



Extracted from:  
Confessions of an English opium-eater, with  
Levana, the Rosicrucians and Freemasons  
by Thomas De Quincey

## HISTORICO-CRITICAL INQUIRY

INTO THE ORIGIN OF THE

## ROSICRUCIANS AND THE FREEMASONS.

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**T**HERE is a large body of outstanding problems in history, great and little, some relating to persons, some to things, some to usages, some to words, etc., which furnish occasion, beyond any other form of historical researches, for the display of extensive reading and critical acumen. 1. In reference to *persons*, as those which regard whole nations—*e.g.* What became of the ten tribes of Israel? Did Brennus and his Gauls penetrate into Greece? Who and what are the Gipsies?—or those, far more in number, which regard individuals; as the case of the Knights Templars—of Mary Stuart—of the Ruthvens (the Gowrie Conspiracy). Who was the man in the Iron Mask? Was the unhappy Lady of the Haystack, who in our own days slept out of doors or in barns up and down Somersetshire, a daughter of the Emperor of Germany? Was Perkin Warbeck three centuries ago the true Plantagenet?\*

2. In reference

\* There can be no doubt that he was. But I mention it as a question which most people suppose to be yet *sub judice*.

to *things*; as—Who first discovered the sources of the Nile? Who built Stonehenge? Who discovered the compass? What was the Golden Fleece? Was the Siege of Troy a romance, or a grave historic fact? Was the Iliad the work of one mind, or (on the Wolfian hypothesis) of many? What is to be thought of the Thundering Legion? of the miraculous dispersion of the Emperor Julian's labourers before Jerusalem? of the burning of the Alexandrian Library, etc. Who wrote the *Εἰκὼν Βασιλική*? Who wrote the Letters of Junius? Was the Fluxional Calculus discovered simultaneously by Leibnitz and Newton? or did Leibnitz derive the first hint of it from the letter of Newton? 3. In reference to *usages*; as the May-pole and May-day dances—the Morris dancers—the practice (not yet extinct amongst uneducated people) of saying “God bless you!” on hearing a person sneeze, and thousands of others. 4. In reference to *words*; as whence came the mysterious *Labarum* of Constantine? etc. Among the problems of the first class, there are not many more irritating to the curiosity than that which concerns the well-known order of Freemasons. In our own language I am not aware of any work which has treated this question with much learning. I have therefore abstracted, rearranged, and in some respects I shall not scruple to say—have improved the German work on this subject, of Professor J. G. Buhle. This work is an expansion of a Latin Dissertation read by the Professor in the year 1803 to the Philosophical Society of Göttingen; and, in respect to the particular sort of merit looked for in a work of this kind, has (I believe) satisfied the most competent judges. Coming after a crowd of other learned works on the Rosicrucians, and those of Lessing and Nicolai on the Freemasons, it could not well fail to embody what was

most important in their elaborate researches, and to benefit by the whole. Implicitly, therefore, it may be looked upon as containing the whole learning of the case, as accumulated by all former writers, in addition to that contributed by the Professor himself; which, to do him justice, seems to be extensive and accurate. But the Professor's *peculiar* claims to distinction in this inquiry are grounded upon the solution which he first has given in a satisfactory way to the main problem of the case—What is the *origin* of Freemasonry? For, as to the *secret* of Freemasonry, and its occult doctrines, there is a readier and more certain way of getting at those than through any Professor's book. To a hoax played off by a young man of extraordinary talents in the beginning of the seventeenth century (*i.e.*, about 1610–14), but for a more elevated purpose than most hoaxes involve, the reader will find that the whole mysteries of Freemasonry, as now existing all over the civilised world, after a lapse of more than two centuries, are here distinctly traced: such is the power of a grand and capacious aspiration of philosophic benevolence to embalm even the idlest levities, as amber enshrines straws and insects!

Any reader who should find himself satisfied with the Professor's solution and its proof, would probably be willing to overlook his other defects: his learning and his felicity of conjecture may pass as sufficient and redeeming merits in a Göttingen Professor. Else, and if these merits were set aside, I must say that I have rarely met with a more fatiguing person than Professor Buhle.\* That his essay is readable at all, if it *be* readable, the reader must

\* I believe that he is also the editor of the Bipont Aristotle: but not possessing that edition of Aristotle myself, I cannot pretend to speak of its value. His *History of Philosophy* I have: it is probably as good as such works usually are: and, alas!—no better.

understand that he owes to me. Mr. Buhle is celebrated as the historian of philosophy, and as a logic-professor at a great German University. But a more illogical work than his as to the conduct of the question, or one more confused in its arrangement, I have not often seen. It is doubtless a rare thing to meet with minds sufficiently stern in their logic to keep a question steadily and immovably before them, without ever being thrown out of their track by verbal delusions: and for my own part I must say that I never was present in my life at one of those after-dinner disputations by which social pleasure is poisoned (except in the higher and more refined classes), where the course of argument did not within ten minutes quit the question upon which it had first started—and all upon the seduction of some equivocal word, or of some theme which bore affinity to the main theme, but was not that main theme itself, or still oftener of some purely verbal transition. All this is common: but the eternal see-sawing, weaving and counter-weaving, flux and reflux, of Professor Buhle's course of argument is *not* common by any means, but very *uncommon*, and worthy of a place in any cabinet of natural curiosities. There is an everlasting confusion in the worthy man's mind between the two questions—What is the *origin* of Freemasonry? and what is the *nature* and *essence* of Freemasonry? The consequence is that one idea always exciting the other, they constantly come out shouldering and elbowing each other for precedency—every sentence is charged with a double commission—the Professor gets angry with himself, begins to splutter unintelligibly, and finds on looking round him that he has wheeled about to a point of the argument considerably in the rear of that which he had reached perhaps 150 pages before. I have done what I could to remedy these infirmities of the book;

and upon the whole it is a good deal less paralytic than it was. But, having begun my task on the assumption that the first chapter should naturally come before the second, the second before the third, and so on—I find now (when the mischief is irreparable) that I made a great mistake in that assumption, which perhaps is not applicable to Göttingen books, and that if I had read the book on the Hebrew principle—or Βουστροφηδόν—or had tacked and traversed—or done anything but sail in a straight line, I could not have failed to improve the arrangement of my materials. But, after all, I have so whitewashed the Professor, that nothing but a life of gratitude on his part, and free admission to his logic lectures for ever, can possibly repay me for my services.

The three most triumphant dissertations existing upon the class of historico-critical problems which I have described above are—1. Bentley's upon the spurious Epistles ascribed to Phalaris; 2. Malcolm Laing's upon Perkin Warbeck (published by Dr. Henry in his *Hist. of Great Britain*); 3. Mr. Taylor's upon the Letters of Junius. All three are loaded with a superfetation of evidence, and conclusive beyond what the mind altogether wishes. For it is pleasant to have the graver part of one's understanding satisfied, and yet to have its capricious part left in possession of some miserable fragment of a scruple upon which it may indulge itself with an occasional speculation in support of the old error. In fact, coercion is not pleasant in any cases; and though reasons be as plenty as blackberries, one would not either give or believe them "on compulsion." In the present work the reader will perhaps not find himself under this unpleasant sense of coercion, but left more to the free exercise of his own judgment. Yet upon the whole I think he will give his final award in behalf of Buhle's hypothesis.



## CHAPTER I.

OF THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ORDERS OF  
THE ROSICRUCIANS AND THE FREEMASONS.

I DEEM it an indispensable condition of any investigation into the origin of the Rosicrucians and Freemasons—that both orders should be surveyed comprehensively and in the whole compass of their relations and characteristic marks ; not with reference to this or that mythos, symbol, usage, or form : and to the neglect of this condition, I believe, we must impute the unsuccessful issue which has hitherto attended the essays on the subject. First of all, therefore, I will assign those distinguishing features of these orders which appear to me universal and essential ; and these I shall divide into *internal* and *external*—accordingly as they respect the personal relations and the purposes of their members, or simply the outward form of the institutions.

The universal and essential characteristics of the two orders, which come under the head of *internal*, are these which follow :—

I. As their fundamental maxim they assume—*Entire equality of personal rights amongst their members in relation to their final object.* All distinctions of social rank are annihilated. In the character of masons the prince and the lowest citizen behave reciprocally as free men—standing to each other in no relation of civic inequality. This is a feature of masonry in which it resembles the church : projecting itself, like *that*, from the body of the state ; and in *idea* opposing itself to the state, though not in fact ; for, on the contrary, the ties of social obligation are strengthened and sanctioned by the masonic doctrines. It is true that

these orders have *degrees*—many or few, according to the constitution of the several mother-lodges. These, however, express no subordination in rank or power: they imply simply a more or less intimate connection with the concerns and purposes of the institution. A gradation of this sort, corresponding to the different stages of knowledge and initiation in the mysteries of the order, was indispensable to the objects which they had in view. It could not be advisable to admit a young man, inexperienced and untried, to the full participation of their secrets: he must first be educated and moulded for the ends of the society. Even elder men it was found necessary to subject to the probation of the lower degrees before they were admitted to the higher. Without such a regulation dangerous persons might sometimes have crept into the councils of the society; which, in fact, happened occasionally, in spite of all provisions to the contrary. It may be alleged that this feature of personal equality amongst the members in relation to their private object is not exclusively the characteristic of Rosicrucians and Freemasons. True; it belongs no less to all the secret societies which have arisen in modern times. But, notwithstanding *that*, it is indisputable that to them was due the original scheme of an institution, having neither an ecclesiastic nor a political tendency, and built on the personal equality of all the individuals who composed it.

II. *Women, children, those who were not in the full possession of civic freedom, Jews, Anti-Christians generally, and* (according to undoubted historic documents) in the early days of these orders—*Roman Catholics were excluded from the society.* For what reason women were excluded, I suppose it can hardly be necessary to say. The absurd spirit of curiosity, talkativeness, and levity, which so

distinguish that unhappy sex, were obviously incompatible with the grave purposes of the Rosicrucians and Masons. Not to mention that the familiar intercourse, which co-membership in these societies brings along with it, would probably have led to some disorders in a promiscuous assemblage of both sexes, such as might have tainted the good fame or even threatened the existence of the order. More remarkable is the exclusion of *persons not wholly free*, of *Jews*, and of *Anti-Christians*; and, indeed, it throws an important light upon the origin and character of the institutions. By *persons not free* we are to understand not merely slaves and vassals, but also those who were in the service of others—and generally all who had not an independent livelihood. Even freeborn persons are comprehended in this designation, so long as they continued in the state of minority. Masonry presumes in all its members the devotion of their knowledge and powers to the objects of the institution. Now, what services could be rendered by vassals, menial servants, day-labourers, journeymen, with the limited means at their disposal as to wealth or knowledge, and in their state of dependency upon others? Besides, with the prejudices of birth and rank prevalent in that age, any admission of plebeian members would have immediately ruined the scheme. Indeed, we have great reason to wonder that an idea so bold for those times as the union of nobles and burghers under a law of perfect equality could ever have been realised. And, in fact, among any other people than the English, with their national habits of thinking, and other favourable circumstances, it could *not* have been realised. *Minors* were rejected unless when the consent of their guardians was obtained; for otherwise the order would have exposed itself to the suspicion of tampering with young people in



an illegal way: to say nothing of the want of free-agency in minors. That lay-brothers were admitted for the performance of servile offices is not to be taken as any departure from the general rule; for it was matter of necessity that persons of lower rank should fill the menial offices attached to the society; and these persons, be it observed, were always chosen from amongst those who had an independent property, however small. As to the exclusion of Anti-Christians, especially of Jews, this may seem at first sight inconsistent with the cosmo-political tendency of Masonry. But had it that tendency at its first establishment? Be this as it may, we need not be surprised at such a regulation in an age so little impressed with the virtue of toleration, and indeed so little able—from political circumstances—to practise it. Besides, it was necessary for their own security; the Freemasons themselves were exposed to a suspicion of atheism and sorcery; and this suspicion would have been confirmed by the indiscriminate admission of persons hostile to Christianity. For the Jews in particular, there was a further reason for rejecting them, founded on the deep degradation of the national character. With respect to the Roman Catholics, I need not at this point anticipate the historic data which favour their exclusion. The fact is certain; but, I add, only for the earlier periods of Freemasonry. Further on, the cosmo-political constitution of the order had cleared it of all such religious tests; and at this day, I believe, that in the lodges of London and Paris there would be no hesitation in receiving as a brother any upright Mohammedan or Jew. Even in smaller cities, where lingering prejudices would still cleave with more bigotry to the old exclusions, greater stress is laid upon the natural religion of the candidate—his belief in God and his sense of moral

obligation—than upon his positive confession of faith. In saying this, however, I would not be understood to speak of certain individual sects among the Rosicrucians, whose mysticism leads them to demand special religious qualities in their proselytes which are dispensed with by common Freemasonry.

III. *The orders make pretensions to mysteries*; these relate partly to ends, and partly to means; and are derived from the East, whence they profess to derive an occult wisdom not revealed to the profane. This striving after hidden knowledge, it was, that specially distinguished these societies from others that pursued unknown objects. And because their main object was a mystery, and that it might remain such, an oath of secrecy was demanded of every member on his admission. Nothing of this mystery could ever be discovered by a visit from the police: for when such an event happens, and naturally it has happened many times, the business is at end—and the lodge *ipso facto* dissolved: besides that, all the acts of the members are symbolic, and unintelligible to all but the initiated. Meantime no government can complain of this exclusion from the mysteries: as every governor has it at his own option to make himself fully acquainted with them by procuring his own adoption into the society. This it is which in most countries has gradually reconciled the supreme authorities to Masonic Societies, hard as the persecution was which they experienced at first. Princes and prelates made themselves brothers of the order as the condition of admission to the mysteries. And, think what they would of these mysteries in other respects, they found nothing in them which could justify any hostility on the part of the state.

In an examination of Masonic and Rosicrucian Societies the weightiest question is that which regards the nature of

these mysteries. To this question we must seek for a key in the spirit of that age when the societies themselves originated. We shall thus learn, first of all, whether these societies do in reality cherish any mystery as the final object of their researches; and, secondly, perhaps we shall thus come to understand the extraordinary fact that the Rosicrucian and Masonic secret should not long ago have been betrayed, in spite of the treachery which we must suppose in a certain proportion of those who were parties to that secret in every age.

IV. *These orders have a general system of signs (e.g., that of recognition) usages, symbols, myths, and festivals.* In this place it may be sufficient to say generally that even that part of the ritual and mythology which is already known to the public,\* will be found to confirm the conclusions drawn from other historical data as to the origin and purpose of the institution: thus, for instance, we may be assured beforehand that the original Freemasons must have had some reason for appropriating to themselves the attributes and emblems of real handicraft Masons: which part of their ritual they are so far from concealing that in London they often parade on solemn occasions attired in full costume. As little can it be imagined that the selection of the feast of St. John (Midsummer-day) as their own chief festival, was at first arbitrary and without a significant import.

