

Freemasonry in USA

By BROTHER HARRY CARR

America-fifty states and forty-nine separate, sovereign Grand Lodges!

On my first visit, in 1960, I started at Montreal, Canada, then south to New York, Boston and Washington; then right across country to San Francisco, Fresno and Los Angeles. It was a seven-week Masonic tour and holiday combined, and I gave my Prestonian Lecture to enormous gatherings of Masons in all those cities, covering more than 7,000 miles within the American continent.

Apart from the usual letters of introduction, my principal equipment for the tour consisted of an insatiable curiosity, and a sufficient knowledge of English Masonic Practices to enable me to ask the right sort of questions so that I could make a reasonable assessment of our differences. I met and spoke to literally hundreds of Masons from E.A.s to Grand Librarians, Grand Secretaries and Grand Masters. I saw many things that pleased me enormously, and many that horrified me.

But, of course, the following impressions do not pretend to be a complete survey, nor can they possibly be true of the whole craft in the U.S.A. I have simply tried to describe something of what I saw, emphasising our differences in practice, with a critical eye for what seems strange to us, and wholehearted praise where praise is due. American Masons are warm, friendly folk, good hosts, good company, and eager to be helpful, and if my words appear to accentuate certain peculiarities, I must plead that they were written without malicious intent, knowing full well that our brethren overseas can find much in our own system and practices that calls for criticism.

THE BACKGROUND

The first thing that is obvious to every English Mason who visits the U.S.A. is that their Freemasonry is nothing like ours. In the first place, Masonry is not for father alone, but for the whole family.

For father there are the usual three "Blue" degrees, and then all the rest running right up to the 320 (the 330 is by selection and invitation; in fact, an honour rather than a degree).

For mother there is the Order of the Eastern Star, and several others.

For boys, aged from 14 to 21, there is the Order of De Molay, named after Jacques de Molai, the last Grand Master of the medieval Knights Templar.

For girls, aged 13 to 20, there is an Order called Rainbow, and another called Job's Daughters, and all these are, in a very special sense, Masonic Orders, or at least closely identified with Freemasonry.

When we were in Washington, D.C., while I was engaged on Masonic duties, my wife was entertained by the wives of several brethren, and among these ladies were Officers of an organisation which-in Washington-is known as Bethel, a kind of junior Masonic organisation for children, boys and girls, aged from 7 to 13!

I have called these Orders Masonic, and it is difficult for us in England to appreciate the point. Perhaps the following illustration may help: In A.Q.C., vol. lxxv, p.119, we recently reviewed the sesqui-centennial "History of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana", a regular and recognised Grand Lodge which is in amicable fraternal relationship with our own Grand Lodge of England.

Chapter 20 in this History is entitled, "Bodies Identified with Masonry in Louisiana" (my italics), and among those listed are:

The Order of the Eastern Star,

The Order of the Rainbow,

The Order of De Molay.

In Eastern Star, and the majority of the others, a genuine Masonic relationship is an essential prerequisite for joining, so that, for the Eastern Star, the lady candidate must be mother, wife, sister or daughter of a Freemason in good standing. (For Rainbow and De Molay, relationship is preferable, but not essential.) There is no suggestion that these Orders are quasi-Masonic, or that they attempt to copy Freemasonry. It is best to regard them as adjuncts to Freemasonry; and in the U.S.A. they are so regarded; the youth organisations as training grounds for the future, while the women's Orders count it a duty and a privilege to serve Freemasonry in every possible way. All this appears very strange to us in England but, although it may seem wrong for a Grand Officer to say so, I like it and I believe that it works! The fathers help the mothers in their "Masonry", and the mothers help the fathers in theirs, and both look after the children's organisations. Whether all these efforts have any marked effect on juvenile delinquency rates in the U.S.A. would be very hard to say, but I am firmly convinced that this family approach to the Craft can do nothing but good.

With this kind of background, the objectives in the Craft tend to take on a rather different aspect from ours. Generally, they do not go in so strongly for the maintenance of large Masonic Institutions, as we do. There are, indeed, many splendid institutions, but the emphasis is mainly on the social side, parties, outings and celebrations of one kind or another. A great deal is done by way of homes and equipment for crippled children. Masonic "blood-banks" are a big feature, the blood being for ultimate use by Masons and non-Masons alike. There

are some Masonic hospitals, and a number of homes for "senior citizens". Nobody grows old in the U.S.A.; if they are lucky enough to live that long, they become "senior citizens", and in those jurisdictions that aspire to the maintenance of institutions, it is usually the "senior citizens" who get first care.

