

PHœNICIAN INFLUENCE UPON FREEMASONRY.

Bro. Sir Charles Warren and the Rev. Bro. A. F. A. Woodford, M. A., recently intimated that traces of ancient Phœnician influence might be discerned in Freemasonry. We think the suggestion can be abundantly proved to be well-founded, and we invite our readers' attention to what we conceive to be evidence in support of this belief.

The traditions and lectures of the craft allege the existence of Freemasonry since the earliest ages of the world, but expressly refer to the building of King Solomon's Temple as a remarkable event in fraternal achievement. We have been of the number of those who attribute the origin of Masonry to Solomon, much less to any other personage at a later day. We credit too highly the Biblical statements and our Masonic traditions in this regard. Solomon said to Hiram, King of Tyre (1 Kings v. 6), "Thou knowest that there is not among us any that have skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians." This was true, and the Jews, who were also unskilled in the working of metals and stone, without the aid of the Sidonians or Tyrians, could never have built Solomon's Temple. Now who were these foreign craftsmen? They were Phœnicians. And who were the Phœnicians? They were, according to Sir William Betham and other scholars, "the shrewdest and most acute of mankind, skilled in science, literature, and art," the inventors of the alphabet, of the art of navigation and of the science of astronomy. Pomponius relates that Phœnician navigators sailed the fleets of Solomon to Ophir (Arabia) and Tarshish (Spain.) Italy was their first great colony, their monuments being found to-day in Etruria, and they sailed the seas over, settled Cyprus, Sicily and Sardinia, penetrated to all the coasts of the Mediterranean, founded Utica and Carth-

age in Africa, and Cadiz, in Spain, passed beyond the Pillars of Hercules, at Gibraltar, and colonized Great Britain and Ireland. As builders they were famous for their Cyclopean architecture, of which there are remains in Etruria and elsewhere. This was the character of the foundations of Solomon's Temple: "The foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits (fifteen feet) and eight cubits" (twelve feet). (1 Kings vii. 10). King Hiram's Cyclopean builders laid those foundations.

Among the Phœnicians were two classes of men gathered into secret societies akin to Freemasonry, viz., the Dionysian Architects, and the Cabiri. The former were a fraternity of builders in Asia-Minor, linked by the secret ties of the Dionysian Mysteries. The latter were sometimes styled "Sons of Vulcan," from their proficiency in the art of metallurgy. The Phœnicians or Tyrians were not idolaters. Mr. George Rawlinson says, "they did not worship images. In the temple of Melkarth, at Gades (Cadiz), there was no material emblem of the God at all, with the exception of an ever burning fire." So Betham tells us, concerning the Cabiri, that they taught in their Mysteries "the unity of the godhead," and they had "certain symbols and signs by which they were known to each other and held together." The Cabiri were philosophers, builders, miners, and navigators, and "speculatives as well as operatives." "The account given of their Mysteries of Samothrace, by Diodorus Siculus, is what the Freemasons still say of themselves, and have always asserted." The literary fragment known as "Sanchonathon," compiled by Philo in the second century, informs us that the Phœnician priests of the Mysteries allegorized all the discoveries of learning, and taught alphabetical writing, which the initiated contemplated with wonder and awe, and also the use of the mariner's