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Hic incipiunt constitutiones.
artis geometrie secundum Euclidem.

Whoſe !kol hope ſkel. rede and loke
he may fynde. i byrte yn olde boke
Of ſuete lordys. and ete ladye. ſe
þat he had hie ay' chylde yn þe ſere þe tuiſſe

COLUMBIA
THE
COLLEGE
EARLY HISTORY

14

OF

FREEMASONRY

IN

ENGLAND.

BY

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&c. &c. &c.

"In his hand he bore that singular abacus."—IVANHOE

LONDON:

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LONG-ACRE.

1840.

ALLEN
1810
1810

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H15

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TO
S. CHARLES, ESQ.
OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS INSCRIBED,
A SLIGHT TESTIMONY OF FRIENDSHIP FROM
THE AUTHOR.

217045

HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY.

“ God alone is gracious and powerful ! Thanks be to our gracious God, Father of heaven and of earth, and of all things that in them is, that he has vouchsafed to give power unto men ! ”

So commences one of the ancient constitutions of Masonry ; and can we be censured for opening our task in the same spirit ? An institution which has incontrovertibly in its present form maintained a fair reputation for three centuries, is not likely to suggest any reflection worthy of condemnation. Listen, then, ye mysterious sons of Adam, to the outpourings of one who has not the felicity of numbering himself a member of your fraternity, and who has never yet had a glance beyond the confines of your mighty arcana —

“ — more wonderful

Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness ! ”

After the sun had descended down the seventh age from Adam, before the flood of Noah, there was born unto Methusael, the son of Mehujael, a man called Lamech, who took unto himself two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. Now Adah, his first wife, bare two sons, the one named Jabal and the other Jubal. Jabal was the inventor of geometry, and the first who built houses of stone and timber; and Jubal was the inventor of music and of harmony. Zillah, his second wife, bare Tubalcain, the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron; and a daughter called Naamah, who was the first founder of the weaver's craft.*

All these had knowledge from above that the Almighty would take vengeance for sin, either by fire or by water, so great was the wickedness of the world. So they reasoned among themselves how they might preserve the knowledge of the sciences they had found; and Jabal said that there were two different kinds of stones, of such virtue that one would not burn, and the other would not sink,—the one called *marble*, and the other *latres*. They then agreed to write all the sciences that

* In the Charter of Freemasonry we are told, that "the seven liberal sciences are all but one science—that is to say, Geometry."

they had found on these two stones, Jabal having offered to accomplish this; and therefore may we say that he was the most learned in science, for he accomplished the alpha and the omega.

Water was the chosen instrument of destruction, but the two pillars of science remained in triumphant security. Hermes, the son of Shem, was the fortunate discoverer of one of them. After this the craft of Masonry flourished, and Nimrod was one of the earliest and most munificent patrons of the art. Abraham, the son of Terah, was a wise man and a great clerk, and he was skilled in all the seven sciences, and he taught the Egyptians the science of grammar. Euclid was the pupil of Abraham, and in his time the river Nile overflowed so far that many of the dwellings of the people of Egypt were destroyed. Euclid instructed them in the art of making mighty walls and ditches to stop the progress of the water, and by geometry measured out the land and divided it into partitions, so that each man might ascertain his own property. It was Euclid who gave Masonry the name of geometry. In his days it came to pass that the sovereign and lords of the realm had gotten many sons unlawfully by other men's wives, insomuch that the land was grievously burdened with them. A council was called, but

no reasonable remedy was proposed. The king then ordered a proclamation to be made throughout his realms, that high rewards should be given to any man who would devise a proper method for maintaining the children. Euclid dispelled the difficulty. He thus addressed the king: "My noble sovereign, if I may have order and government of these lords' sons, I will teach them the seven liberal sciences, whereby they may live honestly like gentlemen, provided that you will grant me power over them by virtue of your royal commission." This request was immediately complied with, and Euclid established a Lodge of Masons.*

So far the ancient legend, which is found with occasional variations in the histories of the constitutions of Freemasonry. I have introduced it here as a preface to the very singular and curious English poem which follows, and which would have been quite unintelligible without it.

The poem alluded to is on the constitutions of Freemasonry, and is taken from a duodecimo manuscript on vellum, written not later than the

* MS. Harl. 1942, quoted in *Freemason's Quarterly Review*, vol. iii. p. 288—295. The earliest copy I know of is in MS. Lansd. 98, No. 48, written about 1600. Cf. the *Freemason's Magazine*, Feb. 1794.

latter part of the fourteenth century, preserved in the Old Royal Library at the British Museum. (Bib. Reg. 17 A, I. ff. 32.) Casley,* by some strange oversight, in the only catalogue we at present possess, has entitled it "a poem of moral duties;" and, although he gives the Latin title correctly, yet the real contents of this singular document were quite unknown, until I pointed them out in an essay "on the Introduction of Freemasonry into England," read before the Society of Antiquaries, during the session of 1838-9. I believe I am right in stating that this is the earliest document yet brought to light connected with the progress of Freemasonry in Great Britain.

* The MS. formerly belonged to Charles Theyer, a well known collector of the seventeenth century, and is No. 146 in his collection, as described in Bernard's *Catalogus Manuscriptorum Angliæ*, p. 200, col. 2. It was from this catalogue that Casley took his erroneous description, evidently being puzzled with the manuscript itself, for his own work is for the most part very carefully executed. I ought to add that the Anglo-Saxon letter z has been used in the following edition of the poem, instead of the middle-age character now generally employed.

A P O E M
ON THE
CONSTITUTIONS OF MASONRY.

