

CHAPTER IX.

MASONS' MARKS.

**M**R GEORGE GODWIN, editor of the *Builder*, has justly claimed that in early days he noticed the fact, now well known, but not so then, that the stones of many old churches bore peculiar marks, the work of the original builders; and that, so long ago as 1841, he submitted a communication on the subject to the Society of Antiquaries, which, with a second memoir on the same subject, and transcripts of 158 of the marks from England, France, and Germany, was printed in the "Archæologia."<sup>1</sup> Mr Godwin's letters brought these signs under public observation, and in the interval between the dates upon which they were written—December 16, 1841, and February 2, 1843—M. Didron of Paris communicated a series of observations on marks to the "Comité Historique des Arts et Monuments," which Mr Godwin notices in his second letter to Sir H. Ellis.<sup>2</sup>

The marks collected by M. Didron divide themselves, according to his opinion, into two classes—those of the overseers and those of the men who worked the stones. The marks of the first class consist generally of monogrammatic characters, and are placed separately on the stones; those of the second class partake more of the nature of symbols, such as shoes, trowels, mallets, etc. It is stated that at Rheims, in one of the portals, the lowest of the stones forming one of the arcades is marked with a kind of monogrammatic character, and the outline of a sole of a shoe. The stone above it has the same character, and two soles of shoes; the third the same character, and three soles, and so on all round the arcade. The shoe mark he found also at Strassburg, and nowhere else, and accounts for this by the fact that parts of the cathedral of Rheims were executed by masons brought from Strassburg.

The marks on both English and French buildings, for the most part, vary in length from 2 to 7 inches, and those found at Cologne from 1½ inch to 2 inches, and were chiefly made, Mr Godwin believes, to distinguish the work of different individuals. At the present time the man who works a stone (being different from the man who sets it) makes his mark on the

<sup>1</sup> Something About Masons' Marks in Various Countries (Transactions, Royal Institute of British Architects, 1868-69, pp. 135-144, by George Godwin, Fellow).

<sup>2</sup> Two Letters from George Godwin, F.R.S., and F.S.A., to Sir Henry Ellis, K.H., F.R.S., Secretary, on Certain Marks Discoverable on the Stones of Various Buildings Erected in the Middle Ages (Archæologia, 1844, vol. xxx., pp. 113-120).

bed or other internal face of it, so that it may be identified. The fact, however, that in the ancient buildings it is only a certain number of the stones which bear symbols—that the marks found in different countries (although the variety is great) are in many cases identical, and in all have a singular accordance in character, in the opinion of the same writer—seems to show that the men who employed them did so by system, and that the system, if not the same in England, Germany, and France, was closely analogous in one country to that of the others. Moreover, adds Mr Godwin, many of the signs are evidently religious and symbolical, and agree fully with our notions of the body of men known as the Freemasons.<sup>1</sup>

Mr Godwin's communications gave a great impetus to the study of this branch of archæological research, and he remarks with good reason, in 1869, "It is curious how long a thing may remain unseen until it has been pointed out;" and records the observation of an old French priest, to whom he had shown the marks with which the walls of his church in Poitiers were literally strewn:—"I have walked through this church four times a day, twenty-eight times a week, for nearly forty years, and never noticed one of them; and now I cannot look anywhere but they flit into my eyes."

Mr Chalmers (1850) thought that masons' marks had, if they have not now, a mystical meaning, their primary use being to denote the work of each mason employed in hewing or preparing stones for any building: first, that, if paid by the piece, each man may have his work measured without dispute; second, that if work be badly done, or an error made, it may at once be seen on whom to throw the blame, and by whom, or at whose expense, the fault is to be amended.

It was a law in St Ninian's Lodge at Brechin that every mason should register his mark in a book, and he could not change that mark at pleasure. The marks differ in no respect in character from those which were brought into notice by Mr Godwin. To the inquiry, on what principle, or according to what rule, these marks were formed, Scottish masons generally replied, "That they probably had in early times a meaning now unknown, and are still regarded with a sort of reverence; that the only rule for their formation is, that they shall have at least one angle; that the circle must be avoided, and cannot be a true mason's mark unless in combination with some line that shall form an angle with it;<sup>2</sup> that there is no distinction of ranks—that is, that there is no particular class of marks set apart for and assigned to master masons as distinguished from their workmen; and if it should happen that two masons meeting at the same work from distant parts should have the same mark, then one must for a time assume a distinction, or, as heralds say, 'a difference.'"<sup>3</sup>

The Irish craftsmen and masons of the Middle Ages, it is said, not only had private marks, but also a dialect called "Bearlagair-na-Sair," which was unknown to any but the initiated of

<sup>1</sup> In a paper, read at the Institute of British Architects, March 14, 1836, and published in the *Architectural Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 193 (on the "Institution of Free-Masonry," by George Godwin, architect), the author quotes extensively from the "Parentalia," Pownall and Hope's "Essays," and Dallaway's "Discourses," and was evidently deeply imbued with the erroneous teaching which reached its culminating point in the attractive pages of the late Mr Hope.

<sup>2</sup> Fallou asserts that the apprentice *Steinmetzen*, at the conclusion of his term, received a mark, which always contained one right angle or square (*Mysterien der Freimaurer*, p. 68).

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Chalmers, Esq., F.S.A., On the Use of Mason Marks in Scotland (*Archæologia*, 1852, vol. xxxiv., pp. 33-36). An intelligent English stonemason recently stated to Mr G. W. Speth, "We choose a mark, and then if on our travels we find that some other mason uses a similar one, we alter ours in some slight particular."

their own callings; and the writer who is responsible for this statement asserts that this dialect is still in use among masons (though not exclusively confined to them) in the counties of Limerick, Clare, Waterford, and Cork.<sup>1</sup>

Upon the question as to whether or not marks were heritable by descent from father to son, the highest authority on Scottish masonry says, "We have been able to discover in the Mary Chapel records only one instance of a craftsman having adopted his deceased father's mark."<sup>2</sup> Mr Lyon continues, "Whatever may have been their original signification as exponents of a secret language—a position which is assigned to them by some writers—there is no ground for believing that in the choice of these marks the sixteenth century masons were guided by any consideration of their symbolical quality, or of their relation to the propositions of Euclid."

