



The Knights of Pythias



The large Vice Chancellor's Jewel is from the 1800's. The size of Pythian jewels was reduced in the 1900's. The Pythian/Odd Fellows chatelaine is probably unique and possibly a widow's piece. The buckle and watch fob are both from the Uniformed Rank. The latter contains just over an ounce of 14K gold.



First column (on ribbon) are Pythian Sister's pieces. Second column are service jewels, 25 and 50 years. Third column, top to bottom: Pythian/Odd Fellows watch fob. Grand lodge jewel in gold. Endowment Rank pin. Watch fob in gold set with lapis, tiger-eye, and carnelian. Fourth Column: Past Chancellor Jewel in 10K and Sterling. Canadian Dramatic Order of Knights Khorassan.

History of the Order

The First Forty Years

A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house. Matthew 13:57

The following brief history of the early years of the Knights of Pythias is largely taken from William D. Kennedy's *Pythian History* published in 1904. Kennedy, a Past Supreme Representative, was brought into the Order by Samuel Read, the first Supreme Chancellor, in 1871. By 1872 Kennedy had introduced the order into Toronto, Ontario with five lodges followed by a grand lodge. By 1874, he was making notes for a history.

Considerable reference has also been made to James Carnahan's *Pythian Knighthood* (1889 ed.) which contains a most interesting interview with Rathbone, the Order's founder. Carnahan's account complements Kennedy's nicely and fills in a number of otherwise puzzling blanks. Carnahan, among [many] other things, was Commander of the Uniformed Rank.

Kennedy and Carnahan were but two of a number of extraordinary Pythians. Their Histories represent a monumental effort at objectivity in the face of some strange and incredible events including several bankruptcies and an internal civil war that would smolder and periodically explode for more than a decade and which would end with most if not all of the founding members out of the order. Kennedy conveniently provides a chronology of Rathbone's in's and out's of the Order he founded.

For the first decade of the Knights of Pythias is largely the story of Rathbone and Read. Both were men of vision, farsightedness, and determination. Unfortunately, their visions did not agree and were destined to collide.

Justus Henry Rathbone was a man of many talents. He was well educated, a schoolteacher, an accomplished musician and occasional playwright, a Royal Arch Mason and a member of the Improved Order of Red Men. He spent the Civil War years in the United States Hospital Service where he worked as a Citizen Nurse and Hospital Steward. His last assignment was in Washington, D.C. and following the War, he secured the first of several Government jobs. Harry Rathbone didn't know it but he was about to launch the most incredibly successful fraternal order in human history. The Knights of Pythias exploded into being in 1864 and continued to roar all through the remainder of the Nineteenth Century. In barely thirty years, it had half a million members and had joined the ranks of the Odd Fellows and Masons in popularity. Their Uniformed Rank inspired numerous others. At the turn of the Twentieth Century, it was *in* to be a Pythian.

It was in the winter of 1858 or the spring of 1859, while teaching school at Eagle Harbor, Michigan, that Rathbone first conceived the idea of forming a fraternal order and had written the ritual. A current play, *Damon and Pythias* by Banim, provided the inspiration for the name. But the nation was soon engulfed in the Civil War and it was not until February 19th, 1864, that the first lodge (Washington # 1) was formed. Incredibly, barely a month later on March 25th, Rathbone would resign from the order he had founded.

Rathbone's first resignation, one of several, was brought about by the actions of one Joseph T. K. Plant, a founding member that Rathbone had met at a Red Man lodge meeting. Shortly after the founding meeting of the KoP, Plant announced the founding of a Grand Lodge *by virtue of him being founder of the Order!* Plant was somehow under the impression that having occupied the office of Venerable Patriarch--the third office down in the new Order--made him Founder.

Plant's audacity was compounded by the fact that at the time there was but a single Pythian lodge with perhaps thirty-five or forty members. A Grand Lodge presupposes subordinate lodges. In the words of Rathbone, *There was nothing out of which to form a Grand Lodge, unless one lodge could be Subordinate and Grand Lodge at one and the same time.* Not the least constrained by impossibility, Plant went on to form his Grand Lodge--and presumably Subordinate Lodges as well--and Rathbone resigned. Carnahan records that Plant was expelled from the order for "divers reasons known to members of the Order." One presumes it may have had something to do with his Grand Lodge.

Though neither Kennedy or Carnahan gives the details (or even mention it), Plant was to be reinstated in the order and take his place in the Supreme Lodge as a Past Supreme Chancellor. [Author's note: Samuel Read (among others) was quite competent at creating Past Grand and Supreme Chancellors out of thin air and a good many of them had little if anything to do with a Grand or Supreme Lodge. Plant appears be one of these Virtual P.S.C.'s by virtue of being a founding member of the Order. Carnahan notes Plant's passing in 1882: he had "fought a good fight and had kept the faith" and had seen the Order come to its "Land of Promise". The burial rites were conducted by Justus H. Rathbone.

By 1868, there were Grand and Subordinate Lodges in Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware and movement was underway to form a Supreme Lodge as an overall governing body for the order. (The Grand Lodge of Washington, D.C. was acting as provisional Supreme Lodge.) The Supreme lodge was approved and held its first session in Washington, D.C. on August 11th. The first Supreme Chancellor was Samuel Read. It was Read, along with Clarence W. Barton, who eventually would force Rathbone out of the Supreme Lodge and effectively out of the order. Samuel Read is best described with a lengthy direct quotation from William Kennedy as follows:

The history of the first four years of the Supreme Lodge, and the results accomplished from 1868 to 1872 inclusive, form the story of his official life--after that, he largely ceased to be a factor in its affairs. During almost all his Pythian career, we knew him well, and the work he did, and while with many of his acts we were not in accord, yet we yield to no one in our admiration of his pluck, energy, and marvelous ability as an organizer. Wisely, at the very threshold of his administration, the Supreme Lodge endowed him with plenary powers--to him was

given the keys to every door--all dispensing powers were his--he was authorized "to make Knights at sight"--and he did--sometimes, out of sight--and where the power required was not expressed, he accepted it as understood--anyway that was as **he** understood it. His favorite mantle of authority, the one with which he clothed himself before pronouncing any benediction or indulgence for which there seemed to be no expressed or implied authority was "by the powers vested in me and the rules and regulations of the Order," and then he proceeded to make Past Grand Chancellors or Past Chancellors, and suspend the operation of any interposing obstacle such as a Constitutional Provision or By-Law. "Making Knights at sight"-- was his greatest and most efficient "prerogative"--and what was there that his prerogatives could not effect? We experienced the application of many of them--this among the rest. When he performed this act, he simply obligated the party, communicated the substance of the ceremonies, explained the unwritten work, and gave the recipient a written certificate (of which we have one) that he was a Knight of Pythias, curtailing his right of use of this to six months, with the understanding that he was to go out into the "waste places of the earth" and proclaim the Gospel of Pythian Knighthood. Being an Odd Fellow and a Representative of that order in its National Conventions, he chose these gatherings as his field of operation, and on the occasion of the meeting of the "Grand Lodge of the United States" (afterwards the "Sovereign Grand Lodge") I. O. O. F. in San Francisco in 1869, where he attended as Grand Representative from New Jersey, he held a "service" at any time, day or night, whenever "the spirit moved," and sent his postulants back to their homes ardent missionaries in the Pythian cause. Though, on the surface, history does not evidence that the spread of the Order was directly attributable to this, yet, nevertheless, we know that to the many methods of propagation, lawful, otherwise, and doubtful, adopted by Brother Samuel Read, was due the rapidity with which, during 1868 to 1872, the Order of Knights of Pythias spread from sea to sea; the happenings passed before us--we knew the man, his manner, methods, manipulations, and "prerogatives," and we know whereof we speak. He seemed to fit right into the times then--times have changed.

Kennedy's mixed feelings toward the man who had brought him into the order are evident in this paragraph. Yet it was the tone set by people like Read that allowed the Knights of Pythias to grow to nearly half a million members in its first thirty years. There can be no doubt that Read was a real go-getter.

Rathbone was also busy in 1868. On June 9th, undoubtedly at Rathbone's request, the Grand Lodge of Washington D.C. (acting as Provisional Supreme Lodge) adopted the following Resolution:

Resolved, That, notwithstanding any law or order to the contrary, power and privilege is hereby granted to the Founder of the Order to create and establish a higher degree or degrees that that shall in nowise interfere with the ritual of the

Order, to be entirely different there from, and to have its own Grand Lodge,
Supreme Lodge, etc.

Rathbone immediately organized a body he called the Supreme Pythian Knighthood, better known as the SPK.

The first Supreme Lodge convened two months later and two resolutions and a quote from the minutes express a somewhat puzzling situation in light of later events. The first resolution from C. W. Barton (and others) asked that they (and others) be allowed to “write a higher degree or degrees to this order to be approved by this body before being attached to the ritual.”

This was almost immediately followed by a Resolution that “the Supreme Lodge recognizes no higher degree or degrees of the Order than those now established in the ritual of the order.”

Just prior to adjournment, “Past Grand Chancellor Rathbone made a few remarks in relation to what purported to be the Supreme Order of the Knights of Pythias and Damon Conclave, No. 1.”

Thus was the beginning of the SPK (Supreme Pythian Knighthood) controversy that would nearly tear the order apart. Both Carnahan and Rathbone place the blame squarely on Clarence W. Barton. Carnahan’s interview with Rathbone gives his side of the story.

Rathbone founded the SPK in 1868 under the authority of the Washington D.C. grand lodge which was then acting as Provisional Supreme Lodge. Rathbone saw the SPK as a Pythian parallel to the Royal Arch Masons and its membership included most of the Pythian founding members and quite a number of other prominent Pythians. Among them was C. W. Barton. Rathbone saw the need for a higher degree to act as “a sieve”; he was not all that happy with the quality of some of the Pythian membership and saw the SPK as a means to select only the best. The SPK consisted of a single lodge, the Damon Conclave of Washington, D.C. The SPK made strict use of the blackball; anyone denied membership would never be given a second hearing.

On August 18th, 1868, C. W. Barton made application to form a new Conclave which he modestly styled Barton Conclave No. 2. It was rejected because some of the applicants had previously been blackballed by the SPK. *When Barton was informed that the charter was denied for Barton Conclave, he left the room vowing vengeance against the Conclave, and right here is where the trouble began that afterward came so near disrupting the Order of K of P.* (Rathbone’s words quoted by Carnahan.)

Samuel Read was perfectly happy with the Knights of Pythias as originally

founded and the convention of 1868 passed a resolution disavowing the SPK and demanding that all Grand and Subordinate lodges not have anything to do with this new order. There can be little doubt that C. W. Barton was behind it but Read undoubtedly saw the SPK as a threat to the authority of the newly formed Supreme Lodge. The battle had been joined. At the same convention, a petition was introduced from a group of Philadelphia women asking that a woman's rank of the order be established. It was promptly tabled (as were its many successors, notes Carnahan.)

[The persistence of the women eventually paid off when in 1888, under increasing pressure, the Supreme Lodge yielded up half a loaf. There would be no Ladies Rank ("for various reasons, which this committee believe will be apparent to all members of this Supreme body...") but instead a parallel body called the Order of Pythian Sisterhood would be established. The Supreme Lodge made it very clear that it would "assume no legal or financial responsibility in connection with the establishment or maintenance of the Order".

The Supreme Lodge convention of 1869 was significant for two events. The petition of a group of Philadelphia Blacks to form a Pythian Lodge was rejected by a vote of 24-13. It would reject similar petitions at the conventions of 1871, 1878, and 1888. It was not unusual in doing so; all fraternal orders of that time limited their membership to white males only. By 1875, Blacks had founded their own Order and as Carnahan notes "Colored bodies had taken the name and were working and claiming to be Knights of Pythias."

It was also at this meeting that Rathbone resigned his position as Past Supreme Chancellor--and effectively from the Supreme Lodge whose meetings he did not attend from 1870 to 1875. Though he would maintain erratic membership in various subordinate lodges, he would play no leadership role during the administration of Read and the subsequent administration of Berry. Rathbone as quoted by Carnahan:

At that time I withdrew from all connection with the K of P and S. P. K., having stated my intention to do so at the supreme Lodge session in Richmond; and further, that I would remain outside the portals of the order so long as a certain prominent officer had connection with it, and I did not return until his membership terminated.

Rathbone can only mean C. W. Barton. As subsequent events would show, the SPK controversy had not been resolved.

Supreme Chancellor Read's report at the convention of 1870 opened with a strong denunciation of members of the SPK who, it seemed, had continued their operations in D.C., Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Acting on this, the Supreme Lodge demanded that each Subordinate Lodge be required to administer a test

oath or O.B.N. (apparently an abbreviation for obligation) to both old and new members in which they would disavow any association with the SPK. Members failing to take the oath would be excluded and lodges failing to do so would lose their charter. This measure was passed with considerable misgivings. In the words of William Kennedy:

“Outside of the actions of the body regarding the SPK, but little legislation of importance was enacted, and when the convention closed, every member present left the meeting with serious forbodings as to the possible results of the enforcement of the “O.B.N.” While it was true that a very large preponderance of those in attendance were thoroughly convinced that the disloyal spirit which prevailed in some localities should be scotched, yet they were doubtful as to the correctness of the diagnosis, and the efficacy of the prescription and treatment.”

