THE FREEMASONS AT WORCESTER CATHEDRAL.

A curious old craft is the Freemason's, with its quaint legends, its noble instances of rescue from difficulties and from death, and its grand charities which absorb the great revenues of the time-honoured fraternity. What speculations have been wasted upon the weighty secret of the Mason since the time of the Roman occupation, to say nothing of the period of his older, but perhaps apocryphal, tradition; all the same speculations ending in the firm belief that he has no secret at all! What books too have been written, published, and bought, showing to all comers the full, true, and particular words, signs, and tokens by which to know a Mason!

If the early traditions of the craft be apocryphal, there can be little doubt that its existence as a guild is of very respectable antiquity. In 1827 a fragmentary sculpture (now preserved at Goodwood Park) was found at Chichester, which, on being pieced, was found to bear a votive inscription, in which the College of Masons dedicate a temple to Neptune and Minerva and the safety of the family of Claudius Cæsar. Another Roman sculpture has been discovered which bears the Masonic emblems, and which probably ornamented the lintel of a lodge-room. The first Master-Mason whose works are extant in England and his name authenticated is William of Sens, who was assisted and succeeded by William the Englishman in the completion of the choir of Canterbury Cathedral in the year 1179. Not far from this date we learn, from a Cottonian MS., that the Master-Mason William Anglus completed important restorations at Canterbury Cathedral. In the 13th century Adam de Glapham and Patric de Carlile, "magister cæmentariorum et carpentariorum cum septem sociis," were employed to build Caernarvon Castle. In 1292 Henricus de Ellerton is called "magister operum," and in the same century Michael de Cantuariâ, "cæmentarius," is employed upon St. Stephen's Chapel. In 1306 Richard de Stowe was the Master-Mason of Lincoln Cathedral, and Nicholas Walton was "magister-carpentarius." From 1300 to 1319 Henry Latomus is found employed on Evesham Abbey. Henry de Yeveley, who was buried in the church of St. Magnus, near London bridge, is designated as "Freemason to Edward III., Richard II., and Henry IV." In the reign of Richard II. "Master Yevelee" was chief Mason of the new work then in progress at the church of Westminster, and received for his fee 100s. a year, with 15s. for his dress and furs. An indenture dated 1st April, 1395, is still extant which contains Yeveley's contract for erecting the "tomb of fine marble" still remaining in Westminster Abbey, which was then undertaken to commemorate the reigning Sovereign and his Queen, Anne, daughter of the Emperor of Germany, then recently deceased. The indenture is made between the King on the one part and Henri Yeveley and Stephen Lote, citizens and Masons, on the other. Yeveley's will is dated 25th May, 1 Henry IV., and Stephen Lote was an executor. Yeveley died in 1400. William of Wykeham was "magister operum" at Windsor Castle in the reign of Edward III. In the compotus of payments, in 1429, of the Cathedral of Canterbury, the names of the masters, wardens, and Masons are all recited. In 1444 John Wastell and Henry Semerk were Master-Masons of King's College. In 1480 and in 1499 Edward Seamer or Semerk was Master-Mason of St. George's Chapel, Windsor; wages one shilling a day. From 1503 to 1506 John Cole is Master-Mason at the tower and spire of Louth, Lincolnshire. These instances, collected from authentic records, could be multiplied to a considerable extent if space could be afforded for the detail.

The execution of the plan of George Heriot's Hospital, in Edinburgh, was superintended by various "master masons." William Wallace was first appointed to this office, and on the 3rd of August, 1620, the treasurer is ordered to pay him "for his bygane pynis and extraordinarie service done in ye frame and building of said wark the sum of 100*l.* scottis and ane time to come as he deserves promesis to consider him." He was succeeded by John Mylore, from whose monument in Greyfriars Church we learn that he was the sixth royal master-mason by descent, from father to son, to seven successive kings of Scotland.

In 1684 at the Warwick Quarter Sessions a rate of wages is ordered: "Free masons 1*s.* 4*d.* with meat and drink, 5*d.* with; penalty for taking above this rate, twenty-one days' imprisonment."

