

Foreword

Although it is common practice to display the banners of the twelve tribes in a Royal Arch Chapter working the USGC of NSW & ACT ritual they do not form part of our ceremony. The nearest we get to referring to them is in the address to the Sanhedrin, "Round the architraves were the twelve signs of the Zodiac and the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel". Neither in the 'Working Instructions' or the layout diagrams are the Banners mentioned. However, in the English ritual the Banners of the Twelve Tribes form part of the ceremony and this paper was written for that ritual.

P.L. Harris

BANNERS AND ENSIGNS OF A ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER.

By B. K. Lark.

In presenting this explanation of the devices on the Banners and Ensigns of the twelve tribes of Israel, I feel a deep sense of humility. There is nothing new in the material submitted and very little of it is surmise or supposition. The address is almost wholly extracted from the Volume of the Sacred Law and better and more faithful minds than mine have devoted themselves to these studies over a span of centuries. If we believe those holy writings, then we must accept them as statement of fact.

On a few occasions I have doubted the veracity of Biblical history and have tried to argue as to what might have really happened to inspire the writers. I do not feel that this is wrong to do for, in each instance, I have found my faith all the more firmly established.

I claim no credit for the work as presented as it is not originated by me. I started with a somewhat tattered series of notes but the real pleasure has been in the resultant reading of the Biblical accounts, both in the Authorised Version and in some modern translations. If this address inspires my Companions to a similar effort of reading and their pleasure and satisfaction are as great as mine, then this work will have been fully justified.

Of all the furniture in a Royal Arch Chapter, probably the most striking is the arrangement of Banners and Ensigns and it is surprising to find that they are involved so little in the ceremonies, being only briefly mentioned in the Symbolical Lecture, which is itself so seldom delivered in the course of Degree-working.

The Banners and Ensigns keep before us the form of a Jewish Encampment which was in the form of a hollow square, no part of which was ever left open or unguarded against the approach of spies or enemies or any other unauthorised persons. The Tabernacle was placed in the centre, 2000 cubits from the nearest point of the soldiers' camp about 1000 yards from the centre. The outer or soldiers' camp protected the inner or Levites' camp which, in turn, protected the Tabernacle which was never left unguarded day or night. The area of an Encampment was considerable for we must remember that, besides the soldiers and Levites, there were all the remaining members of the tribes, together with

their flocks and herds. They were not always on the move but often settled in one place for a considerable period, depending largely on the weather and food situations.

On either side of the tessellated pavement are arranged a series of Ensigns, each bearing its own, peculiar signification and the designs emblazoned on the Ensigns (mounted on staves) formed the distinctive bearings of the twelve tribes of Israel, figurative of the peculiar blessings bequeathed unto each by the Patriarch Jacob who assembled his family together for that purpose when he lay dying. The staves on which the Ensigns are mounted are not just poles to support a flag but have an important symbolical meaning. We must remember that if there was one thing about which Moses was not happy, it was that he should go down to Egypt to deliver his brethren. He produced all the reasons why he should not be selected for that task but when he realised that he was the Almighty's choice and could not evade the responsibility, he asked for a sign. He was told to cast down his rod which immediately became a serpent and Moses fled from before it but, by Divine command, he put forth his hand and picked it up, whereupon it resumed its original form.

This said to be the origin of our Royal Arch Staves and apart from being a sign in the passing of the veils also affords a Method of testing a companion by throwing down a stick and observing how he will pick it up.

The Ensigns mounted on these staves are used, by us, to commemorate the great wonders wrought by the Most High for the Children of Israel during their travels in the wilderness; where they were first set up as standards around their encampment and about which each tribe assembles in due form. The devices on them are emblematical of what would happen to the posterity of each tribe in future ages and it is amazing, to this day, how wonderfully accurate were the inspired prophesies of the Patriarch.

There are also in the Chapter four other principal Banners, each of which bears its own peculiar device. When the Israelites marched through the wilderness the twelve tribes had between them these four Standard or Banners. As previously mentioned; they encamped around the Tabernacle; on the East side were the three tribes under Judah's standard; On the West side were, the three tribes of Ephraim; on the South side were three tribes under Reuben and on the North side were the three tribes under Dan.

