

LANDMARKS IN THE HISTORY  
OF THE  
LEGENDS  
OF  
FREEMASONRY

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*A Lecture read at the West Kent Lodge on  
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## Landmarks in the History of the Legends of Freemasonry

IT is my intention to put before you briefly the prominent landmarks that point out the method by which our Masonic Legendary History was developed. Although I can only treat the subject very superficially, I hope that I shall be able to arouse such a curiosity in some of the younger members of the lodge as to incite them to study the subject for themselves.

The great importance attached to the Legendary History arises from the following causes :

Firstly. It is the only existing authority we have for the traditions and allegories which are found in the Craft Ritual.

Secondly. That a study of it shews how those traditions and legends, commencing on a simple and modest scale, gradually became extended and in some instances finally distorted.

Thirdly. Because the MSS. of the Legendary History are the real sources for acquiring any knowledge of Freemasonry up to the end of the sixteenth century. Other sources are so fragmentary that they only lend themselves to inductive or speculative theories.

Although it may be thought that they have no connection with Freemasonry, it will be necessary for us to give a glance at the early mediæval Gilds of England, most of which have either ceased to exist or are represented by the various City Companies and Corporations.

The doctrines of Free Trade are still in their infancy,

but the doctrines of tribal and corporate combination for mutual support in time of aggression and for defence from outside competition in time of peace have been deeply ingrafted into humanity since very early times.

So far back as the ninth century we find in England traces of Merchant-Gilds, *i.e.*, combinations of the merchants in a town formed, perhaps, primarily against the extortion and tyranny of nobles, but subsequently directed against the competition of, and imports from, merchants in neighbouring towns, each Gild levying fees on merchants coming from outside who wished to trade in the Gild-town, and charging dues on imported products not raised by their own members.

In course of time the benefits accruing from these Merchant-Gilds were coveted by the craftsmen of the various cities, who in their turn combined together into Craft-Gilds for their benefit and defence. Originally they were small law-abiding bodies, but eventually they became so powerful that they were able to extract charters of corporation from various Kings of England, who in their turn retaliated by passing various enactments confining the operations of the Gilds. The Trade Unions of the present day stand in a somewhat similar position *longo intervallo* as did the mediæval Craft-Gilds.

While many of these Craft-Gilds were greatly under the influence of the Church, and in some cases affiliated to her, there existed side by side with them various kinds of Religious Gilds entirely controlled by the Church, some of which were wholly given up to devotional exercises and religious services, others only partially. Amongst the latter mentioned by Brentano,\* are the

\* *English Gilds*, by Brentano and others. E. E. T. S. 1870. See also Gross, *the Gild Merchant*, and Bateson's *Cambridge Gild Records*.

Corpus Christi Gild at York, the Gild of the Lord's Prayer at York (for the performance of Mystery Plays), the Gild at Stamford for the performance of secular plays, and the Gild for building the Chapel of S. Gertrude.

There is not sufficient evidence at present to enable one to determine the particular class\* of Gild with which our first landmark was connected, but in any case it was one that was much indebted to the Church for its moral and religious character.

Our first landmark is the Regius MS. (Reg. 17 A 1) preserved in the British Museum, a facsimile of which I exhibit. It is the earliest MS. record we have of any code of regulations in connection with masonry, and there is no doubt that this code is an early form of those obligations which all Freemasons and Installed Masters take at the present time. Although there is not much doubt that the volume was consulted by the early eighteenth century masonic authorities, it lay unrecognized from the time it entered into the British Museum until 1839 (*i.e.*, about eighty years) when Halliwell-Phillips rediscovered the precious little volume, and read a paper on it at the Society of Antiquaries.

The contents of the MS. may be briefly described as consisting of:—

Firstly. An account of the great importance and antiquity of Masonry.

Secondly. Various precepts and rules of conduct to be observed of all fellows of the craft † (such as might

\* Our present knowledge does not even permit us to classify the Gilds themselves definitely.