By 1871, there were several “rebel” Grand Lodges in existence and the civil courts had been brought into the matter. Cooler heads finally prevailed as it was recognized that the entire order was on the verge of self destruction. The SPK ritual was laid upon the alter of the Supreme Lodge and after all the members present had sworn to never reveal its contents, it was read to them. In a spirit of cooperation brought about by the need for self preservation, both the SPK and the O.B.N. were essentially tabled at the convention of 1871. According to Rathbone, the SPK continued to exist but severed all ties to the Knights of Pythias. In spite of Rathbone’s desires, there would be no higher degrees for the Pythians. The SPK saga had officially ended but the damage that had been done would continue to reverberate through the order for years to come.

[The author speculates:

What ever became of Supreme Pythian Knighthood, the SPK? Rathbone says it severed all ties to the Pythians which means it would have had to change its name. Curiously enough, there was a very Pythian-like organization came into being at just the right time (1870) and place (Pennsylvania) called the Ancient Order Knights of the Mystic Chain. Both time and place coincide nicely with Rathbone’s and the SPK’s departure from the Pythians.

Given the time, place, and circumstance, it isn’t unreasonable to assume that the SPK and AOKMC has some kind of connection. Given the fact that there were more Pythians in Pennsylvania than all the other states combined meant that the new AOKMC members would have been surrounded by Pythians—probably neighbors. And the fact is that a lot of early AOKMC members were also KoP.

Pennsylvania Pythians were pissed and some would say with good reason. Pennsylvania was on the losing side of a Pythian Civil War, the side of Rathbone, the Founder of the KoP. Pennsylvania had led the rebellion against the Supreme Lodge and the Supreme Lodge had excommunicated the lot of ‘em—twice. The

AOKMC was most likely initially made up of ex-Pythians, on the outs with the Supreme Lodge. It probably had a healthy share of SPK members—another reason to be tossed to the wolves. If the SPK survived for any time in any form, it is most likely within the AOKMC.

And where was Rathbone in all of this? Probably sitting it out in DC. Interestingly enough, when Rathbone left the Supreme Lodge over the SPK affair, he severed ties with *both* the Supreme Lodge and the SPK. Although he would re-establish relations with the Supreme Lodge in 1876, the edicts of the Supreme lodge would not have permitted him to re-establish any contact with the SPK and there is no evidence that I know of that he ever did.

So what ever happened to the AOKMC? It appears to have been a One State Wonder. It flourished in angry Pennsylvania but hardly left a trace anywhere else. Latest dated pieces are from the early thirties and that probably marks the AOKMC's extinction; very few small orders survived the Great Depression.

Now the question of the connection between the SPK and the AOKMC could probably be settled definitively by simply comparing the rituals but that is a lot easier said than done. The AOKMC ritual is obviously still extant as Axelrod summarizes it in his encyclopedia (and states—wrongly—the founding date of the AOKMC as 1887) Getting one's hands on a an authentic copy of SPK *anything* would be a significant accomplishment. From the moment the Supreme Lodge came into existence, the SPK was under fire and probably never again wrote anything down. It is more than likely that the ritual for the order never saw printed page—only hand written notebooks. It probably no longer exists. In fact, I've never seen a single artifact that I could connect in any way to the SPK—and I've looked.

William Kennedy, the historian, seems to suggest that a ritual for the Endowment Rank, likewise written by Rathbone, somewhat resembled the SPK ritual. The ER wasn't under siege so it ought to be a fairly simple matter to find some ER ritual and compare it to the AOKMC, right? Wrong. The Endowment Rank was an insurance plan and it didn't really need a ritual and dropped it entirely after a couple of years. Somewhere in an old Pythian hall there may yet exist a copy of that long forgotten ritual but I doubt it will be found in my lifetime—if ever.

[But if somebody does find it, kindly send me a copy. If you find any trace of the SPK, send original.—Snarf\]](#)

The convention of 1872 was a surprise to Samuel Read in that contrary to his expectations, he was not re-elected to Supreme Chancellor and Henry Clay Berry was installed in his place. The SPK/OBN disaster had left an awful lot of people unhappy and they retired Samuel Read. It was during this convention that ranks replaced degrees and changes were made to the third rank.

The Supreme Lodge convention of 1873 was notable for the absence of Clarence W. Barton, Supreme Recording and Corresponding Scribe. He did submit a letter for the assembly:

“I respectfully present this my resignation of the office of Supreme Recording and Corresponding Scribe. I am unable to straighten my accounts at the present time, and ask that the resignation be accepted and I be allowed until the 1st day of September, 1873 to make a full and complete settlement with the Supreme Lodge.”

Also absent was \$7,962.31, the entire treasury of the Supreme lodge. It would eventually be realized that the Supreme Lodge had been left with debts approaching \$17,000. This was a very large sum in 1873 and in contemporary dollars would equal something in excess of \$200,000. Kennedy repeats the belief commonly held in his time that Barton absconded with the money but there may be a simpler explanation. In 1872, the country was hit with a massive depression and a great deal of money vanished as a result. Chances are that the Pythian money was among the casualties of that crash. Barton was never prosecuted. In examining this possibility, it was discovered that the Articles of Incorporation of the Supreme Lodge were so badly written that the Supreme Chancellor quite possibly held his position without the authority of law. Given the frightening possibility that the entire Supreme Lodge structure might be overturned in court, the matter was quietly dropped. Barton headed West and entered politics. He would eventually be expelled from the Order.

Supreme Chancellor Berry certainly inherited his share of problems in 1873. In addition to bankruptcy, there was the problem of the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge which was in full revolt against the authority of the Supreme Lodge. This was allegedly over a previous change in ritual but one has to wonder; Pennsylvania was at the forefront of the SPK movement and though that issue had allegedly been settled, some resentment undoubtedly remained. Philadelphia had been the first lodge founded outside of Washington D. C. and the Order had thrived in the Keystone State. Kennedy notes that there were more Pythians in Pennsylvania than in all the other states combined. For a time, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania was placed in suspension. Somehow, this issue was finally resolved--at least for the time being. It was not the last to be heard from Pennsylvania Pythians.

Still remaining was the problem of the newly bankrupted Supreme Lodge. Several schemes including a failed bond issue were floated and it was finally decided that the Supreme Lodge should manufacture and sell officer and Knight jewels to the Grand and Subordinate Lodges. These were finally introduced in 1874 under the administration of Supreme Chancellor Stillman S. Davis and to this day are still inscribed “Copyright 1874 S.S. Davis S.C.”. This introduced a stream

of revenue that sustained the Supreme Lodge for years to come. In 1874, the Order also got a new--and obviously much needed--constitution. William D. Kennedy played a significant role in writing it.

Pythian Jewels are not known for their beauty and on their introduction were derided by the membership as "coffin plates". Their design reflects not artistic merit but rather the prevailing politics of the time. A superior design had actually been submitted from Massachusetts but Massachusetts had voted against Pennsylvania in that recent controversy and Pennsylvania and its allies retaliated by voting for the opposing--and inferior--design. Thus was the Order saddled with an unattractive design which, except for a reduction in size, has remained virtually unchanged to this day.

Though the official Supreme Lodge records are silent on the subject, Justus H. Rathbone was re-admitted to the Supreme lodge in 1876. Rathbone's account of this, reported by Carnahan, reads like Theater of the Absurd:

[page 283, 1889 ed.]

...when did you again return to the Supreme Lodge?

At the Centennial Session, in 1876, at Philadelphia, Pa.

Was there any opposition to your return to the Supreme Lodge?

There was; and, as I have been informed, by those who were present within that room, an almost unanimous feeling that I should *not* be admitted.

In what capacity did you return to the Supreme Lodge?

As a Past Supreme Chancellor and a member in good standing in my Subordinate Lodge in the District of Columbia.

What was the objection?

It came first from the Committee on Credentials, as there was nothing to show that I was a member in good standing in the Order, except a communication from the vice Grand Chancellor, acting as Grand Chancellor of the District of Columbia.

The information was telegraphed for, and they refused to receive me on a telegram. A strong speech was made in my behalf by J. Rufus Smith, S.R. from W. Va., and permission was finally given for me to enter. Immediately upon my entrance, Supreme Representatives Foxwell and Caldwell, of the District of Columbia, presented to the Supreme Lodge a picture of the Founder and the four original members, and a small pamphlet, giving the history of the Order, and a brief biographical sketch of the original members. Objection to it was immediately interposed. A motion was then made that a committee of three be appointed to

look into the matter, and ascertain, if possible, if the statements contained in the papers presented were the facts, and if I really was the Founder of the Order. The Committee was appointed and consisted of three members known at the time to be perhaps the most inimical to the man to be investigated, of any in the Supreme Lodge. The Committee met, were shown the *original affidavit*, together with the "Sketch" that had been presented to the Supreme Lodge. Brother J.T.K. Plant, being in the city, was sent for by the committee and appeared on the scene. He there saw for the first time the documents, and immediately, without any hesitation, stated that the contents were true to the best of his knowledge and belief, and that he would go further, and, if necessary, announce the fact on the floor of the Supreme Lodge. He further stated that he had never claimed to be Founder or Assistant Founder and did not hold himself responsible for what others had claimed for him. After reading the documents, the question was asked by the Chairman: "Brother Plant, your name is mentioned in this; what have you to say?" "simply and only," was his reply, "that it is correct in every particular. That man [pointing to me] is the sole and only Founder of the Knights of Pythias, and, if necessary, I will go into the Supreme Lodge and announce it. I never claimed I was the founder; the claim was made for me but I never fathered it." The committee returned and made their report to the Supreme Lodge, which, in brief, was that they found the "History as to the Founder of the Order of Knights of Pythias" correct, and that I was entitled to the honor of being the Founder of the Order. A recess was taken for a few minutes and I was warmly congratulated and greeted by the officers and representatives.

At the end of the interview, Carnahan ask Rathbone about the other founding members:

[What has become of the original members of the order?](#)

Robert Allen Champion died in the city of Edinburgh, Scotland, September 25th, 1873. David L. Burnett is at present occupying a prominent position in the Sixth Auditor's Office. Wm. H. Burnett still retains the position that he has held for years in the Quartermaster-General's Office. Dr. E. S. Kimball is engaged in the profession of music and is justly conceded a leading musician; and all reside in Washington D. C. I reside in Alexandria, Virginia.

[Are the living ones yet connected to the order?](#)

They are not; and it has been the one great desire of my life that they should be; they ought, in my opinion, to be recognized and made life members of the Order for it was through the assistance rendered me by them, that the Order was organized. Their time and money were cheerfully and unstintedly given to the work, and you will pardon me if I here state that I believe them to have been most shamefully treated from the first.

[Author's note: Rathbone moved to Alexandria in 1888 and died a little more than a year later. The four people named here are also named by Rathbone as founding--or early--members of the SPK. Like Rathbone, they had been essentially forced from the Order during the Read/Barton/Berry years.

William Kennedy was at the Supreme Lodge of 1876 and devotes only a single paragraph to Rathbone:

While the printed record failed to state the fact, yet it was well understood, by all there, that at this convention, held in the year commemorative of the independence of the nation, Brother Justus H. Rathbone, the Founder, was to be received and welcomed back into the Supreme Lodge and into active association in the Order. Owing to the bitterness which had grown out of the SPK controversy and many other personal differences, Brother Rathbone had not entered the Supreme Lodge since the meeting at Richmond, March 9, 1869--indeed, he had for some time been out of the Order. However, on the morning of the second day of this convention he was admitted.

[The author rants: Kennedy says it was a cake walk and Rathbone says they were out to get him. Welcome to the wonderful world of Pythian Mythology. The Supreme Lodge of 1876 is the stuff of Pythian Legend. It is a well established fact that Rathbone returned to the Supreme Lodge that year but it is not quite clear just *how* he returned. Numerous stories abound including one which states that the Outer Guard simply had no idea who Rathbone was--or refused to believe he was who he said he was! The fact that "the record failed to state the fact" does seem a bit curious in that the Supreme Lodge could fail to at least acknowledge the homecoming of the Founder, especially if it was all sweetness and light as envisioned by Kennedy. And the fact that they didn't let him in until the next day suggests it may have been something like Rathbone says it was. If it were anything at all like Rathbone's account, it becomes fairly obvious why it might have been edited from the minutes. It was, after all, hardly the Order's proudest moment.

The problem with Rathbone, of course, is that he is a playwright and you have to wonder if he is being creative here. J.T.K. Plant just happening to be in town seems just a little too convenient. Why wasn't he at the convention--as Past Supreme Chancellor he certainly had a place there. Yet Kennedy verifies Plant's presence and testimony and identifies the three members of the committee as Samuel Read, George W. Lindsey, and Hugh Lathem. As for their alleged animosity toward Rathbone, there can be no doubt that Read was largely responsible for Rathbone leaving the Supreme Lodge (and Order) in the first place and Lathem was the principal author of the notorious O.B.N. Lindsey didn't enter the Supreme Lodge until 1875 but he was from Maryland which had been a SPK hotbed (and had had its Grand Lodge suspended for it). Lindsey may have been

one of the "Loyalists" who supported Read and the Supreme Lodge against Rathbone. It would appear that the Supreme Lodge did include elements that were hostile to Rathbone's return but they probably were not in the majority as Rathbone claimed. After all, they did not manage to keep him out--though they apparently did manage to delay his entry until the next day. And it is entirely possible that there were a good many people present at that convention who had never met Rathbone and possibly even some who were not altogether certain just who had founded the order in the first place. Rathbone had been largely absent for five years and the order had grown considerably in that time.