The device on the Standard of Judah was a Lion.

The device on the standard of Ephraim was an Ox,

The device on the standard of Reuben was a Man and,

The device on the standard of Dan was an Eagle.

These devices, when combined, form the figure of that wondrous living creature seen by the prophet Ezekiel on the banks of the River Chebar, thus Combining the forms which the Banners severally represent. This vision is recorded in the first chapter of the book of Ezekiel and also in the Revelation (Ch.4, V's. 6, 7 & 8). A short extract from the latter will be sufficient for our present purpose:- "and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four beasts, full

of eyes, before, and behind; and the first beast was a Lion, the second like a calf, the third beast had the face of a Man and the fourth beast was like a flying Eagle and they rest not day and night saying; "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is to come."

In addition to the Divisional Standards each tribe was distinguished by its Ensign charged with a device each being of a different colour according to the colour of the Precious stone on which the name of the tribe was engraved and which was placed in the breastplate of the High Priest this breastplate is the distinguishing badge of; the Third Principal of a, Chapter.

The laws and customs governing the people at this time were hard and very difficult but it is evident that as far as these Banners and Ensigns were concerned paintings were not absolutely forbidden in those days. The probable reason for the designs being largely devoid of artistic merit may be found in the absence of the arts of sculpture and painting in the life of the Jewish nation. It is not inferred that the Hebrews were deficient in artistic taste. As proof, we may mention the marvellous skill exhibited in the construction of the Tabernacle presented in glorious detail, in the book of Exodus (Ch. 24 - 28) but may we not justly attribute the absence, of artistic skill in the case of the Ensigns to the Divine command "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image or the likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth" this, if literally obeyed, would, no doubt, have swiftly stemmed any artistic ambition.

May we not infer also that their ordinary commonsense would have suggested to the leaders that; if no images or paintings were permitted for common use or adornment the people would be less likely to commit the sin of idolatry, which was an ever present risk as they came into contact with people not holding the same religious beliefs as themselves.

It is further of some significance that the only knowledge we have of the lives and actions of the great men and events in Jewish history has come down to us in the form of written records only and the pictures and statuary we have bequeathed to us now are the purely imaginative productions of artists of other nations of comparatively Modern times. In this we also find the reason for the employment of many Scribe's or writers in the Jewish nation.

So, looking back over the foregoing considerations, we find that the Standard was the common Banner under which each group of three among the twelve tribes were united, besides which each tribe had its own separate Ensign displayed in proper order in each Chapter. Before passing to an explanation of the devices on the Banners and Ensigns it would be appropriate to refer to the second Chapter of numbers in which we read: "Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch-his own Standard by, with the Ensign of his father's house far off; about the Tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch".

Esau and Jacob were the twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca, Esau being the first born, but in later life great enmity arose between the brothers so, for Jacob's safety, he was sent into the lands of Laban, his mother's brother, and whose

name was later changed to Israel. Laban had two daughters Leah and Rachel, and Jacob was attracted to Rachel, desiring to take her as his wife. He accordingly arranged to serve Laban for seven years, at the end of which he claimed his bride and the wedding festivities were prepared. Laban, however, had wanted Jacob to marry his elder daughter Leah and during the wedding feast Laban substituted Leah for Rachel in Jacobs bed. From all accounts Jacob did not discover the change until the next morning and when he argued the matter with his uncle it was eventually agreed that he should serve a further seven years to obtain the wife of his choice. This was not calculated to improve the affectionate relationship between the two ladies involved and hence they lived in a state of resentment for the remainder of their lives.

Jacob was first married about 1752 BC. His children were:

From Leah:- Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah, Isaachar, Zebulun and Dinah,

From Bilhah:- Darvand Napthalt,

From Zilpah:- Gad and Asher and,

From Rachel:- Joseph and Benjamin.

Jacob thus had twelve sons and one daughter but in the Patriarchal dispensation of blessings, Joseph and Levi, received no part, their places being taken by Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's sons.

Judah: -The standard of Judah was in charge of prince Nahshon and was emblazoned with a lion couchant surmounted by golden crown and sceptre because from this tribe the Messiah, the King of Kings, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, was destined to spring. The colour of the Banner was crimson or scarlet. To this tribe was assigned the most honourable station in the camp the Eastern sector and according to the ancient belief of the Jews the East was the front or forepart of the world; thus standing in the East they worshiped God by praying with their faces toward the West. It is significant that Christian ministers nowadays frequently do likewise.