A view which has been very generally received is, that the short-hand signatures or markings which masons have for centuries been in the habit of cutting on the stones wrought or hewn by them, may be all included in two classes: the false or blind mark of the apprentice, displaying an equal number of points, and the true mark of the fellow-craft or passed mason, consisting of an unequal number of points.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the late Mr E. W. Shaw, who had made a collection of 11,000 marks, professed his ability to discriminate between the marks of the master masons, fellow-crafts, and apprentices, and the "blind marks," as he termed them, of those hired to work, but who were not members of the guild.<sup>4</sup> Two marks not unfrequently occur on the same stone, showing, according to one view, that it had been hewn by the apprentice and finished or passed as correct by the mason;<sup>5</sup> and, in the opinion of other authorities, that the second mark belonged to the overseer.<sup>6</sup> The Chevalier de Silva, in a memoir presented at a meeting of the Institute of British Architects,<sup>7</sup> gave 522 marks from ancient buildings in Portugal, and the design of his paper was to show that the opinion of those who have believed that these marks have a masonic signification cannot for a moment be entertained. The Chevalier's strongest reason for this belief—although, as Mr Godwin well puts it, English archæologists hardly need any argument to convince them that the marks are not symbolical—is thus expressed: "Adepts were summoned from all parts to work at the buildings in Portugal; and as the works progressed but slowly, not only on account of the enormous size of the edifices, but more especially because cut stones of small dimensions were employed, and all buildings being constructed with stones faced on every side, the hand labour was greatly increased; the only means available to avoid this inconvenience and hasten the works, and at the same time to benefit the workmen, was to make them *cut the stones as piece-work*, according to the dimensions given and designs drawn by the architect. To enable pay-

<sup>1</sup> E. Fitzgerald, architect, *On Ancient Mason Marks at Youghal and Elsewhere; and the Secret Language of the Craftsmen of the Middle Ages in Ireland* (Kilkenny Archæological Society, vol. ii., new series, p. 67).

<sup>2</sup> Lyon, *History of the Lodge of Edinburgh*, pp. 68, 69. *Cf. ante*, pp. 434, 436.

<sup>3</sup> J. A. Smith, M.D. (Sec. Soc. Antiq. Scot.), *Exhibition of Mason Marks, Copied from Melrose Abbey, Dryburgh, Jedburgh, etc.* (Proceedings, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1863, vol. iv., p. 548).

<sup>4</sup> The Rev. A. F. A. Woodford is my authority for this statement. It is to be regretted that Mr Shaw's contemplated work, "Historical Masonry," the publication of which was announced in the *Freemasons' Magazine* of April 18, 1868 (to contain 5700 Masons' marks), has never seen the light.

<sup>5</sup> Dr J. A. Smith.

<sup>6</sup> Didron, Godwin, and Papworth.

<sup>7</sup> "Sur la véritable signification des signes qu'on voit Gravés sur les anciens Monuments du Portugal." This memoir was not printed in the "Sessional Papers," Royal Institute of British Architects, but has been sufficiently summarised by Mr Godwin (*Transactions, Royal Institute of British Architects, 1868-69, p. 139*).

ments to be made to so large a number of workmen without mistake, to know exactly those who had done the various duties assigned to them, the workmen shaped their blocks one after another, and, to avoid confusion in their work, were in the habit of marking each block with a given sign, as representing their signature, so as to show how much was due to them."

If, however, we admit the probability, or, as Mr Godwin expresses it, the *fact*, that the guilds adopted existing forms and symbols without considering the marks symbolical, we may yet believe that they owe their wide diffusion to the existence of associated guilds. "The general similarity which they present all over Europe, from, at any rate, the eleventh century to the sixteenth, and indeed to the present day," points, as Mr Godwin well observes, "to a common origin and continued transmission."

Inasmuch, indeed, as monograms or symbols were adopted in all countries from very early times as distinctive devices or "trade marks," whereby the work or goods of the owners or makers could be identified, it is fairly inferential that masons' marks have been brought more prominently under notice from the simple fact of their having been impressed upon more durable material than was the case with the members of other trades.

Merchants, ecclesiastics, and other persons of respectability, not entitled to bear arms, adopted "marks or notes of those trades and professions which they used,<sup>1</sup> and merchants (for their more honour) were allowed to bear the first letters of their names and surnames interlaced with a cross." In the yard or garden of the convent of the Franciscans or Greyfriars, now called the *Howff*<sup>2</sup> of Dundee, may still be seen many tombstones ornamented with both armorial and mercantile emblems and monograms, those of burgesses bearing, in many instances, carvings of objects illustrative of their crafts or trades. Thus, the scissors or goose is found on the tomb of the tailor; the glove, on that of the skinner; the hammer and crown or anvil, on that of the blacksmith; the loom or shuttle, on that of the weaver; the compasses and square, on that of the mason; the expanded compasses or saw, on that of the wright, etc.

