

ON GEOMETRICAL AND OTHER SYMBOLS.

THE geometrical symbols to which the attention of archaeologists and architects was for the first time called by Mr. Godwin, in the *Archæologia* of 1843, are so numerous and diversified; and they comprise so many of the strictly religious or magical and mystical symbols among them; including the hexalpha itself, the pentacle, the tau, the V or Y, and the cross and symbolical N in all their various modifications; that we must look a little closely, if we can, into the true origin and nature of so rich a "find;" although the uses of these symbols, as masons' monographical marks, together with the rules of diversification which seem to have been practised by the working guilds of Freemasons in regard to these uses, have probably rendered such of the symbols as we cannot otherwise identify with those more strictly confined to mystical or magical ideas, of not very definite or unquestionable religious signification. There are quite enough of identifiable symbols and common principles of religious and magical symbolism in them, however, and more than enough, to justify a little close scrutiny as to the purposes and pretensions of that Freemasonry with which they are so intimately connected, and by means of a little knowledge of which pretensions and purposes we may be enabled to arrive at some definite idea of the original meaning

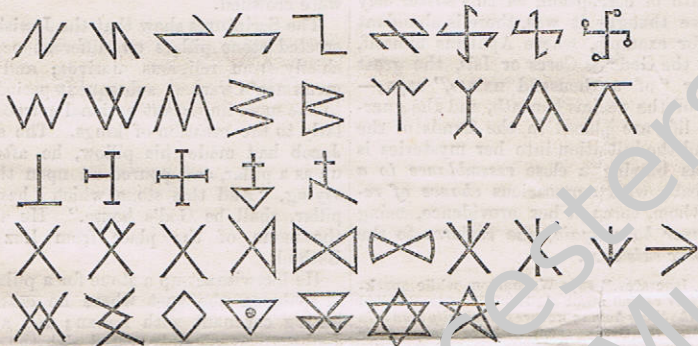
of many of the symbols thus used as mason-marks.

In the first of the two letters to Sir Henry Ellis in the *Archæologia* for 1843 (vol. xxx.), to which I alluded at the close of my last communication, Mr. Godwin says:—

"About three years ago my attention was first drawn to the fact, that the stones both inside and outside numerous ancient buildings in England, bore, in many cases, a peculiar mark or symbol, which was evidently the work of the original builders. It immediately occurred to me that these marks, if extensively examined and compared, might serve to aid in connecting, and perhaps discriminating, the various bands of operatives who, under the protection of the Church, mystically united, spread themselves over Europe during the Middle Ages, and are known as the Free-Masons.

It, therefore, gave me some pleasure, during a recent visit to the Interior of France, to observe, in several instances, at Poitiers, in the department of Vienne, similar marks, in great profusion; the more so, too, as, amongst them, were many exactly resembling some which I had previously found in England, although on buildings of a different date."

Some of these marks, both from English and French buildings, are then given; and from these, together with those afterwards contributed along with the second letter, I have made the following small selection, placed in a kind of affinitive, though necessarily not very consecutive, order of succession, and to which selection I shall have occasion hereafter to refer.



MASONS' MARKS.

Selected from Mr. Godwin's Collection, in the *Archæologia*, vol. 30.

"Whether these marks," continues Mr. Godwin, "were made for the simple purpose of identifying the work done by particular individuals or sub-divisions of the band, or that they had a deeper signification, and motive, I will not now inquire, nor even venture to remark on the origin of the signs themselves *per se*. My present purpose is simply to draw attention to these marks, in the hope that collection may be made in England, France, and Germany, so that they may be properly investigated and compared. No circumstance which promises to throw even the smallest light on the early history of those wonderful monuments, to whom we are indebted for so many magnificent buildings, can be deemed insignificant or unworthy of consideration."

One chief object of the letters related to the more strictly professional question of periods of architecture, and the relationship of the mason-marks to these as well as to the original builders of the edifices so marked, or the schools or lodges of masons who used them; but into this more strictly professional question I need not presume to enter. Although my presence at communications, however, may not "aid in elucidating the history of the Freemasons," as Mr. Godwin desired, they will, I hope, assist in giving us such a definite idea of their tenets and pretensions as shall contribute a little light of its own peculiar kind upon the original and general meaning of the geometrical and other symbols of which it is my object to treat.