† In a similar manner a youth on being entered as an apprentice at the London Guild-hall is presented with a volume of precepts. At the time when the Regius MS. was written these were probably read or recited to the candidate.

well have been recited or read to a youth on being apprenticed).

The first division is the one that specially interests us this evening, as it contains the earliest form of the Legendary History which afterwards assumed such large proportions and importance. But in the present instance it is conspicuous by its simplicity and modesty.

It states that :—

Good masonry is derived from good geometry which was found out by Euclid.

Line 57.

Yn egypte he taw<sup>3</sup>hte hyt ful wyde  
 Yn dyuers londe on euery syde  
 Mony erys aft<sup>ur</sup>warde y und<sup>ur</sup>stonde  
 3er þ<sup>t</sup> þe craft com ynto þys londe  
 þys craft com yn to englund as y 3ow say  
 Yn tyme of good kyng<sup>e</sup> adelston<sup>us</sup> day  
 He made þo boþe halle and eke bowre  
 And hye templus of gret honowre  
 To sportyn hym yn boþe day and ny<sup>3</sup>th  
 An to worschepe hys god w<sup>t</sup> alle hys my<sup>3</sup>th.

It then states that King Athelstan, in order to amend various faults in the craft, called together an assembly of divers Lords, Dukes, Earls, Barons, Knights, Squires, and many more, which ordained articles and points for the governance of the craft; and that the assembly be called every year or every three years as found necessary, to amend faults.

It will thus be seen that the masonic legend of the earliest MS. is extremely simple, and may be divided into four heads :—

That Masonry was derived from Geometry ;

That Geometry was invented by Euclid in Egypt ;

That it was introduced into England ;

That King Athelstan fostered the craft, *called an assembly*, and ordained that it should meet at intervals.

Although it does not quite come within the limits of my subject this evening, I think it would be well to spare a few minutes in the consideration of the second portion of the manuscript, which contains the precepts and rules of conduct which are the foundation of those rules which still guide Freemasons throughout the universe.

The points to be observed by the apprentice are briefly as follows :—

1. ' He most loue wel god and holy churche algate  
And hys maystur also þ<sup>t</sup> he ys wythe ' (also his fellows).
  2. ' Trwly to labrun on hys dede  
Wel deserue to haue hys mede.'
  3. ' Hys maystur conwsel he kepe and close . . . . .  
þe preuetyse of þe chambur telle he no mon  
Ny yn þe logge, what seuer þey done  
Whatseuer þou heryst or syste hem do  
Telle hyt no mon, wher seuer þou go'
  4. ' þat no mon to hys craft be false.'
  5. ' þat whenne þe mason taketh hys pay . . . . .  
Ful mekely y take.'
1. He must love well God and holy church in all ways and his master also that he is with (also his fellows).
  2. Truly to labour on his deed (work) [so as] to well deserve his reward.
  3. His master's counsel to keep close, to tell no man the secrets of the chamber, nor whatsoever they do in the lodge, nor whatsoever thou hearest or seest them do, tell it no man wheresoever thou go. (In this as in the other modernisations I have kept as near to the original as possible. E. H. D.)
  4. That no man to his craft be false.
  5. That when the mason taketh his pay, full meekly it take.

