

**Grand Lodge
Free & Accepted Masons
Of California
Grand Oration 1859**

**Grand Orator
James Lawrence English**

BRETHREN OF THE GRAND LODGE

We read in the second and third chapters of the second book of Chronicles, that "Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the Lord. * * * And Solomon told out three score and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and four score thousand to hew in the mountains, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them. And Solomon sent to Hiram the King of Tyre, saying * * * Behold I build an house to the name of the Lord my God. ***** Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide. Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon; for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and, behold, my servants shall be with thy servants, even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great. * * * * Then Hiram the King of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon: * * * * And now I have sent a cunning man, * * the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skillful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving. ***** And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need: and we will bring it to thee in notes by sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem. ***** Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah. * * * * And he began to build in the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign."

This is the date of the institution of the Order, now called the Order of Free and Accepted Masons, it being according to the commonly received modern chronology, the one thousand and eleventh year before the Christian era.

There are writers, however, who claim that Masonry was instituted by God at the creation of the world, and that the mysteries of Masonry were communicated directly from God to Adam, and from Adam through a succession, which is designated, to King Solomon. From the fact that architecture nourished prior to the erection of Solomon's temple, that cities had been built, and palaces and temples had been reared; and because the principles inculcated by the Order are in their very nature eternal, this class of writers suppose that the Order itself had an existence prior to that period. It is not my intention, at this time, to present to you the various considerations which suggest themselves, to disprove such assumption, but will content myself with saying that all efforts to sustain such a position are purely speculative, and that there is not a particle of testimony, either historical or traditional, on which such claim can be based, neither does the institution itself furnish any internal evidence of such an origin.

We have, on the other hand, writers who dispute the claims of the Craft to such antiquity as I have stated. These writers — many of them men of undoubted learning and great research — though united in their blind zeal against the Order, do not harmonize in their views, either as to the period of its origin or its authors. One attributes its foundation to the Knights Templar; another represents it as the invention of the Jesuits; Clinch deduces it from the institution of Pythagoras; a fourth has ascribed it to the genius of Oliver Cromwell; whilst some monarchical writers have imputed its origin to secret associations hostile to what they considered true government, and seeking to level all distinction in society, and free the mind from the obligations of religion.

On the part of the Mason well versed in history and Masonic tradition, there is no doubt as to our origin. The institution itself bears internal evidence upon the point; and we can well conceive the necessity which existed at the time for the organization. King Solomon was about to enter upon the great and important undertaking of erecting to God a house which should be "wonderful great." He had to employ in its erection a vast body of workmen, upwards of one

hundred and fifty thousand; and a system had to be devised, by which order and regularity would be secured amongst the workmen during the progress of the work. With that consummate wisdom which has rendered him, one of the most remarkable men the world has produced he devised the system which governs our Order. The design was doubtless derived from the association of Dionysian architects which had existed in Asia Minor prior to the building of the temple, and which enjoyed the exclusive privilege of erecting temples, theatres, and other public buildings. That fraternity was bound by secret ties, being initiated into certain mysteries, and was distinguished by many peculiarities which strikingly assimilate it to our Order. It is universally admitted that that association existed in Tyre at the time of the building of the temple, and doubtless the cunning man sent by Hiram to Solomon, as well as the other workmen furnished by him, were members of that fraternity.

According to King Solomon's system, Entered Apprentice Lodges were instituted for the government of the bearers of burdens, — Fellow Craft Lodges, for the government of the hewers in the mountains, the workmen in the quarries, the stone squarers, and the artificers upon the temple itself. After the completion and dedication of the temple, all the craftsmen who were found worthy, were admitted to the Master Mason's degree. The system of government thus instituted by Solomon was perfect in its operation. But he was enabled to commence and complete that great work—the most splendid edifice the world has ever seen—in the incredibly short space of seven years and six months. And when completed, it resembled more the handiwork of the Supreme Architect of the universe than of man.

