imagination, and there is no doubt men have taken advantage of the opportunity. But an archæologist who feels that the rules of evidence should guide his conclusions deals with the subject in a different manner. He seeks for data that cannot be disputed, and is chary about drawing conclusions until he feels that sufficient evidence is forthcoming.

The late James Orchard Halliwell or Halliwell-Phillips was a man of the new school. For most readers of newspapers he was a specialist who had devoted himself to one of the most difficult of subjects, the life of Shakespeare, and if he was unable to make it clear that the player was a poet, he at least revealed much about English life in the Elizabethan days.

Earlier, however, in his career, Mr. Halliwell-Phillips's researches were not confined to the works of one man. He was eager to write the history of English poetry, as seen in its earliest attempts, and he was at pains to master the archaicisms of the language in order that he might become an interpreter. It was in that way he hit upon the remarkable discovery that a century prior to the Norman conquest there was a recognition of an organization in connection with building which appears to have corresponded with Freemasonry, as it was believed to exist at a later period of the Middle Ages. It is time, however, the author should be allowed to be his own interpreter. Writing in 1839, he said :

We possess no series of documents, nor even an approach to a series, sufficiently extensive to enable us to form any connected history of the ancient institutions of Masons and Freemasons; we have, in fact, no materials by which we can form any definite idea of the precise nature of those early societies. We must, therefore, rest contented with the light which a few incidental notices and accidental accounts, far from being altogether capable of unsuspected reliance, afford us. These, as far as I have been able to collect, I have arranged in the following few

pages, with a hope that some fresh evidences may before long be discovered to elucidate a subject not, by any means, devoid of all interest.

During some late researches among the manuscripts in the British Museum for the illustration of the early history of English poetry, I chanced on one in the Old Royal Library, said in the catalogue by Casley to be a " Poem of Moral Duties," and marked 17 A.1. Upon a further examination, however, I found that it was a very singular and curious poem on the Constitutions of Masonry, and a history and laws of the Society of Masons, stated to have been established by King Athelstan. This M.S. consists of a small square duodecimo volume, on vellum, of the fourteenth century, on thirty-three leaves. It is thus entitled in an old rubric :

Hic incipiunt constituciones atis gemetrie secundum Euclidem.

The account commences with a fabulous history of the invention of the art by " the grete clerke Euclyde." It then proceeds to state that—

Thys craft com ynto England as y zow say,
Yn tyme of good Kyng Adelstones day ;
He made tho bothe, halle and eke bowre,
And hye templus of gret honowre,
To sportyn hym yn bothe day and nyzth,
And to worschepe hys God with alle hys myzht.

And we then have a full transcript of all the articles in verse. I do not think it necessary to give more than one specimen—

Articulus primus.

The furst artycul of thys gemetry,
The mayster mason most be full securly—
Bothe stedefast, trusty, and trewe ;
Hyt schal hymn never thenne arewe.
And pay thy felows after the coste,
As vitaylys goth thenne wille than woste,
And pay them trewly upon thy fay,
What that they deserven may.
And to here hure take no more,
But what that they mowe serve fore.
And spa e nowther for love ny drede,
Of nowther partys to take no mede.
Of lord my felow, whether he be,
Of hem thou take no manner of fe.
And as a jugge stonde up-rigzth,
And thenne thou dost to bothe good ryzth,
And trewly do this, wheresever thou gost,
Thy worschep, thy profyt, hyt schall be most.

I think that the foundation of such