In his second letter to Sir H. Ellis, the author points attention to certain notable customs as to christ and crosses which seemed to have a connexion with the subject of mason-marks: he then goes on to say, as to the general subject under notice,—

"The marks of which we are especially speaking, it can, perhaps, hardly be doubted, were made chiefly to distinguish the work of different individuals. At the present time, the man who works a stone, being different from the man who sets it, makes his mark on the bed or other internal face of it, so that it may be identified. The fact, however, that in the ancient buildings it is only a certain number of the stones which bear symbols—that the marks found in different countries, although the variety is great, are in many cases identical, and in all have a singular accordance in character—seems to show that the men who employed them did so by system; and that the system, if not the same in England, Germany, and France, was closely analogous in one country to that of the others.

Moreover, many of the signs are evidently religious and symbolical, and agree fully with our notions of the body of men known as the Freemasons."

With reference to "the religious character of associated masons in early times," a curious circumstance is adduced in this letter from one of the Arundel MSS. in the British Museum, described as "*Sanctorum Vitæ, Miracula, et Martyria*." At folio 218 is a narrative of four men "wonderful in the art of Masonry," who always "worked in the name of the Lord," after prayer and signing with the Cross; and whose skill, when employed by the Emperor Diocletian to carve some columns with foliated capitals out of a porphyritic mountain, was so marvellous as to excite not only the envy but the astonishment of "the philosophers," who attributed their skill to the "mysterious words" of "art-magical."

In the conclusion of the second letter, allusion is made to marks—apparently analogous to those of the Freemasons—on the faces of a monument at Baalbec, referred to in Lord Lindsay's work on Egypt.

These letters in the *Archæologia* contain other and cognate matter, especially with relation to the symbolical N, to which I must return, as well as to the other mason-marks; but, in the meantime, I may note some further particulars, subsequently recorded, as to mason-marks, in the *Archæologia*.

Following up the interesting subject started by Mr. Godwin, there appeared in the *Archæologia* for 1852 a paper by Mr. Patrick Chalmers, F.S.A., with new examples of mason-marks: these were from Scotland, which has for centuries been a great stronghold and school of Freemasonry. In writing on the origin and use of mason-marks, this gentleman says:—

"These marks, in all probability, had their origin before the Christian era; and this would indeed be placed beyond all doubt if the marks observed by Colonel Howard Vyse and others, on stones in the pyramids of Egypt, were mason-marks, and not quarry-marks, as in some instances he has proved them to be, or if he could identify the secret societies of Egypt with those of Freemasonry as has been attempted. It is only reasonable to suppose that mason-marks have been modified by and added to symbols connected with or illustrative of, facts

and doctrines of the Christian faith. A quarter of a century has barely elapsed since the rule that each mason should have his distinctive mark, and should affix it to every stone hewn by him, was strictly enforced in the district I have referred to (Scotland); and even now, when many men are collected together on a work, the rule is observed, though not with so much strictness. It was a law in St. Ninian's Lodge, at Brechin, that every mason should register his mark in a book, and he could not change that mark at pleasure."

In a paper on Mason-marks in Ireland, read before the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, Mr. E. Fitzgerald, architect, who also followed up the subject started in the *Archæologia* (but, in the way, without acknowledgment except of Mr. Chalmers's paper in the volume for 1852), remarks, on the quotation just given, that,—

"The rule given by the Craft of the formation of the marks is, that they shall have at least one angle; that the circle must be avoided, and cannot be a true mason's mark unless in combination with some line that shall form an angle with it: that there is no distinction of ranks; that is, that there is no particular class of marks set apart for and assigned to master-masons as distinguished from their workmen: if it should happen that two masons, working at the same work from distant parts, should have the same mark; then they must, for a time, assume a different distinction, or, as I should say, 'a difference.'"

He thinks that probably Mr. Chalmers was not aware that the system of mason-marks is still carried out in several parts of England among the operative stone-cutters, though not in connexion with the "Free and Accepted Masons;" as he was shown, in 1857, at Lismore, several stones, imported from England into Ireland, for the "Carlisle Tower," which were cut with mason-marks; and Mr. Brown, the Duke of Devonshire's architect, informed him that he had a book with hundreds of marks in it, and with the masons' and stone-cutters' names attached to them; and that, as a new hand or craftsman was put on a job, he received an additional nick, or score, to his master's or foreman's; so that, at once, every man's work was known by his mark.