6. 'But loueday 3et schul þey make none  
 Tyl þat þe werke day be clene a gone  
 Apon þe holy day 3e mowe wel take  
 Leyser y now3gh loueday to make.'
7. 'þou schal not by þy maystres wyf ly  
 Ny by þy felows yn no maner wyse  
 Lest þe craft wolde þe despuse  
 Ny by þy felows concubyne  
 No more þou woldest he dede by þyne.'
8. 'Undur þy maystur þou be trwe  
 For þat poynt þou schalt neuer arewe  
 A trwe medyatur þou most nede be  
 To þy maystur and þy felows fre'
9. 'þat he be stwarde of oure halle . . . . .  
 Weke aftur weke w<sup>t</sup> oute dowte . . . . .  
 3et good acowntes he most make  
 Of suche godes as he hath y take  
 Of þy felows goodes þ<sup>t</sup> þou hast spende  
 Wher and how and to what ende  
 Suche acowntes þou most come to  
 Whenne þy felows wollen þ<sup>t</sup> þou do.'
6. But loveday (*i.e.* holiday) yet shall they make none until the work day be clean gone. Upon the holy-day ye may take leisure enough to make loveday.
7. The word "felows" in line 2 is doubtless intended to be read in the possessive case.
8. Under thy master be thou true, for of that point thou shalt never repent. A true mediator thou must need be between thy master and thy fellows free.
9. That he be steward of our hall week after week without a doubt. He must keep good accounts of such goods as he hath taken, of what thou hast spent of thy fellows' goods, shewing where how and to what end [they have been used]. Such accounts thou must produce when thy fellows will it.

10. ' For and þe mason lyue a mysse  
 And yn hys werk be false y wysse . . . .  
 To þe nexte semble 3e schul hym calle,  
 To apere byfore hys felows alle.'
11. ' þat sy3th hys felow hewen on a ston  
 And ys yn poynt to spylle þat ston  
 . . . teche hym esely hyt to amende  
 Wyth fayre wordes þ<sup>t</sup> god þe hath lende '
12. ' þe twelþe poynt ys of gret ryolte  
 þer as þe semble y holde schal be  
 þer schul be maystrys and felows also  
 And oþur grete lordes mony mo  
 þer schal be þe scheref of þat contre  
 And also þe meyr of þat syte  
 Kny3tes and sqwyers þ[er sch]ul be  
 And oþur aldermen as 3e s[ch]ul se,  
 Suche ordynance as þey maken þere  
 þey schul maynte hyt hol y fere.'
13. ' He schal swere neu<sup>er</sup> to be no þef  
 Ny soker hym yn hys fals craft '

10. For if the (*i.e.*, a) mason live amiss and in his work be false you shall certainly call him to the next assembly to appear before all his fellows.
11. [He] that seeth his fellow hew on a stone and is on the point to spoil that stone, teach him quietly how to amend [his fault] with [such] fair words as God hath lent thee.
12. The twelfth point is of great royalty (*i.e.*, importance). At the assembly which shall be held there shall be masters and fellows also: and many more other great lords. There shall be the sheriff of that country (or district) and also the mayor of that city, Knights and Squires there shall be, and other aldermen as ye shall see. Such ordinances as they make there, they (ye) shall maintain it in every way.
13. He shall swear never to be a thief nor succour him (*i.e.*, one that is) in his false work.

14. 'He most be stedefast and trwe also  
 To alle þys ordynance wherseuer he go . . . .  
 And all' þese poyntes hyr before  
 To hem þou most nede be y swore.'
15. 'For þylke þ<sup>t</sup> ben unbuxom y wysse  
 Aþeynus þe ordynance . . . of þese artyculus . . . . .  
 And for here gultes no mendys wol make  
 þenne most þey nede þe craft for sake.'
14. He must be steadfast and also true to all the ordinances where-  
 soever he go. To all the before [cited] points thou must be sworn.
15. For such as be certainly faithless to the ordinance of these articles,  
 and for their guilt will make no amends, then must they need the  
 craft forsake.

The articles for the master mason are as follows :—

I. 'þe furste artycul of þys gemetry  
 þe mayst<sup>ur</sup> mason moste be ful securly  
 Boþe stedefast trusty and trwe  
 Hyt schal hym neuer þenne arewe  
 And pay þy felows aft<sup>ur</sup> þe coste  
 As vytaylys goth þenne, wel þ<sup>u</sup> woste  
 And pay hem trwly apon þy fay  
 What þ<sup>t</sup> þey deseruen may.'

II. 'þat every mayst<sup>ur</sup> þat ys a mason  
 Most ben at þe generale congregacyon . . .  
 But he haue a resenabul skwsacyon.'

