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Address of Past Noble Grand J.E.F. Matthews of Thomaston Lodge No. 197 I.O.O.F. of Thomaston, Georgia

J.E.F. Matthews

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ADDRESS

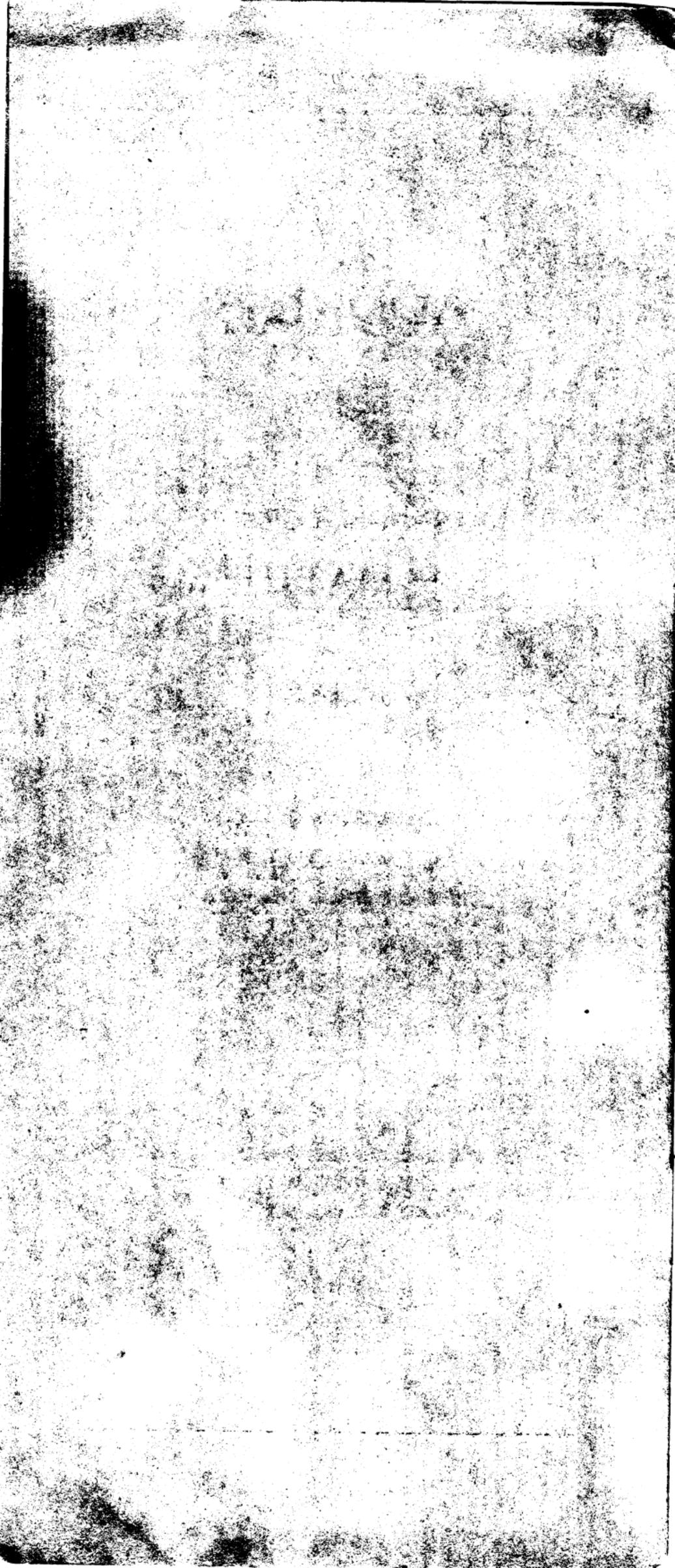
OF

PAST NOBLE GRAND
J. E. F. MATTHEWS

OF

THOMASTON LODGE
No. 197 I. O. O. F.
OF THOMASTON, GEORGIA

DELIVERED BEFORE THE ATWATER LODGE
No. 236 I. O. O. F. OF ATWATER, GEORGIA;
ON TUESDAY EVENING, THE SIXTH OF
JULY, 1920. : : : : :



ADDRESS

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PAST NOBLE GRAND
J. E. F. MATTHEWS

OF

THOMASTON LODGE
No. 197 I. O. O. F.
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DELIVERED BEFORE THE ATWATER LODGE
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ON TUESDAY EVENING, THE SIXTH OF
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(Address of Past Noble Grand J. E. F. Matthews, of Thomaston Lodge No. 197 I. O. O. F., of Thomaston, Ga., delivered before the Atwater Lodge No. 236 I. O. O. F. of Atwater, Ga., on Tuesday evening, the sixth of July, 1920.)