Some of the older monuments present the more interesting figures known as monograms or merchants' marks. Both are objects of high antiquity, particularly the monogram or cypher, which is formed of interlaced letters. Soon after the introduction of printing into England, both monograms and merchants' marks were pretty generally adopted, and placed by artists in the corners of paintings and engravings; by printers and publishers, on the first and last pages of the books they issued; and tradesmen in general used them, not only as signs or distinguishing marks over the doors of their shops, but as stamps and labels on the cloth or other goods in which they dealt.<sup>3</sup>

In two Statutes of uncertain date, one of which has been variously ascribed to the 51st year of Henry III. (1266) and the 13th of Edward I. (1285), and the other is stated in some copies to have been enacted in the 14th of Edward I. (1286), occur very early allusions to the custom or requirement of affixing a mark. The former of these laws ordains, that "every baker shall have a mark (*signum*) of his own for each sort of his bread;"<sup>4</sup> and the latter,

<sup>1</sup> Favyn, *Le Théâtre d'honneur*, Paris, 1623 (Dictionary of Architecture—*Marks*).

<sup>2</sup> *Howff*, *houff*, or *hoif*, a haunt, a place of frequent resort (Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary).

<sup>3</sup> A. Jervise, *Memorials of Angus and the Mearns*, 1861, pp 193, 195-197. "Although these marks are to be seen in different parts of the country, perhaps no single place contains so many and such oddly designed specimens as the *Howff* of Dundee" (*Ibid.*, p. 197).

<sup>4</sup> The Statutes of the Bakers of Rheims, 1681 (XVII.), order "that every baker shall have his different mark in perpetuity to mark his bread" (Archives Législatives de la ville de Rheims, tom. ii., pt. ii.—Collection de Documents

which, on a deficiency of freemen, allows "the best and most discreet bondsmen" to serve on an inquest, stipulates that "each shall have a seal" (*e ke checun eyt seal*).<sup>1</sup> In 1363, it was enacted, that every master goldsmith "shall have a mark by himself" (*un merche a par lui*), and set it to his work;<sup>2</sup> in 1389-90, "that the workers, weavers, and fullers shall put their seals (*leur signes*) to every cloth that they shall work;"<sup>3</sup> and in 1444-45, that no worsted weaver shall make any worsted, "except he put upon the same his sign."<sup>4</sup> A similar duty was imposed upon workers in the precious metals, by the Statutes of Edward IV. and Henry VII. respectively. In 1477-78, it was ordained, "that things wrought of silver were to be marked with the Leopard's Head, and the workman's mark or sign (*marke ou signe*);"<sup>5</sup> and in 1488-89, that "every fyner of golde and sylver put his severall merke upon such, to bere witnes the same to be true."<sup>6</sup> In 1491, "the chief officer for the tyme beying in every cite towne, or borough," was required to have "a speciall marke or seal, to marke every weight and mesure to be reformed."<sup>7</sup> The last enactment in the reign of Henry VII., bearing upon this subject, has the singular title of *Pewterer's Walkying*, and is levelled against travelling tinkers and traffickers in metal, the prototypes in fact of our modern "Marine Storedealer." They are described as "possessing deceivable and untrue beams and scales, whereof one of them would stand even with twelve pounds weight at one end against a quarter of a pound at the other end," and the law requires, "that the makers of all hollow wares of pewter, shall marke the same with [the] severall marks of their owne."<sup>8</sup> The last statute I shall quote is of date 1531, and by it brewers were restrained from "occupying the mystery of a cooper," or making any vessel for the sale of beer, which, in all cases, were to be made "by the common artificers of coopers;" it being further enacted, "that every couper mark his vessell with his owne marke."<sup>9</sup> In the City of London, by various ordinances, confirmed by the civic authorities, the blacksmiths (1372), bladesmiths (1408), and brasiers (1416), of London, were required "to use and put their own mark upon their own work."<sup>10</sup>

I. Although the first two rows of marks on the accompanying plate are taken from English buildings, with scarcely an exception, the same may be found in all parts of the world. The seven earliest numbers have been selected by Mr Godwin as the marks most widely used, which are to be met with in different countries. The hour-glass form (1) is perhaps the most common of all types, and whilst employed in nearly every land as a cypher by operative workmen, appears nevertheless in a large proportion of the ancient inscriptions and

Inédits sur l'Histoire de France). The Old Usages of Worcester (of the fourteenth century) require "that euerych bakere habbe hys seal y-knowe vpon hys loff;" and the Ordinances of the same city, *temp.* Edw. IV. (1467), "that euery tyller sett his propre marke vpon his tyle" (Smith, *English Gilds*, pp. 355, 399; see *ante*, pp. 149, 192).

<sup>1</sup> Statutes of the Realm, *Temp. Incert.*, vol. i., pp. 203, 211.

<sup>2</sup> 37 Edw. III., c. vii. See 2 Henry VI., c. xvii. (1423), where it is enjoined that in places where there is no touch, the goldsmith shall set his mark or sign.

<sup>3</sup> 13 Rich. II., stat. I., c. xi.

<sup>4</sup> *Sanz ceo qil metta sur son signe*: 23 Hen. VI., c. iii. Similarly in 1467, by the 7 Edw. IV., c. i., it was ordered that no worsted weaver of Norfolk should make worsted, "withoute he sette theruppon his owen woven marc." By the same statute the wardens of this craft, if they found the worsteds "well and lawfully made," were also required to affix a "mark or token" (*signe ou token*).

<sup>5</sup> 17 Edw. IV., c. i.

<sup>6</sup> 4 Hen. VII., c. ii.

<sup>7</sup> 7 Hen. VII., c. iii.

<sup>8</sup> 19 Hen. VII., c. vi.



<sup>9</sup> 23 Hen. VIII., c. iv. I am informed that in the city of London to this day the work of individual coopers can be distinguished by their marks. See *ante*, pp. 90, 146, 149, 192.

<sup>10</sup> Riley, *Memorials of London*, pp. 361, 570, 626.

alphabets that have come down to us.<sup>1</sup> Many examples of this mark are given in the accompanying plate, of which perhaps the most curious is No. 100.