The association was a vast fraternity of builders, in which each held that position to which his qualifications entitled him, and in which the brethren were advanced from one degree to another, according to those qualifications. After the completion of the temple, this same association of builders, or at least a portion thereof, was no doubt employed by Solomon in the erection of his "house, on which thirteen years were consumed; as also in the erection of the house of the forest of Lebanon, and of the house for Pharoah's daughter, whom he had taken to wife. He also " built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities which he built in Hamath. Also he built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fenced cities with walls, gates, and bars; and Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities, and the cities of the horsemen, and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem and in Lebanon, and throughout all the laud of his dominion."

An association composed of so vast a number, bound together as it was, could not be evanescent. It had the elements of perpetuity in itself. And though, at this distant day, it is impossible to trace the existence of the Order from year to year, or even from century to century, yet from that day to the present, both history and tradition furnish us with facts which clearly indicate the continued existence of the fraternity. What do we know of the early days of Rome, of the kingdoms of Assyria, of Babylon, of Greece, of Carthage, of Nineveh, of Lydia, of Media, of Persia, or of Egypt? Can we trace from year to year, or from century to century, the history of those kingdoms or of their kings? A few of the most prominent points are all that we know. And how many kingdoms were there of those days which passed away without even leaving their names upon the record of time? If we know so little from the we of history, of the kingdoms of those times, how is it to be expected that history should tarnish us with an account of a cotemporaneous association of builders? It could not be looked for; and the absence of an authentic historical account of the fraternity is no evidence against its antiquity. Though there is no question whatever as to the existence of the Order for the last several centuries, yet the histories of the day are entirely silent upon the subject. When this is so with modern history, so full and so ample in its details, what could be expected from the mere outlines which we have of ancient history? Upon the completion of the temple, the workmen who had been engaged in its construction necessarily dispersed to seek employment where their services might be required. They were scattered not only over Asia Minor, but migrated to Greece, Italy, and other European countries. Strabo, that old geographer, who flourished in the first century before the Christian era, informs us that colonies were established by the inhabitants of Palestine, on the Atlantic coast, about one hundred and ninety years after the Trojan war, or about ten years after the dedication of the temple. The Phoenician fleets extended their voyages along the coast of France to the British Islands; and, according to the Harleian MS., a curious Masonic paper now on file among the manuscripts in the British Museum at London, Masonry was introduced into what is now

France, by one who had been at the building of Solomon's Temple. Thus it was that the fraternity was dispersed throughout the then known world in search of employment.

The first trace which we find of the existence of the fraternity, after the dedication of the temple, is in the year B. C. 714, or two hundred and ninety years after that dedication. In that year, Numa Pompilius, King of Rome, in order to carry out the design he had formed of beautifying the eternal city by the erection of magnificent temples, amphitheatres and other public edifices, gathered together from Asia Minor, Greece, and other countries, a body of workmen, and conferred upon them certain privileges by the name of *collegia fabrorum*, or corporations of architects. The continued existence of these corporations of builders can be traced for upwards of a thousand years; and their connection with the Masonic fraternity of the Middle Ages has been satisfactorily shown by Clave, a French writer. One hundred and eighty years after Numa patronized the fraternity, the building of the second temple was commenced. This was in the second year of the reign of Cyrus, it being the five hundred and thirty-fourth year before the Christian era, and the four hundred and seventieth year after the dedication of Solomon's Temple. We read in the third chapter of the book of Ezra, concerning the building of the second temple, that "they gave money also to the masons and to the carpenters; and meat and drink and oil unto them of Sidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus, King of Persia. ***** And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets * * * to praise the Lord." The masons, carpenters, and builders here mentioned were of the Masonic Order; for, according to the tradition of Royal Arch Masons, the second temple was built by our Craft: And here permit me to remark that I have often been struck with the remarkable coincidence existing between our Masonic traditions and the known facts of history.

That the Order existed at the time of the building of the second temple, we have by tradition from another source. The temple, though commenced in the reign of Cyrus, was finished in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, King of Persia. That prince during his reign, instituted an Order of Knighthood, which has been continued under different appellations, to the present day; and, according to the traditions of that Order, Masonry existed in the reign of Darius, and numbered wise and accomplished men in its ranks. The Order to which I allude was known originally as Knights of the East and West. They afterwards assumed the name of Knights of the Eagle. They were found in Palestine in the days of the Crusades; and are now known as Knights of the Red Cross, on account of the Red Cross borne on their banners.

