

54-1830

A

SHORT VIEW

OF THE

HISTORY

OF

FREE-MASONRY.

Dedicated to the Grand Lodge of England.



BY

WILLIAM SANDYS, F.A.S.

P. M. GRAND MASTER'S LODGE, &c. &c.

"But though this is the most likely foundation of this collection of maxims and customs, yet the maxims and customs so collected, are of higher antiquity than memory or history can reach; nothing being more difficult than to ascertain the precise beginning and first spring of an ancient and long-established custom."

BLACKSTONE.

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MEMORANDUM.—*Should the following Observations (which are intended as a mere sketch) fall into the hands of any who are not Masons, they may, perhaps, complain of obscurity in some parts, and apparent want of connection. The reason will be obvious to every intelligent Mason, who can easily supply the necessary links. The perusal of the Rev. Mr. Oliver's Lectures and History of Initiation, since the first arrangement of these pages, has enabled me considerably to curtail the particulars of Initiation and ceremonial Rites, into which I had originally entered more fully. His works contain much information and research on these subjects.*

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SHORT VIEW,

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IT is curious to observe the analogies between the ancient rites and many of the ceremonies and prejudices of the modern world, which may occasionally be traced back to the earliest ages. Frequent analogies have been said to exist between Free-Masonry and certain institutions of former times; indeed some writers have placed the origin of Masonry at the very earliest periods of society: whether they are right, or whether the following sketch of its supposed progress be

founded on probability, or whether any of the other theories on the subject be correct or not, it is not for me to decide, however partial I may be (like other theorists) to my own system.

The reader will scarcely expect that we should commence our inquiry before the Deluge, though some persons have taken upon themselves to state, that Enoch was an Arch-Mason. With equal decision, Goropius Becanus affirmed that Adam spoke High-Dutch. Noah, the chosen of God, was, no doubt, a highly-gifted man, both as to his moral and his intellectual acquirements, and in him, probably, was centred the greater part, if not all, of antediluvian science. He was, also, perfectly acquainted with the history of the creation of the world and the fall of man; for Methuselah, who died in the year of the flood, and lived 600 years with Noah, was also, for about 250 years, the cotemporary of Adam, and could give, there-

fore, the most accurate information. In the first years after the flood, the true worship of God was preserved by Noah and his family in its pristine purity, but on the increase of mankind, who for want of dwelling places must gradually have diverged from the abode of Noah, the centre of the then known world, corruptions of this worship crept in; and after the dispersion at the Tower of Babel, idolatry was spread over the face of the habitable globe; symbols of the Deity were worshipped as the Deity himself, and that splendid work of his hands the sun, (Bel, Bâl, Bôl, or Bül, as it was called,) the source of light and heat, was, through the weakness of mankind, when unassisted by divine Wisdom, looked upon and worshipped as the supreme Being. The posterity of Ham, who peopled Egypt and Chaldæa, were probably some of the earliest of the Zabii or Fire-worshippers; of whom remnants may still be found among the Guebres or Parsees in Persia and Hindoostan, &c.

The worship of the Solar Fire was the most natural error for mankind to run into ; the Sun, as the most splendid object of creation, being the allegorical representation of God : and, though, in time, it was, through the corruption of the human race, itself worshipped as the Deity, yet it is said that the Priests connected with the different religious mysteries of the ancients, were, to a certain extent, acquainted with the origin of true religion, but loaded their ceremonies with allegories and symbols, of which the meaning was known only to the initiated, in order to keep the multitude in ignorance, and thereby preserve that control and superiority over them, which they so long and so eminently maintained.

In the course of ages, even the generality of the Priests had but a faint notion of the true origin of their rites ; with the exception of some individuals of great natural genius

and penetration, they would, themselves, receive in too literal a sense, the allegorical ceremonies in the midst of which they lived, and from the practice of which they derived their splendor and their power. Although, from being themselves the conductors of that system of juggling and deceit which was necessary to blind the eyes of the uninitiated votaries, they must have been aware of the inefficacy of the idols and emblems worshipped by them, yet, with few exceptions, they probably believed in the Being of which such idols were the representatives.

From the worship of the Solar Fire, connected with a perverted tradition of true religion, apparently originated the different mysteries of the Ancients, whether Mithraic, Orphic, Eleusinian, Bacchic, Druidical, or otherwise. But after the dispersion at Babel, other ceremonies were also introduced into the different rites of Pagan idolatry, illustra-

tive of the history of the Deluge, and of the confinement of Noah with his family in the ark.

A periodical commemoration of this great event, perhaps, existed before the dispersion, but, until the commencement of idolatrous practices, it was scarcely introduced into the religious rites. A striking similarity pervades all the pagan systems, and under different governments and in far distant parts of the world, we recognize the same allegories and the same imperfect and perverted traditions of the primitive religion ; tending to prove one origin for the whole.*

The Apamean medals have been frequently cited, to prove how widely spread the traditions and recollections of the Deluge have

* The Brahmins who accompanied the Indian Army to Egypt, in its march from the Red Sea to the Nile, recognized, at Dendera, the representation of their God Vishnù, amongst the ancient sculptures of that place.—(Clarke's Travels, 8vo. vol. v., p. 85-6.)

been ; controversies have arisen (and where is the subject on which they will not arise) as to their authenticity ; but the celebrated and learned numismatologist, Mr. Eckhel of Vienna, has recognized their genuineness. (Doctr. Num. t. iii. p. 132, & seq. quoted in Burder Orient. Lit. i. 16.)—They are said to have been coined under the Roman Emperor Septimius Severus, at Apamea in Phrygia; the device on them is an ark, floating on the waters, in which a man and woman are seen ; a bird is sitting on the ark, and another flying towards it, holding a branch in its feet : close by are the same two persons standing on the dry land with their right arms held up. The name *no* is on the ark in Greek letters.

