

MASONIC ORIGINES,

BY

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MASONIC ORIGINES.

A Masonic Degree is a rank and dignity with which one is, by legal authority, invested; the investiture consisting in a ceremony of initiation or reception, longer or shorter, scenic, spectacular, or instructive, or with scenic pomp, and instruction intermingled; in administering to him certain vows or obligations; and in the putting him in possession of certain modes of recognition, consisting generally of signs, words, and grips or 'tokens'.

A 'Rite' is an aggregation and succession of any number of Degrees, given by one or more Bodies, but always by the authority of a single Supreme Government.

Of most of the Degrees styled 'Masonic,' the time and the manner of origin are unknown to us. They have either been made by individuals, who were their authors and composers, or by Committees of Bodies. The earliest were undoubtedly framed and set on foot by individuals, themselves makers of them, or for whom they were made by others.

Except the first possessor or possessors, no one can ever obtain legal investiture with any Degree, unless by receiving it from him or them, or from a person or persons or a Body, having power derived from him or them, and so as if immediately from him or them; by assuming the required vows or obligations; and by being, as if by such first possessor or possessors, entrusted with the arcana or modes of recognition, and the oral explanations of the Symbols employed.

A Rite might consist of a single Degree; but whether of one or more, the first possessor or possessors of the Degree or System, or his or their successors, have the right to *make* or to *adopt* Constitutions, Institutes, Statutes, or Regulations, which shall be the

Organic or Supreme Law of the Degree or Rite, providing a system of government for it and for its administration; providing for the creation of Bodies, for fees, dues and revenues, and for a judicial system; with other legislation needed for its successful propagation and well-being. By this legislation every one already of, or afterwards becoming a member of the Rite, is bound, being in law a party to it and one of the makers of it; and no man can be of the Degree or Rite, and repudiate or set at nought its fundamental law. If he does that, he cuts himself off from it.

However, wherever and whenever drafted or made, such Constitutions, Institutes, &c., become the law of the Rite by being adopted by the first possessors of it; and this adoption makes them none the less obligatory, even if their real origin be mythical, or if they purport untruly to have had a more ancient and special origin.

For, as no one can ever be lawfully invested with the Degree or Degrees of the Rite, without swearing allegiance to its Supreme Power and obedience to these Constitutions, no one claiming to be so invested can ever be at liberty to deny their authenticity or impeach them.

And, evidently, no one can ever claim any rights or powers, titles or dignities, created by such Constitutions or provided for by them only, if he denies their authenticity. To do so is simply cheater; in French, *supercherie*; cozenage, rascality.

Degrees and Rites have been invented and created as the means of organization of associations for various purposes; for mutual assistance and relief; for the prosecution of special studies; for the purposes of social, political or religious reforms; or merely for notoriety, show, pomp, and to obtain for their possessors a factitious dignity and supposititious self-importance; and even for mere jollification and vulgar burlesque.

The benefits intended to be so secured cannot rightfully belong to any person except those who, paying the prices for the Degree or Degrees fixed by the law of the Degree or Rite, have received it or them at the hands or by the authorization of a lawful and legitimate Body or Officer of the Rite, having the supreme power derived from the first possessors; and except those who, by assuming the required obligations, have become entitled to, and have been put in possession of, the arcaua and modes of recogni-

tion—belonging to each Degree. To endeavor to procure for one's self those benefits, whether pecuniary, or of consideration and dignity, or of relief or assistance, in any other way, is plain dishonesty and speculation: and for any one not legally in possession of Degrees to take money for conferring them, is the obtaining of money under false pretences. One who does it is well styled in French an *escroc*.

No Body can *possess* or *own* Degrees, nor get title, (as the Grand Orient of France used to pretend to do,) by purchase and cession, of Degrees, if it be composed wholly or in part of persons who have not been invested with them; nor can continue to be owners or possessors of Degrees which it rejects, repudiates, and refuses to work, or forbids its subordinate Bodies to work. Those who are only invested with a lower Degree cannot confer upon others a higher one. A Body of Apprentices cannot make Fellow-Crafts, nor a Body of Fellow-Crafts make Master-Masons, nor could *Cerneau's* Consistory of 32ds make 33ds. It needs no argument to prove that no one can give a Degree to another, unless he has it himself.

Nor can a Body, wholly or in part composed of Master-Masons, legislate for or control Bodies of Royal-Arch Masons, or those of the higher Degrees of another or the same Rite.

These are self-evident axioms, and fundamental principles of Masonic Law and of common sense. Keep them in mind.

The primary or earliest Rite of Free-Masonry was the Symbolic, commonly known as the 'Blue' Masonry, consisting at first of no 'Degrees,' properly so called. When the First or Second Degree was invented and adopted, or by whom or how, is not known. It is only known that until *about* a certain date there were *no* Degrees, and that *about* 1723, perhaps as late as 1725, the Third was adopted. The three were invented and came into use before there was any other organization than that of the Blue Lodges. The Third Degree, at least, belonged to the English Free-Masonry, and could be legally acquired from it only.

In regard to the fundamental law of the English Masonry, as embodied in what are known as Anderson's "Constitutions of the Free-Masons," they were first published at London in 1723, "containing the History, Charges, Regulations, &c., of that Most

Ancient and Right Worshipful Fraternity," dedicated by J. F. Desaguliers, Deputy of the Duke of Wharton, Right Worshipful Grand Master, to the Duke of Montagu, Ex-Grand Master.

