

Organization of the Grand Lodge of England

by Albert Mackey

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EARLY MASONRY IN BRITAIN

From the time of the conquest of Britain by Claudius to the final evacuation of the island by the Romans in the beginning of the 5th century, a period of about three hundred and fifty years had elapsed. During this long occupation the Romans had held, if not undisputed, at least dominant sway over the greater part of the island. Roman legions had been permanently stationed in different towns; Roman colonies had been established; Roman citizens had immigrated and settled in greater numbers; Roman arts and civilization had been introduced; and, as we have already shown in a preceding chapter, the native inhabitants had become almost Romanized in their manners and customs. It is not to be supposed that the domination for so long a continuity of years of a powerful empire, distinguished for its cultivation of the arts, should not have been productive of the effects that must always result from the protracted mixture of a refined with an uncivilized people.

Among the arts introduced by the Romans, there is none that could have so much attracted the attention of the natives as that of architecture. Of all the methods of human industry that are intended to supply the wants or promote the comforts of life, the art of building is placed in the most prominent position. All the arts says Cicero, which relate to humanity have a certain bond of union and a kind of kinship to each other. But it must be acknowledged that the art which proposes to secure to man a protection from the elements and a shelter from the inclemencies of the seasons must hold the highest place in the family scale. It is the first art that man cultivates in his progress from utter barbarism to civilization. It is the most salient mark of that progress.

No sooner did the primitive Troglodytes emerge from their cave dwellings than they began to erect, however rudely, huts for their habitation. And so when a nation or a tribe begins to make an advancement in civilization, its first step is to improve its mode of dwelling. When conquest brings a superior race to ail ignorant and uncultured people, the industrial arts of the former are speedily diffused. among the latter, and architecture, as the most striking and the most useful, more speedily attracts the attention and is more readily imitated than any other. When the Romans first invaded Britain they found the country inhabited by various tribes deriving their origin from different nomadic stocks, and therefore somewhat heterogeneous in their condition and their habits. The Belgians, for instance, who had passed over from Gaul and occupied, by the right of conquest, the coast bordering on the British Channel, were an agricultural people, and are de-

scribed by Camar as being more advanced in the arts of civilized life than the tribes in the interior who were pastoral, who lived on milk and flesh and were clothed in skins. Mela Pomponius, the Roman geographer, who wrote about the same time, describes the Britons as being in general uncivilized and much behind the continental nations in their social culture. Fields and cattle constituted their only wealth.

Mr. Wright, in an Essay of the Ethnology of South Britain at the Extinction of the Roman Government, says that "we may form a notion best and most correctly of the mode of life and of the degree of civilization of the ancient Britons, by comparing them with what we know of those of the wild Irish and of the Celtic highlanders of Scotland in the Middle Ages. Living in sects or clans, each collected round a petty chieftain, who had his residence or place of refuge in the least accessible part of his little territory, they had no towns, properly so called, and no tie of union except the temporary one of war or a nominal dependence on some powerful chieftain who had induced by some means, a certain number of the smaller clans to acknowledge his sovereignty." + Their houses, says Turner, were chiefly formed of reeds or wood, and were usually seated in the midst of woods, a space being cleared on which they built their huts and folded their cattle.++

(+ Thomas Wright, "Essays on Archaeological Subjects," vol. i., p. 68.)

(++ "History of the Anglo-Saxons," vol. i., p. 64.)

The improved condition of Britain, in consequence of their intercourse with their more civilized conquerors, is thus described by Mr. Wright: ("Essays on Archaeological Subjects," vol. i., p. 69.)

"Under the Romans, on the contrary, Britain consisted politically of a number of cities or towns, each possessing its own independent municipal government, republican in form and principle within themselves, but united under the empire through the fiscal government of the province to which they were tributary. Each of these cities inhabited by foreigners to the island, was expected to defend itself if attacked, while three legions and numerous bodies of auxiliaries protected the province from hostilities from without and held it internally in obedience to the imperial government. The country was unimportant and the towns were everything."

The numerous inscriptions found in England in recent times prove another fact, namely, that the legionary troops which were sent from Rome to Britain did not pay merely ephemeral or transitory visits, from which no important influence could have been derived, but that they remained in the same locality during the whole occupation of the country by the Romans, and actually constituted military colonies, making homes in the towns in

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which they lived, and insensibly imparting the use of the Latin language and the adoption of Roman manners to the people. So much, in fact, did they become identified with the native inhabitants, that they often made common cause with them in tumults or insurrections against the imperial government.

The result of this constant intercommunication must have been just that which might anywhere, under such circumstances, have been expected. The architects who accompanied the legions in their visits to Britain and who remained with them during its occupation did not confine their labors to the construction of military works, such as the erection of defensive walls and fortresses. They engaged during the period tranquility which had been secured by the presence of strong bodies of troops in the peaceful avocations of their art. They organized their Colleges of Artificers, which, considering the works in which they were engaged, might correctly be designated as Colleges of Masons; they began the building of temples and other public edifices; they took to their assistance the more intelligent natives, and introduced their Roman architecture by methods which imitated those of the Colleges at home.

