

THE OLD MASONIC



LODGE OF FAITHFUL.



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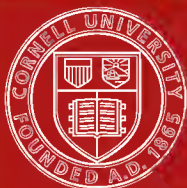
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THE OLD MASONIC LODGE
OF FALKIRK.





THE OLD MASONIC LODGE
OF FALKIRK,

NOW KNOWN AS

LODGE ST. JOHN, No. 16.

BY
THOMAS JOHNSTON,
LATELY SECRETARY OF THE LODGE.

FALKIRK:
PRINTED FOR THE LODGE AT THE *HERALD* OFFICE.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF MAR
AND KELLIE,

Provincial Grand Master of Stirlingshire, and Past Grand Master
Mason of Scotland.

/ MY LORD,

Knowing as we do the keen, kindly, and devoted interest with which you ever regard all that relates to the Masonic craft, especially in the highly-favoured Province so ably and so acceptably presided over by you, we have much pleasure, on behalf of the Members of Lodge St. John, No. 16, Falkirk (for whom the following pages are now published in a permanent form), in dedicating to your Lordship the present little work.

Unfortunately, owing to the loss of portions of our records, much of the history of our ancient Lodge is involved in obscurity and doubt; but it is hoped that this small book—the contents of which, founded on still existing minutes and other documents, originally appeared in the *Falkirk Herald*—will at least throw a degree of light on many of the events and incidents that have marked our Lodge's long and chequered career, and thus prove not quite unwelcome to the "brethren of the mystic tie."

With sincere esteem and most profound respect, we are, my Lord,

Yours fraternally,

JAMES HADDOW, *R.W.M.*

WILLIAM BLACK, *P.M.*

THOS. JOHNSTON, *M.M., Author.*

FALKIRK, 1st October, 1887.

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THE OLD MASONIC LODGE OF FALKIRK.

CHAPTER I.

*Antiquity of the Lodge—The Earliest Existing Minutes—
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and Br. Sir Archibald Primrose.*

IT is believed that the Old Masonic Lodge of Falkirk originally worked under a charter granted by "Mother Kilwinning." How long, in its then form, it existed before 1736 we are not in a position to say; but it is certain that it was represented at the conferences which, in that year, resulted in the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Our senior local Lodge can thus rightly claim a respectable ascertained antiquity; and in this and succeeding chapters regarding it we shall confine ourselves strictly to that which is historically authentic. Unfortunately, the earliest records are altogether missing. An entire book of

the set from 1739 to 1838 seems also to have gone astray, and many passages in the volumes that are preserved are rather obscure, while at various periods the entries are meagre and irregular. It is, therefore, not to be expected that we can furnish a quite connected narrative on the subject with which we are about to deal. On the contrary what we write must unavoidably be, to a large extent, fragmentary, although, as we hope, not on that account altogether valueless to our Masonic friends and the public.

The Lodge was dormant from 1838 till 1864, when, on being resuscitated, it adopted "St. John" as its distinctive title, and was ranked as 16 on the Grand Lodge roll, its old number (14) having in the interval been otherwise bestowed. In early days, however, it was simply called the "Lodge of Falkirk." The first of its minutes that are extant bears the date October 8, 1739, and is signed "James Logan, D.M." At the meeting to which that refers several applications from candidates for admission are considered, and the brethren instruct "Mr George Dennistoun to send in the level (being wrong) to Edinburgh to be rectified." This "Mr George Dennistoun" appears to have been a surgeon in Falkirk, and he was evidently a most enthusiastic and devoted Mason. At another meeting, the same month, a communication is submitted from the "Worshipfull Lodge of Stirling," proposing the appointment of "reciprocal correspondent members" for the due observance of St. Andrew's Day in the two towns. The request is cordially received, the Falkirk fraternity deputing two of their

number to repair to the county capital and "join in solemn assembly to commemorate that worthy patron of this antient kingdom," and all and sundry are earnestly recommended "to cultivate to the utmost of their power mutual harmony, concord, unanimity, brotherly love, and affection with said Lodge." Then a committee is chosen "to assist the Treasurer in righting the jewels belonging to this Lodge, and in preparing proper cloathing for the Master and two Wardens." The Master of the Lodge at this period was one James Livingstone.

The next meetings were held on November 30th, December 14th, and December 27th, 1739. At the last (on St. John's Day) Sir Michael Bruce of Stenhouse is unanimously elected Master, the other office-bearers appointed being a Senior Warden, a Junior Warden, a Treasurer, a Secretary, a Clerk and Key-keeper, and a Key-keeper. It is agreed to give an annual contribution of half a guinea towards the maintenance of Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. The brethren march in procession through the town, and afterwards dine together.

Jan. 29th, 1740.—"The Lodge being duly mett, there was a petition presented by the Right Honble. Earl of Kilmarnock, present Master of the Kilmarnock Lodge and the British Coffee House Lodge, London, craving to be admitted a member of the Lodge of Falkirk, which was received and unanimously granted. . . . The Right Honble. Earl of Kilmarnock payed in ten shillings to the box, half a crown to be enrolled at Edinr., and other dues."