Judah was the fourth son of, Jacob and the blessing bestowed upon him and his, posterity as recorded in the 49th chapter of Genesis, verses 8, 9 and, 10, reads:- "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise thy fathers children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor a ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh come."

This and all other blessings are contained in the same 49th chapter of Genesis and as they are not all fully quoted in this discourse they are worthy of attention. Moses also blessed Judah by praying to God "Let his hands be sufficient for him; be thou a help to him from his enemies" (Deut.33, v.7). This tribe is also spoken of in Jeremiah 31-33:- "I will put my law in their inward parts and I will write in their hearts and will be their God and they shall be my people.". The reference in this instance is to Judah as Leah's son. The number of men fit for military service in this tribe was 74,600.

Under the Standard of Judah in the East, before the entrance of the Tabernacle, the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun pitched their tents because they were the

children of Leah and were consequently united in a mutual bond of consanguinity.

The Ensign of Issachar was in charge of Prince Nathaniel.

It was sky-blue in colour and was emblazoned with a strong ass, crouching between two burdens. Now, the ass is a patient animal and a proper symbol of labour and in accordance with this device the posterity of Issachar settled quietly on the land allotted to them, cultivating it with diligence and assiduity, and did not engage in war or mercantile pursuits. They were lovers of peace and desired only to be left alone and there are very few references to this tribe in Jewish history.

The act of the ass crouching between its burdens was an appropriate symbol of the indolent character of this tribe who preferred submission to every degree of tyranny and oppression rather than take the trouble of preparing themselves to assert their natural, civil and social rights on the field of battle, Abet like the true quadruped ass which, though a sturdy and hardy animal, sinks tamely under its burdens when it could easily, by exerting its bodily strength, shake off and get free from them. The number of men in this tribe was 54,400.

The ensign of Zebulun, who was the sixth son of Leah, was in charge of Prince Eilab. Its colour was purple and its device was a ship and it is obvious that this device represents trade and commerce. From the-earliest times; down to the present day the Jews have been famous traders and financiers and it would be no exaggeration to state that this tribe produced more merchant princes than all the nations together. Jacob's blessing (Ch.49, v.13), was "Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea he shall be a haven of ships". Moses said (Deut. 33.v.19): He shall suck of abundance of, the sea. In ancient times, whenever commercial relations existed between any two countries, the Jewish merchants had their correspondents in every important town and seaport indeed, they were the inventors of the, system which, improved upon, we now call our modern system of exchange. They had used this system for ages, centuries before the art of printing was evolved, and when the art of writing was cumbrous and confined to the knowledge of the few. A-Jewish merchant's order to pay any sum of: money, or its equivalent, addressed to another Jewish merchant, no matter how far separated, was, as a general rule, promptly honoured, so history has proved Jacob's prediction amply verified by the commercial and financial success attained by the Jews in every part of the world. This tribe numbered 57,400 and, looking back over their descriptions, we -find that the sons of Jacob and Leah not only occupied the most, honourable side of the camp and the leadership on the march but had displayed on their Banners and Ensigns the three royal colours crimson, purple and blue.

The next side of the camp we approach is the South; which was occupied by the tribes of Reuben, Simeon and Gad. The great Banner was in charge of Prince Elizur. It bore the device of a man because Reuben was the first born of his parent Jacob ("the excellency of his dignity and power") but Reuben did not enjoy the privileges and prerogatives usually accorded the first born by the Hebrews, these being assigned to Judah, the fourth son because of the iniquity,

and unreliability of Reuben. In 1Chroh. Ch. 5, v,1, we, read that Reuben lost his birthright as the result of having misconducted himself with Bethar, one of his father's concubines.