Of the *external* characteristics—or those which the society itself announces to the world—the main is the

\* We must not forget, however, that the Rosicrucian and Masonic orders were not originally at all points what they now are; they have passed through many changes and modifications; and no inconsiderable part of their symbolic system, etc., has been the product of suggestive generations.

*public profession of beneficence* ; not to the brothers only, though of course to them more especially, but also to strangers. And it cannot be denied by those who are least favourably disposed to the order of Freemasons that many states in Europe, where lodges have formerly existed or do still exist, are indebted to them for the original establishment of many salutary institutions, having for their object the mitigation of human suffering. The other external characteristics are properly negative, and are these :—

I. *Masonry is compatible with every form of civil constitution* ; which cosmo-political relation of the order to every mode and form of social arrangements has secured the possibility of its reception amongst all nations, however widely separated in policy and laws.

II. *It does not impose celibacy* : and this is the criterion that distinguishes it from the religious orders, and from many of the old knightly orders in which celibacy was an indispensable law, or still is so.

III. *It enjoins no peculiar dress* (except, indeed, in the official assemblages of the lodges, for the purpose of marking the different degrees), *no marks of distinction in the ordinary commerce of life and no abstinence from civil offices and business*. Here again is a remarkable distinction from the religious and knightly orders.

IV. *It grants to every member a full liberty to dissolve his connection with the order at any time, and without even acquainting the superiors of the lodge* ; though of course he cannot release himself from the obligation of his vow of secrecy. Nay, even after many years of voluntary separation from the order, a return to it is always allowed. In the religious and knightly orders, the members have not the powers, excepting under certain circumstances, of leaving

them ; and, under *no* circumstances, of returning. This last was a politic regulation : for, whilst on one hand the society was sufficiently secured by the oath of secrecy, on the other hand by the easiness of the yoke which it imposed, it could the more readily attract members. A young man might enter the order ; satisfy himself as to the advantages that were to be expected from it ; and leave it upon further experience or any revolution in his own way of thinking.

In thus assigning the internal and external characteristics of the Rosicrucians and Freemasons, I have purposely said nothing of the distinctions between the two orders themselves : for this would have presupposed that historical inquiry which is now to follow. That the above characteristics, however, were common to both, is not to be doubted. Rosicrucianism, it is true, is not Freemasonry : but the latter borrowed its form from the first. He that gives himself out for a Rosicrucian, without knowing the general ritual of masonry, is unquestionably an impostor. Some peculiar sects there are which adopt certain follies and chimeras of the Rosicrucians (as gold-making) ; and to these he may belong ; but a legitimate Rosicrucian, in the original sense and spirit of the order, he cannot be.





## CHAPTER II.

UPON THE EARLIEST HISTORICAL TRACES OF THE ROSICRUCIAN  
AND MASONIC ORDERS.

THE accredited records of these orders do not ascend beyond the last two centuries. On the other hand, it is alleged by many that they have existed for eighteen hundred years. He who adopts this latter hypothesis which even as an hypothesis seems to me scarcely endurable for a moment, is bound to show, in the first place, in what respect the deduction of these orders from modern history is at all unsatisfactory ; and secondly, upon his own assumption of a far elder origin, to explain how it happened that for sixteen entire centuries no writers contemporary with the different periods of these orders have made any allusion to them. If he replies by alleging the secrecy of their proceedings, I rejoin that this might have secured their doctrines and mysteries from being divulged, but not the mere fact of their existence. My view of their origin will perhaps be granted with relation to Western Europe ; but I shall be referred to the East for the *incunabula* of the order. At one time Greece, at another Egypt, or different countries of Asia, are alleged as the cradle of the Rosicrucians and the Freemasons. Let us take a cursory survey of the several hypotheses.

1. In the earlier records of GREECE we meet with nothing which bears any resemblance to these institutions but the Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries. Here, however, the word *mysteries* implied not any occult problem or science

sought for, but simply sensuous\* and dramatic representations of religious ideas—which could not otherwise be communicated to the people in the existing state of intellectual culture, and which (as often happens), having been once established, were afterwards retained in a more advanced state of the national mind. In the Grecian mysteries there were degrees of initiation amongst the members, but with purposes wholly distinct from those of the masonic degrees. The Grecian mysteries were not to be profaned; but *that* was on religious accounts. Lastly, the Grecian mysteries were a part of the popular religion acknowledged and authorised by the state. The whole resemblance, in short, rests upon nothing, and serves only to prove an utter ignorance of Grecian antiquities in those who have alleged it. †

2. Neither in the history of EGYPT is any trace to be found of the Rosicrucian and Masonic characteristics. It is true that the meaning of the Egyptian religious symbols and usages was kept secret from the people and from strangers; and in that sense Egypt may be said to have had mysteries; but these mysteries involved nothing more than the essential points of the popular religion. ‡ As to the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, they are now known to be spurious; and their pretensions could

\* The word *sensuous* is a Miltonic word; and is, moreover, a word that cannot be dispensed with.

† See the German essay of Meiners upon the Mysteries of the Ancients, especially the Eleusinian mysteries, in the third part of his *Miscellaneous Philosophical Works*. Collate with this the work of Ste. Croix, entitled *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Religion secrète des anciens Peuples*. Paris: 1784.

‡ On the principle and meaning of the popular religion in Egypt and the hieroglyphics connected with it, consult Gatterer's essay *De Theogoniâ Aegyptiorum* in the 7th vol.—and his essay *Demetempychosi*,

never have imposed upon any person who had examined them by the light of such knowledge as we still possess of the ancient Egyptian history and religion: indeed, the gross syncretism in these writings of Egyptian doctrines with those of the later Platonists too manifestly betrays them as a forgery from the schools of Alexandria. Forgery apart, however, the substance of the Hermetic writings disconnects them wholly from masonic objects: it consists of a romantic Theology and Theurgy; and the whole is very intelligible, and far from mysterious. What is true of these Hermetic books, is true *à fortiori* of all later writings that profess to deliver the traditional wisdom of ancient Egypt.

3. If we look to ancient CHALDÆA and PERSIA for the origin of these orders, we shall be as much disappointed. The vaunted knowledge of the Chaldæans extended only to Astrology, the interpretation of dreams, and the common arts of jugglers. As to the Persian Magi, as well before as after the introduction of the doctrine of Zoroaster, they were simply the depositaries of religious ideas and traditions, and the organs of the public worship. Moreover, they composed no secret order: but rather constituted the highest *caste* or rank in the nation, and were recognised by the government as an essential part of the body politic. In succeeding ages the religion of the Magi passed over to many great nations, and has supported itself up to our days. Anquetil du Perron has collected and published the holy

*immortalitatis animorum symbolo Aegyptio* in the 9th vol. of the Göttingen Transactions. The path opened by Gatterer has been since pursued with success by Dornedden in his *Amenophis* and in his new theory for the explanation of the Grecian Mythology; 1802. Consult also Vogel's Essay on the Religion of the Ancient Egyptians and the Greeks. 4to. Nuremberg; 1793.

books in which it is contained. But no doctrine of the Zendavesta is presented as a mystery; nor could any of those doctrines, from their very nature, have been presented as such. Undoubtedly among the Rosicrucian titles of honour we find that of Magus: but with them it simply designates a man of rare knowledge in physics—*i.e.*, especially in Alchemy. That the ancient Magi in the age immediately before and after the birth of Christ, attempted the transmutation of metals, is highly improbable: that idea, there is reason to believe, first began to influence the course of chemical pursuits amongst the Arabian students of natural philosophy and medicine.

4. The pretensions of the DERVISHES and BRAHMINS of Asia, especially of Hindostan, to be the fathers of the two orders, need no examination, as they are still more groundless than those which have been just noticed.

5. A little before and after the birth of Christ there arose in Egypt and Palestine a Jewish religious sect, which split into two divisions—the ESSENES and the THERAPEUTÆ. Their history and an account of their principles may be found in Josephus, and more fully in Philo, who probably himself belonged to the Therapeutæ. The difference between the two sects consisted in this—that the Essenes looked upon practical morality and religion as the main business of life, whereas the Therapeutæ attached themselves more to philosophic speculations, and placed the essence of religion in the contemplation and reverence of the deity. They dwelt in hermitages, gardens, villages, and cottages, shunning the uproar of crowds and cities. With them arose the idea of monkish life, which has subsisted to this day, though it has received a mortal shock in our revolutionary times. To these two systems have been traced the Rosicrucians and Freemasons. Now, without

entering minutely into their history, it is sufficient for the overthrow of such an hypothesis to cite the following principles common to both the Essenes and the Therapeutæ. First, they rejected as morally unlawful all distinction of ranks in civil society. Secondly, they made no mystery of their doctrines. Thirdly, they admitted to their communion persons of either sex. Fourthly, though not peremptorily enjoining celibacy, they held it to be a more holy state than that of marriage. Fifthly, they disallowed of oaths. Sixthly, they had nothing symbolic in their worship or ritual. If it should be objected that the Freemasons talk much of the rebuilding of Solomon's Temple, and refer some of their legends to this speculation,—I answer that the Essenes and Therapeutæ either were Christians, or continued Jews until by little and little their sects expired. Now to the Christians the rebuilding of the Temple must have been an object of perfect indifference; and to the Jews it must have been an important object in the literal sense. But with the Freemasons it is a mere figure under which is represented the secret purpose of the society; why this image was selected will be satisfactorily accounted for further on.

6. The ARABS, who step forth upon the stage of history in the seventh century after Christ, have as little concern with the origin of these orders. They were originally a nomadic people that rapidly became a conquering nation not less from the weakness of their neighbours than their own courage and religious fanaticism. They advanced not less rapidly in their intellectual conquests; and these they owed chiefly to their Grecian masters, who had themselves at that time greatly degenerated from the refinement of their ancestors. The sciences in which the Arabs made original discoveries, and in which, next after the Greeks,



they have been the instructors of the moderns, were Mathematics, Astronomy, Astrology, Medicine, Materia Medica, and Chemistry. Now it is very possible that from the Arabs may have originally proceeded the conceit of physical mysteries without aid of magic, such as the art of gold-making, the invention of a panacea, the philosopher's stone, and other chimæras of alchemy which afterwards haunted the heads of the Rosicrucians and the elder Freemasons. But of Cabbalism and Theosophy, which occupied both sects in their early period, the Arabs as Mahometans could know nothing. And, if those sects had been derived from an Arabian stock, how comes it that at this day in most parts of Europe (and until lately everywhere) a Mahometan candidate would be rejected by both of them? And how comes it that in no Mahometan country at this time are there any remains of either?

In general, then, I affirm as a fact established upon historical research that, before the beginning of the seventeenth century, no traces are to be met with of the Rosicrucian or Masonic orders. And I challenge any antiquarian to contradict me. Of course I do not speak of individual and insulated Adepts, Cabbalists, Theosophists, etc., who doubtless existed much earlier. Nay, I do not deny that in elder writings mention is made of the *rose* and the *cross* as symbols of Alchemy and Cabbalism. Indeed, it is notorious that in the sixteenth century Martin Luther used both symbols on his seal; and many Protestant divines have imitated him in this. Semler, it is true, has brought together a great body of data from which he deduces the conclusion that the Rosicrucians were of very high antiquity.\* But all of them prove nothing more than

\* See Solomon Semler's Impartial Collections for the history of the Rosicrucians. In Four Parts, 8vo. Leipzig: 1786-8.

what I willingly concede: Alchemists, Cabbalists, and dealers in the Black Art, there were unquestionably before the seventeenth century; *but not Rosicrucians and Freemasons connected into a secret society and distinguished by those characteristics which I have assigned in the first chapter.*

One fact has been alleged from Ecclesiastical History as pointing to the order of Rosicrucians. In 1586 the *Militia crucifera evangelica* assembled at Lunenburg: the persons composing this body have been represented as Rosicrucians; but in fact they were nothing more than a Protestant sect heated by apocalyptic dreams; and the object of the assemblage appears to have been exclusively connected with religion. Our chief knowledge of it is derived from the work of Simon Studion, a mystic and Theosophist, entitled *Naometria*, and written about the year 1604. The author was born at Urach, a little town of Wirtemberg; in 1565 he received the degree of Master of Arts at Tübingen; and soon after settled at Marbach, not far from Louisberg, in the capacity of teacher. His labours in Alchemy brought him into great embarrassment; and his heretical novelties into all kinds of trouble. His *Naometria*,\* which is a tissue of dreams and allegories relating to the cardinal events of the world and to the mysteries of Scripture, as well as of external nature from its

\* The full title of this unprinted and curious book is this: "NAOMETRIA, seu nuda et prima libri, intus et foris scripti, per clavem Davidis et calamum (virgæ similem) apertio; in quo non tantum ad cognoscenda tam S. Scripturæ totius, quam naturæ quoque universæ, mysteria, brevis fit introductio—verum etiam Prognosticus (stellæ illius matutinæ, Anno Domini 1572, conspectæ ductu) demonstratur Adventus ille Christi ante diem novissimum secundus per quem homine peccati (Papâ) cum filio suo perditionis (Mahometo) divinitus devastato, ipse ecclesiam suam et principatus mundi

creation to its impending destruction, contains a great deal of mysticism and prophecy about the rose and the cross. But the whole has a religious meaning ; and the *fundus* of his ideas and his imagery is manifestly the Apocalypse of St. John. Nor is there any passage or phrase in his work upon which an argument can be built for connecting him with the Rosicrucians which would not equally apply to Philo the Alexandrian, to John Picus of Mirandula, to Reuchlin, to George of Venice, to Francis Patrick, and to all other Cabbalists, Theosophists, Magicians, and Alchemists.

Of the alleged connection between the Templars and the Rosicrucians, or more properly with the Freemasons,—which connection, if established, would undoubtedly assign a much earlier date to the origin of both orders,—I shall have occasion to speak in another part of my inquiry.

restaurabit, ut in iis posthac sit cum ovili pastor unus. In *crucifera militæ Evangelicæ gratiam*. Authore Simone Studione inter Scorpiones. Anno 1604." An anonymous writer on the Rosicrucians in the Wirtemberg Magazine (No. 3, p. 523) and the learned Von Murr in his treatise upon the true origin of the Rosicrucians and Freemasons, printed at Salzbach in the year 1803, have confounded the word Naometria (*Ναομετρία*) *temple-measuring*, with Neometria (*Νεομετρία*) *New art of measuring*, as though Studion had written a new geometry. By the Temple, inner and outer, Studion means the Holy Scriptures and Nature—the liber intus et foris scriptus, of which St. John says in the Revelations—"I saw on the right of him who sat on the throne a book written within and without, and guarded with seven seals," etc.



## CHAPTER III.

OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH GAVE THE FIRST OCCASION TO THE RISE OF THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER, AND OF THE EARLIEST AUTHENTIC RECORDS OF HISTORY WHICH RELATE TO IT.

