

The Level and The Square

The Level and The Square

by Rob Morris

This poem, written in August 1854, is the most popular of the series. Fifteen Musical compositions have been set to it, and either as song or declamation it has gone the rounds of the Masonic world.

We meet upon the level and we part upon the square
These words have precious meaning and are practiced everywhere
Come let us contemplate them, they are worthy of a thought
From the ancient times of Masonry these symbols have been
taught

We meet upon the level, every country, sect and creed
The rich man from his mansion, the poor man from the field
For wealth is not considered within our outer door
And we all meet on the level upon the checkered floor.

We act upon the Plumb the Junior Warden states
We walk upright throughout our lives, we seek the pearly gates
The All-seeing Eye that reads our hearts doth bear us witness
true

That we shall try to honor God and give each man his due
We part upon the square as all good Masons do
We mingle with the multitude a faithful band and true
So the brotherhood of Masonry from every corner come
To meet upon the level and act upon the plumb.

There's a world where all are equal we're coming to it fast
We shall meet upon the level there when the days on earth are
past

We shall stand before the altar and our Master will be there
To try the blocks we offer with his own unerring square
We shall meet upon the level there but never thence depart
There's a Mansion-'tis all ready for each trusting, faithful

heart

There's a Mansion and a welcome and a multitude is there
Who have met upon the level and been tried upon the square.

Let us meet upon the level then while these earthly ties we
share

And just hope we're there to answer when the roll is called up
there

As we travel through our lifespan time aids us prepare

To gather up our working tools and part upon the square

So remember all our teachings, that bright fraternal chain

We part upon the square below to meet in heaven again

These words have precious meaning and are practiced everywhere

We meet upon the level and we part upon the square.

http://www.themasonictrowel.com/Poetry/poems_rob_morris/the_level_and_the_square.htm

The Press by Rudyard Kipling

The Soldier may forget his Sword,

The Sailor man the Sea,

The Mason may forget the Word

And the Priest his Litany:

The Maid may forget both jewel and gem,

And the Bride her wedding-dress-

But the Jew shall forget Jerusalem

Ere we forget the Press !

Who once hath stood through the loaded hour

Ere, roaring like the gale,

The Harrield and the Hoe devour

Their league-long paper-bale,

And has lit his pipe in the morning calm

That follows the midnight stress-
He hath sold his heart to the old Black Art
We call the daily Press.

Who once hath dealt in the widest game
That all of a man can play,
No later love, no larger fame
Will lure him long away.
As the war-horse snuffeth the battle afar,
The entered Soul, no less,
He saith: "Ha! Ha!" where the trumpets are
And the thunders of the Press!

Canst thou number the days that we fulfill,
Or the *Times* that we bring forth ?
Canst thou send the lightnings to do thy will,
And cause them reign on earth ?
Hast thou given a peacock goodly wings,
To please his foolishness ?
Sit down at the heart of men and things,
Companion of the Press !

The Pope may launch his Interdict,
The Union its decree,
But the bubble is blown and the bubble is pricked
By Us and such as We.
Remember the battle and stand aside
While Thrones and Powers confess
That King over all the children of pride
Is the Press – the Press – the Press !

CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE WORKHOUSE

This time of year i like to send a reminder about what I think Christmas should be about. Sometimes a dark warning does the job better than I ever could, so just so we think about the real side of life, please take the time to read.

CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE WORKHOUSE

(A Poem by George R. Sims, 1847-1922)

It is Christmas Day in the workhouse,
And the cold, bare walls are bright
With garlands of green and holly,
And the place is a pleasant sight;
For with clean-washed hands and faces,
In a long and hungry line
The paupers sit at the table,
For this is the hour they dine.
And the guardians and their ladies,
Although the wind is east,
Have come in their furs and wrappers,
To watch their charges feast;
To smile and be condescending,
Put pudding on pauper plates.
To be hosts at the workhouse banquet
They've paid for – with the rates.
Oh, the paupers are meek and lowly
With their "Thank'ee kindly, mum's!"
So long as they fill their stomachs,
What matter it whence it comes!
But one of the old men mutters,
And pushes his plate aside:
"Great God!" he cries, "but it chokes me!
For this is the day she died!"
The guardians gazed in horror,
The master's face went white;
"Did a pauper refuse the pudding?"
"Could their ears believe aright?"
Then the ladies clutched their husbands,
Thinking the man would die,

Struck by a bolt, or something,
By the outraged One on high.
But the pauper sat for a moment,
Then rose 'mid silence grim,
For the others had ceased to chatter
And trembled in every limb.
He looked at the guardians' ladies,
Then, eyeing their lords, he said,
"I eat not the food of villains
Whose hands are foul and red:
"Whose victims cry for vengeance
From their dark, unhallowed graves."
"He's drunk!" said the workhouse master,
"Or else he's mad and raves."
"Not drunk or mad," cried the pauper,
"But only a haunted beast,
Who, torn by the hounds and mangled,
Declines the vulture's feast.
"I care not a curse for the guardians,
And I won't be dragged away;
Just let me have the fit out,
It's only on Christmas Day
That the black past comes to goad me,
And prey on my burning brain;
I'll tell you the rest in a whisper –
I swear I won't shout again.
"Keep your hands off me, curse you!
Hear me right out to the end.
You come here to see how paupers
The season of Christmas spend;
You come here to watch us feeding,
As they watched the captured beast.
Here's why a penniless pauper
Spits on your paltry feast.
"Do you think I will take your bounty,
And let you smile and think
You're doing a noble action
With the parish's meat and drink?
Where is my wife, you traitors –
The poor old wife you slew?
Yes, by the God above me,

My Nance was killed by you!
'Last winter my wife lay dying,
Starved in a filthy den;
I had never been to the parish –
I came to the parish then.
I swallowed my pride in coming,
For ere the ruin came,
I held up my head as a trader,
And I bore a spotless name.
"I came to the parish, craving
Bread for a starving wife,
Bread for the woman who'd loved me
Through fifty years of life;
And what do you think they told me,
Mocking my awful grief,
That 'the House' was open to us,
But they wouldn't give 'out relief'.
"I slunk to the filthy alley –
'Twas a cold, raw Christmas Eve –
And the bakers' shops were open,
Tempting a man to thief;
But I clenched my fists together,
Holding my head awry,
So I came to her empty-handed
And mournfully told her why.
"Then I told her the house was open;
She had heard of the ways of that,
For her bloodless cheeks went crimson,
and up in her rags she sat,
Crying, 'Bide the Christmas here, John,
We've never had one apart;
I think I can bear the hunger –
The other would break my heart.'
"All through that eve I watched her,
Holding her hand in mine,
Praying the Lord and weeping,
Till my lips were salt as brine;
I asked her once if she hungered,
And as she answered 'No' ,
T'he moon shone in at the window,
Set in a wreath of snow.

“Then the room was bathed in glory,
And I saw in my darling’s eyes
The faraway look of wonder
That comes when the spirit flies;
And her lips were parched and parted,
And her reason came and went.
For she raved of our home in Devon,
Where our happiest years were spent.
“And the accents, long forgotten,
Came back to the tongue once more.
For she talked like the country lassie
I woo’d by the Devon shore;
Then she rose to her feet and trembled,
And fell on the rags and moaned,
And, ‘Give me a crust – I’m famished –
For the love of God!’ she groaned.
“I rushed from the room like a madman
And flew to the workhouse gate,
Crying, ‘Food for a dying woman!’
And the answer came, ‘Too late.’
They drove me away with curses;
Then I fought with a dog in the street
And tore from the mongrel’s clutches
A crust he was trying to eat.
“Back through the filthy byways!
Back through the trampled slush!
Up to the crazy garret,
Wrapped in an awful hush;
My heart sank down at the threshold,
And I paused with a sudden thrill.
For there, in the silv’ry moonlight,
My Nance lay, cold and still.
“Up to the blackened ceiling,
The sunken eyes were cast –
I knew on those lips, all bloodless,
My name had been the last;
She called for her absent husband –
O God! had I but known! –
Had called in vain, and, in anguish,
Had died in that den – alone.
“Yes, there, in a land of plenty,