The nobleman mentioned in the above extract was the husband of Lady Anne Livingstone, only daughter of Falkirk's *quondam* feudal superior, the attainted and exiled Earl of Linlithgow and Callendar. This high-born couple were tenants of Callendar, where indeed they chiefly resided, in such style as their extremely limited means permitted. Lord Kilmarnock, unable to purchase popular applause by lavish display or profuse liberality, was nevertheless, owing to his own amiable and engaging qualities, a great favourite in the district, and by none was he more heartily welcomed than by the Masonic community.

In the absence of Sir Michael Bruce the Earl is called upon to preside at a meeting of the Lodge held on March 5, 1740. At that meeting Sir Archibald Primrose of Dunipace is admitted as a member—a curious and striking coincidence when the circumstance is regarded in the light of what followed. The same dark fate—the traitor's doom—is hovering over both even as they become brothers in the old Mason Lodge of Falkirk.

The minute of May 7, 1740, bears:—"As we observe by the publick news, notified there by order and authority of the Grand Master of Scotland, that a communication is to be held at St. Mary's Chaple, the fourteenth instant, and as we never, as yet, have acknowledged said Lodge, either by enrolling such members as have been admitted since the year one thousand seven hundred and thirty-six, or pay'd up the annual quota agreed to carry on the Royal Infirmary, we therefore grant proxie to our worshipful

brother George Dennistoun, Senior Warden, empowering him to appear for us at said communication, and act for us in whatever way he shall think most convenient, and particularly to pay in the half-guinea towards promoting the Infirmary, as formerly enacted, and also to enrol such members in the Grand Lodge books as have paid their half-crowns for that end."

The Lodge dues at that time were—five shillings to the box, half-a-crown to the Grand Lodge, half-a-crown for "cloathing the brethren present," a shilling to the Clerk, and sixpence to the Tyler.

Here is a rather curious entry, dated December 1, 1740:—"It being proposed that our stock should be immediately raised and lay'd out in meal, in order to supply our brethren at prime cost, to prevent their being imposed on, it is unanimously agreed upon," and a committee, the members of which are "recommended" to be "diligent and active in making it effectual," is appointed to carry out this resolution. The same committee is desired "to consider upon the most proper method to address the Grand Lodge in order to obtain a confirmation of our charter."

On St. John's Day (Dec. 27), 1740, "the Right Honble. my Lord Kilmarnock was unanimously chosen Master." Then follows a minute of March 9, 1741:—"The worshipfull members of the Lodge of Falkirk being met, a letter from our Right Worshipful Master, the Earl of Kilmarnock, was read, dated at Kilmarnock the 12th of January, 1741, wherein he expresses himself most affectionately towards

this Lodge, and resolves to the utmost of his endeavours to promote the advantage of it, and at the same time appoints our worthy brother George Dennistoun, Esq., surgeon in Falkirk, Deputy-Master, with full power to act in his absence."

On October 2, 1741, Lord Kilmarnock attends the Lodge for the first time in his capacity of Master. At that meeting the subject of arrears of dues is discussed, and the prosecution of defaulters is gravely spoken of. In the records of the Lodge there are frequent indications of such threatenings, which, however, seem to have a good deal of the *brutum fulmen* about them, as in such cases the "bark" is generally "worse than the bite." At the date above-named regular stewards are appointed for the first time, the brethren selected for the position being James Livingstone and James Easton.

In 1741 the celebration of St. John's anniversary took place on the 28th of December, when Lord Kilmarnock is re-elected to the chair, and it is resolved "that all fines due for absence should be excused (this day included), and that the Act relating thereto should be put in execution in future without favour."

Lord Kilmarnock was at the meeting and signs the minute of Feb. 6, 1742, and on St Andrew's Day, "in Brother Livingstone's house," the Lodge had a feast, which concluded with the drinking ("though repeated before," as we are told) of "health, success, and prosperity to the Right Honourable the Earl of Kilmarnock, our present

Right Worshipful and Honourable Master, who was this day unanimously nominated Most Worthy Grand Master of Scotland for the ensuing year.”

March 6, 1742.—“This day the Depute-Master of this Lodge, at the desire of the brethren, gave an invitation to the Most Worshipful and Right Honourable Earl of Kilmarnock, Grand Master of Scotland, begging he would honour this Lodge with a visit, to which he graciously condescended. . . . When the Grand Master entered the Lodge, the Master resigned his jewel and seat. He appointed two Grand Wardens *pro tempore*, who took their seats betwixt the two Wardens of this Lodge. The Lodge was closed by the Grand Master.”

At this meeting Lord Kilmarnock was “most graciously pleased to give five shillings into our box towards the relief of indigent brothers. It was the unanimous consent of the Lodge to give of the above donation half-a-crown to the Tyler.”

The minute of 15th January, 1743, has this entry:—
“The Society, taking into their consideration and thinking it their duty to put some mark of favour and regard on their deceast brethren, do therefore enact that, upon the proper application of any one of such deceast brother’s sons, he being duly found qualified, that he shall be entred an Apprentice, and afterward Fellowcraft or Master, in due form, free of all charges, and orders the Clerk to engross this Act among our by-laws.”

The St. John’s Day business meeting of 1743 took place

at Gartcows, where the Earl of Kilmarnock was elected Master ; and his Lordship presided over a communication which was held in the town the same day.

