

world at large, disseminated from the Cloisters at the time of the Crusades, transferred to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem on the persecution and dissolution of the Templars, preserved after the "Reformation" by those Knights, who, having embraced the Protestant faith, merged into the ranks of civil life. Our Templar system is based on the same principles and usages, and we profess to follow their teachings, having no reference to the obsolete "High Grade Templar Degree" of the "Strict Observance," so widely practised throughout Europe in the last century (3) also rejecting the various theories of a direct Templar descent, as well as the fabulous French "L'Ordre du Temple," which had a few followers at the commencement of the present century.

(3.) The "Strict Observance," meaning *implicit obedience*, was first instituted and grafted on Freemasonry in Germany, by Baron Von Hund, in 1754, who had been admitted in France some ten years before into the Order of "Knights Templar." Supposed to have been preserved in Scotland, based upon the fiction that at the destruction of the Order certain Knights took refuge there, and preserved the existence of the Order by joining the Guilds of "Stone Masons," and thus giving rise to the fraternity of "*Free and Accepted Masons*," and that on the institution of the "Rite of Strict Observance," the time had arrived when they should boldly proclaim the continuance of the Order, their numbers to be renewed for ever from the ranks of "Freemasonry," in gratitude for the protection and support they had received.

In July, 1782, Prince Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick, Grand Master of the Rite, held a Congress at Wilhelmsbad, in Hesse Casel, by a great representative assembly of Masonic delegates throughout the world. The result of the conference was a complete revolution of the "High Grade" Templar system, at which it was resolved and declared that Freemasons were *not* the successors of the Templars, although connected with them. The Rituals were to be amended, and the Lodges not to be obliged to work the High degrees against their own wishes—reference to the Templars was to be a merely historical instruction.

This convocation opened the modern period of Freemasonry in Europe, and the adoption of "*Black Masonry*," (or Masonic Templary,) so named, it is said, from the modern Order adopting a black dress as a symbol of mourning for the martyrdom of the last chivalric Grand Master of the ancient order, "Jacques de Molai."

I am of opinion it arose on the dissolution of the Order, from the dispersed and persecuted Templars joining the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (or Malta,) whose *habit is black*.

After the conference at "Wilhelmsbad," the Rite of "Strict Observance" gradually declined, and ultimately died out altogether.