The whole purported to be "collected from their general records, and their faithful traditions of many ages." The History stated that King Athelstan (about A. D. 930) "encourag'd many Masons from France," who "brought with them the Charges and Regulations of the Lodges preserv'd since the Roman times, who also prevail'd with the King to improve the Constitution of the English Lodges according to the foreign model:" and that "Prince Edwin, the said King's youngest son, summoned all the Masons in the Realm to meet him in a Congregation at York, who came and composed a General Lodge, of which he was Grand Master; and having brought with them all the writings and records extant, some in Greek, some in Latin, some in French, and other languages, from the contents thereof that Assembly did frame the Constitution and Charges of an English Lodge." Also, "that those Charges and Laws of Free-Masons have been seen and perused by our late Sovereign, King Henry VI., and by the Lords of his honorable Council, who have allow'd them, and said that they be right good and reasonable to be holden, as they have been drawn out and collected from the records of ancient times."

The "Charges" are thus intituled: "The Charges of a Free-Mason, *extracted from the ancient records of Lodges beyond sea, and of those in England, Scotland and Ireland, for the use of the Lodges in London.*"

And the Regulations: "General Regulations, compiled first by Mr. George Payne, *Anno 1720*, when he was Grand Master, and approved by the Grand Lodge on St. John Baptist's Day, *Anno 1721*," &c., . . . "and now by the command of our said Right Worshipful Grand Master Montagu, the author of this book has compar'd them with and reduc'd them to the Ancient Records and immemorial usages of the Fraternity, and digested them into this new method, with several proper explications, for the use of the Lodges in and about London and Westminster."

In Article 39 of these Regulations it is stated that the approval and consent of the majority of all the Brethren present must be "solemnly desir'd" to make new Regulations binding, "as it was desir'd and obtain'd for *these* Regulations, when propos'd by the

Grand Lodge, to about 150 Brethren, on St. John Baptist's Day, 1721."

The "approbation" of the whole, by the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master and Grand Wardens, and the Masters and Wardens of twenty particular Lodges, (among whom was "XVII., JAMES ANDERSON, A. M., THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK, Master,") recited, that the Free-Masons of England had twice thought it necessary to correct their Constitutions, Charges and Regulations; first, in the reign of King Athelstan, the Saxon, and, long after, in the reign of King Edward IV., the Norman: that the old Constitutions in England had been much interpolated, mangled, and miserably corrupted: that the late Grand Master, the Duke of Montagu, had "order'd the author to peruse, correct and digest, into a new and better method, the History, Charges and Regulations of the Ancient Fraternity;" and that he had, accordingly, "examin'd several copies from Italy and Scotland, and sundry parts of England, and from thence, (tho' in many things erroneous,) and from several other ancient Records of Masons," he had "drawn forth the above written new Constitutions, with the Charges and General Regulations."

Every one now knows that no such "History, Charges and Regulations" had come from Italy; that the Charges were not "extracted from the Ancient Records of Lodges beyond Seas," because there were no other such Lodges; that the whole account of Constitutions adopted by a Grand Lodge at York, of which Prince Edwin was Grand Master, and of the adoption of Constitutions in the times of Henry VI. and of Edward IV., was fabulous. No one knows anything about the real *origines* of the Charges or Regulations, except that the former, at least, were known and used in Scotland before they were in England; and, in short, it is no longer denied that *the whole account* of the sources from which both were derived is a fiction,—in plain words, an impudent *congeries* of lies.

But being 'drawn out' by Anderson, they were adopted by the Grand Lodge, and by *that* became obligatory, being in no wise vitiated by the false statements as to the antiquity of the sources from which they were derived, any more than the laws of Numa Pompilius were, because, to give them greater sanctity, he pretended that they were dictated to him by the Nymph Egeria; or those of Minos, who claimed for them a divine origin.

The *origines* of Nations and of ancient Churches, Societies and Associations are alike enshrouded in the obscurity of the Past. What is really known in regard to the origin of Rome? Nothing. Niebuhr long ago exploded the accepted fictions in regard to Romulus and Remus. What is known as to the origin and the adoption of statutes and rules by any one of all the many Guilds of England? Nothing. And so nothing is known as to the real origin of the Constitutions of Symbolic Masonry. Who knows by what authority the 'Ancient Landmarks' were established? No one. History and tradition are alike mute on the subject.

The next Rite that made its appearance in Masonry was that of Perfection or Hérédom, in France, composed of the Blue Degrees and 22 others, the 18th being the 'Rose Croix,' and the 25th the 'Prince of the Royal Secret.' Of the authors or origins, or separate working, before the organization of the Rite, of any except two or three of the twenty-two Degrees, no information whatever has come down to us; and little reliance is to be placed on what has been told in regard to even those two or three. The twenty-five Degrees had been organized into a Rite before 1762. One by one they had been invented, worked, communicated by the inventors to others, and at last, how and by whom nobody knows, had been arranged and aggregated into a system, called a Rite, which afterwards appeared before the world, and then or at a later time had Regulations *purporting* to have been framed by nine Commissioners, assembled at Berlin or Bordeaux in 1762. Whether there ever *was* any such assembly; whether, if there was, it met in 1762, and at which place; who the Commissioners were, how appointed and empowered; and how, when, where and by what Body these Regulations were adopted, nothing whatever is or ever has been known.

