

THE GUILDS OF THE MEDIEVAL WORKERS IN STONE

The revised laws that resulted from the meeting of 1563 were printed in folio and copies distributed to every lodge of importance that was willing to subscribe to the same. They are entitled the "Brother Book of 1563" and the following is a translation of the ordinances as found in "Gould's History of Free Masonry."

THE BROTHER BOOK OF 1563

First of five pages.

His imperial Roman Majesty, our most gracious Lord, having in this one thousand five hundred and sixty third year most graciously renewed, confirmed and approved to the general fellowship and brotherhood of the stonemasons in the German lands their regulations and duties: and whereas, for some time past many irregularities and bad habits have arisen and obtained in the craft of Masonry; therefore, have many masters and fellows of aforesaid craft and fraternity, as they are named hereafter, met together in the aforesaid sixty-third year, at Bale on St. Bartholomew's, and at Strassburg on St. Michael's day, in order to elucidate and better aforesaid ordinances and articles of the craft and brotherhood, and the aforesaid have elucidated and bettered said ordinances, and settled that they shall be held as hereafter follows, and no one who is of this guild shall do or act contrary thereto.

ARTICLE I. That if any article in this book be too hard or heavy, or any be too light, then may those who are of our guild, being in a majority, alter, lessen, or increase such articles according to the times the necessities of the land, and the course of affairs. And when there is a general summons they shall meet together in chapter form, according to the contents of this book, and (that their resolutions) shall be kept on the oath which each one has taken.

ART. II. Who so comes into this guild of his own good will, as hereafter stands written in this book, he shall promise to keep every point and article if he be of our craft of Masonry. Those shall be masters who can erect costly edifices and such like work, for the which they are authorized, and serve no other craft unless they choose so to do. And be it masters or fellows, they shall and must conduct themselves honorably, and none shall be wronged by them: therefore have we taken power in these ordinances to punish them on the occasion of every such act.

ART. III. Whatever regular buildings are now under journey work, such as Strassburg, Cologne, Vienna, and such like works, and in the lodges thereto belonging, as according to custom have hitherto been completed by journey work, such buildings and work shall remain under journey work, and in no wise shall a contract be made, in order that the work so far as possible, be not cut short by reason of the contract.

ART. IV. If any craftsman who has a regular work should die, then any craftsman or master who understands masonry, and is sufficient and able for the work, may well aspire and apply for the work, so that the Lords who have such work in hand may again be supplied according to the necessity of masonry. So likewise may any fellow who understands masonry.

ART. V. Whatever master it may behove, beyond his own work, to undertake a work abroad, or any other master whom it may

behave, though he have no such aforesaid work in hand, such master shall, as he best can or may, in good faith set or continue such work or building by journey pay, so that there be no danger of the work being cut short according to the rights and usages of masonry. And if a master do not make use of this [method of payment] for the persons who cause the work to be done, and it be found out upon trustworthy information, then shall the said master be taken to task of the craft, corrected and punished after it be proved against him. But if the Lords will not do it so, then may he act according to the Lords desire.

ART. VI. If a master who has possessed and had such a work and building in hand should die, and another master come and find hewn stone work, be it set or unset, such master shall not pull down the set stone work, nor shall he in any way cast away the unset hewn stone work, without the council and agreement of other craftsmen, so the Lords and other honorable persons who cause such buildings to be raised be not put to unjust expense, and that the master who left such work after his death be not defamed. But if the Lords wish such work removed, then may he allow it to be done, provided he seek no dishonest advantage thereby.

ART. VII. And every master who has practised masonry his five year with a stone mason, shall be permitted and shall have power to hew stones and build by contract of journey work, without fear if it so please him, nevertheless without trespassing against the articles written herebefore or hereafter.

ART. VIII. If any one contracts for a work, and gives a plan for it how it shall be, the work shall not be cut short of anything in the design, but he shall execute it accordingly to the plan which he has shown to the Lords, cities or people, so that nothing is altered on the building. Unless it be that the Lords will it so, then may he alter it according to the Lords wishes, without seeking undue advantage.

ART. IX. And no two masters shall have one building or work in common, unless it may be a small building that may be brought to an end in the space of a year: such may he well have in common with him who is a fellow citizen.

ART. X. A master may grant employment as follows: Should it be that masons are required, say for foundations, or to build a wall, for which they are capable, the master may well give them employment, that the Lords be not delayed on their works, and they that are employed shall not be subject to these ordinances: but they shall not be further set to hew stones, because they have not served according to our ordinances.

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