

Frontispiece to D'Assigny's An Impartial Answer to the Enemies of Free-Masonry.

AN IMPARTIAL

ANSWER

TO THE

Enemies of Free-Malonry,

WHEREIN

Their unjust Suspicions, and idle Reproaches of that Honourable CRAFT, are briefly Rehearsed, and clearly Confuted.

To which are ADDED,

Several Serious Admonitions

Necessary to be observed

By that Antient FRATERNITY.

By Fifield D' Assigny, M. D. A. S. L. L. S.	
Quod de que que Viro, & cui dicas sæpe Caveto.	Virg.
Publish'd by the Authority of the GRAND LOD	GE.

Printed by Edward Waters in Dames', street, and are to be Sold at his Shop, and at Mr. Richard Pindar's at the White Hart in Pembroke. Court,

Title-Page of D'Assigny's Impartial Answer... Read in Grand Lodge on 1st April, 1741.



The Dedication.

TO THE

Free and Accepted Masons Of the Kingdom of Ireland.

Well beloved Brethren,

Having nothing more at Heart than the Welfare, Protection, and Advancement of our Ancient and Honourable Craft; and being truly sensible, that the Institution of our Fraternity was design'd for great and noble Uses, I have endeavour'd in the following Lines to Paint the Ignorance and Folly of such, who fond to show their Wit; Spleen, or Illnature, have attempted to render despicable the most valuable Order now on Earth.

But notwithstanding the frequent Sallies of the undiscerning and malicious World, to accomplish that End, we have the Pleasure still to reflect, that with the greatest ease we have baffled and opposed their weak Designs, and smil'd in silence at their fruitless Labours; while our Royal and Noble Art, like a well built Fortification hath stood secure against its cruel opposers, and yet remain'd impregnable, strongly resisting the most absolute Attacks of its viol'nt and daring Foes, who have not the Liberty to say, That 'twas ever in their Power, even once, to disappoint our mutual Intentions. For as our Work peculiarly consists in the Performance

DEDICATION

of every Religious and Moral Virtue, in true and sincere Affection towards our worthy Labourers, who are join'd in the harmonious and united Bonds of such Fellowship, as proves to be the true and only Ornament of human Nature:

Why then should not we live on, like brave and honest Brethren, who strictly pursue those excellent and inimitable Rules, which our wise Forefathers have handed down to us, and who without either Fear or Trembling make it our chief Study to act pursuant to the glorious Pattern of that immortal Stone belonging to our Building, even the ALPHA & OMEGA of our Redemption.

I remain Brethren,

With cordial and unspotted Love; your

Fellow-Labourer in Good Works,

Fifield D'Assigny.





The Sanction.

THIS Piece was read by the Author to the Grand Lodge, when assembled in due Form on the first Day of April, 1741, and was received with an universal Approbation.

John Baldwin, Esq; Secretary.





AN IMPARTIAL

ANSWER, &c

THE ART of FREE-MASONRY according to the most antient and authentick Histories, had its first Original above five thousand Years ago, which hath ever since been favour'd with a general Esteem from the Wise, Noble, and Learned of all Nations, who have not only Protected at all Times the MASTERS and FELLOW-CRAFTS of that wonderful Science, but have been pleased to condescend to lay aside their Regal and Princely Ornaments, nay to divest themselves of the glittering Trappings of State and Titles, and never thought themselves more happy and secure than when they wore the Indelible and Honourary Badges of that ORDER.

By the help of this ART rude Nature was polish'd from her rustick Form, and the wild confus'd Particles of Matter were brought into Strength, Beauty and Proportion; while our great Creator, that All-Powerful Master Mason, hath shewn the Strength of his Wisdom and Knowledge, in the wide and beautiful Expanse of this lower World, which every where appears in the most minute Plans of his Creation.