I have spoken of Masonic tradition as evidence of the origin and continued existence of the Order; and to my mind it is evidence of the highest character. Were these traditions confined to our own country, or even to the country from which we derived them, there might be some doubt as to their truth. As Masons, we possess a knowledge of facts which occurred at the building of Solomon's Temple, unknown to the rest of mankind. These facts, transmitted through a chosen few, are equally well known amongst Masons throughout the entire world,—amongst men of all nations, creeds, and races; and as these traditions in the different countries agree in all essential particulars, they cannot but be true.

The privileges granted to the brethren by Numa Pompilius, were long enjoyed by them. Under his protection, and that of his successors, the Order nourished, until *collegia*, or as we would now term them, lodges, were found in every city and in every province. They were engaged in the labors of the Craft, building cities, erecting temples, amphitheatres, palaces and other edifices. As the Roman empire extended its borders, the brethren followed; and throughout all the countries subjected to Roman sway, splendid monuments of the enterprise of the conquerors and of the workmanship of the Craft were reared, some of which remain even to this day, the wonder of the world.

The Fraternity continued to prosper under the privileges conferred by Numa, for a period of near twelve hundred years; until, in the fifth century of the Christian era, having fallen under the ban of the Emperor, Theodosius issued a decree abolishing all secret societies, prohibiting their assemblages, and enacting the severest punishments for all who should violate its provisions. This decree was so rigidly enforced, that the Order and all other secret societies were, for a while, completely extinguished throughout the empire of the East. Prior to that time the Order had been introduced into Britain. In the year 55, B. C., Caesar landed and made his first campaign against the Britons; but that people were not conquered until A. D. 50, when they were subdued by

Agricola, and the island, from the Friths of Clyde and Forth to the English. Channel, submitted to the Roman yoke. About the year A. D. 120, the Emperor Adrian built what has been known as Adrian's wall, in order to protect the frontier; and, as in the construction of all public works, the Roman Governors employed exclusively the *collegiae fabrorum*, or corporations of architects, I entertain no doubt that the Order was introduced into Britain at that early day. We find no mention or tradition of it, however, until towards the end of the third century, during the reign of Carausius, who usurped the government of Britain. Albanus, a Roman knight—the Saint Alban of English history, and steward of the household of Carausius,—patronized the Fraternity; and during that reign the Craft were employed on many public works. About A. D. 426, and just after the issuance of the decree of Theodosius against all secret orders, the Romans, finally withdrew from Britain.

In the commencement of the seventh century, we find the Craft employed by Augustine, or Saint Austin, in the erection of religious edifices. The old cathedral of Canterbury was founded in the year 600; that of Rochester in 602; St. Paul's, in London, in 604; St. Peter's, in Westminster, in 605; and many others were built by him about the same time. In consequence of the erection of these edifices, as well as the building of palaces and castles throughout the kingdom, the number of the Craft was greatly increased in England. About this time the Gothic style of building was introduced from the continent. Masonry afterwards appears to have declined. It began to revive under the patronage of Saint Swithin, who employed the Craft in repairing the religious houses; and from his time the prosperity of the Order gradually increased, till about the year 872, when it found in Alfred the Great a zealous patron. That prince appropriated a seventh part of his revenue in employing a large number of workmen, and rebuilding the cities, castles, palaces, and churches destroyed by the Danes.

Of the history of the Craft upon the continent of Europe during this period, we know but little. That it was not extinct is evident. In 640, France furnished a body of the brethren to England; and in 950 we find the Craft engaged in the construction of the minster of Cologne. But the Craft attained its highest position about the commencement of the twelfth century. At this period a great desire for pomp and ceremony manifested itself in the Romish church, and caused a corresponding desire for splendid monasteries and magnificent cathedrals. A similar spirit prevailed amongst the monarchs and nobles of the different European realms, and regal palaces and lordly castles were demanded on every side. In order to encourage architecture, the pontiff's of Rome, and the other potentates of Europe, conferred upon the Fraternity the exclusive right to erect such edifices; and, to facilitate the work, invested them with privileges before then unknown. The right of self-government was granted to the Craft, and they were governed solely by their own laws and customs, and were exempted from the payment of all taxes and imposts.

