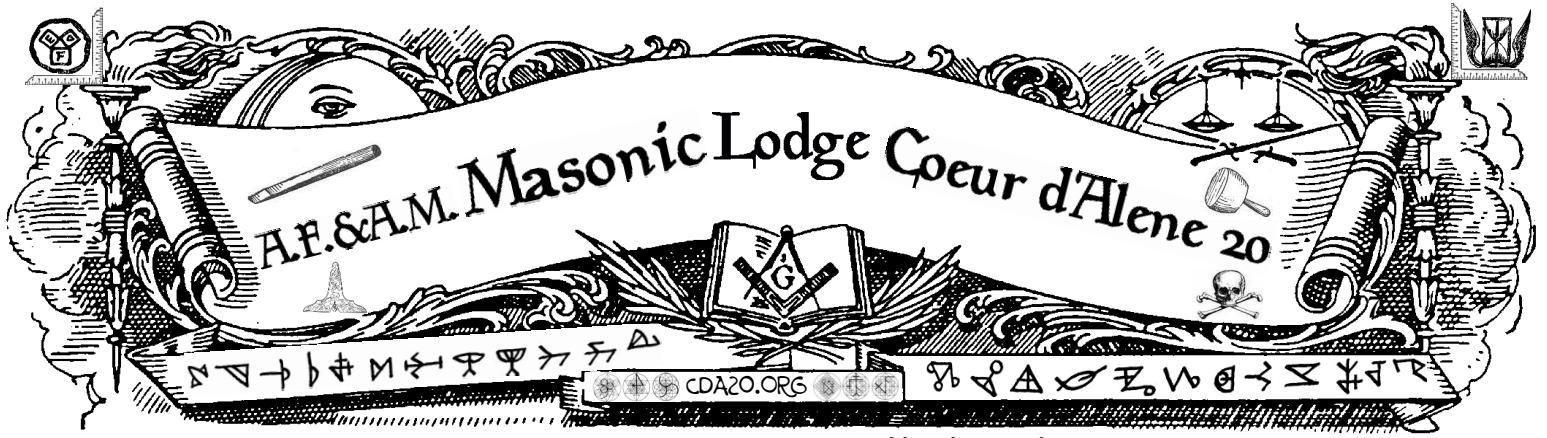
Slaves and freedmen became addicts and loyal supporters. Government officials, especially those belonging to the lowlier ranks, set up altars at every opportunity. But the greatest of all the propagandists were the soldiers of the various Roman armies. Mithra, who was be-lieved to love the sight of glittering swords and flying banners, appealed irresistibly to soldiers, and they in turn were as loyal to him as to any commander on the field. The time came when almost every Roman camp pos-sessed its mithreum.

Mithra began down next to the ground but the time came when he gathered behind him the great ones of the earth. Antoninus Pius, father-in-law of Marcus Aurelius, erected a Mithraic temple at Ostia, seaport of the city of Rome. With the exception of

Marcus Aurelius and possibly one or two others all the pagan emperors after Antani-nus were devotees of the god, especially Julian, who was more or less addle-pated and willing to take up with anything to stave off the growing power of Christianity. The early Church Fathers nicknamed Julian "The Apostate"; the slur was not altogether just because the young man had never been a Christian under his skin.

Why did all these great fellows, along with the philosophers and literary men who obe-diently followed suit, take up the worship of a foreign god, imported from amidst the much hated Syrians, when there were so many other gods of home manufacture so close at hand? Why did they take to a reli-gion that had been made fashionable by slaves and cutthroats? The answer is easy to discover. Mithra was peculiarly fond of rulers and of the mighty of the earth. His priests declared that the god himself stood at the right hand of emperors both on and off the throne. It was these priests who invented the good old doctrine of the divine right of kings. The more Mithra was wor-shipped by the masses, the more complete was the imperial control of those masses, therefore it was good business policy for the emperors to give Mithra all the assis-tance they could. There came a time when every Emperor was pictured by the artists with a halo about his head; that halo had originally belonged to Mithra. It represent-ed the outstanding splendor of the young and vigorous sun. After the Roman emper-ors passed away the popes and bishops





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of the Roman Catholic Church took up the custom; they are still in the habit of showing their saints be-haloed.