And although it may be said, that many suspicious, Ignorant, and despotick Powers have strove by barbarous and unreasonable Methods to force our Secret from us; yet have we with a fixt Resolution and undaunted Courage withstood the strongest Batteries of all their Threats and Temptations. Hunger and Thrift, the most powerful Calls of Human Nature, could never influence the stedfast and faithful Brother to impart his Soul to any of the Pro-

fane. And on the other Hand, when replete with generous Liquor, that Opener of the Mind, he hath still found a close Corner in his Breast to Repose this Subject with Safety: which hath also found means to escape the most artful Contrivances of persuasive Women, who in their soft Hours of Love, have frequently strove (tho' in vain) to wheedle out this Matter from such indulgent Men, as had no power of denying them any other Favour.

Then may we justly term Thee thrice Honourable, thrice Mysterious MASONRY, which hath preserv'd thy Native Beauty, and like a Chast Virgin, who requires no other Guard but Virtue, hath always resisted the bold and rash Pursuits of each intruding KNAVE, and calmly despis'd the aspiring Attempts of the most vigilant COWAN.

Thou hast bound up in the confines of Privacy, the most froward Tongue, and taught the *Slanderer*, Silence: Thou hast restrained the Bents of the most lascivious Mind, and clip'd the Wings of loose Desire; and thereby prevented unlawful, and immodest Love.

Thou hast made the COWARD to discharge the mean Heart, that lurked within his Breast, and to assume that of Bravery and Resolution.

Thou hast untied the knotted Strings of Avarice, and caused the MISER, to discharge his much-lov'd Store, for good and charitable Uses.

Thou hast made the FOP to part his Vanity, in admiring that dear Idol Himself, and gladly to change his gaudy Outside for better and more lasting Furniture within.

Thou hast made Man to regard his CREATOR, with a due Reverence, and religious Awe, neither to suffer himself to be carried away with blind Superstition, or to be hurried on to follow the arrogant Professors of ATHEISM or DEISM.

And if it is objected, that MASONRY by its long continuance hath in some measure flowed in muddy Streams, where it may perhaps have contracted Rust; yet does the Antique Fabrick still remain, the well-form'd Pillars through the Rubbish apparently are seen: And though the Superstructure may be over-run with Moss and Ivy, the Model, now appears with the same additional

¹ Sic.

Splendour as the Glorious Sun, when breaking from its dark and misty Clouds it comes to show itself at once the Comfort and Delight of Men. And I would only enquire of any Impartial Man of Reason, Whether he would not justly prize the Venerable Bust of an antient Hero, who died for his Country's Cause, and whose Name, when living, was ever dear and memorable to the known Friends of Liberty; provided that valuable Representation had by some cruel Accident lost an Eye or a Nose.

The Pride of the Antiquity of our ORDER, which we may justly boast off, was first formed when Distinctions among Men were not known, Stars and Garters were then but Trifles, for they had no other Criterion to jndge 1 of Merit by than a Man's real Desert, and he who took Care to subdue his Passions, to lay a Curb on his unruly Appetites, and to observe the Golden Rule of acting by others as he would they should do unto him, (the main Centre and Guide of his Behaviour) was properly entitled to our ORDER; for these were the first Principles of MASONRY, which afterwards gave Encouragement to his followers to Invent, Study and Improve the liberal Arts and Sciences, which the Brethren of all Countries have with indefatigable Industry, gave undeniable Proofs of their great and masterly Designs to all that part of the World, whom Ignorance and Obstinancy does not shade from the LIGHT. And methinks they deserve no pity, who cast a Veil upon HEAVEN's first-born BLESSING, and having Ears, resolve to be deaf to the Sounds of Understanding: And that this is the Case with the Enemies of our FRATERNITY, will plainly appear, when the unprejudice'd Mind takes into view the many veteran and modern Edifices, compos'd with such Majesty and Art, as they in SILENT LANGUAGE sufficiently shew forth their Master's Praise, and in Dumb Characters demonstrate the Greatness of his SOUL.

And if the World will but consider us in our private Actions, they will soon discern (except a few mistaken Brothers) That we are Friends to Virtue, and to its Friends, Alone; that we have Bowels of Compassion to pity the Fallen and Unfortunate, as well as Charity enough to hear their Complaints, and afford Succour to the Distressed. And as these amiable Dispositions are inherent in every true MASON, I cannot imagine why the prying and uneasy

¹ Sic.