At what particular date the Craft first acquired or assumed the name of "Masons," I do not know. I have not been able to discover that that name was applied to them before the commencement of the twelfth century. At that time the Craft was known as the fraternity of Masons; and in consequence of the immunity they enjoyed from the laws of the different realms, and freedom from the control of princes, they were styled, in contradistinction to all other builders, who did not belong to the fraternity and had no such privileges, Free Masons.

Up to about this period, the Craft was composed exclusively of operative builders. But at this time, attracted by the independence of the Craft, and its great immunities, admission to its ranks was sought by some who were not operative masons. On account of the influence which these applicants possessed, and the additional importance which their affiliation would confer upon the Order, they were admitted. Those thus admitted, not being operative, were termed Accepted Masons.

Possessed of such important privileges, the Craft prospered greatly. Its numbers largely increased; and the Fraternity labored diligently in the erection of the cathedrals and monasteries, the palaces and castles, which are, even at this day, the admiration of the world—traveling about from place to place, and from country to country, as their services were required, and living in huts beside the building on which they were employed. At this period, and for several succeeding centuries, wherever the Church of Rome was established, the Order was sanctioned and patronized.

In the middle of the twelfth century, the abbey of Kilwinning, in Scotland, was built, and the Kilwinning Lodge established by the Masons who erected the abbey. This Lodge is still in existence, and is regarded as the parent of all the Scottish Lodges. For some time after the

establishment of this Lodge, Masonry flourished in both England and Scotland, the Craft meeting with constant employment; and it appears to have been the custom to refer all differences that arose, connected with the art of building, to the general meetings of the Fraternity held at Kilwinning and York.

Being an operative body, the Craft would necessarily flourish most when its services were most in demand. Its arts were peaceful; and times of peace and plenty, when men had leisure and ability to give their attention to improvement, were those in which we find the Craft most prosperous. During the four centuries from the thirteenth to the seventeenth, the fortunes of the Craft were varied. Through all this period, we find unmistakable evidences of its continued existence; but, owing to the wars which prevailed, it did not enjoy any very great degree of prosperity. It appears to have attracted considerable public notice; and while on the one hand, we find it patronized and protected by the sovereign power, we find on the other, that attempts were made to suppress it. In A.D. 1423, the third year of the reign of Henry VI., an act was passed by the English parliament, (3 Hen. VI. Chap. 2,) entitled "an act to abolish the societies of Masons, and to hinder, under grievous penalties, the holding Chapters, Lodges, or other regular assemblies," by the provisions of which the Masons were prohibited from holding their secret meetings. It also enacted that those who called such meetings should be deemed and punished as felons; and that those who attended them should be punished by fine and imprisonment. This act, however, was never enforced; and in 1429, four years after its passage, a Lodge was held at Canterbury under the patronage of the Archbishop. When King Henry assumed the government — he was a minor when he ascended the throne — he not only permitted the Order to meet without being molested, but was himself initiated into its mysteries; and, so far as I can discover, he was the first English king who became a Mason.

At the same period, we find Freemasonry patronized in Scotland by its monarch, James I.; and his example was, in this respect, followed by his successors.

Upwards of half a century later, Henry VII. Of England was made a Mason and acted as Grand Master of the Order. He was the first British sovereign who filled that office. On the twenty-fourth of June, 1502, a Lodge of Masons was formed in the palace, at which Henry VII. Presided as Grand Master; and having appointed his Wardens for the occasion, he proceeded in great state to the east end of Westminster Abbey, where he laid the cornerstone of that superb structure of Gothic architecture, called Henry the Seventh's Chapel. This is the first instance that I have found on record, where that ceremony was performed by a monarch. The celebrated Cardinal Wolsey succeeded Henry VII as Grand Master.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, hearing that the Masons were in possession of many secrets which they refused to disclose, and being jealous of all secret assemblies, she sent an armed force to York to break up the Grand Lodge. Some of the chief officers of the expedition were induced to join the Order, and upon their report to the Queen that the fraternity did not interfere with state affairs, she became quite reconciled to their meeting; and this led to the liberation of the Masons from all future molestation in England.