TOWARDS the end of the sixteenth century,—Cabbalism, Theosophy, and Alchemy had overspread the whole of Western Europe, and especially of Germany. To this mania, which infected all classes—high and low, learned and unlearned—no writer had contributed so much as Theophrastus Paracelsus. How general was the diffusion, and how great the influence of the writings of this extraordinary man (for such, amidst all his follies, he must ever be accounted in the annals of the human mind), may be seen in the life of Jacob Behmen. Of the many Cabbalistic conceits drawn from the Prophetic books of the Old Testament, and still more from the Revelations, one of the principal and most interesting was this—that in the seventeenth century a great and general reformation was believed to be impending over the human race, as a necessary forerunner to the day of judgment. What connects this very general belief with the present inquiry is the circumstance of Paracelsus having represented the comet which appeared in 1572 as the sign and harbinger of the approaching revolution, and thus fixed upon it the expectation and desire of a world of fanatics. Another prophecy of Paracelsus, which created an equal interest, was, that soon after the decease of the Emperor Rudolph, there would be found three

treasures that had never been revealed before that time. Now in the year 1610, or thereabouts, there were published simultaneously three books, the substance of which it is important in this place to examine, because these books, in a very strange way, led to the foundation of the Rosicrucian order as a distinct society.

The first is so far worthy of notice as it was connected with the two others, and furnished something like an introduction to them. It is entitled *Universal Reformation of the whole wide world*, and is a tale not without some wit and humour. The Seven Wise Men of Greece, together with M. Cato and Seneca, and a secretary named Mazzonius, are summoned to Delphi by Apollo at the desire of the Emperor Justinian, and there deliberate on the best mode of redressing human misery. All sorts of strange schemes are proposed. Thales advised to cut a hole in every man's breast and place a little window in it, by which means it would become possible to look into the heart, to detect hypocrisy and vice, and thus to extinguish it. Solon proposes an equal partition of all possessions and wealth. Chilo's opinion is—that the readiest way to the end in view would be to banish out of the world the two infamous and rascally metals, gold and silver. Kleobulus steps forward as the apologist of gold and silver, but thinks that iron ought to be prohibited, because in that case no more wars could be carried on amongst men. Pittacus insists upon more rigorous laws, which should make virtue and merit the sole passports to honour; to which, however, Periander objects that there had never been any scarcity of such laws, nor of princes to execute them, but scarcity enough of subjects conformable to good laws. The conceit of Bias is, that nations should be kept apart from each other, and each confined to its own home; and, for this purpose, that all



bridges should be demolished, mountains rendered insurmountable, and navigation totally forbidden. Cato, who seems to be the wisest of the party, wishes that God in his mercy would be pleased to wash away all women from the earth by a new deluge, and at the same time to introduce some new arrangement for the continuation of the excellent male sex without female help.\* Upon this pleasing and sensible proposal the whole company manifest the greatest displeasure, and deem it so abominable that they unanimously prostrate themselves on the ground and devoutly pray to God "that He would graciously vouchsafe to preserve the lovely race of women" (what absurdity!) "and to save the world from a second deluge." At length, after a long debate, the counsel of Seneca prevails; which counsel is this—That out of all ranks a society should be composed having for its object the general welfare of mankind, and pursuing it in secret. This counsel is adopted: though without much hope on the part of the deputation, on account of the desperate condition of "the Age," who appears before them in person, and describes his own wretched state of health.

The second work gives an account of such a society as already established: this is the celebrated work entitled *Fama Fraternitatis of the meritorious order of the Rosy Cross, addressed to the learned in general, and the Governors*

\* In which wish he seems to have anticipated the Miltonic Adam —

"O why did God,  
 Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven  
 With spirits masculine, create at last  
 This novelty on earth, this fair defect  
 Of nature, and not fill the world at once  
 With Men, as Angels, without feminine;  
 Or find some other way to generate  
 Mankind."

—P. L., Book X.

of Europe; and here we are presented with the following narrative:—Christian Rosycross, of noble descent, having upon his travels into the East and into Africa learned great mysteries from Arabians, Chaldeans, etc., upon his return to Germany established, in some place not mentioned, a secret society composed at first of four—afterwards of eight—members, who dwelt together in a building called the House of the Holy Ghost, erected by him: to these persons, under a vow of fidelity and secrecy, he communicated his mysteries. After they had been instructed, the society dispersed agreeably to their destination, with the exception of two members, who remained alternately with the founder. The rules of the order were these:—“The members were to cure the sick without fee or reward. No member to wear a peculiar habit, but to dress after the fashion of the country. On a certain day in every year all the members to assemble in the House of the Holy Ghost, or to account for their absence. Every member to appoint some person with the proper qualifications to succeed him at his own decease. The word *Rosy-Cross* to be their seal, watchword, and characteristic mark. The association to be kept unrevealed for a hundred years.” Christian Rosycross died at the age of 106 years. His death was known to the society, but not his grave; for it was a maxim of the first Rosicrucians to conceal their burial-places even from each other. New masters were continually elected into the House of the Holy Ghost, and the society had now lasted 120 years. At the end of this period a door was discovered in the house, and upon the opening of this door a sepulchral vault. Upon the door was this inscription: One hundred and twenty years hence I shall open (*Post CXX. annos patebo*). The vault was a heptagon. Every side was five feet broad and eight feet high. It was illuminated by an artificial sun. In the centre was placed,

instead of a grave-stone, a circular altar with a little plate of brass, whereon these words were inscribed : This grave, an abstract of the whole world, I made for myself while yet living (A. C. R. C. Hoc Universi compendium vivus mihi sepulchrum feci). About the margin was—To me Jesus is all in all Jesus mihi omnia). In the centre were four figures enclosed in a circle by this revolving legend : Nequaquam vacuum legis jugum. Libertas Evangelii. Dei gloria intacta. (The empty yoke of the law is made void. The liberty of the gospel. The unsullied glory of God.) Each of the seven sides of the vault had a door opening into a chest ; which chest, besides the secret books of the order and the *Vocabularium* of Paracelsus, contained also mirrors—little bells—burning lamps—marvellous mechanisms of music, etc., all so contrived that, after the lapse of many centuries, if the whole order should have perished, it might be re-established by means of this vault. Under the altar, upon raising the brazen tablet, the brothers found the body of Rosycross, without taint or corruption. The right hand held a book written upon vellum with golden letters : this book, which is called T., has since become the most precious jewel of the society next after the Bible ; and at the end stand subscribed the names of the eight brethren, arranged in two separate circles, who were present at the death and burial of Father Rosycross. Immediately after the above narrative follows a declaration of their mysteries, addressed by the society to the whole world. They profess themselves to be of the Protestant faith ; that they honour the Emperor and the laws of the Empire ; and that the art of gold-making is but a slight object with them, and a mere *πάρεργον*. The whole work ends with these words : “Our House of the Holy Ghost, though a hundred thousand men should have looked upon it, is yet destined to remain

untouched, imperturbable, out of sight, and unrevealed to the whole godless world for ever."

The third book, which originally appeared in Latin with the title—*Confessio Fraternitatis Roseæ Crucis ad Eruditos Europæ*—contains nothing more than general explanations upon the object and spirit of the order. It is added that the order has different degrees; that not only princes, men of rank, rich men, and learned men, but also mean and inconsiderable persons are admitted to their communion, provided they have pure and disinterested purposes, and are able and willing to exert themselves for the ends of the institution; that the order has a peculiar language: that it is possessed of more gold and silver than the whole world beside could yield; that it is not this, however, but true philosophy, which is the object of their labours.

The first question which arises on these three works, the *Universal Reformation*—the *Fama Fraternitatis*—and the *Confessio Fraternitatis*,\* is this; from what quarter do they proceed? The reputed author was John Valentine Andreü, a celebrated theologian of Wirtemberg, known also as a

\* The earliest edition of these works which I have seen is that of 1614, printed at Cassel, in 8vo, which is in the Wolfenbüttel library; but in this the *Confessio* is wanting. From a passage in this edition, it appears that the *Fama Fraternitatis* had been received in the Tyrol as early as 1610, in *manuscript*, as the passage alleges; but the words seem to imply that printed copies were in existence even before 1610. In the year 1615 appeared "Secretioris Philosophiæ Consideratio à Philippo à Gabella, Philosophiæ studioso, conscripta; et nunc primum unà cum Confessione Fraternitatis Ros. Crucis in lucem edita. Cassellis: excud. G. Wesselius, A. 1615." In the very same year, at Frankfurt-on-the-Mayne, was printed by John Berner, an edition of all the three works—the *Confessio* in a German translation. In this year also appeared a Dutch translation of all three; a copy of which is in the Göttingen library. The second Frankfurt edition was



satirist and a poet, and in our days revived into notice by the late illustrious Herder. Others have disputed his claim to these works; and Burke has excluded them from his catalogue of Andreä's writings. I shall attempt, however, to prove that he was the true author. Andreä was born in 1586, at Herrenberg, a little town of Wirtemberg, and was the grandson of the Chancellor Jacob Andreä, so deservedly celebrated for his services to the church of Wirtemberg. From his father, the Abbot of Königsbronn, he received an excellent education, which his own extraordinary thirst for knowledge led him to turn to the best account. Besides Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (in which languages he was distinguished for the elegance of his style), he made himself master of the French, Italian, and Spanish: was well versed in Mathematics, Natural and Civil History, Geography, and Historical Genealogy, without at all neglecting his professional study of divinity. Very early in life he seems to have had a deep sense of the evils and abuses of the times—not so much the political abuses, as those in philosophy, morals, and religion. These it seems that he sought to redress by the agency of secret societies: on what motives and arguments, he has not told us in the record of his own life, which he left behind him in MS.\* But the fact is certain: for as early as his sixteenth year he had written his *Chemical Nuptials of Christian Rosy-cross*, his *Julius sive de Politia*, his *Condemnation of Astrology*, followed by a third in 1616, enlarged by the addition of some letters addressed to the brotherhood of the R. Cross. Other editions followed in the years immediately succeeding; but these it is unnecessary to notice. In the title-page of the third Frankfurt edition stands—*First printed at Cassel in the year 1616*. But the four first words apply to the original edition. The four last to this.

\* This is written in Latin. A German translation will be found in the second book of Seybold's *Autobiographies of Celebrated Men*.



with other works of the same tendency. Between the years 1607 and 1612 Andreä travelled extensively in south and west Germany, Switzerland, France, and Italy.\* In the succeeding years he made short excursions almost annually: after the opening of the Thirty Years' War he still continued this practice; and in the very midst of that great storm of wretchedness and confusion which then swept over Germany, he exerted himself in a way which is truly astonishing to heal the "sorrow of the times," by establishing schools and religious worship—and by propagating the Lutheran faith through Bohemia, Moravia, Carinthia, etc. Even to this day his country owes to his restless activity and enlightened patriotism many great blessings. At Stuttgart, where he was at length appointed chaplain to the court, he met with so much thwarting and persecution, that, with his infirm constitution of body and dejection of mind from witnessing the desolation of Germany, it is not to be wondered that he became weary of life, and sank into deep despondency and misanthropy. In this condition he requested leave, in 1646, to resign his office; this was at first refused, with many testimonies of respect, by Eberhard, the then Duke of Wirtemberg; but on the urgent repetition of his request he was removed to the Abbey of Bebenhausen—and shortly afterwards was made Abbot of Adelberg. In the year 1654, after a long and painful sickness, he departed this life. On the day of his death he dictated a letter to his friend and benefactor, Augustus, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. He made an effort to

\* Travelling was not at that time so expensive for learned men as it now is. Many scholars travelled on the same plan as is now pursued by the journeymen artisans of Germany—exercising their professional knowledge at every stage of their journey, and thus gaining a respectable livelihood.

sign it; wrote the two first letters of his name: and, in the act of writing the third, he expired. From a close review of his life and opinions, I am not only satisfied that Andreä wrote the three works which laid the foundation of Rosicrucianism, but I see clearly *why* he wrote them. The evils of Germany were then enormous; and the necessity of some great reform was universally admitted. As a young man without experience, Andreä imagined that this reform would be easily accomplished. He had the example of Luther before him, the heroic reformer of the preceding century, whose memory was yet fresh in Germany, and whose labours seemed on the point of perishing unless supported by corresponding efforts in the existing generation. To organise these efforts and direct them to proper objects, he projected a society composed of the noble, the intellectual, the enlightened, and the learned—which he hoped to see moving, as under the influence of one soul, towards the redressing of public evils. Under this hope it was that he travelled so much: seeking everywhere, no doubt, for the coadjutors and instruments of his designs. These designs he presented originally in the shape of a project for a Rosicrucian society; and in this particular project he intermingled some features that were at variance with its gravity and really elevated purposes. Young as he was at that time, Andreä knew that men of various tempers and characters could not be brought to co-operate steadily for any object so purely disinterested as the elevation of human nature: he therefore addressed them through the common foible of their age, by holding out promises of occult knowledge which should invest its possessor with authority over the powers of nature, should lengthen his life, or raise him from the dust of poverty to wealth and high station. In an age of Theosophy, Cabbalism, and

Alchemy, he knew that the popular ear would be caught by an account, issuing nobody knew whence, of a secret society that professed to be the depository of Oriental mysteries, and to have lasted for two centuries. Many would seek to connect themselves with such a society: from these candidates he might gradually select the members of the real society which he projected. The pretensions of the ostensible society were indeed illusions; but, before they could be detected as such by the new proselytes, those proselytes would become connected with himself, and (as he hoped moulded to nobler aspirations. On this view of Andreä's real intentions, we understand at once the ground of the contradictory language which he held about astrology and the transmutation of metals; his satirical works show that he looked through the follies of his age with a penetrating eye. He speaks with toleration then of these follies—as an exoteric concession to the age; he condemns them in his own esoteric character as a religious philosopher. Wishing to conciliate prejudices, he does not forbear to *bait* his schemes with these delusions: but he is careful to let us know that they are with his society mere *πάρεργα* or collateral pursuits, the direct and main one being true philosophy and religion. Meantime, in opposition to the claims of Andreä, it has been asked why he did not avow the three books as his own composition. I answer, that to have done so at first would have defeated the scheme. Afterwards he had still better reasons for disavowing them. In whatever way he meant to have published the works, it is clear that they were in fact printed without his consent. An uproar of hostility and suspicion followed the publication, which made it necessary for the author to lie hid. If he would not risk his own safety, and make it impossible for his projects to succeed under any other shape, the

author was called on to disown them. Andreä did so: and, as a suspected person, he even joined in public the party of those who ridiculed the whole as a chimera.\* More privately, however, and in his posthumous memoirs of himself, we find that he nowhere disavows the works. Indeed, the bare fact of his being confessedly the author of "The Chemical Nuptials of Christian Rosycross"—a hero never before heard of—is alone sufficient to vindicate his claim. But further, if Andreä were not the author, who was? Heidegger, in his *Historia Vitæ Jo. Ludov. Fabricii*, maintains that Jung, the celebrated mathematician of Hamburg, founded the sect of Rosicrucians and wrote the *Fama*; but on what ground? Simply on the authority of Albert Fabricius, who reported the story in casual conversation as derived from a secretary of the court of Heidelberg. (See the *Acta Eruditorum Lipsiensia* 1698, page 172.) Others have brought forward a claim for Giles Gutmann, supported by no other argument than that he was a distinguished mystic in that age of mysticism.

