

Ancient Free and Accepted
Masons of England.



The Grand
Festival

A.D. 1717 — A.D. 1911.

On

Wednesday, 26th April, 1911.



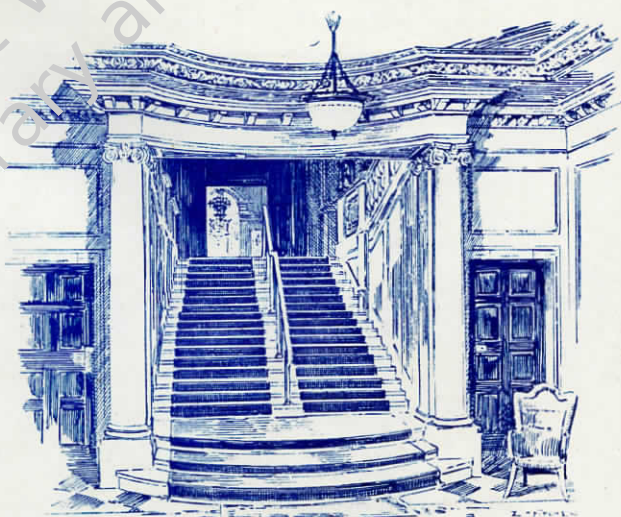
A. D. 1717

*The
Grand
Festival*

A. D. 1911

"GOOSE AND GRIDIRON."
THE STAIRCASE LEADING FROM THE BAR TO
THE FIRST FLOOR ROOM, AS IT WAS
FROM 1665 TO 1831.

*To
Greet You
Well*



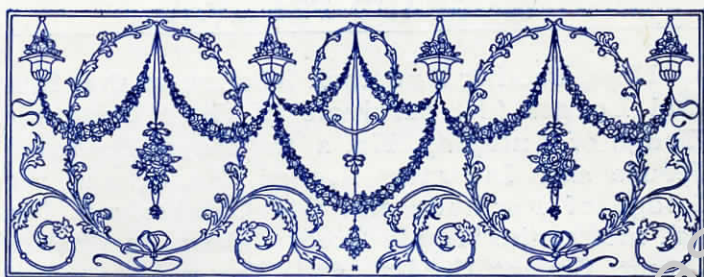
CONNAUGHT ROOMS 1910.



EXTERIOR OF THE
"GOOSE AND GRIDIRON",
1896, SHORTLY BEFORE
ITS DEMOLITION.



INTERIOR
OF THE
BAR ROOM,
"GOOSE AND
GRIDIRON,"
AS IN 1820.



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HE usual, and indeed a necessary mode of commencing the Biography of any individual is to give the date and place of his birth. And this also, I think, is an appropriate method of dealing with these yearly celebrations which mark events in the far past.

What then is the actual date of the first "Grand Festival," and where was it held? For information on this point we have at present to rely solely on the authority of Bro. Dr. James Anderson, and the account given by him in his revised "Book of Constitutions," published by direction of Grand Lodge in 1738. As from time to time it will be necessary for me to quote from this work, let me at once say that Brother Anderson, as a Masonic Historian from the period of Adam to—say 1700 A.D., is not an authority on which we can place unlimited reliance. He drew so recklessly on his imagination, that when he arrived at the latter date, he had become practically bankrupt in his pleasant commodity, and his subsequent statements, though somewhat bald and meagre, may be taken as the correct narrative of what actually took place.

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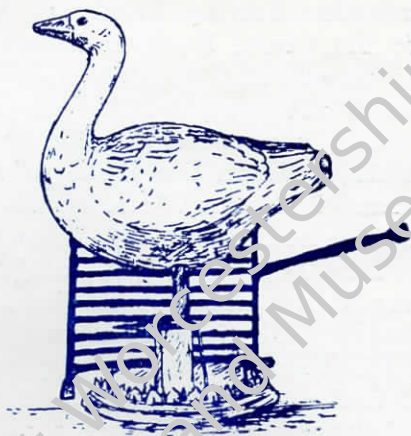
Now, Brother Anderson informs us that four Old Lodges (the survivors of these being the Lodge of Antiquity. No. 2, the Royal Somerset House and Inverness Lodge. No. 4, and the Lodge of Fortitude and Old Cumberland. No. 12), met at the "Apple Tree" Tavern, in Charles Street, Covent Garden, and "forthwith revived the Quarterly Communication of the Officers of Lodges (called the Grand Lodge), resolved to hold an annual assembly and Feast, and then to chuse a Grand Master from amongst themselves till they should have the honour of a Noble Brother at their head. Accordingly on St. John the Baptist's Day, in the 3rd year of King George I., A.D. 1717, the Assembly and the Feast of the Free and Accepted Masons was held at the aforesaid 'Goose and Gridiron' Alehouse."