It gives me pleasure to meet the brothers of Atwater Lodge of Odd Fellows on this 6th day of July, 1920.

I was admitted a member of Warren Lodge No. 20, I. O. O. F., of Griffin, Ga., on the 27th day of July, 1874. Brother J. W. Little was Noble Grand and Brother J. Richardson was Permanent Secretary.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows is said to be the largest fraternal order in the world. Its annual expenses for benevolence are more than five million dollars.

It beats swords into plowshares and spears into pruninghooks. Odd-Fellowship is founded on the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. It was born in the good old Monumental City of Baltimore, Maryland, April 26, 1819, at a time when that direful pestilence, the yellow fever, was desolating many a happy home. And it has gone forward on its grand and glorious mission, "To visit the sick, relieve the distressed, to bury the dead and educate the orphan," and to cheer and make glad the pathway of all the inhabitants of earth.

In Upson County four Odd-Fellows Lodges have been instituted, to wit: Thomaston Lodge No. 197 in 1903, Crest in 1907, The Rock in 1909, and Atwater Lodge No. 236.

It is world-wide, encircling the globe.

In the early history of the order there were five degrees, represented by the emblematical colors of white, pink, blue, green and red.

White was the color of the First or Initiatory Degree, emblematical of purity and fidelity.

Pink was the color of the Second or Covenant Degree, representing the beauty, vigor and modesty of youth.

Blue was the color of the Third or Royal Blue Degree, teaching that truth is one of the cardinal virtues and should be among the first characteristics of an Odd-Fellow.

Green was the color of the Fourth or Remembrance Degree, keeping fresh in our thoughts the beauties of our Fraternity. Red was the color of the Fifth or Scarlet Degree, reminding us of the dignity and sublimity of true manly characters, and to have noble and exalted purposes and to make the most of life.

There is deep meaning in the different colors and symbols used in the regalia and paraphernalia of our Lodge Rooms. The Holy Bible is our Book of Laws and the fountain-source of all our principles and teachings. It is the true Odd-Fellow's companion, and always to be found in our Lodge Rooms.

The Horn of Plenty signifies that in the hour of need and distress our coffers are open to the unfortunate brothers, the widows and the orphans.

The All-Seeing Eye reminds us that the Infinite Creator is omnipresent and seeth all things, both the evil and the good. The Rainbow is the covenant between God and man, and denotes that our love should be as universal as the rainbow which has its arch in heaven and its shafts resting on the surface of the earth.

The Shining Sun teaches that its bright rays are for the rich and the poor, the high and the low—it shines alike for all.

The Dove denotes that, as the dove to Noah of old was the messenger of joy, bearing the olive branch in its beak, so we should be messengers of joy and peace to all mankind.

The Moon and Seven Stars are emblematical of those bright and shining characteristics of true manhood. The moon represents the gentle quality of charity, and the seven stars represent Friendship, Love, Truth, Honor, Charity, Temperance, and Chastity.

The Altar of Incense teaches us that as the patriarchs of old worshipped around one common

altar, and did homage to one God as the Ruler of the Universe, so we should learn to regard the Great Author of our being as our Father, and to esteem each other as brothers of one great family.

The Tent denotes hospitality.

The Bee-Hive instructs in the lessons of industry and frugality.

The honey that lies in the heart of a rose
May gladden the hive for a year;
And the kindness which in one heart glows
A hundred hearts may cheer.

The Three Pillars denote the three grandest elements of human wisdom and Christianity—Faith, Hope, and Charity.

The Two Angels and The Ark of the Covenant represent the worth and moral grandeur of an upright and stainless reputation, and suggest to us the glories of heaven and the grandeur of the Eternal King as typified in the Shekinah.

The Tables of the Law are to remind us of the Ten Commandments, as the great moral code for all humanity—as the voice of Him who spoke amid the thunders of Sinai.

The Lamb is symbolical of innocence and purity.

The Sword and Scales are the significant emblems of justice.

The Serpent and the Rod remind us of that terrible retribution which was inflicted upon the children of Israel for their disobedience of the divine law. To us it signifies faith and confidence in the immutable wisdom and providence of the Supreme Being.

The Bundle of Sticks denotes union and strength.

The Bow and Arrows are designed to represent the covenant between Jonathan and David.

The Skull and Cross-Bones are symbolical of man's mortality.

The Scythe symbolizes death.

The Hour-Glass tells of the brevity of life.