But *the Rite* was an actuality. It certainly existed before 1762, and continued to exist, accepting these Regulations as the law of its being; and no man has, since 1762, become a regular and lawful Mason of that Rite, except under the authority of those Regulations; which, if they *were* made in 1762, existed in manuscript only for seventy years, before being for the first time printed and published at Paris in 1832. I have manuscript Rituals of it as old as the beginning of the present century. The Rite belonged to those who invented it and set it to work: they

had the right to adopt regulations for it, and they and their successors alone had and have the power to confer its Degrees—as *Degrees of that Rite*.

The Grand Orient of France took the 18th of that Rite, the Rose Croix, made three others out of some of its Degrees below the 18th, added these four to the Blue Degrees, and so created the French Rite or *Rit Moderne*. It was the inventor and maker of that Rite, and, as such, had the exclusive right to propagate, administer, and govern it. Nobody has ever disputed that.

The Templar Degree made its appearance in England, brought, it is supposed, from France, and worked in England as the *first* of seven Degrees, of which the 7th was the *Kadosh*. All these were given by the Blue Lodges. In Scotland, one Lodge would sell to another, for a pound or two, the right to confer the Templar Degree. In England, the Lodges conferred it, and afterwards the falsely called 'Grand' Lodge at York chartered an Encampment at Manchester, composed of artizans, which conferred the Templar Degree for seven and sixpence. Then Dunckerly took possession of it, assumed to be its Chief, and made it an 'Order,' with a new organization. Who knows any thing about the *origin* of the Degree, by whom and when and where it was invented and first worked? No man on earth. It is *supposed* to have originated in France; but no one knows that, nor has any one ever seen a French Ritual of a Templar Degree like ours or like the English Degree; nor is such a Degree spoken of, as ever having existed in France, by any French Masonic writer.

Certain persons established an Encampment in Pennsylvania. By what authority, who they were, where they were invested with the Degree, by what Ritual they worked, no body knows or ever will know. Then Encampments appeared in New England. Where the makers of them were invested with the Degree, or whether they had it at all, no one knows; but as they adopted a ceremony totally different from those of the English, Scottish, and Irish Encampments, the presumption is that they had never been legally invested with the Degree by the rightful possessors of it; because, if they had, they would have been furnished with Rituals whereby to establish Bodies, and would have had no power or right to reject these and make new ones for themselves, with nothing whatever in them that even savours of or remotely resembles the ancient real Templar ceremony of reception into

the Order, or the present Ritual of any foreign Templarism, however creditable the American Ritual may be to the inventor of it.

So the Royal Arch Degree appeared in England, no body knows at what date, or by whom invented. The Degree of Mark Master appeared also, when, by whom made or introduced, no one knows. In England there grew up Chapters of Royal Arch and Mark Lodges,—Mark Masonry and Royal Arch Masonry having no connection there with each other.

But in the West Indies, before 1795, the Mark Master, Past Master, and Royal Arch Degrees, were worked in the Island of Santo Domingo, as composing one system, with Rituals translated from the English; and it was required that a person should have the Royal Master and Super-Excellent Master Degrees before he could receive the Royal Arch. The Degree of Master Mark Mason, with a Ritual totally different from the West Indian one, and totally different from our present one, was about the same time worked at Charleston: and by and by the Degree of Select Master appeared and was given with that of Royal Master.

Who knows the origin or author or time of origin of the Mark Master or Master Mark Mason Degree; of the Past Master Degree; of the English Royal Arch; of the Royal Master; of the Select Master; of the Super-Excellent Master? No one. But Bodies of these Degrees were organized: a Rite consisting of the Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, (known to have been made in the United States,) and Royal Arch, was organized, with Chapters, Grand Chapters of States, and a General Grand Chapter of the United States; and a Rite consisting of the Royal and Select Master, and in some States of the Super-Excellent Master Degrees, was also organized, with Councils, Grand Councils, and, finally, and very lately, a National Grand Council.

And those who had possession of the Templar Degree in New England made the Red Cross Degree out of two Degrees of the Rite of Perfection, and organized it and the Templar Degree into another Rite, with Encampments or Commanderies, Grand Encampments or Grand Commanderies, and a Grand Encampment of the United States.

Who knows anything in regard to the origin of the two Degrees out of which the Red Cross was made? No one. When, how, by whom they were made, no one knows.

But, to one thing all agree : that to the Bodies of each of these Rites, the Rite as organized, and as administered by them, exclusively belongs; and if the Degrees of either are given by any other authority, the recipient is a spurious Royal Arch, a spurious Templar, a spurious Select Master; and that any one who, not being regularly invested with either of the Degrees, should undertake to give it, and establish Bodies of it, would be a fraudulent impostor and a knave, no better than a sneak-thief.

And though a Negro Lodge, Chapter, or Commandery may give precisely the same Degrees in all respects, by identically the regular Rituals, one so receiving either is held, every where in the United States, to be no Master Mason, no Royal Arch Mason, no Knight Templar, not having the Degrees from the legitimate authority.