Multitude should give themselves such Concern about us, unless because they want a Knowledge or Power of Imitation; or that they perceive we shine with such superior Lustre, and excell them with its apparent Marks of Distinction, as they from the common Herd of the brutal Creation.

These are Motives, I confess, of Envy, and such as might be removed by an industrious and proper Application; But as Labour and Diligence is requisite for the Performance of any glorious Act, why should not they, before they reap the Fruits of our Vineyard, lend us an assisting Hand? No, forsooth, they want to enjoy the Benefits without the Toil of Cultivating and Manuring it. This prevailing Appetite is certainly contradictory to common Reason, Equity and Justice, and while those Creatures persist in that mode of thinking, nothing but Darkness must fall to their Share; for GOLD, that almost irresistable Argument cannot enforce us to accept of any but those, who after being try'd on the Touchstone of true Merit, have prov'd themselves the Standards of Real Worth.

Now where can be the Impiety of any Sett of Men congregating together, whose chief Aim and Intentions have always been form'd to subdue their Passions, to promote their moral Qualities, and give Eucouragement to the most laudable ARTS; and at the same time, endeavouring to Improve, and to share with each other in the diverse Parts of necessary Skill, and usefull Knowledge: So that the World must take a Pique at our FRATERNITY, for no other Reason but because we do not like loquacious Bablers disclose the Secrets that are repos'd in our Breasts; but when lodg'd there, keep them faithfully within the Limits of an honest Mind, and sooner than divulge the least Part thereof, which might betray our Brother's Honour, we have submitted to suffer even Rack and Torture. And for my part, I must ever be of Opinion, That the keeping of a SECRET is the most distinguishing Characteristick of a generous and worthy Disposition, which from the Apprentice to the Privy Counsellor hath in all Ages been an Obligation highly to be regarded, and more especially since the contrary Method hath often been Productive of the greatest Evils among Mankind, nay, the Ruin of whole STATES and KINGDOMS have been occasioned by the want of a prudent TACITURNITY. And as an excellent Proverbial Writer declares, That the Words of a Man's Mouth should be as deep Waters, and the Wellspring of Wisdom as a flowing Brook, for the Speeches of a Tale-Bearer give mortal Wounds, and affect the innermost and principle 1 Parts of the Body. Nor can the Sentence of honest Plautus enough be admired, who determined, That those who could not bear the burden of Secrets, as well as those who were fond to hear them, should meet with the following Punishments, the Former to be hung up by their Tongues, the Latter by their Ears. And because that we have so well preserv'd the Secrets of our Noble ART, they immediately conjecture and declare that we are bound by some horrible and dreadful Oath, to which I'll beg leave to Answer, That in all civiliz'd Government it hath been a Custom (for the better Preservation and Protection of their Rights and Priviledges) to cause their Princes and Rulers to take certain Oaths, which example all wise Legislators have obliged their Officers, from the Highest to the Lowest, both in Church and State, to follow. And no doubt it was contriv'd in order to restrain the turbulent Motions of Impious Consciences, and to rectify the base Appetites of some untoward Dispositions, insomuch that Tyranny, Injustice, and Oppression might be Strangers to their Breasts, whose Duty bound them to consult and act for the general Interest and Welfare of each Individual. Wherefore we plainly see, that in all Undertakings, where the Good of Mankind was concern'd, an Oath was thought necessary for the better Performance thereof, which cannot be regarded in too solemn a manner: And it is equally binding in matters of Trifles, as well as those of greater Importance, since Truth or Falshood 2 must appear in either. But OATHS in our ART are not necessary, since Truth and Honour are the Principles by which we act. And I cannot see the Prejudice, if Thomas takes an Oath to do

Justice to his Neighbour John, to lend him such a Sum of Money, or Sell his Farm to him before any other Person: So that the World are greatly mistaken when they imagine that the Principles of MASONRY are weak or ridiculous, for they are surely founded on the everlasting Basis of true Religion, moral and social VIRTUE.

The Antiquity of our Noble ORDER descends in the Chain and the second of the second of the second

¹ Sic.

