

WAGES

Alan Hart GLec.

The whole period of the Middle Ages in England was in one aspect of it a struggle of barbarism against civilization, but on the question of wages it would be paying them a tribute to describe them as barbaric; wages were savage, savagely low and savagely cruel, and next only after war were the ruling class's most brutal weapon of subjugation, and that remains true after every possible allowance is made between the purchasing power of a shilling then and a shilling now. A bookkeeper in the reign of Edward I records "that one Master Mason was paid 6d per day, and five Masons were paid 4d per day."

Bro. Edward Conder, from whose Hole Craft these figures are being taken, notes that in 1336 a Mason received one shilling a day. In 1342-1400 typical wages for Freemasons working on Westminster Abbey ran 4d; 10/6 for two Masons for 21 days; two Masons at 2 shillings per week; two for two weeks 6 shillings; for "Master Yevele Chief Mason," one of the greatest of architects, "100 shillings per annum"; etc.

In 1402 Henry IV forbade Masons to work by the week, or to receive pay on feast days, and ordained that on a day before a holiday when they stopped at 3 P.M. they were to receive only one-half day's pay—"in ye name of Godde." One Royal Act forbade Freemasons to be paid more than 5 shillings per day. In 1495 a statute fixed visages for Freemasons at 4d with meals furnished, 6d without meals during the long-day half of the year, 3d and 5d respectively during the other half; the fad a day began at 5 A.M. In Henry VIII's time a Master received 12d a day; a Warden 5d a week; setters 3 8d per week; clerk of the works, 8d per day; under-clerks, 6d per day. At page 93 of his Gleanings Frown Westminster (Oxford London; 1861) George Gilbert Scott prints a number of specimens of the Westminster Fabric Rolls, the oldest being for 1253 A.D. In that year the average wage for Masons was 1 10d per week. In 1271 an expert Master Mason received 2' 6d per week.

*

WAGES OF OPERATIVE MASONS

In all the Old Constitutions praise is given to Saint Alban because he raised the wages of the Freemasons. Thus the Edinburgh-Kilwinning Manuscript says: "Saint Albans loved Masons well and cherished them much, and made their pay right good, standing by as the realm, did, for he gave them iis. a week, and 3d. to their cheer; for before that time, through all the land, a Mason had but a penny a day and his meat, until Saint Alban amended it."

We may compare this rate of wages in the third century with that of the fifteenth, and we will be surprised at the little advance that was made.

In Grosse and Astle's Antiquarian Repertory (iii, page 58), will be found an extract from the Rolls of Parliament, which contains a Petition, in the year 1443, to Parliament to regulate the price of labour. In it are the following items:

And from the Fest of Mighelmasse unto Ester, a free Mason and a maister carpenter by the day iiid. with mete and drynk, withoute mete and drink iiid., ob.

Tyler or Sclatter, rough mason and meen carpenter, and other artificers concernyng beldyng, by the day iiid., with mete and drynk, and withoute mete and drynke, iiid., ob. And from the Fest of Mighelmasse unto Sister, a free Mason and a maister carpenter by the day iiid with mete and drynk, without mete and drink, iiid., ob.

Tyler, meen carpenter, rough mason, and other artificers aforesaid, by the day iid., ob, with mete and drynk, withoute mete and drynk iiid., and every other werkeman and laborer by the day id., ob, with mete and drynk and withoute mete and drink iiid., and who that lasse deserveth, to take lasse.

*

WAGES OF THE WORKMEN AT THE TEMPLE

Neither the Scriptures, nor Josephus, give us any definite statement of the amount of wages paid, nor the manner in which they were paid, to the workmen who were engaged in the erection of King Solomon's Temple. The cost of its construction, however, must have been immense, since it has been estimated that the

edifice alone consumed more gold and silver than at present exists upon the whole earth; so that Josephus very justly says that "Solomon made all these things for the honor of God, with great variety and magnificence, sparing no cost, but using all possible liberality in adorning the Temple."

We learn, as one instance of this liberality, from the Second Book of Chronicles, that Solomon paid annually to the Tyrian Freemasons, the servants of Hiram, "twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil." The bath was a measure equal to seven and a half gallons wine measure; and the cor or chomer, which we translate by the indefinite word measures contained ten baths; so that the corn, wine, and oil furnished by King Solomon, as wages to the servants of Hiram of Tyre, amounted to one hundred and ninety thousand bushels of the first and one hundred and fifty thousand gallons each of the second and third. The sacred records do not inform us what further wages they received, but we elsewhere learn that King Solomon gave them as a free gift a sum equal to more than thirty-two millions of dollars. The whole amount of wages paid to the Craft is stated to have been about six hundred and seventy-two millions of dollars; but we have no means of knowing how that amount was distributed; though it is natural to suppose that those of the most skill and experience received the highest wages.