In 1801 another Masonic Rite made its appearance at Charleston, in South Carolina, composed of the 25 Degrees of the Rite of Perfection, and eight others added to them, and claiming to have been organized at Berlin in 1786. It had, in manuscript, its Grand Constitutions written in French, purporting to have been made at Berlin, in Prussia, in a Supreme Council of the 33d Degree, duly and legally established and constituted there on the 1st of May, 1786, at which Council was present the King of Prussia, Frederic the Great, Sovereign Grand Commander. In 1802, the Supreme Council of the 33d Degree for the United States of America announced to the world, by formal manifesto, its establishment on the 31st of May, 1801. Since then it has had continuous existence under its Constitutions to the present day, with periods of inactivity; sometimes, perhaps, with *no* subordinate Bodies, never with many, until after 1855. All this was but natural for such a Body, Supreme Power of such a Rite, and in such a country, which, having a special Masonry of its own, regarded the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite as intrusive. It has never had less than three members, and was but once, sixty and more years ago, reduced to that; and, by its organic law, three constitute a Supreme Council, as three Master-Masons constitute a Lodge.

In 1814, it created the Supreme Council for the Northern Jurisdiction of the United States at New York, and itself took the title of the Supreme Council for the Southern Jurisdiction.

There are now some twenty-four Supreme Councils of this Rite in the world, all of which, with the exception of two or three, have been created by authority, either immediate or transmitted, from that established at Charleston in 1801. It is more widely diffused than any other Rite of Masonry in the world, and, in its higher Degrees, many times more so than either the Royal Arch or Templar Rite, which are confined to English-speaking countries; and the two Supreme Councils of the United States have of their Obedience over two hundred different Bodies.

By the same law that obtains as to the other Rites, this Rite belonged to those who formed, organized and established it. Whether its Constitutions were framed and adopted at Berlin or not, they were valid as its fundamental law, because they were accepted, adopted and promulgated as such law in 1801.

This Rite was and is called the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite; and no *other* Rite under that name or with all the same Degrees has ever made its appearance. No man has ever regularly received its Degrees, since the adoption of the Constitutions, without swearing to obey them as the supreme law of the Rite: and it is not possible that a Body of any Degree *can* be a Body of this Rite, if it denies the authority of its Grand Constitutions.

The Rite exists and is active, with its Organic Law and its Governing Bodies, precisely as the other Rites exist and are active: and its origin and the origin of its Constitutions, like the origin of all other Rites, is not historically known to us with certainty. If there was a Supreme Council at Berlin, no record of its sessions remains. If there were written minutes of those of the Supreme Council at Charleston for half a century, they have been destroyed or lost. There was not anciently any law that required the minutes of a Body to be recorded in books; and they were universally kept on loose sheets or paper-rolls, when kept at all.

So the early records or minutes of Templarism in England, the 'records' of the 'immemorial Encampments,' if they kept any, have utterly disappeared, like those of the Bodies of the Rite of Perfection in France, and those of the old Blue Lodges in France and England, Scotland and Ireland. No man of this or the last generation has seen the minutes of any of these early Lodges, of the Grand Lodge of France for a score or two of years after its establishment, of any Encampment of Templars before

the time of Dunckerly. I have been endeavouring in vain to find the minutes of the proceedings of the Grand Orient of France, from 1807 to 1815. When did the Grand Lodge of England begin to keep its minutes? and who has seen those from 1717 to 1723? Where are the oldest minutes of "the old Grand Lodge at York?" Who has seen the earliest minutes of Dermott's Grand Lodge? Where is the book that contains the record of its sessions during the first years of its existence? The keeping of formal records was not an essential characteristic of Masoury in the old days; and the ancient history of Blue Masonry is, therefore, more mythical than that of Etruria or Rome.

Fortunately, it is no longer considered necessary to resort to fictions, impudent and ridiculous, to support the claim to legitimacy of any Degree or Rite of Free-Masonry. Nothing, in religion or history or mythology, has ever equalled the riotous exuberance of fiction in which the earlier Masonic writers in England revelled, in regard to the Blue or Symbolic Masonry; and multitudes of Masons religiously believe these impudent fictions yet. They sufficed at the time when they were invented, but they are unnecessary and exploded now.

One Joseph Cerneau came, in 1806 or 1807, from the Island of Cuba to New York, which was within the Jurisdiction of the Supreme Council of the United States at Charleston. He was a Prince of the Royal Secret, of the 25th Degree of the Rite of Perfection, made such in 1806, at Baracoa in Cuba, and also made Deputy Inspector for the northern part of that Island, by Mathieu Dupotet, an Inspector of the Rite of Perfection, by authority transmitted from Etienne Morin; and he was no more. It is admitted by his Historiographer, Folger, that he did not, at first, pretend to have been invested with any other Degrees than the twenty-five of the Rite of Perfection. Afterwards he falsely pretended to have the additional Degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, and the Templar Degree, and he trafficked in all, and in one called 'Aaron's Band,' and so plyed a somewhat profitable trade in these shoddy and bogus commodities. Whatever he may or may not have been, and whatever 'authority or commission or inherent prerogative he may have had, he invaded the jurisdiction of a lawful and regular Supreme Council of the United States, was a trespasser, intruder and interloper, a disturber of the Masonic peace, without the

slightest power to give a Degree or establish a Body of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. All that he did was, on that ground alone, merely null and void.