So now we have the date of the first Grand Festival, and the place where it was held. As, therefore, the "Goose and Gridiron" St. Paul's Churchyard was the Birthplace of the Grand Festival, a few facts as to this old Inn may not be out of place. There stood in the early Stuart period in London House Yard, at the north-west corner of St. Paul's Churchyard, an inn called the "Mitre," a house famous for musical entertainments. The "Mitre" was at any rate partially destroyed in the Great Fire, and rebuilt in 1670. I see by the Parish Assessment Books that one Brookes was then tenant. Music had no charms for him, and he gave the inn the name of the "Goose and Gridiron," in contradistinction to the "Swan and Harp," the usual Sign of a tavern connected with music. Later on it is spoken of as "an Old Inn on the north side of the Churchyard, the usual starting-place of coaches for

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Hammersmith and the western villages." The old house was enlarged somewhat in 1785, and then remained practically unaltered both externally and internally till it was pulled down in 1895.

V.W. Brother Ross Robertson, P.M.G., of Canada, and a noted London antiquarian, in his *History of Masonry in Canada*, describes the old



"At the Sign of the 'Goose and Gridiron,'" 1719.

inn as he saw it just before it was demolished. It had a quaint panelled bar, and a very narrow winding staircase led up to a small vestibule, and opening out of this was the dining-room, of considerable dimensions, where, without doubt, the first Grand Festival was held. Brother Robertson fortunately had drawings taken, and kindly sent me photographs of the originals, which are here reproduced. He had an armchair made out of the oak beams which supported the floor of this room. The old Sign of the "Goose and Gridiron," after some vicissitudes, now reposes in the Guildhall Museum.

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I have dwelt perhaps at too great length on the few facts that can be gleaned about this old London Inn, yet to present-day Freemasons its history should always be interesting and instructive. A memory of the past which should remain to us a cherished "heirloom of the present."

It now remains for us briefly to note the places where the Grand Festival found a home from time to time. The "Goose and Gridiron" was patronised till 1721, when, the numbers having increased, it was held at the Stationers' Hall, on which occasion the Duke of Montagu was made Grand Master. We have the Festival for the first time noticed in the Journal of the period. The *Post Boy* of the 27th of June, 1721, states: "There was a meeting on Saturday last at the Stationers' Hall of between two and three hundred of the Ancient Fraternity of Freemasons who had a splendid Dinner and musick. Several Noblemen and Gentlemen were present at this meeting, and his Grace the Duke of Montagu was unanimously chosen Master for the ensuing year, and Dr. Beale Sub-Master. The Revd. Dr. Desaguliers made a speech suitable to the occasion."

And again the Festival of 1722 is thus quaintly announced in the *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* of the 23rd of June, 1722: "On Monday next being the 25th inst. will be kept at Stationers' Hall the Great Meeting of the Most Noble and Ancient Fraternity of Freemasons, as usual, and in which Society there is some peculiar signal given, so that if any one of them walks by, or is drinking in any edifice or building of stone, they

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all come down immediately from their work, and wait upon him with great respect." This "stormy year" of 1722 saw the Jacobite Duke of Wharton elected Grand Master at the irregular Festival at Stationers' Hall, but he was confirmed in his office at a meeting of Grand Lodge held on the 17th of January, 1723. The Festival was then transferred to the Merchant Taylors' Hall, then from 1731 to 1735 to the Mercers' Hall,



Interior of room on first floor of the "Goose and Gridiron," where the Lodge of Antiquity No. 2, the Royal Somerset House and Inverness Lodge No. 4, and the Lodge of Fortitude and Old Cumberland No. 12, met in 1717 and organized the first Festival of Grand Lodge. As the room was in 1750.

and on three subsequent occasions at the Fishmongers' Hall. From that date till about 1763 the "Old Devil" Tavern, near Temple Bar, in Fleet Street, was usually selected both for the quarterly communication and for the Grand Festival. At this old Tavern in its palmiest days Simon Wadlow ruled as Landlord. He is immortalised by Ben Jonson in "Old Simon the King," the favourite song of Squire Western.

