

Orator's Report  
on the 21<sup>st</sup> Degree  
Noachite, or  
Prussian Knight  
May 1, 2013



The Apron and Gloves of this Degree are yellow. At the top of the Apron is an arm holding a drawn sword. Below is the Egyptian figure of silence

Bremerton Valley of the Scottish Rite

**The Legend/History:** The Council of Kadosh comprises the Nineteenth through the Thirtieth Degrees. The word Kadosh is Hebrew, and means “consecrated or dedicated.” Its members are dedicated to the discovery of philosophic truths and the chivalric virtues. This is the third Degree of the Council of Kadosh. This degree is styled as a Tribunal. In medieval Germany the Holy Roman emperors were unable to effectively control their lands and feudal warfare brought increasing disorder. To help control this lawlessness there emerged in Westphalia near the end of the 12th century an extra-legal but efficient criminal tribunal, called the *Vehmgerichte*, or “Holy Vehm”.

**The Setting:** The time is the Middle Ages. The lodge is styled as a Tribunal after the *Vehmgerichte* just discussed. The set is simple, requiring only a light representative of the full moon. The Tribunal members all wear black masks. The presiding officer, the Lieutenant Commander, is to be unknown to the members. The nocturnal setting and the masked brothers dramatically represent the secretive nature of the *Vehmgerichte* and its members. The secret Tribunal should remind us that we know neither the real character of those who may judge us nor the time of judgment.

The humbly dressed candidate represents Adolf the Saxon, a Knight of the Holy Cross who has just returned from a crusade in Palestine.

**The Ritual:** The candidate appeals to the Tribunal for justice. While he was away; his land was stolen from him with a deed forged by Count Reinfred and the Bishop of Vienna. The Count sits on the Tribunal; he, of course, denies the charges and leaves to procure the deed. When he returns there is an argument that cannot be decided, for each has only his word as evidence. The accused; Adolph, is not a noble and though not a member of the Tribunal, as is the Count, his word is equally accepted. This is a reminder of how indispensable to Human Progress is a free and independent Judiciary. For it is the right of free entrance into the Courts of Justice, where even the weakest may prefer

his complaint against the most powerful which makes a people free.

After several trials and missteps, each calling the other a liar, and a cheat, the document is proved a forgery by certain devices. The Count is disgraced, removed from his station, and convicted. The candidate is made a Prussian Knight and a member of the Tribunal.

**The Lecture:** The Count represents the type not to be emulated; he is most bold, knowing his own guilt, denying it before God and throughout the trial in which it was believed God would judge between guilt and innocence. The Mason is to be the opposite: humble and modest, trusting in God. Though evil may prosper for a time, its downfall is certain. Those under its sway are counseled to have patience and faith.

It is here that we find Pike, a former newspaper editor, also advocating responsible, fair and just journalism. He notes the benefit of the protecting check of publicity demonstrating a clear understanding of the importance of a free press to the preservation of democracy.

Scottish Rite Masons are charged in this Degree to be modest and humble, and not vainglorious nor filled with self-conceit. Be not wiser in your own opinion than the Deity, nor find fault with His works, nor improve upon what He has done. Be modest also in your intercourse with your fellows, and slow to entertain evil thoughts of them, and reluctant to ascribe to them evil intentions. One ought, in truth, to write or speak against no other one in this world. Each man in it has enough to do, to watch and keep guard over himself. When a Mason hears of any man that hath fallen into public disgrace, he should have a mind to commiserate his mishap, and not to make him more disconsolate. To envenom a name by libels, that already is openly tainted, is to add stripes with an iron rod to one that is flayed with whipping; and to every well-tempered mind will seem most inhuman and unmanly.

The lesson from this degree is to learn that arrogance; defamation and cowardice are unworthy attributes of a Mason, and that humility, modesty and courtesy are the true virtues of men and Masons.

This degree teaches us to be devoted to the cause of everyone who has been wronged by the great or oppressed by the powerful, those unjustly accused, those who have suffered from bribery, or corrupt judges, the widows, orphans, distressed and destitute. We are instructed that laziness is degrading and inactivity is shameful... we must seek opportunities to perform good deeds; be loyal in both word and deed.

**DUTIES:** Be humble and modest, trusting in God.

Be steadfast and courageous in the face of adversity.

**LESSONS:** The downfall of evil is certain. A free and independent judiciary is necessary to human progress. Journalism should be fair, just and responsible.

**FOR REFLECTION:** Do you keep the ideal of justice before your own interests?

**IMPORTANT SYMBOLS:** The apron is yellow, and contains an arm holding a sword, and a winged figure holding a key in the left hand, and the right forefinger on the lips (the "Egyptian figure of Silence"). The jewel is a point-up triangle, with an arrow, point downward, an arm holding a sword, and the motto "Fiat Justitia Ruat Caelum" "Let justice be done though the heavens fall."

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*This report is based on excerpts from: "Toward the Light, The Work" – 1999, Orient of Oklahoma; "Bridge To Light" – 2006, Rex Hutchins; "Scottish Rite Ritual, Monitor and Guide" – 2007, Arturo de Hoyos. Adapted from the Spanish version of Rex R. Hutchen's book A Bridge to Light*