1. The first article of this geometry: The master must be full securely both steadfast trusty and true, he shall then never have cause to be sorry. Pay thy fellows according as the cost of victuals goeth then—well thou knowest. Pay them truly upon thy faith what they may deserve.
2. That every master that is a mason must be at the general congregation unless he have a reasonable excuse.

- III. 'þat þe maystur take to no prentysse  
But he haue good seuerans to dwelle  
Seuen 3er w<sup>t</sup> hym as y 3ow telle  
Hys craft to lurne . . .'
- IV. 'þat þe maystur hym wel be se  
þat he no bonde mon prentys make '
- V. 'þe maystur schal not for no vantage  
Make no prentes þat ys outrage . . . .  
To þe craft hyt were gret schame  
To make an halt mon and a lame . . .'
- VI. 'þat þe maystur do þe lord no *pergedysse*  
To take of þe lord for hyse prentyse  
Also muche as hys felows don . . . . .'
- VII. 'þat no maystur for *favour* ny drede  
Schal no þef nowþur cloþe ny fede '
- VIII. '3ef þ<sup>t</sup> he haue any mon of crafte  
And be not also *perfyte* as he auzte  
He may hym change sone a non  
And take for hym a *perfyte* mon.'
- IX. 'þat no werke he undur take  
But he conne boþe hyt ende and make '

3. That the master take no apprentice unless he have good assurance that he (the apprentice) will dwell with him seven years to learn his craft, as I you tell.
4. That the master be careful not to make a bondman an apprentice.
5. That for no consideration shall a master make a deformed person an apprentice. It were a great shame to the craft to make a halt or lame man [a member]. (This is the reason for certain 'preparations' and 'taking notice' that are in use at the present day.)
6. That the master do not prejudice his lord by taking as much hire for the apprentice as for his fellows (who be full perfect.)
7. That neither for favour or fear shall a master clothe or feed a thief.
8. If that he have any workman who is not as perfect as he ought [to be] he may change him soon, at once, and take a perfecter man.
9. That he undertake no work but [that] he can finish and do it.

- X. 'þer schal no mayst<sup>ur</sup> supplante oþer  
But be toged<sup>ur</sup> as systur and broþer.'
- XI. 'þat no mason schulde worche be nyȝth  
But ȝef hyt be yn practesyng of wytte'
- XII. 'To ȝevery mason wher seuer he be  
He schal not hys felows werk deprauē.'
- XIII. ' . . . ȝef þt þe mayst<sup>ur</sup> a prentes haue  
Enterlyche þenne þat he hym teche . . . .  
þat he þe craft abelyche may conne'
- XIV. 'He schal no prentes to hym take  
But dyuers curys he haue to make  
þat he may w<sup>t</sup>ynne hys terme  
O f hym dyuers poyntes may lurne'
- XV. ' . . . . þat for no mon  
No fals mantenans he take hym apon  
Ny maynteine hys felows yn here synne . . .  
Ny no fals sware sofre hem to make.'

10. That he shall supplant no other master, but be together as sister and brother.
11. That no mason shall work by night, unless it be in perfecting his knowledge.
12. That every mason wherever he be shall not depreciate his fellows work.
13. That if the master have an apprentice, that he teach him entirely, that he may ably know the craft.
14. That he shall take no apprentice without taking care that within his term the apprentice learn divers points from him.
15. That he shall take upon himself no false maintenance for any man, nor maintain his fellows in their sin nor suffer them to swear falsely.

I must also draw your attention to the end of the MS. which clearly shews the intimate connection that existed between the Gild and the Church. It points out very forcibly that we owe the great moral tone that pervades

the Masonic charges to the interest taken by the early Churchmen in the morals of their builders. These good priests of the fourteenth century little thought that in caring for the morals of their workmen they were originating a code of morals that in the future would be adopted throughout the entire world.

The latter portion of the MS. is entitled

Ars quatuor coronatorum.