The Harodim, or chiefs of the workmen, must have been better paid than the Ish Cabal, or mere labourers. The legend-makers of Freemasonry have not been idle in their invention of facts and circumstances in relation to this Subject, the whole of which have little more for a foundation than the imaginations of the inventors. They form, however, a part of the legendary history of Freemasonry, and are interesting for their ingenuity, and sometimes even for their absurdity (see Penny).

*

MARK MAN

According to Masonic tradition, the Mark Men were the Wardens, as the Mark; Masters were the Masters of the Fellow Craft Lodges, at the building of the Temple. They distributed the marks to the workmen, and made the first inspection of the work, which was afterward to be approved by the overseers. As a Degree, the Mark Man is not recognized in the United States. In England it is sometimes, but not generally, worked as preparatory to the Degree of Mark Master. In Scotland, in 1778, it was given to Fellow Crafts, while the Mark Master was restricted to Master Masons. It was not recognized in the regulations of the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland. Much of the esoteric ritual of the Mark Man has been incorporated into the Mark Master of the American System.

*

MARK MASTER

The Fourth Degree of the American Rite. The traditions of the Degree make it of great historical importance, since by them we are informed that by its influence each Operative Mason at the building of the Temple was known and distinguished, and the disorder and confusion which might otherwise have attended so immense an undertaking was completely prevented. Not less useful is it in its symbolic signification. As illustrative of the Fellow Craft, the Fourth Degree is particularly directed to the inculcation of order, regularity, and discipline. It teaches us that we should discharge all the duties of our several stations with precision and punctuality; that the work of our hands and the thoughts of our hearts should be good and true not unfinished and imperfect, not sinful and defective but such as the Great Overseer and Judge of heaven and earth will see fit to approve as a worthy oblation from his creatures.

If the Fellow Craft's Degree is devoted to the inculcation of learning, that of the Mark Master is intended to instruct us how that learning can most usefully and judiciously be employed for our own honour and the profit of others. And it holds forth to the desponding the encouraging thought that although our motives may sometimes be misinterpreted by our erring fellow mortals, our attainments be underrated, and our reputations be traduced by the envious and malicious, there is one, at least, who sees not with the eyes of man, but may yet make that stone which the builders rejected, the head of the corner. The intimate connection then, between the Second and Fourth Degrees of Freemasonry, is this, that while one inculcates the necessary exercise of all the duties of life, the other teaches the importance of performing them with systematic regularity. The true Mark Master is a type of that man mentioned in the sacred parable, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant:

thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew xxv, 21).

In America, the Mark Master's is the first Degree given in a Royal Arch Chapter. Its officers are a Right Worshipful Master, Senior and Junior Wardens, Secretary, Treasurer, Senior and Junior Deacons, Master, Senior and Junior Overseers. The Degree cannot be conferred when less than six are present, who, in that case, must be the first and last three officers above named. The working tools are the Mallet and Indenting Chisel. The symbolic colour is purple. The Mark Master's Degree is now given in England under the authority of the Grand Lodge of Mark Masters, which was established in June, 1856 and is a Jurisdiction independent of the Grand Lodge. The officers are the same as in America, with the addition of a Chaplain, Director of Ceremonies, Assistant Director, Registrar of Marks, Inner Guard or Time Keeper, and two Stewards. Master Masons are eligible for initiation. Brother Hughan says that the Degree is virtually the same in England, Scotland, and Ireland. It differs, however, in some respects from the American Degree.

In a letter to the Masonic Home Journal, Louisville, Kentucky (see Proceedings, Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons, Michigan, 1920), Companion Alfred A. A. Murray offers the following note to correct an error relating to the Mark Degree in Scotland.

As regards the Mark Degree itself it was not worked in the Fellow Craft Lodges, but there were really two Degrees, namely, that of Mark Man, which was given to a Fellow Craft, and that of Mark Master, which was given to a Master Mason. The Degree of Mark Man was worked down to within fifty years ago by various Craft lodges, and given to Fellow Crafts. The Degree of Mark Master was conferred as a separate Degree in the same way as the Royal Arch, and was expressly cut off by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, about 1800, in the same way that the Royal Arch and the Temple were cut off. Before that date they used to be worked by an inner circle of the Lodge as a sort of side issue not under the Grand Lodge of Scotland at all.