As already said, I have no intention to inquire into the origin or history of Freemasonry itself, although I cannot well avoid looking a little into the mystical and doctrinal principles involved in the Freemasonic symbols, phrases, and allegories; but I may quote a brief passage from an ancient MS., given in the "*Encyclopædia Londinensis*;" as, in this veracious document, our old heathen friend Nimrod, the "mighty hunter before the Lord" (or rather, perhaps, the mighty seeker after the Lord the oracular Spirit, or "the oracles of God"), unexpectedly turns up in a highly-distinguished position, at the laying of the very foundation stones of Freemasonry itself:—

"The kings of Babylon that heigh Nemrothe was a mason himselfe, and loved well the science, as it is said with [Freemasonic?] masters of histories. And when the city of Nyve, and other cities of the East should be made, Nemrothe, the king of Babylon, sent thither thre score masons at the roqation of the king of Nyve, his cozen and this was the first tyme that ever mason had any charge of his science."

Perhaps the historical tile-tablets of Babylon may yet corroborate this very explicit account of the origin of Freemasonry. Meantime, there is little difficulty in discovering the foundation for the story itself in the following Scriptural passage, Genesis x. 8, "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord [a very singular thing (for the heathen?) to say of a heathen; did we not recollect that Babylonia, or at least Chaldea, was the native country of Abram, the "father" of the Jews, as of all "the faithful," and that the Chaldeans were magicians, as Nimrod himself was; and as, in after times, the Jewish prophet Daniel, the Grand Master of the Babylonian and Chaldean Magicians, also was; being full of "the Spirit of the holy gods," as Nebuchadnezzar the king himself admitted when he somewhat unreasonably commanded Daniel to tell him "the visions of the dream" he had himself forgotten]. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen, between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city."

Freemasons were of two distinct orders,—those of the leather aprons and those of the silk; or in other words, the working guilds and the mystical masons. So far as the brethren of the working guilds were more than mere craftsmen, they were of the mystical order, mere associates of the nominal masons or "symbolical philosophers;" but it seems probable that, at one time, all Free-

masons were craftsmen; and those who were not so may have been afterwards introduced as honorary members, just as we have even the Prince of Wales made an honorary Fishmonger or an honorary Tailor by the City guilds of London. If so, however, the honorary class amongst the Freemasons appear to have at last completely swamped and ousted the modest craftsmen. But however this may be, that the craft and mystery of Freemasonry was of old especially connected with church or temple building, there can be no doubt; and neither can there be any that they allegorized the temple-building process: hence the mystical use of Solomon's temple and its builder.

Now the true temple, or church, of God is the human body itself: "What! know you not that your body is the temple?"—the "temple of the Lord,"—of "the Lord for the body,"—the "temple of the Holy Ghost,"—the "temple of God." And a church or temple, built and completed, or perfected, is therefore the human body brought to perfection, physical as well as mental, and illuminated by "the Light" of the Holy Spirit, shining within and upon it, as "a crown of glory" on its head. We can see, therefore, how, as is alleged, Freemasonry, though at one time essentially a church-building community of working masons, may have, quite relevantly, had secret and allegorical reference to religious or mystical doctrine relating to human perfectibility and reparation.

Thus we find it maintained, in an "Essai sur les Mystères, et le véritable Objet, de la Confrérie des Francs-Maçons," published at Amsterdam, as a second edition, 1774, that the end and purpose of Freemasonry is the

"Restoring to man his primitive goodness [in Paradise where he was perfected by the "creation" of the angelic "woman" out of "the man," and so made "very good"], and causing a revival in his heart of the laws of [his] nature in their greatest perfection: religion had the same end in view: . . . it is Freemasonry alone which has understood the best means of accomplishing it."