Several of the kings of England were subsequently Grand Masters of the Order. In 1685, Sir Christopher Wren became Grand Master; and, with some intermission, he continued to fill that office until the death of William III., in the year 1702. He was the last operative Grand Master, and since his day the craft have ceased to be operative Masons. They do not appear to have prospered as an operative body, after they were deprived of their exclusive privileges. I cannot say at what time they were deprived of those privileges by the civil powers; but in the commencement of the seventeenth century, there being no scarcity of architects and workmen outside of the fraternity, the necessity which prompted the church of Rome to protect and patronize the Order, no longer existed; and becoming jealous of the influence and tendency of the institution, the church withdrew her protection and deprived the craft of their exclusive right to construct the religious edifices. The exclusive right to erect the public edifices of every description, was enjoyed by our brethren to a greater or less degree, from the days of Numa Pompilius, B. C. 714, to the commencement of the seventeenth century of the Christian era—a period of twenty-three hundred years and both the continent of Europe and the British Isles are filled with monuments of their glory.

The connection between modern Freemasons and the builders of the middle and earlier ages is shown conclusively in a manner which is perfectly intelligible to all Mark Masters. The

mark continued to be used by the workmen, as long as the craft labored as operative Masons, for marks are to be seen upon edifices which were built by Sir Christopher Wren, who was, as I have said, the last operative Grand Master of Masons in England. These marks are also visible upon the ancient Gothic churches both in England and on the continent. They are found on the famous cathedral Of Strasburg, which was founded in A. D. 1015, and the discovery of marks upon both inside and outside walls of the ruins of ancient edifices, is to the Mason one of the most interesting results of archaeological research. These marks, though used many, many centuries ago, are similar to those used by Mark Master Masons in their lectures at the present day; and, though mysterious hieroglyphics to the mass of man-kind, they prove to the initiated the connection between the operative Masons of the middle and earlier ages, and the fraternity as it now exists.

It would appear that as long as the Craft continued operative, permanent, located Lodges did not exist, except in those large cities where constant employment could be obtained. Neither were charters or dispensations required to authorize the opening of Lodges. A sufficient number of brethren, assembled together, had power to organize a Lodge and make Masons. And whenever an edifice was to be built, members of the Craft in search of employment assembled, and organizing themselves according to the ancient regulations, proceeded with the work. The fact that permanent Lodges did not generally exist, accounts for the varied fortunes of the Craft. Being composed of operatives, admission would not be sought in times when employment could not be obtained. And during the long wars which frequently prevailed, there were but few accessions to its numbers, whilst, its ranks were gradually thinned by death. During the worst times, however, the repairs and alterations of the public edifices, on which none but Freemasons were permitted to work, furnished sufficient employment to the Craft to perpetuate the Order. After the brethren were deprived, of their exclusive privileges, they continued operative for about a century, but in consequence of that deprivation, they did not flourish. The accessions to their ranks were few, and it appeared as if the Fraternity itself would become extinct. About the commencement of the eighteenth century, during the reign of Queen Anne, a number of Accepted Masons were made, and some writers have supposed that these ' were the first admitted into the Order who were not operative Masons. In this they are clearly mistaken, for there is no question but that Elias-Ashmole, the celebrated antiquarian, was made a Mason in 1646, while King Henry VII. Was Grand Master early in the sixteenth century, and Henry VI. was initiated early in the fifteenth. I have said that Accepted Masons were admitted into the Order as early as the twelfth century. This appears from the fact that the Order of Knights Templar was instituted early in that century; and, that those who constituted that body were not operative Masons is shown by the history of those times. That the Knights Templar were Freemasons, none have been more zealous to establish than the enemies of Masonry.