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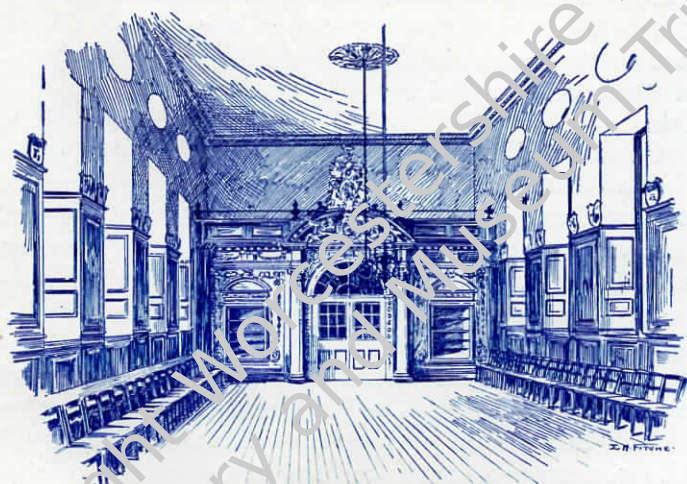
For some twelve years after 1763 the Festival was celebrated at the "Crown and Anchor," Strand, at the corner of Arundel Street, but in 1774 the "Freemasons' Tavern" in Great Queen Street, was purchased, and a permanent home was found for the Festival. The old Tavern was rebuilt in 1786, when more accommodation was found necessary.

It must not be forgotten that during the period that the Premier Grand Lodge was holding its Festival at the "Old Devil" Tavern another Grand Lodge was formed, sometimes styled "The Antient Grand Lodge," and later "The Athole Grand Lodge." Its first Grand Festival was held in 1753 at the "Five Bells" Strand. Prior to that date there were some meetings of the "Grand Committee" of the Antients at the "Griffin" Tavern, Holborn, and the "Temple and Sun," Shire Lane. In an engraved list of the Antients (1733) recently discovered, the "Five Bells" is described as "behind the new Church," that is the Church of St. Mary-le-Strand, built in 1714. The Grand Festival of the Antients was removed to the "Half Moon" Cheapside in 1771, and subsequently was held at the "Horns" Tavern, Doctors' Commons, the "Paul's Head," Cateaton Street, and then at the "Crown and Anchor" Strand until the Union in 1813.

Before leaving the subject of the dates and places where the Grand Festivals have been held, it is interesting to note that there were at one period "Summer Meetings or Festivals," generally organised by the Deputy Grand Master, and of somewhat an informal character. The first mention I can find of these is an advertise-

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ment in the *Daily Post* for the 18th of May, 1739. "Those Brethren who intend to wait on the Right Honourable Lord Raymond, Grand Master of the Antient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, to dine at Putney Bowling Green, to-morrow the 19th inst., are requested to take tickets in time, that Bro. Parry may make suitable arrangements for them.



Stationers' Hall in 1723.

Tickets to be had at Mr. Moody's, Sword Cutler to His Majesty and the Prince of Wales, near Temple Bar, Mr. Berry's, at the Theatre Coffee House, in Bridges Street, Covent Garden, and Forrest's Coffee House. N.B. Dinner on the Table at 2 o'clock, and all Brethren are required to come cloathed." The Bowling Green House seems to have declined as a place of entertainment and became a private residence about 1760. Here afterwards William Pitt lived for several years and died in 1806. No doubt at this period