Finally, I must not omit from this description of the background to the Craft, the all-too-obvious fact that almost everyone wears a badge, usually a "lapel-badge", and one sees all sorts of Masonic symbols ranging up to the 330, with the "High Degrees" and "Shriners" predominating. All this might seem to be a piece of pardonable male vanity and in the vast majority of cases it is nothing more. But the badges tend to become a temptation, and the Masonic visitor to the U.S.A. will not need to look far before he realises that they are all too often used for business.

Of all things likely to shock an Englishman, this, I think, must be the most distasteful, and though I am sure that many brethren in the U.S.A. find these practices as objectionable as we do, one has the impression that they have grown accustomed to them, and that is a great pity.

LODGE MEMBERSHIP

Judging by our standards in England, where the average membership is around 80 per Lodge, American lodge memberships are extraordinarily high. Consider, as an example, Washington, D.C., the capital and the centre of government; it is virtually a city without an industry. It has about fifty lodges in all, four of them with memberships of 1,000, 1,200, 1,400 and 1,500 respectively! And these enormous memberships are to be found in all the large cities in the U.S.A. It is, of course, impossible to strike average figures as between lodges in the small villages and those in the large towns, because they would be misleading. But in any of the cities one might expect the general run of lodges to range from 400 to 800 members, with several running into four figures.

At the time of my visit to the U.S.A., I was already Secretary of two lodges, and I was naturally puzzled as to the reasons for these (to us) fantastic numbers. There appear to be several reasons, and I dare not commit myself as to their order of importance:

(a) Maintenance costs are very high for Lodges and lodge buildings in the U.S.A. and this leads to some curious results. In some cities, where a new lodge is to be founded, it is not uncommon to find that the existing lodges raise objections, because they regard all future Masons in their territory as their own "reserve pool", which will help swell their own membership in due course, and thus help them with their maintenance charges, and their balance sheets. In effect, the Masons themselves are opposing the formation of new lodges (see the note on this subject in "Whither are we travelling?" by M.W. Brother Dwight L. Smith, P. G.M., and Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Indiana, in A.Q.C., vol. lxxvi, p.41).

(b) Most U.S.A. jurisdictions have curious regulations relating to what they call Single, Dual or Plural membership. Some Grand Lodges allow only Single membership, i.e. a Brother may belong to only one Craft Lodge and no more. Others allow Dual membership, usually permitting their members to belong to one lodge inside the State and one outside. Only very few Grand Lodges permit their members the same privilege as we enjoy here of Plural membership, i.e. of joining as many lodges as we please. It seems possible that, in some indirect way, these regulations have the effect of channelling vast numbers of Masons into a comparatively small number of lodges, and that leads to large memberships.

I realise that this may be faulty reasoning, but there is no doubt as to the facts, i.e. that in many jurisdictions, if Lodge memberships are to be kept reasonably low, there are simply not enough Lodges to take the vast numbers of men who want to join.

There are other reasons which are almost national characteristics:

(c) The Americans are great "joiners"; they like to be in on everything.

(d) They admire big numbers and mass production.

Of course I was anxious to know how the American Lodges achieve these enormous memberships, and the opportunity came when I visited the Grand Secretary's office in Boston, Massachusetts. Among many interesting papers that were given to me was their Year Book, containing all the statistics for the preceding year, and thumbing through the pages casually, I came to the section which summarised their Annual Returns. There were many pages of figures but at the very end of the list there was one set of figures that caught my eye. They were details for the very last lodge that was consecrated just before the Year Book was printed, and at the time of this return the lodge was only 11 months old. At that age (11 months) this infant lodge had a membership of 174; during the 11 months it had initiated 54 Brethren; it had passed 49 and raised 45 brethren. Mass production in a really big way!

The lodges usually meet once a month (for ten or eleven months in the year) for their "Stated" or regular meetings, and every week or fortnight for "Emergent", "Special" or work meetings. Attendances, I am told, are proportionately low. In a big lodge perhaps 200 attend the Stated meetings, and 20 or 30 at the "work" meetings, and these "work" meetings are, in effect, the factories where Masons are turned out by mass production. This may sound cynical, but I believe it is a fair statement of the situation that exists in the larger Masonic centres in the U.S.A.

