

Let Your Bucket down Where You Are

Based upon a talk by Most Worshipful Werner Herman Morlock

There is a story about a sailing ship, becalmed off the Northeast coast of South America. The ship was in distress; completely out of potable drinking water.

As good fortune would have it, a small boat appeared low on the horizon and the skipper of the becalmed craft signaled his pressing need of fresh water. He got the reply: "Let your bucket down where you are."

Three times the request was repeated and three times the answer came back: "Let your bucket down where you are!" Finally, the Captain had a bucket lowered and was astounded when it was hauled back aboard filled to the brim with pure, cool, fresh water. Unknowingly, he had aimlessly drifted to a point off the mouth of the great Amazon River which, during certain seasons, sends fresh water out to a distance of over 200 miles.

So we can appreciate that to a ship at sea, it might appear that they were drifting in the vast ocean even when, in fact, they were becalmed in an immense body of fresh

water. All around was the opportunity to easily secure the needed life-giving fluid, but the opportunity had not been recognized.

Isn't there a lesson for Freemasons locked somewhere in this short story? Possibly there is a lesson we can apply both in our Lodges and in our daily lives.

There is another story about two newcomers to a community who were visited on the same day by the local clergyman. During the course of the conversation, the first new resident asked the clergyman, "What kind of people live in this town?"

The clergyman answered with a question, He asked, "What kind of people live in the town you came from?"

"Oh," replied the newcomer, "they were wonderful people, friendly, neighborly, real genuine people."

"You'll find," said the clergyman, "the same kind of people in this town."

During the clergyman's conversation with the second

newcomer, the same question was asked of him, and he gave the same answer. The new resident replied, “The town I came from was a horrible place. The people were unfriendly, disagreeable, the worst sort of gossips, always feuding!”

The clergyman replied, “You’ll find that this town has the same kind of people.”

In truth, it is our own actions and attitudes that bring out the good or the bad in people.

And, of course, we all know people who fret and stew, wishing they had a better life and more opportunity. They wish they could be transported to a place where they might play an important role in public affairs or gain success in great industrial and business enterprises.

If they reside in smaller communities, they talk about how they wish they could move to a bigger city where opportunities are greater.

If they live in a large city they dream about moving to a smaller town where they can get to know their next door neighbors, and can operate a small business and have comfortable incomes.

In short, they dream about greener pastures, but they will take themselves with them wherever they go, and perhaps they need to think about just letting their buckets down where they are.

If we survey the great inventors of the ages, we find so many who didn't demand great machine shops or laboratories to breathe life into their brain children. They let their buckets down where they were.

Fulton was an unknown in a small community when he gave to the world the first boat to move through the water under its own power. He let his bucket down where he was—right into the Hudson River.

The Wright brothers were in the bicycle repair business when their first airplane took wing at Kitty Hawk. They let their bucket down where they were.

Thomas Edison, who already had some notable inventions to his credit, was only 30 years of age and had a comparatively small shop when he started his experiments that gave the world the incandescent lamp; which other noted scientists had declared an impossibility. He let his bucket down where he was.

So many medical discoveries have come through the local experiments of one or two persons, who had no large well-equipped laboratories in which to work. Their equipment was meager, but they let their buckets down where they were, and they came back filled with fresh ideas for saving human life.

For example, who hasn't heard of the Mayo brothers in the little community of Rochester in Minnesota? They didn't feel that they had to seek greener fields. They didn't feel that they had to move to one of the bigger cities in order to establish their great surgical hospital. They let their bucket down in the little city of Rochester, and the world has beaten a steady path to the hospital's door.

And consider Susan B. Anthony, the former school teacher, who gave herself completely for more than a half a

century in bringing suffrage to women, didn't wait for women to assemble in great numbers under her banner in a great nation-wide revolution. She went quietly to work at first in the community in which she lived. She let her bucket down right where she was.

The list of examples goes on and on.

And the same considerations apply to our Lodges. We don't want to find ourselves playing the role of that ship captain who didn't notice that he had drifted into a freshwater pool, with the opportunity for drinking water all around him. We don't want to fall into the trap of thinking that our Lodges are too small and the problems are too big for us to have an impact. Big things have been done in small Lodges by those who let their buckets down where they were. They didn't know what they might be able to accomplish, but they were not afraid to try. So they tried and succeeded.

- Our Masonic Home, which we call the Crown Jewel of Virginia Freemasonry, was sparked by one Mason.
- The magnificent George Washington Masonic Memorial was initiated by a Lodge member in Virginia.

And each of us can make a difference in our district blood programs, our Masonic scholarship programs, our Child ID programs, and in the many different community-oriented projects in which the various Lodges are involved. It just requires that we get engaged rather than sit back and leave it to others to do.

It is equally important that we adopt this same attitude in our daily lives. If we focus on what we could accomplish, if we cultivate an attitude of confidence, if we are positive and optimistic, we will be surprised by all the opportunities for personal growth and success that are around us. And if we would just let our buckets down right where we are, we would be astonished by what they would be filled with, when we lifted them back up.

Freemasonry is a wonderful, world-wide training school in which men learn brotherhood, practice charity, and cultivate morality by first practicing it toward our fellow Craftsmen and then, later, exercising it before the world, everywhere.