Mithraism spread up and down the world with amazing rapidity. All along the coast of northern Africa and even in the recesses of the Sahara; through the Pillars of Hercules to England and up into Scotland; across the channel into Germany and the north countries; and down into the great lands along the Danube, he everywhere made his way. London was at one time a great center of his worship. The greatest number of mithrea were built in Germany. Ernest Renan once said that if ever Christianity had become smitten by a fatal malady Mithraism might very easily have become the established and official religion of the whole Western World. Men might now be saying prayers to Mithra, and have their children baptised in bull's blood.

There is not here space to describe in what manner the cult became modified, by its successful spread across the Roman Empire. It was modified, of course, and in many ways profoundly, and it in turn modified everything with which it came into contact.

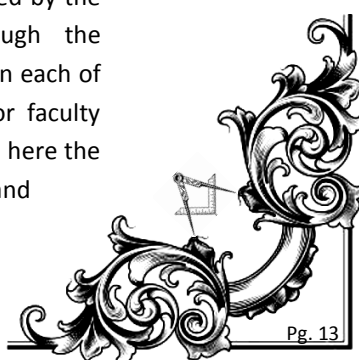
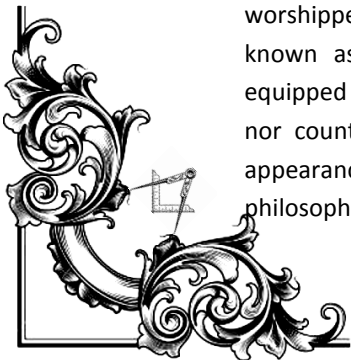
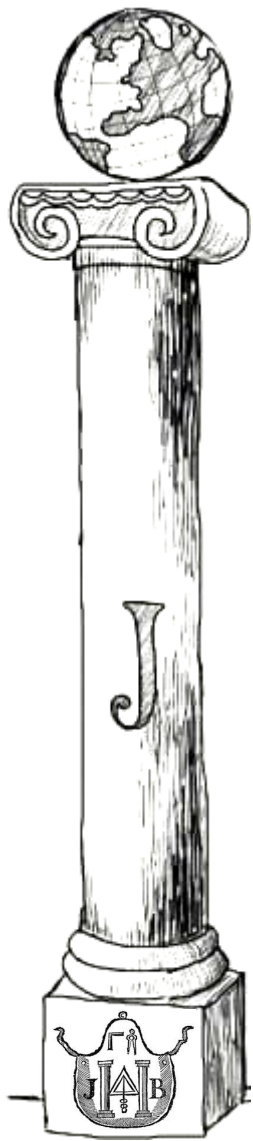
Here is a brief epitome of the evolution of this Mystery. It began at a remote time among primitive Iranian tribesmen. It picked up a body of doctrine from the Babylonian star worshippers, who created that strange thing known as astrology. It became a mystery, equipped with powerful rites, in the Asia Minor countries. It received a decent outward appearance at the hand of Greek artists and philosophers;

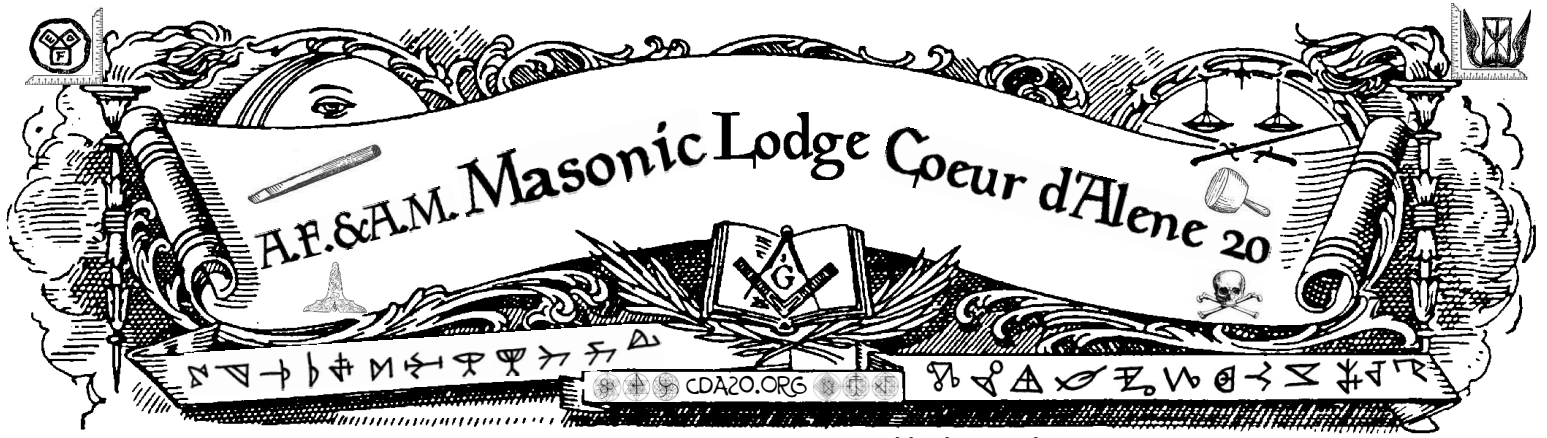
and it finally became a world religion among the Romans. Mithraism reached its apogee in the second century; it went the way of all flesh in the fourth century; and flickered out entirely in the fifth century, except that bits of its wreckage were salvaged and used by a few new cults, such as those of the various forms of Manicheeism.