The rude huts of the native Britons were replaced by more comfortable houses, and the art of building, under the guidance of the Roman Masons, assumed a new form and was prosecuted by new methods, which thus introduced the character and customs of the Roman Colleges into the island, and thus by the example of associated workmen continued the chain of connection which was to be more fully extended in Anglo-Saxon times by the establishment of building guilds. Tacitus has shown us, in his *Life of Agricola*, how and at what an early period this system of Romanizing Britain began. In the last quarter of the 1st Christian century, Agricola arrived in Britain, having been appointed governor of the province. The island, which had hardly yet recovered from the recent insurrection of Queen Boadicea, was still in an insurgent condition. The first efforts of Agricola were of course directed to the restoration of peace and order, and to the correction of civil and political abuses.

His next business was to introduce a system of regulations whose tendency should be to civilize the natives. He encouraged them, therefore, says Tacitus, + by his exhortations and aided them by public assistance to build temples, courts of justice, and commodious dwellings. He praised those who were cheerful in their obedience; he reproached those who were slow and uncomplying, and thus excited a spirit of emulation. He established a plan of education and caused the sons of the chiefs to be instructed in learning and to cultivate the Latin language. The Roman dress was adopted by

many, and the Britons, allured by the luxurious example of their conquerors, began to erect baths and porticoes and to indulge in sumptuous banquets. To do all this was not within the narrow scope of native skill. In the erection of these improved edifices the Britons, being only partly reclaimed from their pristine barbarity, must have invoked and received the advice and assistance of the Roman architects.

(+ "Vita Agricolze," cap. xxi.)

The cooperative and guild-like methods of building practiced by these, as well as their skill in architecture, was thus imparted to the Britons. What had been wisely begun by Agricola was as wisely imitated by his successors in the provincial government, and the Roman Collegiate system was completely established in the island long before the extinction of the Roman domination and the fall of the Roman empire. That the builders or Masons introduced into Rome, or educated there by their Roman Masters, had increased to a very great number is evident from a remark of the panegyrist Eumenius in his Panegyric of the Emperor Maximian. He describes the ancient Gallic city of Bibracte, afterward Augustodunum, but now the modern Autun, which abounds in the remains of Roman architecture, many of them in a good state of preservation. The re-edification of private houses and the construction of temples and other buildings with which Maximian had embellished the city, he attributes to the concourse of architects whom the emperor had brought from Britain, which province, he says, abounded with them. The number of these Roman architects in Britain was so great and their skill so preeminent, that, as we shall hereafter see they were exported into many of the continental cities to construct buildings in the Roman method.

The remains of Roman buildings found at different times in England and a multitude of ancient inscriptions testify to the fact that the conquerors had brought their architectural art with them into Britain. But the mere existence of pieces of architecture would not alone serve to establish the connection of these Roman architects and their British disciples with the mediaeval guilds. In this way we might, as Anderson has done, write a history of architecture, but would hardly be authorized to call it a history of Freemasonry. It is necessary to show that the Roman architects not only brought with them their skill in the art of building but also introduced the associated methods of organization which had been practiced by the ancient Roman Colleges. Of this we have ample evidence.

The Reverend James Dallaway, in his Collections for an Historical Account of Masters and Free Masons, appended to his Discourses upon Architecture in England, says that the first notice that occurs of an associated

body of Roman artificers who had established themselves in Britain is a votive inscription in which the College of Masons dedicate a temple to Neptune and Minerva, and to the safety of the family of Claudius Caesar. It was discovered at Chichester in the year 1725. It is a slab of gray Sussex marble and was found by the workmen who were digging a cellar and who ignorantly or carelessly fractured it. Having been pieced together the slab is now preserved at Goodwood, the seat of the Duke of Richmond, near Chichester.

In his History of West Sussex, Mr. Dallaway gives a facsimile of the slab and the inscription, which is in the following words: EPTVMO ET MINERVAE TEMPLVM B.SALVTE. DO. DIVINAE AVCTORITA. CLAVD. GIDVBNI. R. IC. . .CAI. BRIT. . . GIVM. FABROR. E. QVI. IN. FO. C.D.S.D. DONANTE. AREAM. ... ENTE. PVDENTINI. FIL.

The original is here given, to furnish to the unlearned reader an idea of the character of the inscriptions, which are the palpable monuments of the labors of these Colleges of Artificers, which have been found in all countries into which the Romans extended their power. The literal, but in some places conjectural, translation of this inscription is as follows: "The College of Artificers and they who there fireside over the sacred rites by authority of King Cogidubnus, the Legate of Tiberius Claudius Augustus in Britain, dedicated this Temple to Neptune and Minerva, for the welfare of the imperial family. Pudens, the son of Pudentinus, having given the site." In an article on the Origin and Progress of Gothic Architecture, by Governor Pownall, inserted in the 9th volume of the Archaeologia of the London Society of Antiquaries, this subject of the influence of the Roman artists on the native Britons is exhibited in an interesting point of view.