² Sic.

of Time from the first Link of ADAM, on whose Heart the Almighty Architect engrav'd, even in his Sylvan Lodge, true Geometrical Proportion, and that amazing Symmetry that still remains among us: Nor shall our wise Grand Master NOAH be pass'd over in silence, who with a wonderful Contrivance, and divine Inspiration, erected a Wooden World, to escape the fury of the mighty Waters, and thereby preserv'd the Faithful from a general Deluge.

The Wise Men of Ægypt were also great Admirers of our Science, who under the Misterious Coverings of Hieroglyphicks hid their Secrets from the Vulgar and Uninitiated, and with profound Silence preserv'd their Benefits from all to whom they did not justly belong; nay so great a Veneration had they for Silence, that in their Temples they set up the Statute 1 of their God *HAR-POCRATES, who had his Right-hand plac'd near his Heart, and Cloathed with a Skin which before was full of Eyes and Ears, importing, that many things may be heard and seen, but little Spoken.

The Disciples likewise of old † PYTHAGORAS, were nearly attach'd to us, who follow'd their great Master in the pursuit of Symbolical Learning, and kept their Privacies without committing them to Writing, since by their Memory they were able to impart them to their Successors, as MISTERIES only fit for Gods.

And I cannot see what Reason our Enemies have to blame us for making use of particular SIGNS and WORDS, since they ever were the most distinctive Marks of the best and civil Societies; nay, amongst the Wisest Generals, Are not watch Words given to their Soldiers, whereby the Friend from Foe may be distinguish'd? This is the matter then of their Emulation against us, who are resolv'd to imitate such great Examples as in Darkness to receive the Benefits of Light: For at the building of Babel's stupendous Tower, when Lips lost their usual Sound, and Languages in dark Confusion flow'd, our faithful Brethren made a solemn Engagement to communicate their sacred Mysteries (which were so highly recommended by the Patriarchs) to each other, that they might be handed down to all Posterity, and from this eternal Spring of Knowledge, thus receiv'd, we are able to distinguish the true

¹ Sic.

^{*} Vide Imagines Deorum a vincentio Chartario.

[†] Vide Laertius de vita Pythagoræ.

BROTHER from the officious Eves-Dropper, or the busy Cowan, who knows not how to act upon the *SQUARE, that proper Emblem of divine Essence, where Beauty, Strength, and Harmony amazes our Eyes, and runs through the Whole, to make a finish'd Piece.

I cannot forebear mentioning the †Essenes amongst the Jews, who bore an Affinity to us, and did not disclose their Misteries to any until they had past certain degrees of Probation, and when the new Brother had covinced¹ the SECT, that he was Master of Secrecy, Integrity, and good Manners, they then conferr'd upon him further Knowledge, and properly inducted him into their most secret and valuable Priviledges; and then oblig'd him to live Uprightly, preserve his Faith and embrace the Truth, strictly to adhere to the Principles of Virtue, and above all things to avoid any Action which might bring an Odium or Scandal upon that FRATERNITY. So did the ‡CABALISTS, and Antient §DRUIDS amongst the Britons, as well as many other learned Societies of Men, too numerous to be inserted in the Compass of these Sheets, who all retain'd and preserv'd their Wisdom by Oral Tradition.

Thus much for Antiquity: Now must I beg leave to Inform our Enemies, That we look on the Prosperity of no Society with Eyes of Envy or Malice, nor without Fear or Wit, rail at them as they at us, Unheard, Untry'd, but innocently Laugh at such gross Ignorance, and impotent Malice; while we with agreeable Converse, endeavour to give a relish to the nauseous Draughts of Life, and cause them to flow down with greater smoothness: To State disputes we give no Birth, to Anger or Contentions, no Umbrage, to impure Discourse, no Ear, to idle and licentious Oaths, no Tongue, to Persecution, an absolute Hatred, and to Peace, as

^{*}The Pythagoreans held that a Square was the proper Emblem of Divine Essence, for the gods, they say, who are the Authors of every thing establish'd in Wisdom, Strength and Beauty; are not improperly represented by that Figure.