Morhof (*Polyhist.* I. p. 131, ed. Lubecæ, 1732) has a remark which, if true, might leave Andreä in possession of the authorship, without therefore ascribing to him any influence in the formation of the Rosicrucian order: "Fuere," says he, "non priscis tantum seculis collegia talia occulta, sed et superiori seculo (*i.e.*, sexto-decimo) de Fraternitate Roseæ Crucis fama precrebuit." According to this remark, the order existed in the sixteenth

\* In the midst of his ridicule, however, it is easy to discover the tone of a writer who is laughing not *with* the laughers but *at* them. Andreä laughed at those follies of the scheme which he well knew that the general folly of the age had compelled him to interweave with it against his own better judgment.



century, that is, before the year 1600:\* now, if so, the three books in question are not to be considered as an anticipation of the order, but as its history. Here, then, the question arises—Was the brotherhood of Rosicrucians, as described in these books, an historical matter of fact, or a romance? That it was a pure romantic fiction might be shown by arguments far more than I can admit. The *Universal Reformation* (the first of the three works) was borrowed from the “Generale Riforma dell’ Universo dai sette Savii della Grecia e da altri Letterati, publicata di ordine di Apollo,” which occurs in the *Raguaglio di Parnasso* of Boccacini. It is true that the earliest edition of the *Raguaglio*, which I have seen, bears the date of 1615 (*in Milano*); but there was an edition of the first *Centuria* in 1612. Indeed, Boccacini himself was cudgelled to death in 1613 (See *Mazzuchelli*—*Scrittori d’Italia*, vol. ii. p. iii. p. 1378). As to the *Fama*, which properly contains the pretended history of the order, it teems with internal arguments against itself. The House of the Holy Ghost exists for two centuries, and is seen by nobody. Father Rosycross dies, and none of the order even knew where he was buried; and yet afterwards it appears that eight brothers witnessed his death and his burial. He builds himself a magnificent sepulchre, with elaborate symbolic decorations; and yet for 120 years it remains undiscovered. The society offers its treasures and its mysteries to the world; and yet no reference to place or person is assigned to direct the inquiries of applicants.

\* Which has been adopted by many of the learned: see Arnold’s *Hist. of the Church and of Heretics*, book ii. p. 245. Bruckeri *Hist. Crit. Philosophiæ*, tom. iv. p. 735, sq. Nicolai on the charges against the Templars, part i. p. 164. Herder’s *Letters on Nicolai’s work in the German Mercury for 1782*.



Finally, to say nothing of the *Vocabularium* of Paracelsus, which must have been put in the grave before it existed, the Rosicrucians are said to be Protestants—though founded upwards of a century before the Reformation. In short, the fiction is monstrous, and betrays itself in every circumstance. Whosoever was its author must be looked upon as the founder in effect of the Rosicrucian order, inasmuch as this fiction was the accidental occasion of such an order's being really founded. That Andreä was that author I shall now prove by one argument: It is a presumptive argument, but in my opinion conclusive: *The armorial bearings of Andreä's family were a St. Andrew's cross and four roses.* By the order of the Rosy-cross, he means, therefore, an order founded by himself.\*

\* Nicolai supposes that the *rose* was assumed as the symbol of secrecy, and the *cross* to express the solemnity of the oath by which the vow of secrecy was ratified. Such an allegoric meaning is not inconsistent with that which I have assigned, and may have been a secondary purpose of Andreä. Some authors have insisted on the words *Sub Umbra Alarum tuarum Jehova*—which stand at the end of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, as furnishing the initial letters of *Johannes Val Andrea, Stipendiata Tubingensis.* But on this I have not thought it necessary to lay much stress.



## CHAPTER IV.

OF THE IMMEDIATE RESULTS OF THE FAMA AND THE  
CONFESSIO IN GERMANY.

THE sensation which was produced throughout Germany by the works in question is sufficiently evidenced by the repeated editions of them which appeared between 1614 and 1617, but still more by the prodigious commotion which followed in the literary world. In the library at Göttingen there is a body of letters addressed to the imaginary order of Father Rosycross from 1614 to 1617, by persons offering themselves as members. These letters are filled with complimentary expressions and testimonies of the highest respect, and are all printed—the writers alleging that, being unacquainted with the address of the society (as well they might), they could not send them through any other than a public channel. As certificates of their qualifications, most of the candidates have enclosed specimens of their skill in alchemy and cabbalism. Some of the letters are signed with initials only, or with fictitious names, but assign real places of address. Many other literary persons there were at that day who forbore to write letters to the society, but threw out small pamphlets containing their opinions of the order, and of its place of residence. Each successive writer pretended to be better informed on that point than all his predecessors. Quarrels arose; partisans started up on all sides; the uproar and confusion became indescribable; cries of heresy and atheism resounded from every corner; some were for calling in the secular power; and the more coyly the invisible society retreated from the

public advances, so much the more eager and amorous were its admirers—and so much the more bloodthirsty its antagonists. Meantime there were some who from the beginning had escaped the general delusion; and there were many who had gradually recovered from it. It was remarked that of the many printed letters to the society, though courteously and often learnedly written, none had been answered; and all attempts to penetrate the darkness in which the order was shrouded by its unknown memorialist were successfully baffled. Hence arose a suspicion that some bad designs lurked under the ostensible purposes of these mysterious publications: a suspicion which was naturally strengthened by what now began to follow. Many vile impostors arose, who gave themselves out for members of the Rosicrucian order; and upon the credit which they thus obtained for a season, cheated numbers of their money by alchemy—or of their health by panaceas. Three in particular made a great noise at Wetzlar, at Nuremberg, and at Augsburg: all were punished by the magistracy, one lost his ears in running the gauntlet, and one was hanged. At this crisis stepped forward a powerful writer, who attacked the supposed order with much scorn and homely good sense. This was Andrew Libau. He exposed the impracticability of the meditated reformation—the incredibility of the legend of Father Rosycross—and the hollowness of the pretended sciences which they professed. He pointed the attention of governments to the confusions which these impostures were producing, and predicted from them a renewal of the scenes which had attended the fanaticism of the Anabaptists. These writings (of which two were Latin, Frankfurt, 1615, folio—one in German, Erfurt, 1616, 8vo), added to others of the same tendency, would possibly have laid the storm by causing the suppression

of all the Rosicrucian books and pretensions: but this termination of the *mania* was defeated by two circumstances: the first was the conduct of the Paracelsists. With frantic eagerness they had sought to press into the imaginary order: but, finding themselves lamentably repulsed in all their efforts, at length they paused; and, turning suddenly round, they said to one another—"What need to court this perverse order any longer? We are ourselves Rosicrucians as to all the essential marks laid down in the three books. We also are holy persons of great knowledge; we also make gold, or shall make it: we also, no doubt, give us but time, shall reform the world: external ceremonies are nothing: substantially it is clear that we are the Rosicrucian order." Upon this they went on in numerous books and pamphlets to assert that they were the identical order instituted by Father Rosycross and described in the *Fama Fraternitatis*. The public mind was now perfectly distracted; no man knew what to think; and the uproar became greater than ever. The other circumstance which defeated the tendency of Libau's exertions, was the conduct of Andreä and his friends. Clear it is that Andreä enjoyed the scene of confusion, until he began to be sensible that he had called up an apparition which it was beyond his art to lay. Well knowing that in all that great crowd of aspirants, who were knocking clamorously for admittance into the airy college of Father Rosycross, though one and all pretended to be enamoured of that mystic wisdom he had promised, yet by far the majority were in fact enamoured of that *gold* which he had hinted at—it is evident that his satirical\* propensities were violently

\* I have no doubt that Andreä alludes to his own high diversion on this occasion in the following passage of a later work (*Mythologia Christiana*) which he printed at Strasburg in 1619. It is *Truth (die*

tickled : and he was willing to keep up the hubbub of delusion by flinging out a couple of pamphlets amongst the hungry crowd, which tended to amuse them. They were, 1. *Epistola ad Reverendam Fraternitatem R. Crucis.* Francof. 1613 ; 2. *Assertio Fraternitatis R. C. à quodam Fraternalis ejus Socio carmine expressa,* Franc. 1614 : which last was translated into German in 1616 ; and again, in 1618, into German rhyme, under the title of *Ara Fœderis therapici*, or *Altar of the Healing Fraternity* : (the most general abstraction of the pretensions made for the Rosicrucians being—that they healed both the body and the mind). All this, in a young man and a professed satirist, was natural and excusable. But in a few years Andreä was shocked to find that the delusion had taken firm root in the public mind. Of the many authors who wrote with a sincere design to countenance the notion of a pretended Rosicrucian society, I shall here mention a few of the most memorable:—1. A writer calling himself *Julianus à Campis* wrote expressly to account for the Rosicrucians not revealing themselves, and not answering the letters addressed to them. He was himself, he said, a member of the order ; but in all his travels he had met but three other members, there being (as he presumed) no more persons on the earth worthy of being entrusted with its

*Alethia*) who is speaking : “*Planissime nihil cum hac Fraternitate (sc. Ros. Crucis) commune habeo. Nam, cum paullo ante lusum quendam ingeniosorem personatus aliquis (no doubt himself) in literario foro agere vellet—nihil mota sum libelis inter se conflictantibus ; sed velut in scenâ prodeuntes histriones non sine voluptate spectavi.*”—Like *Miss in her Teens* (in the excellent farce of Garrick) who so much enjoys the prospect of a battle between her two lovers, Andreä—instead of calming the tumult which he had caused—was disposed at first to cry out to the angry polemics—“*Stick him, Captain Flash ; do,—stick him, Captain Flash.*”



mysteries. The Rosicrucian wisdom was to be more extensively diffused in future, but still not to be hawked about in market-places.—2. Julius Sperber of Anhalt-Dessau (according to common repute) wrote\* the “Echo of the Divinely illuminated fraternity of the admirable order of the R.C.” In this there is a passage which I recommend to the especial notice of Freemasons :—Having maintained the probability of the Rosicrucian pretensions on the ground that such *magnalia Dei* had from the creation downwards been confined to the keeping of a few individuals, agreeably to which he affirms that Adam was the first Rosicrucian of the Old Testament and Simeon the last, he goes on to ask whether the Gospel put an end to the secret tradition? By no means, he answers; Christ established a new “college of magic” amongst his disciples, and the greater mysteries were revealed to St. John and St. Paul. In this passage, which I shall notice farther on, we find the Grand-Master, and the St. John of masonry.—3. Radtich Brotoffer was not so much a Cabbalist, like Julius Sperber, as an Alchemist. He understood the three Rosicrucian books not in a literal sense, but allegorically, as a description of the art of making gold and finding the Philosopher’s stone. He even favoured the public with an interpretation of it; so that both “*materia et præparatio lapidis aurei*” were laid bare to the profane. With this practical test of his own pretensions, it might have been supposed that Brotoffer would have exposed himself as an impostor; but on the contrary his works sold well, and were several times reprinted.

\* This was printed at Dantzic in 1616. Nicolai, however, cites an edition printed in 1615. Whether Sperber was the author, is a point not quite settled. Katzauer, in his *Dissert. de Rosæcrucianis*, p. 38, takes him for the same person as Julianus à Campis: but from internal grounds this is very improbable.

—4. A far more important person in the history of Rosicrucianism was Michael Maier: he it was that first transplanted it into England, where (as we shall see) it led ultimately to more lasting effects than in Germany. He was born in Holstein, and was physician to the Emperor Rudolph II., who, being possessed by the mystical frenzy of the age, sent for him to Prague. In 1622 he died at Magdeburg, having previously travelled extensively, and particularly to England. His works are among the rarities of bibliography, and fetch very high prices. The first of them, which concerns our present inquiry, is that entitled *Jocus Severus; Francof.* 1617. It is addressed (in a dedication written on his road from England to Bohemia, “omnibus veræ chymie amantibus per Germaniam,” and amongst them more especially “illi ordini adhuc *delitescenti*, at Famâ Fraternitatis et Confessione suâ admirandâ et probabili *manifestato*.” This work, it appears, had been written in England. On his return to Germany he became acquainted with the fierce controversy on the Rosicrucian sect; and as he firmly believed in the existence of such a sect, he sought to introduce himself to its notice: but finding this impossible, he set himself to establish such an order by his own efforts; and in his future writings he spoke of it as already existing—going so far even as to publish its laws which indeed had previously been done by the author of the *Echo*). From the principal work which he wrote on this subject, entitled *Silentium post clamores*,\* I shall make an extract, because in this work it is that we meet with the first traces

\* *Silentium post clamores*, h. e. Tractatus Apologeticus, quo causæ non solum *Clamorum* (seu revelationem) Fraternitatis Germanicæ de R. C., sed et *Silentii* (seu non redditæ, ad singulorum vota responsionis) traduntur et demonstrantur. Autore Michaelæ Maiero, Imp. Consist. Comite, et Med. Doct. Francof. 1617.

of Masonry. "Nature is yet but half unveiled. What we want is chiefly experiment and tentative inquiry. Great, therefore, are our obligations to the Rosicrucians for labouring to supply this want. Their weightiest mystery is a Universal Medicine. Such a Catholicon lies hid in nature. It is, however, no simple, but a very compound medicine. For out of the meanest pebbles and weeds, medicine, *and even gold*, is to be extracted." "He that doubts the existence of the R. O. should recollect that the Greeks, Egyptians, Arabians, etc., had such secret societies; where, then, is the absurdity in their existing at this day? Their maxims of self-discipline are these—To honour and fear God above all things; to do all the good in their power to their fellow-men:" and so on. "What is contained in the Fama and Confessio is true. It is a very childish objection that the brotherhood have promised so much and performed so little. With them, as elsewhere, many are called but few are chosen. The masters of the order hold out the rose as a remote prize, but they impose the cross on those who are entering."\* "Like the Pythagoreans and Egyptians, the Rosicrucians exact vows of silence and secrecy. Ignorant men have treated the whole as a fiction; but this has arisen from the five years' probation to which they subject even well-qualified novices before they are admitted to the higher mysteries: within this period they are to learn how to govern their tongues." In the same year with this book he published a work of Robert Fludd's (with whom he had lived on friendly terms in England), *De vitâ, morte, et resurrectione*. Of other works, which he published afterwards, I shall here say nothing: neither

\* *Ecce innumeri adsunt ex vocatis, seseque offerunt: at non audivuntur à magistras R. Crucis, qui rosas ostentant, at crucem exhibent. P. 77.*

shall I detain my reader with any account of his fellow-labourers in this path—Theophilus Schweighart of Constance, Josephus Stellatus, or Giles Gutmann. The books I have mentioned were enough to convince Andreä that his romance had succeeded in a way which he had never designed. The public had accredited the *charlatanerie* of his books, but gave no welcome to that for the sake of which this *charlatanerie* was adopted as a vehicle. The Alchemy had been approved, the moral and religious scheme slighted. And societies were forming even amongst the learned upon the basis of all that was false in the system, to the exclusion of all that was true. This was a spectacle which could no longer be viewed in the light of a joke: the folly was becoming too serious; and Andreä set himself to counteract it with all his powers. For this purpose he now published his *Chemical Nuptials of Christian Rosycross*, which he had written in 1601–2 (when only in his sixteenth year), but not printed. This is a comic romance of extraordinary talent, the covert purpose of it being a refined and delicate banter of the Pedants, Theosophists, Goldmakers, and Enthusiasts of every class with whom Germany at that time swarmed. In his former works he had treated the Paracelsists with forbearance, hoping by such treatment to have won them over to his own elevated designs: but in this they were invested with the cap and bells. Unfortunately for the purpose of Andreä, however, even this romance was swallowed by the public as true and serious history. Upon this, in the following year, he published a collection of satirical dialogues under the title of *Menippus; sive dial satyricorum centuria, inanitatum nostratium Speculum*. In this he more openly unveils his true design—revolution of method in the arts and sciences, and a general religious reformation.



