

outside of the Kingdom of England.

Previous to 1600, there were few Master Masons but such as had been Master of a lodge, a duly qualified Architect, or Master Workman, or very eminent scholars, or men of high social rank. These latter classes, however, continued to increase, until, in 1700, their numbers and influence were paramount in the deliberations of the general assembly at London.

The great fire of London, and the civil strifes that raged throughout the kingdom during the middle and latter part of the seventeenth century, had seriously affected the Masonic associations. The London lodges had dwindled down to four in number, and those were sickly and weak. King William the Third, who was a Mason, endeavored to revive the institution and draw together the scattered remnants. He presided in a lodge at Hampton Court in 1700, to stimulate and encourage the fraternity.

The City and St. Paul's Cathedral, having been re-built, many of the Operative Masons had left for other fields of labor, which left the four lodges, composed largely of accepted Masons of rank, and a high degree of intelligence, who desired to perpetuate the institution in a transformed state. Accordingly, at the annual feast, held on the 24th June, 1703, that memorable resolution was adopted, declaring that Masonry should hereafter be free to men of all professions, provided they were regularly approved and initiated into the fraternity. But, owing to the determined opposition of the then Grand Master, Sir Christopher Wren, its force was left in abeyance until after his death, which took place in 1716.

At a general assembly held in 1717, they thought it well to establish a centre of union and harmony under one Grand Master, and they elected Bro. Anthony Sayer to that position.

The lodge at York having been

dormant for about fifty years, the four London lodges detached themselves from all connection therewith, and put into full operation the resolution of 1703, and constituted themselves under the title of the Grand Lodge of England.

Now we come to a new era in Masonry.

The revision of the rules and regulations and the rituals, now became necessary, to render them more suited to the intelligence of the age, and the transformed condition of the institution.

A committee of fourteen, chosen from the erudite Masons of London, including the learned Dr. Desaguliers, who then possessed all the Masonic works of the late Sir Christopher Wren. The succeeding Grand Master, that profound scholar, George Payne, who compiled the greater portion of the work; also, the celebrated Dr. Anderson. These learned brethren, after three years of research and labor, presented their work to the Grand Lodge, which, with some slight modifications, was adopted. All that was proper to be printed was entrusted to Dr. Anderson, and published in 1722, as the first Book of Constitutions. It embodied the fundamental principles and landmarks of the fraternity, and was at once accepted as such throughout the Masonic world, and so remains to this day.

The rituals and all the secret portions were arranged in manuscript, and preserved among the archives of Grand Lodge. Copies thereof were entrusted to Provincial Grand Masters, to enable them to instruct the Masters of lodges within their respective Provinces. But they were still the property of Grand Lodge.

The Grand Lodge of England thus established, instituted lodges in all parts of the world, where the English language prevailed, and also in foreign countries.

In 1729, the Grand Lodge of Ireland, at Dublin, was established.