From that date till early in 1747 there are no entries whatever in the minute book. In the interval the sanguinary drama of the Jacobite rebellion—which, after running its meteor-like course, ended in disaster “when the clans of Culloden were scattered in fight”—had been enacted. Among those who joined the insurgents was Lord Kilmarnock. Falling into the hands of George the Second’s relentless Government, he was tried, convicted, condemned, and beheaded in London in the summer of 1746. Thus it was that the Freemasons of Falkirk of a hundred and forty years ago lost their noble and well-beloved Master, whose tragic death was deeply deplored even by those who had no sympathy with the cause in which he suffered. Nor was the Earl of Kilmarnock the only distinguished man belonging to the Lodge who sacrificed his life in that rash and unhappy enterprise. Brother Sir Archibald Primrose of Dunipace also cast in his lot with Prince Charlie, and, like many another gallant cavalier, he was hanged at Carlisle for his mistaken loyalty.



CHAPTER II.

The Effect on the Lodge of the Jacobite Insurrection—A Protracted Cessation of Labour—The Meetings Resumed—The Lodge and Lord Kilmarnock's Sons—St. John's Day Celebrations—Concession in Favour of Members' Eldest Sons.

IT has been shown that, during the progress of the Jacobite rebellion, and, indeed, for some time previous to and after that memorable event, no meetings of the Lodge were held—at least no record of any such meetings is discoverable. Probably, from the fact that the Master, the Earl of Kilmarnock, had so prominently identified himself with the cause of the insurgents, the brethren felt there was a danger of their own loyalty being called in question if they continued to assemble; so that they prudently resolved to keep themselves safe by suspending the practice of their labours and mysteries till the advent of quieter and less perilous days. Lord Kilmarnock was executed for high treason on the 18th of August, 1746, and the Lodge does not appear to have been regularly called together again till the 9th of February, 1747, the following being the minute of that date:—

“The annuall communication of St. John's Day for the

two bypast years being omitted, by reason of the late commotions in the country and other accidents, a solemn communication was this day appointed, by legal order, for electing office-bearers for the current year for the Lodge. . . . After such a long interruption, as it will require some time to regulate the affairs of the Lodge, the Tayleur is hereby ordered to summon all the brethren of the Lodge to meet at the house of James Logan against Saturday next, the fourteenth instant, at four o'clock afternoon, in order to examine the state of the box, and other affairs of the Lodge." That examination seems to have proved much more satisfactory than had been expected, as we find it recorded that "notwithstanding of the above interval, nothing has occurred that is confused, but all plain and easy."

On St. John's Day, 1748, it was agreed to remit all fines and outstanding dues—a measure which, it is declared, "will be a great encouragement to members who have been long absent to attend punctually for the future, and thereby considerably augment the stock by their after payments." This act, however, is carefully described as "no infringement of the laws, as we find ourselves under the necessity of passing it on account of the late commotions in the country."

On the 27th of December, 1749, Lord Boyd was elected Master, the Hon. Charles Boyd, Senior Warden, and the Hon. William Boyd, Junior Warden. They were sons of the unfortunate Earl of Kilmarnock. Lord Boyd, who,

about ten years afterwards, succeeded to the ancient Earldom of Errol, became tenant of Callendar on the death of his mother, and spent much of his time there. He was an officer in King George's army, and was present at the battle of Culloden, fighting against the insurgents, in whose ranks his father held a high command. Charles Boyd joined the rebels along with Lord Kilmarnock, and, on the defeat of the young Pretender, he with great difficulty managed to effect his escape. Taking refuge in the island of Arran, the greater portion of which, in former days, belonged to his family, he remained in hiding there for many months, and having some slight knowledge of medicine, he exercised his skill in treating the ailments of the inhabitants. He ultimately got himself smuggled over to France, staying there until, the resentment of the Government cooling down, he was enabled to return home with safety. His younger brother, William, bore a commission in the Navy. Lord Boyd was several times re-elected to the Mastership of the Lodge, although there is no evidence that he ever condescended to attend any of its meetings. William Boyd was admitted a member on the 27th of December, 1750, a year *after* his appointment as Junior Warden. No doubt he was already a member of some other Lodge.

The funds of the Lodge do not appear to have been in a particularly prosperous condition at this period, as it is stated that, "after paying the Tayler four shillings sterling, there is seventeen shillings and sixpence sterling in the box."

Dec. 27, 1753.—“A proposall for joining with the severall societys of this place for purchasing meal in quantities for the benefit of the poor being laid before us, as it seems to be designed for the generall good and a charitable end, wee, agreeable to the principles of Masonry, chearfully approve of the same, and, in a paper apart, signify our inclination to contribute towards making the same effectuall.” At the same meeting it was resolved that in future regular quarterly meetings should be held—namely, on the last Friday of March, last Friday of June, and last Friday of September yearly, the anniversary celebrations of St. Andrew and St. John being continued as formerly. It was agreed that members be called upon to pay three halfpence into the box at each quarterly meeting.

On 20th December, 1754, it was resolved to celebrate St. John's Day “in David Watt's,” the brethren “to be all decently cloathed—viz., with white aprons, white gloves, and, if convenient, white stockings, and each of them to wear a St. Andrew's Cross on their hatts or bonnets. The Clerk was desired to cause the Tolbooth bell to be rung the time of the procession.” The great occasion seems to have passed off with all proper *éclat*, and the Lodge received an influential new member in the person of the Hon. Francis Napier.