The letter N symbol which appears on the coins of the Ariarathes, a series of Persian kings who lived before Christ, is infinitely diversified. Of this an instance is presented in No. 44, a mark which we also find at Kilwinning Abbey, Canterbury, and other places, as well as amongst the Arab "Wasm," and upon gnostic gems. In this figure or letter Mr Dove thinks we have something like an equivalent for the sexual union of the V and the Λ on the feminine and masculine symbols of the Egyptians.<sup>2</sup>

The Vesica Piscis, which has been already referred to, was constantly used as a builder's emblem. Fort suggests that the fish was typified by ancient notions, and appropriated by the Christians with other Pagan symbols,<sup>3</sup> but the origin, I apprehend, of this emblem, must be looked for in the Hindu sectarial marks, denoting the followers of Çiva and Parvati (93), which in their general form symbolise the female principle of nature. The trident is one of the attributes of Parvati, and this form (10) is of very frequent appearance in the east; two varieties are shown in the examples of Arab Wasm (105, 107), and others are to be found amongst the marks collected by Sir W. Ouseley and Mr Creed.<sup>4</sup>

II. The second line of marks is from Carlisle Abbey, selected from the 316 specimens published in the paper last cited. The fourth in this row (14) is a curious form, and unlike any other *English* mark that has come under my notice, though it possesses some affinity with Nos. 33 and 101, also with a mark of the Kilwinning lodge, given by Lyon at p. 67 of his history, and to a greater extent with one of the specimens from Jedburgh Abbey, published by Dr Smith. In a closely analogous symbol  or  formed out of lines set at various angles to each other, and intermingled with dots, which is frequently met with on gnostic gems, Bellermand professes to trace the sacred divining-lots—figures produced by the accidental juxtaposition of little sticks and balls.

III.<sup>6</sup> This series exhibits some curious varieties of the hour-glass or "lama" form. No. 23, which also occurs at St Giles Church, Edinburgh, Furness Abbey, and elsewhere, is identical with No. 88.

IV.<sup>7</sup> The Irish specimens present some novel features. The three first (31-33) in their general character resemble the Arab Wasm (XI). No. 37 constitutes a type of itself, and the three right hand figures (38-40) are singularly unlike anything to be found in the collections before me.

V. The French examples are taken from the "Annales Archæologiques,"<sup>8</sup> but ampler

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Runic Inscriptions from Carthage (*Archæologia*, vol. xxx., pl. iii.); and Von Hammer, *Ancient Alphabets Explained*, 1806, pp. 12, 24, 27, 32, 33, 45, 65, and 69. In a plate illustrative of Moor's Hindu Pantheon (14), Mahādeva (or Çiva) is represented with an emblem of this form in his right hand.

<sup>2</sup> On Geometrical and other Symbols (*Builder*, June 6, 1863).

<sup>3</sup> *Early History of Freemasonry*, p. 357.

<sup>4</sup> Ouseley, *Travels in Various Countries of the East*, 1823, pl. lxxxii.; W. T. Creed, *Masons' Marks from Carlisle Abbey* (*Transactions, Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archæological Society*, 1880).

<sup>5</sup> This figure is to be found in the alphabet of Philaos, the philosopher, who, according to Von Hammer (pp. 7, 37), "invented miraculous fumigations, marvellous compounds, talismans, and astrological tables. He also constructed the treasure chambers in the pyramids?"

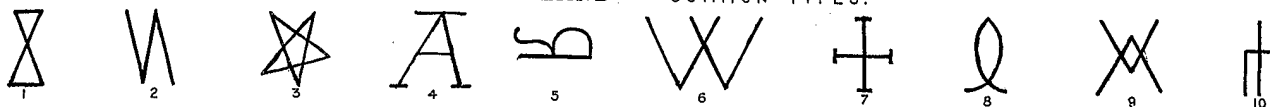
<sup>6</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xxxiv., pl. iii. (Chalmers).

<sup>7</sup> *Kilkenny Archæological Society*, vol. ii., new series, p. 67 (Fitzgerald).

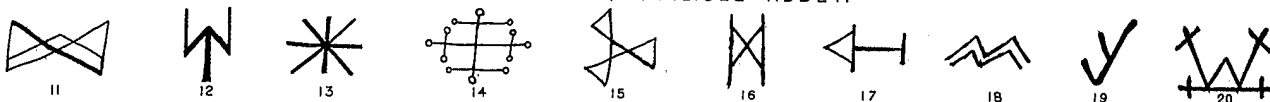
<sup>8</sup> Tome ii., 1845, p. 250 (41-47); tome iii., p. 31, *Signes Lapidaires* (48-50).

# MASONS' MARKS.

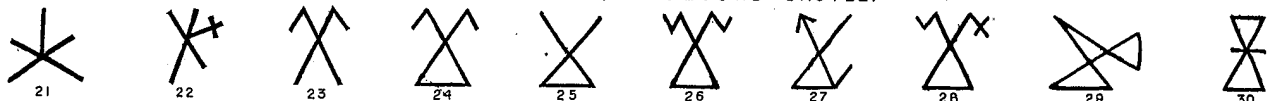
## I. ENGLAND — COMMON TYPES.



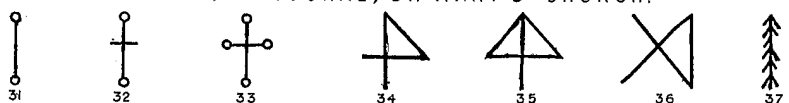
## II. ENGLAND,—CARLISLE ABBEY.



## III. SCOTLAND,—MELGUND CASTLE.



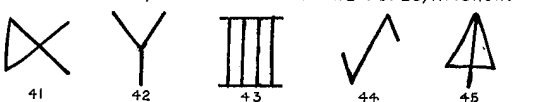
## IV. IRELAND,—YOUGHAL, ST. MARY'S CHURCH.