The earliest mysteries after the dispersion were probably those established in India, of which some interesting relics may yet be seen. From India they spread to Egypt, whence, they would, naturally, travel to

Greece, after the foundation of that state by an Egyptian Colony, and we find accordingly the mysteries introduced there about the year B. C. 1500, modified probably to some extent by the Phœnicians, many of whom, about this time, fled into Greece to avoid the troubles in their own country. The mysteries were, subsequently, carried to Rome, and not extinguished until the beginning of the 5th century by Theodosius the Great, though Josephus mentions the fact of the Temple of Isis at Rome being demolished, and the Priests crucified in the time of Tiberius, in consequence of a lady of rank named Paulina having been debauched by one Decius Mundus, with the connivance of the Priests, in the semblance of the God Anubis.*

The Eleusinian mysteries, established at Eleusis, about 1356 B. C. as it is said, are more known than any others, from the numerous allusions to them in different old

* Jos. Antiq. Book xviii., c. 3., s 4.

writers ; but it is not now my intention, for the reasons before stated, to give more than a very slight sketch of any of these ceremonies. Those who wish to see further on the subject will be entertained and instructed by reference to Faber's *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*, Maurice's *Indian Antiquities*, Gebelin's *Monde Primitif*, and Mr. Oliver's works before mentioned, &c.

As the various theologies of the ancients were derived from the same origin, it is to be expected that a similarity would exist in their respective ceremonies ; and so we find the case to be, modified by difference of climate and civilization. In those instances also, where we can trace them in their descent from one state to another of more recent foundation, as from Egypt to Greece, &c. we must expect to meet with many variations in the details of the derivative, from the parent system ; induced as well by difference of local advantages and consequent

habits, as by the spirit of intended improvement that pervades all newly formed institutions. But the same leading allegory would still be preserved.

The candidate, in all cases, underwent a severe trial, and engaged to lead a new life, founded on the strictest rules of virtue, and after initiation wore a particular garment, in some cases white, in others white, purple, blue, and scarlet. In a variety of the representations of the Egyptian, Hindoo, Persian, American, and other Deities, we see many of the figures invested with handsome aprons. Most of these religious ceremonies were connected with the loss, death or disappearance of some great personage, preceded, in some instances, by a combat between two contending powers, and the subsequent recovery or appearance of his body; they commenced, therefore, as rites of lamentation and ended in rejoicing. A supposed death, and the mangling of a body, its deposition in a coffin

and resurrection, formed parts of some of the rites. The death and restoration of Adonis, Bacchus, Osiris, the Scandinavian Balder, and others, were representations of the same allegory, whether in allusion to the annual declension of the sun, or to the confinement of Noah in the ark during the Deluge and his subsequent delivery therefrom. These rites have even, by some, been supposed to typify the fall and death of man, and his restoration by the promised Seed ; being founded on an imperfect tradition of the early history of man. Thus, the greater Egyptian mysteries (for they were divided, like the Grecian, into greater and less) represented the passage of man through life ; and the death and subsequent resurrection of Osiris might represent the fall and redemption of man ; and so in the other mysteries.*

The entrance of the candidate through winding avenues and darkness, was emble-

* *Class. Journ.* No. 61, p. 174.

matical of the toilsome wanderings of the soul through the mazes of vice and error before initiation. The noises and spectres surrounding him exemplified the various calamities, diseases, and evil passions 'incidental to that bondage from which he was about to emerge, and the punishment of the guilty in a future state: and his admission into the full splendor of these rites, and the dispersion of the shades of night before the brilliant sun of the mysteries, represented the dispersion of the clouds of mental error before the sun of truth.*

Previous to initiation, the candidate was purified with water, and certain questions were propounded to him, with an admonition to present himself pure and undefiled. On being permitted to pass through the ceremony, his resolution was put to severe proof, and he frequently underwent bodily suffering. According to Tertullian, a drawn

* Maurice's *Ind. Antiq.* vol. ii., p. 342—4.

sword was opposed to the candidate at his entrance into the Mithraic Cavern, from which he, occasionally, received more than one wound. He was introduced into subterraneous and winding passages, with gloomy recesses, and startled at every step with strange and terrific noises.—Intermittent flashes of light enabled him to discern round him scowling and horrible spectres.—Sounds of grief and lamentation for the God were heard ; and as the time of probation (which sometimes lasted for days) drew to a close, the severity of his trials increased—the earth trembled beneath his feet, nature, at last, became almost exhausted, and in some cases even death ensued. At length, he received the reward of his courage and perseverance ; his persecutions ceased ; soft sounds, with melodious symphonies, were heard, and the gloom of night gradually subsided ; fair groves and flowery plains were disclosed to view ; the gates of the inmost sanctuary were opened to him ; he was admitted to the view

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of celestial beauty in all the dazzling splendor of its perfection, and beheld the sun shining with meridian lustre even in the middle of the night. He was crowned, and clothed in white garments and various symbols were explained to him.* Thus, by the square, the Egyptian symbolized matter, or the origin of things; by the triangle, generating fire. From their conjunction, as in the quadrangular pyramid, all things, according to them, proceeded. The triple Tau, or Crux Ansata, which the Royal Arch-Mason will easily recognize, is a symbol of the highest antiquity, and is said to have been recognized by the antient priests as the emblem of a future state. The Egyptian Tau was impressed on the forehead of the initiate; the double triangle was an emblem, in Indian Mythology, of the chief male and female Deities. The emblem of stability was bor-

* See Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. i., p. 446—8. Class. Journ., No. lvi., p. 301—2, &c. Ouvaroff, *Essai sur les Mysteres d'Eleusis*.

rowed from the pillar of Seth, or Hermes, on which tradition had inscribed the inventions and knowledge of the human race. The Celtic nations, also, considered the truncated oak as an emblem of unshaken firmness and fidelity.