“The Lodge, betwixt two and three afternoon, went in procession from the house to the West Port, and from that to the East Port, from thence back to the house in the following order:—1st, Tyler with a sword; 2nd, a French

horn; 3rd, the rest of the music; 4th, the Master, supported by one of his own choseing; 5th, the two Wardens; 6th, the Treasurer and Secretary; 7th, the two Key-keepers; 8th, the two Examiners; afterwards the Fellowcrafts, two and two; then the Entred Prentices, two and two; and the procession was brought up by the Clerk, and one appointed by the Master."

Next St. John's Day a standard-bearer was appointed to grace the procession, the office being conferred upon Brother Lauder.

November 30, 1756.—"The Lodge taking it into their consideration that many inconveniences attend the taking bills from entring breatheren for their dues, they are therefore of an unanamosly oppinion that no such custom shall prevale in this Lodge for the futer, but evry petitioner shall pay in his dues to the Treasurer emmedeatly before admission, but if any brother or breatheren shall offer reasons to the Lodge in favoure of any petitioner whay this law may be despenst with for the time bieing, in that case it shall be brought to a vote of the Lodge, and admitted or regeted accordingly." At this meeting arrangements were made for the Festival of St. John, and the brethren were "intreated to attend punctually, and be deasently dressed." The Junior Warden and Treasurer were also instructed to provide a standard for the Lodge, "after the following manner":—"The ground to be a perfit squair, of the dementions they shall juge proper, of a white coulered stuff, having these devices upon it—the Massons' armes

upon the center, the St. Andrew's Cross above it, and motto below it 'Lodge of Falkirk,' with a bunch of freenges or narrow riabonds at the end of the pole, also at the two outmost corners of the square, on each corner one of the juels, compas, squair, plum, rule and leavell." The brethren to whom this important commission was entrusted were allowed a considerable amount of latitude in executing it, as it was left to them "to alter or amend or improve on the above devices." As we learn from another minute, the cost of the flag, together with a box to hold it, was £1 4s.

Another entry about this date bears:—"It is enacted that the eldest son of any brother belonging to this Lodge may be admitted after duely petitioning, and being found duely quallified, upon paying the Clark and Taylor's dues, with this acception that if both shall hapen to be present at a meeting the father shall only have a voat in any question."



CHAPTER III.

*The Testing of Candidates—A Masonic Funeral in 1760—
Erection of Lodge Premises—An Ingenious Financial
Scheme—Interesting Story of how Masonry Helped a
Captive Crew.*

THE Masons of the olden time set their faces rigidly against "scamped" work, and made it a point that all who had the privilege of joining their ranks should be able to show their competence in the lower degrees before they could successfully apply for promotion to the sublime grade. Thus, in the middle of the last century, no Apprentice was permitted to become a Fellowcraft until he had been in the former position for at least six months; and a further probationary period was necessary ere he could reach the third and highest stage in the St. John's mysteries. Nor was time alone needful to qualify for advancement. The candidate had also to give proof that he had picked up his lessons properly; and it was the duty of two sharp functionaries called "Examiners" to put him through his "facings" in order to ascertain that his attainments were up to the mark.

A most earnest and business-like determination seems to have pervaded the Lodge at the St. John's Day communication of 1757. It was then resolved that there should

be no dinner in future on such occasions, but that an hour after the procession the Lodge should be opened; and, so as to improve the knowledge of the members, Brother Moir was appointed an "Extraordinary Examiner" to catechise the brethren. Evidently, however, the virtuous intention to forego the feast was not carried out with uniform exactness; for the eating and drinking department continued to be well attended to at the particular season in question.

In 1758 Thomas Dundas, Esq. of Castlecary—an ancestor or kinsman, we presume, of the Earls of Zetland—was admitted a member of the Lodge, of which at the same time he was appointed Master. His "mother Lodge" seems to have been that of St. Giles, Edinburgh. He frequently attended the meetings of the Falkirk Lodge, to the Mastership of which he was repeatedly re-elected.

In the minute dated 4th January, 1760, there is mentioned a pleasant instance of fraternal "giff-gaff:"—"This day the comete met according to the appointment of the last meeting, and as Brother Alexander Callo having been so good as to complement the Lodge of Falkirk with a dozing of their drinking glasses, therefore we thought it proper to complement him with the freedom of our Lodge, and he signed our book and laws and regulations accordingly."

March 26, 1760.—"The above meeting has taken it to consideration that the stock in the box raises so slow that they have thought proper to raise their quarterly dues from three halfpences to threepence each quarter, likeways a

a motion being made by the brethren that the Society should pay in a shilling yearly, the commensment of the same shall be at St. John's Day, 1760," the impost to continue for a period of six years.

April 8, 1760.—"This day a meeting of the free and accepted Masons mett in Br. Watt's, and went in procession from that to the house of the deceased worthy Br. James Eastone, and after drinking a glass, fifteen of the loving brethren carried the said corps to the place of interrment, and afterwards went into procession to Br. Watt's, and drank a glass to the memory of the said deceas'd brother." In those days teetotalism was unknown, and on no occasion, whether of joy or of sorrow, was the bottle neglected. Even at funerals hard drinking was common; but there is nothing in the foregoing to lead us to suppose that any excess of conviviality characterised the obsequies of "the worthy Br. James Eastone." No doubt, if the brethren had altogether dispensed with the bibulous custom they would have laid themselves open to the charge of showing disrespect to the dead.