THE MITHRAIC THEORY OF THINGS

After overthrowing its hated rival, the early Christian Church so completely destroyed everything having to do with Mithraism that there have remained behind but few fragments to bear witness to a once victorious religion. What little is accurately known will be found all duly set down and correctly interpreted in the works of the learned Dr. Franz Cumont, whose books on the subject so aroused the ire of the present Roman Catholic Hierarchy that they placed them on the Index, and warned the faithful away from his chapters of history. Today, as in Mithra's time, superstitions and empty doctrines have a sorry time when confronted with known facts.

The pious Mithraist believed that back of the stupendous scheme of things was a great and unknowable deity, Ozmiuzd by name, and that Mithra was his son. A soul destined for its prison house of flesh left the presence of Ormuzd, descended by the gates of Cancer, passed through the spheres of the seven planets and in each of these picked up some function or faculty for use on the earth. After its term here the soul was prepared by sacraments and





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discipline for its re-ascent after death. Upon its return journey it underwent a great ordeal of judgment before Mithra.

Leaving something behind it in each of the planetary spheres it finally passed back through the gates of Capricorn to ecstatic union with the great Source of all. Also there was an eternal hell, and those who had proved unfaithful to Mithra were sent there.

Countless deons, devils and other invisible monsters raged about everywhere over the earth tempting souls, and presided over the tortures in the pit. Through it all the planets continued to exercise good or evil influence over the human being, according as his fates might chance to fall out on high, a thing imbedded in the cult from its old Babylonian days.

The life of a Mithraist was understood as a long battle in which, with Mithra's help, he did war against the principles and powers of evil. In the beginning of his life of faith he was purified by baptism, and through all his days received strength through sacraments and sacred meals. Sunday was set aside as a holy day, and the twenty-fifth of December began a season of jubilant celebration.

Mithraic priests were organized in orders, and were deemed to have supernatural power to some extent or other.

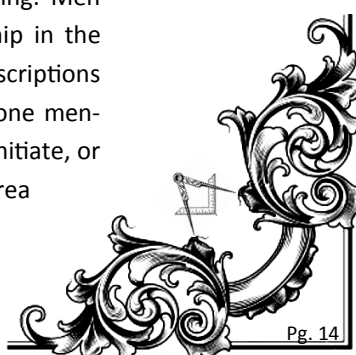
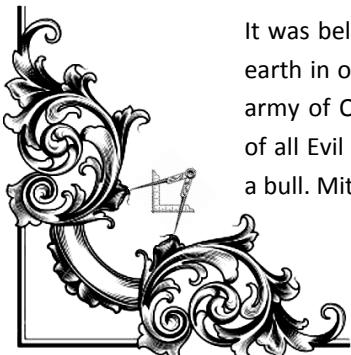
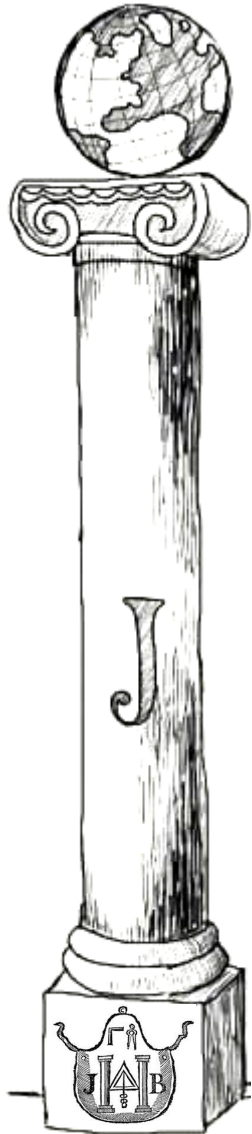
It was believed that Mithra had once come to earth in order to organize the faithful into the army of Ormuzd. He did battle with the Spirit of all Evil in a cave, the Evil taking the form of a bull. Mithra overcame his adversary and

