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THE HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY;

Its Origin, Object and Antiquity; its Transformation, Universality, and Persecution, with concluding remarks.

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MOTTO:

Bees will not work except in darkness;
Thought will not work except in silence;
Neither will virtue work except in secrecy.

SARTON RESARTUS.

Freemasonry is a fraternity spread over the surface of the globe, to whatever part of its civilization has extended its beneficial influence.

The fraternity is composed of men of all creeds and religion, of men in the various stations in life, from the humblest to that of the most exalted. Wealth, power and talents are not necessary to the person of a Freemason. An unblemished character and a virtuous conduct are the only qualifications which are requisite for admission into the Order.

In all ages, its object has been not only to inform the minds of its members by instructing them in the sciences and useful arts, but to better their hearts by enforcing the precepts of religion and morality.

Brotherly love, relief, and truth, with other virtues, are inculcated by hieroglyphic symbols, and the members are frequently reminded that there is an Eye above, which observeth the workings of the heart, and is ever fixed upon the thoughts and actions of men.

Temperance, harmony and joy characterize the assemblies of Masons; all distinction of rank seems to be laid aside, all differences in religious and political sentiments are forgotten, and those petty quarrels which disturb the quiet of private life cease to agitate the mind, and every one strives to give happiness to his brother.

Among the secret societies of the present day, the great *Masonic Brotherhood* is undoubtedly the first in importance. It is important by its antiquity, its extent and greatness of influence which it has exercised and continues to exercise over thought and life of the world.

Respecting the origin of Freemasonry, the opinions of writers, claiming to be well informed, differ; while some, from an over-anxiety for the dignity of their Order, have represented it as co-eval with the world. Others assert that it is a *direct* continuation of the Egyptian or Grecian mysteries; others, that it descends from the Dionesian builders, or arises from the constitution of Pythagoras, or from the Essenes. That, however, these pretensions are unfounded, and will not be able to be tested by history, has been amply proved in Lawrie's History of Freemasonry, collected from authentic sources, and published in Edinburgh, 1804.

Equally unfounded are the hypotheses that the Masonic fraternity originated in the middle ages out of the Order of the Knight Templars, or the Jesuits, or the Rose Cross, or out of the old guilds of masons and stone-cutters.

Long before either of those Orders or guilds existed there were Freemasons, many of whom joined the Knight Templars and Crusades; who during their journey to and stay in the Holy Land, formed themselves into lodges similar to the present military lodges, and hence the erroneous idea that

the Freemasons originated from those Orders; and also long before either of those Orders or guilds existed, there existed numerous corporations of architects, that in one body united all those grand works of architecture. These corporations were composed of the most educated of all the European nations, under the leadership and government of one or more master-architects. They were protected by charters from the ecclesiastical as also from the civil powers; they had their own constitution, and they united in the erection of those numerous, most stupendous and gigantic edifices, peculiar in style, sublime in art, and generally known as the Gothic.

That the present Masonic fraternity has sprung from these grand unions of architects and artificers, and by what means and transition it finally became a fraternity and brotherhood that does no more occupy itself with architecture, has been the result of modern researches in the history of Freemasonry.

This authentic history is properly divided into two periods.

FIRST PERIOD OF FREEMASONRY.

The first society of antiquity with which Freemasonry appears to stand in an historical connection are those corporations of architects, which, with the Romans, existed under the name of *collegia* and *corpora*.

The first corporations of builders were established in Rome under the name of *collegia fabrorum*, with many other societies of mechanics and artificers, *collegia artificum*, by Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, who reigned from 714 to 672 before the Christian era.

During his reign he introduced many salutary reforms, and among these were the establishments of those *collegia*, after the model of the Greek colleges of artificers and the societies of priests. Numa, though not a warrior, possessed all the qualities of a lawgiver and a just and wise ruler; he also instituted for these *collegia* proper meetings, and certain religious rites.

According to the laws of the twelve tables, which were framed in 451 B. C. by a law commission composed of ten patricians, and appointed under the consulate of Appius Claudius Crassinas and Titus Genucius Augurinus, the *collegia* had a right to make their own laws, and could conclude certain treaties with each other, if nothing was contained therein contrary to the public laws, which were conformable with Solon's legislation.

Such corporations, particularly the craft connected with hydraulics, naval and civil architecture, early became dispersed through all the provinces of the Roman State; went on continually increasing and co-operated most powerfully in propagating the Roman customs, science, art, and laws. They, as it were, cultivated the soil which the sword had gained.

Being formed in those early times, in which States and social religious exercises were formed after the model of a family, as an inseparable unity or ensemble, these Roman *collegia*, besides their integrity in the arts, were at the same time civil companionships and religious unions.

This peculiarity of character, so productive to the development of mankind, was preserved by these *collegia*, particularly those of architects, to the end of the Roman Empire, and transplanted into the