And, in the same Essay, it is declared that the "allegory of Freemasonry" is this:—they propose to build a temple: the instruments of this building are symbols of the architecture of the heart,—the square, the triangle, the compass: the work is done "in the light"; and before being introduced or initiated into this glorious work, or made fit to work in and at this august temple, man is a wretch who wanders in darkness; and he must be cleansed and purified. "All Freemasons," we are also told, "are not capable of developing this allegory": I should rather think so! "The well-informed mason knows," however, "that the jewels, as they are emphatically called, of the Lodge, are only ensigns of the inward man." The line, says another "Jeans, in an old oration at Southampton, 'points out the direct but narrow path which leads to a glorious immortality [physical or natural immortality on the face of this earth, with the re-enjoyment of Paradise, or celestial glory, as could easily be shown]. The 'rough ashlar' is 'the brute stone, without shape or form, as taken from the quarry; and emblematic of the mind of man in its primitive state, rude and unpolished like that stone.' The 'smooth or perfect ashlar' is 'a polished stone, of a true die square, which has undergone the skill of the experienced mason [as a hierophant of the mysteries], and is emblematic of the mind of man in its improved state'; and so on. Again, "Freemasonry deals in hieroglyphics, symbols, allegories; and to be qualified to reveal their meaning a man must know more than a mere nominal mason. The full interpretation of them, like that of the mysteries of old, is in select hands,—has been committed only to those of tried fidelity, who conceal it with suitable care; and those—if not deficient in intellect yet—wanting in industry or inclination to explore the penetralia of the temple are not qualified, if willing, to betray it: hence the secrecy which has so long distinguished the fraternity."

Freemasonry, then, was probably meant, in its secret rites of initiation, mystically to show forth how the human frame may be built up, finished, and perfected, as the true temple of the actual Lord and Master of it, who is not the human soul or the man himself,—erroneously conceived to be its master; but the divine Spirit, who, in the perfected and finished state of his temple, as it was in its "primitive goodness," shall illuminate it from within,—as the penetralia of the temple shone solely by the inward "Light" of the Divine glory.

Highly initiated Freemasons admit, and indeed they urge and insist, that Freemasonry is essentially identical with the ancient religious mysteries, and with the Rosicrucian philosophy. There is,

doubtless, in all this, too, a good deal of the "divine dark," no less than in Freemasonry; but let us try if we cannot get at least a glimpse of what is known as to these ancient mysteries.

For brevity's sake, I must give as condensed an idea of the professed object of the mysteries as possible; and, in doing so, prefer quoting at second hand, as it were, from others who have already given condensed ideas of these mysteries; and from a point of view altogether different from my own preconceived ideas.

Thus, in a paper on "The Buddhist Emblem of Architecture," in vol. xiv., p. 633, of *The Asiatic Journal of Bengal*, Captain T. Latter says:—

"In all these mysteries, which were held in such high veneration by the ancients, and the types of which have descended in a chain of unbroken succession even to our own days, the attainment of the crowning point of the craft was typical of DEATH. It was alone by passing through the vale of its shadow that perfect LIGHT could be obtained.* Apuleius, in the 11th book of his *Metamorphosis*, or *Fable of the Golden Ass*, describes minutely this completion of initiation;—the night-like darkness; the approach to the confines of Death; and then, in the very midst of this darkness, the Light revealed to him [and in fact in him]. In some of the various versions of these mysteries it is said that the candidate was shrouded in the shroud-cloth of death; was placed in the narrow home to which we all must go; was raised again, and went forth the new born and perfect craftsman [the initiate of an immortal life, "new every morning" after "dying daily"]. In others it was represented by the candidate passing through an oval, symbolizing that, as he entered this scene of woe, so must he go forth again. Thus was it that we find Death styled in ancient writ, the portal of life."

That the death here alluded to or signified was not the death of corruption, as this writer may perhaps have thought it was, there is abundant proof; as, for example, where Apuleius himself, speaking of the Goddess Ceres or Isis, the great nurse-mother "of a thousand nations," says:—"The gates of the realms beneath, and the guardianship of life, are placed in the hands of the goddess; and the initiation into her mysteries is celebrated as bearing a close resemblance to a voluntary death, with a precarious chance of recovery. . . . whom through her providence, being after a manne born again, she restores to the career of a new existence."

"The sage Socrates," says W. Burton, while speaking of the mysteries and night vigils of Eleusis, "called the mysterious thing human to re-appear principally stands in need of, indeed the Greeks seem to have placed their chief emphasis in them, so Euripides makes Hercules say, 'BLEST when I got a sight of the mysteries; and it was a proverbial speech, when any one thought himself in the highest degree happy [in an ecstasy of excitement, in fact], to say, I seem as if I had been initiated in the higher mysteries. The primitive Christians, in imitation, perhaps of these Pagan rites, or from the same kind of spirit, had a custom of celebrating vigils in the night."