*Hic incipiunt constitutiones artis Gemetrie secundum
Euclidem.*

Whose wol bothe wel rede and loke,
He may fynde wryte yn olde boke
Of grete lordys, and eke ladyysse,
That hade mony chyldryn y-fere y-wisse ;
And hade no centys to fynde hem wyth,
Nowther yn towne ny felde ny fryth :
A cownsel togeder they cowthe hem take,
To ordeyne for these chyldryn sake,
How they myght best lede here lyfe
Withoute gret desese, care, and stryfe; 10
And most for the multytude that was comynge,
Of here chyldryn after here gyndynge.
. . . sende thenne after grete clerkys,
To techyn hem thenne gode werkys ;
And pray-we hem for oure lordys sake
To oure chyldryn sum werke to make,
That they myght gete here lyvyng therby,
Bothe wel and onestlyche ful sycurlly.
Yn that tyme, throggh good gemetry,
Thys onest craft of good masonry 20

Wes ordeynt and made yn thys manere,
 Y-cownterfetyd of thys clerkys y-fere ;
 At these lordys prayers they cownterfetyd gemetry,
 And gaf hyt the name of masonry—
 Far the moste oneste craft of alle.
 These lordys chyldryn therto dede falle,
 To lurne of hym the craft of gemetry,
 The wheche he made ful curysly ;
 Throogh fadrys prayers and modrys also,
 Thys onest craft he putte hem to ; 30
 He that lernede best and were of onesté,
 And passud hys felows yn curysté,
 gef yn that craft he dede hym passe,
 He schulde have more worschepe then the lasse.
 Thys grete clerkys name wes clept Euclyde,
 Hys name hyt spradde ful wondur wyde ;
 get thys grete clerke more ordeynt he
 To hym that was herre yn thys degre,
 That he schulde teche the symplyst of wytte
 Yn that onest craft to be parfytte ; 40
 And so uchon schulle techyn othur,
 And love togeder as syster and brothur.
 Forthermore get that ordeynt he,
 Mayster y-callud so schulde he be,
 So that he were most y-worschepede,
 Thenne sculde he be so y-clepede ;
 But mason schulde never won other calle,
 Withynne the craft amongus hem alle,
 Ny soget, ny servand, my dere brother,
 Thaght he be not so perfytt as ys another ; 50

Uchon sculle calle other felows by cuthe,
 For cause they come of ladyes burthe.
 On thys maner throȝ good wytte of gemetry,
 Bygan furst the craft of masonry :
 The clerk Euclide on thys wyse hyt fonde,
 Thys craft of gemetry yn Egypte londe ;
 Yn Egypte he tawȝhte hyt ful wyde,
 Yn dyvers londe on every syde,
 Mony erys afterwarde y understonde
 ȝer that the craft com ynto thys londe,— 60
 Thys craft com ynto Englund as y ȝow say,
 Yn tyme of good kynge Adelstonus day,—
 He made tho bothe halle and eke bowre,
 And hye templus of gret honowre,
 To sportyn hym yn bothe day and nyȝth,
 An to worschepe hys God with alle hys myȝth.
 Thys goode lorde loved thys craft ful wel,
 And proposud to strenthyn hyt every del ;
 For dyvers defawtys that yn the craft he fonde,
 He sende aboute ynto the londe 70
 After alle the masonus of the crafte,
 To come to hym ful evene straxfte,
 For to amende these defautys alle
 By good consel, ȝef hyt mytȝth falle.
 A semblé thenne he cowthe let make
 Of dyvers lordis, yn here state,
 Dukys, erlys, and barnes also,
 Knyȝthys, sqwyers, and mony mo,
 And the grete burges of that syté,
 They were ther alle yn here degré ; 80

These were ther uchon algate,
 To ordeyne for these masonus a state ;
 Ther they sowgton, by here wytte,
 How they mygthyn governe hytte :
 Fyftene artyculus they ther sowgton,
 And fyftene poyntys ther they wroghton.

Hic incipit articulus primus.

The furste artycul of thys gemetry :—
 The mayster mason moste be ful securly
 Bothe stedefast, trusty, and trwe,
 Hyt shal hym never thenne arewe ; 90
 And pay thy felows after the coste,
 As vytaylys goth thenne, wel thou woste ;
 And pay them trwly, apon thy fay,
 What that they deserven may ;
 And to her hure take no more,
 But what that they mowe serve fore ;
 And spare, nowther for love ny drede,
 Of nowther partys to take no mede ;
 Of lord ny felow whether he be,
 Of hem thou take no maner of fe ; 100
 And as a jugge stonde uprygth,
 And thenne thou dost to bothe good rygth,
 And trwly do thys whersever thou gost,
 Thy worschep, thy profyt, hyt schal be most.

Articulus secundus.

The secunde artycul of good masonry,
 As ge mowe hyt here hyr specyaly,

That every mayster, that ys a mason,
 Most ben at the generale congregacyon,
 So that he hyt resonably y-tolde
 Where that the semblé schal be holde; 110
 And to that semblé he most nede gon,
 But he have a resenabul skwsacyon,
 Or but he be unboxom to that craft,
 Or with falsshed ys over raft,
 Or ellus sekenes hath hym so stronge,
 That he may not come hem amonge;
 That ys a skwsacyon, good and abulle,
 To that semblé withoute fabulle.

Articulus tercius.

The thrydde artycul forsothe hyt ysse,
 That the mayster take to no prentysse, 120
 But he have good severans to dwelle
 Seven ȝer with hym, as y ȝow telle,
 Hys craft to lurne, that ys profytable;
 Withynne lasse he may not ben able
 To lordys profyt, ny to his owne,
 As ȝe mowe knowe by good resowne.

Articulus quartus.

The fowrthe artycul thys moste be,
 That the mayster hym wel be-se,
 That he no bondemon prentys make,
 Ny for no covetyse do hym take; 130
 For the lord that he ys bonde to,
 May fache the prentes whersever he go.

gef yn the logge he were y-take,
 Muche desese hyt mygth ther make,
 And suche case hyt mygth befallē,
 That hyt mygth greve summe or alle.
 For alle the masonus that ben there,
 Wol stonde togedur hol y-fere,
 gef suche won yn that craft schulde dwelle,
 Of dyvers desesys ge mygth telle ; 140
 For more gese thenne, and of honesté,
 Take a prentes of herre degré ;
 By olde tyme wryten y-fynde,
 That the prentes schulde be of gentyl kynde ;
 And so sumtyme grete lordys blod
 Toke thys gemetry that ys ful good.

Articulus quintus.