It would appear that Rathbone and the Supreme Lodge had finally made peace. In 1877 they would authorize and present him with a Founder's Jewel and send him out as Lecturer for the Order. He would attend the Supreme Lodges in 1878, 1880, 1882, 1884, 1886, and 1888. Rathbone was on the road on a lecture tour in Lima, Ohio, when he died on December 9, 1889 at the age of fifty. The cause of death appears to be cancer. He was buried in Utica, N. Y. Rathbone had never been wealthy and it appears that he died virtually penniless. He had fallen on especially hard times in 1884 and the Supreme Lodge had raised some five thousand dollars for payment of his debts and to provide living expenses. The Supreme Lodge of 1890 saw fit to allocate \$700 to be paid yearly to Rathbone's orphaned daughters--his wife had died in 1887--and this was to continue until 1900. In 1893, more than three years after his death, it was noted that his grave had no marker and appeared to be neglected. The Grand Lodge of New York allocated \$1000 to be paid for the perpetual care of the gravesite and a movement began in the Supreme Lodge to erect a monument. This was done in 1899.

Though the order had been nearly torn apart over the question of new degrees, it managed to acquire two new degrees--by then, ranks--in 1877 and 1878. Though neither were to last, both were very much in keeping with the fraternal spirit of the times. The Endowment Rank (ER) was quite simply a life insurance plan. Following the Civil War, there had been founded hundreds of Fraternal Benefit Societies starting with the Ancient Order of United Workmen in 1868. Their primary purpose was to provide affordable life insurance at a time when there was absolutely no social safety net and life insurance was generally available only to the very well off. Though the Pythians were not a fraternal benefit society, the idea obviously appealed to a large number of members and was first introduced at the convention of 1876. The committee appointed to study the matter denounced all "Insurance Schemes" as appealing to the worse nature of man and in opposition to true Pythian Brotherhood. Yet in 1877, in a hundred eighty degree turn-around, the ER was approved. The Committee to write the ritual was headed by Justus H. Rathbone and--if we are to believe Kennedy--the end result somewhat resembled the defunct SPK ritual. The ER was a truly separate Rank with its own ritual, oaths, obligations, and passwords. But by 1879 the ritual had become optional and after 1880 had been dropped entirely.

Unfortunately, even the professionals did not have a very good grasp of the science of life insurance in the late 1800's--the complex actuarial mathematics had not yet been worked out--and there were numerous bankruptcies even among commercial insurance companies. The major problem faced by the Pythians was more money going out than was coming in. It would take quite a few years--and quite a lot of money--before the problems were finally worked out. A special Supreme Lodge convention was called in 1901 when it was discovered that the Endowment Rank had "unadjudicated death losses amounting to \$425,600...[and] that there were no immediately available funds." At that Lodge, assessments for the ER were increased 45%. In time, an Insurance Department would evolve and the ER would quietly go away. It is possible and even likely that the formulation of the Pythian insurance plan as a separate rank complete with ritual etc. was simply done as a courtesy to Rathbone. It certainly did not take long to realize that fraternal sentiment and the hard nosed realities of the life insurance business were hardly compatible.

The Uniformed Rank (UR) came into being in 1878. A great many Pythians were Civil War Veterans and some lodges formed their own military drill teams. This would in time evolve into the Uniformed Ranks, not just for the Pythians but for quite a number of other fraternal orders as well. The Pythian UR was sometimes known as the Army of the Lily.

In many ways, the UR was simply a logical outgrowth of the K of P. The order, having been founded in the midst of the Civil War and by men working for the government--and effectively enlistees--had always had a military flavor to it. Its ranks of Page, Esquire, and Knight emulated those of Medieval knighthood. The UR was seen as sort of an unofficial reserve force, maintaining a military readiness should the Nation need them--its Manual of Drill was that of the US Army. In reality, the UR was more of a fancy drill team suitable for parades and other official functions. As Civil War veterans died off in the early 1900's, the UR went into decline and was effectively defunct around the time of World War Two. Major General James Carnahan's hope for an everlasting UR was not to be and it had entirely ceased to exist by the 1950's.

By 1888, The Pennsylvania Grand Lodge was once again in open revolt. The alleged issue this time was an attempt on part of the Supreme lodge to modify the Constitutions of all Grand and Subordinate lodges to bring them into agreement with the Supreme Lodge Constitution. In reality, it seems more like a simple power struggle. The Pennsylvania Lodge was the most powerful and largest of the Grand lodges. Like before, the Grand Lodge was suspended. Like before, it was finally made to comply with the dictates of the Supreme Lodge. Once again, the Order barely escaped fragmentation.

In the early 1890's, the Order became seemingly obsessed with the issue of

foreign language rituals. There were a good many German Pythians (a lot in Pennsylvania, of course), and they had quite naturally translated the Pythian Ritual into the German language. Up until then, the Order had shown a sort of grudging toleration for non-English versions of the ritual but beginning in 1892, the attitude began to shift and by 1894 the policy was one of English Only. At one point in time, a large quantity of the German ritual was actually burnt. Part of the reasoning was undoubtedly economic regarding the cost of translating and distributing multilingual copies of the ritual. But underlying it all appears to be an attitude that the Knights of Pythias was a uniquely American organization whose ritual ought to be in English--possibly being influenced by the fact that the ritual was based on works of English literature. This is in marked contrast to most of the other orders of the time who took great pride in being established world-wide in every language.

History repeated itself when the Supreme Lodge of 1894 once again found itself bankrupt. The person left holding the [empty] bag this time was the Supreme Master of the Exchequer, Stansbury J. Willey. Losses this time were pegged at \$69,476.51, nearly ten times that lost by Barton two decades earlier. The reasons for the loss were fairly obvious. Willey had given the Lodge's money to his brother-in-law, the stockbroker. 1893 had witnessed a major depression which among other things had destroyed some eighteen thousand businesses. Among them were the companies in which the Pythian funds had been invested. Once again, the Supreme Lodge would have to watch its pennies. Once again, it would replenish its funds through the sale of lodge jewelry.

By 1896, the Pythians numbered 456,944 members, third behind the Masons (920,459) and the Odd Fellows (939,307). The Order actually suffered some losses in this year because of an edict of the Roman Catholic Church forbidding its members from belong to certain "secret orders", the Knights of Pythias among them. By 1902, the order had grown to 540,138.

[The author speculates: From the above numbers, it would appear that the Pythians hit the half million mark sometime in 1899. From 1896 to 1902, they averaged adding almost fourteen thousand new members a year. They had gone from five members to five hundred thousand in only thirty five years. It was a record of fraternal growth unmatched at that time and likely to remain unmatched. They did it with aggressive recruiting and a new order that offered some refreshing changes from the old. For one thing, the Pythians are a secular order. Unlike the Masons and Odd Fellows whose rituals are drenched in religion, the ritual of the Knights of Pythias is based on works of English literature--Rathbone, after all, was a schoolteacher. The Pythians also tended to be more egalitarian than the established Orders which tended to equate the best of men with the wealthiest of them. The humble condition of Pythian jewels, most of which are silver plate and brass, speak of hard times and working men. In this they are more in line with

their philosophical brothers, the fraternal benefit societies, than the Masons and Odd Fellows.

But there was something else, perhaps something undefinable, about the Pythians that distinguished them. Every now and then, there will be created something that unmistakably captures the spirit of its time and soars upon it. It would almost seem that the country had been waiting for the Pythians to arrive. This was recognized by Plant who tried to hijack the Order and Read who did. It was also recognized by the half million who would join the order before the turn of the Twentieth Century. Kennedy, in speaking of Samuel Read, says that he seemed to fit right into the times. He might as well have been speaking of the Order itself.

Alternately, they may have been simply lucky. Taking on the Pennsylvania Grand lodge repeatedly was an act approaching madness. Had the Pennsylvanians been sufficiently organized to take advantage of their numerical superiority we might well be discussing the History of the Knights of Damon.

Founder of the Knights of Pythias



Justus H. Rathbone

(At 48 years of age.)

Below is the Founders Jewel presented to him by the Order





Here is an early cabinet card photo of a Pythian Knight dressed as a Roman Master at Arms.



Knights of Pythias Ritual

Rank of Page

Opening Ceremony

At the hour appointed, a quorum being present, the Chancellor Commander shall take his station, invest him with the jewel of his office and call the lodge to order. The other officers will at once invest themselves with the proper jewels and take their respective stations; and the members will take their seats.

Chancellor Commander, standing: It is my will that ... Lodge, No. ..., Knights of Pythias, now come to order in the rank of Knight, for the dispatch of such business as may be brought before it.

Inner Guard, order the Outer Guard to clear the anteroom, close the door and allow no one to enter.

Takes his seat.

Inner Guard, standing in the door: Outer Guard, it is the order of the Chancellor Commander that you clear the ante-room, close the door and allow no one to enter.

Outer Guard, from his station: The order of the Chancellor Commander shall be obeyed.

Inner Guard, closes the door: Chancellor Commander, the Outer Guard has received your order.

Chancellor Commander, gives two raps: Master at Arms, approach my station and communicate to me the semi-annual password and the password of the rank of Knight, and examine all present in the same.

Master at Arms communicates the word to the Chancellor Commander and then proceeds with the examination. Should anyone present be found without the semi-annual password or the password of the Rank of Knight, the Master at Arms will at once report that fact to the Chancellor Commander, whereupon that officer will require each person so reported to advance to his station and receive the words, if entitled thereto. If not so entitled, he must immediately retire. When all present have been examined, the Master at Arms, standing at the altar, will open the Book of Law, salute the Chancellor Commander and report: Chancellor Commander, I have obeyed your order, and have found all present in possession of the semi-annual password and the password of the rank of Knight.

Chancellor Commander gives three raps: Inner Guard, relieve the Outer Guard, and direct him to report at your station.

Inner Guard retires and relieves the Outer Guard, who immediately reports at the station of the Inner Guard.

Outer Guard: Chancellor Commander, the Outer Guard reports for instruction.

Chancellor Commander: Outer Guard, your station is in the ante-room. Your duties are to take charge of the outer door; to see that no one enters the

ante-room who is not in possession of the semi-annual password, unless otherwise ordered by the Chancellor Commander; to require each Page and Esquire to invest himself with the jewel indicating his advancement in the order; and to obey the orders of the Chancellor Commander. Return to your station, relieve the Inner Guard, and, until so ordered, allow no one to enter.

Outer Guard retires.

Inner Guard returns to his station: Chancellor Commander, the Inner Guard reports for instruction.

Chancellor Commander: Inner Guard, your station is at the inner door. Your duties are to allow no one to enter the lodge-room who does not give the correct alarm and password; and to obey the orders of the Chancellor Commander.

Inner Guard takes his seat.

Chancellor Commander gives one rap: Master at Arms, where is your station and what are your duties in this lodge?

Master at Arms, standing: My station is at the right and front of the Chancellor Commander. My duties are to examine all present prior to the opening of the lodge, and to report the result to the Chancellor Commander; to prepare and accompany candidates; and to obey the orders of the Chancellor Commander.

Takes his seat.

Chancellor Commander gives one rap: Treasurer, where is your station and what are your duties in this lodge?

Treasurer, standing: My station is at the left of the Chancellor Commander. My duties are to receive from the Financial Secretary all moneys collected by him, and to disburse them only on an order from the Chancellor Commander, attested by the Secretary; to present to this lodge, at the end of every semi-annual (or annual) term, a written report of all receipts and disbursements during the term; and to perform all other services required of me by the laws of the order and the by-laws of this lodge. *Takes his seat.*

Chancellor Commander gives one rap: Financial Secretary, where is your station and what are your duties in this lodge?

Financial Secretary, standing: My station is at the left of the Chancellor Commander. My duties are to keep the accounts of this lodge; to notify all who are in arrears; to receive all moneys, and immediately pay the same to the Treasurer, taking his receipt therefore; to make, at each regular convention, a statement of all moneys received by me, and from whom; to present to this lodge, at the end of every semi-annual (or annual) term, a written report, showing the indebtedness of each member and the general financial condition of the lodge; and to perform all other services required of me by the laws of the order and the by-laws of this lodge. *Takes his seat.*

Chancellor Commander gives one rap: Secretary, where is your station and what are your duties in this lodge?

Secretary, standing: My station is at the right of the Chancellor Commander. My duties are to keep a true record of all the proceedings of this lodge; to conduct all

its correspondence; to have charge of the seal and archives; to make out semi-annual (or annual) reports of the work and business of the lodge, and transmit the same to the Grand Lodge; to deliver to the proper officers all funds, documents or other lodge property coming into my hands; and to perform all other services required of me by the laws of the order and the by-laws of this lodge.

Takes his seat.

Chancellor Commander gives one rap: Master of the Work, where is your station and what are your duties in this lodge?

Master of the Work, standing: My station is at the right of the Chancellor Commander, opposite the altar. My duties are to have special supervision of all preparations for floor-work in conferring the ranks; and to perform all other services required of me by the laws of the order and the by-laws of this lodge.

Takes his seat.

Chancellor Commander gives one rap: Prelate, where is your station and what are your duties in this lodge?

Prelate, standing: My station is at the left of the Chancellor Commander, opposite the altar. My duties are to administer the obligations; to offer invocations to the Deity and ask his blessings upon our brotherhood; and to perform all other services required of me by the laws of the order and the by-laws of this lodge.

Takes his seat.

Chancellor Commander gives one rap: Vice Chancellor, where is your station and what are your duties in this lodge?

Vice Chancellor, standing: My station is opposite that of the Chancellor Commander. My duties are to assist the Chancellor Commander in preserving order; to aid in conducting the ceremonies of the ranks; to appoint a minority of all committees (unless otherwise ordered by the lodge); to preside in the absence of the Chancellor Commander; to have supervision of the wicket; and to perform all other services required of me by the laws of the order and the by-laws of this lodge. *Takes his seat.*

Chancellor Commander, standing: The station of the Chancellor Commander is in the executive chair of the lodge. It is his duty to preside over the lodge; to preserve order during its sessions; to appoint a majority of all committees (unless otherwise ordered by the lodge); and to perform all other services required of him by the laws of the order and the by-laws of this lodge.