Moses must have found some good in him for he prayed:, "Let Reuben live and not die and let not his men be few." Jacob prophesied (Genesis Ch.49, v's.3 & 4) that he would not excel because of his instability ("Unstable as water; thou shalt not excel"). As water by a natural propensity inherent in its substance flows from its source in an elevated situation to a place in the lowest, so did Reuben fall from his birthright and subside to an inferior situation among the tribes. This prophecy was remarkably verified for nothing great or praiseworthy has been recorded of the posterity of Reuben, they were inferior in numerical strength to the other tribes (46,500) and because nothing great or honourable is recorded of them some think that the device on the Banner of Reuben should have been a mandrake instead of a man. The mandrake or Mandragora is a narcotic plant, the subject of many fables. It is mentioned in Genesis Ch. 30, v's.14-18, in connection with Reuben and the trouble between Leah and Rachel. The Arabs say that the plant, or its flower, bears a rude resemblance to a man's head and hand and that its root is roughly like, a human body. There was a prevalent belief in Shakespeare's day, that when mandrake was plucked from the ground it emitted horrible noises and Victor Hugo affirmed that the plant was both masculine and feminine in itself. This semblance of a man, it has been asserted, would represent Reuben; unstable, unreliable and lacking all the good qualities of a sterling manhood. That the colour of the Banner should have been red is surprising and borders on sarcastic irony because Reuben's was decidedly not a warlike tribe, yet in the language of every nation, red, the colour of blood, was and is the emblem of combat and War. When these colours were decided upon, however, there may have been a good-and sufficient reason for this peculiarity.

Now, Simeon and Levi were Leah's second and third sons but the tribe of Levi was not counted among the twelve tribes of Israel; Levi is included in this paper because its device a dagger appears on the Ensign of Simeon and because the two tribes were closely involved in acts detrimental to their character. Originally, by Hebrew law, the first-born of all the families were dedicated to the service of the Tabernacle but the punishment of Levi for: his misdemeanours was that he and his descendants should perform this service, being indeed the servants of the priests who were the direct descendants of Aaron. The Levites had maintenance assigned, to them from the public stock, their residences being distributed among the whole of the tribes, they were subject to a rigid discipline and had to serve a novitiate of five years and their labours entailed service for twenty five years, until they attained fifty years of age. Even then they were not free as they spent their declining years instructing the younger Levites and inculcating those lessons in morality, virtue and fidelity which they should practise in their daily lives as an example to the nation; they were exempt from all taxes and were not even numbered among the people. Recourse to the book of Numbers will furnish an interesting account of the Lord's instructions regarding the Levites.

It has been alleged that Simeon and Levi were guilty of cruel and callous crimes. In the 34th. Chapter of Genesis we read how their sister Dinah had been dishonoured but that Shechem desired to take her as his wife. Jacob and his sons made a pact with the men of Shechem but Simeon and Levi broke the pact and carried out wholesale slaughter. Levi later reformed and he and his brethren were enthusiastic in the service of the True and Living God and at the time of the worship of the Golden Calf (Ex. 32); we read:- Moses stood at the gate, saying: "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me", and all, the sons of Levi gathered themselves unto him. Simeon, however, paid a heavy penalty for his sins for he was made one of a tribe of teachers and schoolmasters, which was surely a stern punishment for a man, of rash, fierce and impatient temperament: The Ensign of Simeon was in charge of Prince Shelumiel. It was yellow and some say emblazoned with a city while others refer to a tower in allusion to the tower of Shechem, but generally, it bears a sword and dagger as the implements used by, the progenitors of the tribe in the barbarous slaughter of the Shechemites (the inclusion of the dagger gives us the only emblem of, the tribe of Levi. The dying Patriarch expressed his abhorrence of the- numerous murders committed by Simeon and Levi under the assurance (to their victims) of kindness and good faith; in fact, smiling and using soft words whilst their hearts were full of hatred and murder.

Jacob lamented the violent passion of his two sons and he denounced them in these words:- (Genesis Cli.49,y.7):"Accursed be their anger for it was fierce and their wrath for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.". The tribe of Levi was distributed among the other tribes and; Simeon had very few possessions in the Holy Land but dwelt to the South and in the midst of Judah. They wandered as far as Mount Lear and the deserts of Gibeon and it would be a reasonable assumption that the wandering gypsies are the descendants of Simeon, even as the wandering Arabs are descended from Ishmael. Having associated in wickedness, Divine Providence ordained that their posterity should be divided and no opportunity afforded them of working evil upon their brethren as did their progenitors. The soldiers of Simeon numbered 59,300.

