

well recorded, but generally speaking the minutes are not well written. The MS. Constitutions, however, and the orders of A. D. 1701, are good specimens of caligraphy. That the lodge continued true to its operative origin even in latter years is evident from the fact that *all the business* transacted at the meetings had reference simply to Operative Masonry in one form or other. On Saturday, 31st December, 1748,

"It was ordered that all apprentices that shall offer to be admitted into this Lodge, after serving due apprenticeship, shall pay for such admittance Ten shillings. Also that all other persons and strangers (*not serving a due apprenticeship*) that shall apply to be admitted into said Lodge, shall pay for such admittance the sum of Seventeen shillings. The meeting days for said Society to be the 24th day of June and the 27th day of Decr. in every year."

Certain fines are then agreed on, and officers chosen. It was

"Ordered that none shall be admitted into the said Lodge under the age of 21 or above 40. Also that in case of any of the said members of the said Society shall fail in the world, Its ordered that there shall be paid weekly out of the said Lodge 4s. Producing proper certificates of the same, and when able, the said sum to be withdrawn."

On the 24th June, 1749, provision was made for the relief of the wives and children of deceased members to the extent of half a crown weekly. It was also.

"Ordered that there shall be paid out of the said Lodge Dan. Cuthbertson musicians the sum of Ten shillings yearly (to wit) 5s. at Christmas and 5s. at Midsummer.

The same sum was also agreed to be paid to Mr. Nich. Brown, as Clerk to the Society and in like manner. At this lodge (24th June, 1749) there was left "in the Box or Lodge" £3 4s. On the 27th December in the same year the amount was raised to £7 5s. 10d. The largest sum recorded was at the lodge held June 24th, 1756, when a net balance was declared of £51 16s. 10d. The following entry is made :

"Inrollments of Apprentices—James Swan bound apprentice to Patrick Mills, November, 1751; Edward Robinson bound apprentice to Michael Robinson, April, 1752."

We find that these two Master Masons (*i.e.* Mills and Robinson) were members of the lodge.

The minutes conclude with a statement of accounts dated "June ye 24th, 1757," and mentions that two shillings were "paid for Travelling Brother." Whether any but operative Masons were admitted we cannot determine from the volume of records. It is probable other than Masons were accepted as members, which, after all, would be nothing unusual, for gentlemen were received into operative lodges in the seventeenth century. Mainly, however, if not *wholly*, the Alnwick Lodge was an operative one, and was for the protection of the Craft and the benefit of the Craftsmen. The question as to "Three Degrees" being worked prior to A. D. 1720, receives no additional light from these minutes. In common with all old Lodge Records that we have examined there is a uniform silence as to Masonic *degrees* of any kind, and we do not think that these Alnwick Lodge Minutes are likely to prove more than usually valuable, although, of course, these being the earliest of their kind yet discovered in England gives them a peculiar prominence, and confers a special English value on their contents. In Scotland the fact of lodge records dating back to 1701 is nothing uncommon.—*Bro. William James Hughan.*