

The Trinity College, Dublin, MS., 1711  
Ref. E.M.C., page 69-70

This short catechism, which is in the Trinity College, Dublin, Library [T.C.D. MS. I, 4,18], is contained in one of the volumes of collected papers of **Sir Thomas Molyneux (1661-1733)**, a famous Dublin doctor and scientist. It is written on one side of a single folio sheet, about 11 ¼" x 7 ½", and was originally folded into four, about 3" x 7 ½"; across the top of the folded document was endorsed 'Free Masonry Feb : 1711.' To judge from the photostat made in 1937, the endorsement is in a different hand from the body of the text, the 'M,' the 's,' and the 'y' of 'Masonry' in the endorsement differing considerably from the same letters in the body of the text. The MS. Has been put away in a place of safety, and our observation, based on the Photostat, cannot at present be checked by reference to the original. Nor can it be ascertained, by comparison with other documents, whether the body of the text, or the endorsement, was written by Sir Thomas himself. If either was, we surmise that it was the endorsement. The catechism is the earliest known MS. To recognize three classes of mason, each with its own secrets [but makes no attempt to divide the working into three]. It was printed in *Trans. Lodge of Research No. CC, Dublin, 1924*. Our transcript is made from a Photostat.



Under no less a penalty

Question. W<sup>i</sup> manner of man are you?

Answer. I am a mason.

Q. How shal I know that?

A. By y<sup>e</sup> signs, tokens, & point of my entry.

Q. Where were you entred?

A. In a full & perfect lodge.

Q. W<sup>i</sup> makes a full, & perfect lodge?

A. three masters, 3 fellow craftsmen, & 3 enterprentices.

Q. How stands y<sup>e</sup> lodge?

A. East, & west like y<sup>e</sup> temple of Jerusalem.

Q. Where sits y<sup>e</sup> master?

A. In a chair of bone in y<sup>e</sup> middle of a four square pavement.

Q. W<sup>i</sup> sits he there for?

A. To observe the suns rising to see to set his men to work.

Q. How high is y<sup>e</sup> lodge?

A. As high as y<sup>e</sup> stars inches, & feet innumerable.

Q. Where do you keep the key of y<sup>e</sup> lodge?

A. In a box of bone within a foot, & ½ of y<sup>e</sup> lodge door.

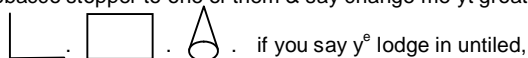
Q. How far is it from y<sup>e</sup> cable to ye anchor?

A. As far as from y<sup>e</sup> tongue to y<sup>e</sup> heart.

Q. Which way blows y<sup>e</sup> wind?

A. East & west & out of y<sup>e</sup> south.

The common sign is with your right hand rub y<sup>e</sup> mouth then cross y<sup>e</sup> throat & lay on ye left brea[st.] The Masters sign is back bone, the word matchpin. The fellow craftsman's signis knuckles, & sinues ye word Jachquin [poss. Jackquin]. The Enterprentice's sign is sinues, the word Boaz or its hollow. Squeese the Master by y<sup>e</sup> back bone, put your knee between his, & say Matchpin. Squeese the fellow craftsman in knuckles, & sinues & say Jachquin [poss. Jackquin] [.] squees the enterprentice in sinues, & say boaz, or its hollow. To know in y<sup>e</sup> dark if there be a mason in Company, Say y<sup>e</sup>. day was made for seeing, & ye night for hearing. If you are amongst the fraternity, & they drink to you, turn y<sup>e</sup> top of the glass down and if after two or three times so doing, if you say y<sup>e</sup> squire is lean, or throw a tobacco stopper to one of them & say change me yt groat, & they will pay your club. To Send for a brother the signes are these



that is as much as to say there is some one in y<sup>e</sup> Company you suspect for a brother. To bring a man from a scaffold, or any other place, hold y<sup>e</sup> heels together, and y<sup>e</sup> toes open, & look up, then with y<sup>e</sup> hand, or Cane make a right angle. this as all other Motions must be done very carelessly.