Arising from all this, perhaps the most frequent question I have been asked in England is, "With memberships of 800 to 1,500 how can a Mason ever become Master of a Lodge? Surely he could never live long enough." The answer is that it is easy. All he needs to do is express a desire to "go on", or to "get in line" as the

Americans say, and the path is wide open for him. It is the great tragedy of Craft Masonry in the U.S.A. that vast numbers of those who join simply use Craft as a springboard to the " Higher Degrees

To be Master of a "Blue" lodge may be very pleasant, but it is not nearly so important as to become a 320 Mason and a " Shriner", with all its attendant advantages (mainly social). As a result, the Craft is neglected in favour of all sorts of side degrees.

Among the Grand Officers, who see and deplore what is happening, this is a source of constant anxiety, frequently expressed in forthright statements. It is a disease whose presence is known and understood, but the remedy, unfortunately, is still to be found. Talk to any American Mason for five minutes, and the chances are that he will show you his wallet containing a whole " concertina-full "of Dues Cards witnessing the number of" Masonic" organisations to which he belongs. There will seldom be more than one (or two) Craft Lodges among them; the rest are all high degrees and side degrees, that are helping, unintentionally, to sap the Craft of its vitality!

THE SCOTTISH RITE AND THE HIGH DEGREES

The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite is perhaps the most powerful "Masonic" organisation in the U.S.A. and it is the principal and most popular route towards the 320 and the Shrine. There is an alternative route, via the so-called York Rite. The finest Masonic buildings and the largest Temples are those of the Scottish Rite, and when I lectured to exceptionally large numbers of Masons, the meetings were all held in Scottish Rite Temples.

They are, in fact, beautifully appointed theatres, wired for sound, with stages, scenery and props, wardrobes, dressing- rooms, and elaborate stage-lighting. The degrees are usually conferred in clusters, i.e. a set of perhaps three or four degrees will be given at one session, the first two or three being "communicated" or recited, and one, the most important, being actually performed or" conferred". The work is done by a team of Officers working as actors in a play. I am told that in some jurisdictions professional teams are used and they are paid for their services.

The candidates and members are seated in the auditorium and one candidate only is selected from those present to take part in the "performance". He is actually" in the ceremony "but all the candidates take their Obligations together and make the requisite responses. In effect, the selected candidate receives the degrees on behalf of his colleagues.

Many of my close friends belong to the Scottish Rite, and I would not want to be misunderstood in what I write about it. Broadly speaking, it opens up the paths to a wider knowledge and understanding, partly of the Craft itself, but to a much larger degree, of the many" fringe studies " which may be said to spring from it.

Of over four million Masons in the U.S.A. more than one in every five belongs to the 320, and that is an amazingly high proportion. It is here that the trouble lies, not because there is anything wrong with the "High Degrees", but rather because of the reason why the brethren join them.

I have mentioned "Shriners", and must say a few words about that organisation. Its full title is "Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine", and it is strictly and in every sense a non-Masonic Order, but a Brother must be a 320 Scottish Rite Mason (or a Knight Templar of a corresponding grade), before he is eligible to join it. The 320 sounds like a very long Masonic journey, but it is not so difficult as might appear, and the "one-in-five" proportion of brethren who achieve the 320 shows that the barriers are easily surmounted.

But the "Shrine" is a thing apart; it is an Order devoted to the social pleasures and good works. At the centre of seventeen cities in Canada and U.S.A. you will find a large and handsome building, or cluster of buildings, under the sign, " The Shriners' Hospital for Crippled Children ", and it serves children of every colour, race and creed, whether their parents are connected with the Craft or not. This aspect of their work is spectacular, wholly praiseworthy, and it deserves emulation. The administration of their hospitals is very sensible too; they find the land, they build the hospitals, equip them splendidly and ensure their maintenance.

As an institution, I gather that the "Shrine" comes under control of the Grand Lodge of the territory, and it has to follow the edicts of the Grand Lodge and the Grand Master. Indeed, my informant reports a case within his own memory when a whole "Divan" (Cabinet) of Shrine Officers was replaced by edict of the Grand Master, because of some infraction.