At this time the Lodge had no regular place of meeting. The Master at the end of each communication intimated where the brethren were next to assemble. That was usually at the house of a brother who happened to be a vintner or innkeeper; and the Br. Watt referred to in the last-quoted minute was frequently patronised. His Christian name was David, and he kept a tavern. No doubt he was the same Boniface (David Watt) of whom

the story is told that, after the battle of Falkirk (1746), he was set upon and deprived of his fine silver-buckle shoes by a party of Highlanders, who refused to abandon their acquisitive design, though imploringly assured by the luckless wight that he was a good friend of the Prince's cause. It was not, however, always either in change-house or in hostelry that the Lodge practised its occult rites. It did so occasionally even in the burgh Tolbooth. This state of matters must have been rather inconvenient and unsatisfactory. The first symptom we have of the brethren moving in the direction of providing premises of their own is to be seen in a minute of October 31, 1760, when a committee was appointed to consider the subject, the idea then being that a suitable house should be purchased.

Dec. 27, 1760.—“At the request of our last meeting, the Master went and inspected a house proposed by the brethren to be purchased, and finds the same worth the money offered for it, and should be glad that the brethren should purchase the same, providing they find the rights good, and appoints a Committee to meet with the owner and make a bargin.” The property here mentioned belonged to one Alex. Kidston. Nothing, however, came of the negotiations, as there was seemingly a flaw discovered in the title-deeds.

On the 22d July, 1761, a committee was appointed “to attend in Br. John Liddell's on Friday night, at 6 o'clock at night, to make a purchase if possable with John Jervey

for a little pice of ground lying at the foot of the Back-roe of Falkirk, and, if the said cometee shall find anything in that way that can be purchased easier to purchase the same."

No cheaper or more eligible site being available, the aforesaid "little pice of ground" was duly acquired.

Jan. 6, 1762.—"It's appointed that the brethren of this Lodge are to meet in Sister Watt's upon the 20th instant, to receive a plan for a new Lodge that they propose to build, and that any mason that has a mind to undertake to finish the same may attend their and give in their estimates."

The plan was submitted accordingly on the 20th of January, 1762, and on the 3rd of February, "the brethren receiving an estimate from Brothers Andrew Eastoun, William Scott, William and John Wyses, amounting to forty-one pound, ten shillings, and ninepence sterling, for which the society agreed to pay the above brethren five pound, eighteen shillings sterling per rood, at three partial payments, and the said mason work to be finished against the first of May next."

In February, 1762, the foundation-stone was laid of the new Lodge, which, says the minute, "was stiled the Melisian Lodge of Falkirk, in honour of Thales, the Melisian." That rather far-fetched title, however, had subsequently to be dropped, as the Grand Lodge refused to sanction it, unless the Lodge was re-constituted under a fresh charter.

On 3rd May, 1762, it was agreed that fines of twopence should be imposed for non-attendance, and one penny upon any member who should be half an hour late at any meeting.

June 22, 1762—"The undertakers petitioned to have their work [the new Lodge] visited and taken off their hand; theirfor the brethren thought proper to appoint Br. John Easton and Br. James Whytlaw to visit and inspect the sufficiency of said work, and give in their report against next meeting, which is appointed to be the 22nd of September next, in the Lodge; likewise, the brethren empower John Moir to finish the rest of said work, and give in a charge of said against the meeting."

The minute of date 15th September, 1762, contains the following ingenious scheme for raising money to defray the expenses connected with finishing the Lodge:—"Suposing to compleat the Lodge, it will be necessary to borrow £50 at five per cent, alow the Lodge only to consist of fourty members, that each pay one shilling sterling each quarterly meeting for four years; let the Steuart's profits be five pence for each botle of punch, or whatever else is used, and let the fine of such absent members be equal to the same; suppose we have three entrys in one year, at ten shillings and six pence each, the rent of the low rooms at one pound each:—To quarterly payment of fourty members yearly, £8; to Steuart's profits on 160 botles punch, or fines, £3 6s 8d; to three entrys, and rents of the low rooms, £3 11s 6d; to fines for those that are late, or

otherwise, 1s 6d; total of yearly collection, £15. The which schame, proposed by Bro. Robert Whyt, was aproven of by a great majority of the Lodge, to which the rest agreed, and it was accordingly enacted that the same should be immediately put in execution after St John's Day nixt to come, and the Lodge appoints the last Wednesday of March, the 24th of June, the last Wednesday of September, and St John's Day to be the quarterly meetings, where the whole members most punctually attend, in order to their regularly paying their quarterly dues, bieing one shilling each quarter, which is to continue for four years after the first quarterly meeting; and it is further enacted that the fine for each absent member at each of these meetings shall be sixpence sterling, which he shall pay together with his dues the first time he enters the Lodge nixt thereafter, which if he refuses to do he shall be extruded the Lodge, and not be allowed to enter the same till he submitt himself to the awward and determineation of the Lodge. As also it is enacted that, if any brother shall not acknowledge the Lodge for eight quarterly meetings successively his name shall be taken out of the books, and he be held as no member of our Lodge. That each brother living at the distance of two or more miles shall, upon regularly remitting his quarterly dues, be exempted from the fine; and the Lodge appoints every member present to drink at least half a botle of punch, or else pay sixpence sterling each quarterly meeting, all which dues, profits, and fines shall be applied to the public stock."