Gad was Jacob's seventh son by Zilpah, Leah's handmaiden. In Genesis 30, v.11, we read:- "When Leah saw that she had, stopped bearing she sent her maid in unto Jacob and when she conceived and bare a son, Leah said:- "A troop cometh" and she called his name Gad." Jacob's blessing (GenXh:49v.19) was: "Gad, a troop over cometh him but he shall overcome in the end."

The Ensign of-Gad was in Charge of Prince Eliasaph and the colour is white, charged with a troop of horsemen. Again, some authorities differ regarding the device and assert that it should be a camp and not a troop, for the sufficient reason that Gad defends his native soil and was not anxious to attack.

Jacob foretold the difficulties that would oppose the progress of Gad's posterity; that, doomed to be overcome, they would finally overcome all difficulties and this prediction was amply verified. Gad and his 45,650 warriors established themselves firmly and peaceably on the portion allotted to them, a country East

of the Jordan extending from the-Dead Sea to the Sea of Gallilee and to the Syrian desert. For some time they suffered severely at the hands of the Ammonites yet they ultimately overcame them through the Military talents of the renowned Gileaditish leader, Jephtha who, later also defeated the Ephraimites and, incidentally, furnished us with the password to the Second Degree.

The third side of the camp, the West, was occupied-by the tribe of Ephraim, united with the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin, all of whom were descended from Rachel (Joseph and Benjamin were her sons and Manasseh and Ephraim her grandsons). Their mother was named Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara, an Egyptian priest of On (Gen.Ch.46,v1-9). In Joshua Ch.17,v.17, we: read:- "and Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, saying:- "Thou art a great people and hast great power."". Ephraim was Joseph's second son, Manasseh being the first-born. They were therefore only grandchildren of Jacob but took precedence over his own sons and the story of their elevation appears in the, 44th Chapter of Genesis: the ancients said: "Joseph is a fruitful bough growing in a well watered soil and shooting forth two luxurious branches" (referring to the Banners of Ephraim and Manasseh and the prediction fulfilled in their pre-eminence). Of Joseph it was said:-"The archers sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him.": in reference to the persecution of his brethren who later sold him into slavery in Egypt and to the false accusation by which he was thrown into prison in that country.

He subsequently triumphed over all his enemies and rose to the highest state of worldly prosperity. Joseph has always been and probably always will be quoted as representing the highest standard of true manly moral courage. His-attitude and actions in the matter of Potiphar's wife, his silence and the bearing of imprisonment, insults and contumely rather than betray the false wife of his benefactor and his suffering under the bitter hatred and vile accusations of the scorned woman prove his absolute trust in God and reveal a moral courage which all must admire who prize honour and virtue in man. Ephraim stepped into the inheritance of this brave and good man and his became one of the leading tribes with 40,500 fighting men.

The great Banner was in charge of Prince Elishhama, its colour was green and its device an ox, which denotes patience, industry and strength. In Genesis Ch.48,v 420, Jacob, said: "When a blessing is pronounced in Israel, men shall use your name and say "God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.""

As has been said Manasseh was the first-born of Joseph and, normally, would have received the greater blessing but in Gen. Ch. 48, we read the circumstances under which his brother was elevated to the senior position. Jacob, said of Manasseh: "He too shall become a, people; he too, shall become great, but: his younger brother shall become greater than he.". The greatest peculiarity of this tribe was that they possessed two portions of territory, the larger portion East of the Jordan and between the territory of Gad to the South and Syria in the North. A place which has figured prominently in our recent history was situated in this area, the Golan Heights, so the land apportioned by Jacob is being warred over even in our time. The other portion was West of the Jordan to the Great Sea and

was bordered by Gad in the East, Issachahjn the North and Ephraim in the South. Jacob said to Joseph (Gen.Ch.48;Y,22) "I give you one ridge of land more than your brothers. I took it from the Ammonites with my sword and my bow."

The Ensign of Manasseh was in charge of Prince Ganaliel it was flesh coloured and bore the device of a luxurious vine growing by the side of a well. Manasseh also is Jehovah (Psalms 60, v: 7). It is interesting to note that there was a king named Manasseh but not of this tribe He was the son of Hezekiah, reigned from the age of 12 until he was 55 and led his people into great sin. The men, of Manasseh numbered 32,200.