The Royal Arch and the Temple were, after 1800, organized as governing Bodies, and then the Mark Master Degree was taken under the sole control of the Supreme Grand Chapter, and continued so 'til, as I say, about fifty years ago, then an agreement was made between the Grand Lodge and the Supreme Chapter that the two Degrees of Mark Man and Mark Master were to be amalgamated, and were to be conferred under the authority of either Body but only upon Master Masons. It is wise to get a clear statement made upon this point, because I observe a very large amount of mistaken information is being granted from time to time, which is derived from confusion of thought and want of knowledge, and results in mistaken action. Brother W. J. Hughan (Trestle Board, California, volume xxnii, No. 4, October, 1919) wrote:

During the centuries which immediately preceded the establishment of the premier Grand Lodge of England and the World, the mark was directly connected with operative and speculative Freemasonry, and from time immemorial, it has been the custom for the skilled Craftsman to chisel his distinctive Mark on the stones he fashioned, so as to indicate his workmanship. It is this fact that differentiates the Mark Degree from all other ceremonies additional to the first three, and justified the formation of the Mark Grand Lodge, nearly fifty years ago, so as to take under its wing those lodges which worked with interesting and suggestive ceremony the English Craft agreement excluding it from the formally recognized series, according to the Articles of Union of A.D. 1813-4.

The antiquity of Mark Masonry cannot be doubted. Operatively considered and even speculatively, it has enjoyed special prominence for centuries; records of the custom being followed by speculative Brethren, according to existing records, dating back to 1600, in which year, on June 8, "Ye principal warden and chief master of maisons, Wm. Schaw, master of work to ye Kingis Maistie," met members of the Lodge of Edinburgh - now No. 1--at Holyrood House, at which meeting the Laird of Auchinleck was present, and attested the Minutes of the Assembly by his Mark as did the Operatives, in accordance with the Schaw Statutes of December 28, 1598, which provided: "That the day of reassauyng, or receiving, of said fallow of craft or master be ord'lie buikit and his name and Mark insert in the said buik."

That theoretical Masons selected their Marks just as the Operatives did during the seventeenth century is abundantly manifest, by an examination of the old Scottish records of that period. One of the most noteworthy instances out of many is the Mark Book of the Lodge of Aberdeen - now No. 1 tri-which started in 1670 A.D., and is signed by forty-nine members, all of whom but two have their Marks inserted opposite their names. The

Master of the 'Honorable Lodge of Aberdeen' in that year was Harrie Elphinston, Tutor of Airth and Collector of the King's Customs, and only a fourth part of the members were Operative Masons, the roll of Brethren including the Earl of Findlater, the Earl of Dumferline, Lord Pitsligo, the Earl of Errolle, a professor of mathematics, several ministers, doctors and other professional men and tradesmen, such as wrights, or carpenters, plaiters, glaziers, etc. The names of the apprentices were entered in another list, the Marks chosen by such being evidently similar to the fathers in several instances (see Marks of the Craft).

When the special and elaborate ceremony, with a distinctive legend, was first used it is not possible to decide, but probably about the middle of the eighteenth century, soon after the arrangement of the Royal Arch as a separate Degree. The oldest preserved records date from the year 1769, and there is no lack of evidence as to the observance of the custom in Speculative Lodges during that century and later either in separate Lodges or under the wing of the Royal Arch. The Mark continued to be worked in England as an unauthorized ceremony until the year 1856, when the Mark Grand Lodge was founded and has proved a conspicuous success, having ultimately secured the support of all the 'time immemorial' and other Lodges in the country, besides having warranted several hundreds of Lodges to work the Degree in England and the Colonies and dependencies of the British Crown.

The ceremony is very popular, especially in North America, and is recognized by all Grand Chapters of Royal Arch Masons there and elsewhere, excepting in England. The Grand Lodge of Ireland includes it with the additional Degrees belonging to the other Masonic Grand Bodies recognized in it and acting in union with it, and the Grand Lodge of Scotland authorizes the Mark to be conferred on Master Masons and the secrets only to be communicated in presence of those who have taken the step in a Lodge entitled to grant it. The Mark Grand Lodge in recent years has incorporated the Mark Man with the Mark Master; and wisely so, as it was the former that was conferred on Fellow Crafts, and the latter on Master Masons during the eighteenth century.

*

MARK MASTER'S WAGES

Companion George W. Warvelle commented thus upon the long established custom of a penny a day paid as the wages of a Mark Master:

This ridiculously low wage scale seems to have been the work of the early American Ritualists. I have in my possession two old English rituals, of Mark Man and Mark Mason, in both of which there is a specification of wages. In the former the rate was 'nine shekels, equal to one pound, two shillings, six pence of our money,' and in the latter it gave 'twenty-five shekels, equal to three pounds, two shillings, six pence of our money.' What the present rate may be in England I am unable to say, but no Englishman would work for the beggarly stipend paid in the American Mark Lodges. I am inclined to believe, however, that our English Brethren have fixed these abnormally high prices to make up for the actual wages formerly paid in England to the Operative Craft. As late as the year 1689 the wages of Freemasons were prescribed by law at one shilling and four pence a day. To demand more subjected them to severe penalties. In fact, it was really the passing of restrictive laws commencing say, about 1356, that led to the present speculative institution, and Masonic scholars of eminence assign the year 1424 as the cessation of English Freemasonry as a strictly operative association (from Tyler Keystone, Michigan, December, 1914).