THE MASON'S CONFESSION commonly called the THE DUNDEE MANUSCRIPT attributed to the year 1727

Transcribed from the <u>Scots Magazine</u> for March, 1755. vol.xvii. pp 132-7.

The Scots Magazine MDCCLV Volume XVII.

Ne quid falsi dicere audient. ne quid veri non aude at.

Edinburgh; Printed by Sands, Donaldson, Murray and Cochran.

Part for March, 1755. Pages 132 to 137:-

To the author of the Scots Magazine.

SIR.

Some Some time ago a Some time ago a M ason living at a considerable distance from me, whom I knew to have the character of a Some tim religious religious man, sent me a long paper, religious man, sent me a long paper, all of his own handwriting, and subscribed byreligious notified the oath word, and other secrets of his craft. When he wrote that paper, and for a good time before, he was concept by bodily distress; and he represents his having been brought under a HisHis narrative is his narrative is intermixed with reasonings from many texts of scripture, and otherwise, about theHis narrative is intermixed with reasonings from many texts of scripture, and otherwise, about theHis narrative is intermixed with reasonings from many texts of scripture, and otherwise, about theHis narrative is intermixed with reasonings from many texts of scripture, and otherwise, about theHis narrative is intermixed with reasonings from many texts of scripture, and otherwise, about theHis narrative is intermixed with reasonings from many texts of scripture, and otherwise, about theHis narrative is intermixed. He considers the oath as Profane and abominable, what was sinful for him to take and sinful to keep; he treats secrets which are therein sworn to, as a compund of superstitious ceremonies, ly thethe whole as a horrid wickedness. At the same time, he urges me to pub engagedengaged in that oath, and for warning others to beware of the snare; engaged in that oath, and for warning others to be and the Lodge he belonged to.

However, However, I have only drawn out his narrative, which I here offer you, inHowever, I have only drawn out his narrative, which I leaving the world to judge of the matter as they please.

He informs me that the account heHe informs me that the account he gives is only of what heHe informs me that the account he gives is whichwhich he entered; without regard to some circumstantial variations which he entered; without regard to some circumstantial variations they they agree in substance. And indeed an absolute uniform they agree in substance. And indeed an absolute uniformity among the follows, the whole affair must be committed only to their memories, and share in the common fate of oral traditions.

A mason's confession of the oath, word and other secrets of his craft.

These These are to testify, These are to testify, concerning that oath, word and other secrets held among the corporation These are to testif

taken under the same, by sundry of them gathered to gether and met at D_____ about the year 1727.

Concerning the oath

AfterAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses theAfter one comes in at the door, he that keeps the door, looses the hishis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires him to deliver any metal thing he has upon him. He is madehis breeches, and requires

ImmediatelyImmediately after that oath, theImmediately after that oath, the administrator of it says, "YouImmediately after that oath, the takentaken under thattaken under that oath, I knew not what these secrets were which I was not to divulge, havingtaken under that oath, I lead to one one person in the Lodge instructed me alittle about their one person in the Lodge instructed and another person in the Lodge, whom I then chused to be my instructor till that time twelve-month, many called my intender; ---- There is a yearly imposing of ---- There is a yearly imposing of that oath in admissions among the said craft that it is termed, being the 27th of December.

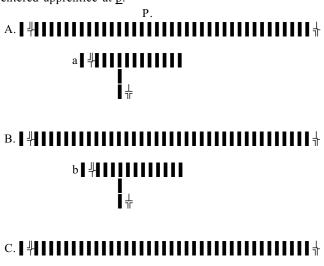
Concerning the word.

After After the oath, After the oath, a word After the oath, a word in the scriptures was shown me, which, said one, is the mason-word. The word. They say <u>Boas</u> is the mason-word, and <u>Jachin</u> a fellow-craft-word. The former is shewn to an entered apprentice a fellow-craft-word. The has sworn the oath; and the latter is shewn to one that has been ahe has sworn the oath; and the latter is shewn to one that a higher degree in their lodge, after he has sworn the oath again, or declared his approbation of it.

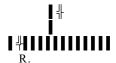
Concerning the other secrets

I shall next shew a cluster of different sorts of their secrets.