[Endorsement] Free Masonry Feb: 1711.

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The earliest known certain reference to three distinct [253] grades of mason, each with its own secrets, is found in the Trinity College, Dublin, MS. of 1711,(1) a document forming part of the collected papers of Sir Thomas Molyneux (1661 1733), a famous Dublin doctor and scientist, and in the opinion (2) of Dr. J. Gilbert Smyly, Librarian of Trinity College, Dublin, possibly written by Molyneux. Thus, until rebutting evidence can be produced, there would appear to be a prima facie case for attributing the development of the trigradal system to Irish masons. The remaining innovation, as compared with operative practice the ceremony of constituting a new lodge and of installing the master of a lodge was first described in Anderson's Constitutions of 1723, so that it is not unreasonable to attribute the origin of the new ceremony to masons associated with the premier Grand Lodge, if not to Anderson himself.

<http://www.libraryireland.com/biography/SirThomasMolyneux.php>

**Sir Thomas Molyneux**, Bart., State Physician, younger brother of William, was born in Cook-street, Dublin, 14 Apr 1661. He was educated in Trinity College, and took out his degree of Bachelor of Medicine, and afterwards visited London, Oxford, Cambridge, and the Continental schools, to extend his knowledge. An interesting correspondence between him and his brother William, containing an account of his travels, is to be found in the *University Magazine*, vol. xviii. At Leyden he became acquainted with Locke and many persons of note. During the War of 1689-'91 he resided in Chester with his brother. They returned immediately after the battle of the Boyne. Thenceforward for some time Dr. Molyneux resided in the house with his father, and engaged in practice. His progress must have been rapid, for in 1693 he was enabled to purchase an estate worth £100 per annum, and in 1711 he founded the Molyneux Blind Asylum in Peter-street, Dublin, at a cost of £2,310 for the house and £2,341 for furniture.

In 1715 he was appointed State Physician, afterwards Surgeon-General to the army; and in 1730 a baronetcy was conferred upon him by Lord Carteret. He died in 1733, aged 72. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society in London, and a constant contributor to the proceedings of the Dublin Philosophical Society, being especially interested in antiquarian and zoological

enquiries relating to Ireland. "He was allowed by all the learned world who knew him, to be a man of uncommon skill and ability in his profession.... It was not without good cause that John Locke chose him as his friend and adviser." The present Baronet is the 7th. An interesting reference to his fine statue by Roubilliac, standing in Armagh Cathedral, will be found in *Notes and Queries*, 3rd Series.

Sources:

- 54. Burke, Sir Bernard: Peerage and Baronetage.
- 116. Dublin University Magazine (18). Dublin, 1833-'77.

He married twice, first to Margaret, a relation of the first Earl of Wicklow, with issue of a son and daughter. The son must have died as a child. He married in 1694 Catherine Howard, daughter of Ralph Howard, at that time Regius Professor of Physic at Trinity College. They had four sons and eight daughters, of whom Daniel and Capel both succeeded to the baronetcy.

**William Molyneux**, brother of Thomas above, patriot and philosopher, was born 17 Apr 1656, in New-row, Dublin. [His father, Samuel Molyneux, was a master gunner, and an officer in the Irish Exchequer. He had distinguished himself in the War of 1641-'52, and although offered the recordership of Dublin, clung with fondness to his own profession, making experiments in gunnery and the construction of cannon, at private butts of his own.] William entered Trinity College in April 1671, and having taken out his bachelor's degree, proceeded to London and entered at the Middle Temple in 1675.