All of these duties I am under solemn obligation to perform with justice and impartiality. In their discharge I ask your earnest co-operation.

Two raps.

What is the duty of every member of this order?

All take the position in which the obligation of the Rank of Knight was assumed, and respond: To avoid anger and dissension; to work together in the spirit of fraternity; to exemplify the friendship of Damon and Pythias.

Resume ordinary position.

Chancellor Commander: To aid us in this work, the Prelate will invoke divine

assistance.

Prelate: Supreme Ruler of the Universe, we humbly ask thy blessing upon the officers and members of this lodge and visiting brothers. Aid us to avoid anger and dissension; help us to work together in the spirit of fraternity; and inspire us to exemplify the friendship of Damon and Pythias. Hear and answer us, we beseech thee. Amen.

All: Amen!

Opening Ode

God bless our knightly band!
Firm may it ever stand,
Through storm and night;
When the wild tempests rave,
Ruler of wind and wave,
Do thou our order save
By thy great might.

For this our prayers ascend—
God bless, protect, defend,
God guard our rights;
Thou who art ever nigh,
Viewing with watchful eye,
To thee aloud we cry:
God save the knights!

Chancellor Commander: Master at Arms, display the shield and arrange the altar.

Inner Guard opens the inner door.

Master at Arms places upon the inner door a shield of the emblematic color of the rank. The door is then closed, and the Master at Arms returns to the altar, places the sword of defence in proper position, salutes the Chancellor Commander and

says: Chancellor Commander, your order has been obeyed.

Chancellor Commander: I now declare ... Lodge, No. ..., duly opened for the dispatch of such business as shall legally come before it.

One rap.

Attention! Raise your visors.

All give the sign of courtesy of the rank of Knight.

Chancellor Commander: Master at Arms, you will retire to the ante-room and present the flag of our country.

The Master at Arms then retires to the ante-room where he will procure the flag, previously prepared on a staff, bringing it unfurled into the castle hall. The Master at Arms will advance to the center of the castle hall in front of the altar, facing the Chancellor Commander.

The Chancellor Commander will then command: Attention! Join me in saluting the flag of our country.

All members will then salute the flag in unison with the Chancellor Commander (using the right hand military salute).

The Master at Arms will then place the flag at the right of the station of the Chancellor Commander, in a socket prepared for it, where it will remain throughout the convention.

The Master at Arms will then return to his station.

(a) The flag ceremony, as incorporated into the official opening and dosing ceremonies, is an outward and visible sign of loyalty and devotion to our country, and will be conducted with deference and dignity.

(b) If practicable, a march shall be played when the Master at Arms enters or retires with the flag, and the national anthem during the salute.

(c) The Chancellor Commander, before ordering the Master at Arms to present or return the flag, may appoint two members to act as a color guard to escort the flag to and from the castle hall. This guard shall wait one on each side of the Master at Arms, armed with a drawn sword to carry. At the command, "Attention," by the Chancellor Commander, the color guard will bring their swords to the present, as for non-commissioned officers (raise and carry the sword to the front, base of the hilt as high as the chin and 6 inches in front of the neck, edge to the left, point 6 inches farther to the front than the hilt, thumb extended on right of the grip, all fingers grasping the grip. As soon as the salute has been given by the members, the guard will bring their swords to carry.

(d) The flag ceremony will be used at all open or public sessions held by a subordinate lodge.

(e) A member entering the lodge, after the lodge has been declared open for the dispatch of business, shall proceed to the altar, and, before giving any sign, salute the flag, without exclamation. A member retiring from the lodge before the closing thereof, shall, without exclamation, salute the flag before giving any sign.

Chancellor Commander: Inner Guard, inform the Outer Guard that this lodge is now open in the rank of Knight, and direct him to admit all who are qualified to enter.

Inner Guard, standing in the door: Outer Guard, this lodge is now open in the rank of Knight, and it is the order of the Chancellor Commander that you admit all who are qualified to enter.

Closes the door.

Chancellor Commander, the Outer Guard has received your order.

Chancellor Commander gives three raps. If any visitors are present, the

Chancellor Commander will say: The lodge will be at ease, and the members will join me in extending a fraternal welcome to our visiting brothers.

Preparation

1. *Robes appropriate to the official stations may be worn if desired.*
2. *Everything being in readiness in the lodge-room, the Chancellor Commander will order the Outer Guard to admit the candidates to the ante-room. The presence of the candidates in the ante-room should be the signal for complete silence in the lodge-room, which the Chancellor Commander shall enforce. The Chancellor Commander will order the Secretary and the Master at Arms to proceed thither and propound to the candidate the following questions, and obtain his signature to his answers:*

Do you believe in the existence of a Supreme Being?

Answer.

Are you of sound bodily health?

Answer.

Have you hitherto applied for membership in the order of Knights of Pythias—if so, when and where?

Answer.

Are you willing to take upon yourself a solemn obligation to keep forever secret all that you may hear, see or be instructed in—an obligation that will in no wise conflict with your creed or your conscience?

Answer.

The candidate replies to these questions, and the Secretary writes the answers in a book prepared for the purpose, after which the candidate signs his name to them, and the Secretary and the Master at Arms sign their names as witnesses. The Secretary, with the Master at Arms, then returns to the lodge-room and reports the result of the examination. If all the answers are not satisfactory to the lodge, the Secretary shall immediately notify the candidate. If all the answers are satisfactory, the lodge shall at once proceed to the initiation.

Initiation

Master at Arms gives the alarm of the rank.

Inner Guard repeats the alarm and attends the wicket: Who comes here?

Master at Arms: The Master at Arms of this lodge, with a stranger who desires to be initiated into the mysteries of the rank of Page in the order of Knights of Pythias.

Inner Guard closes the wicket: Chancellor Commander, the Master at Arms of this lodge, with a stranger who desires to be initiated into the mysteries of the rank of Page, applies for admission.

Chancellor Commander: Admit them.

Inner Guard opens the door.

Master at Arms enters into the darkened lodge-room with the candidate (un-blindfolded) on his left.

Pythagoras, a competent member, in suitable costume, representing Pythagoras, will be stationed inside. As the Master at Arms and the candidate enter,

Pythagoras meets them, and addresses the candidate, the Master at Arms quietly retiring: In me behold Pythagoras. Centuries before your eyes had opened on the light of day, I had attained the knowledge of all the ages. The arts of ancient Egypt, the science of Arabia and the philosophy of Phoenicia, the lore of the Chaldean sages and the occult mysteries of the Persian magi, are to me an open book.

I welcome you as a seeker after knowledge; but bear in mind, O neophyte, this truth—the wish to know contains not always the faculty to acquire. He who seeks to discover must first learn to imagine and to deliberate. The life that contemplates is nobler than the life that enjoys. He who merely is, may be a dull, insensate hind; he who knows, is in himself divine.

The journey which is before you is to you unknown. It lies, perhaps, through flower-bespangled plains and verdant meads, where summer sunshine sifts through interlacing boughs, and perfumed zephyrs sigh, and music-throated birds entrance the listening air. It peradventure winds its devious and uncertain way along the mountain side, where unscaled peaks their towering summits lift amid the thunder's sullen roar, and depths abysmal yawn beyond the treacherous precipice; or else where darkling rivers run, 'mid rayless gloom, through caverns measureless to man, down to a sunless sea. Mayhap it leads through bog and fen and foul morass, where hideous creatures climb and crawl, and slimy serpents cling and coil, and nameless, countless horrors lurk unseen.

Fear is the deadliest foe to knowledge. Be brave. The coward fancies perils which may not exist, and dies a thousand deaths; to the hero danger comes only to nerve his arm and steel his soul to combat and to conquer.

And now, farewell. You go to claim the golden spur that knighthood wears. To wear it, you must win it. Should you succeed, your guerdon and reward will be companionship with loyal-hearted and chivalric knights; should you fail, on you and you alone will rest the burden of the blame.

Pythagoras then retires. This scene may be illustrated by stereopticon views, tableaw~ or in any similar manner, at the option of the lodge.

The Master at Arms, who, in the meantime, has been in waiting, takes the candidate by the arm, and, without speaking, leads him to the ante-room.

Chancellor Commander:

1. Shall appoint two or more members to assist the Master of the Work in the preparation of the floor, which shall be as follows:

On two trestles, twelve inches high, covered by a black pall reaching to the floor, shall be placed an open coffin, which shall contain a skeleton. On the coffin shall be two crossed swords, with the hilts towards the Prelate, and on these the open book of law. The coffin may be placed in the center of the floor, or in front of the station of the Vice Chancellor, or in an alcove of the lodge-room.

2. When directed by the Chancellor Commander, the Master at Arms will retire to the ante-room and prepare the candidate, by placing on him a white sash (extending from the right shoulder to and below the left hip) and securely blindfolding him. As many attendants may be appointed as desired. No frivolous

conversation shall be permitted in the presence of the candidate. Only such remarks as are essential to his proper preparation shall be allowed. There may be such floor-work, forming of triangle, or scene arrangement, as each lodge may determine for itself.

Master at Arms enters, with the candidate on his left, escorts him very slowly once around the room, and halts before the station of the Chancellor Commander. In the meantime, perfect silence should prevail. If possible, a solemn march should be played. While passing around the lodgeroom with the candidate, the Master at Arms should be between the candidate and the altar or coffin.

Master at Arms: Chancellor Commander, before you stands a stranger, who desires to be initiated into the mysteries of the rank of Page in the order of Knights of Pythias.

Chancellor Commander: Stranger, favorable consideration of an applicant for the ranks of Knighthood is an expression of our belief in his honor and integrity. Being thus favored, it remains for you, when you have attained the ranks of Knighthood, to make of this belief a verity. That you may the better understand what you may see and hear, as step by step you advance in this great brotherhood, I ask a listening ear.

This order does not rest its claim for favor solely upon its signs and symbols, but its ceremonies point the way to a higher and better standard of manhood. It would develop and maintain character, and reputation would follow, as the night the day. We do not claim nor expect perfection, but our hope is for better things. We realize the frailties and weaknesses of man, and from the lessons taught, we learn to overcome our own. Whatever of pleasure we may find along the way will prove your profit in the end.

In our ritualistic work, each sentence has a meaning, and each paragraph a lesson for your daily life. You will realize that friendship brings its full reward. The force and sting of hasty judgment may be yours, but caution has its part, and charity's broad mantle will protect the thoughtless and the weak.

We believe that the unkind word is not an asset in the life of man; it brings naught of good, and once sent forth, is a liability which can never, never be redeemed. As you have faith in yourself, your honor and integrity, so have faith in the honor and integrity of your fellowman. Disregard of prudence that vanity may feast, is often seen, but much preferred is the exercise of cautious judgment, and you will learn that confidence in others is as necessary to a successful life as the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the love-light of the home. We look for the good, the brighter, the better side of man.

This order, founded in the City of Washington, February 19, 1864, in its teachings, takes hold of the hearts of men, appeals alike to the high and the low, to the learned and the unlearned, and strikes the chord of human sympathy found in all who do not live for self alone.

The story of Damon and Pythias is its basic thought; every lesson taught has its application to life, day by day—as it was, is, and will be, through each unfolding

year. Our wish, our hope, our aim, is that this order may aid you to be true, cautious, charitable, benevolent and brave, in all that tends to make for good, in a world filled with golden opportunities to plant a flower, and uproot a thorn along the path of life.

In this spirit, I welcome you as an applicant for the mysteries of this rank. In return for the honors we

bestow, what may we expect of you?

Prompted by the Master at Arms, the candidates answers: Obedience.

Chancellor Commander: Master at Arms, the stranger having pledged obedience, you will conduct him to the Prelate of this lodge, who will administer to him the obligation of the rank of Page.

Master at Arms conducts the candidate once around the room, and then to the coffin, in front of the Prelate: Prelate, by order of the Chancellor Commander, I present a stranger, who has pledged obedience, and who wears an emblem of the purity of his purpose, that you may administer to him the obligation of the rank of Page.

Prelate: White has ever been an emblem of purity; and to the members of this order it represents that purity of purpose essential to admission here. You wear it as one whose presence we welcome and whose purpose we applaud.

Master at Arms, require the stranger -to kneel upon both knees, place his left hand upon his left breast and his right hand, palm downward, on the book of law.

Master at Arms obeys the orders as given.

Prelate advances to the coffin.

Master at Arms: Prelate, the stranger is in position to take the obligation.

Chancellor Commander gives two raps. If attendants assist in the ceremony, one should stand at each end of the coffin, and the other attendants (if any) behind the candidate and the Master at Arms. The members remain in their places.

Prelate: Stranger, as you have promised obedience, and are about to assume the obligation of this rank, justice to you demands that you should be in possession of all your faculties.

Master at Arms, you will now remove the hoodwink, that he may see as well as hear.

Master at Arms removes the hoodwink.

Prelate: Stranger, you will repeat after me.

I solemnly promise that I will never reveal the password, signs or any other secret or mystery of this rank, except in a lodge of this order, recognized by and under the control of the Supreme Lodge Knights of Pythias, or when being examined by the proper officer of a lodge, or to one whom I know to be a member of this rank.

I further promise that I will not become a member of, recognize or countenance any organization using the name of this order or any derivative thereof, which is not recognized by or under the control of the Supreme Lodge Knights of Pythias. I further promise that I will obey the laws and, so far as possible, comply with the requirements of the order.