The fyfthe artycul ys swythe good,
 So that the prentes be of lawful blod ;
 The mayster schal not, for no vantage,
 Make no prentes that ys outrage ; 150
 Hyt ys to mene, as ge mowe here,
 That he have hys lymes hole alle y-fere ;
 To the craft hyt were gret schame,
 To make an halt mon and a lame,
 For an unparfyt mon of suche blod,
 Schulde do the craft but lytul good.
 Thus ge mowe knowe everychon,
 The craft wolde have a myghty mon ;
 A maymed mon he hath no myght,
 ge mowe hyt knowe longe ger nyght. 160

Articulus sextus.

The syxte artycul ge mowe not mysse,
 That the mayster do the lord no pregedysse ;
 To take of the lord, for hyse prentyse,
 Also muche as hys felows don yn alle vyse.
 For yn that craft, they ben ful parfyt,
 So ys not he, ge mowe sen hyt ;
 Also hyt were ageynus good reson,
 To take hys hure, as hys felows don ;
 Thys same artycul yn thys casse,
 Juggythe the prentes to take lasse 170
 Thenne hys felows, that ben ful perfyt,
 Yn dyvers maters come qwyte hyt ;
 The mayster may his prentes so enforme,
 That hys hure may crese ful gurne,
 And ger hys terme come to an ende,
 Hys hure may ful wel amende.

Articulus septimus.

The seventhe artycul that ys now here,
 Ful wel wol telle gow alle y-fere,
 That no mayster, for favour ny drede,
 Schal no thef nowther clothe ny fede ; 180
 Theves he schal herberon never won,
 Ny hym that hath y-quellude a mon,
 Ny thylke that hath a febul name,
 Lest hyt wolde turne the craft to schame.

Articulus octavus.

The eghte artycul schewet gow so,
 That the mayster may hyt wel do ;

gef that he have any mon of crafte,
 And be not also perfyte as he aughte,
 He may hym change sone anon,
 And take for hym a perfyture mon, 190
 Suche a mon throughe rechelasehepe,
 Myght do the craft schert worschepe.

Articulus nonus.

The nynthe artycul schewet ful welle,
 That the mayster be bothe wyse and felle ;
 That no werke he undurtake,
 But he conne bothe hyt ende and make ;
 And that hyt be to the lordes profyte also,
 And to hys craft, whersever he go ;
 And that the grond be wel y-take,
 That hyt nowther fle ny grake. 200

Articulus decimus.

The thenthe artycul ys for to knowe,
 Amonge the craft, to hye and lowe,
 Ther schal no mayster supplante other,
 But be togeder as systur and brother,
 Yn thys curyus craft alle and som,
 That longuth to a maystur mason ;
 Ny he schal not supplante non other mon,
 That hath y-take a werke hym uppon,
 Yn peyne therof that ys so stronge,
 That peyseth no lasse thenne ten ponge ; 210
 But gef that he be gulty y-fonde,
 That toke furst the werke on honde,

For no mon yn masonry,
 Schal not supplante othur securly ;
 But gef that hyt be so y-wroꝓth,
 That hyt turne the werke to noꝓth,
 Thenne may a mason that werk crave,
 To the lordes profyt hyt for to save ;
 Yn suche a case but hyt do falle,
 Ther schal no mason medul withalle ;
 Forsothe he that begynnyth the gronde,
 And he be a mason, good and sonde,
 He hath hyt sycurly yn hys mynde
 To brynge the werke to ful good ende.

220

Articulus undecimus.

The eleventhe artycul y telle the,
 That he ys bothe fayr and fre ;
 For he techyt by hys myꝓth,
 That no mason schulde worche be nyꝓth,
 But gef hyt be yn practesyng of wytte,
 gef that y cowthe amende hytte.

230

Articulus duodecimus.

The twelfthe artycul ys of hye honesté,
 To gevery mason, whersever he be ;
 He schal not hys felows werk deprave,
 gef that he wol hys honesté save ;
 With honest wordes he hyt comende,
 By the wytte that God the dede sende ;
 But hyt amende by al that thou may,
 Bytwynne gow bothe withoute nay.

Articulus xiiij^{us}.

The threttene artycul, so God me save,
 Ys, gef that the mayster a prentes have, 240
 Enterlyche thenne that he hym teche,
 And meserable poyntes that he hym reche,
 That he the craft abelyche may conne,
 Whersever he go undur the sonne.

Articulus xiiij^{us}.

The fowrtene artycul, by good reson,
 Scheweth the mayster how he schal don ;
 He schal no prentes to hym take,
 But dyvers curys he have to make,
 That he may, withynne hys terme,
 Of hym dyvers poyntes may lurne. 250

Articulus quindecimus.

The fyftene artycul maketh an ende,
 For to the mayster he ys a frende ;
 To lere hym so, that for no mon,
 No fals mantenans he take hym apon,
 Ny maynteine hys felows yn here synne,
 For no good that he mygth wynne ;
 Ny no fals sware sofre hem to make,
 For drede of here sowles sake ;
 Lest hyt wolde turne the craft to schame,
 And hymself to mechul blame. 260

Plures constituciones.

At thys semblé were poyntes y-ordeynt mo,
 Of grete lordys and maystrys also,

That whose wol conne thys craft and com to astate,
 He most love wel God, and Holy Churche algate,
 And his mayster also, that he ys wyth,
 Whersever he go, yn fylde or fryth ;
 And thy felows thou love also,
 For that thy craft wol that thou do.

Secundus punctus.

The secunde poynt, as y ȝow say,
 That the mason worche apou the werk day, 270
 Also trwly, as he con or may,
 To deserve hys huyre for the halyday,
 And trwly to labrun on hys dede,
 Wel deserve to have hys mede.

Tercius punctus.

The thrydde poynt most be severele,
 With the prentes knowe hyt wele,
 Hys mayster counsel he kepe and close,
 And hys felows by hys goode purpose ;
 The prevetyse of the chamber telle he no mon,
 Ny yn the logge whatsoever they donn ; 280
 Whatsoever thou heryst, or syste hem do,
 Telle hyt no mon, whersever thou go ;
 The conwsel of halle, and ȝeke of bowre,
 Kepe hyt wel to gret honowre,
 Lest hyt wolde torne thysself to blame,
 And brynge the craft ynto gret schame.

