

THE COMPASS

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One of the disadvantages of the Masonic Ritual is that some of the words used are not well known by the brethren giving the Work. It seems that when the word is totally unknown a brother will go to great lengths to ensure that he obtains the correct pronunciation and meaning but with other words simple mistakes are made.

One of these which comes to mind is using the singular "compass" in place of the plural "compasses". The Masonic use is "compasses" as the full name of the instrument is a "pair of compasses" – the same as a "pair of trousers" – both have two legs.

I recently came across a book entitled "Compass & Steering Instructions" from the H.M.S. "Northampton". Upon reading it, (and being in a humorous state of mind), I started applying Moral lessons to the **Compass**.

The Compass is a round card to which are fixed magnets, these keep the north point of the card always pointing to the North. The card turns on a pivot in the centre. It is used to show the direction in which the ship is going, called the Course. This Compass is covered with a Glass to ensure that the instrument is not disturbed by outside matter.

There are 32 Points of the Compass of which the four principal ones are called Cardinal Points and are North, South, East and West. All other Compass Points take their names from the Cardinal Points.

However, as we are not sea-going sailors we apply this instrument to our morals. In this sense, as the placement of the magnets stabilize the round card and ensure a true course based on the North Pole, so we must affix our morals to the roundness of life to ensure that our course is kept in a true direction always pointing towards the ultimate goal.

The glass reminds us to keep outside distractions from making us deviate from our direction but to let the world at large look in and see the course which we are steering.

As the four Cardinal Points give their names to all other points of the Compass, so they should remind us of the four Cardinal Virtues, namely, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice and direct us to adhere to them which will provide overall direction to our life.

The final paragraph of this booklet sounds as if it could have been written for a Lodge.

"All messages received through a Voice Tube must be repeated word for word through the Tube before being delivered to the authority for which they are intended. This insures accuracy."

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