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# LANDMARKS IN THE HISTORY

OF THE

#### LEGENDS

OF

### FREEMASONRY

A Lecture read at the West Kent Lodge on January 26th, 1907, by EDMUND H. DRING 5
229, 1297, 2076

PRIVATELY PRINTED



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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 Gildtown, 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

<sup>\*</sup> 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 tawihte hyt ful wyde
Yn dyuers londe on euery syde
Mony erys afturwarde y undurstonde
3er pt pe craft com ynto pys londe
pys craft com yn to englond as y 30w say
Yn tyme of good kynge adelstonus day
He made po bope halle and eke bowre
And hye templus of gret honowre
To sportyn hym yn bope day and nyith
An to worschepe hys god wt alle hys myith.

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:—

- 'He most loue wel god and holy churche algate
   And hys maystur also pt 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 . . . . . pe preuetyse of pe chambur telle he no mon Ny yn pe logge, what seuer pey done Whatseuer pou heryst or syste hem do Telle hyt no mon, wher seuer pou go'
- 4. 'pat no mon to hys craft be false.'
- 5. 'pat whenne pe mason taketh hys pay . . . . Ful mekely y take.'
- He must love well God and holy church in all ways and his master also that he is with (also his fellows).
- 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 pey make none Tyl pat pe werke day be clene a gone Apon pe holy day 3e mowe wel take Leyser y now3gh loueday to make.'
- 7. 'pou schal not by py maystres wyf ly Ny by py felows yn no maner wyse Lest pe craft wolde pe despyse Ny by py felows concubyne No more pou woldest he dede by pyne.'
- 8. 'Undur by maystur bou be trwe
  For bat poynt bou schalt neuer arewe
  A trwe medyatur bou most nede be
  To by maystur and by felows fre'
- 9. 'pat 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 p<sup>t</sup> pou hast spende Wher and how and to what ende Suche acowntes pou most come to Whenne þy felows wollen p<sup>t</sup> pou do.'
- 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.
- 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 he mason lyue a mysse
  And yn hys werk be false y wysse . . .
  To he nexte semble 3e schul hym calle,
  To apere byfore hys felows alle.'
- ipat sy3th hys felow hewen on a ston
  And ys yn poynt to spylle pat ston
  teche hym esely hyt to amende
  Wyth fayre wordes pt god pe hath lende '
- 12. 'pe twelpe poynt ys of gret ryolte
  per as pe semble y holde schal be
  per schul be maystrys and felows also
  And opur grete lordes mony mo
  per schal be pe scheref of pat contre
  And also pe meyr of pat syte
  Kny3tes and sqwyers p[er sch]ul be
  And opur aldermen as 3e s[ch]ul se,
  Suche ordynance as pey maken pere
  pey schul maynte hyt hol y fere.'
- 13. 'He schal swere neuer to be no pef 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.
- II. [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 pys ordynance wherseuer he go . . . .
  And all' pese poyntes hyr before
  To hem pou most nede be y swore.'
- 15. 'For bylke bt ben unbuxom y wysse
  Ageynus be ordynance . . . of bese artyculus . . . .
  And for here gultes no mendys wol make
  benne most bey nede be craft for sake.'
- 14. He must be steadfast and also true to all the ordinances wheresoever 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. 'pe furste artycul of pys gemetry
  pe maystur mason moste be ful securly
  Bope stedefast trusty and trwe
  Hyt schal hym neuer penne arewe
  And pay by felows aftur pe coste
  As vytaylys goth penne, wel pu woste
  And pay hem trwly apon by fay
  What pt pey deseruen may.'
- II. 'pat every maystur pat ys a mason Most ben at pe generale congregacyon . . . But he haue a resenabul skwsacyon.'
- I. 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.
- That every master that is a mason must be at the general congregation unless he have a reasonable excuse.

- III. 'pat pe maystur take to no prentysse
  But he haue good seuerans to dwelle
  Seuen 3er wt hym as y 30w telle
  Hys craft to lurne . . .'
- IV. 'pat pe maystur hym wel be se pat he no bonde mon prentys make'
  - V. 'pe maystur schal not for no vantage
    Make no prentes pat ys outrage . . .

    To pe craft hyt were gret schame
    To make an halt mon and a lame . . .'
- VI. 'pat pe maystur do pe lord no pergedysse

  To take of pe lord for hyse prentyse

  Also muche as hys felows don . . . . .'
- VII. 'pat no maystur for favour ny drede Schal no pef nowpur clope ny fede'
- VIII. '3ef pt he haue any mon of crafte
  And be not also perfyt as he auste
  He may hym change sone a non
  And take for hym a perfytur mon.'
  - IX. 'pat no werke he undur take But he conne bope hyt ende and make'
- 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. 'per schal no maystur supplante oper But be togedur as systur and broper.'
- XI. 'pat no mason schulde worche be ny3th But 3ef hyt be yn practesynge of wytte'
- XII. 'To zevery mason wher seuer he be He schal not hys felows werk depraue.'
- XIII. '... 3ef bt be maystur a prentes haue

  Enterlyche benne bat he hym teche ....
  bat he be craft abelyche may conne'
- XIV. 'He schal no prentes to hym take
  But dyners curys he haue to make
  pat he may wtynne hys terme
  - Of hym dyuers poyntes may lurne'
  - XV. '.... pat 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.
- 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 myiht

And to hys swete modur mary bryiht

pat we mowe kepe pese artyculus here

And pese poyntes wel al y fere

As dede pese holy martyres fowre

pat yn bys 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 p<sup>u</sup> were of a mayde y bore Sofre me neuer to be y lore But when y schal hennus wende Grante me pe 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

<sup>\*</sup> Lived about 2,200 B.C.

<sup>†</sup> 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 difdain 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 Which is there deduced not only from facred writ, but profane story, particularly that it was brought into England by St. Amphibal, and first communicated to St. Alban, who fet down the Charges of majonry, and was made paymaster and Governor of the Kings works, and gave them charges and manners as St. Amphibal had Which were after confirmed by King taught him. Athelftan, 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 fuch charges and manners, as they then thought fit: which charges in the faid 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 lest 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 cheisly 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 otherwife call an accepted mason, he is obliged presently to come to him, from what company or place foever he be in, nay tho' from the top of a Steeple, (what hazard or inconvenience foever he run) to know his pleafure, and affist him; viz. if he want work he is bound to find him fome; 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 majorry be not dishonored: and many such like that are commonly known: but fome others they have (to which they are fworn 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 marryed, or ever had so much as any natural issue; (unless we give way to the sabulous History of Guy Earl of Warwick, whose eldest son Reynburn is said indeed to have been marryed to Leoneat the supposed daughter of Athelstan, which will not serve the turn neither) much less ever had he a lawfull 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 jealouse 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 fo 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 majons, 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 majons that came to them fhould 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 ferve, 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-masons do as much mischeif 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

<sup>\*</sup> 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.

<sup>†</sup> 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 I 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 bonû 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.

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