Quartus punctus.

The fowrthe poynt techyth us also,
 That no mon to hys craft be false ;
 Errour he schal maynteine nonn
 Aȝeynus the craft, but let hyt gonn ; 290
 Ny no pregedysse he schal not do
 To hys mayster, ny hys felows also ;
 And thaȝth the prentes be under awe,
 ȝet he wolde have the same lawe.

Quintus punctus.

The fyfthe poynt ys, withoute nay,
 That whenne the mason taketh his pay
 Of the mayster, y-ordent to hym,
 Ful mekely y-take so most hyt byn ;
 ȝet most the mayster, by good resonn, 300
 Warne hem lawfully byfore nonn,
 ȝef he nulle okepye hem no more,
 As he hath y-donn ther byfore ;
 Aȝeynus thys ordyr he may not stryve,
 ȝef he thenke wel for to thryve.

Sextus punctus.

The syxte poynt ys ful ȝef to knowe,
 Bothe to hye, and eke to lowe,
 For suche case hyt myȝth befalle,
 Amonge the masonus, summe or alle,
 Through envye, or dedly hate,
 Ofte aryseth ful gret debate ; 310

Thenne owyth the mason, zef that he may,
 Putte hem bothe undur a day ;
 But loveday zet schul they make nonn,
 Tyl that the werke day be clene a-gonn,
 Apon the holyday ze mowe wel take
 Leyser y-nowzgh loveday to make,
 Lest that hyt wolde the werke day,
 Latte here werke for suche a fray ;
 To suche ende thenne that ze hem drawe,
 That they stonde wel yn Goddes lawe. 320

Septimus punctus.

The seventhe poynt he may wel mene,
 Of wel longe lyf that God us lene,
 As hyt dyscryeth wel opunly,
 Thou schal not by thy maystres wyf ly,
 Ny by thy felows, yn no maner wyse,
 Lest the craft wolde the despyse ;
 Ny by thy felows concubyne,
 No more thou woldest he dede by thyne.
 The peyne therof het hyt be ser,
 That he be prentes ful seven zer, 330
 zef he forfete yn eny of hem,
 So y-chasted thenne most he ben ;
 Ful mekele care myzth ther begynne,
 For suche a fowle dedely synne.

Octavus punctus.

The eghte poynt, he may be sure,
 zet thou hast y-taken any cure ;

Under thy mayster thou be trwe,
 For that poynt thou schal never arewe ;
 A trwe medyater thou most nede be
 To thy mayster, and thy felows fre ; 340
 Do trwly al that thou myȝth,
 To both partyes, and that ys good ryȝth.

Nonus punctus.

The nynthe poynt we schul hym calle,
 That he be stwarde of oure halle,
 ȝef that ȝe ben yn chambur y-fere,
 Uchon serve other, with mylde chere ;
 Jentul felows, ȝe moste hyt knowe,
 For to be stwardus alle o rowe,
 Weke after weke, withoute dowte,
 Stwardus to ben so alle abowte ; 350
 Lovelyche to serven uchon othur,
 As thawgh they were syster and brother ;
 Ther schal never won on other costage,
 Fre hymself to no vantage,
 But every mon schal be lyche fre
 Yn that costage, so moste hyt be ;
 Loke that thou pay wele every mon algate,
 That thou hast y-bowght any vytayles ate,
 That no cravyng be y-mad to the,
 Ny to thy felows, yn no degre, 360
 To mon or to wommon, whether he be,
 Pay hem wel and trwly, for that wol we ;
 Therof on thy felow trwe record thou take,
 For that good pay as thou dost make,

Lest hyt wolde thy felowe schame,
 And brynge thyself ynto gret blame.
 ȝet good acowntes he most make
 Of suche godes as he hath y-take,
 Of thy felows goodes that thou hast spende,
 Wher, and how, and to what ende ; 370
 Suche acowntes thou most come to,
 Whenne thy felows wollen that thou do.

Decimus punctus.

The tenthe poynt presentyth wel god lyf,
 To lyven withoute care and stryf;
 For and the mason lyve amysse,
 And yn hys werk be false y-wysse,
 And throwȝ suche a false skewstasyon
 May sclawndren hys felows oute reson,
 Throwȝ false sclawnder of suche lame
 May make the craft kachone blame. 380
 ȝef he do the craft suche vylany,
 Do hym no favour thenne securly,
 Ny maynteine not hym yn wyked lyf,
 Lest hyt wolde turne to care and stryf;
 But ȝet hym ȝe schul not delayme,
 But that ȝe schullen hym constrayne,
 For to apere whersevor ȝe wylle,
 Whar that ȝe wolen lowde or style;
 To the nexte semblé ȝe schul hym calle,
 To apere byfore hys felows alle, 390
 And but ȝef he wyl byfore hem pere,
 The craft he moste nede forswere ;

He schal thenne be chastid after the lawe
That was y-fownded by olde dawe.

Punctus undecimus.

The eleventhe poynt ys of good dyscrecyoun,
As ge mowe knowe by good resoun;
A mason, and he thys craft wel con,
That sygth hys felow hewen on a ston,—
And ys yn poynt to spylle that ston,
Amende hyt sone, gef that thou con, 400
And teche hym thenne hyt to amende,
That the . . . werke be not y-schende.
And teche hym esely hyt to amende,
Wyth fayre wordes, that God the hath lende,
For hys sake that sytte above,
With swete wordes noresche hym love.

Punctus duodecimus.

The twelthe poynt ys of gret ryolté,
Ther as the semblé y-holde schal be,
Ther schul be maystrys and felows also,
And other grete lordes mony mo; 410
Ther schal be the scheref of that contré,
And also the meyr of that syté,
Knygtes and sqwyers [ther sch]ul be,
And other aldermen, as ge schul se;
Suche ordynance as they maken there,
They schul maynté hyt hol y-fere
Ageynus that mon, whatsoever he be,
That longuth to the craft bothe fayr and fre.

gef he any stryf ageynus hem make,
Ynto here warde he schal be take. 420

xiiij^s punctus.

