

paratively, so limited in number as to render any notice of their craft or industry, in the statute, inexpedient or unnecessary. Yet, if the latter solution be accepted, why the wearisome changes which are rung upon the varieties of the tiler's trade, in the same clause of the Act? Mr. Brewer, quoting the stat. 6 Hen. VIII., c. iii. (XXVI.), speaks of "superior workmen, or *freemasons*." The word in the same sense is used by a high authority, who says:—"Every kind of artisan's work, if on an extensive scale, was superintended by a master in the craft—he is the master carpenter or the *freemason*."¹

Had the generic term "masons" been used by the framers of the statute, the inference would be plain—that it referred to both the superior and the inferior classifications of the trade; but the employment of the expression *rough mason*, in a code, moreover, so carefully drawn up, almost forbids the supposition that it was intended to comprise a higher class of workmen, and rather indicates that the term *Freemason*—as already suggested,—though, perhaps, in common or successive use, applied to denote a stonecutter, a contractor a superior workman, a passed apprentice or free journeyman, and a person enjoying the freedom of a guild or company, had then lost—if, indeed, it ever possessed—any *præter* operative significance, and if for no other reason was omitted from the statute, as importing a sense in which it would have been generally misunderstood.

According to Brentano, "Wherever the craft guilds were legally acknowledged, we find foremost that the right to exercise their craft and sell their manufactures depended upon the *freedom* of the city."

A pamphlet of the year 1649, referring to the constitution of the Clothworkers' Company, as amended in the twenty-third year of Henry VII., and then existing, presents an interesting picture of the classes or gradations into which this association was divided.

"The first degree was Apprentices of the Craft. These were not to take wages, or work Journey-work, by their Ordinances.

"The second degree was Freemen; they presented, admitted to work by Journeys, or Journey-work. These sometimes called the Yeomandry; sometimes, the Company of Batchelors. They entred Bond not to work with any Forraigner, but with Freemen of the Craft, and this was according to their Ordinances too.

"The third degree was Householdors they admitted.

"The fourth degree was a Livery or Cloathing, such as wore Gown and Hood. This was called the fellowship.

"The fifth degree was Warden.

"All were under the government, rule, and punishment of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen for the time being. Such as rebelled were bound in recognizance to the Mayor's Court."

In bringing to a close my view of the early statutes, whilst conscious that I have unfolded very little that may tend to strengthen the opinion entertained of the high antiquity of Freemasonry, I may claim, at least, to have dissipated some few errors, and thereby to

¹ Letters and Papers, etc., temp. Henry VIII., vol. i., 1862, preface, p. cxii.

² J. E. T. Rogers, A History of Agriculture and Prices in England from 1259 to 1793 (1866), vol. i., p. 502.

³ Brentano, On the History and Development of Gilds, p. 65.

⁴ The Government of the Fullers, Shearmen, and Clothworkers of London, p. 6.