The efforts of Andreaë were seconded by those of his friends, especially of Irenæus, Agnostus, and of Joh. Val. Alberti under the name of Menapius. Both wrote with great energy against the Rosicrucians: the former, indeed, from having ironically styled himself "an unworthy clerk of the Fraternity of the R. C.," has been classed by some learned writers on the Rosicrucians as one of that sect; but it is impossible to read his writings without detecting the lurking satire. Soon after these writers, a learned foreigner placed the Rosicrucian pretensions in a still more ludicrous light; this was the celebrated Thomas Campanella. In his work upon the Spanish Monarchy, which was translated into German, published, and universally read in Germany some time\* before the original work appeared, the Italian philosopher—speaking of the follies of the age—thus expresses himself of the R. C.: "That the whole of Christendom teems with such heads (viz., Reformation jobbers) we have one proof more than was wanted in the Fraternity of the R. C. For scarcely was that absurdity hatched, when—notwithstanding it was many times declared to be nothing more than a *lusus ingenii nimium lascivientis*, a mere hoax of some man of wit troubled with a superfluity of youthful spirits—yet, because it dealt in reformations and in pretences to mystical arts, straightway from every country in Christendom pious and learned men, passively surrendering themselves dupes to this delusion, made offers of their good wishes and services; some by name; others anonymously, but constantly maintaining that the brothers of the R. C. could easily discover their names by Solomon's mirror or other cabbalistic means. Nay, to such a pass of

\* It was published in 1620, at which time Campanella was confined in prison at Naples. The publishers had obtained the original copy, either from some traveller, or during their own residence in Italy.



absurdity did they advance, that they represented the first of the three Rosicrucian books (the *Universal Reformation*) as a high mystery, and expounded it in a chemical sense, as if it had contained a cryptical account of the art of gold-making, whereas it is nothing more than a literal translation, word for word, of the *Parnasso* of Boccacini." The effect of all this ridicule and satire was, that in Germany, as there is the best reason to believe, no regular lodge of Rosicrucians was ever established. *Des Cartes*, who had heard a great deal of talk about them in 1619, during his residence at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, sought to connect himself with some lodge (for which he was afterwards exposed to the ridicule of his enemies); but the impossibility of finding any body of them formally connected together, and a perusal of the Rosicrucian writings, satisfied him in the end that no such order was in existence. Many years after, Leibnitz came to the same conclusion. He was actually connected in early life with a soi-disant society of the R. C. in Nuremberg; for even at this day there is obviously nothing to prevent any society in any place from assuming that or any other title: but that they were not connected traditionally with the alleged society of Father Rosycross, Leibnitz was convinced. "Il me paroît," says he, in a letter to a friend, published by Feller in the *Otium Hannoveranum* (p. 222), "il me paroît que tout ce, que l'on a dit des Freres de la Croix de la Rose, est une pure invention de quelque personne ingenieuse." And again, so late as the year 1696, he says in another letter—"Frâtres Roseæ Crucis fictitios fuisse suspicor; quod et Helmontius mihi confirmavit." Adepts there were here and there, it is true, and even whole clubs of swindlers who called themselves Rosicrucians: thus Ludov. Conr. Orvius, in his *Occulta Philosophia, sive Cælum sapientum et Vexatio*

*stultorum*, tells a lamentable tale of such a society, pretending to deduce themselves from Father Rosycross, who were settled at the Hague in 1622, and after swindling him out of his own and his wife's fortune, amounting to eleven thousand dollars, kicked him out of the order, with the assurance that they would murder him if he revealed their secrets: "which secrets," says he, "I have faithfully kept, and for the same reason that women keep secrets—viz., because I have none to reveal; for their knavery is no secret." There is a well-known story also in Voltaire's *Diction. Philosoph.*, Art. *Alchimiste*, of a rogue who cheated the Duke of Bouillon of 40,000 dollars under the masque of Rosicrucianism. But these were cases for the police-office, and the gross impostures of jail-birds. As the aberration of learned men, and as a case for the satirist, Rosicrucianism received a shock from the writings of its accidental Father Andreä and others, such as in Germany\* it never recovered.

\* In France it never had even a momentary success. It was met by the ridicule of P. Garasse and of Gabriel Naudé in his *Instruction à la France sur vérité de l'histoire des Freres de la Rose-Croix*: Paris, 1623; and in *Le Mascurat*, a rare work, printed in 1624, and of which the second edition 1650 is still rarer. Independently of these works, France was at that time the rival of Italy in science, and had greatly the start of Germany and England in general illumination. She was thus sufficiently protected from such a delusion. Thus far Professor Buhle. But pace tuâ, worthy Professor, I—the translator of your book—affirm that France had *not* the start of England, nor wanted then or since the ignobler elements of credulity, as the History of Animal Magnetism and many other fantastic follies before *that* have sufficiently shown. But she has always wanted the nobler (*i. e.*, the imaginative) elements of credulity. On this account the French have always been an irreligious people. And the scheme of Father Rosycross was too much connected with religious feelings, and moved too much under a religious impulse, to recommend itself to the French. This reason apart, however, accident had much to do with the ill fortune of Rosicrucianism in France.

And hence it has happened that, whatever number there may have been of individual mystics calling themselves Rosicrucians, no collective body of Rosicrucians acting in conjunction was ever matured and actually established in Germany. In England the case was otherwise; for there, as I shall show, the order still subsists under a different name. But this will furnish matter for a separate chapter. Meantime, one word remains to be said of Andreä's labours with respect to the Rosicrucians. He was not content with opposing gravely and satirically the erroneous societies which learned men were attempting to found upon his own romance of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, but laboured more earnestly than ever to mature and to establish that genuine society for the propagation of truth, which has been the real though misinterpreted object of his romance, and indeed of his whole life. Such a society he lived to see accomplished: and in order to mark upon what foundation he placed all hopes of any great improvement in the condition of human nature, he called it by the name of *the Christian Fraternity*. This fact I have recorded, in order to complete the account of Andreä's history in relation to Rosicrucianism: but I shall not further pursue the history of *the Christian Fraternity*,\* as it is no ways connected with the subject of the present inquiry.

\* See the *Invitatio Fraternitatis Christi ad Sacri amoris candidatos*: Argentur, 1617; the *Christianæ societatis idea*: Tubingæ, 1624; the *Veræ unionis in Christo Jesu specimen*: Norimb., 1628; and other works on the same subject. A list of the members composing this Christian Brotherhood, which continued its labours after Andreä's death, is still preserved.



## CHAPTER V.

## OF THE ORIGIN OF FREEMASONRY IN ENGLAND.

THUS I have traced the history of Rosicrucianism from its birth in Germany ; and have ended with showing that, from the energetic opposition and ridicule which it latterly incurred, no college or lodge of Rosicrucian brethren, professing occult knowledge, and communicating it under solemn forms and vows of secrecy, can be shown from historical records to have been ever established in Germany. I shall now undertake to prove that Rosicrucianism was transplanted to England, where it flourished under a new name, under which name it has been since re-exported to us in common with the other countries of Christendom. For I affirm, as the main thesis of my concluding labours, THAT FREEMASONRY IS NEITHER MORE NOR LESS THAN ROSICRUCIANISM AS MODIFIED BY THOSE WHO TRANSPLANTED IT TO ENGLAND.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century many learned heads in England were occupied with Theosophy, Cabbalism, and Alchemy : amongst the proofs of this (for many of which see the *Athenæ Oxonienses*) may be cited the works of John Pordage, of Norbert, of Thomas and Samuel Norton, but above all (in reference to our present inquiry), of Robert Fludd. Fludd it was, or whosoever was the author of the *Summum Bonum*, 1629, that must be considered as the immediate father of Freemasonry, as Andreä was its remote father. What was the particular occasion of his own first acquaintance with Rosicrucianism is not recorded ; all the books of Alchemy or other occult



knowledge, published in Germany, were at that time immediately carried over to England—provided they were written in Latin; and, if written in German, were soon translated for the benefit of English students. He may therefore have gained his knowledge immediately from the three Rosicrucian books. But it is more probable that he acquired his knowledge on this head from his friend Maier (mentioned in the preceding chapter), who was intimate with Fludd during his stay in England, and corresponded with him after he left it. At all events, he must have been initiated into Rosicrucianism at an early period, having published his *apology*\* for it in the year 1617. This indeed is denied to be his work, though ascribed to him in the title-page; but, be that as it may, it was at any rate the work of the same author who wrote the *Summum Bonum*,† being expressly claimed by him at p. 39. If not Fludd's, it was the work of a friend of Fludd's: and, as the name is of no importance, I shall continue to refer to it as Fludd's—having once apprised my reader that I mean by Fludd the author, be he who he may, of these two works. Now the first question which arises is this: for what reason did Fludd drop the name of Rosicrucians? The reason was briefly this: his apology for the Rosicrucians was attacked by the celebrated Father Mersenne. To this Fludd replied, under the name of Joachim Fritz, in two witty but

\* Tractatus apologeticus—integritatem Societatis de Roseâ Cruce defendens. Authore Roberto De Fluctibus, Anglo, M.D.L. Lugd. Bat. 1617.

† This work was disavowed by Fludd. But as the principles, the style, the animosity towards Mersenne, the publisher, and the year, were severally the same in this as in the *Sophiæ cum Moriâ certamen*, which Fludd acknowledged, there cannot be much reason to doubt that it was his. Consult the "Catalogue of some rare books" by G. Serpilius, No. II. p. 238.



coarse books, entitled *Summum Bonum*, and *Sophiæ cum Moriâ certamen*; in the first of which, to the question—“Where the Rosicrucians resided?” he replied thus—“In the houses of God, where Christ is the corner-stone;” and he explained the symbols of the Rose and Cross in a new sense, as meaning “the Cross sprinkled with the rosy blood of Christ.” Mersenne being obviously no match for Fludd either in learning or polemic wit, Gassendi stepped forward into his place, and published (in 1630) an excellent rejoinder to Fludd in his *Excercitatio Epistolica*, which analysed and ridiculed the principles of Fludd in general, and in particular reproached him with his belief in the romantic legend of the Rosicrucians. Upon this, Fludd, finding himself hard pressed under his conscious inability to assign their place of abode, evades the question in his answer to Gassendi (published in 1633) by formally withdrawing the name *Rosicrucians*: for, having occasion to speak of them, he calls them “*Fratres R. C. olim sic dicti, quos nos hodie Sapientes (Sophos) vocamus; omissio illo nomine (tanquam odioso miseris mortalibus velo ignorantie obductis) et in oblivione hominum jam fere sepulto.*” Here, then, we have the negative question answered—why and when they ceased to be called Rosicrucians. But now comes the second, or affirmative question—why and when they began to be called Freemasons. In 1633 we have seen that the old name was abolished; but as yet no new name was substituted; in default of such a name they were styled *ad interim* by the general term, *wise men*. This, however, being too vague an appellation for men who wished to form themselves into a separate and exclusive society, a new one was to be devised bearing a more special allusion to their characteristic objects. Now the immediate hint for the name *Masons* was derived from the legend, contained in

the *Fama Fraternitatis*, of the "House of the Holy Ghost." Where and what was that house! This had been a subject of much speculation in Germany; and many had been simple enough to understand the expression of a literal house, and had inquired after it up and down the empire. But Andreä had himself made it impossible to understand it in any other than an allegoric sense, by describing it as a building that would remain "invisible to the godless world for ever." Theophilus Schweighart also had spoken of it thus: "It is a building," says he, "a great building, *carens fenestris et foribus*, a princely, nay an imperial palace, everywhere visible and yet not seen by the eyes of man." This building, in fact, represented the purpose or object of the Rosicrucians. And what was that? It was the secret wisdom, or, in their language, *magic*—viz., 1. Philosophy of nature, or occult knowledge of the works of God; 2. Theology, or the occult knowledge of God himself; 3. Religion, or God's occult intercourse with the spirit of man, which they imagined to have been transmitted from Adam through the Cabbalists to themselves. But they distinguished between a carnal and a spiritual knowledge of this magic. The spiritual knowledge is the business of Christianity, and is symbolised by Christ himself as a rock, and as a building of which he is the head and the foundation. What rock, and what building? says Fludd. A spiritual rock, and a building of human nature, in which men are the stones and Christ the corner-stone.\* But how shall stones move and arrange themselves into a building?

