☞ Please give this Circular all possible publicity.

# HISTORY OF THE OLD ENGLISH OR YORK RITE OF FREEMASONRY.

*"The York Rite is the Mother of all the other rites; from it they have separated as so many schisms; it is the most ancient, the most simple, and most Scientific; and so far as my knowledge of the other rites extends, with the principal of which I am sufficiently acquainted, I may be permitted to say, that it is the only one in which the true system of symbolic instruction has been preserved."*

"A Lecture on Free masonry", by Albert G. Mackey, M. D.

BRETHREN,

To announcing to you the regular and uninterrupted continuation of the old English, or York rite—typified in the Seven steps of the Mystical ladder—it is necessary first to state that there is no wish to interfere with the Craft and Arch degrees under the Grand Lodge, and Grand Chapter, of England; the rite, as such, waiving all claims, holding them in abeyance, and requiring its Candidates to be possessed of those degrees prior to the communication of its higher mysteries.

In exhibiting the claims of the rites now practised there is no necessity to go beyond the establishment of the Grand Lodge in 1717 and it is quite certain, from undeniable evidence, that the ancient English, or York rite, has been in uninterrupted operation ever since. There is printed evidence in 1721 (a), 1724, and 1744, to show that a system of high-grade Masonry prevailed, but was, perhaps wisely, repudiated by the Modern Grand Lodge. The 1721 work alludes to the higher mysteries of Christian Masonry, in Rosicrucian symbolic language the 1724 pamphlet to "the fift order," and the 1744 work to "three steps" above Master Mason; (b) further stating that those were practised at York, London, and Dublin, however, the "Grand Lodge of All England," at York fell into abeyance and the brethren separated into scattered Lodges, Chapters, and Encampments, to re-collect themselves, after 1761, from a dormancy of over twenty years.

There existed in London in 1740, a "Provincial Grand Lodge and Chapter" of Herodom—Rose Croix, which at that date, granted warrants, claimed to have existed from "time immemorial" (c) and to have been instituted as an offset by those Templars who fought for Bruce, at Bannockburn; upon these claims to have originated the degrees of Rose Croix, and Rose Croix, a d this, and various facts, connect those orders with the Templars, though the Rosae Crucis embraces traditions from the ancient Theosophic brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. It is well-known that the English Order of Templars could be traced back at the beginning of this century, to the year 1740 and the close connection but separate nature of the Templar and the Kad sh even then will be proved, (d) The oldest document we have is a London one mentioning the following degrees: Symbolic 9, Master Architect 1 (P.M.), Royal Arch 1, Rosae Crucis, or Triple Cross 1, HRDM TP 1, Kadosh, Pale tine, 1, Red Cross, Physical, Philosophical, and Moral.

On the continent of Europe, the Chevalier Ramsay, (1728), advocated his own peculiar rite of seven degrees, and received, prior to 1736, the patronage of the Jesuit Chapter of Clermont, where our exiled King James II had settled in 1740, the Templar Order was practised by Field-Marshal Von Marschall, and Baron Hunde, "Privy Councillor and proprietor of many estates," entered into the French Army at Breslau, in 1743 and was there entered a Templar (e), and the Kadosh is said to have been established at Lyons in the same year.

In 1745 Prince Charles Edward Stuart was made a Scottish Templar at Holyrood by some who were members in 1715, and in 1747 he granted to Arras in France, a charter (yet in existence) as "King of Great Britain and in that quality S.G.M. of the Chapter of Herodom known under the title of Knights of the Eagle and Pelican, and since our misfortunes as Rose Croix" (f) the symbol of the Pelican feeding its young having been used upon the banner of his father James III., in 1718). (f) Baron Hunde afterwards became Commander of the "seventh province of the order," (g) under the Stuart Princes and propagated in 1754 a rite consisting likewise of seven degrees of which we have 5 d. Rose Cross, 6 d. Templar, 7 d. Professed Knight (Kadosh)