The Ensign of the tribe of Benjamin was in charge of Prince Abidan; its colour- was green, and its device a wolf. The tribe of Benjamin were ever fierce and warlike and made so many enemies that, eventually; the other tribes assembled and almost wiped them out, only 600 men being left alive (and this from a tribe that had numbered 35,400-fighting men!). Their flocks and herds were destroyed and their homes burned (Judges Ch. 20). Saul sprang from this tribe and both he and his sons were slain in battle. Jacob was notoriously fond of his youngest son, Benjamin, yet in his Patriarchal blessings under, Divine Inspiration; he conferred no peculiar blessings upon Benjamin or his posterity. He said: (Gen.Ch.49,v.27):- "Benjamin is a ravening wolf; in the morning he devours the prey and in the evening he snatches ,a share of the spoil.". There was a saying among the tribes: "When the wolf shall attack the goat, Benjamin shall overcome the wolf " and, eventually, the other tribes forgave the 600 survivors and found wives for them. The men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying,: "There shall not any of us give his daughter to Benjamin as wife" and in Judges pl. 21,v.25,- "In these days there was no king in Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

We now approach the fourth and last quarter of the camp which was assigned to Dan. Dan was the largest tribe next to Judah, (62,700) and it was probably for this reason that his division formed the rearguard of the allied army. With Dan, were associated the two remaining tribes, Asher and Napthali, the sons of the concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah. The Great Banner was in charge of Prince Akiezer, it was bright green and charged with a golden eagle, a component of the Cherubim denoting wisdom and sublimity.

This emblem has since been, adopted as the insignia of Egypt, Rome, France, Prussia, Russia and America. Some of the Banners depict a device of an eagle with a serpent in its talons and some show a serpent only as emblematical of the ways and habits of the people. The tribe of Dan were for defeating their enemies by policy rather than by force, they having displayed on occasions outstanding cunning. Moses drew attention to this (Deut. 33,v.22):- "Dan is a lion's whelp; he shall leap from Balhan."

One learned Rabbi, the Rev: David Jodd, said that Dan's Standard was a lion's whelp and he firmly believes that the Ethiopians are the descendants of Dan, having noticed in Africa, among the-emblems of the tribes, on breastplates, instruments of music and banners, a lion's whelp but the balance of testimony is

in favour of the eagle as this tribe were the ringleaders of Idolatry the first who apostatised from God, soon after the death of Joshua. The Grand Chapter of New South Wales has adopted for the tribal, Ensign of Dan a device of a serpent biting the heels of a horse, this being in strict conformity with Jacob's prophecy (Gen. Ch.49, V1s,16-17):-"Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel, Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path that biteth the horses heels, so that their riders shall fall backward. Surely then we must consider that when Jacob referred to Dan as a judge and then as a serpent the inference we should draw is that if he were forced, as he has been and still is in some benighted lands, to employ the cunning and wisdom of the serpent he would be quite equal to the task. The territory of Dan was on the shores of the Great Sea and Joppa was contained in that area.

The Ensign of Asher was in charge of Prince, Pagiel, its colour was purple and its device either a flourishing tree, a cup or two, goblets. They were a fruitful and prolific tribe and lived in ea fertile area in the North of the Holy Land which included Mount Carmel and the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon. "And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore Jacob a second son and Leah said: "Happy am I for the daughters shall call me blessed", and she called his name Asher (Gen Ch.30,v 's .12-13). Jacob (Gen.Ch.49, v.20) said "Asher shall have rich food as daily fare and shall provide dishes fit for a king." This tribe provided 41,500 fighting; men:

The Ensign of Napthali was in charge of Prince Ahira, its colour was blue and its device a hind for Jacob said (Gen.C11.49, v .21):- "Napthali is a hind let loose; he giveth goodly words.". They were a spirited and free people and had prodigious increase for it has been reported that, from the four sons of Napthali whom he took down into Egypt, proceeded upwards of 50,000 descendants".