The threntethe poynt ys to us ful luf,
He schal swere never to be no thef,
Ny soker hym yn hys fals craft,
For no good that he hath byraft,
And thou mowe hyt knowe or syn,
Nowther for hys good, ny for hys kyn.

xiiij^{us} punctus.

The fowrtethe poynt ys ful good lawe
To hym that wold ben under awe ;
A good trwe othe he most ther swere
To hys mayster and hys felows that ben there ; 431
He most be stedefast and trwe also,
To alle thys ordynance, whersever he go,
And to hys lyge lord the kynge,
To be trwe to hym, over alle thynges.
And alle these poyntes hyr before
To hem thiou most nede be y-swore,
And alle schul swere the same ogth
Of the masonus, ben they luf, ben they loght,
To alle these poyntes hyr byfore
That hath ben ordeynt by ful good lore. 440
And they schul enquere every monn
On his party, as wyl as he conn,
gef any mon mowe be y-fownde gulty
Yn any of these poyntes spesyaly,

And whad he be, let hym be sowȝht,
 And to the semblé let hym be browȝht.

Quindecimus punctus.

The fyftethe poynt ys of ful good lore,
 For hem that schul ben ther y-swore,
 Suche ordynance at the semblé was layd
 Of grete lordes and maystres byforesayd, 450
 For thylke that ben unbuxom y-wysse
 Aȝeynus the ordynance that there ysse
 Of these artyculus, that were y-mened there,
 Of grete lordes and masonus al y-fere.
 And ȝef they ben y-preved opunly
 Byfore that semblé, by an by,
 And for here gultes no mendys wol make,
 Thenne most they nede the craft forsake ;
 And so masonus craft they schul refuse,
 And swere hyt never more for to use. 460
 But ȝef that they wol mendys make,
 Aȝayn to the craft they schul never take ;
 And ȝef that they nul not do so,
 The scheref schal come hem sone to,
 And putte here bodyes yn duppe prison,
 For the trespasse that they hav y-don,
 And take here goodes and here catelle
 Ynto the kynges hond, every delle,
 And lete hem dwelle there ful styлле,
 Tyl hyt be oure lege kynges wylle. 470

Alia ordinacio artis gemetriæ.

They ordent ther a semblé to be y-holde
 Every ȝer, whersever they wolde,
 To amende the defautes, ȝef any where fonde
 Amonge the craft withynne the londe;
 Uche ȝer or thrydde ȝer hyt schuld be holde,
 Yn every place whersever they wolde;
 Tyme and place most be ordeynt also,
 Yn what place they schul seemle to.
 Alle the men of craft ther they most ben,
 And other grete lordes, as ȝe mowe sen, .480
 To mende the fautes that both ther y-spoke,
 ȝef that eny of hem ben thenne y-broke.
 Ther they schullen ben alle y-swore,
 That longuth to thys craftes lore,
 To kepe these statutes everychon,
 That ben y-ordeynt by kynge Aldelston;
 These statutes that y have hyr y-fonde
 Ychulle they ben holde througħ my londe,
 For the worsché of my rygolté,
 That y have by my dygnyté. .490
 Also at every semblé that ȝe holde,
 That ȝe come to ȝowre lyge kyng bolde,
 Bysechyngē hym of hys hye grace,
 To stonde with ȝow yn every place,
 To conferme the statutes of kyng Adelston,
 That he ordeynt to thys craft by good reson.

Ars quatuor coronatorum.

Pray we now to God almyght,
 And to hys swete moder Mary bryght,

That we mowe kepe these artyculus here,
 And these poyntes wel al y-fere, 500
 As dede these holy martyres fowre,
 That yn thys craft were of gret honoure;
 They were as gode masonus as on erthe schul go,
 Gravers and ymage-makers they were also.
 For they were werkemen of the beste,
 The emperour hade to hem gret luste;
 He wylned of hem a ymage to make,
 That mowgh be worsched for hys sake;
 Suche mawmetys he hade yn hys dawe,
 To turne the pepul from Crystus lawe. 510
 But they were stedefast yn Cristes lay,
 And to here craft withouten nay;
 They loved wel God and alle hys lore,
 And weren yn hys serves ever more.
 Trwe men they were yn that dawe,
 And lyved wel y Goddus lawe;
 They thoght no mawmetys for to make,
 For no good that they mygth take—
 To levyn on that mawmetys for here God,
 They nolde do so, thawg he were wod, 520
 For they nolde not forsake here trw fay,
 An byleve on hys falsse lay.
 The emperour let take hem sone anonn,
 And putte hem ynto a dep presonn;
 The sarre he penest hem yn that plase,
 The more yoye wes to hem of Cristus grace.
 Thenne when he sye no nother won,
 To dethe he lette hem thenne gon;

Whose wol of here lyf get mor knowe,
 By the bok he may hyt schowe, 530
 In the legent of scanctorum,
 The names of quatuor coronatorum.
 Here fest wol be withoute nay,
 After Alle Halwen the eyght day.
 ge mow here as y do rede,
 That mony geres after, for gret drede
 That Noees flod wes alle y-ronne,
 The tower of Babyloyne wes begonne,
 Also playne werke of lyme and stou,
 As any mon schulde loke uppon; 540
 So long and brod hyt was begonne,
 Seven myle the hegghte schadweth the sonne.
 Kyng Nabogodonosor let hyt make,
 To gret strenthe for monus sake,
 Thaxgh suche a flod agayn schulde come,
 Over the werke hyt schulde not nome;
 For they hadde so hys pride, with strange bost,
 Alle that werke therfore was y-lost—
 An angele smot hem so with dyveres speche,
 That never won wyste what other schuld reche.
 Mony eres after, the goode clerk Eucljde 551
 Taughte the craft of gemetré wonder wyde,
 So he dede that tyme other also,
 Of dyvers craftes mony mo.
 Throggh hys grace of Crist yn heven,
 He commensed yn the syens seven;
Gramatica ys the furste syens y-wysse,
Dialetica the secunde so have y-blysse,

