

## The Builders Art

by Bro. Sydney H. Old-St. George's Lodge No 141, Kelowna published in Masonic Bulletin-BCY-April 1939

Freemasonry is essentially a building art and as such is subject to fundamental laws governing its procedure. It is first necessary that the ground upon which the structure is to be raised shall be such as to guarantee a proper and sure foundation. The designing of the edifice is, of course, subject to the purpose for which the structure is intended and the next consideration is the nature and quality of the material to be used in the building. These are the preliminary points to be observed before the real work is begun. The F.C. degree is peculiarly the work degree, in which the material is laboured upon and moulded to form, always with the design in view, the objective to be attained. Every candidate for Masonry should be selected for what he is, not for what you think you can make of him; for remember he has to do his work, not you, and if he answers well to the first requirements there is little doubt but that he will ultimately make good. It has often been said that the purpose of Masonry is to build character. Maybe this is correct today, but in the old schools of Initiation the qualifications of the would-be candidate would show the character already developed, i.e., "freeborn, of mature age, sound judgment, strict morals and under the tongue of good report." But let us first understand what we mean by free-born. Every man is a slave unto himself. He formulates his mental attitudes and surrounds himself with concrete ideas, he makes his own environment and generally imprisons himself in a mental attitude from which he cannot escape. "Men in cages" sums up the situation in those words. There is only one method of escape from himself; that is to live more really in the lives of those round him. "Thou shalt love your neighbour as thyself." But the ancient meaning of free-born meant to throw aside all self-imposed restrictions and be free from prejudice, free from preconceived notions, free from bigotry, free from dogma, free from inordinate passions, free from the inhibitions caused by egoism, in fact free from all attitudes of mind that would act as a barrier to the perfect inflow of Truth—just a clear white tracing board fit for the Great Architect to lay lines and draw designs upon, or as a pure white lambskin without spot or blemish. It is such a condition that furnishes the safe and sure foundation upon which the F.C. begins his work. In the F.C. degree we are earnestly recommended to study the liberal arts and sciences—grammar, rhetoric, logic, mathematic, geometry, astronomy and music, all of which Pythagoras deemed necessary to the proper understanding of the operations of Divine Law in Nature. Indeed, so positive was he in this that it is recorded he refused Ireneas admission to his School because he was lacking in his knowledge of mathematics and music, which any tyro in the study of this septenate of sciences would know is necessary. Pythagoras avers that "GOD mathematizes" and that "number and numbers underlie and guide the formative hand of Nature." Plato, another Initiate, says that "GOD geometrizes," yet some Masons find it difficult to associate geometry with man's moral and spiritual nature. Euclid, who outstripped his Master in the art, lays the foundation of a better understanding in his AXIOMS to which I would refer you.