The candidate was, finally, declared to be born again and made perfect, and dismissed with the mysterious formula, "Konx, Om-pax." In different countries, the trials of the candidate had different degrees of severity: the Persians were very strict, but were re-modelled by Zoroaster. The Mexican rites, in honor of Vitzliputzli, were barbarous, including human sacrifices to a great extent, as did the rites of the Druids, and, perhaps, to a certain degree, many of the other systems of religion, being a perversion of the original system of vicarious atonement, joined to that recklessness of human life, which appears to be the associate of power

* Clarke's Travels, 8vo., vol. v., 152—3.

when uncontrolled by the mild precepts of true religion.

The words “Konx, Omṡax,” with which the candidate was dismissed (until of late considered inexplicable) are now ascertained to be Sanscrit, which is another argument in favor of the Brahminic origin of these rites. They are still used by the Brahmins at the conclusion of several of their religious ceremonies, and are thus expressed : “Kanska, Om Paksha.” Of these words, the first is the subject of our most ardent vows ; OM or AUM, the mysterious monosyllable of the Indians, which will be mentioned hereafter ; and *Paksha* means change, turn, vicissitude, &c. though it appears to have been used in the sense of silence, whence the words “pax” in Greek and Latin, and “paix” in French, used with the same signification.* When lawyers formerly pleaded in India in a Court

* Class. Journ., No. xxvi., p. 399, &c. Trans. Asiat. Soc., vol. v., p. 300.

of Justice, they were allowed to speak for two or three hours, according to the importance of the case, and to regulate the time there was a clepsydra, or water-clock, ready, which made a certain noise at the end of the expired *pacsha* or turn ; this noise was called *pacsha*. Many of my readers may possibly think that this custom might be restored with good effect.

In some of the religious ceremonies, the candidate was instructed in a mysterious word, which had reference to a supreme Being or Omnipotence. The Egyptian word was "On," that of the Indians "Om," compressed from the trilateral word "A. U. M." representing the creative, preserving, and destroying power of the Deity, and typifying therefore the Indian Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeva.

The Chinese, Japanese, and Ceylonese, who practised Buddhism, but with ceremo-

nies very similar to the Indians, used the word "O-Mi-To-Fo," signifying Omnipotence. The awe and reverence with which the ancients used the name of the Deity, is well worthy of example in modern times. The Jews never used the sacred term (the tetragrammaton, as it was called) composed of Jod, He, Vau, He, in common speech, using the words, "Elohim" or "Adonai," instead; and even the manner in which it should be pronounced is now lost;* it is derived from the verb "Haiah," "he has been," and may be considered to mean the past, present, and future united. The Jews called it "Shem hamphoresh," or the unutterable name; and when it was necessary to write it in the volume of the sacred law peculiar ceremonies were laid down for the usage of the Scribes on the occasion. The before-mentioned words "Om," "On," and "O-mi-to-fo," were always pronounced with the utmost reverence; and in similar man-

* Ockley, *Introd. ad Ling. Orient.*

ner the Thibetians pronounced their sacred term "Om, ha, hum."

The mysterious name of some of the North American Indians is curious from its striking similarity to the Hebrew. They call their supreme God in general "Ishtohoollo," but they have, also, a tetragrammaton which is never used in common speech, compounded of four notes, and used only in their most sacred ceremonies. The first is pronounced quite short in a base key "Yah;" they then retreat, facing each other, with their heads bowing forward, their arms across, rather below the breast, their eyes half shut; and in a grave and solemn manner they sing in a strong base key the awful monosyllable "O," for the space of a minute; they next pronounce "He," in the treble, as long as their breath will allow them; and finish the great song or solemn invocation, by uttering in a base key, with a bold voice and short accent, the word "Wah;" thus composing the mysterious word "Yo-he-wah." In

some of their sacred festivals, the Priests and female singers dance round the holy fire, singing the sacred name as above, and frequently striking up with "Hallelu, Hallelu," then "Halleluiah, Hallelu-yah," and "Alleluiah," and "Allelu-yah."* This would, almost, imply a derivation from the Hebrews. The Druids expressed the sacred name by O. I. W. Among the Priests of these various mysteries or theologies, were some of the most celebrated Philosophers of antiquity. It is said that Moses was educated by the Magi of Egypt, whose ceremonies and tenets, like those of other countries, were kept sacred by oaths of secrecy, death being the penalty of violation.

It has been asserted, that after the deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, Moses preserved certain of the rites of the Jewish Priesthood secret from the people, by means of particular proofs ; which, when the Jews

* Class. Journ., No. xxviii., p. 243—5.

were scattered, became known by degrees to the Pagans, who introduced portions of them into their own ceremonies.