The statute-book of England bears testimony to the existence of the craft in early times, the following instances will testify: By the 34 Edw. III. cap. 9, it is enacted "that all alliances and covines of masons and carpenters, and congregations and chapters, ordinances and oaths betwixt them made, shall be from henceforth void and wholly annulled." The 3 Henry VI., cap. 1, declares, "that such chapters and congregations shall not be from henceforth holden;" offenders were adjudged to be felons, "and that all the other masons that come to such chapters and congregations bee punished by imprisonment of their body, and make fine and raunsome at the King's will." After this we find the craft apparently viewed with more favour, for by 2 Edward VI., cap. 15, it is provided, "That no person or persons shall at any time after the first day of Aprill next comming, interrupt, denie, let or disturbe any free-mason," &c.

Two principal colleges were formed at Strasbourg and Cologne by the master-masons of those grand Cathedrals, and regulations were formed which were religiously preserved under the strong sanction of good faith and secrecy. Of these ancient brethren we find shadowy trace in the following

Legend of Strasbourg Cathedral.

There is a quaint old tradition which comes down to us from ancient times, tottering under its load of age, and replete with the superstitions of the past. On the borders of Alsatia there lies a great city, dating its foundation far back to the old Roman days, and rich in those architectural relics of the olden time which are ever so dear to the antiquary.

"Quaint offspring of centurial years the town of Strasburg stands:
Rich in the lore of a mighty past in legend and in story;
Rich in high-hearted honest sons, a country's truest glory;
Rich in its old Cathedral church with clustering ivy spread;
The Santa Croce of the land, where sleep her noble dead"

The story runs that once in every twelvemonth, on the eve of St. John, when the quiet burghers of that ancient city are wrapt in peaceful slumber, and when the hour of midnight clangs out from the loud-tongued bell which hangs in the old Cathedral tower, the spirits of the stone masons, by whose hands the sacred pile was erected, arise from the tomb and once more revisit the scene of their former labours. Up from the dark and gloomy crypt, along the columned aisles and vast dim nave, across the white-gleaming marble floor, chequered with ghostly shadows that stream from pictured oriels, past the stone-carved statues that keep watch and ward with their swords and sceptres, comes the long train of deathlike night-wandering shadows, clad in their quaint old mediæval costume, the masters with their compasses and rules, the craftsmen with their plumbs and squares and levels; the apprentice lads with their heavy gavels, all silently greeting their companions, old and dear, with time-honoured salute and tokens as of yore. While the last note of the deep-mouthed bell is still trembling in the air, reverberating from arch to arch, and dying away amid the frozen music of the traceried roof, forth from the western portal streams the shadowy throng. Thrice around the sacred edifice winds the waving floating train, brave old Erwin himself leading the way, while far above—up above the sculptured saints who look down upon the sleeping city—up where at the very summit of the feathery fairylike spire the image of the Queen of Heaven stands, there floats a cold white-robed female form, the fair Sabina, old Erwin's well-beloved child, whose fair hands aided him in his work. In her right hand a mallet, in her left a chisel, she flits among the sculptured lacework of the noble spire like the genius of Masonry. With the first faint blush of dawn the vision fades, the phantom shapes dissolve, and the old Masons return to their sepulchres, there to rest until the next St. John's Eve shall summon them to earth.

We however must not gossip too long, nor indulge our archæological proclivities too freely, or we shall have no room for the Freemasons of Worcestershire.

Although no traces remain in the English lodges of the operative period of the guild, still the members of the venerable craft in the fair province of Worcestershire do not neglect the objects which called the ancient fraternity into existence. Upon the decease of the much respected Past Master, Brother Joseph Bennett, in 1862, the two Worcester lodges testified their regard for his memory, and their desire for the adornment of our noble Cathedral, by the erection of the beautiful window which may now be seen between the baptistery and the north transept. This work was produced by the well-known establishment of Messrs. Lavers, Barraud, and Westlake, of Endell-street, Bloomsbury, and is alike creditable to the Freemasons and to the artists. The Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire, at its annual assembly last year, whilst testifying its admiration of the important restorations which are so honourable to the Dean and Chapter, resolved to contribute to this excellent work by presenting the glass for the north transept window. The aid of Brother Lavers and his skilled co-adjutors was again invoked, and the afternoon of Tuesday, the 10th of August, A.D. 1863, saw the successful completion of a very noble specimen of art. For the adornment of an edifice consecrated for the use of Christian worship no subject could be more appropriately chosen for the window than the representation of personages of the Jewish and Christian faiths. At the base of the window we have those Jewish Masons who were remarkable above all for their connexion with the building of the first and second Temples—Solomon, Hiram King of Tyre, Hiram Abiff, Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. In the upper and main portion are represented the twelve Apostles who were chosen by our Lord to construct that temple built without hands, the Christian Church. In the tracery of the window are the symbols of Free Masonry, the armorials of the order, and those of the Right Worshipful Brother Royds, Provincial Grand Master. The work is executed in the Early Decorated style; it is rich in effect, the drawing is sufficiently archaic to harmonise with the other details of the venerable fabric, and we have no doubt that this fine production will take rank with the best windows of our modern period. A brass slab placed below the window bears the following inscription:—