Lay a loving woman dead,
Cruelly starved and murdered
for a loaf of the parish bread;
At yonder gate, last Christmas,
I craved for a human life,
You, who would feed us paupers,
What of my murdered wife!"
'There, get ye gone to your dinners,
Don't mind me in the least,
Think of the happy paupers
Eating your Christmas feast;
And when you recount their blessings
In your smug parochial way,
Say what you did for me, too,
Only last Christmas Day."

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believe aright?" Then the ladies clutched their husbands, Thinking the man would die, Struck by a bolt, or something, By the outraged One on high.

But the pauper sat for a moment, Then rose 'mid silence grim, For the others had ceased to chatter And trembled in every limb. He looked at the guardians' ladies, Then, eyeing their lords, he said, "I eat not the food of villains Whose hands are foul and red:

"Whose victims cry for vengeance From their dark, unhallowed graves." "He's drunk!" said the workhouse master, "Or else he's mad and raves." "Not drunk or mad," cried the pauper, "But only a haunted beast, Who, torn by the hounds and mangled, Declines the vulture's feast.

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"Keep your hands off me, curse you! Hear me right out to the end. You come here to see how paupers The season of Christmas spend;. You come here to watch us feeding, As they watched the captured beast. Here's why a penniless pauper Spits on your paltry feast.

"Do you think I will take your bounty, And let you smile and think You're doing a noble action With the parish's meat and drink? Where is my wife, you traitors – The poor old wife you slew? Yes, by the God above me, My Nance was killed by you!

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"Up to the blackened ceiling, The sunken eyes were cast – I
knew on those lips, all bloodless, My name had been the
last; She called for her absent husband – O God! had I but

known! – Had called in vain, and, in anguish, Had died in that den – alone.

“Yes, there, in a land of plenty, Lay a loving woman dead, Cruelly starved and murdered for a loaf of the parish bread; At yonder gate, last Christmas, I craved for a human life, You, who would feed us paupers, What of my murdered wife!”

‘There, get ye gone to your dinners, Don’t mind me in the least, Think of the happy paupers Eating your Christmas feast; And when you recount their blessings In your smug parochial way, Say what you did for me, too, Only last Christmas Day.’”

The Builders – by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The Builders
by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
(1807-1882)

All are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time;
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays

Are the blocks with which we build.

Truly shape and fashion these;
Leave no yawning gaps between;
Think not, because no man sees,
Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of Art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part;
For the Gods see everywhere.

Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen;
Make the house, where Gods may dwell,
Beautiful, entire, and clean.

Else our lives are incomplete,
Standing in these walls of Time,
Broken stairways, where the feet
Stumble as they seek to climb.

Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base;
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.

Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets, where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain,
And one boundless reach of sky.

A Pilgrims Way – Rudyard Kipling

I do not look for holy saints to guide me on my way,
Or male and female devilkings to lead my feet astray.
If these are added, I rejoice—if not, I shall not mind,
So long as I have leave and choice to meet my fellow-kind.
For as we come and as we go (and deadly-soon go we!)
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!
Thus I will honour pious men whose virtue shines so bright
(Though none are more amazed than I when I by chance do
right),
And I will pity foolish men for woe their sins have bred
(Though ninety-nine per cent. of mine I brought on my own
head).
And, Amorite or Eremite, or General Averagee,
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!
And when they bore me overmuch, I will not shake mine ears,
Recalling many thousand such whom I have bored to tears.
And when they labour to impress, I will not doubt nor scoff;
Since I myself have done no less and—sometimes pulled it off.
Yea, as we are and we are not, and we pretend to be,
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

And when they work me random wrong, as oftentimes hath been,
I will not cherish hate too long (my hands are none too
clean).