These ideas of the *summum bonum* or "highest good" of man remind me of the less ancient doctrine ascribed to certain mystics whom a writer (believed to be Defoe), in a work on the history of magic, stigmatises as magicians. He is very virulent against the "effluvia of hell," as he calls them, but seems pretty fairly to describe the views he reprobates.

"Now magic," he says, "puts an end to all difficulty. By consulting the dark oracle and entering a little into the secrets of the sacred science, as they wickedly tell you it is, they come out transformed into a new kind of species [a higher development of humanity, doubtless]: they tell you that they are arrived to a complete knowledge of the eternal mysteries—that God is nothing but the sum of human desires; the ecstasy of an exalted Spirit, carried up into the regions of eternal calm and quiet, where the Soul is in raptures of joy and love. This they resolve, by the Light of the refined sublime judgment, to be the perfection of happiness, and that is God. Amor Deus est; Jupiter quodæque capis."

Of the Rosicrucian Philosophy, perhaps all I need here do is, for want of a better, to quote my own brief condensation, from the Paper on Symbols in the *Builder* of 15th January, 1859.

"The Rosicrucians taught that there are two kinds of life, 'the compound life' and 'the elementary life.' The compound is the human or Soul-life. The elementary is the Sylphide or Spirit-life. It was the duty of the sages, by fasting, watching, prayer, and contemplation, to bring about 'a Rosicrucian marriage' with the elementary or Spirit-life. That life was the companion and bride of man (the compound life) in Paradise; and the desertion of this his Spirit bride constituted the very fall of man himself. The grand purpose of the brethren of 'the Rosy Cross' was, by help of the Spirit-life, to bring about the entire regeneration and the perfection and salvation or immortalization of man, in body and soul and spirit. As in the Eleusinian initiation, 'science, genius, and immortality' were to be the fruits of the glorious alliance which the sages sought. By the help of their Spiritual brides, they could penetrate into all the secrets of nature, and 'see into the life of things'; and this accords with what the Taliesin says of the Druidical god-life."

We may now have some idea of what the Freemasons mean when they speak of the similarity of

* "In the shadow of Death Light will spring up." A dread reality, and his shadow are "Death and his brother sleep." The Lord "turneth the shadow of death into the morning."—Amos v. 8.

their initiations to those of the ancient mysteries, and shall now be better able to indicate what such symbols as the hexalpha, used as one of their most precious jewels, must have been originally meant by them, as well as by many others, to signify.

I fear, however, that I must postpone any further remarks on the Freemasonic and other geometrical symbols, if you will allow me, to another communication. J. E. DOVE.

THE CORONATION CHAIR, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

ALLUSION was recently made in the *Builder* to the coronation stone set within the ancient chair which is now preserved near Edward the Confessor's shrine in Westminster Abbey. The traditionary history of this stone is remarkable, but it is only traditionary. It has been known as the "prophetic" or "fatal" stone, which tradition asserts is the same whereon Jacob rested his head when he saw the vision of the ladder reaching to Heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending in the Plain of Luz. From various sources we have evidence of the great antiquity of the practice of crowning kings on an elevated stone or by a pillar; and the custom may still be said to form part of the coronation ceremonies of our own country. Besides the stone in Westminster Abbey, there still remains the stone at Kingston-upon-Thames, on which several of the ancient kings of England were crowned.

The Scriptures show that the Jewish patriarchs erected stone pillars on different occasions, but chiefly from religious motives; and that these monuments were at subsequent periods dedicated to the most important national purposes, particularly to the creation of kings. The stone which Jacob had made his pillow, he afterwards set up as a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it, saying, "And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house." He also changed the name of the place from Luz to that of Beth-el.

He likewise set up a stone for a pillar at Galed Mizpah, on the spot where he entered into a lasting covenant with Laban; and at that spot Jephtha was solemnly vested with the government of Gilead. At the stone which Joshua had set up, Abimelech was made king. Adonijah usurped his brother's crown, and held a feast at the stone of Zobeith; and Jehoash was crowned and anointed king standing by a pillar, as the manner was. Josiah also stood by a pillar, with all his people, in the Temple at Jerusalem, when he made a solemn covenant to keep the ordinances of the Lord.*

It is probable that the custom of inaugurating kings by placing them either upon or near an elevated stone spread extensively through the East, as it certainly did from thence to the Celtic and Scandinavian nations. The Persians had their "artioze" or "fatal" stone, the use of which with them was to point out the most deserving candidate for the throne. Amongst the Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes, the practice was to form a circle of stones, commonly about twelve in number, in the middle of which was set up one larger than the others. This was the royal seat, the nobles occupying those surrounding it, the people standing without. Here the leading men of the kingdom gave their suffrages, and placed the elected king on his throne. Monuments of this kind remain in Denmark, and traces of them may be found in Shetland, the Hebrides, Isle of Man, and elsewhere.

