

been generally accepted by his auditors, and not advanced by him as something new. He says: "You know that we can boast that the first Grand Lodge ever held in England was held in this city, where Edwin the first Christian King of Northumbria, about the 600th year after Christ, and who laid the foundation of our Cathedral, sat as Grand Master."

Edwin, who was born in 586, ascended the throne in 617, and died in 633. He was pre-eminent among the Anglo-Saxon Kings, who were his contemporaries, for military genius and statesmanship. So inflexible was his administration of justice, that it was said that in his reign a woman or child might carry everywhere a purse of gold without danger of robbery, high commendation in those days of almost unbridled rapine. The chief event of the reign of Edwin was the introduction of Christianity into the kingdom of Northumbria. Previous to his reign, the northern metropolis of the church had been placed at York, and the king patronized Paulinus the bishop, giving him a house and other possessions in that city.

The only objection to this story is the date, which is three hundred years before that of the reign of Athelstan and the supposed meeting at York in 926.

3. Are the constitutions which were adopted by that General Assembly now extant? It is not to be doubted that, if a General Assembly was held, it must have adopted constitutions or regulations for the government of the Craft. Such would mainly be the object of the meeting. But there is no sufficient evidence that the document now called the "York Constitutions," or the "Gothic Constitutions," are those that were adopted in 926. It is more probable that the original document and all genuine copies of it are lost, but that it formed the type from which all the more modern manuscript constitutions have been formed. There is the strongest internal evidence that all the manuscripts, from the Halliwell to the Payworth, had a common original form, from which they were copied with more or less accuracy, or on which they were framed with more or less modification. And this original I suppose to be the constitutions which must have been adopted at the General Assembly at York.

The theory, then which I think may safely be advanced on this subject, and which must be maintained until there are better reasons than we now have to reject it, is that about the year 926 a General Assembly of Masons was held at York under the patronage of Edwin, brother of Athelstan, at which assembly a code of laws was adopted, which became the basis on which all subsequent Masonic constitutions were framed.—*National Freemason*.

## HISTORY OF THE TWO PILLARS.

THE interest in relics has its foundation in the transitory nature of all material forms and the difficulty with which man makes any permanent impression upon them. It has taken but a thousand years or so to obliterate the monumental evidences of some of the greatest cities of the world. A few manuscript books have lasted a little longer, but time at last tyrannizes over all; walls crumble, the ancient books go piecemeal to rags, languages die, the meaning of words and symbols changes, and it requires the continuous attention of man to rescue anything from the sea of oblivion that continually encroaches upon the shores of history. A few leading ideas and words seem to last forever, but, as a rule, all handiwork that appeals to the eye disappears sooner or later; and when we meet with any artificial object which presents to our eyes a form preserved while cities have crumbled and nations have vanished, it seems a new revelation of the past. But it is in the unexpected discovery that familiar words, ideas, and objects have a pedigree as long as chronology itself that we get, perhaps, the most vivid impression of contact with the past, and that shadowy hands seem to reach out suddenly from some mysterious storehouse of dead and dusty things to clasp our own. For the great majority of even educated people, such an experience as this may be found in the history of the modern dollar-mark, \$. How little does the clerk, shop