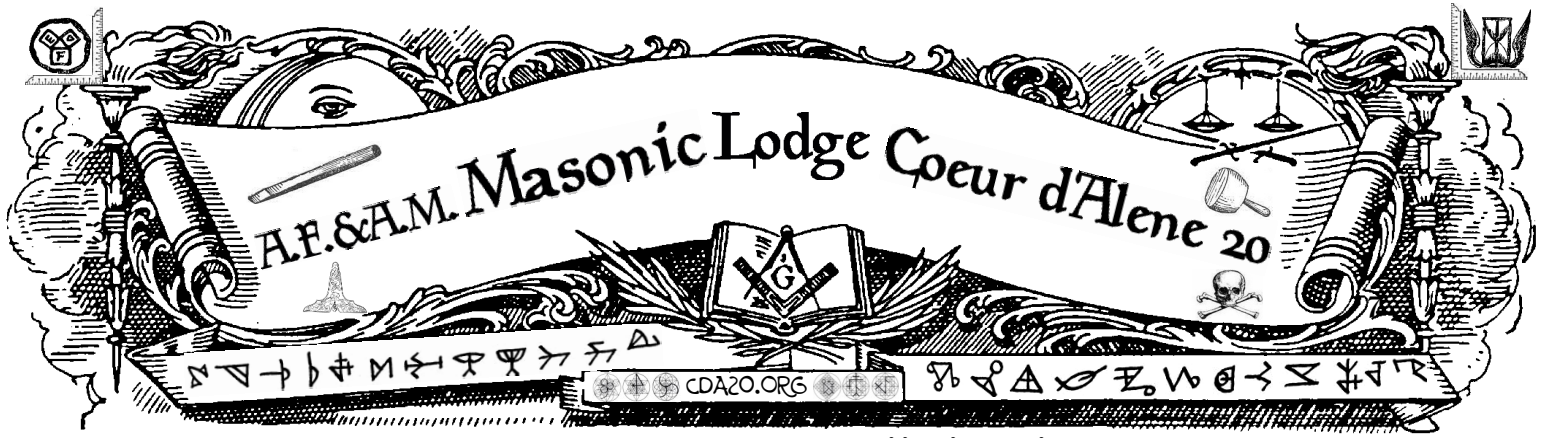
then returned to his place on high as the leader of the forces of righteousness, and the judge of all the dead. All Mithraic ceremonies centered about the bull slaying episode.

The ancient Church Fathers saw so many points of resemblance between this cult and Christianity that many of them accepted the theory that Mithraism was a counterfeit religion devised by Satan to lead souls astray. Time has proved them to be wrong in this because at bottom Mithraism was as different from Christianity as night from day.

IN WHAT WAY MITHRAISM WAS LIKE FREEMASONRY

Masonic writers have often professed to see many points of resemblance between Mithraism and Freemasonry. Albert Pike once declared that Freemasonry is the modern heir of the Ancient Mysteries. It is a dictum with which I have never been able to agree. There are similarities between our Fraternity and the old Mystery Cults, but most of them are of a superficial character, and have to do with externals of rite or organization, and not with inward content. When Sir Samuel Dill described Mithraism as "a sacred Freemasonry" he used that name in a very loose sense. Nevertheless, the resemblances are often startling. Men only were admitted to membership in the cult. "Among the hundreds of inscriptions that have come down to us, not one mentions either a priestess, a woman initiate, or even a donatress." In this the mithrea





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differed from the collegia, which latter, though they almost never admitted women as members, never hesitated to accept help or money from them.

Membership in Mithraism was as democratic as it is with us, perhaps more so; slaves were freely admitted and often held positions of trust, as also did the freedmen of whom there were such multitudes in the latter centuries of the empire.

Membership was usually divided into seven grades, each of which had its own appropriate symbolical ceremonies. Initiation was the crowning experience of every worshipper. He was attired symbolically, took vows, passed through many baptisms, and in the higher grades ate sacred meals with his fellows.