Statistics are liable to misinterpretation, and I try to avoid them here. But an examination of the detailed charts relating to Craft and "High-Degree" memberships in the U.S.A. show quite clearly that during the past three years there has been a small but regular fall in memberships of Craft Lodges; yet the "Shrine" membership increases each year!

CRAFT RITUAL

There are a number of different Craft rituals in use in the U.S.A., generally exhibiting only minor variations and, broadly speaking, they are very similar to ours in England. Yet, in a very curious way, the visitor who knows his ritual will find that the American versions sound strangely old-fashioned, repetitive and somehow older than ours. Surprisingly, this is true; although the Americans got their ritual from Britain, their ritual is, in fact, older than ours, and that makes an interesting story.

As you probably know, our present ritual was virtually standardised at the time of the union of the rival Grand Lodges, in 1813, when the "Antients" and the

"Moderns" ultimately came together to form the United Grand Lodge. For several years before that date committees of learned brethren had been sitting, trying to evolve a revised form of ritual that would be acceptable to both sides. The result of their labours, very satisfying to us nowadays, did not meet with wholesale approval at that time. Many changes had been made and a great deal of symbolical material had been discarded.

American Masonic workings owe their origins, unquestionably, to England, Scotland and Ireland, but the stabilisation of their ritual was done by an American, Thomas Smith Webb, who, although he wrote very little of it himself, may well be described as the father of American ritual.

In 1792 Webb, a printer by trade, settled in Albany, N.Y., and soon afterwards he made the acquaintance of John Hanmer, an English Freemason who was a keen ritualist and apparently very knowledgeable about the Preston system. Webb, though barely 22 years of age, had already been a Freemason for nearly two years, and their mutual interests drew them together. This was the period when the English Masonic ritual was at its highest stage of development. Hutchinson and Calcott had published their works; Preston was in his prime, and the 1792 edition of his "Illustrations of Masonry" had just appeared. This was the eighth edition, as popular and successful as its predecessors, and it was almost a Bible to the English Craft. Webb took the book, retained sixty-four pages of Preston's work intact, word for word, cut out a few minor items and rearranged others, and published it in 1797 under the title, "Freemasons' Monitor or Illustrations of Freemasonry". Within twenty years the ritual in England had been altered, curtailed and polished up (some said almost beyond recognition), but not so in the U.S.A.; they preserved it.

Look at some of our oldest Tracing Boards and you will see pictures of the Scythe, Hour-Glass, Beehive, Anchor, etc., which once had their proper places as symbolic portions of our ritual. They have disappeared from our Tracing Boards and from the ritual; but in America they are still in use to this day, depicted on the Boards and explained in their "Monitors". And so, it is fair to say that their ritual, though it came from us, is actually older than ours, and it is not merely "old-fashioned", but also more discursive, and by reason of their lectures, much more explanatory than ours, especially of the symbolical meaning of their procedure.

But apart from the things we have lost, their ritual material is essentially the same as ours, and easily recognisable. Their signs and secrets are the same as ours, except that they use the Scottish sign for the E.A. Their second degree is more elaborate than ours. Their third is basically the same as ours, but because they perform the drama as if it were a play, treating the candidate as though he was really H.A., the result is occasionally rather rough and frightening, especially in those lodges that pride themselves on the realism of their performance.

The manner in which the Americans safeguard their ritual is also interesting. In England our Grand Lodge views the ritual as a "domestic matter", i.e. a majority of the brethren in any lodge may decide what form of ritual shall be worked, and unless the lodge was guilty of some serious breach, the Grand Lodge would not interfere. In the U.S.A. the very reverse is the case. Each Grand Lodge prescribes the ritual that its lodges shall work, and usually the Grand Lodge prints and publishes the "monitorial" or explanatory portions of the rituals, too. Ten out of the forty-nine Grand Lodges also publish the esoteric ritual, in code or cipher, but this is forbidden in the others. Moreover, to prevent innovations, the Grand Lodges protect their forms of working by the appointment of officers, called Grand Lecturers, whose duty is not to lecture, but to ensure that the groups of lodges under their care adhere to the official workings. They do this by means of official demonstrations called "Exemplifications", and during my first visit, I was lucky enough to see both first and second degrees rehearsed in this way.