When the Romans conquered and held possession of our isle, says Governor Pownall, they erected every sort of building and edifice of stone or of a mixture of stone and brick, and universally built with the circular arch. The British learned their arts from these Masters. But the Continent being more subject to the ravages of invading barbarians than the isolated province of Britain, many of the Gaulish cities and the fortresses on the Rhine were destroyed. And when Constantius Chlorus resolved, at the close of the 3rd century, to rebuild them, he sent to Britain for architects to execute the work of re-edification. By this withdrawal of the builders from the island of Britain and by transferring them to the Continent, Britain itself soon lost the knowledge which it had formerly acquired of the Roman architecture. But after the establishment of the Christian religion in the empire, missionaries being sent to the provinces to convert the inhabitants, they brought with them from Rome not only the new religion but a

revived knowledge of the arts, and especially of architecture, which was necessary for the building of churches. As to the influence produced upon the Britons by their conversion to Christianity, Camden tells us that no sooner was the name of Christ preached in the English nation, than with a most fervent zeal they consecrated themselves to it and laid out their utmost endeavors to promote it by discharging all the duties of Christian piety, by erecting churches and endowing them; so that no part of the Christian world could show either more or richer monasteries. + Thus the skill, which for a time had been suspended if not lost, was again revived by the architects and builders who were again brought from Rome to Britain by the Christian missionaries, who, says Pownall, were the restorers of the Roman architecture in stone.

(+ Camden, "Britannia," p. cxxxii.)

The huge buildings of stone erected by the monks in England, ought perhaps to be attributed to a later period when the Saxons had gained possession of the island. But as Christianity had been introduced into England before that period and under the Roman domination, we may accede to the hypothesis that some of that kind of work was done at that early period. We may, therefore, grant a large amount of plausibility to that part of the Legend of the Craft which reports the tradition that under the usurped reign of Carausius, St. Alban had organized the fraternity of Masons and bestowed upon them his patronage. Whether the Legend is correct or not in attributing this important work to the protomartyr, it may at least be accepted as traditionally preserving the historical fact that Freemasonry was reorganized after the Roman method by the Christian missionaries. There is abundant evidence in the old chronicles that the method of building in stone and with circular arches was always designated as *opus Romanum* or the Roman work, and an edifice so constructed was said to be built *more Romanum*, or according to the Roman method.

The error of the legendists, however, is that they attributed personally to Carausius, the usurper of the imperial power, the patronage of Masonry and the appointment of St. Alban as his chief architect or Master Mason; an error in which they have been followed by Anderson and all other Masonic writers. Of this statement there is no competent historical evidence. Bede, Matthew of Westminster, and all the other old chroniclers, describe Carausius as a man of very mean extraction, treacherous to the government which employed him, unfaithful to the people whom he was sent to protect, sacrificing their interests to his own greed for spoil, and distinguished only for his ability as a soldier. Of the piety and Christian constancy of Alban the same writers are lavish in their praises, but they make

no reference to his skill as an architect or to his labors under Carausius as a builder. Even of his martyrdom there are said to be great chronological difficulties. Matthew of Westminster places its date eleven years after the death of Carausius. This would not militate against his previous employment by Carausius as the steward of his household, to use the words of Anderson, and the Master of his works, if there were any historical evidence of the fact.

If we appeal to the testimony of Camden, whose laborious researches have left no authority uncollected and no statement unexamined which refer to the early history of Britain under the Romans, we shall find no support for the traditions of the legendists or for their expansion by Anderson and the writers who have servilely followed him. Of Carausius we only learn from Camden that after his reconciliation with Maximian, he governed Britain in perfect peace, and that he repaired the wall at the mouth of the Clud and fortified it with seven castles. (Camden, "Britannia," p. lxxiv.)

The only reference made by Camden to St. Alban is in a passage where he says that toward the end of Diocletian's and Maximian's reign a long and bloody persecution broke out in the Western Church and many Christians suffered martyrdom, among the chief of whom he names Albanus Verolamiensis or St. Alban. But he makes no allusion to him as an architect, nor does he mention the name of the apocryphal Amphibalus. Further on he attributes to the town of Verulam the honor of having given birth to St. Alban, whom he calls a man justly eminent for his piety and steadiness in the Christian faith; who with an invincible constancy of mind suffered martyrdom the first man in Britain. + He relates the legends which were extant in connection with his passion, but while he dwells on his piety and his constancy to the faith which gave him all his fame, he says nothing of his labors as an architect nor does he in any way connect him with Carausius. (+ Camden, "Britannia," p. 296.)

