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### THE YORK LEGEND.

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YORK is a city in the north of England, which is celebrated for its traditional connection with the early history of Masonry in that kingdom. No topic in the history of Freemasonry has so much engaged the attention of modern Masonic scholars, or given occasion to more discussion, than the alleged facts of the existence of Masonry in the tenth century at the city of York, as a prominent point, of the calling of a congregation of the Craft there in the year 926, of the organization of a General Assembly, and the adoption of a constitution.

During the whole of the last and the greater part of the present century, the Fraternity in general have accepted all of these statements as genuine portions of authentic history; and the adversaries of the Order have, with the same want of discrimination, rejected them as myths, while a few earnest seekers for truth have been at a loss to determine what part was historical and what part was legendary.

Recently the discovery of many old manuscripts have directed the labors of such scholars as Hughan, Woodford, Lyon and others, to the critical examination of the early history of Masonry, and that of York has particularly engaged their attention.

For a thorough comprehension of the true merits of this question, it will be necessary that the student should first acquaint himself with what was, until recently, the recognized theory as to the origin of Masonry at York, and then he should examine the newer hypothesis advanced by the writers of the present day. In other words, he must read both the tradition and the history.

In pursuance of this plan, I propose to commence with the legend of York Masonry, as found in the old manuscript constitutions, and then proceed to a review of what has been the result of recent investigations. It may be premised that, of all those who have subjected these legends to the crucible of historical criticism, Bro. William James Hughan, of Cornwall, in England, must unhesitatingly be acknowledged as "*facile princeps*," the ablest, the most laborious, and the most trustworthy investigator. He was the first and the most successful remover of the cloud of tradition which so long had obscured the sunlight of history.