This person established in New York, without any authority to do so, even under his Patent from Dupotet, a "Sovereign Grand Consistory" of Princes of the Royal Secret, of the 25th Degree, of the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Heredom, but calling it of the 32d, whose members from time to time selected some of themselves and rewarded them with what they called the 33d Degree, which gave them no powers, but was a mere naked decoration, and therefore not the 33d Degree established by the Grand Constitutions of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite; and these 33ds, so made, were in the aggregate styled a Supreme Council, a merely ornamental group, which had no powers at all; *all* powers of government and administration, of legislation and judicial decision, belonging to the Princes of the Royal Secret in Grand Consistory.

All the 32ds in the world could not make a 33d of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. Nor could there be a Supreme Council of that Rite without powers, a mere *nominis umbra*.

And if Cerneau had actually been a 33d and had had power to create a Supreme Council, his action, investing a Grand Consistory with supreme powers, and providing for a nominal Supreme Council with none, would have been utterly irregular, in gross violation of the Constitutions of the Rite, and absolutely null and void.

Undoubtedly, if he had had competent authority, he could have established Bodies of the Rite of Perfection in twenty-five Degrees in New York, and the Supreme Council at Charleston could have had nothing to say against it; for its Rite had not swallowed or extinguished that of Perfection, nor obtained any exclusive title to its twenty-five Degrees. But the whole of Cerneau's action was a mere impudent imposture and fraud. Nothing could have been more brazenly fraudulent than his styling the Degree of Prince of the Royal Secret of the Rite of Heredom or Perfection, the 'Thirty-second' Degree; for that Rite consisted of twenty-five Degrees and no more; and he never had any Thirty-second Degree, or any other Degree above the 25th of that Rite. He was simply an audacious knave and impostor, earning money by dealing in stolen wares under false pretences;

as he was in giving the Degree of Knight Templar, which also he never had. It is now boldly asserted that he had a commission from the Grand Orient of France, which is an audacious lie; for no man has ever seen such a commission; and he *could* not have had one, because, until 1815, the Grand Orient of France never controlled the Degrees above the 18th.

Undoubtedly, he might have made himself the author of a new Rite, by inventing or procuring some one to invent for him eight Degrees, in addition to those possessed by him, and calling the last the 33d, and making a Body of it the Supreme Power of the Rite.

But he could neither appropriate the names borne by Degrees of the same numbers, in the Ancient and Accepted Rite, nor claim and pretend that the Degrees of his invention were identical with those; nor give to his Rite the name of "Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite," nor pretend and claim that it was the same as that practiced by the Supreme Councils at Charleston, of France, and others, under the Grand Constitutions purporting to have been made in 1786, without being guilty of imposture and rascality, and of obtaining money under false pretences. All such performances are what in the French language are styled *escroquerie* and *friponnerie*.

When any Rite has become established, those who obtain its Degrees *pay* for them, sometimes very considerable sums. By being invested with these Degrees, by the possession of the means of recognition, (only to be *honestly* obtained by paying for them, and only by paying the person or Body entitled by the Constitutions of the Rite to receive the fee,) and by becoming a member of the Order, Society, or Association, a person obtains valuable rights and privileges,—the right to be defended in danger and aided in adversity, the privilege of finding Brothers wherever the Order exists, a joint ownership in the property of the Lodge or other Body to which he belongs, titles and decorations which, if he *pays* for them and obtains them honestly, he has a right to be proud of, and the right to letters, if he travels, making him favourably known to distinguished persons in other countries.

Now, if any one *not* legally invested with the Degrees of the Rite or Order, and having no authority derived from the founders to give its Degrees and establish Bodies of it, comes into its Jurisdiction and gives what are, or what he pretends are, its Degrees,

and establishes Bodies of it, the persons invested with his gew-gaws are not lawfully in possession of them, and the Bodies that he creates are spurious, and he is a rogue, even worse than a thief, for so obtaining money by false pretences and selling what does not belong to him—a knave of the scurviest sort; a poor, contemptible, impudent impostor and sharper.

One can scarcely conceive of a more disreputable or dirty occupation. The pretended authority of the bilk who practices it rests on lies. He must sustain himself by continual lying, entrap the unwary by lying, make decent men parties to fraud by lying, sell his stolen or shoddy wares by the aid of lies, must lie from the rising of the sun until the going down thereof, must live in an atmosphere of lies, be saturated with mendacity, become a walking fraud, filch money from men's pockets by lies, cheat, cozen, pilfer by lies, and he equally without conscience or shame.

“La fourberie ajoute la malignité au mensonge.”

If the axioms, which need no demonstration, that Degrees belong to those who make, compose, or compile them, and who do not sell or abandon their right of proprietorship over them, and that Rites belong to those who organize and establish them, and are the first workers of them, were not true, or could be changed into lies, or cease to govern in Masonry, there would no longer be any clandestine or irregular Masons, or spurious Bodies, or any Masonic legitimacy: a man receiving the Blue Degrees in a Negro Lodge, or by reading a book, would be as good a Mason as any one; and anybody who pleased could give Degrees and establish Lodges and Grand Lodges, Chapters, Commanderies, Councils and Consistories; and all Masonry would be destroyed.

For, when an Apprentice is asked, what makes him a Mason, he answers, “My obligation;” and if a man who never took the obligation of a Degree to the real owner and lawful possessor of it, still has the Degree and can give it and create Bodies of it, the whole bottom of Masonry has dropped out. If he *actually*, but surreptitiously, has obtained a knowledge of the whole Ritual of the Degree, it is a baser act on his part to use for profit what has been basely obtained, than it is to *make* a Degree and represent it to be and sell it for a regular Degree of a regular Rite,

when it is not that at all. For, in the latter case, he only steals the name of the Degree; and, in the former, he steals that and the substance of it together.