And when they do me random good I will not feign surprise.

No more than those whom I have cheered with wayside charities.

But, as we give and as we take—whate'er our takings be—

The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

But when I meet with frantic folk who sinfully declare

There is no pardon for their sin, the same I will not spare

Till I have proved that Heaven and Hell which in our hearts we
have

Show nothing irredeemable on either side of the grave.

For as we live and as we die—if utter Death there be—

The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

Deliver me from every pride—the Middle, High, and Low—

That bars me from a brother's side, whatever pride he show.

And purge me from all heresies of thought and speech and pen

That bid me judge him otherwise than I am judged. Amen!

That I may sing of Crowd or King or road-borne company,

That I may labour in my day, vocation and degree,

To prove the same in deed and name, and hold unshakenly

(Where'er I go, whate'er I know, whoe'er my neighbor be)

This single faith in Life and Death and to Eternity:

“The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

The Level and The Square – Br. Robert Morris

We meet upon the Level and we part upon the Square
What priceless words of meaning these words Masonic are
Come, let us contemplate them, They are worthy of a thought;
In the very walls of Masonry the sentiment is wrought.

We meet upon the Level and from every station come
The rich man from his palace and the poor man from his home,
For the rich must leave their wealth and state outside the Mason's door,
And the poor man finds his best respects upon the Checkered Floor.

We meet upon the Plumb, 'tis the order of our Guide
We walk upright in every way and lean to neither side;
The All-Seeing Eye that reads our hearts and doth bear us witness true,
That we still try to honour God and give each man his due.

We part upon the Square, for the world must have its due,
We mingle with the multitude, a faithful band and true,
But the influence of our gatherings in Masonry is green,
And we long upon the Level to renew the happy scene.

There is a World where all are equal, we are hurrying to it fast,
We shall meet upon the Level when the Gates of Death are past;
We shall stand before the Orient and our Master shall be there,
To try the blocks we offer with His own unerring Square.

We shall meet upon the Level there, but never thence depart,
There's a Mansion, 'tis all ready for each trusting, faithful heart,
There is a Mansion and a welcome and a multitude is there;

Who have met upon the Level and been tried upon the Square.

Let us meet upon the Level then while labouring patient here;
Let us meet and let us labour though the labour be severe,
Already in the western sky the signs bid us prepare,
To gather up our working tools and part upon the Square.

Hands round Ye faithful Brotherhood, the bright fraternal chain,
We part upon the Square below and meet in Heaven Again;
And the words of precious meaning, those words Masonic are,
"WE MEET UPON THE LEVEL AND WE PART UPON THE SQUARE".

The Lambskin – Author Unknown

The Lambskin

Author Unknown

It is not ornamental, the cost is not great
There are other things far more useful, yet truly I state,
Tho' of all my possessions, there's none can compare,
With that white leather apron, which all Masons wear.

As a young lad I wondered just what it all meant,
When Dad hustled around and so much time was spent,
On shaving and dressing and looking just right,
Until Mother would say; "It's the Masons tonight".

And some winter nights she said; "What makes you go,
Way up there tonight thru' the sleet and the snow,
You see the same things every month of the year".
Then Dad would reply; "Yes, I know it, my dear".

"Forty years I have seen the same things it's true,
And though they are old, they always seem new,

For the hands that I clasp, and the friends that I greet,
Seem a little bit closer, each time that we meet”.

Years later I stood at that very same door,
With good men and true, who had entered before.
I knelt at the alter and there I was taught,
That virtue and honour can never be bought.

That the spotless white Lambskin all Masons revere,
If worthily worn, grows more precious each year.
That service to others brings blessings untold
That man may be poor, though surrounded by gold.

I learned that true Brotherhood flourishes there,
That enmities fade ‘neath the Compass and Square.
That wealth and position are all thrust aside,
As there on the level, men meet and abide.