The Coffin reminds us that when life has ended we must occupy about the same space in the silent chambers of the tomb.

That if we have not lived in vain,
We may at last exclaim:
'Tis not all of life to live
Nor all of death to die.

This thing—how certain when this life is o'er,
Man dies to live, and lives to die no more.

The Three Links are symbolical of the three grand principles of our Order—Friendship, Love, and Truth—the triple, triune gems in the bright diadem of Odd-Fellowship. It is the mystic, magic, golden chain that binds us together as brothers.

It has been truly said that the noblest deeds of philanthropy have never passed into history. Doing good by stealth and blushing to find it fame, is the shining token of that heaven-born virtue—charity. The true history of a Lodge can no more be told to the public ear than the silent, sacred story of the heart.

There's a turned down page, as some writer says,
In every human life—
A hidden story of happier days,
Of peace amid the strife.

There's a hidden page in each life and mine
A story might unfold;
But the end was sad of the dream divine —
It better rest untold.

Human life has been compared to a narrow strip of land in an ocean—

A narrow isthmus twixt two boundless seas,
The past, the future, two eternities.

Childhood with its innocence, youth with its glee and merriment, manhood with the sober reali-

ties of life, and age with its infirmities, follow each other in rapid succession. What is human life? To the man of years, his frame bent, his cheek furrowed, his brow frosted, life is an existence of memories, a present overshadowed by the past, arched with no bow of promise in the future. To the young, standing upon the bank of youth's enchanted stream, listening with enchained rapture to the music of its waters, life is a stream of harmonies, upon whose waves joy's pealing anthems float, filling heart and soul and being with symphonies gentle as the rustling of angel's wings and sweet as the songs of ocean shells. Life is but a note in the music of time, which, touched by the hand of Fate, gives forth a gentle tone, then dies away in echo sweet. It is a cable chain that connects the shores of time and eternity, and across whose wires are transmitted the few brief messages of human joy and human sorrow. Life is a harp of many strings, emitting at morning's dawn symphonies sweet as notes from heavenly lutes, yet at evening's close its shivered chords are mute and all its music gone. As the ocean shell, thrown by the rising tide to the sandy beach, soon crumbles back to dust, so does life when cast upon time's crumbling shore, almost before the wave recedes, blanch, moulder, and die. Life is a checkered scene of beauty and bloom, of joy and sorrow. There are Naides in her streams, cheering with their smiles or melting with their tears. There are Creades among her rocks, wooing with their graces or repelling with their frowns. There are Nereides along her shores, enticing with the flowers of her grottos or threatening with the storms of her caves. Life is a book, written by the great Author of the skies, and from its living pages we learn lessons of immortal life.

In the beautiful drama of *Ion*, written by Sergeant Talford of the English bar, the hope of immortality is eloquently uttered by the death devoted Greek and finds deep response in every thoughtful soul. When about to yield his young existence as a sacrifice to fate, his Clemanthe asks if they should meet again, to which he replies:

“I have asked that dreadful question of the hills that look eternal—of the clear stream that flows forever—of the stars amid whose fields of azure my raised spirit hath walked in glory. All were dumb. But as I gaze upon thy living face, I feel that there is something in the love that kindles through its beauty that cannot wholly perish. We shall meet again, Clemanthe.”

Our noble Sisters of the Rebekah Lodges are active in the good work of Odd-Fellowship, and this branch of our Order is most beautiful and is growing.

If God be in the sky and sea,
And live in light and ride the storm,
Then God is God, although He be
Enshrined in a woman's form;
And claims glad reverence from me.

Woman's warm heart and gentle hand in God's
eternal plan,
Were formed to soften, soothe, refine, exalt and
comfort man;
For he would never work alone, and even in Eden's
bowers,
He pined for woman's smile, to cheer his task of
tending flowers.

Woman is the crowning type of all earthly beauty. When God had finished the wondrous work of creation—when He had studded the blue arch of heaven with silvery, twinkling gems of night and sprinkled the earth with beautiful flowers and foliage, He gave to the world His masterpiece of handiwork, Man; and then finished the mighty plan by creating Woman from His masterpiece, that she, as the finishing touch of creation, should typify all the beauties and glories of life.

* * * *

Resolved, that Brother J. E. F. Matthews be requested to furnish us with a copy of his address delivered before our Lodge of Odd-Fellows Tuesday evening, the 6th day of July, 1920, at Atwater, Georgia.

J. W. BARRON, Noble Grand.
J. R. GRUBB, Vice-Grand.
A. S. FERGUSON, Secretary.