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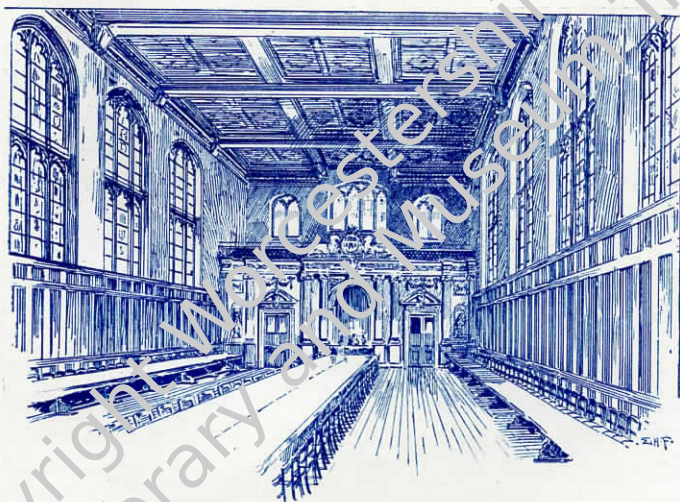
(1735 to 1800) this Summer Festival was held fairly regularly. The last notice in the Minutes of Grand Lodge is in 1798, for a Feast at the Canonbury House, Islington.

And now, having ascertained as far as our present sources of information enable us the dates when and the various places where the Grand Festivals were held, I think we may glance back into the past once more, and try to revive the primitive Festivals and the arrangements and conditions under which they were held.

One can well imagine that in the first years at the "Goose and Gridiron," the conduct of the Festival or Feast was an easy task. Nothing more than an "Ordinary," a form of entertainment common to the Taverns near St. Paul's. The elections and other business came after refreshment, and the Masonic Toasts concluded the Festivities. As Dr. Chetwode Crawley says in his admirable paper on "Mock Masonry," "the generation that surrounded the cradle of the Grand Lodge of England was robust and strenuous." It was, and from the Grand Mastership of that really able and distinguished Brother, Dr. Desaguliers, in 1719, the numbers increased and the quality of the Brethren advanced many rounds on the social ladder, and included "several noblemen." So something had to be done to diffuse the light of Masonry and proclaim its revived importance. The Stationers' Hall was taken in 1721 to accommodate the increased numbers. So far—well, but in an evil hour, in my opinion, it was decided to hold a procession through the streets. The Brethren met in the

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morning at the "King's Arms," St. Paul's Churchyard, "and from thence they marched on foot to the Hall in proper cloathing, and due form; where they were joyfully received by about 150 true and faithful all cloathed." Later, coaches were called into requisition, and the Grand Master was escorted through the town from his house to the place of meeting with Banners, Emblems, Stewards, etc., etc.



Merchant Taylors' Hall, 18th Century.

The most notable of the "Procession Festivals" was that held in 1729, and I give the account in full from the Minutes of Grand Lodge:

"The 29th day of January, 1729. The Right Hon. Lord Kingston, Grand Master, having appointed this day for the holding of the Grand Annual Feast, according to ancient custom, the same was conducted in the following manner:

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Grand Officers waited on the Duke of Norfolk, the Grand Master Elect, at his Grace's house in St. James's Square, by Eleven o' the clock in the morning, where they were met by many persons of Quality and Gentry, being Masons, who had coaches in Town, and about one o' the clock made the following Procession to Merchant Taylors' Hall in the City, where they dined.

CEREMONIAL OF PROCESSION TO THE HALL.

THE Nobility according to their several degrees (the Juniors going first) except such as have been Grand Masters, who are to take place of all others and to be attended by their Grand Officers, viz.,

- Lord Colerane
- Lord Inchiquin
- Lord Paisley
- Duke of Richmond
- Earl of Dalkeith
- Duke of Montague
- The Grand Wardens Elect
- The Secretary with the Velvet Bag
- The Grand Wardens
- The Deputy Grand Master alone
- The Two Grand Masters Together
- All to be cloathed with aprons and gloves
- His Grace's State Coach empty

N.B. The first Coach must be directed to stop at the end of Pallmall and not to proceed till a messenger comes to him with orders to move

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on Slowly, the rest that follow to keep in a Line close to their leaders, to prevent any other coaches (or Carts) getting between them.

After the Marshall has seen the Grand Master's Chariot begin to move, He is to make the best of his way to the Hall and be ready to order the following Procession

THE PROCESSION WHEN THEY COME INTO THE HALL.

The 12 Stewards to stand 6 on each side the passage, letting the Company pass through them (in the same order as they came) and when the Grand Wardens Elect advance the Stewards are to close and to walk two and two before them.