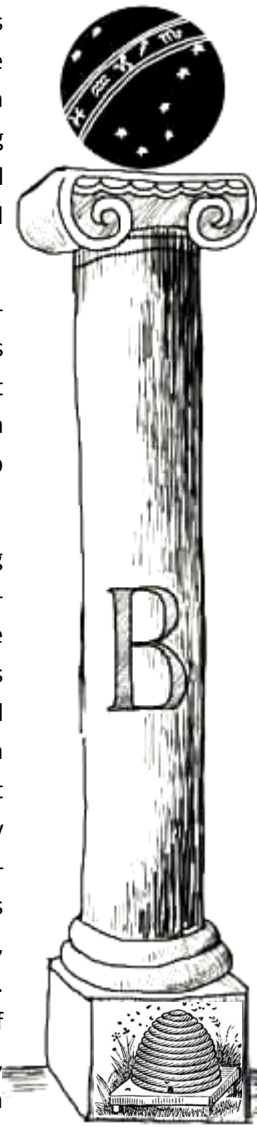
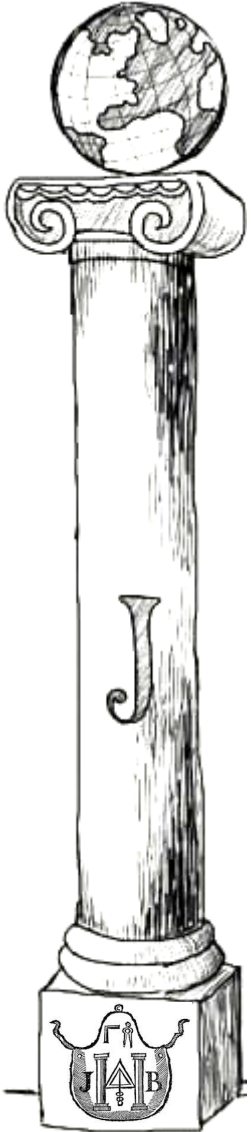
The great event of the initiate's experiences was the taurobolium, (*In the Roman Empire of the 2nd to 4th centuries, taurobolium referred to practices involving the sacrifice of a bull, which after mid-2nd century became connected with the worship of the Great Mother of the Gods; though not previously limited to her cult, after 159 CE all private taurobolia inscriptions mention Magna Mater.*) already described. It was deemed very efficacious, and was supposed to unite the worshipper with Mithra himself. A dramatic representation of a dying and a rising again was at the head of all these ceremonies. A tablet showing in bas relief Mithra's killing of the bull stood at the end of every mithreum.

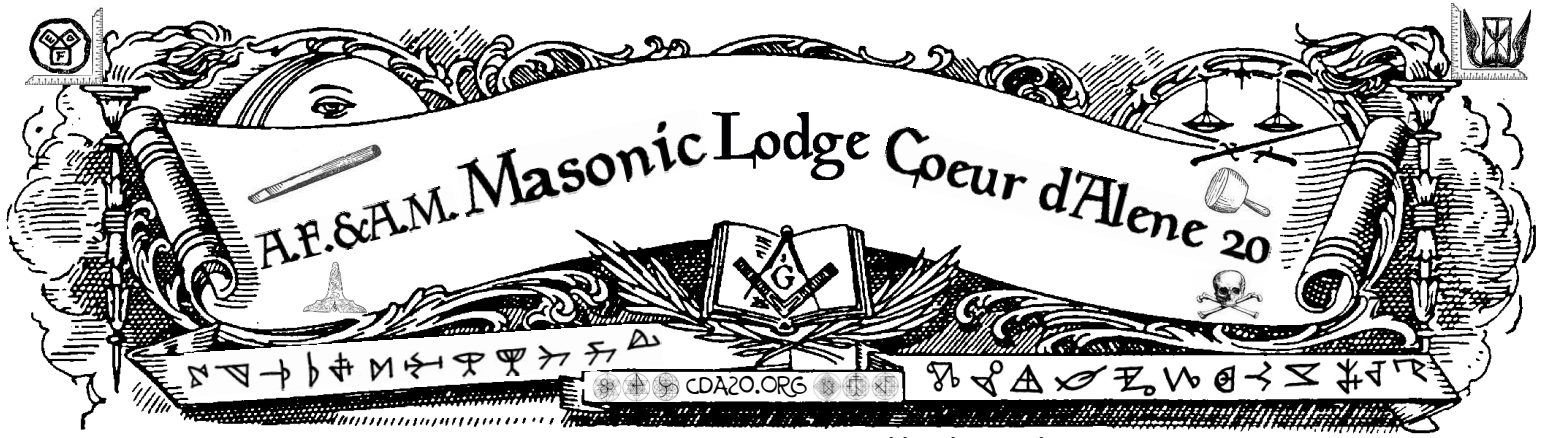
This, mithreum, as the meeting place, or lodge, was called, was usually cavern shaped,

to represent the cave in which the god had his struggle. There were benches or shelves along the side, and on these side lines the members sat. Each mithreum had its own officers, its president, trustees, standing committees, treasurer, and so forth, and there were higher degrees granting special privileges to the few.