We must, therefore, reject the whole story of Carausius and St. Alban as apocryphal; so far as it implies that the Emperor was a great patron of Masonry and the Saint his Master Workman, we find no historical foundation for it; but we may accept it as a mythical statement, the true interpretation of which is that there was a revival of Masonry in England toward the time of the extinction of the Roman domination, through the influence of the Christian missionaries, a fact for the truth of which we have, as has already been seen, sufficient authority. Anderson says that the true old Masonry departed from Britain with the Roman legions; for though many Roman families had settled in the south and were blended with the Britons, who had been well educated in the science and the art, yet the subsequent

wars, confusions, and revolutions in this island, ruined ancient learning, till all the fine artists were dead without exception. ("Constitutions," second edition, p. 59.)

Mr. Fergusson, a more learned and more accurate writer than Anderson, has arrived at almost the same conclusion. He says: When Rome withdrew her protecting care, France, Spain, and Britain relapsed into, and for centuries remained sunk in, a state of anarchy and barbarism as bad if not worse than that in which Rome had found them three or four centuries before. It was in vain to expect that the hapless natives could maintain either the arts or the institutions with which Rome had endowed them. But Fergusson subsequently makes a very important admission which greatly modifies the opinion he had just expressed when, in continuing the paragraph, he says: But it is natural to suppose that they would remember the evidences of her greatness and her power, and would hardly go back for their sepulchers to the unchambered mole-hill barrows of their forefathers, but attempt something in stone, though only in such rude fashion as the state of the arts among them enabled them to execute. This is all that the theory advanced in this work contends for. The assertion of Anderson is altogether too sweeping and general. That of Fergusson admits that the influences of Roman domination had not been entirely obliterated by the departure of the legions. Rome, which had administered the government for centuries, could hardly fail, to use his own language, to leave some impress of her magnificence in lands which she had so long occupied. The concurrent testimony of all historians will not permit us to deny or to doubt that after the extinction of the Roman dominion in Britain, there was decadence of architecture as well as of the other arts. But this did not amount to a total destruction, but only to a suspension. Nations who have emerged from barbarism to civilization, and who for centuries have enjoyed the refinements of culture, do not at once relapse into their primitive savage state. There was certainly not sufficient time for the exhibition of this ethnological curiosity in the period embraced between the departure of the Romans and the firm establishment of the Anglo-Saxons. Nor was there that isolation which was necessary to hasten this fall from national light to national darkness.

(+ Fergusson, "Rude Stone Monuments," p. 394.)

The southern parts of Britain, at least, were in too close a propinquity to more civilized and more Romanized Gaul to lose at once all traces of Roman refinement. And above all, the presence and the influence of the Christian missionaries who, coming from Rome, were uninterruptedly engaged in the task of converting the natives to the new faith, must have been

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a powerful stay to any downward progress to utter barbarism. The links of the chain that united the builders of Britain with those of Rome had only rusted; they were not rudely snapped asunder. The influence of the methods of building pursued by the Roman Colleges of Artificers, who had done so much work and left so many memorials in Britain, were still to be felt and to be renewed when these links were strengthened and brightened by the Anglo-Saxons. But this is anew and an important subject that demands consideration in another chapter for it brings us to an interesting phase in the history of Freemasonry. (Fergusson, "Rude Stone monuments," p. 394.)

MASONRY AMONG THE ANGLO-SAXONS

After the departure of the Roman legions and the withdrawal of the Roman protection, Britain, left to its own resources, was soon harassed by the invasions of Scots and Picts, by predatory excursions of barbarians from the opposite shores of the North Sea, and by civil distractions which were the natural result of the division of power among many rival petty principalities. Among the Britons there was one leader, Gwotheyrn, or, as he is more generally called, Vothgern, who seems to have assumed, if he did not legally possess it, a predominating position over the other British princes. Feeling, after various unsuccessful attempts, that he could not, by his unaided forces, repulse the invaders, he sought the assistance of the Saxons.

The Saxons were a tribe of warlike sea-kings who occupied the western shore of what has since been known as the Duchy of Holstein, with the neighboring islands on the coast. Brought across the sea by the invitation of the Britons, they soon expelled the Picts and Scots. But, attracted by the delights of the climate and the fertility of the soil, so superior to the morasses of their own restricted and half-submerged territory, they remained to contest the possession of the island with its native inhabitants. Hence there followed a series of conflicts which led at last to the expulsion of the native Britons, who were forced to retire to the southwestern parts of the island, and the establishment of the Saxon domination in England.

During the period of intestine wars which led to this change, not only of a government, but of a whole people, it is not to be supposed that much attention could have been paid to the cultivation of architecture or Masonry. Amid the clash of arms the laws are silent, and learning and the arts lie prostrate. Yet we are not to believe that all the influences of the preceding four or five centuries were wholly paralyzed. Gildas, it is true, complains in querulous language and an involved style, + in the Epistle which is

annexed to his History, of the wickedness both of the clergy and the laity, but the greatest licentiousness is not altogether incompatible with the preservation of some remains of the architectural skill and taste which had been originally imparted by the Roman artificers.