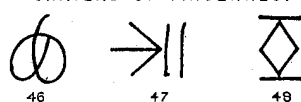
## DOMINICAN FRIARY.



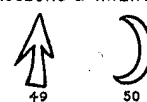
## V.—FRANCE,—CHATEAU OF THE POPES, AVIGNON.



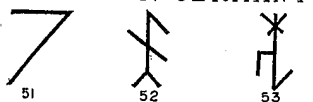
## CHATEAU OF VINCENNES.



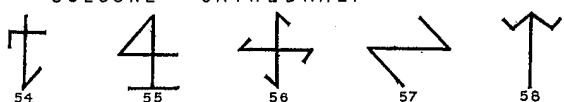
## STRASSBURG & RHEIMS.



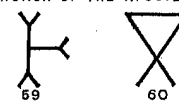
## VI.—GERMANY,



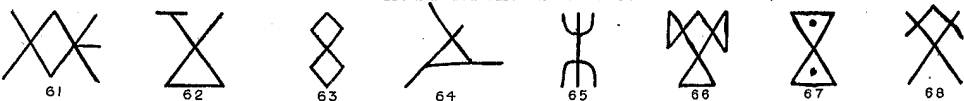
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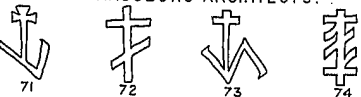
## CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES.



## VII. ST. NINIANS LODGE BRECHIN, 1714—1847.



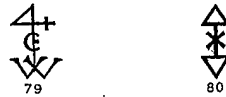
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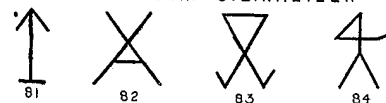
## VIII.—MONOGRAMS & EMBLEMS. FROM THE HOWFF, DUNDEE.



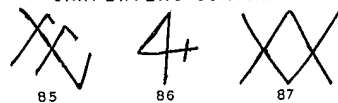
## TELFORD'S TOOL MARK.



## IX.—GERMAN STEINMETZEN



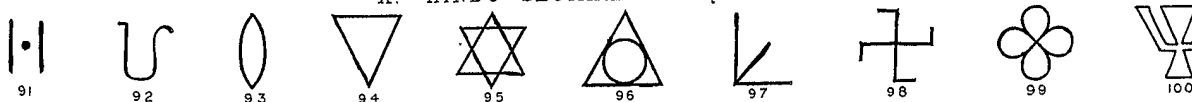
## CARPENTER'S COMPANY.



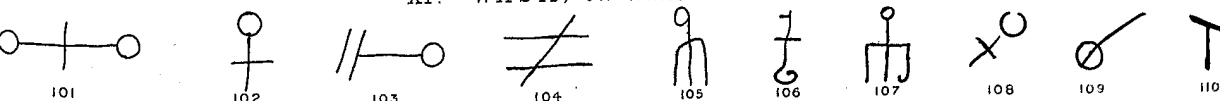
## BRICKLAYERS & TYLER'S COMPANY.



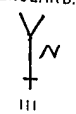
## X.—HINDU SECTARIAL MARKS OR SYMBOLS.



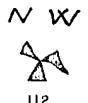
## XI.—WASM, OR ARAB TRIBE MARKS.



## ENGLAND.



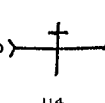
## FRANCE.



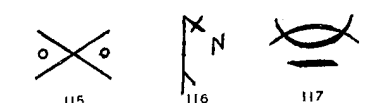
## SPAIN.



## PORTUGAL.



## XII.—COMPOUND MARKS. ITALY. GERMANY. SCOTLAND.



## ROMAN BATH. EL HAMMA




*W. Small, Esq.*

varieties have been reproduced by Mr Godwin in the publications to which I have already referred.

VI.<sup>1</sup> The German types are abundantly illustrated by the collector upon whom I have drawn for the specimens annexed (51-60).<sup>2</sup> The fifth mark (55) in this row—a form of the figure 4—may be traced throughout many ramifications in the collections from which I have quoted. No. 56, a cross *cramponée*, or two intersecting straight lines with angled arms, is a noted Hindu symbol (98). It is also known as the Swastika and Fylfot, and a specimen appearing on a Roman altar in Alnwick Castle has been described by Lord Broughton as denoting the hammer or mace of the Scandinavian god, Thor. It is seen with Thor on various medals and on Runic monuments, and also occurs in the minster at Basle. With reference to the connection of the Scandinavians with Italy, Sir William Betham (“*Etruria Celtica*”) shows an Etruscan coin with this symbol on it.<sup>3</sup>

Besides the Roman stones worked in rude patterns with the pick, either in straight lines, diamond pattern, or basket-work, as occasionally found on Hadrian's Wall, some are marked with a plain St Andrew's cross.<sup>4</sup> Mr Bruce, when figuring some of the marks on Roman stones, thus<sup>5</sup> remarks on those taken by Horsley to be numeral letters, denoting the number of the cohorts: “In all probability, the marks in question are the result of the caprice of the stonemasons. The editor has seen many examples of stones scored in the way which Horsley represents (some of which are shown in the woodcuts), but which he thinks partake more of the nature of masons' marks than of Roman numerals. Sometimes a simple cross will be observed, sometimes two parallel strokes, occasionally, as in Horsley's No. XVII., a ‘broad arrow.’ One of the examples which our great antiquary gives under No. XVI. is what masons call diamond broaching, and is very common. Stones thus scored occur chiefly in the separations of the wall and the stations. The stones used in Hadrian's original erection are severely plain.”