Pray we now to god al myȝht  
 And to hys swete mod~~ur~~ mary bryȝht  
 þat we mowe kepe þese artyculus here  
 And þese poyntes wel al y fere  
 As dede þese holy martyres fowre  
 þat yn þys craft were of gret honoure

It then goes on to give an account of the Quatuor Coronati, the patron saints of masons and builders, and afterwards gives a very comprehensive homily on the way to live and way to behave in church, etc. Four more lines I must quote of a prayer in this homily, as the last words have become thoroughly ingrafted into Freemasonry.

And as þ<sup>u</sup> were of a mayde y bore  
 Sofre me neu~~er~~ to be y lore  
 But when y schal henn~~us~~ wende  
 Grante me þe blysse w<sup>t</sup> oute ende  
 Amen amen. so mot hyt be.

Our second landmark is the Cooke MS. which is also in the British Museum (Add. MSS. 23,198.) It was written about 1430, although there is little doubt that it is a copy of a manuscript of a slightly earlier date, and is in prose. Like the Regius MS. it consists of two portions, I, legendary, II, Precepts for the Master and Apprentice.

The second portion is, however, not so complete as in the earlier Regius MS.

The part devoted to the legendary history is, however, much longer and more detailed than the similar part in the Regius MS. The author admits that he compiled it from the Bible, Josephus and Higden's Polichronicon, a work written early in the fourteenth century. In so doing he unwittingly laid the foundation of that wonderful pedigree of freemasonry which reached its height of absurdity at the hands of Anderson.

The pedigree starts by giving the name of Cain's master mason and governor of the works when he built the City of Enoch, *viz.*, Jabal! and continues through Tubal Cain, who was the brother of Jabal, Noah, Ham and Numrod. Then it goes on to state how Abraham,\* when he made a journey to Egypt to escape a famine taught Euclid† geometry. Euclid taught the Egyptians, who in turn taught the children of Israel when they were in captivity. Thence the descent to Solomon's temple which may perhaps have been the objective of the earlier part of the pedigree, is easily traced.

From Jerusalem, we are told the science was brought into France and into many other regions.

The legend then proceeds to state that Charlemagne, while King of France, fostered the Masons and gave them charges. And then how S. Adhabelle came to England, converted S. Alban (who died 350 years before Charles was born), and gave the masons charges. The next character introduced is Athelstan who, as in the Regius MS., calls an assembly with the idea of framing regulations for the use of masons.

This, brethren, is the real basis on which the legendary

\* Lived about 2,200 B.C.

† Lived about 400 B.C.

Masonic history is founded, for it entirely eclipses the modest story of the Regius MS.

From 1430, the date of the Cooke MS., to 1580 (the date of Grand Lodge MS. No. 1) we have no MSS. shewing the steps of transition that took place in the Legendary History, but from 1580 until 1717 we have more than sixty MSS. all more or less founded on the Cooke MS., but very few of which are identical word for word. Owing to the mistakes of copyists, the alterations of some editors and the additions of many other editors, the legend during the next 130 years, *i.e.*, from 1580-1717, becomes more and more impossible and less reliable than the excusably pretentious legend of the Cooke MS. which was admittedly compiled from cognate sources.

The next landmark I wish to bring to your notice is Plot's Natural History of Staffordshire, 1686, which I exhibit because it contains not only the first *printed* account of the Masonic Legend, but it is the first time that any mention of Freemasonry appears in *print*. So far as the legend is concerned it teaches us nothing at all, except the fact that Plot had before him a MS. that has since been lost, inasmuch as he mentions points that do not appear in any one MS. we can now trace, although they exist separately in several. He was severely critical of the false history contained in these legends, and the fact that he was biassed against Freemasons renders the evidence he gives in their favour the more reliable.