First, First, then, three chalk First, then, three chalk lines being drawn on the floor, about an equal distance, as at A.B and C: the master of t stands at <u>P.</u>, and the fellow-crafts, with the wardens and entered apprentices, on, and the fellow-crafts, with the wardens and entered apprentice at p.



ff



sayssays the master, "Come forward". says the prentice "I wsays the master, "Come forward". says the prentice "I wot says the mas you." you." you." you." no coming over the line with one foot, while he sets the other square shoulder, and says, "Good day, gentlemen."

Coming Coming over the second line with one foot, while he sets the other square off at <u>b.</u>, he lays the right hand on the left side and and says, "God be here". Coming over the third line with one foot, while he sets the other squareand says, "God be here". Coming rightright hand on the right kneeright hand on the right knee and says, "God bless all the honourable brethre his body when on the bare knee, so he comes over these lines setting his feet thrice in the form of a square.

question. What say you? <u>answer</u>. Here stand I. (with his feet in the form of a square) younger and la. Here stand I. (with his f apprentice. ready to serve my master from the Monday morning to the Saturday night, in all lawful employments.

- Q. Who made you a Who made you a mason? A. God Almighty, a holy will made me a mason; God Almighty, a holy will made me a mason prentices made me a mason. N.B. To the best of my remembrance the whole lodge present did not exceed twenty persons; but so I was taught to answer which I can give no reason for.
- Q. Where's your master? Where's your master? A. He's He's not so far off but he may be found. _____ Then if the square be at hand, it onon the stone at which they are working; and if not, the feet are set on the stone at which they are working; and if not, the feet are set in posture posture he stands in while he repeats posture he stands in while he repeats his secrets and so the square is acknowledged to be master
- Q. How set you the How set you the square? A. on two irons in the wall; if two will not three will; and that makes both square and level.

 N.B. If they ca, in two irons above and one below, it If they ca, in two irons above and one below, it makes If they ca, in two irons aloca, in but one. And the reason it is said set square and not to hang it is They're not to hang their master.
- Q. What's a mason? A. He's a mason that's a mason born, a mason sworn and a mason by trade.
- Q. Where keep you Where keep you the Where keep you the key of your lodge? A. Between my tongue and my teeth, and under a lap of thethe secrets of the secrets of my heart lies; for if I tell anything in the lodge, my tongue is to be taken out from beneath mythe secrets of mymy heart out from beneath my left oxter, and my body to be buried within themy heart out from beneath my left oxter, and my body to within the twenty-four hours.
- Q. What's the key of your lodge? A. A well hung tongue.
- Q. Are you a mason? A. Yes.
- Q. How shall I know that. A. By sig By signs, tokens and the By signs, tokens and the points of my entry. Master Shew me one of the Shew Shew me the first and I'll shew you the second. So the master gives him the sign., with the left hand up the side. So the master government by Italian to the side. So the master government by Italian to the side of the second finger from the thumb of the other's right hand.
- Q. How many points are there in the word? A. Five.
- Q. What are What are these five? A. The word is one, the sign is two, the grip is three, the penalty is four and heal The word is one, the is five.

- Q. Where was you entered? A. In a just and perfect lodge.
- Q. What makes a just and perfect lodge? A. Five fellowcrafts, and seven entered apprentices. N.B. They do not restrict themselves to this number, though they mention it in form of questions but will do the thing with fewer.
- Q. Where Where should the mason-word be given? A. On the top of a mountain, from the crow of On the top On the top of On the top of On the top On the top On the On
- Q. How many points are there in the square? A. Five.
- Q. What are What are these five? A. The square, The square, our master, under God, is one; The level, a two, the plumb rule, a three, the haruler four and the gage is five.

The The day that The day that a prentice comes under oath, he gets his choice of a mark The day that a prentice comes under oath, he gets his

soso did I chuse this, so did I chuse this, (The figure is in the MS.) which cost one mark Scots. Herebyso did I chuse this, (The figure is in question, where got you this mark? A. I laid down one and took up another.

If If one should come to a mason working at a stone, and say, "That stone lies Boss", the prentice is taught to answer, "It is not so Bass but it may be filled up again." or "It is not so boss as your head would be if your harms were out."

