

**Grand Lodge
Free & Accepted Masons
Of California
Grand Oration 1900**

**Grand Orator
Carroll Cook**

The address was ex tempore, and the resolution of the Grand Lodge, that it be prepared for publication in the proceedings, cannot be complied with.

The speaker at the outset stated that he did not purpose making any flowery speech or oratorical effort but rather to devote the time allotted to him to a short plain talk, in which he intended to speak some disagreeable truths and point out some faults to be found among members of the Craft, and other dangers menacing the Order; not that such faults or dangers could destroy, because the foundations of Masonry were too deeply laid for that, but that they could and did mar its beauty symmetry and impair its usefulness. He said that such faults and dangers injured the order indirectly in the same manner that a pure object is injured by contamination with an impure, and directly by making it possible for improper persons to be admitted among us.

He first spoke of negligence of brethren, their non-attendance, their failure to perform labors required of them, and the habit of many, when acting as members of committees of investigation, reporting favorably because too negligent to make the necessary inquiries as to candidate's qualifications.

He then addressed himself to the greed for membership and the desire existing to exceed previous administrations in members admitted. Increase in Lodges was too rapid and it was time to call "down brakes".

The question of politics both in the Grand Lodge and in subordinate Lodges, was then treated of. The speaker regretted the insatiable thirst for power which in men and nations was never satisfied, and which so often led many brethren to forget the teachings and regulations of Masonry.

Lack of moral courage was then considered, and the fact that within our ranks we numbered many brethren who lacked the courage of their convictions. He spoke of the Mason who, protected by the secrecy of the Lodge-room, would make professions which the fear of ridicule would prevent his making in the outer world. Cowardice in use of the black ball was then spoken of. The failure of investigating committees to report unfavorably upon applicants clearly unfit, merely because of their influential friends or positions, was next alluded to as the most dangerous form that moral cowardice could assume.

He closed with an allusion to the three great lights of Masonry, and the occasion on which they had first been shown to each and every brother, and regretted that the lessons of Masonry and those lights were not more constantly kept at hand for daily use. He hoped that what he had said might cause some who had listened to him to hence-forth permit these three great lights of Masonry to illumine their way.

Bro. COOK was suffering from a severe cold, and was compelled, at this point in his address, to explain that throughout the whole he had labored under great difficulty and as he felt his voice failing him, he begged the indulgence of the Most Worshipful Grand Master and brethren, and that they consider anything else he had in mind to say as said, and excuse him from further torture to himself. He then closed his address, and a resolution was adopted extending the thanks of the Grand Lodge to the Orator for his interesting address, and requesting that such portions of it as might be proper to be written be prepared for publication with its proceedings.