

the exclusive keeping of the lay guilds, and when the decay of faith and morals among the clergy was visited with daring sarcasm and contempt by the people. That the *Masons* were unpunished for their audacious indiscretions may have been because the doctrines of the holy faith were not impugned, whilst the hypocrisy and vice exposed in the all-expressive language of art, the priesthood could neither defend nor deny. It is not in the least probable that these things would have been tolerated by the dignitaries of the church unless the lay founders had lent their connivance. Mr. Findel, a German writer on Freemasonry, whose works have been translated into English, supposes that the *Masons* were haters of Popery at heart and believers in Evangelical truth, and that they were protected from persecution by the Guilds. In the opinion that they held a creed of apostolic simplicity, I think that the historian shows that large faith of love, and that he is willing to accept on behalf of its object whatever is of good report. It is more likely that they were just a trifle irreverent, and relished a joke more heartily than they enjoyed a mass. For instance, in the large Church of Strasburg, we are told that in one of the transepts opposite the pulpit, a hog and a goat may be seen carrying a sleeping fox as a sacred relic; a bitch is following the hog, in advance of this procession is a bear with a cross, and before the bear a wolf holding a burning wax taper. Then follows an ass, which is reading mass at the altar. A beautiful preserved, altar piece in the church of Doberan, Mecklenburg, exhibits priests grinding dogmas in a mill. In the Cathedral of Brandenburg a fox in priestly robes is preaching to a flock of geese. In the minster at Berne, in a picture (in that age architecture included painting) of the last judgment, the Pope is amongst the damned. We are all familiar with the uncouth faces of man and beast on our mediæval buildings that do duty

for gargoyle and corbel. Probably some of my readers have been in Temple Church, London, and must have noticed the heads in miniature which form the finial of the pew-ends. There is not according to our modern notions of such things, a becoming expression of countenance in any of them; they are all grotesque with grimace, and each seems to strive to outgrin the other.

Mr. Findel, in his work on Freemasonry, says that the Masonic Guilds took their rise in the church-building middle ages, and that their place of birth were the frontiers of France and Germany. Many of the great churches were a long time in the building, and the workmen thus embodied acquired the inevitable *esprit de corps* from community of interest and vocation. They were, in fact, a regiment of industry; they were separated by their craft and its symbolism from the civilians amongst whom they had pitched their tents; they were commanded by a master, and every nine men were under the wardenship of the tenth. When the Cathedral was completed; when it rose in tower and spire like a creation of wondrous frost work, the tents were struck and a new encampment found. But the men who were in some cases scattered throughout the country still belonged to the army of operative masons, and could by the use of sign or pass-word be at once received into the ranks of a new regiment. So that, apart from any secret rules of art, the incorporation had its manifest advantages. Indeed it had been asserted that the architects of the finest churches, those which best exemplified unity and grandeur of conception, were either laymen or ecclesiastics who were members of the Guilds. If this were so, the secrets of the Crafts must have been those of mere construction and manual skill; things which could be best taught and acquired experimentally. They have left their marks, however, on the stones of those magnificent edifices.