(+ Of all the post-classical writers in Latin none is so difficult to comprehend or to mandate as Gildas. Beddes, the fact that there are in existence only two codices of the original manuscript, and that subsequent editions have indulged in many, various, and sometimes contradictory readings, add to the difficulty of a correct interpretation of his writings.)

The Saxons themselves were not a thoroughly barbarous people. The attempts to subdue the tribes of Germany as they had those of Spain, of Gaul, and of Britain were not very successful. The ferocious bravery of the Germans under the leadership of the great Hermann, into Herminius by Tacitus, was able to stem the progress of the Roman legions in the interior of the country and to confine them eventually to the possession of a few fortresses on the Rhine. The German tribes, among whom we are, of course, to count the Saxons, were thus enabled to retain their own manners, customs, and language, while their communication with the legions, both in war and in peace, must have imbued them with some portion of Roman civilization.

Many new ideas, feelings, reasoning and habits, says Mr. Turner, must have resulted from this mixture, and the peculiar minds and views of the Germans must have been both excited and enlarged. The result of this union of German and Roman improvement was the gradual formation of that new species of the human character and society which has descended, with increasing melioration, to all the modern states of Europe. ("History of the Anglo-Saxons," i., p. 96.)

Dr. Anderson, when describing the Saxon invasion of Britain, says that the Anglo-Saxons came over all rough, ignorant heathens, despising everything but war; nay, in hatred to the Britons and Romans, they demolished all accurate structures and all the remains of ancient learning, affecting only their own barbarous manner of life, till they became Christians. ("Constitutions," 2d edition, p. 60.)

Entick and Northouck, in their subsequent editions of the Book of Constitutions, have repeated this slander, which, even if it were a truth, could not have forever obliterated the connection which we are seeking to trace between the Masonry of the Roman Colleges and that of mediaeval England; because, although it might have been suspended by Saxon barbarism, it is easy to prove that it could have been renewed by subsequent intercourse with the architects of France. But against this careless misrepresentation of Anderson and his subsequent editors, let us trace the more accu-

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rate and better digested views of the historian of the Anglo-Saxons. Mr. Turner, when writing of the arrival of Hengist with his Saxon followers in England, says:

The Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain must therefore not be contemplated as a barbarization of the country. Our Saxon ancestors brought with them a superior domestic and moral character, and the rudiments of new political, juridical, and intellectual blessings. An interval of Aaughor and desolation unavoidably occurred before they established themselves and their new systems in the island. But when they had completed their conquest, they laid the foundations of that national constitution, of that internal polity, of those peculiar customs, of that female modesty, and of that vigor and direction of mind, to which Great Britain owes the social progress which it has so eniiently acquired. ("History of the Anglo-Saxons," i., p. 179.)

The fact is that, though the Saxons introduced a style of their own, to which writers on architecture have given their name, they borrowed in their practice of the art the suggestions left by the Romans in their buildings, and used the materials of which they were composed. Thus a writer on this subject says that the Saxons appear to have formed for themselves a tolerably regular and rude style, something midway between the indigenous and the Roman in its details, and he attributes this to the buildings left by the Romans in the country, which, though rare, must have been sufficiently abundant long after their departure from the island. Abundant evidence will be shown in the course of the present chapter that there was not a total disruption of Saxon architecture + and Masonic methods of associated labor from that which was first introduced into Britain by the architects of the Roman Colleges.
(+ Paley, "Manual of Gothic Architecture," p, 14)

There were, of course, some modifications to be attributed partly to a want of experienced skill, partly to the suggestions of new ideas, and partly to the influence of novel religious relations. The temple, for instance, of the Romans had to be converted into the church of the Christians, but the Roman basilica was the model of the Saxon church, and the Roman architect was closely imitated, as well as could be, by his Saxon successor. The spirit and the influence and the custom of the Roman College was not lost or abandoned. Scarcely more than a century elapsed between the arrival of the Saxons and the entire subjugation of the country, and that space of time is to be divided among the briefer periods required for the continued successes of different chieftains. Thus it took Hengist only eight years after his first coming to firmly establish himself in the kingdom of Kent. Only forty years after the establishment of the Saxon octarchy, Pope Gregory

sent St. Augustine from Rome with missionaries to convert the Saxons to the faith of Christianity.

During all this interval many Roman buildings had existed in England, which, from their size and magnificence of construction, must have become models familiar to the Saxons. The temples of the Saxon idols had been constructed of wood, and as Gregory permitted them to be converted into Christian places of worship, the Saxon churches at first were almost all of that material. There was a deficiency of better materials. But we find an effort to use them whenever they could be obtained, so that a kind of construction called stone carpentry prevailed, in which we find a wood design contending with stone materials. + But in not much later times, and long before the Norman Conquest or the introduction of Gothic architecture, the Saxons built their churches, monasteries, and other public edifices entirely of stone. Although it may be admitted that the pagan Saxons on their first arrival did indeed destroy many of the churches which had been erected by the British Christians and expelled the priests, yet it must be remembered that by the subsequent advent of Augustine from Rome a new life was restored to architecture and the arts, and that as Mr. Paley says, the frequent missions and pilgrimages to Rome, together with the importation of Italian churchmen, which took place as early as the end of the 7th century, must have exercised great influence upon ecclesiastical architecture in England.” ++

(+ Paley, “Manual of Gothic Architecture,” p. 12.)