The following extract from a minute of December 27, 1762, is interesting :—

“Brothers Whyt and Wyse reported that the Grand Master, Charles, Earl of Elgin, had ordered the several Lodges under the inspection of the Grand Lodge of Scotland to assume Don Antonio de Pizarro, Governour of Terragona, in Spain, as a nominal member of their Lodge, and that therefore he ought to be so in ours. The reason of which follows :—

“Mr. Dickson, a member of some of the Lodges in Scotland, was sailing from Gibraltar to some ports in Italy. During his voyage he had the misfortune to be in danger of shipwreck from a storm which overtook him, which obliged him to run his ship ashore on the Spanish coast, under the walls of Terragona. Mr. Dickson and his crew were seized as King’s prisoners, and carried before the Governour of the place, Don Antonio de Pizarro, who treated them with the utmost humanity. He expressed a great deal of anxiety for Mr. Dickson, as he would be under the necessity of sending him and his crew to Cadiz, where he could not say how long they would remain, as there was no cartel settled betwixt Britain and Spain. After they had conversed a while, Don Antonio inquired at Mr. Dickson for several persons at Gibraltar whom he knew were Masons, which made him conjecture that Don Antonio himself was a Mason. Mr. Dickson gave him a sign, which Don Antonio returned, who afterwards treated him and his crew with the greatest affection, and it gave


Don Antonio no small pleasure to find it was in his power to relieve a distressed brother. He gave orders so that nothing might impede Mr. Dickson's journey, whom, because of his being a brother, he gave liberty with his crew to return to Gibraltar, and supplied him with all necessaries for the journey. When he arrived at Gibraltar he informed the Governour of what had happened, who was so charmed with the story that he sent back sixteen Spaniards to Don Antonio, and the same night he was made a Mason. Mr. Dickson wrote home an account of the whole affair to the Grand Master of Scotland, who has with his own hand wrote a letter of thanks to Don Antonio, and ordered the story to be recorded in the books of the Grand Lodge. As this generous conduct of Don Antonio de Pizarro does honour to Masonry, the Grand Master has ordered Don Antonio to be assumed as a nominal member of all the regular Lodges in Scotland.

“The Lodge having considered the above affair, unanimously consented to the same, and Don Antonio was accordingly enrolled a member of the Lodge of Falkirk.”



CHAPTER IV.

The Brethren Enter their New Lodge—Royal Arch Masonry in Falkirk—The Operative Element in the Lodge—How the Ingenious Financial Scheme Worked—Borrowing Money—Masonry in Carron—Bonfire and Wine-drinking at the Cross—Curious Cases of Discipline.

HE brethren appear to have entered their new Lodge (situated at the corner of Back Row and Silver Row) on the 22d of September, 1762. A good deal, however, remained to be done before the premises could be regarded as in a finished or satisfactory condition, and for several years many are the complaints recorded in the minutes as to the dilatoriness of the "undertakers," who are threatened with all sorts of dire consequences. Nevertheless, it fell out that matters were ultimately arranged in an amicable manner, and the Falkirk Masons were at length in possession of a mansion which, in those days, was a credit, as it must have been a comfort, to them. The building, with the arms of the craft over the doorway, still stands, and is used as a public-house.

Royal Arch Masonry was introduced into the town a

little after the middle of last century, and on the 27th of December, 1762, the brethren of that order "agreed to join their stock with that of the Falkirk Lodge, the Falkirk brethren to get the Arch and Royal Arch parts." This arrangement continued for years, when the Royal Arch section probably became extinct. The fee charged for exaltation was six shillings.

It is interesting to learn that, even at this period, when Freemasonry was purely speculative in its character, there was still a marked disposition to favour operative masons. In exemplification of this fact—of which there are instances in the records of most of the old Lodges—it may be mentioned that on the 27th of December, 1764, it was decided in future to admit applicants of this class for 10s 6d, whereas ordinary applicants had to pay 15s. All comers, however, had to give a shilling to the Clerk and sixpence to the Tyler.

We have already referred to the ingenious scheme devised to defray the expenses connected with the completion of the Lodge building. Unfortunately it did not prove quite so successful as had no doubt been expected. We are not informed that anyone "kicked against" the ordinance "appointing" every brother "to drink at least half a bottle of punch," the profits arising from the sale of said punch to go to the funds. Looked at in the light of that thirsty age, when the teetotaller was a personage of the future, the minimum quantity of liquor thus prescribed was moderation itself; and there were no doubt many to whom

“half a bottle” was by no means an adequate refreshment. It may be assumed, therefore, that all and sundry dutifully imbibed; but many who had nothing to say against the Steward’s good cheer had decided objections to paying the quarterly shilling. That tax had accordingly to be abandoned, and, instead of it, a shilling each St. John’s Day was imposed, as formerly. We have no proper account of how much the new Lodge cost altogether, although the figures for the mason work are set down at £51 9s. 1d., from which £1 was deducted. Apparently some difficulty was experienced in meeting the various bills, so that the brethren were under the necessity of borrowing a sum of £25 10s. from the Society of Weavers. This was the commencement of a practice which years afterwards led to the alienation of all their property, and had the effect of causing this ancient Lodge itself to become dormant for about a quarter of a century.