The extract is as follows :—

‘To these add the *Customs* relating to the *County*, whereof they have one, of admitting Men into the *Society* of *Free-masons*, that in the *moorelands* of this *County* seems to be of greater request, than any where else, though

I find the *Custom* spread more or less all over the *Nation*; for here I found persons of the most eminent quality, that did not disdain to be of this *Fellowship*. Nor indeed need they, were it of that *Antiquity* and *honor*, that is pretended in a large *parchment volum* they have amongst them, containing the *History* and *Rules* of the craft of *masonry*. Which is there deduced not only from *sacred writ*, but *profane story*, particularly that it was brought into *England* by *St. Amphibal*, and first communicated to *St. Alban*, who set down the *Charges* of *masonry*, and was made paymaster and Governor of the *Kings* works, and gave them *charges* and *manners* as *St. Amphibal* had taught him. Which were after confirmed by King *Athelstan*, whose youngest son *Edwyn* loved well *masonry*, took upon him the *charges* and learned the *manners*, and obtained for them of his Father a *free-Charter*. Whereupon he caused them to assemble at *York*, and to bring all the old *Books* of their *craft*, and out of them ordained such *charges* and *manners*, as they then thought fit: which *charges* in the said *Schrole* or *Parchment volum*, are in part declared: and thus was the *craft* of *masonry* grounded and confirmed in *England*. It is also there declared that these *charges* and *manners* were after perused and approved by King *Hen. 6.* and his *council*, both as to *Masters* and *Fellows* of this right *Worshipfull craft*.

Into which *Society* when any are admitted, they call a *meeting* (or *Lodg* as they term it in some places) which must consist at least of 5 or 6 of the *Ancients* of the *Order*, whom the *candidats* present with *gloves*, and so likewise to their *wives*, and entertain with a *collation* according to the *Custom* of the place: This ended, they proceed to the *admission* of them, which chiefly consists in the communication of certain *secret signes*, whereby they are known to one another all over the *Nation*, by which

means they have maintenance whither ever they travel: for if any man appear though altogether unknown that can shew any of these *signes* to a *Fellow* of the *Society*, whom they otherwise call an *accepted mason*, he is obliged presently to come to him, from what company or place soever he be in, nay tho' from the top of a *Steeple*, (what hazard or inconvenience soever he run) to know his pleasure, and assist him; *viz.* if he want *work* he is bound to find him some; or if he cannot doe that, to give him *mony*, or otherwise support him till *work* can be had; which is one of their *Articles*; and it is another, that they advise the *Masters* they work for, according to the best of their *skill*, acquainting them with the goodness or badness of their *materials*; and if they be any way out in the *contrivance* of their *buildings* modestly to rectify them in it; that *masonry* be not dishonored: and many such like that are commonly known: but some others they have (to which they are *sworn* after their fashion) that none know but themselves, which I have reason to suspect are much worse than these, perhaps as bad as this *History* of the *craft* it self; than which there is nothing I ever met with, more false or incoherent.

For not to mention that St. *Amphibalus* by judicious persons, is thought rather to be the *cloak*, than master of St. *Alban*; or how unlikely it is that St. *Alban* himself in such a barbarous Age, and in times of persecution, should be *supervisor* of any *works*; it is plain that King *Athelstan* was never married, or ever had so much as any natural issue; (unless we give way to the fabulous *History* of *Guy* Earl of *Warwick*, whose eldest son *Reynburn* is said indeed to have been married to *Leoneat* the supposed daughter of *Athelstan*, which will not serve the turn neither) much less ever had he a lawful son *Edwyn*, of whom I find not the least umbrage in *History*. He had indeed a *Brother*

of that name, of whom he was so jealous though very *young* when he came to the crown, that he sent him to *Sea* in a *pinnace* without *tackle* or *oar*, only in company with a *page*, that his death might be imputed to the *waves* and not *him*; whence the young *Prince* (not able to master his passions) cast himself headlong into the *Sea* and there dyed. Who how unlikely to learn their *manners*; to get them a *Charter*; or call them together at *York*; let the *Reader* judg.