Charity and Relief were universally practised and one Mithraist hailed another as "brother." The Mithraic "lodge" was kept small, and new lodges were developed as a result of "swarming off when membership grew too large.

Manicheism, as I have already said, sprang from the ashes of Mithraism, and St. Augustine, who did so much to give shape to the Roman Catholic church and theology was for many years an ardent Manichee, and through him many traces of the old Persian creed found their way into Christianity. Out of Manicheism, or out of what was finally left of it, came Paulicianism, and out of Paulicianism came many strong medieval cults — the Patari, the Waldenses, the Hugenots, and countless other such developments. Through these various channels echoes of the old Mithraism persisted over Europe, and it may very well be, as has often been alleged, that there are faint traces of the ancient cult to be found here and there in our own ceremonies or symbolisms. Such theories are necessarily vague and hard to prove, and anyway the thing is not of sufficient importance to argue about. If we have three or four symbols that originated in the





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worship of Mithra, so much the better for Mithra!

After all is said and done the Ancient Mysteries were among the finest things developed in the Roman world. They stood for equality in a savagely aristocratic and class-riddled society; they offered centers of refuge to the poor and the despised among a people little given to charity and who didn't believe a man should love his neighbor; and in a large historical way they left behind them methods of human organization, ideals and principles and hopes which yet remain in the world for our use and profit. If a man wishes to do so, he may say that what Freemasonry is among us, the Ancient Mysteries were to the people of the Roman world, but it would be a difficult thing for any man to establish the fact that Freemasonry has directly descended from those great cults.

[Note: Kipling, who has never wearied of handling themes concerned with Freemasonry, often writes of Mithraism. See in especial his Puck of Pook's Hill, page 173 of the 1911 edition, for the stirring Song to Mithras.] FINIS



THE SCYTHE

Is an emblem of time, which cuts the brittle thread of life, and launches us into eternity. Behold! what havoc the scythe of time makes among the human race; if by chance he should escape the numerous evils incident to childhood and youth, and with health and vigor arrive to the years of manhood, yet withal we must soon be cut down by the all-devouring scythe of time, and be gathered into the land where our fathers have gone before us.



HUMOR

Q - "How many Masons does it take to screw in a light bulb?"

A - It's a secret!

Q - "How many Masons does it take to screw in a light bulb?"

A - Three. One to screw it in, one to read the minutes of the previous light bulb replacement, and one to sit on the sidelines and complain about the way they USED to screw in light bulbs.

Q - "How many Masons does it take to screw in a light bulb?"

A - Three. You need a Secretary to read the minutes of the last light bulb changing, a Master Mason to change the light bulb, and a Past Master to sit on the sideline and say "That isn't how we did it."

Q - "How many Masons does it take to screw in a light bulb?"

A - Change it! My grandfather donated that lightbulb

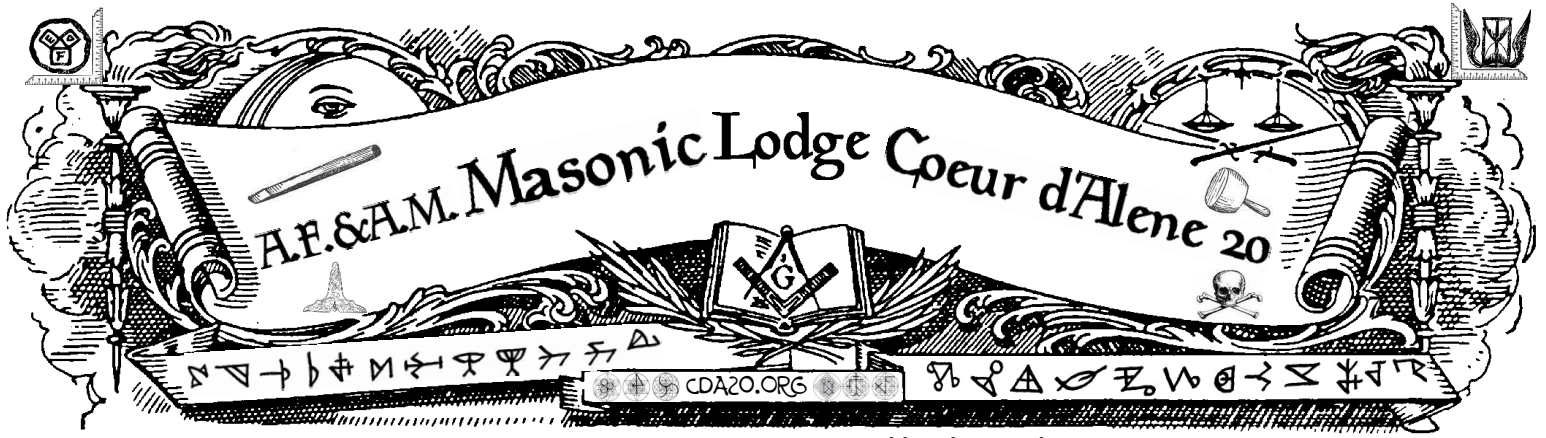
Q - "How many Past Masters does it take to change a light bulb?"

