

A SPRIG OF ACACIA

From the first moment when the elected candidate hears the Charge in the ante room and learns of "that humble and reverent attitude is now your duty to assume as all have done who have gone this way before you", to the sublime instant when he is raised to a Master Mason, the candidate is marching steadily forward to greater light and the great secret of Freemasonry. It is a great secret - and yet it is "no" secret - it is the truth of immortality and the life beyond. If the All Seeing Eye is the most ancient in the ritual of masonry, then the grandest of all the symbols and emblems of the Master's Degree, the Sprig of Acacia, holds the greatest comfort. As a symbol of hope this sprig of evergreen marks the temporary resting place of the departed, for is it not the whole drama of the Master Mason's degree - one which teaches in the most simple terms the immortality of the soul.

The Acacia tree grows abundantly in many parts of the Eastern lands, though more especially in the Holy Land. It attains a great height and is among the hardest of woods. It is one of the evergreens and in contrast to other varieties of trees which shed their leaves, the Acacia is a perpetual reminder of life. Among the Jews it was held in great reverence and respect and was used in building the Tabernacle in the wilderness as well as many articles of furniture which made up the Temples of worship such as the Ark, the table for the shew bread and other sacred pieces of furniture. It has been said that the crown of thorns that Christ wore was woven of its boughs. The Acacia has other peculiar characteristics in that life seems so strong in it that when it is cut and used as building arts where a portion of it touches the ground it will sprout and grow again. From it also a very special species of Arabic gum is secured. The Arabs as well as the Jews hold it in the highest esteem. The Acacia has then, always been consecrated from among other trees by virtue of the sacred purposes for which it has been used. Masons have appropriated this hallowed and sacred tree as a symbol that teaches and conveys the lessons of an after life. Indeed, it is incorporated into the funeral service in these or similar words - "This evergreen is the emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul and by this we are reminded that we have a mortal part which never dies."

The Sprig of Acacia is not only the emblem of a future but also of faith - a faith which brings peace and happiness in the spirit.

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