

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 Listeners, by Walter de la Mare

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The Listeners

BY WALTER DE LA MARE

'Is there anybody there?' said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
'Is there anybody there?' he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.

But only a host of phantom listeners

That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call.

And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head:—
'Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word,' he said.

Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Untitled

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THE LAMBSKIN

Poem by Edgar A. Guest

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 is 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 honor 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 tho 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, honor the lambskin, may it always remain
Forever unblemished, and free from all stain,
And when we are called to the Great Father's love,
May we all take our place in that Lodge up above.

“If” Poem by Rudyard Kipling

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."
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 that 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.

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eyes The faraway look of wonder That comes when the spirit
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