While diligently studying law, his attention was also turned towards scientific pursuits. He returned to Dublin in 1678, and soon afterwards married Lucy Domville, daughter of the Irish Attorney-General. In 1683 was formed the Dublin Philosophical Association, the forerunner of the Royal Dublin Society and the Royal Irish Academy. Sir William Petty was president, and Molyneux acted as secretary. Its first meetings were held in a house on Cork-hill. He now became acquainted with some of the leading personages of the time, and through the Duke of Ormond's influence, was in 1684 appointed Engineer and Surveyor of the King's Buildings and Works. Next year he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society.

Sent by the Government to survey fortresses on the coast of Flanders, he passed on to Holland and France, and in Paris became acquainted with Borelli, the famous mathematician. In 1686, soon after his return, he published an account of the telescope dial invented by himself. The following year he had the pleasure of reading advanced sheets of Newton's *Principia*, sent him by Halley. During the War of 1689-91 he resided at Chester, where he lost his wife. He there occupied himself in the composition of a work on dioptrics. On his return he was appointed one of the Commissioners of Forfeited Estates, with a salary of £500. But the task was suited neither to his tastes nor his feelings; he was indifferent about money, and soon resigned a laborious and highly invidious and unpopular office.

About this time he speaks of his well-selected library of 1,000 volumes, and of being visited by the Duke of Wurtemberg, General De Ginkell, and Scramamoer. Both in 1692 and 1695 he was elected member for the University of Dublin, which had conferred upon him the degree of LL.D. The laws passed for the destruction of Irish trade and commerce induced Molyneux to write the work that has since rendered his name conspicuous in Irish history: *The Case of Ireland, being bound by Acts of Parliament made in England, Stated*, published, with a dedication to the King, early in 1698. It maintained that Ireland and England were separate and independent kingdoms under the same sovereign — that Ireland was annexed, not conquered — "If the religion, lives, liberties, fortunes, and estates of the clergy, nobility, and gentry of Ireland may be disposed of without their privity or consent, what benefit have they of any laws, liberties, or privileges granted unto them by the crown of England? I am loth to give their condition an hard name; but I have no other notion of slavery but being bound by a law to which I do not consent... We have heard great outcries, and deservedly, on breaking the Edict of Nantes, and other stipulations; how far the breaking our constitution, which has been of five hundred years' standing, exceeds that, I leave the world to judge."

The work created a great sensation, was stigmatized as seditious and libelous by the English Parliament, and ordered to be burned by the common hangman. Shortly after its publication, he went to England to visit his friend and correspondent, John Locke. The fatigues of the journey brought on a severe attack of illness, and he died on the 11th October 1698, soon after reaching home, aged 42. He was buried in St. Audoen's Church, Dublin. Some interesting notes regarding his monument will be found in *Notes and Queries*, 3rd and 4th Series.

Locke, writing to his brother, said: "I have lost in your brother not only an ingenious and learned acquaintance, that all the world esteemed, but an intimate and sincere friend, whom I truly loved, and by whom I was truly loved." The highest tribute ever paid to his patriotism and genius was by Grattan, in his great speech in the Irish Parliament, on 16th April 1782. Harris's *Ware* enumerates fifteen works, 4 chiefly philosophical, from his pen. The most important, besides his *Case of Ireland*, were *Six Metaphysical Meditations* (Lond. and Dub. 1680), *Sciothericum Telesopicum* (Dub. 1686), and *Dioptrica Nova* (Lond. 1692). [His son Samuel, born in 1689, was secretary to George II. when Prince of Wales, and was afterwards Lord of the Admiralty and a member of the Privy-Council. He died childless in 1727.]

Sources:

- 110. Dublin, History of the City: John T. Gilbert. 3 vols. Dublin, 1854-'9.
- 196. Irishmen, Lives of Illustrious and Distinguished, Rev. James Wills, D.D. 6 vols. or 12 parts. Dublin, 1840-'7.
- 245. Moore, Thomas, Memoirs: Henry R. Montgomery. London, 1865.
- Moore, Thomas, see Nos. 132, 307.
- 339. Ware, Sir James, Works: Walter Harris. 2 vols. Dublin, 1764.