Rethorica the thrydde, withoute nay,
Musica ys the fowrthe, as y ζ ow say, 560
Astromia ys the v, by my snowte,
Arsmetica the vi, withoute dowte,
Gemetria the seventhe maketh an ende,
 For he ys bothe meke and hende.
 Gramer forsothe ys the rote,
 Whose wyl lurne on the boke;
 But art passeth yn hys degre,
 As the fryte doth the rote of the tre;
 Rethoryk metryth with orne speche amonge,
 And musyke hyt ys a swete songe, 570
 Astronomy nombreth, my dere brother,
 Arsmetyk scheweth won thyng that ys another,
 Gemetré the seventhe syens hyt ysse,
 That con deperte falshed from trewthe y-wys.
 These ben the syens seven,
 Whose useth hem wel, he may han heven.
 Now dere chyldren, by ζ owre wytte,
 Pride and covetyse that ζ e leven hytte,
 And taketh hede to goode dyscrecyon,
 And to good norter whersever ζ e com. 580
 Now y pray ζ ow take good hede,
 For thys ζ e most kenne nede,
 But muche more ζ e moste wyten,
 Thenne ζ e fynden hyr y-wryten.
 ζ ef the fayle therto wytte,
 Pray to God to sende the hytte;
 For Crist hymself, he techet ous
 That holy churche ys Goddes hous,

That ys y-mad for nothyng ellus
 But for to pray yn, as the bok tellus ; 590
 Ther the pepul schal gedur ynne,
 To pray and wepe for here synne.
 Loke thou come not to churche late,
 For to speke harlotry by the gate ;
 Thenne to churche when thou dost fare,
 Have yn thy mynde ever mare
 To worschepe thy lord God bothe day and nyȝth,
 With alle thy wytttes, and eke thy myȝth.
 To the churche dore when thou dost come,
 Of that holy water ther sum thow nome, 600
 For every drope thou felust ther
 Qwenchet a venyal synne, be thou ser.
 But furst thou most do down thy hode,
 For hyse love that dyed on the rode.
 Into the churche when thou dost gon,
 Pulle uppe thy herte to Crist, anon !
 Uppon the rode thou loke uppe then,
 And knele down fayre on bothe thy knen ;
 Then pray to hym so hyr to worche,
 After the lawe of holy churche, 610
 For to kepe the comandementes ten,
 That God gaf to alle men ;
 And pray to hym with mylde steven
 To kepe the from the synnes seven,
 That thou hyr mowe, yn thy lyve,
 Kepe the wel from care and stryve.
 Forthermore he grante the grace,
 In heven blysse to han a place :

In holy churche lef nyse wordes
 Of lewed speche, and fowle wordes, 620
 And putte away alle vanyté,
 And say thy pater noster and thyn ave ;
 Loke also thou make no bere,
 But ay to be yn thy prayere,
 gef thou wolt not thyselfe pray,
 Latte non other mon by no way.
 In that place nowther sytte ny stonde,
 But knele fayr down on the gronde,
 And, when the Gospel me rede schal,
 Fayre thou stonde up fro the wal, 630
 And blesse the fayre, gef that thou conne,
 When *gloria tibi* is begonne ;
 And when the gospel ys y-donn,
 Agayn thou mygth knele adown—
 On bothe thy knen down thou falle,
 For hyse love that bowght us alle ;
 And when thou herest the belle ryng
 To that holy sakerynge,
 Knele ge most, bothe gyng and olde,
 And bothe gor hondes fayr upholde, 640
 And say thenne yn thys manere,
 Fayr and softe withoute bere,
 “ Jhesu Lord, welcom thou be,
 Yn forme of bred, as y the se,
 Now Jhesu, for thyn holy name,
 Schulde me from synne and schame ;
 Schryff and hosel thou grant me bo,
 ger that y schal hennus go,

And very contrycyon of my synne,
 That y never, Lord, dye thereynne ; 650
 And as thou were of a mayde y-bore,
 Sofre me never to be y-lore ;
 But when y schal hennus wende,
 Grante me the blysse withoute ende ;
 Amen ! amen ! so mot hyt be,
 Now, swete lady, pray for me."
 Thus thou myght say, or sum other thyng,
 When thou knelust at the sakerynge.
 For covetyse after good, spare thou nought
 To worschepe hym that alle hath wrought ; 660
 For glad may a mon that day ben,
 That onus yn the day may hym sen,
 Hyt ys so mucche worthe, withoute nay,
 The vertu therof no mon telle may ;
 But so meche good doth that syht,
 As seynt Austyn telluth ful ryht,
 That day thou syst Goddus body,
 Thou schalt have these, ful securly,
 Mete and drynke at thy nede,
 Non that day schal the gnede. 670
 Ydul othes, an wordes bo,
 God forgeveth the also,
 Soden deth that ylke day,
 The dar not drede by no way ;
 Also that day y the plyht,
 Thou schalt not lese thy eye syht,
 And uche fote that thou gost then,
 That holy syht for to sen,

They schul be told to stonde yn stede,
 When thou hast therto gret nede ; 680
 That messongere, the angele Gabryelle,
 Wol kepe hem to the ful welle.
 From thys mater now y may passe,
 To telle mo medys of the masse :
 To churche come get, gef thou may,
 And here thy masse uche day ;
 gef thou mowe not come to churche,
 Wher that ever thou doste worche,
 When thou herest to masse knylle,
 Pray to God, with herte style, 690
 To geve the part of that servyse,
 That yn churche ther don yse.
 Forthermore get, y wol gow preche
 To gowre felows, hyt for to teche,
 When thou comest byfore a Lorde,
 Yn halle, yn bowre, or at the borde,
 Hod or cappe that thou of do,
 ger thou come hym allynge to ;
 Twyes or thryes, withoute dowte,
 To that lord thou moste lowte, 700
 With thy rygth kne let hyt be do,
 Thyn owne worschepe thou save so.
 Holde of thy cappe, and hod also,
 Tyl thou have leve hyt on to do.
 Al the whyle thou spekest with hym,
 Fayre and lovelyche bere up thy chyn ;
 So after the norter of the boke,
 Yn thys face lovely thou loke.