These facts are quite sufficient to prove the authenticity and antiquity of the Ancient Templar rite of Seven degrees, and we are expressly informed in the 32 d. of the modern "Ancient and Accepted rite," that the Masonry of the Crusaders was confined to these seven grades, the last three of which were worked under the government of an Arch Chapter, but it was not until the year 1786 that the Ancient Masons in London started a separate organization for the Ane; degree of R. A. during the dormancy of the York Grand Lodge which in 1761 had re-assembled the working of the Templar, a third Grand Lodge was formed at Bristol [under a Grand Charter from the under A "Council of Princes" still existing, and from the wade of the Knights Rosae Crucis, Templars, and Kadosh, and the Lodge of St. George of Observance," London, was formed a sunday rite to that of Baron Hunde, and under the Royal Order of Scotland, in 1782, the degrees of Rosy Cross.

But this our venerable order has been its traitors and its sa vers, for in 1758, Pirlet, a tail , and Lacurne, a dan ing master, invented a new and ( th "al rite of 25 degrees, enabling them to confer the ti les of Knights Princes, Sovereigns, and even Emperors, under the ( government of the "Empire of the East and West." The Marquis of the order Chaillon de Joinville gave a patent, 1761, to Jewish Merchant, Bro. Stephen Morin, to propagate his rite in the West Indies; he established a Council at Kingston Jamaica, *that a Council was then held in Paris to decide whether the Templar and the Kadosh were or were not the same degree (h).* They then proceeded to add to the main name of "Knight of the East and Black Eagle, Ten dar colors, prior to the Statute of Bordeaux in 1762, interpolating afterwards a Templar or ar between that and Rose Croix. This new Rite I zero ( doubt was formed upon the excellent principle of universal tolerance, but the tolerance introduced by Jewish brethren has altogether disappeared in this country. Bro. Stephen Morin granted a certificate in 1767 to Bro. Franckan, who founded a Chapter, then of 29 d., at Albany, New York; thence the Rite reached Charleston, where in a circular, of 1802, issued by Bro. Dalcho, the K. H. is the 29 d. (i). It was therefore subsequent to 1802, that the *undoubtedly forged Statutes*, of Frederick the Great of Prussia, were concocted. The present Supreme Council of Charleston, honestly admit the fraud, which is proved by numberless authorities quoted by impartial historians. (j). After 1802 one Bro. Abraham Jacobs, a wandering pedlar of degrees, travelled over America, and settled at New York, in 1808, having conferred by certificate the first 18 degrees upon Bro. J. J. J. Gourgas, clerk to a Dr. de la Motta; the former afterwards shewed a patent, in his own handwriting, but signed by the latter, of the remaining 15 degrees, which enabled him to establish a schismatic Council, which was irregular, in 1846, when Bro. Gourgas, then clerk upon a boat trading with Liverpool, established the S. G. C. 33d of London, which still continues a system of self-election, and assumes sole control over the large fees drawn from the provinces, and gives our degrees to any Master Mason.

We have seen that the old Templar Rite of seven degrees continued to be lawfully and regularly practised in England, between 1521 and 1782, when it numbered at Bristol, that eminent Mason Bro. Thos Dunckerley, who was elected Grand Master of H.M—K.H. in 1790, at which time was ranged under his banners (amongst many others) the following Conclaves *then* practising seven degrees of chivalry, which Bro. Dunckerley states had existed as Chapters of the Rite, time out of mind, three were:—*Observance*, London, *Redemption*, York, (whence through the York Grand Lodge, emanated in 1786, the *Jerusalem* Conclave, Manchester.) *Baldwyn*, Bristol, *Antiquity*, Bath. (k). About this time the Irish Masons also conferred the Rose Croix degree under Templar warrants. (l). and although the original establishment of that "Council of Rites" was utterly irregular yet their system is identical with that of the English, *time-immemorial*, *Royal Grand Council of Ancient Rites*, and so much has been done by the Duke of Leinster, for Rose Croix Masonry in Ireland, that it is to be hoped that the original fault of its governing constitution may pass out of mind.