(++ Paley, “Manual of Gothic Architecture,” p. 13.)

It will be seen hereafter that the Saxons repeatedly resorted to the aid of foreign workmen from Rome or from Gaul in the construction of their churches, so that the influences of the Roman system which was derived in former times from the Roman Colleges continued at frequent intervals to be renewed, and the link of connection was thus kept unbroken. The principal difference between the works of the Roman and the Saxon architects has been supposed to be that the former built in shine and the latter in wood. And if this were true, it is evident that all inquiry into the nature of Saxon architecture must be at an end; for as the wooden edifices must have long since perished, all the remains of stone structures which have been excavated in England will have to be attributed to the age of the Roman domination before the invasion of the Saxons, or to that which succeeded the conquest by the Normans.

The perishable fabrics of timber erected by the Saxons would have left no traces behind. The erroneous opinion that the Saxons built all their churches of timber was first advanced by Stow, in his Survey of London,

and afterward by Mr. Somner in his *Antiquities of Canterbury*, who says that before the Norman advent most of our monasteries and church buildings were of wood, and he asserts that upon the Norman Conquest these fabrics of timber grew out of use and gave place to stone buildings raised upon arches. But the Rev. J. Bentham, in his *History of the Cathedral Church of Ely*, has refuted the correctness of this view with unanswerable arguments. He has shown that although there were some instances of wooden edifices, yet that the Saxon churches were generally built of stone, with pillars, arches, and sometimes vaultings of the same material. And he adds the following remarks, which are important in the present connection as showing that the Roman influence continued to be felt in the Saxon times, and thus that the chain which we are tracing remained unbroken. "There is great probability that at the time the Saxons were converted the art of constructing arches and vaultings and supporting stone edifices by columns was well known among them; they had many instances of such kind of buildings before them in the churches and other public edifices erected in the times of the Romans. For notwithstanding the havoc that had been made of the Christian churches by the Picts and Scots, and by the Saxons themselves, some of them were then in being. Bede mentions two in the city of Canterbury. Besides these two ancient Roman churches it is likely there were others of the same age in different parts of the kingdom, which were then repaired and restored to their former use." (*History of the Cathedral Church of Ely*, sec. v., P. 17.)

Of the two Roman churches for whose existence Bentham refers to the authority of Bede, that venerable historian says, There was on the east side of the city a church dedicated to the honor of St. Martin, built while the Romans were still in the island, wherein the queen, who, as has been said before, was a Christian, used to pray, + and of the other that Augustine recovered in the royal city a church which he was informed had been built by the ancient Roman Christians, and consecrated it to our Savior. ++
(+ Bede, "Histoire Ecclesiastique," lib. i., cap. 26.)
(++ Ibid., lib. i., cap. 33-35)

In an article on Anglo-Saxon architecture, published in the *Archaeological Journal* for March, 1844, Mr. Thomas Wright (no mean authority on antiquarian science) has, like Mr. Bentham, successfully combated the doctrine that all the Saxon churches were wooden. I think, he says, the notion Anglo-Saxon churches were all built of wood will now hardly find supporters. He admits, which none will deny, that there were structures of this kind. A few wooden churches are mentioned in *Domesday Book*, and we learn from other authorities that there were some others. But he con-

tends that a careful perusal of the early chroniclers would afford abundant proof that churches were not only abundant among the Anglo-Saxons but that they were far from being always mean structures. Speaking of the Saxon churches, which Odericus Vitalis tells us were repaired by the Normans immediately after the conquest, he remarks that if they had been mean structures and in need of repairs, it is more probable that the Normans would have built new ones.

The conclusions which are to be drawn from Mr. Wright's article are that while there were undoubtedly some wooden structures, just as there are in this day, the Anglo-Saxons built many churches, and built them sumptuously of stone, and in the Roman manner. The Rev. Richard Hart is therefore right when he says, on the authority of the architect Mr. Rukman, that in the construction of their churches, the Anglo-Saxons imitated Roman models; as might naturally be expected, considering that Rome was the source from which their Christianity had been derived, the birthplace of many of their prelates and clergy, and at that period the very focus of learning and civilization. ("Ecclesiastical Records," ch. v., note 2, p. 217.)

It has been conceded that during the comparatively brief period that was occupied by the Saxons after their arrival in Britain until they obtained complete possession of the country, the intestine wars between them and the natives must have had the effect of suspending the pursuit of architecture. But it has been shown that this suspension did not altogether obliterate the influence of the Roman builders who had established their methods of building when the island was a province of the empire. And it has also been seen that the destruction by the Saxons of the Christian churches which had been built by Roman architects was not so thorough or so universal as has been supposed by some writers, and that they did not, as Northouck, amplifying the language of Anderson, says, root out all the sands of learning and the arts that the Romans had planted in Britain. (Northouck, "Constitutions," Part II., ch. ii., p. 90.)