The portion of land assigned to this tribe was in Upper Galilee; between the borders of the lands of Asher and Manasseh. These were a people who, like the tribe of Zebulun, jeopardised their lives in the high places of the battlefield, the fighting men of this tribe numbering some 53,400 and it is interesting to note that the mother of Hiram Abiff was a daughter of the tribe of Napthali.

In the course of this paper, the numbers of men have been noted but in Numbers Ch. 1', v.1, we read that the Lord commanded Moses to number the community of Israel by recording all males twenty years of age and upwards who were fit for military service. The total of the of the twelve tribes was 603,150 and added to this figure were the Priests and Levites and all those not liable to military service, together with their flocks and herds, and we thus have some idea of the vast concourse which constituted the nation at that time.

Gen. Ch.49,v .33 records;`- "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons he gathered up his feet into the bed and yielded up the ghost and was gathered to his ,people."

This concludes the explanations of the meaning of the devices on the Banners and Ensigns of the twelve tribes as displayed in our Royal Arch Chapters and it is a remarkable fact that the devices were not only most appropriate in their

signification of the various characteristics of Jacob's sons but that their descendants have retained these characteristics throughout their long history, down to the present time, It is therefore obvious that Jacob's prophecies were inspired by the Most High, even He who alone is able to see into the future.

In speaking of the great Banner of Dan it was mentioned that its device - an eagle is a component part of the Cherubim and this statement applies equally to the four Banners, each of which forms a component part of the same Cherubim, as will be seen by reference to the Volume of the of the Sacred Law at the place quoted in this paper, where the four beasts or Cherubim are mentioned. They are recorded in several places in Biblical history but reference to the Revelation will suffice for our present purpose.

In Rev. Ch. 15,v.7, we read that they held the vials filled with the wrath of God and, in Rev. Ch. 5,v.6, reference is to the Lamb, the Lion of Judah in the midst of the four beasts, so we compare the function of the Cherubim with the duties of the four divisions of Israel who under the four Banners guarded that most valuable possession of their nation, the Tabernacle containing the Ark of the Covenant.

Before concluding this paper it should be pointed out that Moses also pronounced blessings upon the people of Israel before his death and these are to be found, in the 33rd. Chapter of the book of Deuteronomy and the modern translation of the final four verses is interesting and perhaps applicable even to this present day:- "There is none like the God of Jeshuran who rides the heavens to your help, riding the clouds in his glory, who humbled the gods of old and subdued the ancient powers, who drove at the enemy before you and gave the word to destroy. Israel lives in security, the tribes of Jacob by themselves, in a land of corn and wine where the skies drip with dew. Happy are you, people of Israel, peerless, set free. The Lord is the shield that guards you; the blessed one is your glorious sword. Your enemies come cringing to you and you shall trample their bodies under foot."

The position of the four Banners around the Tabernacle are also emblematical of the positions of the Archangels around the Throne of the Most High, as indicated in the Midrash, an ancient Jewish book, the function of which is described as the finding of new meanings in addition to the literal ones in the Scriptures. The Talmudic tradition has formulated certain rules to deduce such hidden and new meanings and, in certain cases the Midrash established the Law; in others it has found scriptural support to the Laws already accepted. The book covered a period of 1,000 years up to the tenth century A.D.

The angel who presides in the East is named Gabriel, which means
"Might, Sovereignty and Power!"

In the South, Michael presides and the name means: "Who is like unto God".

In the West, Raphael, meaning: "God, the Eternal Physician", holds authority.

In the North, Uriel presides, which name means: "God is my light."

There is yet another, whom we may term the travelling Archangel and whom we should mention here as he is the most important of all, so far as the human race is concerned, namely Azrael, which name means: "The help of God" - the tender, pitying and loving angel of Death - whose function is to lead weary souls into the blessed realms of Peace - the City of Rest - with silent but loving hand - not an enemy to humanity as is often thought but a loving friend who is the pilot of Jehovah to the haven of infinite mercy, peace and love. That is why he is called "The-help of God."

The Companions may be reminded that we Masons also have our Ensigns which are indicated in the following expressive verse:- Bible, Compass and Square.

As our Ensigns we wear:

The bright symbols of Wisdom profound,

And while these are Our guide,

Every symbol beside

Ad a foil to our Art will be found.'

May every Companion steer his course through, life by these three Great Lights of Masonry.