- Q. When doth mason wear his flower? A. Between Martinmas and Yule.
- Q. What is mason's livery? A. A yellow cap and Blue breeches __ meaning the compasses.
- Q. How many Jewels are there in your lodge? A. Three.
- Q. What are these three? A. A square p avement, a d inted ashlar, and a broached dornal.
- Q. What's the square pavement for? A. For a master-mason to draw his ground draughts on.
- Q. What's the dinted ashlar for? A. To adjust the square.
- Q. What's the broached domal for? A. For me, the younger and last-entered prentice to learn to broach upon.

lodge is a place where masons assemble and work, Hence that assembly or society of masons is called a lodge.

- Q. How high How high should a mason's seige be? A. Two steeples, a Two steeples, a back, and a cover, knee-high all together. -----No is taught, that the cowans stage is build up of whin stones, that it may so on tumble down again; is taught, that in the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather toin the lodge, that his neck may be under the drop in rainy weather to in the lodge.
- Q. Where lies Where lies the cappel-tow? A. Eighteen or nineteen foot and a half from the lodge door; and at the end of it lies the cavell-mell, to dress the stones with. --- N.B. There is no such thing among them as a cappel-tow.
- Q. Where place ye in Where place ye in the lodge? A. On On the sunny side of a hill, that the sun may ascend on't when it rises. ----N.B.
- Q. How stands your lodge? A. East and West, as kirks and chapels did of old.
- Q.Why so? A. Because they are holy; and so we ought to be.
- Q. How many lights are there in your lodge? A. Three.
- Q. What are these three? A. The south-east, south and south-west.
- Q. How many levels are there in your lodge? A. Three.
- Q. What are these What are these three? A. The sun, the The sun, the sea and the level .--- N.B. I can give no reason why the sun an

calledcalled two of their levels, but so they will have it. --- To be particular in called two of their levels, but so they will have it. --- To south-eastsouth-east corner of the lodge, and the fellow-crafts next to him, and next to them the wouth-east corner of the lodge, and prentices, and how their seiges stand distant from another, and the tools they work with, is not worth while.

Q. Where lay you the key of your lodge? A. Two feet from the lodge door, beneath a green divot. Two feet from the lodge door, beneath a ofof their oath under which the secrets of the lodge are hid from the drop; that is from the un-entered prentice, or any others not of their society, whom they call drops.

Q. How long should a prentice wear his shirt? A. Till there Till there be nine knots in Till there be nine knots in it; three up the back, an arm.

There There are likewise various other signs, which they distinguish or discern themselves by. As, if one There are likewise various other and and to send for another mason, he does it by sending a piece of paper, with a square folded in at thear hehe squeese it in his hand, when it is opened out, the mark where the square point was folded in, is the thing that's noticed.

Or, Or, if he send his glove, then the square put on Or, if he send his glove, then the square put on the Or, if he send his glove, then the squathing.

ToTo find another by drinking, one says, "Drink". The other answers "No". To find another by drinking, one says, "Drink". The other an answers, "A fter you is good manners" Again he saith "Drink I warrant you". And then he takes it.

Coming Coming to a house where masons may be, he is to knowck three knocks Coming to a house where masons may be, he is to knowck thethe sign of the right hand up the left hand up the left side; or if riding, he is to strike the horse of their language is not known, he is to kneel with one knee, holding up his hand before the masons.

IfIf one If one coming into a company, wants to know whether there be a mason in the same; as he comes If one coming into a company, wants to too stumble, and says, "The days for seeing, the night's for heto stumble, and says, "There"There is no difference between a dun cow and "There is no difference between a dun cow and a dun"There is no difference between sayssays the fellow? He answers, "I saysays the fellow? He answers, "I say nothing but what I may say again.says the fellow? He answer a dun humble cow."

A mason's horse is found out among others by the left foot stirrup being laid up.

ToTo know if one or more masons To know if one or more masons be in a company which one meets on To know if one or more masons there, he says, "A man walks." If more be there the answer is "Men walk" Then says he "Good men and masters met youyou be: God bless all your company." Or he gives the sign, by the right hand above they crafts due guard. and the grip, by clasping his fingers at the wrist, next at the. and the grip, by clasping his fingers at the wrist, next at footfoot to foot, knee to knee, ear to ear and says "Great you, gfoot to foot, knee to knee, ear to ear and s

II shall now give an account of what they call the Monday's lesson. ---- When the prentice comes to door, door, he is to knock three knocks; a lesser, a more and a more. If none answers, hedoor, he is to knock three knocks; a lesser, a more at the dishes and sweep the house.