Fot and hond, thou kepe ful styлле
 From clawynge and tryppynge, ys sckylle, 710
 From spyttynge and snyftyngе kepe the also,
 By prevy avoydans let hyt go.
 And gef that thou be wyse and felle,
 Thou hast gret nede to governe the welle.
 Ynto the halle when thou dost wende,
 Amonge the genteles, good and hende,
 Presume not to hye for nothyngе,
 For thyn hye blod, ny thy comynge,
 Nowther to sytte, ny to lene,
 That ys norther good and clene. 720
 Let not thy cowntenans therfore abate,
 Forsothe, good norter wol save thy state.
 Fader and moder, whatsoever they be,
 Wel ys the chyld that wel may the,
 Yn halle, yn chamber, wher thou dost gon,
 Gode maneres maken a mon.
 To the nexte degré loke wysly,
 To do hem reverans by and by ;
 Do hem gef no reverans al ogowe,
 But gef that thou do hem knowe. 730
 To the mete when thou art y-sette,
 Fayre and onestelyche thou ete bytte ;
 Fyrst loke that thyn honden ben clene,
 And that thy knyf be scharpe and kene,
 And kette thy bred al at thy mete,
 Rygth as hyt may be ther y-ete ;
 gef thou sytte by a worthyour mon,
 Then thy selven thou art won,

Sofre hym fyrst to toyche the mete,
 ȝer thyself to hyt reche. 740
 To the fayrest mossel thou myȝht not strike,
 Thaght that thou do hyt wel lyke ;
 Kepe thyn hondes, fayr and wel,
 From fowle smogyng of thy towel ;
 Theron thou schalt not thy nese snyte,
 Ny at the mete thy tothe thou pyke ;
 To depe yn the coppe thou myȝht not synke,
 Thagh thou have good wyl to drynke,
 Lest thyn enyn wolde wattryn therby—
 Then were hyt no curtesy. 750
 Loke yn thy mowth ther be no mete,
 When thou begynnyst to drynke or speke.
 When thou syst any mon drynkyng,
 That taketh hed to thy carpyng,
 Sone anonn thou sese thy tale,
 Whether he drynke wyn other ale.
 Loke also thou scorne no mon,
 Yn what degre thou syst hym gon ;
 Ny thou schalt no mon deprave,
 ȝef thou wolt thy worschepe save, 760
 For suche worde myȝht ther outberste,
 That myȝht make the sytte yn evel reste.
 Close thy hond yn thy fyste,
 And kepe the wel fro had-y-wyste.
 Yn chamber, amonge the ladyes bryght,
 Holde thy tonge and spende thy syght ;
 Lawȝe thou not with no gret cry,
 Ny make no ragyng with nybody,

Play thou not but with thy peres,
 Ny tel thou not al that thou heres, 770
 Dyskever thou not thyn owne dede,
 For no merye, ny for no mede ;
 With fayr speche thou myght have thy wylle,
 With hyt thou myght thy selven spylle.
 When thou metyst a worthy mon,
 Cappe and hod thou holle not on ;
 Yn churche, yn chepyns, or yn the gate,
 Do hym revera[n]s after hys state.
 gef thou gost with a worthyor mon
 Then thyselven thou art won, 780
 Let thy forther schuld sewe hys backe,
 For that y . . . withoute lacke ;
 When he doth speke, holte the styлле,
 When he hath don, sey for thy wylle,
 Yn thy speche that thou befelle,
 And what thou sayst avyse the welle ;
 But byref thou not hym hys tale,
 Nowther at the wyn, ny at the ale.
 Cryst then of hys hye grace,
 geve gow bothe wytte and space, 790
 Wel thys boke to conne and rede,
 Heven to have for gowre mede !
 Amen ! amen ! so mot hyt be,
 Say we so alle per charyté.

The foregoing poem proves the *tradition* to be at least as ancient as the close of the fourteenth century; and from l. 143, it would appear that the writer, who was most probably a priest, had access to some documents concerning the history of "the craft." Many writers, more zealous than cautious, place the date of the introduction of Freemasonry into England in the third century, but it need scarcely be said that there is not the slightest authority for any such belief.*

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1753,† there is a reprint of a pamphlet, stated to have been published at Frankfort, in the year 1748, in an octavo volume of twelve pages. It is entitled, "Certayne questions, with awnsweres to the same, concernynge the mystery of Maconrye; wryttene by the hande of Kyng Henrye the Sixthe of the name, and faythfullye copied by me Johan Leylande Antiquarius, by the command of his Highnesse,"—probably Henry the Eighth. This document was stated to have

* Lawrie's *History of Freemasonry*, 8vo. Edinb. 1804; Anderson's *History*; Desagulier's *Constitutions*; Smith's *Use and Abuse of Freemasonry*; Preston's *Illustrations*; L'Univers *Maconique*, &c.

† Vol. xxiii. p. 417. Reprinted in the *Freemason's Magazine* for the month of August, 1794. See also, Preston's *Illustrations of Masonry*, p. 110, and Dermott's *Ahiman Rezon*. This last tract I have not been able to obtain a sight of.

been copied by one Mr. Collins, from a MS. in the Bodleian Library, and to have been enclosed in a letter from John Locke, the celebrated metaphysician, to Thomas, Earl of Pembroke, dated May the 6th, 1696. It has been so frequently printed,* that I do not consider it necessary to insert it here; but it is singular that the circumstances attending its publication should have led no one to suspect its authenticity. I was at the pains of making a long search in the Bodleian Library last summer, in the hopes of finding the original, but without success. In fact, there can be little doubt that this celebrated and well-known document is a forgery!

In the first place, why should such a document have been printed abroad? Was it likely that it should have found its way to Frankfort, nearly half a century afterwards, and been published without any explanation of the source whence it was obtained? Again, the orthography is most grotesque, and too gross ever to have been penned either by Henry the Sixth or Leland, or both combined.

