

GOTHIC CONSTITUTION.

The regulations for the government of the craft, which are said to have been adopted at the city of York in 926, when the Grand Assembly was held under Prince Edwin, and to which additions were afterwards made at Annual Assemblies, have been called the "Gothic Constitutions," because they were written in the old Gothic character. Several copies of them were said to have existed in 1707, when Dr. Anderson digested them, and made them the base of the Book of Constitutions.

GRAND LODGES.

The present organization of Grand Lodges, is comparatively modern. At first every lodge was independent, and a sufficient number of brethren meeting together^d were empowered to practice all the rights of Masonry without a warrant of Constitution. The brethren were in the habit of meeting annually, or as many as could conveniently do so, for the purpose of conferring upon the general interests of the craft, and on such occasions chose a Grand Master or chief ruler. These meetings were called Grand Assemblies, and the privilege of attending them was not, as now, restricted to the Grand officers, Master and Wardens of private lodges, but was the duty of every Mason. For instance, amongst the old Charges, preserved by the Lodge of Antiquity in London, is one which says, "every Master and fellow shall come to the Assemblie, if it be within fifty miles of him, and if he have any warning, and if he have trespassed the craft, to abide the award of Masters and Fellows. The oldest charter in England that we are aware of is one quoted by Preston, and said to have been in the possession of Nicholas Stone, a sculptor under the celebrated Inigo Jones, in which it is stated that "St. Albans loved the Masons well, and cherished them much, and he got them a charter from the king and his counsell, for to holde a general counselle, and give itt to name Assemblie." As St. Albans was mar-