Some of the early Christians, to avoid the constant persecutions directed against them, symbolised their religious rites ; borrowing, for that purpose, such of those usages of the Pagan mysteries, (with which many of them were acquainted,) as they found suitable. From the fragments, however imperfect, of the primitive religion, that might be traced amidst the corrupt rites of these mysteries, especially in the idea of a future state that pervaded them, coincidences would occasionally appear which were made use of by certain of the early teachers of the pure doctrine of Christianity, to strengthen the weaker part of their congregations. Gregory Nazianzus relates the manner in which the popular Pagan rites were made subservient to the advancement of the Christian faith. Even in modern times, during the

most flourishing æra of the Popedom, people worshipped in the same temples, at the same altars, and sometimes the same images, and with similar ceremonies to those used by their Pagan ancestors, adapted of course to the ceremonies of the Romish church.*

When St. Austin was sent over in the year 596 to convert the Anglo Saxons, he was instructed by Gregory, to accommodate as much as he could the Christian forms of worship to those of his disciples, to convert their heathen temples into churches, and to establish Christian, in the place of Pagan, festivals.

As early as the time of the Apostles, this indulgence towards the weaker Christians seems to have existed, and met with just rebuke from St. John and St. Paul.† The

* See Clarke's Travels, vol. v., p. 455, and authorities there cited.

† Rev., cap. ii.; 1 Corinth., cap. viii.; Coloss., cap. ii.

fact, however, of its receiving their censure, proves its existence, while it warns us of its in-expediency, and will account, probably, for the preservation of many Pagan symbols in the manner before suggested.

In many cases the societies of early Christians required proofs of brotherhood by certain signs and tokens, previously to admission to participate in their ceremonies; and I have seen it stated, though I know not on what authority, that there was a religious fraternity of Greek Masons, as late as 1751, in possession of the secret constitutions of the first Christians, of as early a date as 327, and probably much older, which were similar to those of the Priests of Memphis, as far as we are informed of them.*

It is probable that the principal Priests interfered, or had some control in the erec-

* Recueil Precieux de la Maçonnerie Adonhiramite, vol. i., p. 69, &c.

tion of the great and magnificent buildings of antiquity, which were, generally, of a religious nature, and the chief Architects might have received great part of their education from the Priests, who were the depositaries of the knowledge of their several ages. Thus, we find, that in the early ages of Christianity, the Monks were, in many cases, the Architects and Builders of their own churches and monasteries. In order to regulate the vast number of men collected together for the erection of those stupendous edifices of the ancients, certain forms were introduced, which enabled the principal builders to class their men according to merit and skill, and served to distinguish them from strangers. This might have been the case as early as the Tower of Babel, which was, probably, a Temple of the Sun, or Bêl. On the erection of the Pyramids and King Solomon's Temple, the same regulations would be observed; and tradition might even carry down, from the time of

the earliest building of this magnitude, traces of the forms then used ; which, with some modification, might be adopted by subsequent builders. Thus, from one body of men to another, constituted for the same purpose, the forms and usages of the earliest society might be carried down, (subject to the variations occasioned by change of time and place) each succeeding society, on its formation, adopting such rules of the preceding institution as were then known, or were suitable for their purposes. Urged, also, by that desire, so common among mankind,* of dating from remote antiquity, they would endeavour to conceal their origin, by identifying themselves with the earliest ages, claiming to be a continuation of the societies

* It is this love of having sprung *atavis regibus*, that induces so many A's, and B's, and C's, (I am afraid to use names, however absurd, for fear of their being claimed by some one or other in the present state of over-population) to pay large sums of money for emblazoned parchments, commencing with King Hippogriff, or Prince Prettyman, or some equally romantic character.

then in existence ; and in process of time, after a lapse perhaps of centuries, the degree of antiquity to which they were justly intitled, would become matter of speculation ; especially as a link might be traced, however faint, even to the remotest periods.

Besides the Colleges, or Societies of Priests, there were, also, in early times, Societies or Institutions of intelligent Men, Architects, &c. whose object was the mutual communication of scientific knowledge, the acquisition of which they concealed from the uninitiated, by means of certain signs, whereby they made themselves known to each other, and excluded strangers. It is said that such societies were in existence even as long ago as the building of King Solomon's Temple. In the year B. C. 300, or thereabouts, a body of men, of this description, known as the Dionysian Artificers, were incorporated by command of the Kings of Pergamus, and had Teos, (where they

had erected a magnificent Temple to Bacchus, the reputed founder of their order,) assigned to them as a settlement. They possessed the exclusive privilege of erecting Temples, Theatres, and other public buildings in Asia Minor, and were divided into Lodges, with peculiar tokens to recognise the Brethren, of whom they relieved the poorer ones. Mr. Clinch, in his *Anthologia Hibernia*, states, there was in existence, in Syria, in 1794, a remnant of the Dionysians, or, perhaps, the Essenes, who were descended from the Kasideans, a set of distinguished men, voluntarily pledged to preserve the Temple from injury and decay. It was in this part of the world, that the Templars, who were founded during the Crusades, in the beginning of the twelfth century, by Hugh de Payens and Geoffrey de St. Aldemar, obtained their Masonic knowledge; and hence proceeded many of the trading or free-masons, who, under the sanction of different Popes, went about to build Churches, &c.