I further promise that I will heed the teachings of this rank, and seek to profit thereby, and, as I meet the members of this order, I will endeavor to exemplify, in my conduct and my demeanor toward them, the principles of friendship embodied in the lesson of tonight.

To the faithful observance of this obligation I pledge my sacred word of honor. So help me God—and may he keep me steadfast.

All: Amen!

Prelate: Stranger, by this vow you are bound until death.

All: Even until death!

Prelate: Until the mortal casket is forever stilled, no longer obeying for good or ill the behests of your immortal being, and soon to return to undistinguishable dust; and when your frame, like that on which you gaze, becomes an object lesson to be coned—a spectacle for curious or reflective minds to ponder o'er, and wonder if, once instinct with life, it sipped of every sinful sweet, and unremembered fell asleep; or if the hand, ne'er closed to human need, its largess so bestowed that e'en the fleshless and cadaverous palm could not the kiss of gratitude affright—may the record of your life be such that the briefest truthful thought must be, "He lived to bless mankind!"

Prelate, Master at Arms and attendants kneel on right knee.

Anthem

In the deep hush that o'er the earth is stealing,

Father, I come to thee;

In humbleness of heart I kneel appealing—

Be merciful to me!

Be merciful to me!

Prelate: You will now arise.

My friend, you have pledged your sacred word of honor—man can give no higher pledge. You have called upon the ruler of the universe to aid you in keeping that obligation inviolate. You come to us in the strength of vigorous life, desiring to know our mysteries and willing to aid us in the work we have to do. As an order, we do not seek to shape your creed; but we do ask you to exercise your powers for good. In coming here, you assume no obligation in conflict with your duty to home and loved ones; and you can best honor us by your care of those who by the ties of home have claims upon you. You have now not only your own good name to protect and defend, but, enrolled under our banner, working for the elevation of mankind, do no act that will bring dishonor upon this order. We would have you fill the hours with kind words, the days with generous deeds; and as you meet your brethren,

"Be thou the rainbow to the storms of life,

The evening beam that smiles the clouds away!"

With pleasure I present to you a sprig of myrtle, which you will retain until its symbolism shall have been explained.

Master at Arms, conduct our friend to the ante-room, that we may prepare to give him further instruction.

Master at Arms conducts the candidate to the ante-room, and removes his sash. Chancellor Commander gives three raps.

The attendants, under the direction of the Master of the Work, will remove the paraphernalia. The Inner Guard will inform the Master at Arms, through the wicket, when everything is in readiness.

Master at Arms gives the alarm of the rank.

Inner Guard repeats the alarm and attends the wicket: Who comes here?

Master at Arms: The Master at Arms, with a friend who desires to receive further instruction in the mysteries of the rank of Page.

Inner Guard closes the wicket: Chancellor Commander, the Master at Arms, accompanied by a friend who desires to receive further instruction in the mysteries of the rank of Page, applies for admission.

Chancellor Commander: Admit them.

Inner Guard opens the door.

Master at Arms enters, with the candidate, conducts him once around the room, and halts before the station of the Vice Chancellor: Vice Chancellor, I present to you a friend who desires to receive further instruction.

Vice Chancellor, standing: How am I to know that he has taken the obligation of the rank of Page?

Master at Arms: He is in possession of a sprig of myrtle.

Vice Chancellor: What does the myrtle symbolize?

Master at Arms: The friendship which bound Damon and Pythias.

Vice Chancellor: How should we exemplify that friendship?

Master at Arms: By the practice of fraternity.

Vice Chancellor: I accept the emblem [*takes it from him*] as an evidence of your intention to join us in the practice of fraternity; and I will now instruct you in the secret work of this rank.

When this lodge is open in the rank of Page, and you desire admittance to the ante-room, you will make your presence known at the outer door. The Outer Guard will open the door, obtain your name and report it to the Inner Guard, who will report it to the Vice Chancellor. If you are in good standing, the Outer Guard will be ordered to admit you to the anteroom, where you will invest yourself with the jewel of a Page, bearing the letter "F" on a field of blue, blue being the emblematic color of this rank.

You will then approach the inner door and give thereon ... which will be answered from within by ...

The wicket will then be opened, and through it you will give your name. This will be reported to the Vice Chancellor, who will order you admitted if correct. The wicket will again be opened, and through it you will give in a whisper the password of this rank, which is ... You will then be admitted to the lodge-room, and will advance to the altar, on which will rest the open book of law, with two swords crossed

underneath, the points toward you. There you will salute the flag of our country, using the right hand military salute. You will then give to the Chancellor Commander the sign of courtesy, thus: ... The Chancellor Commander will answer it by ..., which indicates permission to be seated. Should you desire to retire while the lodge is open in this rank, unless leaving the lodge-room to execute an order of the Chancellor Commander, you will advance to the altar and salute the flag of our country. You will then give to the Chancellor Commander the same sign which you gave on entering the lodge-room. Should the Chancellor Commander answer it by ..., you may retire— otherwise, you will return to your seat.

The motto of this rank is ...

The gavel is the emblem of the authority of the Chancellor Commander, and is used to preserve order, call the members of the lodge to their feet and seat them— one rap calling the lodge to order, two raps calling all the members to their feet and three raps seating them.

Master at Arms, conduct our friend to the Chancellor Commander, that he may learn the lesson of this rank.

Takes his seat.

Master at Arms conducts the candidate to the station of the Chancellor

Commander: Chancellor Commander, by direction of the Vice Chancellor, I present a friend, that he may learn from you the lesson of friendship.

Chancellor Commander, standing: The friendship of Damon and Pythias shines through the mists of centuries, a glowing tribute to the humanity of the past. It was made the sweet song of ancient Greece, and is immortalized in the permanence of our order.

Damon, a senator of Syracuse, had incurred the displeasure of Dionysius, and was under sentence of death. Many delighted to honor him when he wore the robes of office; now he has but one friend in all Syracuse—the companion of his brighter, better days. Pythias was true; and knowing Damon's love of home, he begged the tyrant to grant his friend a respite, that he might see his wife and child before he died. A hero of many battles, a stranger to the art of speech, his love for Damon inspired a most eloquent appeal:

“As thou’rt a husband and a father, heax me!

Let Damon go and see his wife and child

Before he dies. For four hours respite him;

Put me in chains; plunge me into his dungeon,

As pledge for his return. Do this—but this—

And may the gods themselves build up thy greatness

As high as their own heavens!”

The fervor of this strange request touched the heart of Dionysius. It was to him a mystery. He had lived for self alone; he had sacrificed his friends, his honor, his home, upon the altar of a boundless ambition, for place and for power. To him friendship was

Ambition's ladder;

Whereto the climber upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend.”

The request was granted, and Pythias became a hostage for Damon, who hastened toward his home by the distant sea.

The mystery deepens—the tyrant cannot solve it.

By his decree, in the lone dungeon where Pythias wears the chains, the fair Calanthe urges her lover to break his bond and fly with her where dangers can not come.

He will not go; he has pledged his word; honor is more to him than life—and in his refusal the tyrant marvels still the more.

Will Damon return? The love of home, of wife and child, the tender memories that shine like burning stars through the gathering gloom, hold him, until, ere he knows, the last hour of respite is hastening by.

Giving a last fond embrace to his loved ones—a last longing, lingering look at his once happy home—he starts for Syracuse, to redeem his promise and to save his friend.

The hour of execution is at hand; Damon has not returned; and his hostage is brought to the block to suffer in his stead. The evening sun shines golden on the towers and temples of ancient Syracuse, as Pythias looks out upon the vast throng, who taunt him with the seeming falseness of his friend. Relying upon the honor of Damon, trusting in his word, proud of his friendship, he calls upon the gods to prevent his return; and, in response to the cruel jeers of the mob, proclaims the fidelity of Damon, and turns to meet his fate.

At the last moment, when the headsman’s axe is raised, a horseman is seen in the distance, coming with the speed of the wind.

It is Damon! He has been true to his promise. He has saved his friend.

The air resounds with the shouts of the populace, in recognition of a virtue that has long been buried under the weight of human selfishness.

At the strange scene the tyrant looks in wonderment; and, as he looks, the cruel purpose of the hour passes away, and friendship sits upon the throne, wearing a crown “that ne’er encumbers nor can be transferred.”

These heroes still live, and will live while friendship warms the heart of man. This virtue is the cornerstone of the order, and our members are sworn to exercise it toward each other.

Keep sacred the lesson of to-night; and so live that, when you come to the river that marks the unknown shore, your hands may be filled with deeds of charity, “the golden keys that open the palace of eternity.”

I now confer upon you the rank of Page in the order of Knights of Pythias.

Invests the candidate with a blue jewel.

Master at Arms, face the Page to the lodge.

Master at Arms faces the Page toward the station of the Vice Chancellor.

Chancellor Commander gives two raps: Officers and members of ... Lodge, No. ..., I take pleasure in introducing Page ...

The lodge will be at ease.

NOTE.—When the lodge is at ease, it shall be the duty of the Secretary to have the candidate enrolled as a member of the lodge. It is further made the duty of this officer to promptly enter the dates when the ranks of Esquire and Knight are conferred upon every candidate.

The lectures of this rank may be illustrated by stereopticon views, tableaux or in any similar manner, at the option of the lodge.

Closing ceremony

Chancellor Commander gives one rap: If there is no business to be transacted necessitating the return to the Rank of Knight we will proceed to close. Attend, while the Prelate implores the blessing of Deity.

Two raps.

Prelate: Vouchsafe Thy blessing, our Heavenly Father, on the events of this evening. Be Thou with us, shield us from all harm, and finally permit us to be with Thee, on the last great day, a united brotherhood, to share the blessings of life eternal. Hear and answer us, we beseech Thee. Amen.

All: Amen!

Chancellor Commander: Master at Arms, return the flag of our country to its resting place.

Thereupon the Master at Arms, with the flag, will assume the same position in front of the altar as in the opening ceremonies, and the salute of the flag will be given in the same manner and form as in the opening ceremonies. The salute having been given, the Master at Arms will then return the flag to the property room.

Chancellor Commander gives one rap: Master at Arms, remove the shield, close the books of law, secure the swords of defence, and collect the jewels.

The Chancellor Commander will pause until the Master at Arms has obeyed his instructions in every particular.

By virtue of the power vested in me, I now declare ... Lodge, No. ... duly closed. Inner Guard, inform the Outer Guard.

Inner Guard, standing in the door: Outer Guard, the lodge is closed.

Chancellor Commander gives one rap.



Knights of Pythias Ritual

Rank of Esquire

Proving

Chancellor Commander: Officers and members, the introduction of any discussion of a personal character, liable to be offensive to the candidate, must be avoided. The sole purpose of the ceremony must be to impress the candidate with the lesson of C..., and the observance of the obligations of the order. The discussion should be clean and dignified, calculated to appeal to the better side of man, and leave in truth, "no unpleasant recollections."

Master at Arms, retire and present the Page for proving.

The Master at Arms will then retire to the ante-room, and conduct the candidate (in ordinary dress) to the inner door.

Master at Arms gives the alarm of the rank upon the shield.

Inner Guard repeats the alarm and attends the wicket: Who strikes upon the shield of this lodge?

Master at Arms: The Master at Arms of this lodge, with a Page who desires to be proved in the rank of Esquire.

Inner Guard closes the wicket: Chancellor Commander, the Master at Arms of this lodge, with a Page who desires to be proved in the rank of Esquire, applies for admission.

Chancellor Commander: Admit them.

Inner Guard opens the door.

Master at Arms enters, with the candidate on his left, escorts him around the lodge-room twice, and halts before the station of the Chancellor Commander. In the meantime, perfect silence should prevail. If possible a march should be played: Chancellor Commander, before you stands a Page who desires to be proved in the rank of Esquire.

Chancellor Commander, standing: With pleasure I welcome you as an applicant for the honors of this rank. Your presence to-night shows your appreciation of the purposes of our order, and is evidence of the fact that your exemplification of friendship by the practice of fraternity has caused the members of this lodge to regard you as worthy of advancement. That you may give a further pledge of your fidelity, the Master at Arms will conduct you to the Prelate of this lodge, who will administer to you the obligation of the rank of Esquire. **Takes his seat.**

Prelate takes position at the altar, facing the station of the Vice Chancellor.

Master at Arms presents the candidate at the altar, facing the station of the

Chancellor Commander: Prelate, by order of the Chancellor Commander, I present you a Page, that you may administer to him the obligation of the rank of Esquire.

Prelate: Advance your left foot, place your left hand on your left breast, close your right hand, raise your right arm as if to strike a downward blow, and repeat after me.

Chancellor Commander gives two raps.

Prelate: I solemnly promise that I will never reveal the password, signs or any other secret or mystery of this rank, except in a lodge of this order, recognized by and under the control of the Supreme Lodge Knights of Pythias, or when being examined by the proper officer of a lodge, or to one whom I know to be a member of this rank.

I specially promise that I will not commit to writing any of the secret work of this order, so that it may become known; nor will I permit it to be done by another, if in my power to prevent.

I further promise, so far as may be in my power, to guard the good name of a member of this or of any other rank of this order, and that I will not speak ill of him until I am satisfied by careful investigation, that he has disregarded his obligation, has violated the laws of his country or has been guilty of conduct unbecoming a gentleman.

I further promise that, in my dealings with men, I will endeavor to be careful, cautious and prudent; and for the frailties of others will exercise the same charity I would ask for myself.

To the faithful observance of this obligation I pledge my sacred word of honor. So help me God— and may he keep me steadfast.

Chancellor Commander gives three raps.