Q. How far is the prentice to carry off the ashes? A. As far off until he see the smoke come out of the chimney head.

After After that he goes to his master's After that he goes to his master's chamber door, and knocks three knocks; After that he goes to his master you waking? If he answer, "Not so sound but what I may be wakened." then he aa morn is it? a morn is it? He answers, "It is a fair morn is it? He answers, "It is a fair morning; the wind's in the west, and the sun's in the mastermaster says, "Who told you that?" master says, "Who told you that?" The prentice answers, "he met with a hather man" "Ay (say ay soon up at the morn.

 street, street, with his right foot at his master, a left, sword point, within strokestreet, with his right foot at his master, a left, sword point, feetfeet and feet and an half of the lodge-door, there he prentice leaves him. And he goes to sort up thefeet and an half of the lodge-door, order; after which, he calls in the men to work.

And this is the amount of that inventer matter; or all I can remember that is material in it.

P.S. There was printed, in the year 1747 (ix.404)

A protestation and A protestation and declinature from the society of Operative masons in the lodge at Torphichen, to meet at A protestate kirk.kirk. Dec 27, 1739: subscribed, of that dat, at Kirknewton, by <u>James Chrystie</u>: with a subscribed adherence, at the same place of the same date, by <u>James Aikman</u>, <u>Andrew Purdie</u> and and <u>John Chrystie</u>: and with another subscribed adherence, at Dalkeith, July 27, 1747, by <u>John Miller</u>.

InIn that paper, they renounce the mason-oath, asIn that paper, they renounce the mason-oath, as finding the same "sinful and unlawful". and and therefore not binding upon their conscience." They declare, that it is imposed and and therefore not binding upon the ceremonies ceremonies and circumstances as are in themselves sinful and unwarrantable andceremonies and circumstances kneelingkneeling up on their bare knees, and the naked arm upon the Bible;"kneeling up on their bare knees, and the naked arm upon the Bi without without allowing a copy of the said oath and time duly and delwithout allowing a copy of the said oath and time duly and thereof, thereof, or things, sworn to therein, never being under their seriousthereof, or things, sworn to therein, never being under their seriousthereof, or things, sworn to therein, never being under their seriousthereof, or things, sworn to therein, never being under their seriousthereof, or things, sworn to therein, never being under their seriousthereof, or things, sworn to therein, never being under their seriousthereof, or things, sworn to therein, never being under their seriousthereof, or things, sworn to therein, never being under their seriousthereof, or things, sworn to therein, never being under their seriousthereof, or things, sworn to therein, never being under their seriousthereof, or things, sworn to the seriousthereof, and the seriousthereof, an seeingseeing the person swearing knows what he is swearing to;" -- That they "do look upon the dreadful wseeing the person sw superstition, superstition, idolatory, blasphemy and profanation of the namesuperstition, idolatory, blasphemy and profanation of the name toto that oath, altoto that oath, altogether to that oath, altogether unbecoming the name and professions of Christians; by the which unl manymany are rashlymany are rashly and inconsiderately precipitated and slily drawnmany are rashly and inconsiderately precipitated and ereere ever theyere ever they can be aware of it." --- What "it is ere ever they can be aware of it." --- What "it is an appending the seal of a uncommonuncommon imprecations, to a blank, yea to worse, to ridiculous nonsense and superstition: nonsense, uncommon imprecations aggravation, aggravation, of aggravation, of profaning the sacred scriptures, by intermixing them therewith), only fit for the amusementag inin a winter-evening; most of the secrets being idlein a winter-evening; most of the secrets being idle stuff or lyes, and other parts of it super and and idolaters." -- Moreover, they declare, and idolaters." -- Moreover, they declare, that the secrecyand idolaters." -- Moreover, the world in print; concerning which, (they say)

therethere have been many lyes andthere have been many lyes and equivocations, in denying the same, though they contain there have been

I am etc.

D.B.

N.B. With With his letter, ab With his letter, above inserted, Mr. D.B. sent us the paper he mentions (132), which is dated Nov 13, 17 anotheranother of the same handwriting and subscription, dated Febanother of the same handwriting and subscription, dated Feb 20, 1752 sentsent to thesent to the mason, for explaining some things in his papers, and the mason's answers. Having compared thesent to the mason narrative with these papers, we find arrative with these papers, we find that it is faithfull taken from them; so that whatever shall conduct, which it does not become us conduct, which it does not become us either to justify or condem n, the auther