It appears from a minute dated 4th Nov., 1765, that the Carron brethren belonging to the Lodge had power to admit members, whose names were regularly reported to the Falkirk Lodge. Indeed that same year a separate Depute-Master and Wardens were appointed by the Falkirk Lodge to officiate in that district. This proceeding, it may be (for we have no precise knowledge on the subject), formed the germ from which was developed the old Lodge of Carron, now reopened as No. 139, after having been closed for forty-five years.

Sept. 21, 1766.—“This day the brethren mett, and

taking into consideration that Thomas Dundas of Castle-carrie, Esq., is now in this countree, did recomend it to the Secretary to notifie our situation to him, as he generously promised to assist us to defray the expence of erecting our Lodge." This gentle reminder had the desired effect; for Mr Dundas sent £5, and afterwards supplemented that by another donation of £10—not a bad contribution at a time when money was scarce and went far.

Dec. 1, 1766.—“The brethren agreed that James Wyse should furnish a dinner on St. John’s Day, and that there should be a bonfire at the Cross, and a covered table with a dozen of wine and a sufficient number of glasses.” The James Wyse here spoken of was the tenant of the Lodge property, and, unlike some of his successors, who occasioned a great deal of loss and trouble to the brethren, he seems to have been “the right man in the right place.”

The following extracts, which sufficiently explain themselves, refer to cases of discipline. Although long, long years have gone by since the offenders “passed over to the majority,” it may be prudent to suppress names:—

Nov. 30, 1768.—“Some of the brethren complained of Br. D——’s irregular behaviour in the Lodge by prophane swearing, which he audaciously persisted in notwithstanding being admonished to the contrary, for which he is recommended to the consideration of the Lodge against St. John’s Day.”

Dec. 21, 1768.—“A complaint bieng made to the Lodge of the conduct of G—— H—— for marrieng people, and J—— A—— for seducing a young woman by a marriage of the same, H—— being present, acknowledged he gave him the lines, which he, the said A——, signed, and A—— said he had been in bed with her, but not on terms of marriage.”

G—— H—— seems to have been doing a little business in the Greta Green matrimonial line. As for J—— A—— the inquiry into his conduct resulted in his restoration to favour, and he was raised to the degree of Master. In 1771, however, he was in another scrape of some sort, the precise nature of which is not indicated, and, failing to appear when called before the brethren, he was deprived of his privileges. This severe measure brought him to his senses, and, on attending and humbly acknowledging his fault, he was the second time “white-washed.”

Dec. 27, 1768.—“The Lodge proceeded to the consideration of the conduct of G—— H——, and unan-
amously expeled him the society, untill he shall behave properly as to those things laid to his charge. Br. D——’s conduct was also under the consideration of the Lodge, to whom he submitted, who unan-
amously fined him two shillings and sixpence sterling, which was applied to the poor.”

Dec. 27, 1770.—“In regard to J—— N—— bieng asked by the Worshipfull Master and the other brethren to

disclose a breach of obligation by another brother, which he peremptorily refused, therefore the Master and the other brethren, not only on that account, but also on account of his morall character, unanimously agreed to expell Brother J—— N—— this honorable Lodge, and that for ever. It was also unanimously agreed by the Lodge to expell Brother A—— D—— for a breach in his obligation to the society, and likewise on account of his morall character, and further bieng habit and repute a harberer of bad company in his house, and with his consent.”


Of Br. A—— D—— we hear no more. Perhaps his ill behaviour had been so flagrant that it could not be defended; perhaps his name flourished in records which have been lost. At all events, there is an end of him and his “morall character,” so far as the documents that have been preserved are concerned. Of his fellow-sufferer, Br. J—— N——, we have a parting glimpse, and that exhibits him in fighting attitude, determined to vindicate his outraged reputation. He was evidently not a man quietly to submit. At a meeting of the Lodge, held on 30th January, 1771, two certificates in his favour, and emanating from no less a source than the Kirk Session of Falkirk, were presented; and the Secretary stated that he was informed that Br. N—— was going to prosecute the Lodge for libel. The subject was discussed, but decision regarding it was postponed till next St. John’s. The Secretary and those adhering to him, who

apparently had come to regard, or been frightened into affecting to regard, Br. N——'s expulsion as illegal, thereupon protested that, in case the threatened action was raised, no part of the property or funds of the Lodge should be used in defending it. Here were all the elements for a whole peck of future trouble. What the result was—whether Br. N—— was pacified by the withdrawal of the imputations on his “morall character” and by being reinstated in the enjoyment of his Masonic privileges, or whether the gentlemen of the law got a job over the affair—cannot now be learned; for the earliest existing volume of minutes closes at the date 30th November, 1771, and there is a hiatus between then and 1798, the book or books relating to the intervening period being missing.



CHAPTER V.

Lost Records—St. Andrew's and St. John's Anniversary Celebrations—Military Members of the Lodge—J.P.'s "Holding the Rent"—Considerate Treatment of a Poor Brother—"Piebaker" Balderston—Grangemouth Custom-House—The Brethren at the Parish Church—Increasing Pecuniary Difficulties—Ruinous Condition of the Lodge Property—An Overwhelming Financial Crisis—The Lodge Becomes Dormant.

