

mitted a visiting member, and being strictly tried and examined and found duly qualified, he was accordingly admitted as Fellow Craft and Master Mason, and took the obligation of initiating a Master Mason from one Lodge to another, and having signified his desire to become a permanent member of this Lodge, and to pay one-half guinea to the publick funds of this Lodge in consideration of such privilege, the Brethren unanimously agreed thereto, and he was accordingly voted a permanent member." The form of obligation signed by visiting Brethren is as follows: "I solemnly swear by God, and as I shall answer to God at the great day of Judgment, that I was duly entered an apprentice Mason within the Lodge adhibited to my subscription, and I further solemnly swear by the oath I now take, and the oath I took when I was so made a Mason, that I shall never reveal any of the secrets of Masonry which I may see or hear in consequence of being admitted as a visiting Brother in this Lodge of Fortrose, in Stornoway."

1800.

On the 21st February, 1800, "The Brethren found it necessary to reject with regret the petition of Donald Nicholson merely owing to his being illiterate, a class of people, however unexceptionable otherwise, they resolve hereafter to exclude from admission into this Society, and have appointed a deliverance to this effect." At a later meeting "A petition was presented from John Morison, mariner, but he being represented as an illiterate man, and consequently by the rules of the Lodge not an eligible member, therefore as a proof of which he was requested to write his own petition . . . having presented a specimen of his writing, he was balloted for in the usual manner, and entered an apprentice."

Bro. Donald McDonald, schoolmaster, held the office of Secretary at the beginning of the century. The following extract is an example of the quaint and formal manner in which the minutes were written, and sketches the general programme gone through by the Brethren on St. John's Day.

On the 27th December 1800, "The Lodge having met at 11 a.m., the office hearers were elected, and the state of the finances and other business of the Lodge was taken into consideration and adjusted to the satisfaction of the Brethren present. Thereafter the Lodge was closed, having first agreed, in honour of the day, to walk in a solemn procession to the church to hear a discourse from our Reverend Brother Chaplain, which was accordingly done, and a most elegant and animating discourse was delivered by him, in every way applicable to the occasion, and a handsome collection made at the church door for the benefit of Bro. George Bartleman, late Tyler of this Lodge, The Brethren, after preaching, walked back to the Lodge Room in the same order as they proceeded. The Brethren then resolved to walk in procession to Mr. Morison's new Inn, where they meant to conclude the evening by dining together in a brotherly and affectionate manner."

The funds of the Lodge were in a fairly good condition during these early years, and notwithstanding their large outlays upon the buildings the Brethren never refused a bona fide application for charity. Petitions for assistance from widows of deceased Brethren were frequently brought forward, and sums granted varying from five to ten pounds. The average yearly amount expended in charity ran to about thirty pounds sterling.

1808.

On 27th December, 1808, "The Lodge took into consideration a petition presented to them from Mrs. Jean McAulay, spouse to Malcolm McLeod, sailor, a member of the Lodge, and now a prisoner in Norway, when they directed their Treasurer to pay her to this date one pound sixteen shillings sterling, and also to pay her from this date twenty shillings every quarter until her husband would be delivered from his confinement."

At this time Napoleon Bonaparte had declared the British Islands in a state of blockade, and England had similarly retaliated. Smuggling was a capital offence, but men smuggled on a large scale in defiance of law, and both Governments sold for money permission to break the law, thereby earning large profits. Bro. Malcolm Macleod had evidently shipped aboard one of these smuggling or privateering crafts, and had the misfortune to be captured and