It is time that some things should be called by the right names. Theft is nothing less than theft, whatever it be that a man steals. The man who, without having lawful and regular investiture with a Degree, claims to possess it, is an impostor, and, therefore, a knave. For him to give it for money, is cozenage: to establish spurious or irregular Bodies is sheer rascality: and for men not ignorant and misled, to endeavour to get the right to enjoy the benefits and privileges, of any Rite, for sums far smaller than those pay who obtain it at the hands of regular Bodies, and without taking the proper obligations to the regular possessors, hoping thereby to share in what is not their own, is dishonesty and indecency.

Bro.: William J. Hughan, of Torquay in England, has noticed in the London Free-Mason the pamphlet, "Masonic Origines." I am indebted to him for pointing out an error into which I had fallen, which I have corrected in this edition.

I copy the following paragraph from his notice:

"He asks (1), 'when did the Grand Lodge of England begin to keep its minutes?' I reply, from 1723; and their chief records are to be found in the History of Free-Masonry, by Bro.: Gould, being copies of the original records still preserved at Free-Masons' Hall, which many of us have seen and handled."

No doubt; but the Grand Lodge was established in 1716, according to Anderson; and what I was commenting on was the absence of records or minutes of the organization of Bodies, of their '*origines*,' and of their earliest proceedings. None at all are to be found of the *organization* of the Grand Lodge of England, *in the shape of authenticated minutes*; and we have no record of what it did for six or seven years.

Speaking of "the great Masonic event of the eighteenth century,—the Assembly of 1717,—out of which sprang the Grand Lodge of England, the Mother of Grand Lodges," Bro.: Gould says:

“Unfortunately, the minutes of Grand Lodge only commence on June 24, 1723.

“For the history, therefore, of the first six years of the new régime, we are mainly dependent on the account given by Dr. Anderson in the ‘Constitutions’ of 1738, *nothing whatever relating to the proceedings of the Grand Lodge, except the ‘General Regulations’ of 1721, having been inserted in the earlier edition of 1723.*” 4 Gould, 279.

Anderson says that after the rebellion was over in 1716, the four old Lodges (which had no names or numbers, being designated only by the ale-houses or taverns where they met), with some old Brothers, met at the Apple Tree Tavern, and “constituted themselves a Grand Lodge *pro tempore* in due form,” and “revived the Quarterly Communication of the officers of Lodges (call’d the Grand Lodge),” and resolved to hold the Annual Assembly and Feast, and then to chuse a Grand Master from among themselves, until they should have the honour of a noble Brother at their head.” 4 Gould, 279, 280. The date of this meeting is not given.

But the Assembly and Feast (annual) were held afterwards, on St. John Baptist’s day, 1717, at the Goose and Gridiron Ale-house, when Antouy Sayer, Gentleman, was elected Grand Master of Masons, and Jacob Lamball, a Carpenter, and Captain Joseph Elliott, Grand Wardens. The Grand Master “commanded the Masters and Wardens of Lodges to meet the Grand Officers every quarter in communication.” This was the Grand Lodge, which *did not elect the Grand Master and Grand Wardens.*

George Payne was elected Grand Master of Masons, at the Assembly and Feast, 24 June, 1718, and a city Carpenter and a Stonecutter, Grand Wardens; Desaguliers, at the Assembly and Feast, 24 June, 1719; and George Payne a second time, at those on 24 June, 1720.

Then, at the Quarterly Communication, or Grand Lodge in ample form, on St. John Evangelist’s day, 1720, the selection of the Grand Master was provided for, to be made by the Grand Lodge, on the nomination of the actual Grand Master; and the power of appointing the Deputy and the Grand Wardens was given to the Grand Master “according to antient custom, when noble Brothers were Grand Masters.” 4 Gould, 281.

These statements and others that follow, in regard to the Assemblies and Feasts and the Grand Lodge, were published by

Anderson in 1738; and Gould admits "that the history of the Grand Lodge, from 1717 to 1723, as narrated by Anderson, is, to say the least, very unsatisfactorily attested." 4 *Gould*, 292. And in a note he shows that the information which Anderson furnishes was derived from hearsay, as he was not affiliated in English Masonry until after the election as Grand Master of the Duke of Montagu, in 1721.

I add here, as illustrating what I have said in regard to uncertainty as to the origins of Bodies, what Bro. Gould says in regard to two ancient Lodges, each older than the Grand Lodge of England :

"Between the years 1710 and 1748, the Alnwick records, *if not wholly wanting*, contain at best very trivial entries." 4 *Gould* 267.

Do *any* minutes of it show anything in regard to its organization and first meeting?

"The earliest entry in the minute-book of Swalwell Lodge is of September 29, 1725."

Does this, or anything afterwards, show anything in regard to its origin or early history?

But I have looked into Bro. Gould's History for those "chief records" which are to be found therein, being "copies of the Original Records;" and this is what I have found :

The earliest proceedings recorded in the minutes of the Grand Lodge of England are of 24 June, 1723, given by Gould, Vol. IV, pp. 373-375. There were present the Duke of Wharton, Grand Master, Dr. Desaguliers, Dep. Gr. Master, and the two Gr. Wardens.