The procedure is simple: each Grand Lecturer has perhaps eight to fifteen lodges under his care. On the appointed day all the Officers (including Treasurer, Secretary, Stewards, etc.) are ordered to attend in one of the Grand Lodge Temples, or at a central Masonic Temple, and attendance is compulsory. The Officers of the most senior lodge will take their places and they start to rehearse a ceremony, without interruption. After perhaps ten minutes the Grand Lecturer will walk to the centre of the lodge, comment on the work and correct any errors that were made, and the next lodge in order of seniority will take over and continue. This is done until all the lodges have been rehearsed.

In some jurisdictions the organisation and procedure is different. The Grand Lecturer has a team of Grand Inspectors under him, each in charge of perhaps five lodges. Each lodge, in turn, is host to the other four, and only the "host" lodge gives the exemplification, while the others look on. Ultimately, the Grand Lecturers are all responsible for the accuracy of the work".

The exemplifications I saw in Boston required a necessary period of adjustment to Bostonian English, but after that I would gladly give them full marks; their work is splendid.

RITUALS AND MONITORS

Grand Lodge practices, in regard to books of the ritual, differ from State to State. In Pennsylvania and California, for example, no written or printed ritual is permitted. All tuition is, as they say, "from mouth to ear", i.e. the Officers and candidates must attend at rehearsals or work-meetings until they have memorised their work, simply by listening to it over and over again. In some jurisdictions each officer is responsible for training his successor, privately, not at rehearsals. The ritual material is usually divided up into two categories

1. "Monitors" which print non-secret portions of ritual and procedure, symbolic lectures, etc., all in plain language.

2. The "Rituals" proper, which are printed (in ten States) in some sort of cipher, with..... dots in the usual places.

The Monitors need not concern us here, but the Rituals are interesting. There appear to be four different ciphers that are mainly used. One of the most popular is a kind of "geometrical" code, made up of straight lines, curves, angles and symbols, which look very difficult, but are, in fact, fairly easy to break down.

In many jurisdictions a two-letter code is used; usually the first and last letters of each word, but occasionally the first two letters of each word. These two codes are fairly difficult to read until one begins to have a fair knowledge of the "expected" word; but as soon as the phrases become at all familiar the two letter codes are quite easy to read.

Most difficult of all is the one letter code, in which only the first letter of each word is used, and this is absolutely terrifying, almost impossible, to read until one has acquired a real knowledge of the ritual.

From the Officers' point of view all this is simply a matter of patience and regular attendance, but for the candidates it is another story. Here in England the Candidate for passing has to learn the answers to perhaps eight or nine questions, usually printed on cards in plain language, with perhaps one or two words omitted. For raising he learns another seven or eight answers and he is through.

In the U.S.A. jurisdictions these examinations are called "Proficiency Tests" and they must be a really worrying experience. In Rhode Island, for example, the E.A. passing to F.C. has to answer about seventy-seven questions, with the Obligation, by heart, before he can pass his test; the F.C. must answer some forty-odd questions and the Obligation from memory, and the M.M., after he has taken his degree another forty or so, again with the Obligation by heart. Then, and not until then, does he become a real member of the lodge. Then he is allowed to sign the register, and enjoy all the privileges of membership.

All this would be difficult enough if the questions and answers were printed in plain language, but they are not. In those jurisdictions where no printed rituals are permitted, the candidates must attend "classes of instruction", usually under the care of the J.D. or S.D., until they have learned their work "from mouth to ear". Elsewhere they learn their work from the cipher books. I have a set of the "Proficiency Tests" as used in Rhode Island in their one letter code. They are simply terrifying. I have been a Preceptor for many years and I find them difficult to read. Heaven knows how the candidates manage but they do.

Here, I believe, it is fair to say that American Masons, after passing their "Proficiency Tests" in all three degrees acquire a much wider knowledge of the

ceremonies, and especially of their symbolical meaning, than our candidates get in England. Their patience and industry are more than justified.

VISITING A LODGE IN THE U.S.A.

(Author's Note-It is impossible to describe the practices of forty-nine separate Grand Lodges in a short paper of this kind. To deal with such a subject in detail would require several large volumes. In all that has been written thus far, and especially in the chapter below, the reader will please remember that practices vary from one Grand Lodge to another. I have simply tried to give my impressions based upon different territories in which I visited.)

The Lodge will be opened at perhaps 7.30 p.m., directly into the Third Degree. All business is conducted in the Third Degree (except Initiation and Passing). There may have been a meeting earlier in the afternoon for degree work, and that would have been followed by a break from 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. for dinner, a simple and informal meal, without any toasts or speeches. "Table-work", as we know it in England, is almost unknown in the U.S.A.