\* *Summum Bonum*, p. 27. "Concludimus igitur quod Jesus sit templi humani lapis angularis; atque ita, ex mortuis, lapides vivi facti sunt homines pii; idque transmutatione reali ab Adami lapsi statu in statum suæ innocentiae et perfectionis—i.e., à vili et leprosa plumbi conditione in auri purissimi perfectionem." Masonic readers

They must become living stones: "Transmutemini, transmutemini," says Fludd, "de lapidibus mortuis in lapides vivos philosophicos." But what is a living stone? A living stone is a *mason* who builds himself up into the wall as a part of the temple of human nature: "Viam hujusmodi transmutationis nos docet Apostolus, dum ait—Eadem mens sit in vobis quæ est in Jesu." In these passages we see the rise of the allegoric name *masons* upon the extinction of the former name. But Fludd expresses this allegory still more plainly elsewhere: "Denique," says he, "qualiter debent operari Fratres ad gemmæ istiusmodi (meaning *magic*) inquisitionem, nos docet pagina sacra:" how, then? "Nos docet Apostolus ad mysterii perfectionem vel sub *Agricolæ*, vel *Architecti*, typo pertingere;"—either under the image of a husbandman who cultivates a field, or of an architect who builds a house: and, had the former type been adopted, we should have had *Free-husbandmen* instead of *Freemasons*. Again, in another place, he says, "Atquæ sub istiusmodi *Architecti* typo nos monet propheta ut ædificemus domum Sapientiæ." The society was therefore to be a *masonic* society, in order to represent typically that temple of the Holy Spirit which it was their business to erect in the spirit of man. This temple was the abstract of the doctrine of Christ, who was the Grand-master: hence the light from the *East*, of which so much is said in Rosicrucian and Masonic books. St. John was the beloved disciple of Christ: hence the solemn celebration of his festival. Having, moreover, once adopted the attributes of masonry as the figurative expression of their objects,

will remember a ceremony used on the introduction of a new member which turns upon this distinction between lead and gold as the symbol of transition from the lost state of Adam to the original condition of innocence and perfection.

they were led to attend more minutely to the legends and history of that art; and in these again they found an occult analogy with their own relations to the Christian wisdom. The first great event in the art of Masonry was the building of the Tower of Babel: this expressed figuratively the attempt of some unknown Mason to build up the temple of the Holy Ghost in anticipation of Christianity, which attempt, however, had been confounded by the vanity of the builders. The building of Solomon's Temple, the second great incident in the art, had an obvious meaning as a prefiguration of Christianity. Hiram,\* simply the architect of this temple to the real professors of the art of building, was to the English Rosicrucians a type of Christ: and the legend of Masons, which represented this Hiram as having been murdered by his fellow-workmen, made the type still more striking. The two pillars, also, Jachin and Boaz† (strength and power), which are amongst the memorable singularities in Solomon's Temple, have an occult meaning to the Freemasons, which, however, I shall not undertake publicly to explain. This symbolic interest to the English Rosicrucians in the attributes, incidents, and legends of the art exercised by the literal Masons of real life, naturally brought the two orders into some connection with each other. They were thus enabled to realise to their eyes the symbols of their own

\* The name of Hiram was understood by the elder Freemasons as an anagram: H. I. R. A. M. meant Homo Jesus Redemptor Animarum. Others explained the name Homo Jesus Rex Altissimus Mundi. Others added a C to the Hiram, in order to make it CHRISTUS Jesus, etc.

† See the account of these pillars in the 1st Book of Kings, vii. 14-22, where it is said—"And there stood upon the pillars as it were *Roses*." Compare 2nd Book of Chron. iii. 17.



allegories ; and the same building which accommodated the guild of builders in their professional meetings offered a desirable means of secret assemblies to the early Freemasons. An apparatus of implements and utensils such as were presented in the fabulous sepulchre of Father Rosycross, were here actually brought together. And accordingly, it is upon record that the first formal and solemn lodge of Freemasons, on occasion of which the very name of Freemasons was first publicly made known, was held in Mason's Hall, Mason's Alley, Basinghall Street, London, in the year 1646. Into this lodge it was that Ashmole the Antiquary was admitted. Private meetings there may doubtless have been before ; and once at Warrington (half-way between Liverpool and Manchester) is expressly mentioned in the life of Ashmole ; but the name of a Freemason's Lodge, with all the insignia, attributes, and circumstances of a lodge, first came forward in the page of history on the occasion I have mentioned. It is perhaps in requital of the services at that time rendered in the loan of their hall, etc., that the guild of Masons as a body, and where they are not individually objectionable, enjoy a precedency of all orders of men in the right to admission, and pay only half fees. Ashmole, by the way, whom I have just mentioned as one of the earliest Freemasons, appears from his writings to have been a zealous Rosicrucian.\* Other members of the lodge were Thomas Wharton, a physician, George Wharton, Oughtred the mathematician, Dr. Hewitt, Dr. Pearson the divine, and

\* When Ashmole speaks of the antiquity of Freemasonry, he is to be understood either as confounding the order of philosophic masons with that of the handicraft masons (as many have done), or simply as speaking the language of Rosicrucians, who (as we have shown) carry up their traditional pretensions to Adam, as the first professor of the



William Lily the principal astrologer of the day. All members, it must be observed, had annually assembled to hold a festival of astrologers *before* they were connected into a lodge bearing the title of Freemasons. This previous connection had no doubt paved the way for the latter.

I shall now sum up the results of my inquiry into the origin and nature of Freemasonry, and shall then conclude with a brief notice of one or two collateral questions growing out of popular errors on the main one.

I. The original Freemasons were a society that arose out of the Rosicrucian mania, certainly within the thirteen years from 1633 to 1646, and probably between 1633 and 1640. Their object was *magic* in the cabbalistic sense—*i.e.*, the *occult wisdom* transmitted from the beginning of the world, and matured by Christ; to communicate this when they had it, to search for it when they had it not: and both under an oath of secrecy.

II. This object of Freemasonry was represented under the form of Solomon's Temple—as a type of the true Church, whose corner-stone is Christ. This Temple is to be built of men, or living stones: and the true method and art of building with men it is the province of *magic* to teach. Hence it is that all the masonic symbols either refer to Solomon's Temple, or are figurative modes of expressing the ideas and doctrines of *magic* in the sense of the Rosicrucians, and their mystical predecessors in general.

III. The Freemasons having once adopted symbols, etc., from the art of masonry, to which they were led by the

secret wisdom. In Florence, about the year 1512, there were two societies (the *Compagnia della Cazzuola* and the *Compagnia del Pajuolo*) who assumed the mason's hammer as their sign: but these were merely convivial clubs. See the life of J. F. Rustici in Vasari—*Vite dei Pittori*, etc. Roma: 1760, p. 76.

language of Scripture, went on to connect themselves in a certain degree with the order itself of handicraft masons, and adopted their distribution of members into apprentices, journeymen, and masters. Christ is the Grand-Master, and was put to death whilst laying the foundation of the temple of human nature.

IV. The Jews were particularly excluded from the original lodges of Freemasons as being the great enemies of the Grand-Master. For the same reason, in a less degree, were excluded Mahometans and Pagans. The reasons for excluding Roman Catholics were these :—First, the original Freemasons were Protestants in an age when Protestants were in the liveliest hostility to Papists, and in a country which had suffered deeply from Popish cruelty. They could not therefore be expected to view Popery with the languid eyes of modern indifference. Secondly, the Papists were excluded prudentially, on account of their intolerance: for it was a distinguishing feature of the Rosicrucians that *they* first\* conceived the idea of a society which should act on the principle of religious toleration, wishing that nothing

\* It is well known that until the latter end of the seventeenth century, all churches and the best men discountenanced the doctrine of religious toleration ; in fact, they rejected it with horror as a deliberate act of compromise with error: they were intolerant on principle, and persecuted on conscientious grounds. It is among the glories of Jeremy Taylor and Milton, that, in so intolerant an age, they fearlessly advocated the necessity of mutual toleration as a Christian duty. Jeremy Taylor, in particular, is generally supposed to have been the very earliest champion of toleration in his *Liberty of Prophecyng*, first published in 1647 ; and the present Bishop of Calcutta has lately asserted in his life of that great man (prefixed to the collected edition of his works : 1822) that “ The *Liberty of Prophecyng* is the *first* attempt on record to conciliate the minds of Christians to the reception of a doctrine which was then by every sect alike regarded as a perilous and portentous novelty ” (p. xxvii.): and again (at p. cxxi.) his lordship

should interfere with the most extensive co-operation in their plans except such differences about the essentials of religion as must make all sincere co-operation impossible. This fact is so little known, and is so eminently honourable to the spirit of Freemasonry, that I shall trouble the reader with a longer quotation in proof of it than I should otherwise have allowed myself. Fludd, in his *Summum Bonum* (Epilog., p. 53), says:—

Quod, si quærat<sup>r</sup> cujus sint religionis—qui mysticâ istâ Scripturarum interpretatione pollent—viz., an Romanæ, Lutheranæ, Calvinianæ, etc.—vel habeantne ipsi religionem aliquam sibi ipsis peculiarem et ab aliis divisam? Facillimum erit ipsis respondere: Nam, cum omnes Christiani, cujuscunque religionis, tendant ad unam eandem metam (viz., ipsum Christum, qui est sola veritas), in hoc quidem unanimi consensu illæ omnes religiones conveniunt.—At verò, quatenus religiones istæ in ceremoniis Ecclesiæ externis, humanis nempe inventionibus (cujusmodi sunt habitus varii Monachorum et Pontificum, crucis adoratio, imaginum approbatio vel abnegatio, luminum de nocte accensio, et infinita alia) discrepare videntur,—hæ quidem disceptationes sunt *præter* essentielles veræ sapientæ mysticæ leges.

V. Freemasonry, as it honoured all forms of Christianity, deeming them approximations more or less remote to the ideal truth, so it abstracted from all forms of civil polity as alien from its own objects, which, according to their briefest

calls it “the *first* work, perhaps, since the earliest days of Christianity, to teach the art of differing harmlessly.” Now, in the place where this assertion is made.—*i. e.*, in the life of Jeremy Taylor—perhaps it is virtually a just assertion: for it cannot affect the claims of Jeremy Taylor that he was anticipated by authors whom in all probability he never read: no doubt he owed the doctrine to his own comprehensive intellect and the Christian magnanimity of his nature. Yet, in a history of the doctrine itself, it should not be overlooked that the *Summum Bonum* preceded the *Liberty of Prophecy* by eighteen years.

expressions, are—1. The glory of God ; 2. The service of men.

VI. There is nothing in the imagery, mythi, ritual, or purposes of the elder Freemasonry which may not be traced to the romances of Father Rosycross, as given in the *Fama Fraternitatis*.

### CONCLUSION.

I. THAT the object of the elder Freemasons was not to build Lord Bacon's imaginary Temple of Solomon :—

This was one of the hypotheses advanced by Nicolai : the House of Solomon, which Lord Bacon had sketched in his romantic fiction of the island of Bensalem (New Atlantis), Nicolai supposed that the elder Freemasons had sought to realise ; and that forty years afterwards they had changed the Baconian house of Solomon into the spiritual type of Solomon's temple. Whoever has read the *New Atlantis* of Bacon, and is otherwise acquainted with the relations in which this great man stood to the literature of his own times, will discover in this romance a gigantic sketch from the hand of a mighty scientific intellect, that had soared far above his age, and sometimes, on the heights to which he had attained, indulged in a dream of what might be accomplished by a rich state under a wise governor for the advancement of the arts and sciences. This sketch, agreeably to the taste of his century, he delivered in the form of an allegory, and feigned an island of Bensalem, upon which a society, composed on his model, had existed for a thousand years under the name of Solomon's house ; for the lawgiver of this island, who was also the founder of the society, had been indebted to Solomon for his wisdom.



The object of this society was the extension of physical science : on which account it was called the College of the Work of Six Days. Romance as all this was, it led to very beneficial results ; for it occasioned in the end the establishment of the Royal Society of London, which for nearly two centuries has continued to merit immortal honour in the department of physics. Allegory, however, it contains none, except in its idea and name. The house of Solomon is neither more nor less than a great academy of learned men, authorised and supported by the state, and endowed with a liberality approaching to profusion for all purposes of experiment and research. Beneficence, education of the young, support of the sick, cosmopolitism, are not the objects of this institution. The society is divided into classes according to the different objects of their studies : but it has no higher nor lower degrees. None but learned men can be members ; not, as in the masonic societies, every decent workman who is *sui juris*. Only the exoteric knowledge of nature, not the esoteric, is pursued by the house of Solomon. The book of the Six Days is studied as a book that lies open before every man's eyes ; by the Freemasons it was studied as a mystery which was to be illuminated by the light out of the East. Had the Freemasons designed to represent or to imitate the house of Solomon in their society, they would certainly have adopted the forms, constitution, costume, and attributes of that house as described by Bacon. They would have exerted themselves to produce or to procure a philosophical apparatus such as that house is represented as possessing ; or would at least have delineated this apparatus upon their carpets by way of symbols. But nothing of all this was ever done. No mile-deep cellars, no mile-high towers, no lakes, marshes, or fountains, no

botanic or kitchen-gardens, no modelling-houses, perspective-houses, collections of minerals and jewels, etc., were ever formed by them, either literal or figurative. Universally the eldest Freemasonry was indifferent with respect to all profane sciences and all exoteric knowledge of nature. Its business was with a secret wisdom in which learned and unlearned were alike capable of initiation. And in fact the *exoterici*, at whose head Bacon stood, and who afterwards composed the Royal Society of London, were the antagonist party of the Theosophists, Cabbalists, and Alchemists, at the head of whom stood Fludd, and from whom Freemasonry took its rise.\*

II. That the object of the elder Freemasons and the origin of the master's degree had no connection with the restoration of Charles II.

This is another of the hypotheses advanced by Nicolai, and not more happy than that which we have just examined. He postulates that the elder Freemasons pretended to no mystery; and the more so, because very soon after their first origin they were really engaged in a secret transaction, which made it in the highest degree necessary that their assemblies should wear no appearance of concealment, but should seem to be a plain and undisguised club of inquirers into natural philosophy. What was this secret transaction according to Mr. Nicolai? Nothing less than the

\* There is besides in this hypothesis of Nicolai's a complete confusion of the *end* of the society with the *persons* composing it. The Freemasons wished to build the Temple of Solomon. But Lord Bacon's House of Solomon did not typify the *object* of his society: it was simply the *name* of it, and means no more than what is understood at present by an academy, *i.e.*, a circle of learned men united for a common purpose. It would be just as absurd to say of the Academicians of Berlin—not that they composed or formed an Academy—but that they proposed, as their secret object, to build one.

restoration of the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Charles II., to the throne of England. The members of the Masonic union, says he, were hostile to the parliament and to Cromwell, and friendly to the Royal family. After the death of Charles I. (1649) several people of rank united themselves with the Freemasons, because under this mask they could assemble and determine on their future measures. They found means to establish within this society a "secret conclave" which held meetings apart from the general meetings. This conclave adopted secret signs expressive of its grief for its murdered master, of its hope to revenge him on his murderers, and of its search for the lost word or logos (the son), and its design to re-establish him on his father's throne. As faithful adherents of the Royal family, whose head the Queen had now become, they called themselves *sons of the widow*. In this way a secret connection was established amongst all persons attached to the Royal family, as well in Great Britain and Ireland as in France and the Netherlands, which subsisted until after the death of Cromwell, and had the well-known issue for the royal cause. The analogies alleged by Nicolai between the historical events in the first period of Freemasonry and the symbols and myths of the masonic degree of master are certainly very extraordinary; and one might easily be led to suppose that the higher object of masonry had passed into a political object, and that the present master's degree was nothing more than a figurative memorial of this event. Meantime, the weightiest historical reasons are so entirely opposed to this hypothesis, that it must evidently be pronounced a mere conceit of Mr. Nicolai's:—

1. *History mentions nothing at all of any participation of the Freemasons in the transactions of those times. We*

have the most accurate and minute accounts of all the other political parties—the Presbyterians, the Independents, the Levellers, etc., etc. : but no historian of this period has so much as mentioned the Freemasons. Is it credible that a society, which is represented as the centre of the counter-revolutionary faction, should have escaped the jealous eye of Cromwell, who had brought the system of *espionage* to perfection, and who carried his vigilance so far as to seize the *Oceana* of Harrington at the press? He must have been well assured that Freemasonry was harmless; or he would not have wanted means to destroy it with all its pretensions and mysteries. Moreover, it is a pure fancy of Nicolai's that the elder Freemasons were all favourably disposed to the Royal cause. English clubs, I admit, are accustomed to harmonise in their political principles: but the society of Freemasons, whose true object abstracted from all politics, must have made an exception to this rule then, as certainly as they do now.