The late Thomas Wright, M.A.,<sup>6</sup> mentions that the “masons' marks are often found on Roman buildings, and resemble most closely those of the masons of the Middle Ages. Sometimes they consist of a letter, perhaps the initial of the mason's name, but they are more usually crosses, triangles, and other geometrical figures.”

Though enough has been said to show that such were in use by the Romans in Britain, one more example may be quoted, if indeed it be a mason's mark. It is found on an altar at Habitancum, and dedicated to the goddess Fortuna by Julius Severinus, on the completion of a bath.<sup>7</sup> The incised figure or mark resembles a cross *potent fichée*, as a herald would call it, except that the crutch ends are only on the side-arms, the uppermost arms being a distinct cross, thus, 

The Romans also marked their building tiles, but for the most part with an inscription indicating the troops or officials by whom or under whose directions the buildings were erected.

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xxx., pl. x. (Godwin).

<sup>2</sup> See *Transactions*, Royal Institute of British Architects, 1868-69 (Plate of Marks).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136. See also Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*, pl. ii.; Fort, *The Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry*, pp. 238, 326; and King, *The Gnostics and their Remains*, pl. xi., fig. 5, and pl. xiii. A, fig. 6.

<sup>4</sup> J. Collingwood Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 1867, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> *Lapidarium Septentrionale* (published by the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-on-Tyne), 1875, p. 39.


<sup>6</sup> *The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon*, 3d edit., 1875, p. 133.

<sup>7</sup> Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 1867, p. 335.



VII.<sup>1</sup> These are the marks of a lodge of *Freemasons*. Numerous examples of this class of cypher are given by Lyon in his noted work. An early instance of a "mason" who was not an operative being elected to rule over his brethren, is afforded by the records of the Lodge of Aberdeen, 1670, under which year appears the *mark* of Harry Elphinston, "Tutor of Airth and Collector of the Kinges Customes," master, or a past master, of the lodge. At the same date is found also the cypher of Maister Georg Liddell, "Professor of Mathematickes."<sup>2</sup>

VIII. The marks of the Strassburg architects are taken from the "Annales Archæologiques."<sup>3</sup> The seal from which I have extracted figure No. 71 is described as that of "Pierre Bischof d'Algesheim, one of the master stone-cutters (*maîtres tailleurs de pierre*) who were received into the new brotherhood (*confrérie*) of the year 1464. Bischof, one of the chief promoters of this association, was afterwards master of the works (*maître-d'œuvre*) of the city" (Strassburg). The two following marks are those respectively of Masters Mark Wendland and Laurent de Vedenheim. Nos. 75-79 are from monograms and emblems on tombstones at the *Howff* of Dundee. No. 75, which appears on a monument referring to the Mudie family, is identical with the craft cyphers of Scottish and German stonemasons (24, 83); and the anchor (76) fitly marks the last resting-place of a sailor. The 4 mark (77), differing but slightly from a cypher in St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh,<sup>4</sup> is of date 1582. The marks of John and James Goldman, father and son, A.D. 1607, are represented in figure 78. Next follows the monogram of William Chaplane (79), from a monument erected in memory of his wife (1603).<sup>5</sup>

The last of this series is the cypher of Telford, the celebrated engineer, of whom Smiles records, that "many of the stones composing the bridge over the Esk, at Langholm, were hewn by his hand, and on several of the blocks forming the land-breast his tool-mark is still to be seen."<sup>6</sup> Telford's mark is almost exactly presented in one of the alphabets, which the erudite Von Hammer *claims* to have rescued from oblivion,<sup>7</sup>  Yet probably no one would be more astonished than the worthy engineer, were he still amongst us, to hear of the similarity.

IX. The fourth mark of the *Steinmetzen* is taken from Heimsch,<sup>8</sup> the preceding ones from Stieglitz.<sup>9</sup> For those of the Carpenters I am indebted to the obliging clerk of that company, Mr Preston, who allowed me to copy them; No. 85, the mark of John Fitzjohn, master, 1573, from a book of that date; and the others from a handsomely carved mantelpiece, of 1579, erected during the mastership of Thomas Harper (86) and the wardenship of Anthonie Bear (87). The marks of the Tylers and Bricklayers are from Mr Godwin's collection.

<sup>1</sup> Archæologia, vol. xxxiv., pl. iv. (Chalmers).

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, chap. viii. ("Lodge of Aberdeen," No. 34).

<sup>3</sup> *Artistes du Moyen Age: Sceaux et Marques des Architectes de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg (71-73)*, tome viii., p. 187. "Sur le premier de ces trois Sceaux (71) la marque se compose de la Croix, toujours placée verticalement au milieu de l'écu, et de l'équerre posée au bas, de telle manière que la branche courte est tournée vers le haut" (*Ibid.*, tome v., 1846, p. 272—Monogrammes Écussonnes des Architectes Allemands—74).

<sup>4</sup> Lyon, *History of the Lodge of Edinburgh*, plate facing p. 67, fig. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Cf. Ibid.*, p. 55, and plates of marks (St Giles and Mother Kilwinning).

<sup>6</sup> *Life of Thomas Telford*, 1867, p. 116. In 1786, Telford, writing from Portsmouth, "states that he is taking great interest in Freemasonry, and is about to have a lodge-room at the George Inn, fitted up after his plans and under his direction" (*Ibid.*, p. 129).

<sup>7</sup> Von Hammer, *The Alphabets of the Seven Planets*, sec. v., pp. 10, 51.

<sup>8</sup> *Craft Customs of the Ancient Stonehewers*, trans. by G. W. Speth (*Masonic Monthly*, July 1882).

<sup>9</sup> C. L. Stieglitz, *Über die Kirche der Heiligen Kunigunde*, Leipzig, 1829, appendix iii.