On the contrary, we have the evidence of the Venerable Bede and the repeated testimony of modern excavations that there were at the time of the Saxon conversion to Christianity at least two Roman churches standing which might serve as models for the Saxon Masons, and numerous remains of Roman buildings which afford materials for new structures. And now, after the conversion, we find the chain connecting Roman Masonry with that pursued by the Saxons renewed and strengthened not only by these models, but by the direct influence of the prelates who were sent from Rome, and who brought with them or sent for workmen to Rome and Gaul, who might carry out *More Romano* (in the Roman manner) their designs in the

building of churches and monasteries. Butler, in his *Lives of the Saints*, a work, however, in which we must not place implicit confidence, says that on the permanent settlement of Augustine in Britain, at the close of the 6th century, when Ethelbert, the King, had been converted, and the people generally were accepting the new religion, the princes and nobles were very zealous in building and endowing churches and religious houses, and many of them traveled to Rome and other foreign parts to improve themselves in the sacred sciences. (*Lives of the Saints*, vol. v., pp. 418, 419.)

That there was at that time a constant and uninterrupted communication between Rome and Britain is evident from the frequent epistles from Gregory, the Pontiff, to Augustine and to the King, Ethelbert. Missionaries were also sent to Britain to assist Augustine in his pious work, and it is not at all improbable that Masons came with them from Rome, or from Gaul, to be employed in the construction of churches and monasteries, with which the land was being rapidly filled. But we have more to rely on than mere supposition. There are abundant records showing that workmen were imported from abroad for the purpose of building, and that thus the Roman method was renewed in the island. Anderson is not, therefore, strictly correct when he says that the Anglo-Saxons, affecting to build churches and monasteries, palaces and fine mansions, too late lamented the ignorant and destructive conduct of their fathers, but knew not how to repair the public loss of old architecture. (*Constitutions*, 2d edition, p. 61.)

It has been shown that there were some models of Roman buildings still remaining, and there was no ignorance of the need of obtaining workmen from Rome or Gaul, and no want of opportunity to obtain them. He is, therefore, more historically right when he adds, though it contradicts his former assertion, that these works required many Masons, who soon formed themselves into societies or lodges by direction of foreigners who came over to help them. (*Ibid.*)

He is altogether wrong in saying that the Saxons adopted the Gothic style in building. That style of architecture was not invented until long afterward. In the year 627, Edwin, King of Northumbria, who had been converted by Paulinus, one of the missionaries of Augustine, was baptized in the city of York, the capital of his kingdom. While receiving the necessary religious instructions he built a temporary church of timber, in which the sacrament of baptism might be administered. But immediately afterward, under the direction of Bishop Paulinus, he caused the foundation to be laid of a larger and nobler church, of stone, which, although immediately begun, was not finished until after his death, by his successor, Oswald. (Bede, *History*, lib. ii., cap. 14.)

Although Bede, in narrating the event, says nothing of any foreign aid that had been asked or received in its construction, yet it is evident from the facts that the church was built of stone and in a square form, like a Roman basilica, + and would imply the necessity of Roman Masons, or other foreigners imbued with the Roman method, to superintend the work.

(+ This is the very word used by Bede. "Majorem et augustiorem de lapida fabricare curavit basilicam." The Roman basilica, or Hall of Justice, was the model of all the early churches built by Roman architects, and the old basilica, were often converted with but little change into churches by the Christian emperors.)

In the assembling of foreign Masons at York to erect St. Peter's Church, under the auspices of King Edwin, is supposed by modern Masonic writers to be the assembly incorrectly referred to in the Legend of the Craft as an assembly held at York, under the patronage of Prince Edwin, the son of Athelstan, three hundred years afterward. But this subject has been so thoroughly discussed in the preceding part of this work, under the head of the York Legend, that it is unnecessary to renew the controversy. Besides St. Peter's, at York, Paulinus built many other churches. Some of them we know were of stone, and the others might have been of the same material, as Bentham says, for aught that appears to the contrary. He was certainly a great patron of ecclesiastical architecture, but Anderson makes no mention of him, although, according to his fashion, he should have styled him, as he does Charles Martel, a Right Worshipful Grand Master.

Another distinguished architect, of a not much later period, was Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Weremouth, whom the Roman Church has canonized. In the year 675 he built a church at Weremouth, and two monasteries, one at Weremouth and one six miles distant from Jarrow. Of these Bede has given a particular account in his history of them. He tells us that the abbot went over into France to engage workmen to build his church after the Roman manner, and brought many back for that purpose. The monk was prosecuted with such vigor that within a year the church was completed and divine service performed in it. But a very important fact stated by Bede is that when the church was nearly finished Benedict sent over to France for artificers skilled in the mystery of making glass (an art hitherto unknown in Britain), who glazed the windows and taught the art to the Saxons.