A rude enthronement, somewhat similar to that of the Northmen, is to be found among the Celtic tribes; and the kings of both Scotland and Ireland were placed upon a stone at the time of their election. The consecration of peculiar rocks and stones formed a branch of Druidical superstition, and the votaries of Druidism were taught to believe that there was great virtue in stones thus allowed. "The stone of power" was a flat stone, usually black, which the Druidical priests were said to "consult:" probably they slept upon it, like Jacob, and had what they regarded as celestial and oracular visions for their guidance. The Arch-Druids, too, sat in a stone chair, to which they attributed wonderful virtues, and which appears to have partaken of the nature of a bishop's throne. They spoke mystically of "awakening" the chair of the Taliesin at Caer Sidi, and declared that he who sat in it would suffer neither disease nor decay; but become one of the "twice-

* The etymology of the word "Column," is an interesting and curious subject, with reference to the ancient "Columns" or oracles.

born" and "deathless brotherhood." It is conjectured that the stone below the coronation chair may have been Druidical. There were formerly some rhymes current in Ireland which imply that the Scotch, although of legitimate descent, would fail to preserve regal power unless in possession of the Fatal Stone.

From Fordun's account of the Coronation Stone we gather some particulars respecting its legendary history. There was a certain king of Spain, of the Scottish race, called Milo, who had many sons: one, however, named Brek, he loved beyond all the others, although he was neither the eldest nor the heir. He therefore sent him to Ireland with an army, and gave him a marble chair, carved with very ancient art by a skilful workman, in which the kings of Spain of the Scottish nation were wont to sit when inaugurated. This Simon Brek having reached the above island with a great army, reduced it under his dominion, and reigned in it many years. He placed the stone or chair at Themor, the royal residence, a noted place at which his successors were accustomed to reside. Gathelus, as some say, brought this chair, with other regal matters, with him from Egypt into Spain: others relate that Brek, having anchored on the Irish coast, was forced by contrary winds to withdraw his anchor from the surge; and whilst labouring to that end, a stone in the form of a chair of marble was hauled up by the anchors of the ship. Receiving this as a presage of future success and dominion, he was exceedingly joyful, and it was then prophesied that he and his posterity should reign wherever this stone was found.

In Hollinshed's Chronicle there is a long account of this Gathelus, who is there said to have been a Greek, the son of Cecrops, who built the city of Athens. After leaving Greece, Gathelus resided some time in Egypt, when he married Scota, the daughter of King Pharaoh; but being alarmed by the judgments denounced by Moses, who was then in Egypt, he quitted that country, and landed in Spain, where he built a city, which he called Brigantia. When he sat upon his marble stone, he gave laws and administered justice to his people. This stone was in fashion like a seat or chair, having such a fatal destiny, as the Scotch say, following it, that, wherever it should be placed, there should the Scottish men reign and have supreme governance. "Hereof it came to pass, that first in Spain, after in Ireland, the kings which ruled over the Scottish men received the crown upon that chair until the reign of Robert the First, king of Scotland."

There are several ancient rhymes connected with this; amongst them the following:—

"King Edward wyth the lang shankes from Scotland
he fette:
Besyde the shryne of Seynt Edward at Westminster
he hitte sette."

