

## A MASONIC MINUTE

*The Craftsmen have done their duty*

During the Ceremony of Dedicating a new Lodge Hall, the Grand Master directs and dismisses the principal officers to make an examination using the implements of Operative Masonry to test those parts of the building that should be square, level, and plumb. On their return to the lodge room each, in turn report that “*the Craftsmen have done their duty.*”

Michael Armstrong relates this tale. “*The ancient Romans had a tradition: whenever one of their engineers constructed an arch, as the capstone was hoisted into place, the engineer assumed responsibility for his work in the most profound way possible: he stood under the arch.*”

In the days of Operative Masonry it was crucial that the workmanship was of the highest order, true and trusty “according to the rules of architecture,” otherwise the whole structure was in danger of collapsing. The consummate skill of our ancient brethren – the Architects and Master Masons of the Middle Ages – has endured in the magnificent buildings, ecclesiastical and secular, they erected in stone throughout Europe. These great edifices stand today as monuments of unsurpassed architectural glory.

Herein lies both inspiration by example and a cautionary tale by analogy for us as Speculative Masons. As Free and Accepted Masons, what is the Craftsman’s duty? What is it that we are endeavouring to build today? And how are we going about it? Are we prepared to undergo years of “apprenticeship” learning our trade? In other words are we engaged in the serious pursuit of excellence in all aspects of our Masonic activities?

There are those that suggest that Freemasonry is an endangered species