X.<sup>1</sup> The Hindu symbols present many forms with which Freemasons are familiar. The U figure (92) occurs very frequently in Spain, and has also been copied by Sir W. Ouseley from an ancient palace near Ispahan.<sup>2</sup> In others the sexual origin of all things is indicated (93-97), the most prevalent being the equilateral triangle. The Hexalpha (95) represents the two elements in conjunction; and with a right angle bisected by a line (97), worshippers of Sacti, the Female principle, mark their sacred jars, as in like manner the votaries of Isis inscribed the sacred vase of their goddess before using it at her rites.<sup>3</sup> The latter symbol, which is to be found in the Lycian and other alphabets, and also corresponds with the broad arrow, used to denote Crown property, formed one of the apprentice "marks" in the "Lodge of Aberdeen," 1670, and occurs in all countries where masons' marks are perceptible.

The Rose (99) is uncommon, yet amongst the weapons belonging to the stone period found in Denmark are many flint mallets, cross-shaped, presenting this appearance, with a hole at the intersection for the haft to be inserted.<sup>4</sup> An exact counterpart of the Hindu symbol was found by Hughan in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral; but with these two exceptions, the mark under examination is, so far as I am aware, unknown to western collectors. The last three specimens in this line (98-100) are rare forms of the Hindu sectarian marks, and belong rather to certain great families than to religious sects.

XI. These *graffitti*, or scratchings, are characters adopted by Arabs to distinguish one tribe from another, and commonly used for branding the camels on the shoulders and haunches, by which means the animals may be recovered, if straying, and found by Arabs not hostile to the owners. They are found also scratched upon the walls in many places frequented by Bedawin, as, for instance, in the ruined convents, churches, etc., on the plain of the Jordan, and occasionally, as at Ammân, several such cyphers are united into one complex character.<sup>5</sup> The custom, however, has many interpretations. According to some, it denotes the terminus of a successful raid; others make it show where a dispute was settled without bloodshed; but as a rule it may be regarded as an expression of gratitude.<sup>6</sup> Captain Burton says, "that the *Wasm* in most cases showed some form of a cross, which is held to be a potent charm by the Sinaitic Bedawin," and is further of opinion that the custom is dying out.

Describing the ruins of Al Hadhr, Mr Ainsworth observes: "Every stone, not only in the chief buildings, but in the walls and bastions and other public monuments, when not defaced by time, is marked with a character, amongst which were very common the ancient mirror and handle, ♀ (102, 108), emblematical of Venus, the Mylitta of the Assyrians, and Alitta of the Arabians, according to Herodotus; and the Nani of the Syrians."<sup>7</sup> The last cypher (110) is styled by Burton, the "Camel stick."

XII. The examples of compound marks are mainly taken from Mr Godwin's collection;<sup>8</sup> the Scottish specimen is from the plate attached to Dr Smith's paper, already referred to; and

<sup>1</sup> Moor, Hindu Pantheon, pl. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Travels in Various Countries of the East, 1823, pl. lxxxii.

<sup>3</sup> Dr Barlow, Symbolism in Reference to Art (Transactions, Royal Institute of British Architects, 1859-60, p. 97); King, The Gnostics and their Remains, p. 176.

<sup>4</sup> Fort, The Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry, p. 278.

<sup>5</sup> James Finn, Byways in Palestine, 1868, Appendix A, pp. 453, 454 (101-103).




<sup>6</sup> R. F. Burton, The Land of Midian, 1879, vol. i., p. 320; vol. ii., p. 156.

<sup>7</sup> W. F. A. Ainsworth, Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, etc., 1842, vol. ii., p. 167.

<sup>8</sup> Transactions, Royal Institute of British Architects, 1868-69, pp. 135-144 (111-116).

the three last figures, from a recent work.<sup>1</sup> M. da Silva thought, "that the second mark, added to the special sign used by them, was always the same for an entire family, these marks being usually a zero, ○; a triangle, Δ; a disc, ⊙; or a small cross, +."

In the examples given from Portugal and Spain the second mark is chiefly a circle, but in England the N form and the acute angle, <, have by Mr Godwin been generally found to be so used. This careful observer has met with four stones in one wall, nearly close together, each bearing two marks, whilst no two of the eight marks were alike.

Mr Ainsworth says that the marks at Al Hadhr were carefully sculptured, one in the *centre of every stone*, but as a general rule the cyphers are traced without any regard to uniformity or position. At the Mosque and Reservoir at Bozrah Mr Merrill noticed many stones with marks upon them, but there were only four varieties: (1.)  was on those of the north wall; (2.)  on those of the east wall; (3.) ○ on those of the south wall; (4.)  on those of the west wall. In the west wall he counted upwards of one hundred and sixty stones which had this mark. It is singular and noteworthy that many of the stones, however, bore no mark at all.

That workmen have been accustomed to mark the product of their labour from very early times, is indisputable. In default of stone, the Chaldeans used bricks, sometimes of unbaked clay hardened by the heat of the sun. The curious archaic characters, with which they stamped on the bricks the name of the king who built the temple, and the name of the god or goddess to whom it was dedicated, taken separately, might very well pass for masons' marks of a later age. Like the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, in all probability, stamped the inscription upon their bricks with a solid stamp. But, unlike the Chaldeans, who impressed the characters on a small square near the centre of the broad faces of the bricks, the writing of the Assyrians either covered the whole face or else ran along the edge.

The Babylonians, like the early Chaldeans, seem to have almost entirely used bricks in their constructions, and like them impressed the inscription on the broad face of the brick, in a square, with a solid stamp.