The Irish name for this stone was generally the "Fatal Stone;" sometimes, however, it was called the "Stone of Fortune." Its place, when in Ireland, was the Hill of Tara; and for some ages the kings of that country were crowned upon it there. Sir J. Ware, in his account of the relic, states that the Irish historians say it was brought by the colony of the Tuath de Danu in their country, where it was regarded as an enchanted stone, and reputed to have a peculiar quality; namely, that when any of the Royal Scythian race placed themselves on it to be crowned, it made a terrible noise resembling thunder; but if the king-elect were a pretender, the stone was silent: and tradition reports that in the times of heathenism, before the birth of Christ, he only was crowned monarch of Ireland under whom, when placed upon it, the stone "groaned or spoke." In the reign of Moriatach Mac Ere, it was sent to his brother Fergus, first king of Scotland, who was descended from the blood-royal of Ireland; and he had it placed in Argyle, where it continued until the reign of King Kenneth II., who A.D. 840, having vanquished the Picts, near Scone, enclosed the stone in a wooden chair, and deposited it in the monastery there, to serve for the inauguration of the kings of Scotland. According to Pennant, its station, when in Argyleshire, was the Castle of Dunstaffnage; and in his Tour in Scotland, he has given an engraving of an ivory image, found in the ruins of that castle, which represents a king sitting, as he supposes, in the ancient chair, in whose bottom was the fatal stone. The shape of this chair is very different from that in Westminster Abbey; and if, we may judge rightly from this carving, it was of great antiquity.

Bishop Leslie, who wrote his account of Scottish events early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, states that Kenneth removed the marble chair

from Argyle to Scone, and willed that the future kings should be inaugurated sitting on that chair. Hollinshed narrates the facts of this removal more particularly. "King Kenneth," he says, "having destroyed the Pictish kingdom, caused the marble stone (which Simon Brek sometime brought out of Spaine into Ireland), and the first Fergus out of Ireland into Albion, to be brought now forth of Argyle, where, till that time, it had been diligentlie kept, into Gowrie; which region before appertained to the Picts; there to remaine from thenceforth as a sacred token for the establishment of the Scottish kingdome in that countrie. He placed it at Scone upon a raised seat, on a plot of ground there, because that the last battell which he had with the Picts was fought neare vnto the same place." Buchanan, in his History of Scotland, gives an account of the coronation stone, which is very similar to the above; but says, in addition, that the kings of Scotland were wont to receive both the regal title and the insignia sitting on that chair, till the days of Edward I. king of England; and Chalmers asserts that the last of the Scottish kings who was crowned on that seat was Alexander III. Hardyng, however, whose chronicle was partly composed in Henry VI.'s reign (and with whom on this point several ancient historians agree), speaking of John Balliol, affirms that he was crowned—

"In the Minster of Scone, within Scotlād ground,
Sitting upon the regal stone full sound,
As all the Kynges then vsed had afore
On Sainet Andrewes day, with al joye therfore."

In April, 1296, Edward I., having formed a league with Bruce, defeated John Balliol in a great battle near Dunbar. Afterwards Edward, wishing to deprive the Scottish nation of every vestige of its independence, caused the crown, sceptre, and inauguration stone, with all the public jewels, archives, charters, &c., to be conveyed to London as memorials of his conquest and the subjugation of the Scots.

In the wardrobe account of Edward I., under the heading "Jewels remaining at the End of the Twenty-seventh Year, of those which were sometime the King of Scotland's, found in the Castle of Edinburgh," mention is made of a large enamelled silver ring, and a great stone on which the kings of Scotland were wont to be crowned. It would seem by this that the coronation-stone was at any rate for a time deposited in Edinburgh. Most historians, however, agree that Edward carried the stone from Scone to London. Respecting this, Hemingford says—"In the church at the monastery of Scone, near the high altar, there was a very antique stone, made indeed concave like a rude chair, wherein the future kings were seated as customary in the place of coronation. This stone Edward I., in returning through Scone, commanded to be taken away and carried to London." Knighton gives similar testimony; and Walsingham says that Edward, in returning by the Abbey at Scone, took from thence the stone which the kings of Scotland were wont to use for a throne at the coronation; and brought it to Westminster, and ordered it thenceforth to be made the chair of the officiating priest. Another authority, who has evidently gathered his information from the last-named writer, says:—

"And as he came homeward by Skone away,
The Regal stone of Scotland then he brought
And sent it forth to Westminster for ay
To be there in a chaire cleanly wrought,
Which then was standyng beside the shryne
In a chaire of olde tyme made full fyne."

Matthew of Westminster informs us [date 1297] that the king coming to Westminster, on the morning of St. Botolph, offered to the blessed King Edward the regalia of the Scottish kingdom, viz., the throne, the golden sceptre, and the crown.