A - "Why change it...it always worked before?"

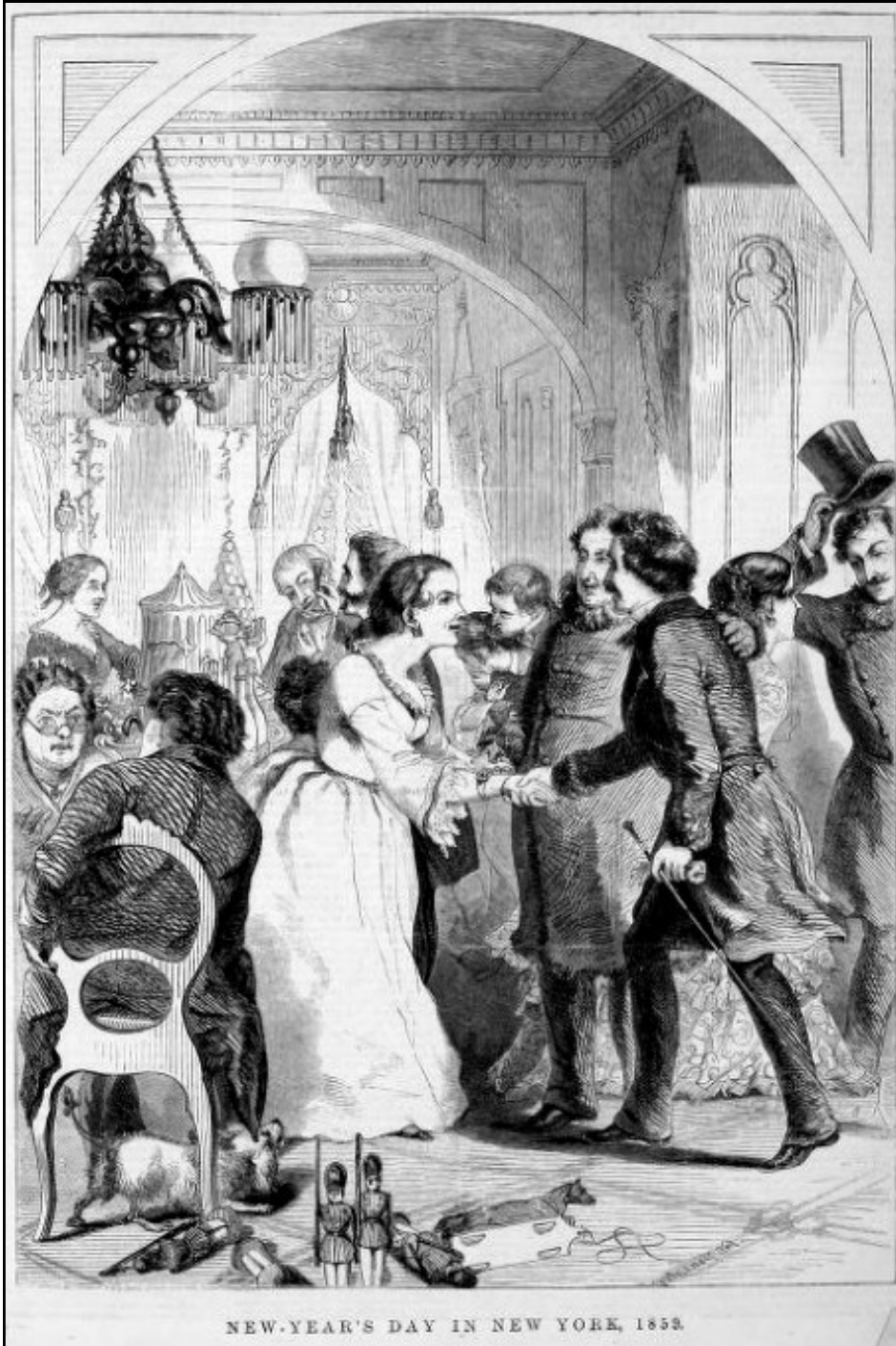
SEAL

FRANKFORT EAGLE LODGE
founded 1832

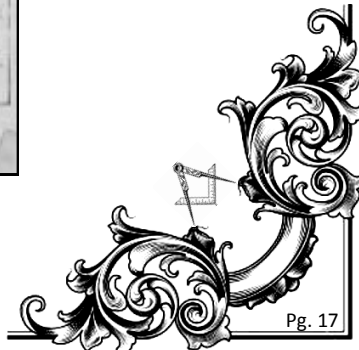
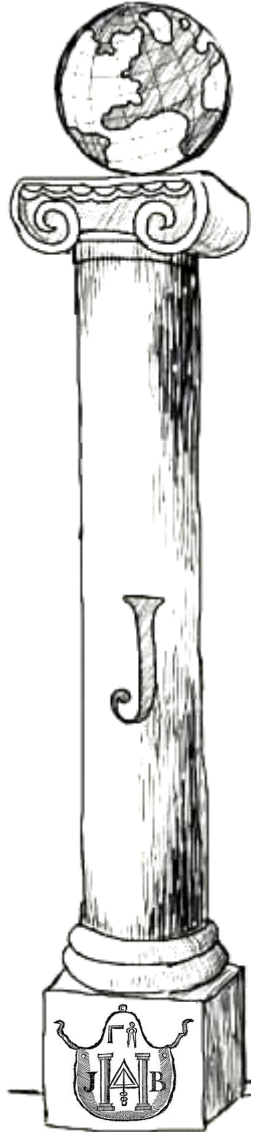