Prelate: You are now entitled to full instruction in the secret work of this rank, and, in receiving it, remember that its teachings are not limited to the signs and password. There is a lesson we would impress upon you that may be of use in every transaction of life.

In all that is done here, we do not look to our pleasure, but to your good. The obligation you have taken is a comprehensive one, and imposes duties you should not forget. The friendship of Damon and Pythias should be your friendship for the members of this lodge. It will be your duty to protect their honor and to defend their integrity. Your force of character and prudent counsel should guide them past the dangers that line the pathway of all.

Especially to young men should this order be a defence against every evil, and keep them perfect in their manhood.

You should so learn the lesson of friendship that, in its exercise, you may correct a fault as well as commend a virtue. If you have not so learned this lesson, I ask you to turn again to that Grecian scene, and again, and again, until its sacred memories are your own, and you shall know, as never before, the full, the Pythian, meaning of friendship.

Your future in this lodge is what you make it.

If you love mankind; if you would make the world brighter and better and bring sunshine and gladness to hearts in gloom; if you would aid in dispelling the clouds that at times gather about and darken the lives of all men—we bid you welcome to our midst, and ask you to

“Do noble things—nor dream them all day long— And so make life, death and that

vast Forever One grand, sweet song.”

Master at Arms, conduct the Page to the Vice Chancellor for instruction.

Returns to his station.

Master at Arms conducts the candidate to the station of the Vice Chancellor.

Vice Chancellor, by direction of the Prelate, I present to you a Page for instruction.

Vice Chancellor, standing: I will now instruct you in the secret work of this rank.

When this lodge is open in the rank of Esquire, and you desire admittance to the ante-room, you will make your presence known at the outer door. The Outer Guard will open the door, obtain your name and report it to the Inner Guard, who will report it to the Vice Chancellor. If you are in good standing, the Outer Guard will be ordered to admit you to the ante-room, where you will invest yourself with the jewel of an Esquire, bearing the letter “C” in a field of yellow, yellow being the emblematic color of this rank.

You will then approach the inner door and give thereon ..., which will be answered from within by ...

The wicket will then be opened, and through it you will give your name. This will be reported to the Vice Chancellor, who will order you admitted if correct. The wicket will again be opened, and through it you will give in a whisper the password of this rank, which is ...

You will then be admitted to the lodge-room, and will advance to the altar, on which will rest the open book of law, with two swords crossed thereon, the points toward you. There you will salute the flag of our country, as in the rank of Page.

You will then give to the Chancellor Commander the sign of courtesy, thus: ...

The Chancellor Commander will answer it by ..., which indicates permission to be seated.

Should you desire to retire while the lodge is open in this rank, unless leaving the lodge-room to execute an order of the Chancellor Commander, you will advance to the altar and salute the flag of our country. You will then give to the Chancellor Commander the same sign which you gave on entering the lodge room. Should the Chancellor Commander answer it by ..., you may retire—otherwise, you will return to your seat.

The motto of this rank is ...

The use of the gavel is the same as in the rank of Page.

Master at Arms, conduct the Page to the Chancellor Commander, for instruction in the lesson of this rank.

Master at Arms conducts the candidate to the station of the Chancellor

Commander: Chancellor Commander, by direction of the Vice Chancellor, I present this Page, for instruction in the lesson of this rank.

Chancellor Commander, standing: In ancient times, an Esquire was but one rank removed from the honors of knighthood. It is the same in this order; and, as you advance to this rank, remember its motto C Study the full meaning of the word, so that, under all circumstances, at all times, you may be prudent, cautious and watchful, exercising care in the business of life, prudence in your social relations,

and that watchful tenderness toward your loved ones consistent with the highest, purest type of manhood.

The lesson of this rank is intended to be practical and of practical benefit. If you will take the motto as your life-motto; if you will keep it always before you, it will prove a danger-signal, warning you of the pitfalls that line the path of life.

Our desire is so to impress the lessons of this order that, when you shall have reached the summit, and stand among us a Pythian knight, you will have no unpleasant recollections of your journey; but all that you may have seen and heard will give you a grander view of life, a more extended conception of its duties and responsibilities, and you may fully realize that our order has but one purpose, one result—the elevation, the happiness, the betterment, of mankind.

Exercise friendship; be cautious; be charitable; and, in your daily life, reflect credit and honor upon the ceremonies of to-night.

Master at Arms, conduct the Page to a seat.

Takes his seat.

Master at Arms conducts the candidate to a seat.

The lodge immediately proceeds to the apparent transaction of ordinary business, during which the Secretary approaches the candidate and quietly asks him to accompany him to his station and record his name. The Secretary thereupon escorts the candidate to his station, requests him to be seated and presents to him a form containing blanks for name, age, residence, occupation and motto, which he directs him to fill.

As soon as the candidate has taken his seat, the Master at Arms will quietly take position behind him.

If the candidate declines to fill the blank for the motto, the Secretary should offer to do so for him. If the candidate refuses to permit this, the Master at Arms will announce: Chancellor Commander, the Page remembers his obligation, and refuses to write the motto or to permit it to be written.

Chancellor Commander: Master at Arms, present the Page at this station.

Master at Arms presents the candidate at the station of the Chancellor Commander.

Chancellor Commander, standing: Your remembrance of this obligation deserves and has our warmest commendation. You have here exemplified caution, care and prudence; and we would impress upon you the necessity of exercising, in every vocation of life, the same caution, the same care, the same prudence, you have just shown.

This evidence of your regard for the obligation of this rank we accept as an assurance of your fidelity to every obligation which you as a gentleman are bound to respect.

This test is but one of the many you will find in the path of years. As you stand here, in the flush of successful progress in our order, I would ask you to remember that you are but human, and share with us to some extent the frailties of mankind. Do not let this temporary triumph make you self-complacent. Over-confidence has proven the ruin and downfall of many worthy, well-meaning men. Man's natural

tendency is to egotism. Success oft leads to vanity and a self-assurance which bring swift and sure disaster. Vaunting pride and self-laudation are not the keys that will open the door to the hearts of your friends. The exercise of prudence, caution and care in the affairs of life will commend you to your fellows, and the remembrance of the frailties of men will temper your judgments with mercy, as you keep in mind the lesson of this rank.

I now confer upon you the rank of Esquire in the order of Knights of Pythias.

Invests the candidate with a yellow jewel.

Master at Arms, face the Esquire to the lodge.

Master at Arms faces the Esquire toward the station of the Vice Chancellor.

Chancellor Commander gives two raps: Officers and members of ... Lodge, No. ...,

I take pleasure in introducing Esquire ...

The lodge will be at ease.

If the candidate attempts to fill the blank for the motto, or permits the Secretary to do so, the Master at Arms shall prevent the completion of the act.

Master at Arms: Chancellor Commander, the Page has attempted to write the motto of this rank [or, the Page has permitted the writing of the motto of this rank, when it was in his power to prevent].

Hands the blank to the Chancellor Commander.

Prelate, standing: "I specially promise that I will not commit to writing any of the secret work of this order, so that it may become known; nor will I permit it to be done by another, if in my power to prevent."

Takes his seat.

Chancellor Commander, standing: Brethren, the Page has attempted to write the motto of this rank [or, the Page has permitted the writing of the motto of this rank, when it was in his power to prevent]. What is your will?

Takes his seat.

At this point, the motion to suspend having been made and seconded, the member previously appointed by the Chancellor Commander for the purpose will rise in his place and open the prosecution.

Chancellor Commander: Master at Arms, present the Page at this station.

Master at Arms presents the candidate at the station of the Chancellor Commander.

Chancellor Commander, standing: We trust that the events of tonight will not pass away like a dream of youth, but be with you through all the years, another link in the golden chain that binds you to our glorious trinity. These ceremonies are but pages from the book of life, and in their study you will gather strength for the duties that come to all.

The presence of these friends gave you confidence; and, in the security that lulls you to sleep, the full effect of your obligation was for the moment lost. We commend your confidence, and would have you rest secure in the friendships of our order; but, as a good citizen, as a faithful Esquire, we would have you ever careful of your conduct, although surrounded by friends most true. Ever remember that the seeming friend of today may be the enemy of tomorrow, and by no act of

yours place it in his power to do you an injury should he become your foe. Your mistake brought hasty words of censure from those who thus exemplified the tendency of mankind. When the breath of scandal touches the garments of a fellow being, many are ready to condemn, and to accept the naked charge as a proof of guilt, as they pass the judgment of an evil-thinking mind. Be not so hasty as they in dealing with the weaknesses of mankind. Remember, there are those near and dear to every one; and, as you love your own, neither think nor speak ill of any until you have exercised the prudence shown by those who to-night have spoken in your behalf. The lives of many have been clouded by thoughtless, unkind words. Good men and true have struggled and gone down, poisoned by the slanders that have followed them through all their days. Be prudent in your converse and cautious in your judgment, that no unjust words of censure pass your lips. What to your dim eyes may seem a stain, in God's clear light may prove a scar, won on some hard-fought field, where you would faint and yield. You have here made a mistake—one common to our humanity—and when it was so proven, you saw the hand of charity extended in the pardon granted. We would have you cautious and prudent; but, more than this, forget not that charity is over all. If the weak or unwary stumble and fall, it is not only your duty, but it should be your pleasure, to place them again upon their feet, and by words of kindness and acts of love bid them Godspeed.

The importance of regard for your obligation has marked the lesson of tonight. We would have you remember every obligation of life. Be true to yourself, your home and loved ones; and at all times remember that these friends have meant you well, and will stand your firm defenders as long as your armor is worn in the cause of right and of humanity.

Lights the blank, and, as it bums, says: And now, as this, the only evidence of your error, turns to ashes, these friends blot from their memories all unpleasant recollections of the mistake by you made.

I now confer upon you the rank of Esquire in the order of Knights of Pythias.

Invests the candidate with a yellow jewel.

Master at Arms, face the Esquire to the lodge.

Master at Arms faces the Esquire toward the station of the Vice Chancellor.

Chancellor Commander gives two raps: Officers and members of ... Lodge, No ..., I take pleasure in introducing Esquire ...

The Lodge will be at ease.



Knights of Pythias Ritual Rank of Knight

Preparation

When ordered by the Chancellor Commander, the Outer Guard will admit the candidate to the ante-room. The Master at Arms, clad in armor and with sword at a "carry," will immediately, by order of the Chancellor Commander, retire to the ante-room.

During the preparation of the candidate, no one except the Outer Guard and the Master at Arms shall, under any pretence, be allowed to enter the ante-room.

Master at Arms: Esquire, ere you leave this room in quest of further knowledge of our mysteries, I ask of you a pledge that you will not improperly reveal anything that you may see or hear tonight. Do you make this pledge?

The candidate answers: I do.

To typify the protection which this lodge assures to all who worthily enter its castle hall, I place this shield upon your breast and this helmet on your head; and, that you may not witness mysteries to which as yet you are not entitled, I lower this visor before your face.

While speaking, the Master at Arms places a shield on the candidate's left arm, and on his head a helmet, which must be provided with a close visor, the lowering of which will completely blindfold him.

Charging

Master at Arms takes the candidate by the right arm and conducts him to the armory (or some other suitable room), which may be a temporary apartment arranged inside the lodge room). This room must be in absolute darkness. The monitor must previously have taken his station in one end of the room, or in an adjacent room connected by an opening or a speaking-tube. On reaching the middle of the room, the Master at Arms will say: Esquire, you will be seated here, where you will remain alone. When you shall hear three strokes upon the bell, raise the visor which obscures your sight, and wait in silence.

Appropriate instrumental music may be introduced here.

The Master at Arms retires noiselessly to the end of the room opposite the Monitor, and after two or three minutes (or when the music has ceased), gives slowly three strokes upon a gong or bell.

Monitor: He that hath light within his own clear breast may sit in the centre of the night and enjoy bright day; but he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts, benighted walks beneath the midday sun.

The darkness which surrounds you is symbolic of life. Man sits in gloom, and the purpose of his existence is a mystery.

Thus shut out from the light of day—"the world forgetting, by the world forgot"—learn now from me the highest purposes of our order.

As you are now, helpless, alone, an unmanned barque upon an unknown sea, your heart-beats the only chart and log-book, hear what I would say; and, as you

hear, resolve that from the ashes of the past you will arise, and, in the spirit of Pythian fidelity, do your duty to your fellows and to your God.

Life has its sunshine and its shadow; its days and its nights; its seasons of joy and its hours of sorrow. In this great drama every Pythian has a part—a duty to himself, a duty to his family, a duty to his fellowman. Out of the silence of the darkness which entombs you, I would have you learn the duty of a Pythian knight. When the darkness of death comes to the home of a friend, your duty is there, to comfort, to console, and if possible to point out, through the gloom of sorrow's night, the stars that shine beyond. To share and have part in the sorrows of our friends broadens the vision, tempers the heart, and makes golden the light that falls upon the hearthstone where we with loved ones dwell.

Night bath glories the day can never reveal. The day tells of the budding flowers, the sparkling stream, the lights and shadows of the grand old wood. We see the majestic mountain, and the peaceful homes brightening the valleys rich in bounteous nature's golden harvest. We arise in the morning, when dewdrops sparkle like diamonds upon the opening flower; we go forth at eventide, when the sunset glows with rubies—but, look where we may, the vision of the day is prescribed.

When tired day has sunk into the arms of restful night,
“Heaven's ebon vault,
Studded With Stars unutterably bright,
Seems like a canopy which love has spread
To curtain her sleeping world.”