Rapin, the historian, after alluding to the intention of King Edward to unite the two kingdoms, and the removal into England of the Scottish regalia and famous inauguration stone, says, "The people of Scotland have all along placed in that stone a kind of fatality: they fancied that while it remained in their country the state would remain unshaken; but the moment it should be elsewhere removed, great revolutions would ensue; and for this reason Edward carried it away,—to create in the Scots a belief that the dissolution of their monarchy had come, and to lessen their hopes of obtaining their liberty."

Of such import was this stone, that it was not only made a separate article in a treaty of peace, but also of political conference between Edward III. and David II., king of Scotland. A writ of Privy Council, of July 1st, 1328, is in existence, signed by the king and directed to the Abbot and Convent of Westminster, wherein Edward III., after reciting that the stone whereon the kings of Scotland used to sit, at the time of their corona-

tion, and which was then in the keeping of that abbot, &c., should be sent to Scotland; and that he had ordered the Sheriffs of London to receive the same from them by indenture, and cause it to be delivered to the queen mother: notwithstanding this command, it is clear that the coronation-stone was never given up, although many ancient records, jewels, and monuments, were actually delivered to the Scotch.

The ancient prophetic distich relating to this stone is said to have been cut in or engraven on it by command of king Kenneth; but this is in all probability erroneous; for, so far as we are able to discover, there are no traces of any inscription; and, with the exception of a small cross, there is no mark upon this stone: there is, however, a rectangular groove or indent, in which an inscription might at one time have been fixed.

The coronation-stone is placed within the framework of the chair, which is now in the Confessor's Chapel: at each end is a circular iron handle, affixed to a staple within the stone itself, so that it might be lifted up.

On referring to the notes above given, it will be seen that in some respects the ancient accounts of the stone do not agree with its present appearance. We have it described as a "white marble stone," and in some instances as being richly carved by a cunning artist: notwithstanding, it is in reality a dun-coloured, common-looking stone, like some of those which are brought for various purposes from Dundee, in Scotland. It is a sandy granular stone, chiefly quartz, with light and reddish coloured felspar, and also light and dark mica, with some other matters intermixed; and on the upperside there is a dark, brownish coloured flint pebble, which, from its hardness, has not been cut through, though immediately crossed by the indent above mentioned. The stone is of oblong but irregular form, measuring 26 inches in length, 16½ inches in breadth, and 10 inches in thickness.

In the wardrobe accounts of Edward I.'s time there is a charge by Master Walter, the painter, for the costs and expenses incurred by him for making one step at the foot of the new chair (in which is the stone from Scotland), set up near the altar in St. Edward's shrine in the Abbatial Church at Westminster, in pursuance with the order of the king, and for the wages of the carpenter and painter for painting the said, together with making a case for covering the chair. The cost of this was 17. 19s. 7d.

A VISIT TO THE BIRKENHEAD DOCK WORKS.

On Saturday afternoon last about fifty of the members of the Liverpool Architectural and Archæological Society paid a visit to the Birkenhead Dock works. They were received by Mr. J. Justen, from the department of the dock engineer, Mr. Lyster.

It is not our intention to enter upon an elaborate description of the great estate of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board at Birkenhead, but it may interest our readers if we note a few facts in reference to the gigantic dock works on the Cheshire side of the Mersey—works extending over an area of 121 acres and 2,869 yards, and of a money value of more than four millions sterling. The quay space at Birkenhead is between five and six miles in extent: at Liverpool it is nearly seventeen miles, whilst at the latter place also the dock space is about 250 acres. The Liverpool Dock Estate covers about 810 acres, of which about 220 are yet unappropriated, and the Birkenhead Estate about 450 acres. So much for the contrast of the two estates in point of area. The extent to which the Liverpool docks are used is well known; in fact, they are over-crowded at times. The Birkenhead have yet to be tested.

The members on landing forthwith proceeded to the reclaimed portion of the Woodside basin, at the west end of which a quarry has been opened, and excellent red sandstone is being obtained, and used for building the walls of the half-tide dock and great northern entrances near Seacombe. One of Taylor's travelling steam cranes was in use for hoisting and placing the stone on the trucks, and the visitors were much struck by the economy of labour consequent upon the employment of this piece of machinery. The next point of interest visited was the Morpeth Dock, which at present contains less than four acres of water space. The enlargement is to the extent of seven acres, and consists of a cut to the south-eastward—already finished—bringing the extreme end of the dock close to the river wall, and pointing to the north-east corner of the Albert Dock Warehouses. The present entrance to the Morpeth Dock—a very