The official reports of Bro. Dunckerley, between 1790 and 1795 place the *Rosae Crucis degree, before or after* the Templar indifferently, but whilst giving the Templar epochs of the different degrees, he states that, "the origin and history of the seventh degree, or Knights Kadosh may not be written," and no minutes were allowed in the degree is a Templar history and was called the "*Commander's degree of Ne plus Ultra*," and as the Grand Conclave in London, was until 1809 composed solely of Commanders it stiled itself in all its circulars the "*Grand Conclave of the Royal Order of H. R. D. M.—K. D. S. H.—ne plus ultra*."

The "*Seven Steps of Chivalry*," including Royal Arch, Templar, Priest, Palestine East and West Rose Croix, Kadosh, with other Commanderships, passed in 1796 to Baron Ramsdiff; in 1806 to H. R. H. the Duke of Kent, (acknowledged in Dr. Dalcho's circular as head of the K. H.) in 1809 to Judge Waller Rodwell Wright; and 1811 to H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex—who, after 1817, ceased all interest, and called no meeting of Grand Conclave. This want of government left the ancient regular Conclaves to range themselves under a "Royal Grand Council of Antient Rites time-immemorial," the only *untainted* possessors of the high-grades in the world, and the Patent of which its members would not exchange for those of all other Councils, under this body was, and still is, practised all degrees under Paris as far back as 1822 the 90th of the order of Misraim. The Grand Conclave of London became a dead letter few private Conclaves holding any relation with its Chancellor, and all doing what was right in their own eyes.

The state of affairs which we have described existed down to 1846, when Drs. Oliver (alias Crucefix), Leeson, Nash, and Oliver, applied to the before-mentioned, and, *at that time irregular*, Bro. Georgius, to establish his rite in this country. All these four brethren had received their high-grades from the Templar Conclaves. Drs. Oliver and Leeson were members of the "Cross of Christ" Conclave, London and received the Rose Croix and K.P.U. & m Bros. Goldsworthy and Emly, at a small tavern in Clerkenwell (at Dr. Oliver from the *Redemption* Hall, and the learned and worthy Dr. Nash from the *Baldwyn* Bristol and was afterwards expelled by his *confreres* of the Grand, for continuing his connection with his own ancient Conclave. It is evident from this that these four learned Doctors could only have introduced the spurious rite of Bro. Georgius by a breach of their O.B as Templars, but this our little with ambitious men; such are the facts, and [illegible] C. of 1846 became also the retirers of Grand Conclaves, never formed upon many of the ancient Conclaves that were [illegible] without a blemish now existing, that abortion, as [illegible] called the Grand Conclave of Knights Templar [illegible].

The doings of these [illegible] brethren met with no approbation from the Provincial [illegible] which declared, with power to confer everything, and when the Antient Grand Baldwyn Bristol *Redemption* York *Observance* London; *Jerusalem* Manchester, and their ancient regular early constituted Chapters of H. R. D. M. [illegible] and trouble united themselves with the Grand Conclave, they reserved to themselves all the original rights and privileges, their ancient Charters, and the Supreme Council refused to give over all the ten authentic [illegible] degrees, but relinquished to the H. R. other degrees and [illegible] degrees, and the Grand Royal Arch, Grand Grand Patron of the Most Royal Secret, Grand Inspector [illegible] &c. &c.

It [illegible] that these [illegible] Conclaves refused the Grand Conclave of 1846, passed the following law; Dec 14th, 1846 —

That in the rare case of [illegible] Templar Knights and [illegible] a warrant [illegible] prior to 1791 and which warrant [illegible] power to confer degrees not connected with the order of Knights Templar, Knights of Malta, a warrant of confirmation of [illegible] proper application be granted by the M. W. and S. G. M. [illegible] Encampments all the powers it possessed [illegible] the original warrant, so far as the orders of Templars and Knights of Malta are concerned, having the right of the power therein contained so long as they are [illegible] and all rights in every respect from the order of Knights Templar and Knights of Malta."

It is an axiom [illegible] that no law [illegible] Templar high-grade Chapters have unanimously condemned under the Council of Ancient Rites, until such time as the Grand Conclave shall reverse its old and only legal system. The Law must be reasonable, and all Knights K. H. and Templar Commanders members of the Council.