Gaze on the silent, shining spheres, as in eternal, unerring cycles they move like silver barques upon the azure sea of heaven; and, as from each of them there radiates some light to brighten and to bless, so, when the night of sorrow darkens the home of a friend, be thou a star of sympathy and love, from which, across the path of those to whom life seems a never-ending night, shall come bright beams of hope. Let words of counsel and of cheer, set to the music of fraternal love, fall from your lips, giving a glow to the cheek, a sparkle to the eye, and hope to the heart, of him who hears. May they fall like rays of light from a heaven of peace!

When the charge of the Monitor has been concluded, the Master at Arms, after waiting a few moments, will quietly approach the candidate, and, without speaking (except, if necessary, the single word, “Come”), will conduct him to the ante-room. When notified that the Senate chamber is in readiness, the Master at Arms will conduct the candidate to the Senate chamber. Nothing whatever shall be said to the candidate during his progress; and if there are doors to be passed through, they shall be opened without alarm or challenge.

Prior to the introduction of the candidate, the Master of the Work, assisted by such attendants as may be necessary, shall arrange the room (which may be the lodge-room or some adjacent apartment) as follows, or in some other suitable manner:

Everything being in readiness, the Master at Arms will bring the candidate into the room and seat him, remaining with him.

The Scribe, appropriately clad, enters and, taking his position at desk, apparently busies himself with his records.

The Headsman, in appropriate costume and armed with headsman axe, enters and takes his position.

Lodges may, at their option, dispense with the services of the Scribe and the Headsman.

Such floor-work, in the form of drill or otherwise, as may be desired, may precede the entrance of the Senate.

The Senators, clothed in appropriate robes, enter, marching in twos, and escorted, if desired, by spearmen or a detachment of knights in uniform. Each Senator holds in his left hand a aper or parchment scroll, rolled so that only the outside shall be visible. All the scrolls must be identical in appearance externally, but that of the first Senator must be blue on the inside, that of the second Senator yellow, and all the others red. The Senators take their seats, and the escort retires, returning with the King.

King enters, preceded by the Herald and escort, and followed by two attendants in suitable costume.

Herald: The King!

Senators rise. The King takes his position at the station of the Vice Chancellor (or position corresponding thereto), one attendant on each side of him, Herald escorts in rear of Senators.

King, standing: Is every Senator in his proper place?

Herald, saluting: All are present, sire.

*King: With knightly courtesy I greet you. **Senators salute.** Be seated, Senators.*

King and Senators take seats. Herald and attendants remain standing.

Senators, you are the chosen guardians of the portals through which must pass all who would attain the honors of Pythian knighthood. Your decisions are supreme; and from your edicts, once formally pronounced, there is no appeal. As Senators, pledged to protect our order against the intrusion of those unfit to wear the armor of a knight, I urge you to be ever on your guard, and to let nothing swerve you from the line of Pythian duty. Do not measure valor by the effrontery which is too often the mask of cowardice, nor count as fear the gentle mien that is frequently the guise of sterling manhood. Seek always to have the full and perfect measure of him who craves from you the honor of the knightly spur. In all you do, be just—and yet be merciful. Remember,

“Wise were the kings who never chose a friend

Till . . . they had unmasked his soul

And seen the bottom of his deepest thoughts.”

There is present an Esquire who seeks to stand upon the summit of Pythian knighthood. Avouching his readiness to undertake any duty, to undergo any test, which your wisdom may prescribe, he awaits with confidence your decree. Ere he is brought before you, I have but this to say: To be held worthy of the honor that he craves, brave he must be, a lover of the right, the foe forever of the wrong, ready to do all and to dare all for the cause of truth.

Herald, instruct the Master at Arms to present the Esquire in presence of the Senate.

Herald salutes and faces about: Master at Arms, by order of the King you will present the Esquire in presence of the Senate. *Steps aside.*

Master at Arms advances with the candidate: My liege and Senators, I here present an Esquire, who brings an honest name from those who know him well, as his best voucher. Thus commended, he seeks the right to wear the golden spur, and here avouches his readiness, by observance of your mandates, to prove himself a man of iron nerve—a fit companion for our well-tried knights.

King: Esquire, this august body has convened to name a test whereby your valor may be put to proof. Is it your desire that we proceed?

The candidate answers: It is.

King: Senators, the Esquire awaits the announcement of your decree.

First Senator rises: Your majesty, the fame of our illustrious order has spread from sea to sea—not so much by deeds of valor and high emprise, as by unobtrusive acts of love and tender sympathy.

No man should pass our portals who is not fearless in the cause of right and of humanity; nor should he wear the golden spur until by some sure test we prove the truth of his pretensions. Not, indeed, by rude barbaric torture; that comes from other and darker days, and tells the story of man's savagery; but, in the kindly spirit of our order, let him be tested by an oath, pledging his honor to the defence of virtue and the maintenance of right. This, far better than any mere physical test, will appeal to his manhood and reach his moral nature, and thus give a true impression of an order whose mission is one of love.

Takes his seat.

Second Senator rises: Such test will not suffice. It fails to compass the full intendment of our ceremonies. Vows are easily made, and pledges soon forgotten. The waves of shame and sorrow roll over the ruins of many lives that have found shipwreck in a sea of promises.

Than the pledged word of a knight there is no higher test of fealty; and were this man already one of us, I would ask no more. We know him, however, but as an untried neophyte; and we should make acquaintance with his mettle by means of deeds, not words—deeds that have no hidden or uncertain meaning. Put on him the armor of a knight, give him a sword, and in the full strength of his manhood let him prove his skill and valor, face to face with one of our tried and trusty knights. Thus may we learn the temper of this Esquire, and test his coolness under trial see if he face danger without fear, and mark his bearing when confronted by one worthy of his best defence and equal to his most skilled attack.

I for one desire a test in which every movement shall proclaim the man, that we may see him as he is, stripped of the mask that all men wear.

Takes his seat.

Third Senator rises: In this chamber, where each Senator is the peer of every other, perfect freedom should abound, and candor mark our speaking.

I prize at their full worth the counsels of my fellow Senators; and yet I do not agree to either of the tests proposed. One of them is scarcely a test at all; and the other is by no means sure. This man, it may be, lacks skill in fencing; and, if so, it were the sheerest folly for him to stand against one who is master of the art. We should name a test in which his act alone would prove his fitness for our favor. He is a man of goodly presence and courageous bearing, and comes to us with confidence, ready to undergo any ordeal we may name— *To the candidate*—Is it not so?

I wish for him a thorough test, that all may see the truth of boasted valor, and that, when we shall prove that he is worthy of it, he may gain and hold our warmest friendship. And so, let him be made to upon a ... of ... of ..., set firmly in a solid slab of oak; and as he does, let each one look and listen, to see if in his face he show the pallid flag of fear, or by a groan give token of a coward soul.

Takes his seat.

Fourth Senator rises: My sovereign liege, the lesson of to-night should brighten the path of life of him who stands before us, and be the crowning jewel in the casket of Pythian gems.

Proud of our order as we are, guardians of its portals as we must be, it should be our earnest care that no harsh line shall mark the Pythian page.

This man needs no test. We know him well. We have watched his daily life, and we should be proud to have his name upon our roster. Mindful of the friendship which is the foundation of our order, and which every one of us has pledged to this Esquire, I ask you, Senators, to forego the test, that no act of injustice or cruelty may mar our records. The encouragement of moral worth is one of the objects of our order, and our duty is to guard as a sacred trust the honor of our membership. This man stands now upon the threshold of knighthood; and to admit him upon our faith in his integrity would be a lesson grander in its results than any test that has been named.

Takes his seat.

Fifth Senator rises: The utterances of the Senator do credit to his manhood and honor to our order; and yet we must remember that nothing is more inflexible than Pythian law.

This man can not be knighted until we test him.

I too would know the Esquire as does the valiant Senator; I too desire to hold his friendship at its highest worth; but, sirs, the merest prudence demands a strict observance of our statutes.

Give no man your perfect confidence until you have proved him worthy; and then,
"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade."

This man may be all that's claimed for him. If so, he will bravely meet the test, whatever it may be.

Takes his seat.

King: In all that has been said there is much wisdom; and the several tests proposed bear each so much of merit as to leave but little room for choice. Would that all men were pledged to the defence of virtue and the maintenance of right. Then indeed would the sunlight of love and happiness dispel the shadows of cruelty and wrong, and all mankind rejoice in the reign of universal equity. In the second test you have but outlined the duty of those who pass our gates. Welcome the day when all shall wear the armor of truth, and in the strength of manhood put away the petty jealousies that mar and dwarf, and tell the story of our weakness. Then shall character be rated the standard of eminence, and moral worth held higher than royal blood; then shall slander and hypocrisy seek sepulture forever in the shadow of eternal night. In the test of steel there is a double meaning. It calls for a deed of daring unknown to history, yet marks the boundary of human confidence—a virtue found only in men of sterling worth and fixed integrity. What say you, Senators—is it your will now to decide upon the test for this Esquire?

Sixth Senator rises: It had not been my purpose to take part in these deliberations, except to exercise the right of suffrage secured to every Senator. I am, as all of you do know, a plain, blunt soldier. Trope and metaphor flow not readily from my tongue, and the graces of the orator's art are to me unknown. But, sire, I crave permission to say a few brief words for this Esquire.

As I have listened to the utterances of my colleagues, my mind has been busy with memories of the long ago. One scene stands out, upon the canvas of the past, distinct and vivid. I see a battlefield, the flash of lances and the gleam of swords, the charge of squadrons met and repulsed, and met again. I see two horsemen, clad in glittering armor, meet in the shock of conflict. One is unhorsed and sorely hurt, and the other rides away, leaving his vanquished foeman stretched upon the ground, to die alone. Ere long, an Esquire chanced to pass that way. He sees the helpless soldier. Pausing, he bends above him, and staunches the life-blood well-in g from his wounds; then tenderly he bears him to a safe retreat, and in his helmet brings water quickly from the brook to cool the raging fever of his blood. Sire, I was that stricken soldier—and, but for the kindly care and gentle ministrations of that simple Esquire, whose name I never learned, I had not been alive to-day.

No nobler virtue warms the knightly heart than gratitude. There, in that hour of dire extremity, I registered an oath, that no Esquire in need of succor or of counsel should ever appeal to me in vain. In fulfillment of that vow, I ask you, sire, that I may be allowed to meet the test imposed on this Esquire. ***Steps to his side.*** Thus may I discharge part of the debt of gratitude I owe, and thus may he learn that the true knight is the champion and the defender of suffering humanity, always and everywhere.

Seventh Senator rises: The words just spoken honor him who gave them

utterance. I am glad the Senator has spoken. My admiration for him as a soldier pales before my appreciation of the nobler qualities he has displayed. Gratitude fills his heart as he remembers the favors on him bestowed in time of need. In this busy, bustling world, men nurse the recollection of a wrong, but too oft forget the kindnesses received. Not so with us. We teach no grander lesson than that of friendship, and from it spring the golden fruits of gratitude. The exercise of this virtue has our warmest commendation; and we would so emphasize it in our ceremonies that it may be a living principle of our order.

Yet sentiment must not usurp the place of judgment. The Esquire's merit must be known, and our duty must be done. I have naught but the kindest feeling for the Senator who has made this offer, but justice to him and to the Esquire demands that we refuse it.

Takes his seat.

Eighth Senator rises: The Senator has voiced my judgment. It cannot be. He who stands before us must not put aside the robe of his high office to assume the garb of one whose valor we would know. He is a valiant knight, high in rank, brave on the field of battle, and wise in counsel. Shall we permit one whose fame is our delight to bear the test

for this Esquire? No! No! Who wears the spurs must win them—and I would urge that he be made to carve his way to the high honor he sees fit to claim.

As one who guards these portals as he would his home, I insist that the Senator remain, and that his knightly offer be courteously refused.

Takes his seat.

King to sixth Senator: Senator, you have in a few brief words, at once gained a stronger hold on our affection and told the sum of Pythian duty. We appreciate the motives that prompt this generous offer; but, in compliance with our law, we must refuse it. You will remain with us *sixth Senator takes his seat;* while you, Esquire, must win the spurs you seek to wear.

Ninth Senator rises: In proving this man's valor, we must teach him the crowning virtue of our order.

He will ever remember the friendship of Damon and Pythias; and, in so doing, will border the path of life with the flowers of love. He has learned that the exercise of caution, care and prudence is a necessity in every successful life. We have shown him that weakness is the common heritage of man, and that Pythian charity is as boundless as the shores of time. To-night, he is upon the border of an unknown land. There is to him an air of mystery about our ceremonies; and our words, to which he gives a double meaning, fill him with doubt as to our purposes. We must teach him that the true knight does no man wrong; but, with friendship for all, with charity for the weak and erring, with confidence in his brethren, he is, in the pride of a better manhood, an exemplar of our teachings, doing honor to our order and to himself.

In this spirit, with this purpose, looking only to his good, impressing a lesson that must appeal to his best intelligence and enlist him in our work for all humanity, we

should, with the same friendship, the same prudence, the same charity, we have taught, name for him a test.

Takes his seat.

King rises: Senators, in recognition of the suggestion of your colleague just made—as you display your scrolls, so will I note the choice of tests.

Those of you who wish that this Esquire be tested by an oath will display the blue; those who desire that he shall prove his valor with his sword, the yellow; those who demand the test of steel, the red.

Senators, your choice.

Each Senator (except the sixth) unrolls and holds in front of him his scroll—that displayed by the first Senator being blue; that by the second, yellow, and all the others red. The sixth Senator grasps tightly his scroll and averts his face.

King: The red predominates. Attendants!

The attendants step forward, face inward and make obeisance to the King.

The test of steel.

The attendants retire and bring the real test, which they place in front of the King, and then step to the right and left and face inward.