The Secretary carrying the Velvet Bag
The Grand Wardens
The Deputy Grand Master

LEFT.

RIGHT.

The sword to be born by the Master of the lodge to whom it belongs.

The Book of Constitutions carried on the Velvet Cusheon by the Master of the senior Lodge.

GRAND MASTER
ELECT.

THE GRAND
MASTER.

The Marshal.

In this order they are to proceed to the Chamber prepared for the Grand Lodge which is to be ready formed.

The Cusheon is to be laid on the pedestal, before the Grand Master, the Book and Sword

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upon it, the Masters and Wardens of the several Lodges to be in order to receive the Grand Master, etc.

After DINNER the following Procession is to be made round the Hall by the Grand Master and his Officers, after which the new Grand Master and his Officers make the like Procession (being first installed), and at their return take their places.

THE PROCESSION AFTER DINNER IN THE HALL.

Lynch to clear the way
The 12 Stewards 2 & 2

LEFT. RIGHT HAND.

A Master of a lodge bearing one of the Great Lights. The Secretary bearing one of the the Velvet Bag.

Great Lights.

Junior Grand Warden Senior Grand Warden
Two Great Lights born by Masters of Lodges
in Breast

Deputy Grand Master

The Sword born by the same person as before. The Book of Constitutions born on the Cusheon as before.

Grand Master

Those who have been Grand Masters, Deputy Grand Masters and Grand Wardens, two and two, the Seniors going first after the Grand Master.

The Marshal

N.B. The Brethren sitting at the several tables must have directions to face about as the Procession is made, and to take the Candles off the Tables and to hold them in their hands (above their heads) at proper Distances that the Ceremony may be more Conspicuous.

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THE Marshal, Mr. Pyne, is to bear a Truncheon painted blew and tipt with gold.

The Grand Master being come into the Grand Lodge Room and seated in his chair with the Grand Master Elect on his Right hand, and the Grand Officers, etc., in their places, His Worship declared His Grace the Duke of Norfolk Grand Master for the ensuing year, who was received with a general satisfaction.

His Grace then made Choice of His Grand Officers, viz.,

Nathaniel Blackerby continued Depy. Grand Master.

The Honble. Collo. Carpenter Senr. Grand Warden.

Thomas Batson, Esqr. Junr. Grand Warden.

Br. William Reid continued Secretary.

AFTER Dinner the General Healths were drank as usual, and the Stewards were called up to the Master's Table and had the Thanks of the Grand Master and the rest of the Company for their handsome Entertainment, and their healths were drank accordingly."

A little procession, however, like a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. A mighty cavalcade, such as the Lord Mayor's Show, interests, and in a measure rather awes the multitude; but the peregrinations of a few coaches, banners, and symbols of an unfamiliar character through the streets is throwing temptation in the way of the baser sort.

The first notice we have of any caricature of the outside Procession is in a satirical print

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entitled "Mock Masonry of the Grand Procession," dated 1741. This broadsheet, now very rare, has an engraving of a burlesque procession in the vicinity of Charing Cross, and some doggerel verses. The whole is transcribed by the disguised signatures of Mr. Esquire Carey, and Paul Whitehead. I have said that these Masonic Processions were putting temptation in the way of the baser sort, and certainly Messrs. Carey and Whitehead may be placed in that category. Perhaps Carey (his parents gave him the un-Christian name of "Esquire") was more fool



"Old Devil" Tavern, Temple Bar.

than knave, and was led on by a "superior spirit" in his partner. Paul Whitehead (1710 to 1774) in contradistinction to Carey, was certainly more knave than fool. He was "paid Secretary to the Monks of Medmenham," and he is well described by the great satirist, Churchill:

"May I (can worse disgrace on manhood fall?)
Be born a Whitehead and baptised a Paul."

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Such was the man who was one of the chief abusers and critics of Freemasonry of that period.

In 1714 Grand Lodge wisely discontinued these street Processions at the Festivals, and has ever since been properly jealous of allowing any public processions whatever, except on very special and appropriate occasions.

As the street processions became obsolete, the ceremonies at the Meeting and Feast were rendered more ornate. So I find the Toasts at the Banquets were gradually increased in numbers and they became more stereotyped as to form. I think it will be interesting to give in extenso the Toast List for 1794.

