

was held in York on the 27th December, 1561, when Queen Elizabeth, who was suspicious of their secrecy, sent an armed force to dissolve the meeting. A copy is still preserved of the regulations which were adopted by a similar assembly held in 1663, on the festival of St. John the Evangelist; and in these regulations it is declared that the private lodges shall give an account of all their acceptations made during the year to the General Assembly. Another regulation, however, adopted at the same time, still more explicitly acknowledges the existence of a General Assembly as the governing body of the fraternity. It is there provided, "that for the future, the said fraternity of Freemasons shall be regulated and governed by one Grand Master and as many Wardens as the said society shall think fit to appoint at every Annual General Assembly."

And thus the interests of the institution continued until the beginning of the eighteenth century, or for nearly eight hundred years, to be entrusted to those General Assemblies of the fraternity, who, without distinction of rank or office, annually met at York to legislate for the government of the craft.

But in 1717, a new organization of the governing need was adopted, which gave birth to the establishment of a Grand Lodge, in the form in which these bodies now exist. So important a period in the history of Masonry demands our special attention.

After the death, in 1702, of King William, who was himself a Mason, and a great patron of the craft, the institution began to languish, the lodges decreased in number, and the General Assembly was entirely neglected for many years. A few old lodges continued, it is true, to meet regularly, but they consisted of only a few members.

At length, on the accession of George I., the Masons of London and its vicinity determined to revive the annual communications of the society. There were at that time only four lodges in the south of England, and the members of these, with several old Brethren, met in February, 1717, at the Apple Tree Tavern, in Charles street, Covent Garden, and organized by putting the oldest Master Mason, who was the Master of a lodge, in the chair; they then constituted themselves into what Anderson calls, "a Grand Lodge *pro tempore*;" resolved to hold the annual assembly and feast, and then to choose a Grand Master.

Accordingly, on the 24th of June, 1717, the assembly and feast were held; and the oldest Master of a lodge being in the chair, a list of candidates was presented, out of which Mr. Anthony Sayer was elected Grand Master, and Capt. Joseph Elliott and Mr. Jacob Lamball, Grand Wardens.

The Grand Master then commanded the Masters and Wardens of lodges to meet the Grand Officers every quarter, in communication, at the place he should appoint in his summons sent by the Tiler.

This was, then, undoubtedly, the commencement of that organization of the Masters and Wardens of Lodges into a Grand Lodge, which has ever since continued to exist.

The fraternity at large, however, still continued to claim the right of being present at the Annual Assembly; and, in fact, at that meeting, their punctual attendance at the next Annual Assembly and feast was recommended.

At the same meeting it was resolved "that the privilege of assembling as Masons, which had been hitherto unlimited, should be vested in certain lodges or assemblies of Ma-

sons convened in certain places; and that every Lodge to be hereafter convened, except the four old lodges at this time existing, should be legally authorized to act by a warrant from the Grand Master for the time being, granted to certain individuals by petition, with the consent and approbation of the Grand Lodge in communication; and that, without such warrant, no lodge should hereafter be deemed regular or constitutional."

In consequence of this regulation, several new lodges received Warrants of Constitution, and their Masters and Wardens were ordered to attend the communications of the Grand Lodge. The Brethren at large vested all their privileges in the four old lodges, in trust that they would never suffer the old charges and landmarks to be infringed; and the old lodges, in return, agreed that the Masters and Wardens of every new lodge that might be constituted, should be permitted to share with them all the privileges of the Grand Lodge, except precedence of rank. The Brethren, says Preston, considered their further attendance at the meetings of the society unnecessary after these regulations were adopted; and, therefore,

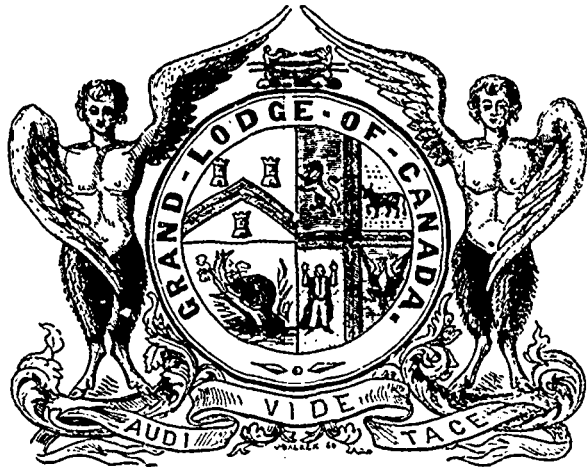
trusted implicitly to their Masters and Wardens for the government of the craft; and thenceforward the Grand Lodge has been composed of all the Masters and Wardens of the subordinate Lodges which constitute the jurisdiction.

The ancient right of the craft, however, to take a part in the proceedings of the Grand Lodge or Annual Assembly, was fully acknowledged by a new regulation, adopted about the same time, in which it is declared that all alterations of the Constitutions must be proposed and agreed to, at the third quarterly communication preceding the annual feast, and "be offered also to the perusal of all the Brethren before dinner, *even of the youngest Entered Apprentice*."

This regulation has, however, become obsolete, and the Annual Assembly of Masons has long since ceased to be held; the Grand Lodges having, since the beginning of the eighteenth century, assumed the form and organization which they still preserve, as strictly representative bodies.

(To be Continued.)

* General Regulations, art. xxxix.



The accompanying illustration is the Official Seal of the Grand Lodge of Canada, which is a very artistic and emblematic design, and reflects great credit on the taste of the executive of the Grand Lodge of Canada. On the dexter side of the shield are the arms of the speculative masons, and on the sinister side the operative, with the Canadian beaver. Each of our future numbers will be illustrated with sketches of masonic antiquities, seals, and other devices, which we trust will prove interesting to our readers.

We have much pleasure in being enabled to inform our readers that two new lodges, both under the Grand Lodge of Canada, have been recently organized in Lower Canada; one in the city of Montreal by our French Canadian brethren, under the designation *La Loge Jacques Cartier*, the other at Melbourne, Eastern Townships, called *St. Francis Lodge*, both have our best wishes for success. We learn that at Melbourne twelve candidates were, by dispensation, admitted members at the first regular communication.

A petition for a dispensation to hold a lodge at Sherbrooke has been received by the D. G. M. of the G. L. of C. We believe that the prayer of the petition has been granted, and that ere our present number will have been issued a regular lodge of Free and Accepted Masons will have been established in the flourishing capital of the Eastern section of the Lower Province.

We shall be at all times happy to exchange with our contemporaries, more especially with such of those as are like ourselves, "Masonic;" and trust that our brethren of the fourth estate will have no cause to complain of any want of courtesy on the part of the *Canadian Masonic Pioneer*.

We shall be glad to make arrangements with any Brothers in Eastern or Western Canada, in the Eastern Provinces, or in the United States, to act as Agents for the *Pioneer*.

We trust our brethren in Upper Canada will encourage us both in a literary and pecuniary point of view, we have mailed copies of this our first number to many on whose support we have reason to reckon and trust they will not disappoint us.