To the glory of God, and for the adornment of this Cathedral, the north transept window is erected by the Freemasons of Worcestershire.—ALBERT HUDSON ROYDS (High Sheriff of the County), Provincial Grand Master, 1866.

The Freemasons of Worcestershire, summoned by notice from the Provincial Grand Secretary, on Tuesday afternoon, assembled in the Chapter-house, which was kindly placed at their disposal by the Dean and Chapter, where they proceeded to don the insignia by which the outward signs of the mystic brotherhood are familiar to the world. The following Brethren were present:—The Right Worshipful Brother Royds, Provincial Grand Master, Worshipful Brother J. Barber, M.A., Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Brothers E. Giles, W. Mascfield, Samuel Smith, W. H. Jones, W. Woods, L. H. Kenwrick, the Rev. H. Richardson, H. Wilson, G. T. Bloomer, William Smith, Henry Agar, W. Wink, the Rev. C. G. Ridgway, E. T. Wright, M. Smart, J. W. Stone, R. T. Baker, J. Everal, W. Lea Smith, C. D. Faulkner, T. Hobbs, R. L. Campbell, D. A. Cooper, C. H. Bayley, W. Bristow, R. Woof, S. M. Beale, W. Meredith, the Rev. R. Cattley, W. Webb, the Rev. R. Sanders, W. Underwood, G. Parsons, E. L. Harrison, G. W. Grosvenor, W. T. Adcock, M. Dennison, W. L. Faucett, A. T. Hancocks, W. Cobley, W. Holland, T. M. Hopkins, L. Nicholas, R. Smith, S. Corkran, J. T. Bennett, D. Kendall, T. Groves, R. T. Horley, A. Brown, F. N. Gosling, E. Watton, W. Caldicott, J. Fitzgerald, T. E. Lucy, H. Cross, J. H. Lucy, E. Turner, W. W. Lavers, W. Done, W. Woods, T. Troman, B. Brooks, C. C. W. Griffiths, T. Baxter, C. F. Pideock, — Blundell, J. Newton, and S. Baldwin.

A Provincial Grand Lodge having been opened, the brethren, with the clergy, then proceeded to the Cathedral in the following order:—The Very Rev. the Dean, the Rev. Canon Wood, and the Rev. Canon Wynter; the lay clerks and choristers; the Provincial Grand Master, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Past Provincial Grand Officers, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Chaplain, Treasurer, Registrar, Secretary, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, Superintendent of Works, Directors of Ceremonies, Sword Bearer, Organist, Stewards, Brethren of Lodges.

The usual afternoon service was performed in the Lady Chapel, the officiating clergymen being the Rev. R. Cattley and the Rev. W. Rayson. The anthem was taken from the 133rd Psalm, "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." At the conclusion of the service the Lodge proceeded to the transept, accompanied by the clergy, when the following ceremony took place:—

Provincial Grand Master: Worshipful Deputy, why are we here?

D.P.G.M.: With deference we assemble on this sacred spot by our humble means to add ornament to a building dedicated to the worship of the Most High.

P.G.M.: How do you thus intend to act?

D.P.G.M.: Funds having been raised in our Province we have devoted them, we trust, to a good purpose; our Treasurer attends, and can account.

P.G.M.: Worshipful Treasurer, you have had funds entrusted to your care, what are they?

Treasurer: Enough to answer a good purpose.

P.G.M.: Have you them in hand?

Treasurer: No, Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master, it is no part of a Mason's duty to hold funds if he knows where and how he can well employ them.

P.G.M.: What do you produce?