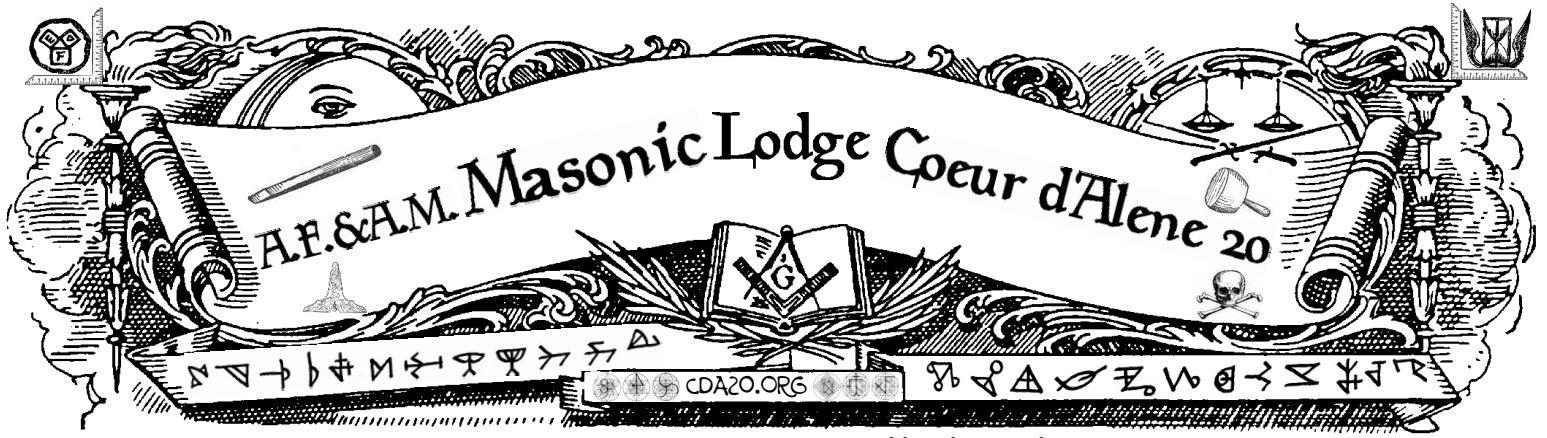


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NEW-YEAR'S DAY IN NEW YORK, 1858





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