After the minutes of this meeting, those of the Quarterly Communication of November 25 are given. The two extracts cover three quarto pages. Then follows Anderson's statement of what was done on the day of that Quarterly Communication.

Then are given certain questions settled on the 19th of February, 1724, and the 28th of April of the same year; and extracts and quotations from the records or minutes of the following dates: November 21, 1724; May 20, 1725, and November 27, 1725, each distinguished by its brevity; December 19, 1727, and St. John's Day, Christmas, same year—the former only naming the Lodges represented, and the latter being a resolution of 3½ lines; November 26, 1728; August 28, 1730; December in the

same year; December 15, 1730; March 17, 1731, certain resolutions; June, 1731; December 13, 1733, two brief resolutions; February 24, 1735; March 31, 1735; with brief references and extracts down to March 25, 1754.

Gould has perhaps extracted all that is of any importance from the early records; and it is very certain that they contain nothing at all in regard to the origin and first organization of the Grand Lodge of England; and that, if any minutes of its sessions for six or seven years were kept, *which does not appear*, they are lost.

I hardly think that I can agree with my Brother Hughan, that "*the chief records*" of the Grand Lodge of England are given by Bro. Gould. He may have extracted all that he considered of value historically; but he has not given us the records themselves. There may be much in them that would be of very great value otherwise than historically, as showing the progress of innovation, as well in the way of depravation as of improvement. A great many shining lights in Masonry would be benefited by a larger knowledge of what the old Masonry really was.

I have said to Brother Hughan that to refer Masons to the costly history of Bro. Gould for the minutes and records of the Grand Lodges is idle. Not one Mason in a thousand in the United States will ever even *see* the work; and a smaller number will own it. I have asked him why such minutes as remain cannot be published, complete, entire, *and just as they are*, in such shape that they can be accessible at small cost to Masons generally. I should prefer to judge for myself whether Brother Gould has given us the chief records or not. Let us go to the sources of history, and hear what the old Bodies themselves have said about their origins and doings.

I do not understand that the few persons who 'revived' Masonry in England, in 1716 and 1717, had any commission to do so from the four old Lodges to which they belonged; that these Lodges were working at all until afterwards; and that the making of the Grand Lodge was the act of these Lodges as organized Bodies. Where is the *procès verbal* of the organization of the Grand Lodge? Nowhere. What if it did begin to record its doings in 1723? Do the minutes then commenced give any information as to its *origines*? No. These continue all in the clouds.

The four old Lodges are only *nominum umbræ*, 'the shades of names.' They are wholly impersonal to us. We know nothing of their previous life; and the whole story sounds like a myth.

Bro. Hughan next says, quoting my words:

(2.) "Where were *any* minutes of the 'old Grand Lodge at York,' if there was such a Body?" "I reply," he says, "they are still at *York*, from the year 1712, as respects the old Lodge, and from 1725 as a Grand Lodge; . . . and all from 1712 to 1730, and others, are exactly reproduced in Gould's justly celebrated history."

Let us see exactly what they are.

There is a roll of parchment in existence, containing minutes of "a *private* Lodge," and occasionally of "a *general* Lodge" at York, the first entry being of March 19, 1712, and the last of May 4, 1730. Persons were "sworn and admitted" and "admitted and sworn" "into the Honourable Society and Fraternity of Free-Masons, as well at a general Lodge, as at a private one." The first entry begins: "March the 19, 1712, at a private Lodge held at the house of James Boreham;" and notes the swearing and admission of six persons, and nothing more. It is signed by "Geo. Bowes, Esq., Dep. President."

Up to December 27, 1725, there are minutes of 19 private Lodges, one of 'a Lodge,' one of 'a new Lodge,' one of 'an adjournment of a Lodge,' two of '*general* Lodges,' and two of 'St. John's Lodges,' which were general ones, as the 'new Lodge,' 'a Lodge,' and 'adjournment of a Lodge' were not. We thus have *four* general Lodges only, in more than thirteen years, and *no* '*Grand Lodge*' mentioned. And these brief minutes, as well as of the general Lodges as of the private ones, contain literally *nothing* except mention of the swearing and admission of members. Most of the entries are not signed at all; some of those of private Lodges are signed by George Bowes, Dep. President; one of a general Lodge by Sir Walter Hawksworth, President; and one of a St. John's Lodge by Charles Fairfax, Dep. President. 4 Gould, 271 ff.

On the 27th December, 1725, a minute shows that the 'Society' went in procession to Merchants' Hall, had the Grand Feast, and elected a Grand Master, Deputy, Wardens, Treasurer and Clerk. This is not signed by any one; nor is any subsequent entry signed by any officer until that of June 24, 1729.

Then follow thirteen entries of two lines each of the swearing and admission of members at private Lodges; one of June 24, 1726, of like admission, at a general Lodge, and one of June 24, 1729, of like admission, 'at St. John's Lodge held at y^e Starr in Stonegate.' The last also records the election of a Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master and Grand Wardens, and the appointment of a Committee 'to assist in regulating *the state of the Lodge*, and redressing from time to time any inconveniences that may arise."

And the last entry is of May 4, 1730, at a private Lodge at Mr. Colling's, being the sign of y^e White Swann in Petergate, York, at which it was ordered by the Dep. Mast^r then present, that if thenceforth any officer of the Lodge should be absent from the company at the monthly Lodges, he should be fined a shilling for each omission. This was signed by the Dep. Gr. Master, and the preceding entry by the newly elected Grand Master.