* In addition to the reprints before mentioned, I may add the Life of Leland, where its authenticity is asserted. It may be as well to inform the reader, that a large mass of papers relating to the London Freemasons, extending from 1732 to 1750, may be found in the Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. C. 136. Mr. Black possesses a minute-book of the Freemasons of Chester, of the commencement of the eighteenth century.

For instance, we have Peter Gowere, a Grecian, explained in a note by the fabricator—for who else could have solved it?—to be Pythagoras! As a whole, it is but a very clumsy attempt at deception, and is quite a parallel to the recently discovered one of the *first Englische Mercurie*. Let us add that Freemasonry is not in any degree dishonoured by the rejection of this evidence from its history.

In the third year of the reign of Henry the Sixth, during that sovereign's minority, the following statute received the sanction of Parliament:—

“First, —Whereas, by the yearly congregations and
“confederacies made by the Masons in their general
“chapters assembled, the good course and effect of the
“statute of labourers be openly violated and broken, in
“subversion of the law, and to the great damage of all
“the commons: our said lord the King, willing in this
“case to provide remedy, by the advice and assent
“aforesaid, and at the special request of the said com-
“mons, hath ordained and established, That such
“chapters and congregations shall not be hereafter
“holden; and if any such be made, they that cause
“such chapters and congregations to be assembled
“and holden, if they thereof be convict, shall be judged
“for felons; and that all the other masons that come
“to such chapters and congregations, be punished by

“imprisonment of their bodies, and make fine and ransom at the will of the King.”

Now this Act,* instead of dissolving this corporation, the “generalx chapitres assemblez,” which would in fact have acknowledged it as legal prior to such dissolution, forbids all the chapters and other congregations to be held, and declares all persons assembling or holding such to be felons. It appears to me from this, that very probably many especial privileges were conferred by the Papal see upon the trading fraternity of Freemasons which is said to have existed in Europe during the middle ages.† Further than this, that, upon the strength of these privileges, the Freemasons had presumed to invade the established law of the land, and arrogate to themselves an exclusive nomination of workmen. On this supposition, we can account for the violation of the statute of labourers alluded to in this Act.‡

Dr. Plot, in his *History of Staffordshire*, mentions the statute of 3 Hen. VI., and asserts that it

* See “*The Grand Mistery of Freemasons discovered*,” folio, Lond. 1724, pp. 12.

† *Archæologia*, vol. ix. p. 118.

‡ Lawrie (p. 95) asserts, that a Lodge of Freemasons was formed at Canterbury, in the year 1429, with the Archbishop at its head. He quotes a MS. register, but does not state where it is to be found. I see no reason, however, to question his veracity.

was repealed by an act passed in 5 Eliz. cap. 4. This is not correct, but it is difficult to imagine how the mistake could have originated. In point of fact, this statute never was repealed,—at least, I have not been able to find any notice to that effect. There was, indeed, an act passed in 1548,* allowing Freemasons to practise their craft in any town in England, although not free of that town; but this of course refers to the company in its working form, and not to a benefit society, and in either case does not abrogate the former statute.

This last-mentioned statute is important as showing the recent use of the term *freemason* to those who practised the actual trade. In the year 1506, John Hylmer and William Vertue, *freemasons*, were engaged to “vaulte or doo to bee vawlted with free-stone the roof of the quere of the Colledge Roiall of our Lady and Saint George, within the castell of Wyndsore, according to the roof of the body of the said Colledge.”† A friend has sugges-

* Stat. 2 and 3, Edw. VI., cap. xv. § 3.

† I glean this information from an indenture dated 5 Jun. 21 Hen. VIII., copied from the original in the Archives of the Dean and Chapter of Windsor, by Ashmole, MS. Ashm. 1125, fol. 11, r^o—12, r^o. I am indebted for my knowledge of it to the kindness of my friend Mr. W. H. Black, whose readiness and liberality in assisting literary enquiries, I have more than once gratefully experienced. An illumination of masons in the act of

ted to me the possible connection between the terms *freemason* and *freestone*.

My collection of facts is now exhausted, and it has been a source of great regret to me, that I have not been able to obtain a more connected and certain train of evidence. The few isolated particulars I have brought together are, however, much more satisfactory than the generalities stated by former writers. How willingly should we exchange some of our documents on an overburdened subject for a few more on this—

Fortuna multis dat nimis, nulli satis.

The identity of the legend in the ancient poem with that in the modern constitutions, is a decisive argument in favour of the connexion between the old societies of masons, and the benefit clubs of the seventeenth century.* We have already seen that the modern system must be posterior to the 3rd of Edw. VI., and the earliest existing manuscript of the later constitutions belongs to the commence-

building may be seen in MS. Bib. Reg. 19. D. ij, fol. 68, v^o, b, of the commencement of the fifteenth century: the master mason is superintending.

* The fact is that every trade had a company, and the regulations of the companies of masons in olden times were not very different from those of the others. I refer the reader to the statutes of the company of tilers at Coventry, in the fourteenth century, in MS. Harl. 6466.

ment of the seventeenth century. In defiance, then, of the *creationist* Freemasons of the present day, I am sure that every unprejudiced enquirer will admit that, in all probability, English freemasonry in its present state was not introduced before the close of the sixteenth century.

In concluding these brief memoranda, I am aware how much yet remains to be done, and how much *may* be done by a zealous investigator—one who is initiated in the mysteries of the craft, and who does not cling to the romantic ideas of its too willing votaries. Let him turn away for a moment from the mummery which envelopes the real good, and take a rational view of the facts of the case. To me it appears scarcely credible that a body of men of all ranks and all professions, uniting in a circle of love and friendship, and aiming at the accomplishment of the *summum bonum* of a Christian life, should so far forget their own acknowledged importance as to wish for proofs of a pedigree from Adam. *Fronti nulla fides*: surely the weight of a supposititious though splendid origin cannot raise the society in the estimation of the wise and good—

— miserum est alienæ incumbere famæ,
Ne collapsa ruant subductis tecta columnis.
Stratus humi palmes viduas desiderat ulmos.

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