LIST OF TOASTS, FESTIVAL 7th MAY, 1794

"John Dent, Esq., M.P. for Lancashire, in the chair.

"After Dinner, 'Non Nobis,' by Messrs. Johnstone, Incedon, Dignum, Fawcett, Davies, etc.

"1. Toast, 'King and Craft.'
Music, 'God Save the King.'

"2. 'H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, G.M.'
Music, 'Apprentices' Song.'

"Song, Dignum, 'The Joys of an humble state.'

"3. Toast, 'Lord Moira.'
Music, 'Britons strike home.'

"Song, Incedon, 'This day a stag must die.'

"4. Toast, 'Duke of York and the Army.'
Music, 'See the conquering hero comes.'

"Glee, 'When Arthur first at Court began.'

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"5. Toast, 'Duke of Clarence and the Navy of Great Britain.'

Music, 'Rule Britannia.'

"Song, Johnstone, 'Land of Potatoes.'

"6. Toast, 'John Dent, Esq. (the Chair).'

"Song, Fawcett, 'Father and Mother and Sake.'

"7. Toast, 'Grand Wardens.'

"Duet, 'Wine cannot cure.'

"8. Toast, 'Sir P. Parker, D.G.M.'

Music, 'Hearts of Oak.'

"Song, Angelo, 'With a double voice.'

"The Grand Officers were announced from the Chair.

"9. Toast, 'Peace, harmony and unanimity to Masons in general.'

"Song, Williams, 'What folly, boys, to be down-hearted.'

"10. Toast, 'Board of Stewards,'

"11. Toast, 'Prince Edward.'"

It will be noticed here, as in other lists that the first toast is the time-honoured one of the "King and the Craft."

Having obtained, I trust, some insight into the formation, constitution, and customs of the Grand Festival of the past, we have now to consider lastly a subject of no less interest and importance in connection with this annual celebration of Masonry. The fortunes and history of the Grand Festival from the very early days are indissolubly connected with the Grand Stewards, and the origin and rise of the "Red Apron" Lodges. Bro. Henry Sadler, with his usual accuracy and precision, has thrown new light on

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this old subject in his "Memorials of the Globe Lodge. No. 23."

As I mentioned before, the first few Feasts at the "Goose and Gridiron" were like the efforts of primitive man in architecture. As related in the second Lecture, "the first efforts were small, and the structure simple and rude," no more than a number of joints for the dinner, and bowls of punch for the Toasts to complete the work and festivities. But numbers increased, and so we find Dr. Anderson relating that after



The "Crown and Anchor," Strand (corner of Arundel Street)

the election of the Duke of Montagu in 1721 "the Grand Wardens were ordered as usual to prepare the Feast, and to take some stewards to their assistance, Brothers of Ability and Capacity, and to appoint some Brethren to attend the Tables; for that no strangers must be there. But the Grand Officers not finding a proper number of Stewards, our Brother, Mr. Josiah Villeneau, Upholder in the Borough of Southwark, generously took the whole on himself, attended by

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some waiters." Our excellent Brother was doubtless a Member of the Upholders' Company to whom Charles I. granted a Charter. In any case, he seems to have been the mainstay of the Grand Festival of 1721.

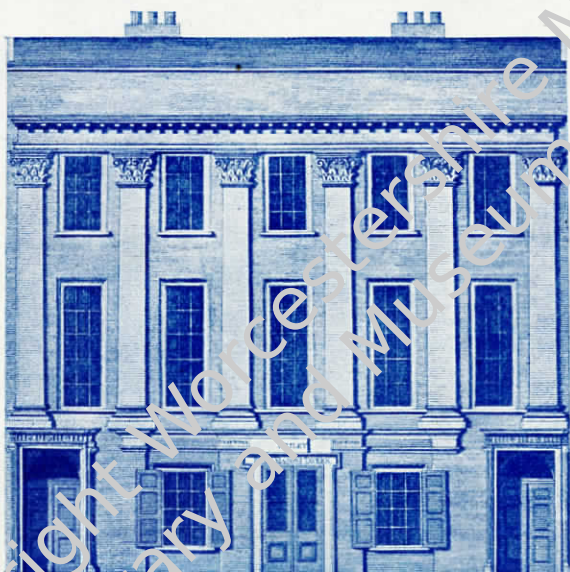
Now it is a very true old saying that human nature is much the same in all ages. And it is human nature to appreciate splendid ceremonies, to even like to take a dignified and ornamental part in the same, to eat a good dinner, and at one's ease to hear more or less eloquent speeches. And last but not least it is human nature to desire to reserve the right and privilege of freely abusing all the arrangements and proceedings throughout.