[†] Vide Philo de vita Contemplativa. Josephus antiq; lib. 8 Cap. 2.

¹ Sic.

Vide Basnages Hist. of the Jews on Cabala.

[§] Vide Cæsar Com. lib. 6. Samms Hist. of Brit. Book 1 Chap. 4.

great a Love; thus with a due deference to our Superiors, we Spin the Threads of our Days in joyful Harmony and just Proportion; and tho' upon the Level with our Brethren, never beyond Compass, and within the Limits of the Square and Plumb.

As to the ridiculous Inventions of the Vulgar to asperse our FRATERNITY, I mean, such as raising the Devil, Conversing with infernal Spirits, the wild Story of an old Woman between the rounds of a Ladder, the Cook's red hot Iron, or Salamander. with many more of the same idle Stamp, I shall pass over with Compassion towards them, as beneath the Notice of Men of Reason, since they never had any Foundation for such Faith, but what proceeded from their dark Ignorance. To them our CRAFT shall ever stand as a Pyramid of Amazement, as it hath hitherto done. with the Generous and Brave a lasting Monument of Glory: But those who argue with moderate humour, and would enquire into the Cause, why some of our FRATERNITY are liable to the Failures of human Nature, and even tainted with some deform'd and vicious Appearances? I Answer, That in so great a number of Men it is not to be wonder'd at if here and there an Apostle turns an Apostate. And as too many have the Art of cloaking their Vices under the colour of Sanctity, How is it possible that a human Eye can discover the black Ideas of their Minds? No. that Knowledge meets with an universal Blank, except from one to whom all Hearts are open and every Action known before 'tis brought into Motion: And how unequitable is it then to blame a whole Society for some few mistaken Men? whose unhappy Failures cannot affect or depreciate our glorious ART, still unspotted and undefiled, no more than true RELIGION can be defaced by wicked and blasphemous Professors. And tho' some iniquitous Wretches have labour'd to give a Stab to Both, yet we with the greatest Satisfaction view all their attempts prove as fruitless as if they strove to change the Complexion of the Æthiopic, or deprive the Leopard of his Spots: And Experience sadly convinces us, That neither Scripture nor Reason will polish the evil Stamps of some preverse Minds; wherefore with Pity we must Compassionate those unhappy Dispositions, and endeavour to preserve our Conscience void of Offence towards our great CREATOR and our BRETH-REN.



Serious Admonitions, &c.

Candidus imperti, Si non, his utere mecum.

Hor.

YE Immortal *NOACHIDÆ, hear my Words, and let not the Truth forsake thee, but bind it about thy Necks with Hoops of Steel: Let not the malicious World have cause to give ye blame, whose antient Customs have been admired from time immemorial, and I hope will still deserve the same esteem from the most eminent of Ages yet to come, and increase in Splendour while the Sun shoots from its radiant Beams, or the Moon its pale Nocturnal Reflection.

Preserve your antient Laws and Charges, and let your Constitutions be the Guide of your Actions; but particularly observe to pay due and proper Homage to that most august and glorious Body, The GRAND LODGE of this Kingdom, which I hope will ever be adorned with such dazzling Patterns as our late Grand Masters, and I should think myself somewhat remiss if I did not inform you of the assiduous and prudent Methods that our Grand Officers have lately taken to increase the Benefits of our Common-Wealth, wherefore let each Brother pay to them a decent Tribute of Praise, for their constant Attendance, their great and learned Counsells are sufficient Marks of the Elegance of their taste in Architecture, and of their sincere Warmth and Affection to our Craft, and of that true Spirit of MASONRY which they have so often shewn, and which will not only render them the Delight of our present Brethren, but the Admiration of all Future.

^{*} The most ancient Word for Masons that can be found in their Records.

In your private Lodges be subservient to those wholesome Bylaws, which have been made for your Uses, and are consistent with the old Rules of MASONRY, for each Deviation from them, will not appear in a good Light before our excellent Masters.