Treasurer: A document, which, with your permission, I will hand to our Grand Secretary.

P.G.M.: Provincial Grand Secretary, you have my commands to read the document.

The Grand Secretary read a formal receipt for the cost of the window.

P.G.M.: Let it be deposited in the archives of our Provincial Grand Lodge. Brethren of this province, this window is now ours. Provincial Junior or Grand Warden, what are your wishes?

J.G.W.: Prosperity to our Order.

P.G.M.: Provincial Senior Grand Warden, your wishes?

S.P.G.M.: That the light of Heaven may fall upon our handy work.

P.G.M.: Brethren, little remains for us to do. This noble pile, designed and built by members of our Order in ages past, finds us the place to add our mite. Long may it be an ornament to the house, dedicated to the worship of the Most High. Very Reverend Mr. Dean and Reverend Canons: As a Mason, and as the head of this province, I ask you to accept this gift from the brethren of our ancient craft, and sometimes, when you look upon its mellowed light, may you be induced to say, "O, worthy Masons."

The Very Rev. the DEAN, who spoke with considerable emotion, said: My opinion has been confirmed by the advice of those on whose judgment and experience I place the greatest reliance, that I shall not desecrate this holy edifice or transgress the bounds of duty and decorum if in accepting this noble and beautiful gift I offer you a few remarks, which I should not have done had it not been inscribed with this motto—not only "for the adornment of this Cathedral," but "to the glory of our God." I stand here to-day to discharge a three-fold duty,—I have to thank you on the part of myself and the canons of this cathedral church for your munificent and beautiful contribution. I beg to thank you as the chairman of the Restoration Committee for this addition to our building; and as the incumbent of this diocese I have also to thank you for the interest you have shown in the chief parish church of this diocese; for it is a great mistake to suppose that the Cathedral belongs exclusively to the Dean and Chapter. It belongs to every person in the diocese, although we are appointed its guardians and custodians, and bound under the most solemn oath to advance its glory and its stability. But you have not been unmindful of the responsibility that has been thrown upon you. Independently of those contributions which enabled us to carry on our work, we have had several gifts from private individuals, which will be looked upon hereafter with the greatest admiration and interest. The site which you have chosen for your window is, I think, a most happy selection. It is placed far above the power of any casual accident, and it will throw its sober light on the principal monument of our Cathedral which the chisel of Roubiliac has sculptured to the memory of that great champion of truth and Protestantism, Bishop Hough. I cannot, gentlemen, claim to be a member of your fraternity, but in one respect I do feel that I am entitled to claim kindred with them. In the second lesson for this evening's service we heard the apostolical admonition, "Let brotherly love continue," and though I cannot claim the proud privilege of being a member of the craft, I can claim that I am associated with you in my most earnest endeavours, which have been continued through a life now extended beyond the usual duration of human existence, in my earnest, anxious, prayerful endeavours to promote "Peace on earth, and good-will to men." That you may each of you continue in the exercise of those good works for which you are so distinguished, may God in his infinite mercy grant! You may go to your homes assured that the present Dean and Chapter will guard your beautiful gift with the greatest care; and when they are laid in the grave they will hand it over to their successors, who will not be less careful of it, and who will point out to succeeding generations this splendid token of your liberality, piety, and love.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the brethren returned to the Chapter-house in procession, when Lodge was closed and the outward signs of the order disappeared. Subsequently they assembled at the Crown Hotel, when about 40 brethren sat down to an excellent banquet, (served in the most admirable manner by Brother Fuggle,) under the presidency of the Provincial Grand Master. The toasts of "the Queen," "the Prince and Princess of Wales and other members of the Royal Family," "the Grand Master of Freemasons, the Earl of Zetland;" "the Deputy Grand Master, the Earl de Grey and Ripon;" "the Provincial Grand Master, the Right Worshipful Brother Royds;" "the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, the Worshipful Brother John Barber;" "the Visitors," "the Provincial Officers past and present," "the Dean and Chapter of Worcester;" "Messrs. Lavers, Barraud, and Westlake, the artists of the window;" "the Grand Secretary" and "Grand Treasurer," "to all poor and distressed Masons," "the Host of the day." The brethren separated at an early hour, unanimously gratified with the proceedings of the day; and thus ended a meeting of which the Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire may long be proud.

LUPUS.

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