Their skill was well known and recognised on the Continent, from the earliest ages of Christianity, and some individuals may, occasionally, have visited England; as we find St. Alban, who was, in 303, the proto-martyr of this kingdom, a great patron of the science, and said to have been Grand-Master; but the earliest authentic account of their introduction into England as a body, is in the year 674, when the celebrated Wilfrid, Archbishop of York, built Hexham Church, and Benedict Biscop, founder of the Abbey of Weremouth, collected a number of Masons in France, and brought them over to build his church of stone, after the Roman manner, as it was then called; and, at the same time, the art of glass-making was introduced. Wherever they travelled, they kept themselves a distinct body from other inferior artificers, preserving their knowledge secret, by means of certain signs and proofs, known only to those formally admitted into the society; some of these

were, probably, borrowed from, or might be traced to the old Pagan rites, or might have reference to some of the signs in use on the building of former stately edifices. Previous to the year 674, our Churches were in general built of wood; the Anglo Saxon term, even for building, being *getymbrian*, to make of wood; but from the time of the introduction of this body of scientific men into the kingdom, our architecture gradually improved, and was fostered and encouraged by many of our Kings, Princes, and Nobles, several of whom were, from time to time, inrolled among, and initiated into, the societies of the Masons. Of these, some were, probably, selected, in order that they might the better assist the Masons, and relieve them, by means of their wealth and rank, from the burthens that might, otherwise, have been imposed on them, in common with that part of the population which was in a state of vassalage; and others might have been thus distinguished as an acknow-

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ledgment for their patronage, or a mark of respect to their abilities.

A Grand Lodge is said to have been established by Prince Edwin, son of King Athelstan, about 926, at York, which was then the resort of some of the principal Masons. The history of the science in this country, from the rude wattled dwellings of the early Britons, to the erection of those splendid examples of ornamented architecture, King's College and Henry Seventh's Chapels; and from thence, through the Grecian structures of Inigo Jones, Sir Christopher Wren, and other eminent Builders, to the present time, including the progress of domestic architecture for the same period; will afford much entertainment to those who can spare sufficient time for its perusal.

During the thirteenth century, about which time some of our finest Cathedrals were built, architecture flourished greatly

on the Continent, as well as in England. The Popes, in order to encourage the Masons whose skill was most frequently displayed in religious structures, granted them, by their Bulls, many indulgencies and exemptions from imposts, &c. together with the valuable privilege of fixing their own prices ; and the power of the Popes, as is well known, was then as much attended to in the different European States, as in their own immediate territories. Encouraged by these advantages, the Free-Masons, as they were called, placed further restrictions on the admissions into their society, and probably re-modelled and amended their forms of introduction, where necessary, taking additional precautions to distinguish the Brethren of the fraternity by methods known only to those regularly admitted. They continued to travel about from one country to another to build Churches, &c. A Surveyor, or Master governed the whole, and each tenth man was called a Warden, over-

looking the other nine. They possessed considerable merit and ability, as is amply proved by the numerous beautiful specimens of their skill yet remaining. Even the principles on which their peculiar style of building was founded, are not thoroughly known, and many of our greatest Architects, since the Reformation, have failed in their endeavours to imitate it. It is matter of History, that the privileges before mentioned were, about this time, granted to them by the Popes; but there is one particular Bull, occasionally mentioned, of which the preamble has reference to the building of King Solomon's Temple, and to the Chief Architect there, (whose traditional History, it is said, may be found in the Talmud,) stating the powers granted to him by King Solomon, with other particulars, and conferring the same privileges to the Free-Masons. Governor Pownall states, in the 9th vol. of the *Archæologia*, that he had, in the year 1773, with the sanction of the Pope, made accu-

rate search in the Vatican for this Bull or Charter, but without effect.

The forms and symbols in use among the Knights Templars, in many instances, harmonized with those of the Free-Masons, and there was considerable intercourse or connection between the two societies. The celebrated Orientalist, Hammer, in his History of the Assassins, maintains, that the Order of Free-Masonry was held by the Ismaelites, or the illuminated of the East, at Grand Cairo; and, in a Treatise, called *Mysterium Baphometi Revelatum, &c.* published in the *Mines de l'Orient*, vol. vi., part 1, Vienna, 1818, fol. states, that there were Masonic emblems found in the Church of Prague, which was built in the middle of the thirteenth century, and formerly belonged to the Templars; also in the Churches at Erfurt and Schoengrabern, &c.

This work is an attack upon the principles

of the Templars, and treats of their celebrated Idol Baphomet, as he calls it ; which Raynouard, in the *Journal des Savans*, for March and April 1819, proves, was Mahomet, and refutes, apparently with success, the imputations cast upon the Order by Hammer.

Many of the fraternity established themselves in Scotland, where they, probably, were first permanently introduced at the time of the building of the Abbey of Kilwinning, about the middle of the twelfth century ; though, according to Bede, as early as 710, Naitan, King of the Picts, sent to Ceolfred, the Abbot of Weremouth, to beg some Masons to build a Church of Stone.

The Kilwinning Lodge, which is, I believe, the mother Lodge of Scotland, is said to have been founded by Robert the First of Scotland, about 1313, and has been traced back to the end of the 15th century. The Mi-

nutes of St. Mary's Chapel, the oldest Lodge in Edinburgh, are stated, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, to extend back to the year 1598, and contain, as early as 1600, the names of some members who were not architects.

The Scotch Free-Masons must have attained high repute; for at the time of the persecution and dissolution of the Knights Templars, the Provincial Grand Master of Auvergne, Pierre d'Aumont, with two Commanders and five Knights, fled, in the disguise of Masons, to one of the Scottish Isles, where they found the Grand Master, Hauptoncourt, and other members, in conjunction with whom they resolved to maintain the Order, still concealing themselves from persecution by acting under the guise of Free-Masons, and borrowing some of their emblems.