On the 6th of July, 1726, there is an entry in regard to a person who had "presumed to call a Lodge and make Masons without the consent of the Grand Master or Deputy:" beginning "Whereas it has been certify^d to me," and declaring that "I do, with the consent of the Grand Master, and the approbation of the whole Lodge," expel him from the Society: with provisions in regard to the other persons concerned in the irregularity, and for others who might in like manner afterwards offend. But who "I" was, does not appear.

How the Grand Lodge was formed, and when, these minutes do not show. In fact, they do not contain the name "Grand Lodge." They chronicle a meeting of "a general Lodge" on the 24th of June, 1713; one on the 24th of June, 1714; one on Christmas, 1716, "held there by the Hon^{ble} Society and Company of Free-Masons, in the City of York;" one on Christmas, 1721: and, after the election of a Grand Master by "the Society," December 27, 1725, a general Lodge, on the 24th June, 1726; and at St. John's Lodge, 24th June, 1729, the election of a Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, and Grand Wardens, and the appointment, by the Grand Master, of seven persons, one 'Dr.' and six 'Mr's,' "to assist in regulating the *state of the Lodge*, and redressing from time to time any inconveniences that may arise."

Evidently, as Gould admits, this so-called "Grand Lodge was without any chartered subordinates," and the same persons met

as a general Lodge and as a private Lodge. The general Lodges "were held on the Festival days, in June and December, and there were regular monthly meetings." The private Lodges apparently were distinct from these, and additional to the ordinary assemblies; and, Gould adds, "it may well be, were convened exclusively for 'makings.'" IV, 406.

As thirty-six of the entries are of these "private" (or occasional) Lodges, and only seven of general Lodges and St. John Lodges, these minutes to which Bro. Hughan refers me give us mighty little information about "the Grand Lodge of York," except that it was not, in any sense of the word, a Grand Lodge, and that it had nothing to do. Its *origines* are not even hinted at.

Bro. Hughan further quotes:

(3.) "Who has seen the minutes of Dermott's Grand Lodge? Where is the book that contains a record of its sessions during the first twenty-five years of its existence?" I reply, he says, "Several of us have seen the minutes and registers *from their origin* in 1751-2, as they are in the archives of the United Grand Lodge from 1751-2 to 1813, and their main characteristics are faithfully exhibited in Gould's History."

"From *their origin*," but not from the origin of the Grand Lodge. What is known as to that? I did not know that there were *any* early records of it, and am glad to be better informed.

The minutes of the Grand Lodge of the "Ancients" date from the election of Laurence Dermott as Grand Secretary, which took place in Grand Committee at the Griffin Tavern, "Mr. Hagarty" in the chair, on the 5th of February, 1752, present the officers of Nos. 2 to 10. It is, therefore, as Gould says, impossible to say how far, as an organized body, the existence of the Ancients should be carried back. A note to the minutes of September 14, 1752, states that a General Assembly was held on the 17th of July, 1751, when the Masters of six Lodges were present. Moreover, the note says that Dermott never received any copy or manuscript of the former Transactions from his predecessor; "nor does Laurence Dermott," he says, "the present Secretary, think that Bro. Morgan did keep any book of Transactions—though there is no certainty that he did not."

It is to be hoped that Dermott's minutes will some time be published, *unmutilated*. Keeping hid away from the general eye ma-

terials for Masonic History is a custom that ought to become obsolete. The demand of intelligent Masons to-day is for more light.

Upon the subject of the obscurity of Masonic Origines, I add this from Gould, in regard to the Grand Lodge of Ireland. *It is the oldest extant minute* :

GOULD V, 28. *Minutes of the Grand Lodge of Munster, 1726.*

“At an assembly and meeting of the Grand Lodge for the Province of Munster, at the house of M^r. Herbert Phaire, in Cork, on St. John’s Day, being the 27th day of December, A^{no} D^m. 1726. The Hon^{ble} James O’Brien, Esq^{re}, by unanimous consent, elected Grand Master for the ensuing year.” . . .

It was also entered thus, on the 27th of December, 1727 :

“Several Lodges within the Province had neglected to pay their attendance.”

How long these ‘several Lodges’ had existed, how they began to exist, and when they formed a Grand Lodge of Munster, are matters as to which history tells us nothing whatever.

In regard to the Grand Lodge of England, we have no minutes or records of either of ‘the four old Lodges,’ by members of which, and other Brethren, the Grand Lodge of England is said to have been formed. Nothing is known in regard to most of these Brethren; and but for information given by Dermott, we should not have their names. The age of these four old Lodges before the revival is pre-historic. All that preceded that event is, as far as they are concerned, wrapped in the impenetrable darkness of oblivion.

Thus the criticisms of Bro. Hughan do not touch the principal matter treated of in the ‘Masonic Origines,’ *i. e.*, the total absence of original minutes and records, or of authentic evidence in regard to beginnings of Masonic Bodies and Grand Bodies in general. He has not succeeded in throwing much light on the origin of two of the English Grand Lodges.

Perhaps he can tell me where are to be found the minutes of the formation and earliest proceedings of the Grand Lodge of the Royal Order of Scotland at Edinburgh?

Or the date of the invention and first working of its two Degrees, and of the Mark Degree?