The Master at Arms then leads the candidate to the station occupied by the King. The Master of the Work then causes the floor-cloth and steps to be placed in position.

King: Esquire, you will carefully examine this instrument, and fully satisfy yourself as to its composition.

Pauses until the candidate has examined the test.

You see that it is a solid slab of oak, in which are firmly set sharp ... of ...

Attendants, place the test.

The attendants retire to the rear of the candidate, giving the real test to the Master of the Work, who thereupon places the fictitious test in proper position, the attendants promptly returning to a point in the rear of the Master at Arms and the candidate. The real test must never be placed on the floor.

Esquire, this test may seem to you cruel and uncalled for; and, while there is much I dare not reveal, I wish to say: a moral coward is often tempted to deeds of reckless daring, rather than face the jeers of those about him. A man of courage and noble purpose will by no act of his do violence to his manhood. With confidence in himself and in his friends, prudence marks his conduct and success crowns his life.

With this admonition, and the assurance that you are to be the judge of what is prudent, I bid you meet the test.

Master at Arms, conduct the Esquire to a seat, prepare him properly, and present him before the test.

Master at Arms conducts the candidate to a seat near the steps, requires him to remove his shoes, and causes him to stand on the top step. The attendants take their places on the right and left of the steps, facing inward.

During the entire ceremony of the test, the members shall retain their seats.

Master at Arms: Sire, your order has been obeyed.

King: Esquire, you have presented yourself as an aspirant for the honors of knighthood, avowing your readiness to undergo any test that might be imposed upon you. The wisdom of the Senate, after full debate, decreed the test of steel. That decision is supreme; from that edict, thus formally pronounced, there is no appeal. Therefore, I bid you instantly to ...,,!

If the candidate fails or refuses to obey, the King will order: Attendants, do your duty!

The attendants will at once seize the candidate firmly but without violence, and place both his feet on the test.

If there is more than one candidate for the rank, they shall proceed singly to this point, and afterwards in a body.

The King and Senators retire.

Brief intermission.

Chancellor Commander: Master at Arms, present the Esquire at this station.

Master at Arms conducts the candidate to the station of the Chancellor Commander.

Chancellor Commander standing: In the ceremonies just ended, there are lessons which you may apply with profit to the affairs of life.

In the caution, care and prudence of the Senate in naming a test which should fully prove your confidence, you were given a practical exemplification of the motto of the rank of Esquire.

In the proposition that your personal pledge should be accepted as a sufficient guaranty, we endeavored to teach you that, between members of this order, the word of a Knight of Pythias, given as such, is as sacred and binding as any statement made under the most solemn oath known to man.

In proposing that you should be clad in the armor of a knight, and caused to prove your valor with the sword, you were instructed that a Knight of Pythias should ever wear the armor of truth and the shield of virtue, against which the shafts of vice and falsehood can not prevail.

In the test you were called upon to meet, we sought to impress you that a Knight of Pythias should be obedient to every official command, and that, with confidence in his brethren, he should fearlessly do his duty.

In the proffer of the Senator to suffer in your stead, there was exemplified the highest type of friendship known to man.

Confidence is an outgrowth of friendship. Damon and Pythias were Friends; and, as a result, Pythias became a hostage for Damon, with perfect confidence that his friend would return to meet the fate the tyrant had imposed. The absence of Damon, as the hours rushed on to the time for the execution, did not lessen the confidence of Pythias in the honor and integrity of his friend. Even as he stepped upon the scaffold, the warmth of his friendship was not chilled by the winds that came from the valley of death, and his love for Damon gave him courage to bless the fate that was preventing his return.

Damon's return proved his honor, and confirmed the judgment of Pythias in the

confidence by him reposed His example we commend; and we would have our members prove themselves worthy of every confidence.

With this explanation, I ask you: Will you endeavor to aid in disseminating the principles of our order?

The candidate answers: I will.

Chancellor Commander: Master at Arms, the Esquire having expressed his willingness to aid in disseminating the principles of our order, you will present him to the Prelate, who will administer to him the obligation of the rank of Knight.

Prelate takes position at the altar, facing the station of the Vice Chancellor.

Master at Arms presents the candidate at the altar, facing the station of the

Chancellor Commander: Prelate, by order of the Chancellor Commander, I present an Esquire, that he may assume the obligation of the rank of Knight.

Chancellor Commander gives two raps.

Prelate: Advance your right foot, place your left hand on your left breast, bring your right hand in front of your body, grasping the hilt of the sword, as it rests on the book of law, and repeat after me.

I solemnly promise that I will never reveal the password, grip, signs or any other secret or mystery of this rank, except in a lodge of this order, recognized by and under the control of the Supreme Lodge Knights of Pythias, or when being examined by the proper officer of a lodge, or to one whom I know to be a member of this rank.

I further promise that I will always, to the extent of my ability, relieve a worthy knight in distress, endeavor to warn him of any danger which I may know to threaten him or his family, and to aid him whenever and wherever I may be convinced that he is in need.

I further promise that I will never, by any act of mine, voluntarily disturb the domestic relations of a brother knight; but that, so far as possible, I will protect the peace and purity of his household as I would my own.

I further promise that I will not expose any part of the proceedings of this or of any other lodge, nor discuss them in the presence of any one whom I do not know to be a member of the order.

I further promise that I will obey the orders of this lodge, the Grand Lodge having jurisdiction over it, and of the Supreme Lodge Knights of Pythias, and the official mandates of the executive officers thereof.

To the faithful observance of this obligation I pledge my sacred word of honor. So help me God—and may he keep me steadfast.

Chancellor Commander gives three raps.

Prelate: Master at Arms, conduct the Esquire to the Vice Chancellor for instruction.

Returns to his station.

Master at Arms conducts the candidate to the station of the Vice Chancellor: Vice Chancellor, by direction of the Prelate, I present to you an Esquire for instruction.

Vice Chancellor, standing: I will now instruct you in the secret work of this rank.

When the lodge is open in the rank of Knight, and you desire admittance to the ante-room, you will make your presence known at the outer door. The Outer Guard will open the door, and you will give him, in a whisper, the semi-annual password. He will then admit you to the ante-room. You will approach the inner door, and give thereon ... , which will be answered from within by ...

The wicket will then be opened, and through it you will give your name and rank. These will be reported to the Vice Chancellor, who will order you admitted if correct. The wicket will again be opened, and through it you will give in a whisper the password of this rank, which is ... You will then be admitted to the lodge-room, and will advance to the altar, on which will rest the open book of law, with one sword lying diagonally across the book, the hilt toward your right hand. There you will salute the flag of our country, as in the preceding ranks. You will then give to the Chancellor Commander the sign of courtesy, thus: ...

This sign must be given by all who enter the lodge while open in this rank, except by those who are returning after having executed an order of the Chancellor Commander. The Chancellor Commander will answer it by ... which indicates permission to be seated.

Should you desire to retire before the lodge has been closed, unless leaving the lodge-room to execute an order of the Chancellor Commander, you will advance to the altar and salute the flag of our country. You will then make this sign ... Should the Chancellor Commander answer it by ..., you may retire—otherwise, you will return to your seat. In both these signs, your fingers represent the bars of an open-barred visor, such as knights formerly wore on their helmets. As, in ancient times, a knight, entering a castle or camp of his friends, raised his visor to disclose his identity, so you, entering a Pythian castle hall, make this sign: ...

When going outside, where he would surely meet strangers and possibly enemies, he lowered his visor, to protect his face and conceal his identity; so you, when leaving a castle hall, make this sign: ...

In the examination of those present prior to the opening of the lodge, you will give to the Master at Arms the semi-annual password and the password of the rank of Knight.

At the opening of the lodge, when the question is asked, "What is the duty of every member of this order?" you will assume the position taken when the obligation of the rank of Knight was administered, and respond, "To avoid anger and dissension, to work together in the spirit of fraternity, to exemplify the friendship of Damon and Pythias."

The motto of this rank is ...

The grip is given thus: ...

There is a cover key, which may be used in connection with this grip, as an additional test. Its use as such will now be exemplified for your benefit, the Master at Arms representing the person being tested, and I the person applying the test.

The Vice Chancellor and the Master at Arms then rehearse the following dialogue:
V.C.: ...,?

M.A.:

V.C.:

M.A.:

V.C.: ...,?

M.A.:

Vice Chancellor: You will observe that this dialogue is an acrostic, and that the first letter of each sentence, arranged consecutively, form the word ... This word, in ancient times, was the synonym of strength; and we use it here as typical of the strength of that friendship on which this order is founded.

The Grand Honors, to which only the Grand Chancellor or his duly commissioned Deputy, when making an official visit, is entitled, are given thus: ... They indicate fealty to the Grand Lodge and readiness to obey its laws.

The Supreme Honors, to which only the Supreme Chancellor or his duly commissioned Deputy, when making an official visit, is entitled, are given thus: ... They indicate tribute to the Supreme Lodge and defence of its authority.

The voting sign, which is used in the transaction of the ordinary business of the lodge, in the rank of Knight, is made thus: ... the same sign being used for an affirmative or negative vote.

The use of the gavel is the same as in the preceding ranks.

You must remember that you are positively forbidden to use any of the signs, passwords or other instruction which has been or may be hereafter given you in this order, as a means by which you may violate the law of the land or transgress the established rules of society; nor are you bound to recognize any of them when they are made use of by any one guilty of these of Fences. The secret work of this order is for the assistance and protection of its members only when they are doing right.

The arrangement of the book of law and the swords of defence on the altar, which, as you have seen, differs in each rank, is to indicate to the members the rank in which the lodge is open, so that they may give the appropriate sign of courtesy, and thus avoid disclosing to others a secret to which they are not legally entitled. Master at Arms, conduct the Esquire to the Chancellor Commander.

Takes his seat.

Master at Arms conducts the candidate to the station of the Chancellor Commander, halting about five feet from it. A naked sword must be lying diagonally across the station, the hilt toward the Chancellor Commander's right hand: Chancellor Commander, by direction of the Vice Chancellor, I present this Esquire to you.

Chancellor Commander, standing: Esquire, you have been informed by the Vice Chancellor that, in order to gain admittance to the ante-room, when the lodge is open in the rank of Knight, you must give to the Outer Guard the semi-annual password.

The semi-annual password, as its name indicates, is a word which is changed twice in each calendar year. Every subordinate lodge of Knights of Pythias uses

the same semi-annual password during the current semiannual term. This word must be given at the outer door, in every rank, by all who have attained the rank of Knight. If, on seeking admission to the ante-room of your own lodge, you should be without it, you will so inform the Outer Guard, who will report that fact to the Inner Guard, and he will report it to the Chancellor Commander. If you are not entitled under the law to the semi-annual password, you will be so informed, and you cannot be admitted until you take the steps necessary to entitle you to it. No one, under any circumstances, except a candidate for the rank, under escort, can be permitted to enter or to remain in a lodge open in the rank of Knight, unless he is in possession of or entitled to the semi-annual password. If you are entitled to it, the Outer Guard will be ordered to admit you to the ante room. Immediately on entering the lodge-room, you will proceed to the station of the Chancellor Commander and receive the word. You can receive it only from the Chancellor Commander of

the lodge of which you are a member (who may communicate it to you in or Out of the lodge-room), or from the Chancellor Commander of another lodge, to whom you present an official receipt for all indebtedness to your own lodge to the beginning of the current semi-annual term, bearing the seal of your own lodge and signed by the Financial Secretary thereof— and proving yourself, by proper identification, or examination in the secret work, to be the person designated in such official receipt.

The semi-annual password for the present term is ...

You will kneel on your right knee.

Two raps.

Takes up the sword and advances to the candidate: By virtue of the power vested in me as Chancellor Commander of this lodge, and in the name of the order universal, I create you a Pythian knight.

Strikes the candidate lightly on the left shoulder with the flat of the sword blade.

Be friendly *one blow*, be cautious *one blow*, be brave *one blow*. *Returns sword.*

Who wins the spurs should wear them. Rise, Knight ..., and stand among your peers.

The Chancellor Commander places a Knight's jewel on the candidate's left breast, saying as he does so: I now invest you with the insignia of Knighthood. This jewel is an emblem of the highest rank this lodge can confer; that you will wear it worthily we earnestly believe.

As a Knights of Pythias, speak the truth; uphold the right; protect the weak; relieve the distressed. Remember always that, as you illustrate in your daily life the friendship, the charity, the benevolence, that we teach, you will bring honor to the order which now gives you welcome.

The Chancellor Commander extends his right hand, giving the grip of the rank of Knight, and returns to his station.

The Master at Arms and the Knight remain in their places.

Three raps.

If fraternal love held all men bound, how beautiful this world would be! Whenever in your power, guide the steps of those who trust in you to goodness and to truth. From out your heart cast every grudge; banish every unkind thought; put away every personal prejudice; and as the gleam of the calm blue heaven of fraternal love shines soft and pure into your soul, remember that only stainless garments befit a Knight of Pythias. Evil exists—let it not be found in your heart; but from its presence learn to know the value of the good and true. As sunset, veiled in night, is oft the promise of the red dawn of a new day, so oftentimes the evils which exist but show the good that lies beyond. And when the western hills obscure life's sun, may you sleep secure in the promise of the dawn of a never-ending day.

Master at Arms, face the Knight to the lodge.

Master at Arms faces the Knight toward the station of the Vice Chancellor.

Chancellor Commander gives two raps: Officers and members of ... Lodge, No. ...,

I present to you Knight ...

The lodge will be at ease.



If you would like to know more about the Knights of Pythias they maintain a website at: <http://www.pythias.org>



For more information on the AOKMC [\(click here\)](#)



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