

LAYING THE FOUNDATION-STONE OF THE NEW LODGE, TORQUAY.

ABOUT a month since, the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of the New Masonic Hall to be erected in the above town, was performed by the Right Worshipful the Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Devonshire, the Rev. John Huyshe, M.A., with the customary display that characterises the demonstrations of the craft.

Special trains ran from Barnstaple, Plymouth, and intermediate stations, and by mid-day crowds of people, accompanied by bands of music, flags, banners and other paraphernalia, lined the streets of the quiet Devonshire town.

The Provincial Grand Lodge was summoned to assemble at the Town Hall, at "High Twelve"; and by that hour no fewer than three hundred Masons, representing, with very few exceptions, every lodge in the province, besides many visiting brethren, were in attendance. The arrangements of the interior of the lodge excited the admiration of every brother. The D.P.G.M., on taking his seat, was greeted according to the ancient form nine times, and the grand lodge was duly opened with solemn prayer. Bro. Franklin Thomas, Worshipful Master of the St. John's Lodge, Torquay, No. 411, then advanced to the centre of the lodge, attended by his wardens and two grand stewards, and formally asked the D.P.G.M. "fraternally to assist him in laying the foundation-stone of a building intended to be dedicated to Freemasonry." Certain ceremonials having been performed, the brethren, fully clothed in their aprons, jewels, and insignia of office, departed for the site of the intended building, in Park Place, in a pre-arranged order of procession.

On arriving at the site of the intended building, the ceremony was proceeded with in the presence of an immense concourse of persons, who occupied every available spot within sight. All being ready, the P.G. Treasurer deposited the usual coin, and the P.G. Registrar the sealed stone, in cavities which had been made in the stone for their reception. The silver trowel was then handed to the D.P.G.M., who having spread the mortar, the stone, suspended by the "Lewis," was successfully lowered into its place, and duly tried by the "Plumb-rule," the "Level," and the "Square." Giving it three raps, the D.P.G.M. then addressed the assemblage thus:—

"Know all you who hear me. We proclaim ourselves free and lawful Masons, true to the laws of our country, professing to fear God, and to



NEW MASONIC HALL, TORQUAY.—(K. APPLETON, ARCHITECT.)

confer benefits on mankind. We practise universal beneficence towards all. We have secrets concealed from the eyes of men which may not be revealed to any but Masons, and which no outsider has yet discovered; they are, however, lawful and honourable. Unless our craft was good, and our calling honest, these secrets would not have existed for so many generations, nor should we have had so many illustrious personages as Brethren of our Order, always ready to sanction our proceedings and contribute to our welfare. We are assembled in the broad face of open day under the canopy of heaven, to build a house for Masonry. May God prosper our handiwork as it shall most please Him. May this house become a place wherein just and upright Masons may practise benevolence, promote harmony, and cultivate brotherly love, until they shall all assemble in the Grand Lodge above, where the world's Great Architect lives and reigns for ever."

The P.G. Chaplain next pronounced a solemn benediction, and the D.P.G.M. anointed the stone-work with oil, strewing wheat and salt and pouring wine upon it. The procession was then re-formed and returned to the Town Hall, when 120 of the brethren adjourned to a banquet, at which the usual loyal and Masonic toasts were drunk with enthusiasm.

The subjoined engraving represents the proposed building, which is to be ornamented with a circular window at the east end, filled with tracery in the form of a Masonic device. The reasons why the Gothic style of architecture was selected we understand to be these:—1st, That it permits of certain masonic forms being introduced with greater effect than could be done in any other style; 2ndly, That this is the style of most of the greatest works of the early operative Freemasons, who erected the noble works of art in the middle ages—the lodges travelling from place to place executing those wonders of magnificence which are the admiration of the world to the present day; and, 3rdly, That the Gothic style is essentially the style for England, being that which is best adapted to our social requirements and tastes, and to our climate, both in point of utility, and artistically.