

land, in the year 1599, are still extant, yet in England we have no Lodge minutes ranging back further than 1700. So, for the sake of convenience, the mythico-historical period of Freemasonry, will be held to have extended to 1717 when Masonic records show that in that year there were four Masonic Lodges in London, England, and this is the year that the present Grand Lodge of England was instituted, and it is here that we emerge from the cloudland of legend and tradition and enter into the domain of authentic history. The origin and source whence first sprang the institution of Freemasonry, says Dr. Mackey, has given rise to more differences of opinion and discussion among Masonic scholars than any other topic; nearly every prominent historical personage from the Devil to the Druids, have at one time or another been credited with the institution of Freemasonry, and the erection of Stonehenge, a Druidical Temple (of which I will have more to say later).

In India at the present day the Masonic Hall is familiarly known as the "Shaitan Bungalow," or Devil's House.

In 1721 Masonry was introduced into France, and in 1733 the first Grand Lodge of America was instituted at Boston.

In 1813 the union of the two Grand Lodges of England was consummated.

In 1850 we find Masonry spread over the surface of the globe. Thus in a century Freemasonry was propagated all over the earth, scattering in its path the seeds of civilization and progress, until to-day we find it the grandest institution under the sun.

The grand object of Masonry is to promote the happiness of the human race; its laws are reason and equity; its principles, benevolence and love; its religion, purity and truth; its intention is peace on earth, and its disposition, good will towards mankind.

Let any unprejudiced man pronounce his opinion of Freemasonry from experience of the benefits it has conferred on Society, and his judgment cannot be unfavorable, and the Masons' most determined enemies must admit them to be honorable in their actions, and estimable in private life. Look over any criminal calendar of any assizes held in any part of the world, and you very seldom find members of the craft charged with felonious offences, or accused of disturbing social order.

I might here add that almost all institutions that have existed and are existing to-day, have taken some parts of their ritual and procedure from that of the Masons, as anyone belonging to the Masonic Order as well as some other order, can see at a glance the Masonic hand in its general make-up and ritual.

Many orders have sprung up from time to time, but I will confine my remarks to those in existence to-day.