Yet more improbable is it still, that *Hen.* the 6. and his *Council*, should ever peruse or approve their *charges* and *manners*, and so confirm these right Worshipfull *Masters* and *Fellows* as they are call'd in the *Scrole*: for in the third of his reigne (when he could not be 4 years old) I find an *act* of *Parliament* quite abolishing this *Society*. It being therein ordained, that no *Congregations* and *Confederacies* should be made by *mafons*, in their general *Chapters* and *Assemblies*, whereby the good course and effect of the *Statutes* of *Labourers*, were violated and broken in subversion of *Law*: and that those who caused such *Chapters* or *Congregations* to be holden, should be adjudged *Felons*; and those *mafons* that came to them should be punish't by *imprisonment*, and make *fine* and *ransom* at the *Kings* will. So very much out was the *Compiler* of this *History* of the *craft* of *masonry*, and so little skill had he in our *Chronicles* and *Laws*. Which *Statute* though repealed by a subsequent *act* in the 5 of *Eliz.* whereby *Servants* and *Labourers* are compellable to serve, and their *wages* limited; and all *masters* made punishable for giving more wages than what is taxed by the *Justices*, and the *servants* if they take it &c., Yet this *act* too being but little observed, 'tis still to be feared these *Chapters* of *Free-mafons* do as much mischief as before, which if one may estimate by the penalty, was anciently

fo great, that perhaps it might be usefull to examin them now.'

The next landmark in the history of the Masonic legend is one of the great witnesses we have of the darkness in which Antiquaries in general and Freemasons in particular were steeped in the first half of the eighteenth century. It is the first edition of the Book of Constitutions, published in 1723.

It would take up too much of your time on the present occasion to trace the foundation of Grand Lodge. Suffice it to say that speculative freemasonry made such strides during the second half of the seventeenth century that in 1717 a few lodges met together and formed a Grand Lodge which was designed to be the governing body of Freemasonry within certain specified bounds of London.\*

In the minutes of Grand Lodge we find that :—

“ At Grand Lodge Sept. 29. 1721 His Grace's † worship and the Lodge finding fault with all the copies of the Old Gothic Constitutions ordered Brother James Anderson A.M. to digest the same in a new and better method.” (16 Lodges represented).

Eighteen months afterwards Bro. Anderson's MS. was approved and ordered to be printed, and it was printed and published in the ensuing year. I have placed on the table a copy of this book, which is not often found perfect.

The proper consideration of the Book of Constitutions would demand a whole evening, but in accordance with the plan I suggested at the beginning of this paper I will

\* And happily it is still the prerogative and birthright of all Metropolitan brethren to be responsible directly to Grand Lodge alone and not to any intermediary Provincial or District G. Lodges.

† Duke of Montague was G.M.

lightly skim through it, and briefly refer to the second edition of 1738.

It begins with the enunciation that "Adam our first parent, created after the image of God, the G. A. of the U., must have had the Liberal Sciences, particularly Geometry written on his Heart; for ever since the fall we find the principles of it in the Hearts of his offspring. . . ."

"No doubt Adam taught his sons Geometry and the use of it in the several Arts and Crafts convenient at least for those early times.

"Nor can we suppose that Seth was less instructed who being the Prince of the other half of Mankind, and also the prime cultivator of Astronomy, would take equal care to teach Geometry and Masonry to his offspring. . . ."

After some pages of similar pronouncements we come to the following passage:—

"The Israelites at their leaving Egypt were a whole Kingdom of Masons, well instructed under the Conduct of their Grand Master Moses, who often marshalled them into a regular and general Lodge while in the wilderness, and gave them wise charges, Order etc. had they been well observed!"

Soon follows Solomon and the building of the Temple, and in connection with it we have absolutely the first mention of Hiram Abiff, and then only in a subsidiary manner.