They held a Chapter on St. John's day,

1313, that saint being their patron, when D'Aumont was chosen Grand Master; in 1361 the seat of the Grand Master was moved to Aberdeen; and, by degrees, under the veil of Free-Masonry, of which this order now professed to be a branch, they spread into Italy, Germany, France, Portugal, Spain, and elsewhere.* Those who like to amuse themselves with fanciful speculations, may, perhaps, trace back the choice of St. John's day for the meetings of the Templars and other Societies, to the time of the Temple of Belus, or the worship of the Sun, as it is the summer solstice when that luminary is at its highest. King Edward Third, about the 24th year of his reign, 1350, when founding the College at Windsor, granted to John de Sponlee the Office of Master of the Stone-hewers, and gave him power to take and press, as well within liberties as without, so many Masons and other Artificers as were necessary, and

* Acta Latomorum, vol. i., p. 329.

to convey them to Windsor, to work at the King's pay, but to arrest and imprison such as should disobey or refuse, until the King took other order; with a command to all Sheriffs, Mayors, Bailiffs, &c., to be assisting to him on the King's behalf.* Writs were, accordingly, issued into different Counties, to collect able workmen; but they, being dissatisfied with "the King's pay," entered into a combination, in many places, to resist this act, and made use of certain of their peculiar tokens to recognise and assist each other against being pressed into this service.

It will not be out of place to mention, here, that when that beautiful structure, the Cathedral of Strasburg, was in progress (between the years 1275 and 1520, or thereabouts) a great number of Free-Masons were, naturally, collected in that City, either employed in the building, or attracted by the

* Ashmole's Hist. Garter, 135.

desire of viewing its splendor ; it was considered as a second Solomon's Temple, and a modern wonder of the world : and at a meeting, held at Ratisbon, in 1459, it was agreed, that the Architect, or Superintendent, of Strasburg Cathedral, should, as a tribute of respect to the building, be Grand Master of the Free-Masons ; and one Dotzinger, of Worms, the successor of Hültz, who completed the spire in 1449, was, accordingly, chosen First Grand Master. Grandidier, in his description of the Cathedral, published in 1782, says, there were documents and original diplomas of the Emperors, then in existence, to prove this fact, kept in a chest belonging to the Lodge of Free-Masons at Strasburg.

It would appear, from the act of 3d. Hen. 6, c. 1, A. D. 1424, as if the Free-Masons had, occasionally, combined together to obtain a higher rate of wages than was legal, and that they did not consider them-

selves bound or affected by the statutes made for the regulation of the wages of other artificers ; relying, possibly, on the different Bulls made in their favor, by the Popes ; for by that act, Chapters and Congregations of Masons were forbidden, as thereby “ the good course and effect of the statutes of labourers be openly violated and broken, in subversion of the law, and to the great damage of all the commons.” Masons attending such Chapters and Congregations were to be punished by “ prisonment of their bodies, and make fine and ransom at the King’s will.” This act was, however, never put in force, and the Masons still continued their Assemblies and Communications, though, perhaps, not quite in so public a manner as before. Indeed, King Henry Sixth, who afterwards appointed the celebrated William Wanefleet, Grand Master, is said to have been admitted into the Order, as well as the Protector, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, with many other dis-

tinguished persons, who defended it against Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, when he endeavoured to suppress the Masons, after the passing of the before-mentioned act, by accusing them of seditious speeches and menaces. In other societies of artificers, the members recognised each other by certain tokens, as well as the Masons; and, at this day, several of the Crafts are known by the name of mysteries. The Masons, however, from their antiquity, their knowledge, and the numerous privileges from time to time granted to them, as well as from the number of eminent men admitted into the society, who were not strictly Architects, and their dispersion throughout the world, have far surpassed all others, and have become the object of general history. It is not very improbable to suppose, that some of their peculiar symbols may be traced from the earliest period; nor is it necessary for this purpose that they should have existed as a connected frater-

nity from such time ; but certain portions of the rites of the most remote nations, may have been, with the modifications, and in the manner to which I have before alluded, adopted by successive societies, and thus brought down to ages scarcely acquainted, perhaps, with the original allegory.

On a reference back to the foregoing slight sketch, the progressive descent of any leading tenet, or characteristic, may be easily imagined ; and this will account for the similarity existing in certain institutions in different parts of the world. Even in Africa, we hear of the Tribunal of the Purrah, which may be considered a remnant of Egyptian Free-Masonry ; and the San hō hwuy, or Triad Society, in China, claims the highest antiquity : of this, a short description shall be given hereafter, by way of appendix, as collected from the transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of London, vol. 1, p. 240—50 ; but, at present, I must

return to the Free-Masons of England. I will add, however, that in tracing, from its supposed origin, any peculiar symbol, the inquiry should be confined to the leading, or essential, land-marks of an institution, for any amplifications, or explanations, of such symbols, will, in general, be of a more modern date ; and of some, the origin might be easily ascertained. In the case of un-written knowledge, nothing but short and essential principles would be handed down.

The Masons were induced to take strict precaution to prevent the admission of strangers into their meetings, because they frequently consulted therein on the scientific parts of their profession, and mutually gave and received instruction on abstruse points connected with it, which it was their interest to conceal from the world at large.