2. *The masonic degree of master, and indeed Freemasonry in general, is in direct contradiction to this hypothesis of Nicolai.* It must be granted to me by those who maintain this hypothesis that the order of the Freemasons had attained some consistence in 1646 (in which year Ashmole was admitted a member), consequently about three years before the execution of Charles I. It follows, therefore, upon this hypothesis, that it must have existed for some years without any ground or object of its existence. It pretended as yet to no mystery, according to Nicolai (though I have shown that at its very earliest formation it made such a pretension); it pursued neither science, art, nor trade: social pleasure was not its object: it "masoned" mysteriously with closed doors in its hall at London; and no man can guess at *what* it "masoned." It constituted a



“mystery” (a guild)—with this contradiction *in adjecto*, that it consisted not of masters, journeymen, and apprentices; for the master’s degree, according to Nicolai, was first devised by the conclave after the execution of Charles I. Thus far the inconsistencies of this hypothesis are palpable: but in what follows it will appear that there are still more striking ones. For, if the master’s degree arose first after the execution of Charles I., and symbolically imported vengeance on the murderers of their master and restoration of his son to the royal dignity, in that case during the two Protectorates, and for a long time after the abdication of Richard, the mythus connected with that degree might indeed have spoken of a murdered master, but not also (as it does) of a master risen again, living, and triumphant: for as yet matters had not been brought thus far. If to this it be replied that perhaps in fact the case was really so, and that the mythus of the restored master might have been added to that of the slain master after the Restoration, there will be still this difficulty, that in the masonic mythus the two masters are one and the same person who is first slain and then restored to life; yet Charles I., who was slain, did not arise again from the dead; and Charles II., though he was restored to his throne, was yet never slain—and therefore could not even metaphorically be said to rise again.\* Suiting therefore to neither of these

\* Begging Professor Buhle’s pardon, he is wrong in this particular argument—though no doubt right in the main point he is urging against Nicolai: the mere passion of the case would very naturally express the identity of interest in any father and son by attributing identity to their persons, as though the father lived again and triumphed in the triumph of his son. But in the case of an English king, who never dies *quoad* his office, there is not only a pathos but a philosophic accuracy and fidelity to the constitutional doctrine in this way of symbolising the story.



kings, the mythus of the masonic master's degree does not adapt itself to this part of history. Besides, as Herder has justly remarked, what a childish part would the Freemasons be playing *after* the Restoration! With this event their object was accomplished: to what purpose then any further mysteries? The very ground of the mysteries had thus fallen away; and, according to all analogy of experience, the mysteries themselves should have ceased at the same time.

But the Freemasons called themselves at that time *Sons of the Widow* (i.e., as it is alleged, of Henrietta Maria, the wife of the murdered king); and they were in search of the lost word (the Prince of Wales). This, it is argued, has too near an agreement with the history of that period to be altogether a fiction. I answer that we must not allow ourselves to be duped by specious resemblances. The elder Freemasons called themselves *Sons of the Widow*, because the working masons called and still call themselves by that name agreeably to their legend. In the 1st Book of Kings, vii. 13, are these words:—"And King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram of Tyre, a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali." Hiram, therefore, the eldest mason of whom anything is known, was a widow's son. Hence, therefore, the masons of the seventeenth century, who were familiar with the Bible, styled themselves, in memory of their founder, *Sons of the Widow*; and the Freemasons borrowed this designation from them as they did the rest of their external constitution. Moreover, the masonic expression, *Sons of the Widow*, has the closest connection with the building of Solomon's Temple.

Just as little did the Freemasons mean, by *the lost word* which they sought, the Prince of Wales. That great personage was not lost, so that there could be no occasion for seeking him. The Royal party knew as well where he was

to be found as in our days the French Royalists have always known the residence of the emigrant Bourbons. The question was not—where to find him, but how to replace him on his throne. Besides, though a most majestic person in his political relations, a Prince of Wales makes no especial pretensions to sanctity of character: and familiar as scriptural allusions were in that age, I doubt whether he could have been denominated *the logos* or *word* without offence to the scrupulous austerity of that age in matters of religion. What was it then that the Freemasons really *did* mean by the lost word? Manifestly the masonic mystery itself, the secret wisdom delivered to us under a figurative veil through Moses, Solomon, the Prophets, the Grand-Master Christ, and his confidential disciples. Briefly, they meant the lost word of God in the Cabbalistic sense; and therefore it was that long *after* the Restoration they continued to seek it, and are still seeking it to this day.

III. That Cromwell was not the founder of Freemasonry:

As Nicolai has chosen to represent the elder Freemasons as zealous Royalists, so on the contrary others have thought fit to describe them as furious Democrats. According to this fiction, Cromwell, with some confidential friends (*e.g.*, Ireton, Algernon Sidney, Neville, Martin Wildman, Harrington, etc.) founded the order in 1645—ostensibly, on the part of Cromwell, for the purpose of reconciling the contending parties in religion and politics, but really with a view to his own ambitious projects. To this statement I oppose the following arguments:

First, it contradicts the internal character and spirit of Freemasonry—which is free from all political tendency, and is wholly unintelligible on this hypothesis.

Secondly, though it is unquestionable that Cromwell established and supported many secret connections, yet the

best English historians record nothing of any connection which he had with the Freemasons. *Divide et impera* was the Machiavellian maxim which Cromwell derived, not from Machiavel, but from his own native political sagacity ; and with such an object before him it is very little likely that he would have sought to connect himself with a society that aims at a general harmony amongst men.

Thirdly, how came it—if the order of Freemasons were the instrument of the Cromwellian revolution—that the Royalists did not exert themselves after the restoration of Charles II. to suppress it ?

But the fact is, that this origin of Freemasonry has been forged for the purpose of making it hateful and an object of suspicion to monarchical states. See, for example, “The Freemasons Annihilated, or Prosecution of the detected Order of Freemasons,” Frankfort and Leipzig, 1746. The first part of this work, which is a translation from the French, appeared under the title of “Freemasonry exposed,” etc., Leipz. 1745.

IV. That the Scotch degree, as it is called, did not arise from the intrigues for the restoration of Charles II. :—

I have no intention to enter upon the tangled web of the modern higher masonry ; though, from an impartial study of the historical documents, I could perhaps bring more light, order, and connection into this subject than at present it exhibits. Many personal considerations move me to let the curtain drop on the history of the modern higher masonry, or at most to allow myself only a few general hints, which may be pursued by those amongst my readers who may be interested in such a research. One only of the higher masonic degrees—viz., the Scotch degree, which is the most familiarly known, and is adopted by most lodges, I must notice more circumstantially—because, upon some

statements which have been made, it might seem to have been connected with the elder Freemasonry. Nicolai's account of this matter is as follows:—

“After the death of Cromwell and the deposition of his son, the government of England fell into the hands of a violent but weak and disunited faction. In such hands, as every patriot saw, the government could not be durable; and the sole means for delivering the country was to restore the kingly authority. But in this there was the greatest difficulty; for the principal officers of the army in England, though otherwise in disagreement with each other, were yet unanimous in their hostility to the king. Under these circumstances the eyes of all parties were turned upon the English army in Scotland, at that time under the command of Monk, who was privately well affected to the Royal cause; and the secret society of the king's friends in London, who placed all their hopes on him, saw the necessity in such a critical period of going warily and mysteriously to work. It strengthened their sense of this necessity—that one of their own members, Sir Richard Willis, became suspected of treachery; and therefore out of the bosom of their ‘secret conclave’ (the masonic master's degree) they resolved to form a still narrower conclave to whom the Scotch—*i.e.*, the most secret—affairs should be confided. They chose new symbols adapted to their own extremely critical situation. These symbols imported that, in the business of this interior conclave, wisdom—obedience—courage—self-sacrifice—and moderation were necessary. Their motto was—*Wisdom above thee*. For greater security they altered their signs, and reminded each other in their tottering condition not to stumble and—*break the arm*.”

I do not deny that there is much plausibility in this hypothesis of Nicolai's: but upon examination it will



appear that it is all pure delusion, without any basis of historical truth.

1. Its validity rests upon the previous assumption that the interpretation of the master's degree, as connected with the political interests of the Stuarts, between the death of Charles I. and the restoration of his son, is correct: it is therefore a *petitio principii*; and what is the value of the *principium*, we have already seen.

2. Of any participation on the part of a secret society of Freemasons in the counsels and expedition of General Monk—history tells us absolutely nothing. Even Skinner preserves a profound silence on this head. Now, if the facts were so, to suppose that this accurate biographer should not have known it—is absurd: and, knowing it, that he should designedly suppress a fact so curious and so honourable to the Freemasons amongst the Royal party—is inexplicable.

3. Nicolai himself maintains, and even proves, that Monk was not himself a Freemason. In what way then could the society gain any influence over his measures? My sagacious friend justly applauds the politic mistrust of Monk (who would not confide his intentions even to his own brother), his secrecy, and the mysterious wisdom of his conduct; and in the very same breath he describes him as surrendering himself to the guidance of a society with which he was not even connected as a member. How is all this to be reconciled?

Undoubtedly there existed at that time in London a secret party of Royalists—known in history under the name of the Secret Conclave; but we are acquainted with its members, and there were but some few Freemasons amongst them. Nicolai alleges the testimony of Ramsay—“that the restoration of Charles II. to the English throne was first concerted in a society of Freemasons, because

General Monk was a member of it." But in this assertion of Ramsay's there is at any rate one manifest untruth on Nicolai's own showing; for Monk, according to Nicolai, was not a Freemason. The man who begins by such an error in his premises must naturally err in his conclusions.\*

4. The Scotch degree—nay, the very name of Scotch masonry—does not once come forward in the elder Freemasonry throughout the whole of the seventeenth century, as it must inevitably have done if it had borne any relation to the restoration of Charles II. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the Scotch degree was known even in Scotland or in England before the third decennium of the eighteenth century.

But how then did this degree arise? What is its meaning and object? The answer to these questions does not belong to this place. It is enough on the present occasion to have shown how it did *not* arise, and what were *not* its meaning and object. I am here treating of the origin and history of the elder and legitimate masonry, not of an indecent pretender who crept at a later period into the order,

\* Andrew Michael Ramsay was a Scotchman by birth, but lived chiefly in France, where he became a Catholic, and is well known as the author of "The Travels of Cyrus," and other works. His dissertation on the Freemasons contains the old legend that Freemasonry dated its origin from a guild of working masons, who resided during the crusades in the Holy Land for the purpose of rebuilding the Christian churches destroyed by the Saracens, and were afterwards summoned by a king of England to his dominions. As tutor to the two sons of the Pretender, for whose use he wrote "The Travels of Cyrus," Ramsay is a distinguished person in the history of the later Freemasonry. Of all that part of its history which lay half-a-century before his own time, he was, however, very ill-informed. On this he gives us nothing but the cant of the later English lodges, who had lost the kernel in the shell—the original essence and object of masonry in its form—as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century.

and, by the side of the Lion—the Pelican—and the Dove, introduced the Ape and the Fox.

V. The Freemasons are not derived from the order of the Knights Templars :—

No hypothesis upon the origin and primitive tendency of the Freemasons has obtained more credit in modern times than this—That they were derived from the order of Knights Templars, so cruelly persecuted and ruined under Pope Clement V. and Philip the Fair of France, and had no other secret purpose on their first appearance than the re-establishment of that injured order. So much influence has this opinion had in France that in the first half of the eighteenth century it led to the amalgamation of the external forms and ritual of the Templars with those of the Freemasons; and some of the higher degrees of French masonry have undoubtedly proceeded from this amalgamation. In Germany it was Lessing, who, if not first, yet chiefly, gave to the learned world an interest in this hypothesis by some allusions to it scattered through his masterly dialogues for Freemasons. With many it became a favourite hypothesis; for it assigned an honourable origin to the Masonic order, and flattered the vanity of its members. The Templars were one of the most celebrated knightly orders during the crusades: their whole Institution, Acts, and Tragical Fate are attractive to the feelings and the fancy: how natural, therefore, it was that the modern masons should seize with enthusiasm upon the conjectures thrown out by Lessing. Some modern English writers have also adopted this mode of explaining the origin of Freemasonry; not so much on the authority of any historical documents, as because they found in the French lodges degrees which had a manifest reference to the Templar institutions, and which they naturally attributed to the

elder Freemasonry, being ignorant that they had been purposely introduced at a later period to serve an hypothesis: in fact, the French degrees had been originally derived from the hypothesis; and now the hypothesis was in turn derived from the French degrees. If in all this there were any word of truth, it would follow that I had written this whole book of 418 pages to no purpose: and what a shocking thing would that be! Knowing therefore the importance to myself of this question, it may be presumed that I have examined it not negligently, before I ventured to bring forward my own deduction of the Freemasons from the Rosicrucians. This is not the place for a full critique upon all the idle prattle about the Templars and the Freemasons: but an impartial review of the arguments for and against the Templar hypothesis may reasonably be demanded of me as a negative attestation of my own hypothesis. In doing this I must presume in my reader a general acquaintance with the constitution and history of the Templars, which it will be very easy for any one not already in possession of it to gain.

1. It is alleged that the masonic mystical allegory represented nothing else in its capital features than the persecution and overthrow of the Templars, especially the dreadful death of the innocent Grand-Master, James Burg de Mollay. Some knights, together with Aumont, it is said, made their escape in the dress of masons to Scotland; and, for the sake of disguise, exercised the trade of masons. This was the reason that they adopted symbols from that trade; and, to avoid detection, gave them the semblance of moral purposes. They called themselves *Franc Maçons*, as well in memory of the Templars who in Palestine were always called Francs by the Saracens, as with a view to distinguish themselves from the common working masons. The Temple



of Solomon, which they professed to build, together with all the masonic attributes, pointed collectively to the grand purpose of the society—the restoration of the Templar order. At first the society was confined to the descendants of its founders : but within the last 150 years the Scotch masters have communicated their hereditary right to others in order to extend their own power ; and from this period, it is said, begins the *public* history of Freemasonry. See “The Use and Abuse of Freemasonry, by Captain George Smith, Inspector of the Royal Military School at Woolwich, etc., etc., London 1783.” See also, “Scotch Masonry compared with the three Vows of the Order, and with the Mystery of the Knights Templars : from the French of Nicholas de Bonneville.”