We learn from this statement that it was customary with the Saxons to seek assistance from the skill of the continental artists and handicraftsmen. This will explain the true meaning of the passage in the Legend of the Craft, which refers to the introduction of French and other Masons into England in the 7th century, in the time of Charles Martel, and afterward at the supposed Assembly at York, in the 10th century. And it affords a confir-

mation of what has been frequently said in the previous part of this work, that the Legend of the Craft, though often chronologically absurd and incorrect in many of its details, yet has throughout in its most important particulars a really historical foundation.

The historians of that period supply us with many proofs that churches and monasteries were erected by the Saxons of stone after the Roman manner, or that they sent abroad for architects to superintend the construction of their buildings. Eddius Stephanus, who flourished at the beginning of the 8th century, and whose name has been transmitted to posterity by his Life of Saint Wilfrid, informs us that that saint, who was also Bishop of York about the middle of the 7th century, erected many sumptuous buildings in his diocese and thoroughly repaired the church of St. Peter at York, which had been much injured in the war between the Mercians and the Northumbrians. But Eddius especially refers to two churches built by Wilfrid, the one at Ripon in Yorkshire and the other at Hexham in Northumberland. Of the former he says that Wilfrid built a church at Ripon from the foundations to the top of polished stone, + and supported it with various columns and porticos. This polished stone as a material and these columns and porticos, where arches would probably be required, indicate the presence and the instruction of Roman architects, whether they came from Rome or Gaul. But of all his works, the church of St. Andrew at Hexham seems to have been the most magnificent.

(+ *Polito lapide* is the language used by Eddius. "Vita S. Wilfridi," cap. xvii., p. 59. He uses the same words in describing the materials of the church at Hexham.)

Hexham was a part of the crown-lands of the Kings of Northumbria, and, having been settled in dower on Queen Ethelrida by King Egfrid, a grant of it was made to Wilfrid for the purpose of erecting it into an episcopal see. Wilfrid began to lay the foundations of the cathedral church in the year 674. Eddius speaks of it in terms of great admiration, and says that there was no other building like it on this side of the Alps. He describes its deep foundations and the subterranean rooms, all of wonderfully polished stones, and of the building consisting of many parts above ground, supported by various columns and many porticos, ornamented with a surprising length and height of walls, and surrounded by mouldings, and having turnings of passages sometimes ascending or descending by winding stairs, so that he asserts that he had not words to explain what this priest, taught by the spirit of God, had contemplated doing.

Five centuries after, in 1180, the remains of this famous church were still standing, though in a condition of decay. Richard, Prior of Hexham, who lived at that time, describes the church with still more minuteness. He

says that the foundations were laid deep in the earth for crypts and subterranean oratories, and the passages underground which led to them were contrived with great exactness. The walls were of great length and height, and divided into three separate stories, which were supported by square and other kinds of well-polished columns. The walls, the capitals of the columns which supported them, and the arch of the sanctuary were decorated with historical representations, images, and various figures in relief, carved in stone and painted in an agreeable variety.

The body of the church was encompassed with penthouses and porticos which, above and below, were divided with wonderful art by partition walls and winding stairs. Within the staircases and upon them were flights of stone steps and passages leading from them, both ascending and descending, which were disposed with so much art that multitudes of people might be there and go all around the church without being perceived by any one who was in the nave. Many beautiful private oratories were erected with great care and workmanship in the several divisions of the porticos, in which were altars in honor of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Michael, Archangel, of St. John the Baptist and of the holy Apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins, with the proper furniture for each. Some of these, Prior Richard says, were remaining; at his day, and appeared like so many turrets and fortified places. (Richard, *Prior Hagustal*, lib. i., chap. iii)

Of a church of such grand proportions, such massive strength, and such artistic construction, it cannot, for a single moment, be supposed that it was built by the uncultivated skill of Saxon Masons. The stone material, the supporting arches, the intricate passage, the winding stairs, all proclaim the presence of foreign architects and a continuation or a resumption in England of the methods of Roman Masonry. Nor is this at all improbable. Wilfrid, although a Saxon, had from an early age received his ecclesiastical education in Rome, and after his return to Northumberland had not only maintained a constant correspondence with, but had made several visits to, the imperial city, and was personally well acquainted with France. When, therefore, he commenced the construction of important religious houses of such magnitude, he had every facility for the importation of foreign workmen, and there can be no reason for denying that he availed himself of the opportunities which were afforded to him. Indeed the Venerable Bede concedes this when he says that the most reverend Wilfrid was the first of the English bishops who taught the churches of the English nation the Catholic, that is the Roman, mode of life. (Bede, *"Histroy"* lib. iv, cap. ii.)

During the long period of forty-five years, in which he occupied the Episcopal See of York, Bishop Wilfrid caused a very great number of