As you are all well aware, the legend of the widow's son is taken from 1 Kings vii.-13 *et. seq.* and 2 Chron. ii.-13 and 14 and 2 Chron. iv.-16, but in not one instance does the cognomen Abiff appear in our authorised version. Anderson, probably copying Coverdale's translation of the Bible, averred that the current translation was

incorrect, and that the word Abbi in the Hebrew is a name and should not have been translated father. All Hebrew scholars repudiate this correction, which nevertheless is perpetuated to the present day in our ritual. You will find the reference on p. 11 of the "Constitutions"; but even there Anderson did not incorporate the word Abiff in the text, but only in a foot-note.

After the account of Solomon's Temple follow in the sequence of the Bible Narrative, Grand Master Mason Nebuchadnezzar and General Master Mason Zerubabel.

From Jerusalem the Art was taken to Greece and thence spread over the world, and from this point onwards the legend follows on somewhat the same lines as the old MS. charges, freely adorned, however, with Anderson's interpolations.

The second edition edited by Anderson and issued in 1738 was much enlarged and afforded a further opportunity for the editor's embellishments. In the fifteen years that had elapsed since the issue of the first edition, Anderson discovered not only the names of a number of Grand Masters living in classical times, but of other Grand Officers and even Provincial Grand Officers. But although we cannot always give credence to Bro. Anderson's history the book is valuable as affording us the only record of Grand Lodge proceedings from 1720-1738, as well as other *contemporary* information.

Such brethren is the manner in which the Masonic legend, familiar to all Master Masons, became developed. From a modest and straightforward commencement in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, in which the author shewed his *bonâ fides* by attempting to give the authorities for his statements, it gradually became distorted by some copyists, altered by others to suit the expediencies of the moment, and amplified by many, not excepting Dr.

Anderson, who, not to be behind-hand in leaving his impress on the legend, sprinkled the contents of his ponderous and credulous brain into every page, aye, even into every sentence of his work. It, however, has not been printed with the imprimatur of Grand Lodge since 1784.

As I said in my opening remarks, I hope that this very brief sketch will induce some of the younger brethren to take a more intelligent interest in the history of Freemasonry. It is a subject that unfortunately has not hitherto been popular with masons, owing to the difficulties in finding a competent guide. That excuse, however, no longer exists, as in Bro. Gould's Concise History of Freemasonry there is to be found a lucid and unprejudiced view of the subject. It behoves every Freemason to be able to give the Reason of his Faith as well as to practise it: and unfortunately this cannot be learnt in the lodge room, but requires a small amount of study and reading. It, however, forms such an extremely interesting chapter of mediæval tradition, that when the threshold is once passed, the enchantment that surrounds it will be found to increase the more one studies it.

What I have put before you this evening may perhaps by some of you be thought derogatory of our ancient Tenets. Believe me, W. M. and B., that was not my intent, nor would I for a moment subscribe to such a sentiment; but what I do hope to stir up in your minds is a more intelligent, intellectual interest in our History. It must never be forgotten that Allegory forms an essential portion of our ceremonies, and that we are expressly taught that Freemasonry is a peculiar system of Morality veiled in Allegory and illustrated by symbols. No attempt is made in our ritual to distinguish between Allegory, Tradition, and History, and very few Freemasons take the trouble to distinguish between them.

These two facts have undoubtedly been the cause of many good people treating our ancient society with contumely.

But, Brethren, whatever blemishes there may be in the historical portion of the Masonic Legend, we cannot help being struck with the fact that the earliest MS. we have connected with masonry, shews that even in the middle ages, which many unthinking people have called the Dark Ages, masonry strove to inculcate among its members purity of life, brotherly sympathy and support, honest dealing both with the world as well as with brethren, and also a belief in the G.A. Can we then be surprised that a system founded on such a moral basis, should not only have survived the fate of other Gilds and associations, but have spread itself unto the innermost portions of the world. Brethren, so long as those great tenets and principles are carried out, so long as the brethren act up to their professions and obligations and carry the Faith and Charity of Freemasonry into their daily life, and so long as they are jealous of the honour of the craft and exercise care that good men, and good men *alone*, are admitted to its ranks, we can hopefully look forward to Freemasonry extending into the far distant ages.