Such is the legend, which is afterwards supported by the general analogy between the ritual and external characteristics of both orders. The *three* degrees of masonry (the holy masonic number) are compared with the triple office of general amongst the Templars. The masonic dress is alleged to be copied from that of the Templars. The signs of Freemasonry are the same with those used in Palestine by the Templars. The rites of initiation, as practised on the admission of a novice, especially on admission to the master’s degree, and the symbolic object of this very degree, are all connected with the persecution of the Templars, with the trial of the knights, and the execution of the Grand-Master. To this Grand-Master (*James Burg*) the letters I and B, which no longer mean Jachin and Boaz, are said to point. Even the holiest masonic name of Hiram has no other allusion than to the murdered Grand-Master of the Templars. With regard to these analogies in general, it may be sufficient to say that some of them are accidental—some very forced and far-sought—and some

altogether fictitious. Thus, for instance, it is said that the name *Franc Magon* was chosen in allusion to the connection of the Templars with Palestine. And thus we are required to believe that the eldest Freemasons of Great Britain styled themselves at first Frank Masons: as if this had any warrant from history: or, supposing even that it had, as if a name adopted on such a ground could ever have been dropped. The simple fact is—that the French were the people who first introduced the seeming allusion to Franks by translating the English name *Freemason* into *Franc Magon*; which they did because the word *libre* would not so easily blend into composition with the word *Maçon*. So also the late Mr. Von Born, having occasion to express the word Freemasons in Latin, rendered it *Franco-murarii*. Not to detain the reader, however, with a separate examination of each particular allegation, I will content myself with observing that the capital mythus of the masonic master's degree tallies but in one-half with the execution of the Grand-Master of the Templars, or even of the Sub-Prior of Montfaucon (Charles de Monte Carmel). The Grand-Master was indeed murdered, as the Grand-Master of the Freemasons is described to have been; but not, as the latter, by treacherous journeymen: moreover, the latter rose from the grave, still lives, and triumphs; which will hardly be said of James Burg de Mollay. Two arguments, however, remain to be noticed, both out of respect to the literary eminence of those who have alleged them, and also because they seem intrinsically of some weight.

2. The English word *masonry*. This word, or (as it ought in that case to be written) the word *masonry*, is derived, according to Lessing, from the Anglo-Saxon word *massoney*—a secret commensal society; which last word again comes from *mase*, a table. Such table societies and

comptuses were very common amongst our forefathers—especially amongst the princes and knights of the middle ages; the weightiest affairs where there transacted, and peculiar buildings were appropriated to their use. In particular, the *masonies* of the Knights Templars were highly celebrated in the thirteenth century. One of them was still subsisting in London at the end of the seventeenth century—at which period, according to Lessing, the public history of the Freemasons first commences. This society had its house of meeting near St. Paul's Cathedral, which was then rebuilding. Sir Christopher Wren, the architect, was one of its members. For thirty years, during the building of the cathedral, he continued to frequent it. From this circumstance the people, who had forgotten the true meaning of the word *massoney*, took it for a society of architects with whom Sir Christopher consulted on any difficulties which arose in the progress of the work. This mistake Wren turned to account. He had formerly assisted in planning a society which should make speculative truths more useful for purposes of common life. The very converse of this idea now occurred to him—viz., the idea of a society which should raise itself from the praxis of civil life to speculation. “In the former,” thought he, “would be examined all that was useful amongst the true; in this, all that is true amongst the useful. How if I should make some principles of the *masonry* exoteric? How if I should disguise that which cannot be made exoteric under the hieroglyphics and symbols of *masonry*, as the people pronounce the word; and extend this masonry into a Freemasonry, in which all may take a share?” In this way, according to Lessing, did Wren scheme; and in this way did Freemasonry arise. Afterwards, however, from a conversation which he had with Nicolai, it appears that

Lessing had thus far changed his first opinion (as given in the *Ernst und Falk*) that he no longer supposed Sir Christopher simply to have modified a *massoney*, or society of Knights Templars, which had subsisted secretly for many centuries, and to have translated their doctrines into an exoteric shape, but rather to have himself first established such *massoney*—upon some basis of analogy, however, with the elder *massoneys*.

To an attentive examiner of this conjecture of Lessing's, it will appear that it rests entirely upon the presumed identity of meaning between the word *massoney* and the word *masonry* (or masonry as it afterwards became, according to the allegation, through a popular mistake of the meaning). But the very meaning and etymology ascribed to *massoney*—(viz., a secret club or *compotus*, from *mase*, a table)—are open to much doubt. Nicolai, a friend of Lessing's, professes as little to know any authority for such an explanation as myself, and is disposed to derive the word *massoney* from *massonya*, which in the Latin of the middle ages meant first a club (*clava*, in French *massue*): secondly, a key (*clavis*), and a secret society (a club). For my part I think both the etymologies false. *Massoney* is doubtless originally the same word with *maison* and *magione*; and the primitive etymon of all three words is clearly the Latin word *mansio*, in the sense of the middle ages. It means simply a residence or place of abode, and was naturally applied to the dwelling-house of the Templars. Their meetings were held *in mansione Templariorum*—i.e., in the massoney of the Templars. On the suppression of the order, their buildings still remained, and preserved the names of temples, templar mansions, etc., just as at this day we find many *convents* in Hanover, though they are no longer occupied by monks or nuns; and in Italy there are



even yet churches to be found which are denominated *de la Mason*, which Paciaudi properly explains by *della Magione*—these churches having been attached to the dwellings of the Knights Templars. It is therefore very possible that a Templar *massoney* may have subsisted in London, in the neighbourhood of St. Paul's Church, up to the end of the seventeenth century. Some notice of such a fact Lessing perhaps stumbled on in the course of his reading. He mistook the building for a secret society of Templars that still retained a traditional knowledge of the principles peculiar to the ancient order of Knights Templars; next he found that Sir Christopher Wren had been a frequenter of this *massoney*. He therefore was a Knight Templar, but he was also an architect; and by him the Templar doctrines had been moulded into a symbolic conformity with his own art, and had been fitted for diffusion among the people. Such is the way in which a learned hypothesis arises; and on this particular hypothesis may be pronounced what Lessing said of many an older one—Dust! and nothing but dust! In conclusion, I may add what Nicolai has already observed, that Lessing was wholly misinformed as to the history and chronology of Freemasonry. So far from arising out of the ashes of the Templar traditions at the end of the seventeenth century, we have seen that it was fully matured in the forty-sixth year of that century, and therefore long before the rebuilding of St. Paul's. In fact, Sir Christopher Wren was himself elected Deputy Grand-Master of the Freemasons in 1666: and in less than twenty years after (*viz.* in 1685) he became Grand-Master.

3. *Baphomet*.—But, says Mr. Nicolai, the Templars had a secret, and the Freemasons have a secret; and the secrets agree in this, that no uninitiated person has succeeded in discovering either. Does not this imply some connection

originally between the two orders ; more especially if it can be shown that the two secrets are identical? Sorry I am, my venerable friend, to answer—No. Sorry I am, in your old days, to be under the necessity of knocking on the head a darling hypothesis of yours, which has cost you, I doubt not, much labour of study and research—much thought—and, I fear also, many many pounds of candles. But it is my duty to do so ; and indeed, considering Mr. Nicolai's old age and his great merits in regard to German literature, it would be my duty to show him no mercy, but to lash him with the utmost severity for his rotten hypothesis—if my time would allow it. But to come to business. The Templars, says old Nicolai, had a secret. They had so ; but what was it? According to Nicolai it consisted in the denial of the Trinity, and in a scheme of natural religion opposed to the dominant Popish Catholicism. Hence it was that the Templars sought to make themselves independent of the other Catholic clergy ; the novices were required to abjure the divinity of Christ, and even to spit upon a crucifix, and trample it under foot. Their Anti-Trinitarianism Mr. Nicolai ascribes to their connection with the Saracens, who always made the doctrine of the Trinity a matter of reproach to the Franks. He supposes that, during periods of truce in captivity, many Templars had, by communication with learned Mohammedans, become enlightened to the errors and the tyranny of Popery ; but at the same time strengthening their convictions of the falsehood of Mahometanism, they had retained nothing of their religious doctrines but Monotheism. These heterodoxies, however, under the existing power of the hierarchy and the universal superstition then prevalent, they had the strongest reasons for communicating to none but those who were admitted into the highest degree of their order—and to them only

symbolically. From these data, which may be received as tolerably probable and conformable to the depositions of the witnesses on the trial of the Templars, old Mr. Nicolai flatters himself that he can unriddle the mystery of mysteries—viz., Baphomet (Baffomet, Baphemet, or Baffometus); which was the main symbol of the Knights Templars in the highest degrees. This Baphomet was a figure representing a human bust, but sometimes of monstrous and caricature appearance, which symbolised the highest object of the Templars; and therefore upon the meaning of Baphomet hinges the explanation of the great Templar mystery.

First, then, Mr. Nicolai tells us what Baphomet was *not*. It was not Mohammed. According to the genius of the Arabic language out of Mohammed might be made Mahomet or Bahomet, but not Baphomet. In some Latin historians about the period of the Crusades, Bahomet is certainly used for Mahomet, and in one writer perhaps Baphomet (viz., in the *Epistola Anselmi de Ribodimonte ad Manassem Archiepiscopum Remensem*, of the year 1099, in Dachery's *Spicilegium*, tom. ii. p. 431,—“Sequenti die aurorâ apparente altis vocibus *Baphomet* invocaverunt; et nos Deum nostrum in cordibus nostris deprecantes impetum fecimus in eos, et de muris civitatis omnes expulimus.”) Nicolai, supposing that the cry of the Saracens was in this case addressed to their own prophet, concludes that *Baphomet* is an error of the press for *Bahomet*, and that this is put for *Mahomet*. But it is possible that *Baphomet* may be the true reading: for it may not have been used in devotion for Mahomet, but scoffingly as the known watchword of the Templars. But it contradicts the whole history of the Templars—to suppose that they had introduced into their order the worship of an image of Mahomet. In fact, from all the records of their trial and persecution, it results that no such charge was

brought against them by their enemies. And, moreover, Mahometanism itself rejects all worship of images.

Secondly, not being Mahomet, what *was* it? It was, says Mr. Nicolai, Βαφη μητρδς, *i.e.*, as he interprets it, the word *Baphomet* meant the *baptism of wisdom*; and the image so called represented God the universal Father—*i.e.*, expressed the *unity* of the Divine Being. By using this sign therefore, under this name, which portook much of a Gnostic and Cabbalistic spirit, the Templars indicated their dedication to the truths of natural religion.

Now, in answer to this learned conceit of Mr. Nicolai's, I would wish to ask him—

First, in an age so barbarous as that of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when not to be able to read or write was no disgrace how came a body of rude warriors like the Templars to descend into the depths of Gnosticism?

Secondly, if by the image called Baphomet they meant to represent the unity of God, how came they to designate it by a name which expresses no attribute of the deity, but simply a mystical ceremony amongst themselves (*viz.*, the baptism of wisdom)?

Thirdly, I will put a home question to Mr. Nicolai: and let him parry it if he can: How many heads had Baphomet? His own conscience will reply—Two. Indeed, a whole length of Baphomet is recorded which had also four feet; but, supposing these to be disputed, Mr. Nicolai can never dispute away the two heads. Now, what sort of a symbol would a two-headed image have been for the expression of unity of being? Answer me that, Mr. Nicolai. Surely the rudest skulls of the twelfth century could have expressed their meaning better.

Having thus upset my learned brother's hypothesis, I now come forward with my own. Through the illumination



which some of the Templars gained in the East as to the relations in which they stood to the Pope and Romish church, but still more perhaps from the suggestions of their own great power and wealth opposed to so rapacious and potent a supremacy, there gradually arose a separate Templar interest no less hostile to the Pope and clergy of Rome than to Mahomet. To this separate interest they adapted an appropriate scheme of theology; but neither the one nor the other could be communicated with safety except to their own superior members: and thus it became a mystery of the order. Now this mystery was symbolically expressed by a two-headed figure of *Baphomet*: *i.e.*, of the Pope and Mahomet together. So long as the Templars continued orthodox, the watchword of their undivided hostility was *Mahomet*: but as soon as the Pope became an object of jealousy and hatred to them, they devised a new watchword which should covertly express their double-headed enmity by intertwinning the name of the Pope with that of Mahomet.\* This they effected by cutting off the two first letters of *Mahomet*, and substituting *Bap* or *Pap*—the first syllable of *Papa*. Thus arose the compound word *Baphomet*; and hence it was that the image of *Baphomet* was figured with two heads, and was otherwise monstrous in appearance. When a Templar was initiated into the highest degree of the order, he was shown this image of *Baphomet*, and received a girdle with certain ceremonies which referred to that figure. At sight of this figure in the general chapters of the order, the knights expressed their independence of the church and the church creed, by

\* Those who are acquainted with the German Protestant writers about the epoch of the Reformation, will remember the many fanciful combinations extracted from the names *Pabst* (Pope) and *Mahomet* by all manner of dislocations and inversions of their component letters.

testifying their abhorrence of the crucifix, and by worshipping the sole God of heaven and earth. Hence they called a newly-initiated member a "friend of God, who could now speak with God if he chose"—*i.e.*, without the intermediation of the Pope and the church. Upon this explanation of Baphomet, it becomes sufficiently plain why the secret was looked upon as so inviolable that even upon the rack it could not be extorted from them. By such a confession the order would have exposed itself to a still more cruel persecution, and a more inevitable destruction. On the other hand, upon Mr. Nicolai's explanation, it is difficult to conceive why, under such extremities, the accused should not have confessed the truth. In all probability the court of Rome had good information of the secret tendency of the Templar doctrines; and hence, no doubt, it was Pope Clement V. proceeded so furiously against them.

Now then I come to my conclusion, which is this: If the Knights Templars had no other secret than one relating to a *political* interest which placed them in opposition to the Pope and the claims of the Roman Catholic clergy on the one hand, and to Mahomet on the other—then it is impossible that there can have been any affinity or resemblance whatsoever between them and the Freemasons; for the Freemasons have never in any age troubled themselves about either Mahomet or the Pope. Popery\* and Mahometanism are alike indifferent to the Freemasons, and always have been. And in general the object of the Freemasons is not political. Finally, it is in the highest degree probable that the secret of the Knights Templars

\* In rejecting Roman Catholic candidates for admission into their order—the reader must remember that the Freemasons objected to them not *as* Roman Catholics, but as persons of intolerant principles.  
—*Translator.*

perished with their order: for it is making too heavy a demand on our credulity—to suppose that a secret society never once coming within the light of history can have propagated itself through a period of four centuries—*i.e.*, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, in which century it has been shown that Freemasonry first arose.