So honour the Lambskin, may it always remain,
Forever unblemished and free from all stain.
And when we are called to the great Fathers love,
May we all take our place in that Lodge up above.

My New Cut Ashlar – Rudyard Kipling

My New Cut Ashlar

Rudyard Kipling

My New-Cut ashlar takes the light
Where crimson-blank the windows flare.
By my own work before the night,
Great Overseer, I make my prayer.

If there be good in that I wrought
Thy Hand compelled it, Master, Thine—
Where I have failed to meet Thy Thought
I know, through Thee, the blame was mine.

The depth and dream of my desire,
The bitter paths wherein I stray—
Thou knowest Who hast made the Fire,
Thou knowest Who hast made the Clay.

Who, lest all thought of Eden fade,
Bring'st Eden to the craftsman's brain—
Godlike to muse o'er his own Trade
And manlike stand with God again!

One stone the more swings into place
In that dread Temple of Thy worth.
It is enough that, through Thy Grace,
I saw nought common on Thy Earth.

Take not that vision from my ken—
Oh whatsoe'er may spoil or speed.
Help me to need no aid from men
That I may help such men as need

Palace – Rudyard Kipling

Palace

Rudyard Kipling

When I was a King and a Mason,
a Master proven and skilled,
I cleared me a ground for a palace,
such as a King should build.

I decreed and cut down to my levels,
but presently under the silt,
I came on the wreck of a palace,
such as a king had built.

There was no worth in the fashion,
there was no wit in the plan.
Hither and thither aimless,
the ruined footings ran.

Masonry, brute, mishandled,
but carved on every stone.
"After me cometh a Builder,
tell him I, too, have known".

Swift to my use in the trenches,
where my well-planned ground works grew,
I tumbled his quoins and his ashlar,
and cut and reset them anew.

Lime I made from his marbles;
burned it, slaked it, and spread,
Taking and leaving, at pleasure,
the gift of the humble dead.

Yet I despised mot, nor gloried;
for as we wrenched them apart,
I read in the raised foundations
the heart of that builder's heart.

As though he had risen and pleaded,
so did I understand.
The form of the dream he had followed,
in the face of the thing he had planned.

When I was a king and a Mason,
in the open noon of my pride,
They sent me a word from the darkness,
they whispered and called me aside.

They said—"The end is forbidden.
"They said—"Thy use is fulfilled.
Thy palace shall stand, as that other's,
the spoil of a king, who shall build."

I called the men from my trenches,
my quarries, my wharves and my shears.
All I had thought I abandoned,
to the faith of the faithless years.

Only I cut on the timber-only,
I carved on the stone-
"After me cometh a Builder,
tell him I, too, have known."

The Farewell – Robert Burns

The Farewell

Robert Burns

Adieu ! a heart-warm fond adieu !
Dear brothers of the mystic tie !
Ye favour'd, ye enlighten'd few,
Companions of my social joy !
Tho' I to foreign lands must hie,
Pursuing fortune's slidd'ry ba',
With melting heart, and brimful eye,
I'll mind you still, tho' far awa'.

Oft, have I met your social band,
And spent the cheerful festive night ;
Oft, honour'd with supreme command,
Presided o'er the sons of light :

And by that hieroglyphic bright,
Which none but craftsman ever saw !
Strong memory on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes when far awa' !

May freedom, harmony and love
Unite you in the grand design,
Beneath th' Omniscient eye above,
The glorious Architect Divine !
That you may keep th' unerring line,
Still rising by the plummet's law,
Till Order bright completely shine,
Shall be my pray'r when far awa'.

And You, farewell ! whose merits claim,
Justly, that highest badge to wear !
Heav'n bless your honour'd noble name,
To Masonry and Scotia dear !
A last request permit me here :
When yearly ye assemble a', -
One round, I ask it with a tear,
To him, the Bard that's far awa'.