The advantages of the Order being apparent to its members, the design was conceived by brethren in London, to perpetuate the institution as a body of speculative Masons, in which the principles of the Order should be inculcated, notwithstanding that the brethren had ceased to be operative. To accomplish this, some innovations were necessary; not upon its principles or mysteries, but by the establishment of additional regulations for its government under the new character it would assume. Accordingly, in 1717, the Grand Lodge of England was established, to have and exercise supreme power over all Masons under its jurisdiction. At this time there were only four Lodges in the kingdom. The Grand Lodge was not formed by representatives from the Lodges then in existence but at an assembly of Masons presided over by the oldest Master Mason present, who had been Master of a Lodge. One of the first acts of this body was to give permanence to the Lodges, by depriving the brethren of the right which they had enjoyed prior to that time, of organizing a Lodge whenever and wherever a sufficient number of brethren might assemble; and by decreeing that the privilege of assembling as Masons should be vested in Lodges convened in certain places, that every Lodge thereafter to be convened should be legally authorized to act by a warrant from the Grand Master for the time being, and that without such warrant, no Lodge should be deemed regular. The four Lodges then in existence were permitted, to enjoy their former privileges. As the Order had ceased to be operative, these regulations were indispensably necessary to ensure its perpetuity. This mode of organization was adopted from that which had long been in force in Scotland. In that kingdom, James II, about the middle of the fifteenth century, granted to William St. Clair, Earl of Orkney and Roslin, the office of Grand

Master of Masons throughout their kingdom, and made the office hereditary in his family. The Grand Master of that kingdom being entitled, by a regulation of James I, to receive annually £4 Scots from every Master Mason, and also a fee at the initiation of every new member, the Earl of Orkney, in order to insure the collection of his fees, instituted the regulation of requiring every Lodge in the kingdom to work under a charter issued by the Grand Master; and this is the origin of chartered Lodges. No such requirement existed there previously, nor elsewhere, until the organization of the Grand Lodge of England.

The Grand Lodges that we read of prior to the organization of the Grand Lodge of England, were merely general assemblies of the members of the Craft, called by the Grand Master to consult together as to its interests, for the purposes of instruction, and to settle such differences as had arisen, connected with the art of building. The Grand Masters, who called and presided over them, were appointed by the sovereign of the country in which they were held. The power to appoint the Grand Masters appears to have been reserved by the sovereign, when the Craft was invested with its exclusive privileges; and, from the fact that that power was exercised until the close of the seventeenth century, I have concluded that the Craft were not entirely deprived of their exclusive privileges until that time. The Craft were¹ frequently allowed to select their own Grand Masters, subject to the approval of the sovereign. It would seem, too, that other general offices of the Paternity were appointed by the sovereign power. Among the evidences to be met with, which go to establish that such was the case, is the record of letters patent to be found amongst the record of the Privy Seal, dated at Holyrood House the twenty-fifth of September, 1590, and granted by King James VI. " To Patrick Copland, of Udaught, for using and exercising the office of wardenrie over the art and craft of masonrie, over all the boundis of Aberdeen, Banff, and Kincardine, to hold warden and justice courts within the said boundis, and there to minister justice." This letter, while it tends to prove what I have stated, that the Craft were governed solely by their own laws and customs, also goes to prove that the officers who administered justice, according to Masonic laws and customs, were appointed by the sovereign.

All the peculiarities of the Order as it now exists are deducible from its ancient character. One of those is that women are not allowed to be made Masons. Many fanciful reasons have at different times been assigned for this exclusion; but the true one is to be found in the fact that women are not adapted by nature to the performance of those severe labors in the forests, in the quarries, and on the edifices themselves, to which the members of the Craft were subjected. And not being constitutionally able to perform the tasks, they were excluded from the privileges of the Craft:

At the present day, the study of the arts and sciences is only enjoined upon the Fraternity; but in olden times, the Masonic Lodges were academies of the arts and sciences, wherein the brethren were instructed in all the learning of the age, and particularly in those branches connected with architecture. They continued to be such schools until about the middle of the last century.

I have thus given you a succinct outline of the history and characteristics of the Fraternity, from its institution to the commencement of the eighteenth century. The limits of an address would not admit of detail. Since that time Freemasonry has been what it is now, purely speculative, as we term it. Time will not allow me to say anything concerning the principles of the Craft. The interesting ceremony of the installation of the Grand Officers for the ensuing year, remains yet to be performed; and from that I will only detain you to express the wish as to our beloved Order, which I know will meet with a hearty " amen " in the bosom of every brother present, "*Esto perpetua.*"