Be cautious to whom ye afford your Benefits, and let not Poverty or any other Motive influence any of you to sell your Birth-Rights for a Mess of Pottage, but like true MASONS, and as Elect amongst Men prove that you are the real thing you represent. Let no clandestine Acts Eclipse your Characters, but like judicious Potters see that your Clay is well temper'd, free from the least unseemly Blemish before you make your Vessel, for such omission often destroys the Beauty of your Work.

Let not excess of Liquor destroy your Reason or waste your Substance; but behave both in Celibacy and a Matrimonial Life, in such a manner as may convince the unbelieving World, that MASONRY hath not lost it's pristine Decorations. Let Slander and Envy be banish'd from your Breasts; despise not one Another, for Detracting a Brother's Character is spoiling your Own, and giving the World the same opportunity of judging of yourself: 'Tis robbing him of his dearest Part, his Reputation, which does not enrich you, but makes him Poor indeed. And, you shou'd consider, that the most doubtful Accusations, are always found from the general and prevailing Ill-Nature of Mankind, to leave a Sting behind Them; and as the Poet elegantly says,

On Eagles Wings pernicious Scandals fly, While virtuous Actions are but Born, and die!

Men of this cruel way of Thinking, are a pest to Governments, and hurtful to all Societies; and, I think, they may be justly compared to the Looking-Glasses in the Temple of Smyrna, which represented the fairest and best featured Face, as a most deformed and frightful appearance; In short I wou'd advise you to Reflect, That he who sells his Brother's Credit at a low price, perhaps, may make a Market for others to purchase his own at the same Rate. Avoid then speaking Evil of him at any time, but defend his Character as far as is consistent with the safety of your own Honour.

Now remains a noble Virtue, which our great Limners in the Portraiture thereof, have Represented in the form of a naked

* Babe, having a sprightly Countenance, and surrounded with a Cloud; in its Right Hand holding a bloody Heart, in its Left, affording Honey to a Bee without Wings; which Draught seems to Import, that Charity ought to be as humble as a Child, and all her Gifts bestowed with a Chearful Will. The bleeding Heart must signify, the pain a good Brother feels when he sees, and pitys the Distressed: And that Honey which is given to the Bee without Wings, is that Succour which should be afforded to the Unfortunate who cannot help Themselves. Therefore fail not to aid, by your Advice, and supply with your Purse, the Necessities of the Indigent Supplicant, for all your Treasure is but in Trust for him: And, he who detains a Mite from his needy Brother, when in his power, without hurting himself, certainly commits an act of Iniustice. Therefore, my Brethren, act as that learned Apostle St. Paul advises, Put on Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, and above all these things put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness: And be not like that Miser, who, when on his death-Bed put as much Gold in his Mouth, as he could possibly contain therein; and being ask'd the reason for so doing, answered, That some were wiser than others, and that he purposed to keep that safe until he was dead.

Reject all Pretenders as Men of base and ignoble Principles, and take at all times an especial care that your House be well Tyled, and your Materials kept close in an Ivory Receptacle, while awful Silence with a Sword of Faith stands Guardian at the Door, and every Brother keeps his Key. And be not like the false † Hipparchus who was expell'd by Pythagoras for his infamous Dealings, and having lost all sense of Honour, the good Philosopher, as a punishment of his crime, ordered a Tomb to be made for him, while living; the reflection of the Shame of which, threw the Wretch into a violent fit of Madness, insomuch that he committed that monstrouse crime of Suicide, by cutting his own Throat: So was his Memory amongst good Men thus much abhorred, that after his death he lay upon the Island of Samos, where the Sands of the Sea were his deserved Sepulchre.

^{*} This Emblem of Charity is Represented in the Copper-plate at the Frontispiece.

[†] Clem. Alexandr. Strom.

To Conclude, May the Royal Art go on and Prosper, spreading its Glories from Pole to Pole, while Learning, Trade and Liberty shall flourish; and may it be ever countenanc'd by the most eminent Potentates, since it hath always been a Favourite of the politest Kingdoms: Thus may it still continue, in spite of all that Treachery, Ignorance, or Malice can contrive to Overthrow it.

And may it Live 'till Nature fades away, And gives a Groan, expressing its Decay.

FINIS

The state of the principle of the state of t