

received from the Grand Commandery of Texas, announcing the death of Past Grand Commander John C. McCoy, who died in the city of Dallas, on the 30th of April last, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, honored and respected. May our brethren "Rest in peace until the Resurrection Morn."

HISTORICAL DISSERTATION ON TEMPLAR RITUALS AND THEIR MASONIC CONNECTION.

It is not my intention to enter into any discussion about the history and merits of "Freemasonry," nor of the numerous side degrees and Rites that come under the category of the "High Grade" system. These latter I do not consider genuine Masonry, many of them being more like the Pagan Philosophy of the ancient sages, and from the intense feelings of bitterness engendered amongst them of late years by the rivalry of contending bodies, asserting claims to greater antiquity and authenticity, all feelings of brotherly love and consideration appear to be eradicated. My object is to show that true Templary is purely Christian, and in no way a part of Universal Masonry.

I cannot in general terms agree as to the antiquity of all the Masonic traditions, and would ask you not to pass over thousands of years and lose sight of the intervening space, by which alone what we call Masonry is known, poring over Egyptian hieroglyphics to solve the mysteries of the primitive world, however interesting to the Antiquarian, gives but little insight into Modern "Freemasonry" and its kindred studies. No doubt the theory is correct that in Babylon centuries before the Christian era, when the Jews were returning to Jerusalem to assist in building the second Temple—"Confucius" and "Pythagoras" carried back much to commemorate the building and glory of the "First" Temple, and taught others. We have been taught in a school of a later period, and I prefer to have my history nearer home; more so, as we have now one of the most exhaustive and reliable histories by "R. F. Gould," Barrister-at Law, London, England, ever published on "Free-Masonry"—a perfect mine of information not to be found in any other work on the subject.

THE COMMENCEMENT OF MASONIC TEMPLARY.

It is clearly ascertained that modern or Masonic Templary originated from the

"High Grade" system of Free-Masonry—soon after Speculative Masonry was directly imported from England to the continent of Europe, where it was enthusiastically adopted as a pure code of morality and universal Brotherhood.

The "High Degrees" were first promulgated about 1741, or a few years earlier, (ostensibly unknown before that period) by French and German members of the Craft, who, for the most part, confined to men of leisure and letters, principally chosen from the higher classes of social life, not content with the truly noble mechanical origin of Free-Masonry, were ambitious to be thought the descendants of the famous "Religious and Military Fraternity of the Templars," and endeavored to assert a claim to a parentage more in accordance with their own ideas, based upon the supposed connection that had traditionally existed between the Templars of the Crusades and the old Christian Builders or Architects of the cloisters.

These High degrees, being founded on false premises (1) were at first strongly

(1) The High degrees are the additions made to the original Craft degrees of Speculative Masonry to all above that of "Master Mason," which subsequently included the Royal Arch degree, and first arose from the supposed connection between the Ancient Builders and the Templars; this gave the impetus to the fertile imaginations of Ritual compilers in Europe to invent new degrees (not always having the merits of historical authority) as an amplification and development of the craft rituals. Some of them derived from the "Hermetic" Philosophy, and the mystic theories of the French and German schools, supplemented by chivalric degrees claiming descent and connection with all the extinct orders of Knighthood. The Order of the Temple exercised considerable influence in founding the French High degrees.

The principal idea being the discovery in a vault by Scottish Crusaders of the lost ineffable word, also that in the search they had to work with the "Sword" in one hand and the "Trowel" in the other—as a confirmation of the belief in the original connection existing between the old Christian Builders and the Chivalric Fraternities.

In the British Empire and the United States of America the term "High degrees or Grades" is now generally applied to the "A. & A. S. Rite 33"—"The Egyptian rite"—and those of "Misraim and Mem-