It is therefore evident from the faithful and truthful account that the present proprietors of the *Rosae Crucis* and the Templar representatives of the old English or York rite, whose degrees were recognised by the articles of Union in 1813, between the Ancient and Modern Masons, and all other bodies practising degrees above the Royal Arch whether as Templars or Red Cross Masons, are modern and spurious and unacknowledged by Grand Lodge.

The annual reports of the G. C. of K. T. now include Rose other time-immemorial Conclaves, which were there under this law viz—*Abbey*, Nottingham; *Mount Calvary*, Lincoln; *Union* or *Bourgeoise*, Exeter. But even this is a very partial recognition for all Conclaves warranted prior to 1791 were so by the G. M. of H. M—K. H and are thereby authorised to confer without further fee, let or hindrance from any source the *Rosae Crucis* of the old English or York Rite—so that this movement has claims upon the support of all these.

From what has been established above, it follows

1. The regular existence from 1721 of a series of seven Templar degrees, afterwards amplified to so many steps of knighthood practised by the English Freemasons and carried on by the Kings and Princes of the Stuart family and including the *Rosae Crucis*, and *Kadosh*, and that several Conclaves of Templars, have preserved the sanction of Grand Conclave and the recent all the Supreme Grand Conclaves claim their ancient degrees: which ratification cannot now be lawfully withdrawn.

2. That the "Ancient and Accepted Rite," first of 25 d. then of 29 d. and last of 33 d., is a spurious Templar offshoot of 1758; more recently (1802) forged, giving a fraudulent basis and exemption of power, has been added thereto, and the rite, as practised in England, has lost all its ancient cosmopolitanism.

3.—That the sole legal possessors of the ancient degrees, of *Rosae Crucis, Kadosh, Prince of the Royal Secret, &c.*, are the Chapters now working under the "Council of Rites," and that the modern and spurious S.G.C. of the 33d is a foreign and meddling interference with an older existing rite, has no lawful standing and must on no account be allowed to interfere in this country, with our old and honest rite.

It follows from this that no countenance ought to be given by well informed Royal Arch, and Templar Masons, of probity and reputation, to the spurious "Ancient and accepted Rite," the triple treaty just forced upon Grand Conclave (without notice to the provinces,) (m.) being injurious to the reputation, honour, and dignity, of the Grand Conclave of Templars, and the Mark Grand Lodge, and ought forthwith to be abrogated.

With the desire of carrying into effect these logical conclusions it is suggested that a Meeting of all the old Conclaves be held some time in July, to be called by circular, advertised in the newspapers, *to arrange a petition to the Grand Master of Templars*, and organise a power to rescind, decently and in order, these base and unworthy alliances; but if justice cannot be had that the formal revival of the old English or York rite be then calmly, dispassionately, reasonably, but firmly carried into effect, with or without sanction of the present Grand Conclave of Templars, or the self-constituted Supreme Grand Council.

Begging your energetic assistance and co-operation,

Yours Fraternally,

LIBERTAS.

---

(a) Possibly ranked by the importance of the Cities, having no guide to dates.

(b) Archdeacon Mant says that any three Templars, possessing the Rose Croix, had power anciently to confer it.

(c.) This Bro. Goldsworthy constituted the "High Grove-wood Chapter," Tottenham, which again constituted the "Rochdale Chapter," so that these two derive from the same source as the S. G. C. of H. R. Lincoln.

(d.) It is reported that the Provincial Grand Registrar, of the Old of Lancaster, actually suppressed the spurious papers.

---

(e) Gadicke's *Freemason's Lexicon*, Berlin, 1818.

(f) "Notes and Queries."

(g) Lenzies *History of Freemasonry*, last edition

(h) Statutes of the Ancient and Accepted Rite, New York, 1807.

(i) A very old copyblease of the English Council of Rites, *time-immemorial*, omits "Prince of the Tabernacle," proving it to be the latest invention. (Bro. John Yarker, 33d. 90d. G.A. K. Francaise 1871).

(j) The best single work is Dr. Folger's History of the Rite, New York, 1862. The S. G. C. of London, have recently printed these forged Statutes, as the basis of their power, and have thereby laid themselves open to the moral and legal pleas of the fraud.

---

Bro. J. W. Mason, Printer.

Courtesy of the Manchester Masonic Museum Trust