Thus the Festival gained in years, but not in Stewards, and we read in 1725, "After the Generall healths were over, one was drunk to the Grand Steward. viz., John James Heidegger and his two Deputys." As Bro. Heidegger (1650 to 1749) is the first "Grand Steward" mentioned in our records he ought not to be passed by without some further reference. He was the son of a Swiss clergyman and came to London towards the end of the 17th Century. As an authority in musical matters and stage management he became associated with Handel in 1718. He owed, it would appear, nothing to his appearance, as Mrs. Delaney describes him as "the most ugly man that was ever formed." Being a person of infinite variety of entertainment he was appointed by George II. "Master of the Revels." He was a friend of the Duke of Montagu, who no doubt introduced him to the Craft. Our Brother's declining years were passed at the

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Maid of Honour Row, Richmond, where he had his hall and staircase painted in the Italian style, and these appear at the present moment as fresh as ever. He died there 5th September, 1749, at the good old age of 99.

However, in 1728 Dr. Desaguliers proposed that a certain number of Stewards should be



Old "Freemasons' Tavern," 1799. (From Grand Lodge Library.)

appointed, "who should have the entire care and direction of the Feast." At the request of the Grand Master, 12 Brethren at length came forward and volunteered their services. The generous and dignified regime of the Grand Stewards thus commenced, and their privileges were to follow in due course at the next Festival. The exclusive right of nominating their successors in Office was then conferred, and the privilege of

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wearing the Red Apron and Jewel (designed by Bro. William Hogarth) in the years 1731 and 1735 respectively.

Bro. F. J. W. Crowe (P.M. of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076), author of "Masonic Clothing and Regalia" and "Colours in Freemasonry," is of opinion that the Dark Blue of Grand Lodge Officers is derived from the ribbon of the Order of the Garter, and the red of the Grand Stewards from the Order of the Bath. In or about 1725, the Duke of Montagu and several other prominent Grand Officers were Knights of



From List of Lodges of "Antient Masons," 1753.

the Garter, with Bro. John Anstis as Registrar of the Order, and it was about this period that the Grand Officers began to wear the distinctive Garter or dark blue ribbon. In this connection it is to be observed that it was in 1725 that George II. revived the Order of the Bath, and 35 Knights were installed, many of whom belonged to the Craft, Bro. Anstis being also

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Herald of the Arms of the revived Order. The sash and ribbon of this Order is red worn over the right shoulder.

In the year 1775 the number of Stewards was still 12, returned by eight lodges. The Somerset



John James Heidegger, First Grand Steward, 1725.
(From Grand Lodge Library.)

House Lodge (now No. 4) returned three, and two other lodges two each. The actual number of the Red Apron Lodges at the time of the Union of the two Grand Lodges in 1813 was

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nine, and the Duke of Sussex added nine others to this number. Many of these latter nine had sent up Grand Stewards to the Festival in the early days.

Since that date all the 18 lodges have retained their privileges except two. The Pilgrim Lodge resigned its Red Apron in 1834, and the Jerusalem Lodge No. 197 received the honour; and the Old King's Arms Lodge lost its privileges in 1852, but was reinstated in 1904.

The Festival has seen many changes, but none has been more gratifying to the Craft in general than the return of the Feast, after a short interval, to the premises where for some 135 years it has now been held. It is a unique Celebration of the World's Mother Grand Lodge, calling together all classes of Masons, those of our Sister Constitutions and from the Dominions beyond the seas. As years go on it owes much of its added dignity and usefulness to the generous labour and ever-increasing zeal of the Grand Stewards, to whom the members of our Order should be always grateful and join yearly in the classical toast:

"Floreat æternum Supremi Dispensatores
Periæque Maximæ Latomorum."

J. P. Simpson

S. W. Quatuor Coronati
Lodge 2076