

"In the same year, the brethren held a Lodge at Bradford, Yorkshire, and made Masons of some eighteen gentlemen, resident in that neighborhood. Rarely a tradesman was received, the members being nearly all of the aristocracy; and the Lodge was never, not even before the revival of 1717, in any sense employed for operative purposes. Like unto the records of a Lodge in Scotland, the minutes clearly prove the existence of *speculative* Lodges prior to 1717; so that the 'revivalists' of that eventful period can not be credited with a severance of the operative element from Freemasonry, seeing speculative Lodges met prior to the revival itself.

"This fact seems to have generally been forgotten or ignored by many who *claim so much* for the London Revivalists, and *so little* for Freemasonry, before their introduction to the Craft. We append two extracts from the York Records to prove our position, in which the absence of any allusion to Grand Lodge, Grand Master, and such titles, can not fail to be noted by all observant Masons, as being their special characteristic:

'At St. John's Lodge, on Christmas, 1716, at the house of Mr. Jas. Boreham situate Stonegate, in York, being a general Lodge held there, by Honorable Society and Company of Freemasons, in the City of York, Jno. Turner was sworn and admitted into the said Honorable Society and Fraternity of Freemasons.

CHARLES FAIRFAX, *Deputy President*.'

"On January 10, 1722-3, at the same time, the following persons were acknowledged as Brethren of this Ancient Society [here names follow]; and on February 4th, 1722-3, at the same time and place, the two persons whose names are underwritten were, upon their examination, received as Masons, and as such were accordingly introduced and admitted into this Lodge.

"We see, then, that in the one case there are initiates recorded, and in the other Masons made elsewhere were visitors to the Lodge. These visitations prior to 1717, are of importance in confirming the fact of the universality of the Freemasonry that was worked before the last century, whatever it may have been."

THE MASTER MASON'S DEGREE.

"Bro. Wm. James Hughan treats this subject historically:

"The sublime degree of a Master Mason, *Alias* the 'Third Degree' may be very ancient; but, so far, the evidence respecting its history goes no further back than the early part of last century. Few writers on the subject appear to base their observations on *facts*, but prefer the 'traditions' (so called) derived from old Masons. We, however, give the preference to the minutes and by-laws of Lodges. All of which we have either seen, traced, or obtained copies of, unequivocally prove the *degree* of a Master Mason to be an early introduction of the revivalists of 1717. No record prior to the second decade of the last century ever mentions *Masonic degrees*, and all the manuscripts preserved decidedly confirm us in the belief that in the mere operative (although partly speculative) career of Freemasonry, the ceremony of reception was of a most unpretentious and simple character, mainly for the communication of certain lyrics and secrets, and for the conservation of the ancient customs of the Craft.

"Bro. D. Murray Lyon in Scotland, and Bro. the Rev. A. F. A. Woodford and myself in England, have for years endeavored to trace and examine every old manuscript relating to Freemasonry in Great Britain; and so far, not one discovered says aught of Masonic degrees, excepting the 'Sloane manuscript,' the date being far from established; and, therefore, is not evidence on either side.

"In the 'Book of Constitutions,' A.D. 1723 (the first edition issued by any Grand Lodge in the world, we find, page 61, the following law: 'Apprentices