

origin and genesis in the Guilds or Colleges of Roman constructors or builders, who came over to Britain with the Roman legions when Britain was conquered. These bands of workmen were practically delegations from the *Collegia Frabrorum* or the stonemasons' guilds or unions of Rome, which were instituted and organized by Numa Pompilius in the year 715 B.C. Now these stonemasons' guilds laid what was known as the corner stones of all the public buildings in Rome. This corner stone was considered the most important stone in the edifice and was laid with magnificent ceremonies. Tacitus, the celebrated Roman historian, well describes the ceremony in his account of the rebuilding of the Capitol, when the priests, senators, knights and citizens amid demonstrations of joy, seized hold of the cords which held the stone, and dragged it into its proper place. This ceremony took place under the auspices of the operative Masons' Guilds or Colleges—what would be known in these days as the Trades' Unions, of Rome. The old guild workmen used their tools as aids in mechanical work just as your workmen will do in the erection of this proposed edifice. Now, with this preamble, let me give you a leaf from the history of our organization of Masonry. In the beginning of the seventeenth century a change came over the operative organization, and, probably with the idea of extending the influence of the membership, founding an ideal organization that would represent more fully the Christian doctrine of fraternity, its entire character was changed, and those who were non-operatives were admitted—men eminent in the ranks of art, science, and literature. The name, the customs and ceremonies of the ancient fraternity, with their rights and charters, were retained; a centre of union was formed in a Grand Lodge, and instead of the art of building, the tenets of "brotherly love, relief and truth" were the distinguishing features, and the organization became speculative in its character. The tools used as mechanical aids were adopted for illustrations in the exemplification of great truths. For instance, the twenty-four inch gauge, or ordinary two-foot rule, used by the operative mason to measure work, reminds the speculative Mason of the division of the day into twenty-four hours, and directs him to apportion his time to its proper objects, viz.: Prayer, labor, refreshment and sleep. The common gavel, mallet or stone-hammer, used in the hand of the operative for the hewing of stone, teaches that skill without exertion—you see the application—is of little avail, that labor is the lot of man, that the heart may conceive and the head devise in vain, if the hand be not prompt to execute the design. From the chisel, which is of such material use with the operative as an aid in the squaring of stones and the decorative part of work, we learn that nothing short of indefatigable exertion can induce the habit of virtue, enlighten the mind, and elevate the character of man. Now, cannot every one of you, whether members of the Craft or not, apply these principles to your daily lives? You now have the story of the transition of operative into speculative Masonry. With regard to this ceremony of to-day, and the excellent truth it inculcates, we in imitation of the primal fraternity of builders lay this stone. It must be perfectly square, as an emblem of morality, and in its solid contents a cube, an emblem of truth. We place it in the north-east corner, between the north, the place of darkness, and the east the place of light. The north is Masonically a place of darkness, because the sun in his progress through the ecliptic never reaches further than 23 degrees 28 minutes north of the equator. A wall being erected on any part of the earth further north than that will, therefore, at the meridian receive the rays of the sun on its south side, while the north will be in shadow at the