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THE HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY;

Its Origin, Object and Antiquity; its Transformation, Universality, and Persecution, with concluding remarks.

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MOTTO:

Bees will not work except in darkness.
Thought will not work except in silence;
Neither will virtue work except in secrecy.

SARTOR RESARTUS.

(CONCLUDED.)

SECOND PERIOD OF FREEMASONRY.

The transformation of the Masonic fraternity, alluded to in the preceding section, was brought about in 1717 by three members of those four Lodges then in existence.

The names of these three great men are,—the celebrated experimental philosopher, *Desaguliers*, the learned and affable theologian, *James Anderson*, and the profound *George Payne*.

Led by these men, the members of those four Lodges resolved to continue the Masonic Brotherhood under its ancient constitution, doctrines and liturgy, and as before, as accepted Masons, they had been accustomed to do, to continue the same, not as a society that had anything to do with building, but as one the essential characteristics of which were: *brotherly love, relief, and truth.*

They used their utmost endeavors to appear before the people and the government as a fraternity formed for the promotion of a love of mankind, tolerance and sociability, and that made its social duty implicit obedience to the lawful government.

By retaining the name, customs and ceremonies of the ancient fraternity, the new Lodges retained the privileges and charters of those societies, and induced many of the old accepted Masons that had left the inactive Lodges to re-unite with them in their most laudable undertaking.

They, (according to their own words,) in 1717, further thought it well to establish a centre of union and harmony under one Grand Master; to place the eldest Mason, who at the same time was a Master of a Lodge, in the chair as Grand Master; to constitute themselves, *pro tempore*, one Grand Lodge; to renew the quarterly communications of the officers of the Lodges, to hold the annual meetings and the festivals; and to elect a Grand Master from among them, until they should have the honor to have a brother of high nobility at their head.

The first Grand Master was *Anthony Sayer, Esq.*

By these various measures and arrangements, they founded the second period of the Masonic Brotherhood.

During this period, the society gained a purer and a freer existence, independent of the building corporations or any other society or institute; faithful to its original design, it was and is a society dedicated to the promotion of those purely moral objects,—a *love of mankind, tolerance, and sociability*, by practising *brotherly love, relief, and truth*; a society which, however, retained the name, the fundamental laws, the doctrines received by tradition, and the ceremonies of the ancient Masonic fraternity; a society which practices its art as a secret, and only admits into its membership *free men*.

These arrangements were, at the same time, the

means of spreading this transformed society, or the exterior forms of Freemasonry, as received by tradition, over all Europe, and over all the European colonies.

In 1721, their brother, *James Anderson*, was charged by the Grand Lodge to re-model the defective copies of the old Gothic constitution according to a modern and better method, and to form thus a general book of constitution, which alone should be valid for all the special Lodges in futuro to be established under the authority of that Grand Lodge. Anderson collected a number of copies of the old constitution, which he found to be copies of the ancient York constitution; and in comparing the same, and in compiling that new book of constitution, the constitution of York formed the basis for his work; he omitted, added and altered as he thought proper. The draught of this new book, after having been examined and slightly amended by a committee composed of fourteen learned brethren, was sanctioned and accepted in 1721 by a resolution of the Grand Lodge. It was printed in 1722, and acknowledged in 1723 as the only valid book of constitution, and was then given over to the public. A new edition was published in 1738, for which Anderson again made use of the York constitution. The traits of the ancient York constitution are also distinctly to be recognized in the editions of 1756, 1784, and in the latest book of constitution of the United Grand Lodges of all old Masons at London, which union took place in 1813, and of which constitution the second part appeared in 1815.

The most important portion of this book of constitution of the new English Grand Lodge at London, are the *six old charges* or fundamental laws which Anderson has extracted from the sixteen fundamental laws of the York constitution, by re-modeling them so as to be conformable to the object for which the Grand Lodge had been established, and which are acknowledged by all Grand and subordinate Lodges of the globe as the fundamental laws of the whole fraternity. The following are the most important of those old charges as they appear in the edition of 1784, and, with few alterations, in the constitution of 1815:—

“The Mason is bound to obey the laws of morality; and if he understands the principles of the society, he will neither be an atheist nor a profligate. Though the Masons of ancient times were obliged to profess the religion of their country, whatever that might be, it is considered now more beneficial to bind them to that religion alone in which all men agree, and to leave to each his peculiar opinion. They are to be men of probity and honor, whatever may be their difference in name or in opinion.

“By this,” says the constitution. “Masonry becomes the central point of union, and the means of establishing friendship among persons who, without it, would live in continual separation. The Mason is to be a peaceable subject or citizen, and never to allow himself to be involved in riots or conspiracies against the public peace and the welfare of the nation. No private hatred or feud shall be carried to the threshold of the Lodge, still less political or religious disputes, as the Masons in this capacity are only of the above-named general religion. Masons are of all nations and tongues, and decidedly against political feuds, which never have been favorable to the welfare of the Lodges, nor ever will be.”