Mr. Ware, in his Treatise on Vaults, pub-

lished in the 17th Vol. of the *Archæologia*, says, that we are indebted to them for the vaultings which secure our Cathedrals, and, that the art of constructing walls to resist the thrust of a stone vaulting was one of their original mysteries. We find occasional references to agreements entered into with some of the fraternity ; for instance, in Ashmole's *History of the Garter*, p. 136, an indenture is mentioned, dated 5th June, 21st Henry VII. by which John Hylmer and William Vertue, Free-Masons, undertook the vaulting of the roof of the choir, for £700, and to finish it by Christmas A. D. 1508. In an indenture of 4th Henry VIII. between the Provost and Scholars of King's College, Cambridge, and John Wastell, Master Mason of the said works, and Harry Severick, one of the Wardens of the same ; Wastell and Severick agree for £1200. to set up a vaulting for the Church, to be finished in three years ; and in an indenture dated 4th August, in fifth of Henry Eighth, for com-

pleting the vaultings of King's College Chapel, Cambridge; John Wastell, Master Mason, undertakes to keep working, continually, forty of the Free-Masons. In Dugdale's Monasticon mention is made of other contracts.

The Free-Masons were distinguished in the regulations for establishing the wages of artificers and others, by having awarded to them the highest rate, of which a few examples will suffice. It appears, therefore, even if they considered themselves exempt from any of these regulations, that they were held in proper estimation by the framers of them; and although the wages are such as may appear marvellously little in our eyes, we must consider the difference of times and the then value of money.

The preamble to the first statute of labourers, 23d Edward Third, is rather curious, shewing even at that time a spirit of combi-

nation. It states, " Because a great part of
 " the People, and especially of Workmen
 " and Servants, late died of the Pestilence,
 " many seeing the necessity of Masters, and
 " great scarcity of Servants, will not serve
 " unless they may receive excessive wages,
 " and some rather willing to beg in idleness,
 " than by labour to get their living ; we con-
 " sidering the grievous incommodities, which
 " of the lack especially of Ploughmen and
 " such Labourers may hereafter come, have"
 &c. However, this has not much to do with
 the present subject ; therefore to proceed
 with the examples of wages :

In 1351, a Master-Mason (probably equi-
 valent to a Free-Mason) by the day, 3*d.*—
 Other Masons or Tylers, 2*d.*—Their ser-
 vants or boys, 1½*d.*

In 1446—From *Easter* till *Michaelmas*:

A Free-Mason, with diet, by the day .	4 <i>d.</i>
Without diet	5½ <i>d.</i>
A Master-Tyler, Slater, Rough Ma- } son, by the day, with diet }	3 <i>d.</i>

D

Without diet 4½*d.*

From *Michaelmas* to *Easter*, a penny by the day less.

In 1514—From *Easter* to *Michaelmas* the daily wages of a Free-Mason, with diet } 4*d.*

Without diet 6*d.*

A Rough Mason and Tyler, the same.

From *Michaelmas* to *Easter*, 1*d.* less.

(These also are the wages allowed by 6*Hen.*8. c.5.)

In 1610—A Free-Mason, which can draw his plot, work, and set accordingly, having charge over others, before <i>Michaelmas</i> , by the day	} 8 <i>d.</i>	With Meat	Without Meat
			12 <i>d.</i>

After *Michaelmas* 6*d.* 10*d.*

A Rough Mason, which can take charge over others, before <i>Michaelmas</i>	} 5 <i>d.</i>		
			10 <i>d.</i>

After *Michaelmas* 4*d.* 8*d.*

		With Meat & Drink	Without
In 1684—A Freemason	6 <i>d.</i>		16 <i>d.</i>

A Master Brick-Mason	6 <i>d.</i>		12 <i>d.</i>
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Their Servants and Apprentices, } 4*d.* 8*d.*
 above the age of eighteen . . }

From the middle of September to the middle of March, one penny by the day to be abated of the wages before specified.*

The earliest authentic manuscripts I have seen connected with Free-Masonry are two in the British Museum, the older of which belongs apparently to the middle or latter half of the seventeenth century.† They contain a sort of traditionary history of no great value, and a collection of charges, most of which are similar in effect to those published in Preston ; it was therefore unnecessary to set them out here : they also contain a short form of obligation, but do not appear to have much reference to speculative masonry.—The supposed old manuscript printed in

* See Fleetwood, Chron. Preciosum. Archæologia, vol. xi. p. 203—9.

† Harleian MSS. 2054, being in R. Holmes' collection ; the other is Harleian MSS. 1942.

Preston, and elsewhere, with Mr. Locke's comments thereon, should be authenticated, which, if in the Bodleian library, can be easily done.

The admission of Elias Ashmole, the Antiquary, into the Society, in the year 1646, caused a revision of the different forms for reception of candidates; and to the simple and terse rites then in existence, and which were, probably, of very high antiquity, were added others by Ashmole and his companions, who, in arranging them, were, perhaps, swayed by the knowledge they, as men of letters, possessed of the ancient mysteries of Egypt and Greece, and other Pagan ceremonies. Prior to the connexion of Ashmole and his friends with the Masons, they had been in the habit of meeting together, in the Mason's Hall, Mason's Alley, Basinghall Street, for purposes of speculative science, and might, possibly, have had some connection with the Rosicrucians. After this time,

the Society received many speculative Masons, or brethren, who were not professional Masons, into their body ; but the Civil Wars now occurring, the confusion of private rights, and interruption of domestic intercourse, which pervaded the country for some years, affected the fraternity, as well as other meetings. It is said, that certain modifications of their ceremonies were now introduced, with reference to some unfortunate occurrences in our national history, and that the distinction of Master-Mason, which had been formerly confined to the actual Master of a Lodge, was extended to many other Members of a certain degree of skill.*