The Egyptians stamped their bricks with the cartouche of the king, or with the name and titles of a priest or other influential person.<sup>2</sup> A number of these marks are figured by Rifaud, and represent hieroglyphic characters, numerals, etc. They are supposed to date from about the fourth dynasty, and the marks were traced upon the bricks with the finger. The bricks bearing cartouches impressed with a stamp date from the eighteenth dynasty; but we must not forget the masons' marks, scrawled in red pigment, within the great pyramid, the cartouche of King Cheops, etc., etc.

In the fifth dynasty, the porcelain tiles were marked on the back with numerals, to facilitate their arrangement; and those found at Tel-el-Yahoudeh bear on the back both hieroglyphics and, in some instances, Greek letters.

Each Roman brick-maker had his mark, such as the figure of a god, a plant, or an animal, encircled by his own name, often with the name of the place, of the consulate, or the owner of the kiln or brickfield.<sup>3</sup> No marks of this kind have been observed on any brick or tile

<sup>1</sup> Selah Merrill, *East of the Jordan*, 1881, pp. 55, 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Voyage en Egypte*, etc., 1830-36, Paris, pl. lxxxviii.-xci. Cf. also Lepsius, *Denkmäler*; and S. Birch, *D.C.L.*, etc., *History of Ancient Pottery*, edit. 1873, pp. 9-14, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Seroux d'Agincourt, *Rec. de Fragmens*, pp. 82-88; Smith, *Dictionary of Antiquities—later*.

found at York, though many of these have the inscription, *Leg. vi.*, or *Vic.*, or *Leg. ix.*, *His.* or *Hisp.*, stamped upon them. In the same city, however, several fragments of amphoræ have been discovered, from which it appears that the name of the potter was commonly stamped on one of the handles or the neck. This vessel was used for holding olives, oil, or honey, but especially wine.<sup>1</sup>

An eloquent writer has described the finding of masons' marks at Jerusalem as one of their "capital discoveries," coming upon the explorers "like flashes of morning light."<sup>2</sup> Emanuel Deutsch arrived in Jerusalem while the shaft was open, and went down it to inspect this record of his race. In the port of Sidon he afterwards found marks of the same kind, and after careful weighing of the evidence, came to the following conclusions: (1.) The marks on the temple stones are Phœnician; (2.) they are quarry-signs, not writings or inscriptions.

As Herod employed Greek artisans, who knew nothing of Phœnician letters and numerals, Mr Hepworth Dixon is probably right in alluding to the "masons' marks" as "one of their capital discoveries," because, as he contends, "in the first place, they settle the question of whether the work was Solomonic or Herodean;"<sup>3</sup> and in the second place, they prove the literary accuracy of the text in Kings, that workmen from Tyre were employed in quarrying these stones for the Temple wall. Josephus gives two accounts of Solomon's buildings on the Temple hill, and these accounts unhappily disagree, which has led Lewin to the charitable conclusion that the Jewish historian made his first statement before he had studied his subject with much care. "A difficulty is admitted," says Mr Dixon, "but our discovery removes suspicion from the sacred text, 'Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them.' In the presence of our Phœnician marks, it is impossible to doubt that Hiram's builders did also help to hew these stones."<sup>4</sup>

In inquiries of this character we cannot be too careful not to confound what may be the effect of chance or idle amusement, with letters or syllabic characters. Mr Truter relates, that in the southern extremity of Africa, among the Betjuanas, he saw children busy in tracing on a rock, with some sharp instrument, characters, which bore the most perfect resemblance to the P and the M of the Roman alphabet; notwithstanding which, these rude tribes were perfectly ignorant of writing.<sup>5</sup> Probably nothing would have more astonished the workmen of past ages, than the interpretation which has been placed on their ancient signatures. For any practicable purpose, collections of marks are alone valuable in determining whether the same workmen were employed, to any great extent, upon buildings in the same countries. To settle this point, the resemblance between the most frequently recurring marks, should be carefully noted. To do this effectually, however, many thousand specimens would have to be collated, and it seems more than probable that until a successor to the late Mr Shaw, in zeal and

<sup>1</sup> Wellbeloved, *Eburacum*; or, *York under the Romans*, pp. 118, 121. See also Smith, *Dictionary of Antiquities*, s.v. *Fictile*. Many inscriptions on Roman tiles and pottery are given by Dr Birch in the appendix to his work.

<sup>2</sup> W. Hepworth Dixon, "Underground Jerusalem," *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1876.

<sup>3</sup> "On the east wall, at the very base, Captain Warren discovered stones with ancient Hebrew letters in red paint, and these have been thought by some to show that the masonry must of necessity be the work of Solomon. This character was, however, in common use as late as the time of Herod, and the discovery only serves to show that the wall is not later than Jewish times" (Lieutenant C. R. Conder, "The High Sanctuary of Jerusalem," *Good Words*, October 1881). Captain Warren's excavations (referred to by Mr Hepworth Dixon) were carried out during the years 1867-69. Lieutenant Conder was his successor in Palestine, and continued occasional researches during the years 1873-75.

<sup>4</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1876, p. 491.

<sup>5</sup> Cited in Humboldt's *Researches*, vol. i., p. 154.

assiduity, arises, no comprehensive study of "Masons' Marks," or, as Mr King styles them, "enigmatical symbols," will be either practicable or desirable. Many communications on this subject, accompanied in some instances by tracings or copies of marks, have been published in the "Builder," and in the *Masonic Journals*; of these, the disquisition by Mr Dove in the former (1863), and the papers of the late Dr Somerville<sup>1</sup> in the latter, will well repay perusal. In the *Keystone* (Philadelphia) of January 19, 1878, reference is made to Dr Back's collection of stone marks copied by him from German churches and other edifices, but of this work there is no copy in the British Museum or other libraries to which I have had access.

<sup>1</sup> Ancient Masons' Marks (*Freemasons' Quarterly Magazine*, 1851, p. 450; 1852, p. 316).