

THE CRAFTSMAN, HAMILTON, 15th JANUARY, 1867.

CENTENARY OF THE LODGE OF ST. MARNOCK.

A grand Masonic gathering occurred at Ayrshire, in connection with the centenary festival of the Lodge of St Marnock, No. 109, on the 21st of November last. It is a curious fact that since its institution, in November 1736, the Grand Lodge of Scotland has only on three occasions deigned to favor Ayrshire with a deputation of its office bearers and members, one during the period of its supremacy in Scotland being disputed by Mother Kilwinning and twice since its incorporation with its ancient rival. The gathering took place in the George Hotel, Kilmarnock, and was a magnificent affair. It is a rather singular coincidence that an Earl of Dalhousie should have been Grand Master elect both at the birth of the Lodge St. Marnock and at the celebration of its centenary. In December, 1766, the ninth Earl of Dalhousie was nominated; and in November, 1767, elected, to the office of Grand Master. At the present moment the thirteenth Earl of Dalhousie has just been raised to the throne. During the evening Bro. D. Fraser, read the following sketch of the history of the Lodge St. Marnock, drawn up by Bro. Archibald McKay, the laureate of No. 22:—

St Marnock's Lodge is dedicated to the venerable saint from whom the name of the good town of Kilmarnock is derived. The charter of the Lodge is dated 17th November, 1767. The first Grand Master was William Park, of Langlands, surgeon. The roll of the original members contains the names of the leading men at that time in the town and neighbourhood. In 1770, William Earl of Glencairn was Grand Master. The Rev. Bro. Mutrie, of the Low Church, who figures in Burns' poem of "The Ordination," was Chaplain; and among the honorary members were the Hon. John Cunningham, brother to the Earl of Glencairn; James Dalrymple, younger, of Orangefield; and William Creech, bookseller, Edinburgh, who we take to be the well known Creech who published the second edition of the works of Burns, and who is the subject of some of the letters and poems of the poet. Among the other members we may mention Captain Wallace, of Cairnhill; John Glen, of Assloss; Dr. Hamilton, Kilmarnock House; Arnot, of Silverwood; Bailie Hunter, Robert Montgomery, of Bogston; Sir William Cunningham, William Muir, of Burlith; Bailie Hugh Parker, George Boyd, surgeon, and Patrick Clark, of Holmes, who was Grand Master in 1783. Among the old papers of the Lodge are a number of applications from individuals wishing to become members. Some of these are not a little curious. They show at least the social spirit with which the brethren were actuated in the good old time, and the anxiety which prevailed among the gentlemen of the town and neighborhood to get enrolled as members of the lodge; for example, Bailie David Hunter is represented as possessing "a love of mankind and attachment to his glass with sociable companions." Regarding William Paterson, of Muirhouse, it is said—"virtue, genius and manly spirit, and many other amiable accomplishments recommend the petitioner to the benign favor of St. Marnock Lodge;" and of Robert Gilchrist, of Maryland, merchant, and a brother of Kilmarnock Kilwinning, it is said—"If an honest heart, a sound

bottom, a genius sublime and eccentric, and an extensive knowledge of the mysteries of Masonry, united in a single man, can qualify him as a brother of St. Marnock, Bro. Gilchrist cannot, in justice to his merits, be denied that honor." Other recommendations of a similar kind might be given, but those just quoted are sufficient to afford an idea of the spirit which prevailed among "the merry Masons" in the good old times. In 1775, the Lodge held a grand ball or dance, at which about eighteen ladies attended, and afterwards supped with the brethren. "St. Marnock," says the minute, "presided and inspired all the company with harmony and mirth, and happiness crowned the evening and morning of a new day." At the consecration of the St. Marnock Lodge, the Grand Master "delivered," to use the words of the minute, "a very learned and elegant discourse on the antiquity, design and beauties of Masonry, and favored the Lodge with two inimitable songs of his own composition, which were received with the greatest applause by the brethren." As a specimen of the Kilmarnock muse a hundred years ago, we may give a few lines from one of the songs:

"From the Grand Lodge of Scotland our charter we claimed,
Our Lodge is St. Marnock, which high shall be famed—
The town has our wishes in commerce to thrive—
May trade with good order, be still kept alive.
Let their morals be chaste without cunning or art,
As pure their religion, so pure be their heart.

But, as the poet has it, "all that's bright must fade," and St. Marnock's Lodge, for a time at least, became somewhat dormant. From 1784 to 1807 few meetings were held. In the last mentioned year the Kilmarnock Academy was in the course of being built, and many gentlemen wishing the foundation-stone laid with Masonic honors, the brethren conceived it a good opportunity for again reviving the Lodge, which was done under favorable auspices Bro. Parker—the late Major Parker of Assloss, and then chief magistrate—laid the foundation-stone with great solemnity, in presence of the other civic authorities, several Masonic bodies, the volunteers, &c. The last meeting recorded in the old books of St. Marnock's was held in January, 1818. Perhaps the political excitement which prevailed about that time in the district was the cause of the meetings being discontinued. Bro. Frazer then proceeded: I have little more to add to the remarks so ably penned by our esteemed brother. But this much I may say, I am sure you will be glad to learn that the prosperity of Lodge St. Marnock, since its reposal in February, 1867, has been neither fast nor slow, but steady and progressive. We have since our resuscitation "initiated" thirty-one members, and done what we could for the advancement of Masonry as an ancient heirloom and a pleasing science. In looking over the minutes and other documents in connection with the original Lodge, I find that very many military gentlemen were admitted to the "light" in front of the altar dedicated to the patron saint of Kilmarnock. Officers of cavalry and foot appear in almost every minute, seeking for and obtaining admittance into our sublime mystical science. Of the names of the honored dead, but one, so far as known to us, still lives—a hale, active octogenarian. I refer to the Rev. Robert Hawthorne, Stapleford Lodge, Cambridge; and in respect of the kindness shown by him to us, at our reposal we have elected him honorary Chaplain to Lodge St. Marnock for