On the restoration of Charles Second, the society of Free-Masons again flourished, and that Monarch was, himself, admitted into the Order. The great Fire of London, and the demand for architectural talent that necessarily followed, imparted new vigour to

* Acta Latom. vol. ii. p. 264-5.

the fraternity ; the building of St. Paul's Cathedral, by Sir Christopher Wren, the Grand Master, raised the Masons to an eminence never before surpassed ; and many patrons of the art, and scientific characters, were eager to enrol their names in the list of so distinguished a body. The Lodge that then assembled, near St. Paul's, where Sir Christopher Wren presided, still flourishes, with equal fame, under the immediate control of His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, our Most Worshipful Grand Master ; and it is said to have in its possession many curious relics connected with the building of St. Paul's. In the time of Queen Anne, it was resolved, "That the privileges of Masonry should no longer be restricted to operative Masons, but extend to men of various professions, provided they were regularly approved and initiated into the Order."

Previous to this resolution, we have seen that men of rank and science were, occa-

sionally, admitted, but afterwards, any men of respectable birth and good character were received, if otherwise approved of by the Brethren. In the beginning of the reign of George First, an unfortunate schism arose in the Society, in consequence of Sir Christopher Wren, who was then about 90 years of age, and unable to attend to any active duties of the Craft, having been superseded, in his office of Surveyor of Buildings to the King, by Mr. Wm. Benson; under whose direction the generality of Master Masons in London refused to meet; and the Country Lodges, especially at York, and in Scotland, (where the Grand Lodge was instituted in 1736) kept inviolate the ancient landmarks, &c. of the Order.

About the year 1717, Dr. Desaguliers, who was Grand Master in 1719, a man of considerable scientific attainments, with other men of talent, took considerable pains in arranging and modelling that system of

Free-Masonry, which, prior to the memorable Union in 1813, was recognised in London in opposition to what was then called Ancient Masonry; and certain peculiar toasts and ceremonies were introduced at his Installation-feast. The celebrated entered Apprentice song was, probably, made about this time, as it appears, with the music, in the third volume of the Musical Miscellany, London, 1730. The Ancient Masons, as they were called, chiefly assembled in the country, after the schism in the time of Sir Christopher Wren; but in 1757, they again established their Grand Lodge in London, under the Earl of Blessington, when, it is said, they recognised twenty-five degrees. Indeed, about this time, the formation of new degrees seems to have been much favored, although, in reality, unconnected with true Masonry, and contrary to its spirit; but some persons of prurient imagination, (*e.g.* Cagliostro, Ramsay, Rosa, &c.) indulged their fancies, by discovering

or inventing new orders, to the number, in the whole, perhaps, of some hundreds:— the order or rite of Misphraim, alone, contains ninety degrees.

Among other novelties, the late Dr. John Brown instituted a Latin Lodge in Edinburgh, in 1784, entitled the Roman Eagle, which flourished some time.

The Maçonnerie d'Adoption, wherein females were admitted, was in vogue in France during modern times, and numerous attended. It was in existence in 1822, and is most probably so still.

The system of Masonry, as practised in England, was established in France by Lord Derwentwater and others, in the year 1725, and afterwards into other parts of the Continent. During the troubles in France, Ancient Masonry, which was the system there practised, took refuge in America, whence

it was brought back to France in 1804, and re-organised, recognising thirty-three degrees. The French Masons enrol under their banners many names of the first distinction, and fully practise the masonic attributes of hospitality and relief. In Sweden also the Free-Masons, under the immediate patronage of their king, have obtained high repute for intelligence and skill.

In 1777, or thereabouts, the Chapter of the Royal Arch was established in London ; but, for a general history of the Order, from the earliest times, reference must be made to publications already existing, (of which the reader will make such use, and to which he will ascribe such authority as he thinks proper) especially to Preston's useful and popular Compendium, and the *Acta Latomorum*.

In 1813, a union was happily effected between the two systems of Masonry, since

which time the Society has flourished in an unprecedented manner, uniting, in a peculiar degree, the virtues of friendship and benevolence, and enrolling under its banners some of the first names in the country, including our most gracious Sovereign, as its Patron. And, whilst it is governed, as at present, by a Prince, whose talents give additional lustre to his rank, and who applies their united power to the direction and support of the institution upon the truly Masonic principles with which he is himself thoroughly acquainted, the Order must continually flourish and increase.

APPENDIX.

As matter of curiosity, I have added a short description of the Secret Association in China, before-mentioned, called the "San hō hwuy," or the Triad Society, which claims to be of the highest antiquity; it was formerly called "Theen te hwuy," or the Cœlesto-terrestrial Society. Its professed design is benevolence, and the government of it is vested in three persons, called Ko, or elder Brothers; they are respectively named, Yih Ko, Urh Ko, and San Ko; *i. e.* Brother first, Brother second, and Brother third; the other Members are called Brethren. They have certain initiatory ceremonies; and the candidate enters into an obligation under an arch or bridge of swords held over him by the brethren. They have also, secret signs and tokens, by which to

distinguish themselves. A word highly prized by them is "Hung," with its component parts, namely, San-pit-urh-shih-yih, meaning, numerically, 321; but to which they apply some mystic meaning. They use signs by motions of the fingers, employing three of them to take up any thing, as a tea-cup, or its cover, with the thumb, fore and middle fingers, or the fore, middle and third fingers, in a particular way.

THE END.

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