At 7.30 p.m. the Minutes and private Lodge business will be dealt with; at 8 p.m. the Lodge will be ready to receive its individual guests, Delegations, and perhaps their Deputy District Grand Master, the local Grand Lodge Officer who has generally some ten to fifteen Lodges under his care.

Most of the Brethren and Visitors, including Grand Lodge Officers, will have picked up a plain white apron from a pile outside the lodge door, and will enter wearing no other Masonic clothing except possibly a breast jewel. Americans, perhaps because of the vagaries of their climate, are very informal about Masonic dress, and the visitor need not be surprised at light-coloured suits, brown shoes, and typically American neckties; but the Officers of the Lodge are usually immaculate in dinner-dress, with their full Lodge regalia, and their aprons are often very ornate by English standards.

The layout of the Lodges is not quite like ours in England but, of course, practices will vary in different jurisdictions-I merely describe the best-equipped Lodges that I saw during my visit. The Temples are large, with the altar in the middle of the floor. As one might expect with the "mass-production Masonry", the altars are enormous, perhaps 8 ft. by 6 ft., with kneeling stools on all four sides; a fine altar-cloth, a huge Bible with broad ribbon markers, and a spot-light above the altar shines directly on to the Bible. The three lesser lights (three handsome tall candlesticks) are placed at three corners of the altar. The precise positions of the three lights seemed to vary in different lodges, and on this point there appears to be no absolute uniformity.

The W.M., wearing a top hat, sits in the east, his chair framed in a handsome architectural "feature" pillars and cornice, at the head of a flight of seven steps which run along the eastern wall of the Lodge room. He sits "open to the Lodge"

without any pedestal in front of him, but a little low table is at his right hand, just large enough to hold a gavel. The J.W. sits similarly framed, at the head of a flight of three steps, and the S.W. has five steps. The Treasurer and Secretary are seated separately in the N.E. and S.E. corners respectively, in heavy cash desks with grilles, ornamental cages, rather like those used for bank cashiers thirty or forty years ago. The floor is covered with carpet, usually of a normal household design-not the black and-white chequered "pavement" that we know.

The visitor entering the Lodge will be escorted to a point nearest the altar, where he halts to salute first the W.M., then the J.W., and then the S.W. The salute, which I cannot describe here, is always the position of the hands at the moment of taking the Obligation; but the E.A. sign in America is the Scottish "Due Guard" (which can best be described as the position of the hands when taking the Obligation in the Royal Arch).

In giving the salute, the visitor will have turned full circle towards the Master who stands to greet him. The Marshal (our D.C.) will now introduce the visitor by name, giving his Lodge number, rank, etc., and the W.M. removes his top hat, and holding it at his breast, welcomes the visitor by name, and if he is a Master or Past Master, the W.M. will offer him the courtesy of the east". This is an invitation to the Guest to sit on the Master's right hand, a courtesy which I accepted gladly. But I was surprised to notice that the majority of American visitors (even including Grand Officers) bowed their thanks and remained in the body of the Lodge. This puzzled me very much, until I realised that I had overlooked one item of the Lodge furnishings. Along both sides of the Lodge, spaced at fairly close intervals, there is a row of large and handsome " Club" ashtrays-and they are not there for ornament! There are no ashtrays in the east, and this probably explains the visitors' reluctance to sit there. I was told, somewhat shamefacedly, that there is no smoking during the degrees, but in fairness, it must be emphasised that smoking in the Lodge room is permitted only in certain American jurisdictions, not in all of them.

The Americans are very efficient in matters of stage management. The Marshal carries a short ebony baton, perhaps 18 inches long, with handsome silver mounts, and he escorts the W.M. or the Chaplain down to the altar for all prayers and obligations, while all the lights gradually dim down to darkness, so that only the spotlight is left, shining directly on to the Bible. So, too, after the Lodge is closed, the Marshal organises the " Salute to the Flag". A procession of Officers is formed, and a huge flag is brought into the Lodge under escort. It is borne towards the altar, the lights dim down, and the only spotlight is left shining on the flag, while the assembly sings, "My Country, 'tis of Thee".

Yes, they really are different.

Excerpts from a paper read to Manchester Lodge for Masonic Research, No. 5502, E.C.