

be read with pleasure, among which are two dramatic pieces, it scarcely made any addition to the poetical reputation of the writer.

Mr. Mason died in April 1797, at the age of seventy-five, in consequence of a mortification occasioned by a hurt to his leg. He had married an amiable lady, who died of consumption in 1767, and was buried at Bristol cathedral, under a monument on which are inscribed some very tender and beautiful lines by her husband. His character in private life was exemplary for worth and active benevolence, though not without a degree of stateliness, and assumed superiority in his manner, probably fostered by his official residence. A tablet has been placed to his memory in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey. Besides his poetical writings, there have been popularly attributed to him a satirical poem of much temporary distinction, entitled "An Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers," together with some other pieces of political satire which appeared about the same time. The strength of language, and the sarcastic humour, of these performances, give them a cast so different from his usual style of composition, that the internal evidence is supposed to decide against his authorship; yet it is certain that he could occasionally write with energy and simplicity; and the objects of satire in these pieces are such as he was likely to have fixed upon. See *Mog.* and *Monthly Rev.*

MASON (George), the eldest son of a distiller at Deptford, was born in the year 1736. After his father's death, he was married Dr. Jubb, late Hebrew professor at Oxford. We have no particulars of Mr. Mason's life. He died of an apoplexy, at his seat at Aldenham Herts, on the 24th of November, 1806, aged 71. He wrote, 1. *An Essay on Design in Gardening*, first published in 1768, under his name. 2. *Appendix to the same*. 3. *A Freeholder's Answer to T. Paine*. 4. *Poems*, by Thomas Hoccleve, with a Preface, Notes, and Glossary, 4to. 5. *A Supplement to Johnson's English Dictionary*, 4to. 1801. In the preface to this work and in several of the articles, as also in the Glossary to Hoccleve, Johnson is treated in the most contemptuous manner.

6. *Life of Richard earl Howe*, 1803, 8vo.
MASON'S ISLAND, a small island in the Potomack. See *N. lon.* 77. 13. W.

MASONRY, *f.* A branch of architecture, consisting in the art of hewing or squaring stones, and cutting them into square or perpendicular, for the uses of building; but, in a limited sense, masonry is the art of assembling and joining stones together with mortar.

MASONRY, or FREE MASONRY, an ancient and mysterious, instituted (as Arnoet, in his Dutch Dictionary, says) by virtuous men, with the praiseworthy design of calling to our remembrance the most useful truths, in the midst of the most innocent and social pleasures; founded on charity, liberality, and brotherly love."

Mr. Preston, a past master of the Lodge of Antiquity, one of the most distinguished writers on this art, says, in his *Illustration of Masonry*, "From the commencement of the world, we may trace the foundation of Masonry. Ever since symmetry began, and harmony discovered her charms, our order has had a being. During the progress, and in many different countries, it has flourished. No art, no science, preceded it. In the dark period of antiquity, when literature was in a low state, and the rude manners of our forefathers withheld from them the knowledge we now so amply share, Masonry diffused its influence. This science unveiled, arts arose, civilization took place, and the progress of knowledge and philosophy gradually dispelled the gloom of ignorance and barbarism. Government being settled, authority was established, laws, and the assemblies of the fraternity acquired the patronage of the great and the good, while the tenets of the profession diffused unbounded philanthropy.

Abstracting from the pure pleasures which arise from the pursuit so wisely constituted as that which subsists among the members, and which it is scarcely possible that any circumstance or occurrence can erase, Masonry is a science con-

finied to no particular country, but extends over the whole terrestrial globe. Wherever arts flourish, there it flourishes too. Add to this, that by secret and inviolable signs, carefully preserved among the fraternity, it becomes an universal language. Hence many advantages are gained: the distant Chinese, the wild Arab, and the American savage, will embrace a brother Briton, and know, that, beside the common ties of humanity, there is still a stronger obligation to induce him to kind and friendly offices. The spirit of the fulminating priest will be tamed; and a moral brother, though of a different persuasion, engage his esteem for mutual toleration in religious opinions is one of the most distinguishing and valuable characteristics of the craft. As all religions teach morality, if a brother be found to neglect the part of a truly honest man, his private speculative opinions are left to God and himself. Thus, through the influence of Masonry, which is reconcilable to the best policy, all those disputes which embitter life, and sour the tempers of men, are avoided; while the common good, the general object, is zealously pursued.

"From this view of our system, its utility must be sufficiently obvious. The universal principles of the craft unite, in one indissoluble bond of affection, men of the most opposite tenets, of the most distant countries, and of the most contradictory opinions; so that in every nation a mason may find a friend, and in every climate a home.

"Masonry passes under two denominations, operative and speculative. By the former, we allude to a proper application of the useful rules of architecture, whence a structure derives its figure, strength, and beauty; and whence result a due proportion and a just correspondence in all its parts. By the latter, we learn to govern the passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain a creed, and practise charity.

"*Speculative Masonry* is so far interwoven with religion, as to lay us under the strongest obligations to pay that rational homage to the Deity, which at once constitutes our duty and our happiness. It leads the contemplative to view with reverence and admiration the glorious works of creation, and inspires them with the most exalted ideas of the perfections of the divine Creator. *Operative Masonry* furnishes us with dwellings, and convenient shelter from the inclemencies of seasons; and, while it displays the effects of human wisdom, as well in the choice as in the arrangement of the materials of which an edifice is composed, it demonstrates that a fund of science and industry is implanted in man, for the best, most salutary, and most beneficent purposes.

"The lapse of time, the ruthless hand of ignorance, and the devastations of war, have laid waste and destroyed many valuable monuments of antiquity, on which the utmost exertions of human genius have been employed. Even the Temple of Solomon, so spacious and magnificent, and constructed by so many celebrated artists, escaped not the unsparring ravages of barbarous force. Free Masonry, notwithstanding, has still survived. The attentive ear receives the sound from the instructive tongue, and the sacred mysteries are safely lodged in the repository of faithful breasts. Tools and implements of architecture (symbols the most expressive!) are selected by the fraternity, to imprint on the memory serious truths; and thus the excellent tenets of the institution are transmitted, unimpaired, under circumstances precarious and adverse, through a succession of ages."

Thus much for the principles of this institution, the members of which are called Free and Accepted Masons. Mr. Preston, as will be seen above, deduces their origin from the creation of the world; and, indeed, a very ancient manuscript, which, it is probable, he had never seen, but which was printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for June 1815, serves in some degree to corroborate his postulation. It is contained in a very long roll of parchment, and bears internal testimony of having been written at least 300 years since; and the "Constitutions," by which the fraternity is still authoritatively governed, (printed under the sanction of the Grand Master, 4to. 1784.) certainly