S was stated at the end of last chapter, the minutes for the twenty-seven years from about the close of 1771 to 1798 are missing. Possibly, like the time-stained records now before us, they are still in existence, and, as was the case with these, are destined in due season again to see the light of day, and to tell their own old story. It may be that at this moment they are reposing in some quiet and dusty nook, in the keeping of one all unconscious of their value and their interest. On the other hand, it is not improbable that long ago they were sacrificed to those commonplace utilitarian purposes which, to the unspeakable disgust of the

historian and the antiquary, have proved the destruction of so many yet more important manuscripts relating to a bygone age. Howe'er that be, the want of them leaves us utterly in the dark as to the proceedings and fortunes of the Lodge during the protracted interval to which we have referred. But, without stopping to indulge in needless conjecture, let us go on and draw upon the next available source of information—the minute-book beginning with the entry “Nov. 30, 1798.”

On that date the brethren met in order to celebrate the anniversary of St. Andrew, Scotland's traditionary national patron. Evidently the festive qualities for which they were formerly noted remained unimpaired, for they “spent the night with that conviviality which distinguishes the ancient craft of Freemasons.” On the 14th December following, Br. Robert Walker was elected Master, and on the 27th of the same month (St. John's Day) there was a grand demonstration in honour of the Evangelist. First of all there was a dinner, and “after some toasts being given by the R.W. Master, the brethren walked by torch-light in procession through the town, being joined by a number of the Carron and Operative Masons, and spent the rest of the evening in cheerfulness by hearing a number of good songs, drinking toasts applicable, and departed orderly and in good time.” It would seem that a movement was then on foot with a view to the erection of a hall in Edinburgh for the accommodation of the Grand Lodge, and on the 11th

January, 1799, the Falkirk Lodge agreed to give £5 in support of that object.

At the end of last and in the early years of this century Falkirk appears to have had a considerable military population, portions of several corps—both cavalry and infantry—being stationed there. At that period the inordinate ambition of Napoleon threatened to strangle the liberties of all Europe, and the duty of heading the resistance to the designs of the rapacious usurper devolved upon Britain, who, with her allies, did not finally succeed in crushing him till Waterloo had been fought. That was only after years of anxiety and heroic effort, during which the resources of the country were most severely taxed. Among the troops then quartered in the town were detachments of the 1st Light Dragoons, the Lochaber Regiment, and the Lanarkshire Militia. Many of the soldiers availed themselves of the opportunity of getting initiated into the Masonic mysteries by joining our old Lodge, the atmosphere of which, indeed, acquired thereby a distinctly martial flavour. The musicians were generally admitted free of charge on account of services rendered, or to be rendered, on the occasion of the processions which were the pride and the joy of the brethren of those days.

It was the custom of the Lodge to meet on the first Friday of each month for "instruction." The minute of Oct. 3, 1800, says—"The brethren went through the various degrees of the craft with brotherly kind-

ness and charity, assisting one another in the noble work."

March 7, 1800.—"It was agreed to let the Lodge-room to the Justices of the Peace for them to hold their courts in, and to the Commissioners to hold their meetings, for the rent of seven pounds sterling per annum, and to take possession at Whitsunday first, reserving the power and use thereof to ourselves from three o'clock afternoon, when the courts and sittings rise. To accommodate the judges more properly, ordered four big chairs, armed and leather bottomed, to be made, which shall also be used for seats by the two Wardens, Deputemaster, and Secretary. Ordered the floor boards or foot-stools of the Master's and the other office-bearers' chairs to be repaired. Ordered also a long table to be made and covered with green baize, to stand before the Master's seat, and that the Chaplain shall sit in the centre, the Treasurer on his right, and the Clerk on his left hand, with backs to the Master's seat."

The Commissioners alluded to in the above extract were probably some committee of the County Commissioners of Supply. As for the Justices, they did not turn out to be such very exemplary and desirable tenants as might have been expected in the case of gentlemen occupying their dignified station. On December 8, 1809, "the brethren took into consideration that the Lodge had run into debt, which they considered it hard when there was a sum dew to the Lodge by the honour-

able Justices of Peace of bygone rent for the Lodge-room sufficient to pay all the debts dew by the Lodge ;” and at a subsequent meeting it was resolved to present an account at the first court, the Master being authorised, in the event of payment being refused, to act as he might think most proper. How the matter was settled is not revealed in the minutes.

If the Lodge was owing money itself, it was generally in the position of being owed a good deal. More than one of those to whom the premises at the corner of Back Row and Silver Row were let had to be proceeded against for rent, and it was even found necessary to bring the coercive machinery of the law to bear upon sundry defaulting brethren, although there was a creditable disposition to temper justice with mercy.

Dec. 1, 1800—“It was reported that Br. W—— had been prosecuted, and the rent due by him recovered.” It was also reported that the order for prosecuting Br. A—— for his entry-money was executed, “but, on consideration of his large family, and the very high price of provisions, &c., with several other circumstances, it would scarcely be fair, and far less brotherly, to exact payment from him. It was therefore agreed to pass from taking any payment.”

The Masonic community of those days were a jolly set of worthies, who entertained a due regard for the good things of this life. On proceeding “from labour to refreshment” they were no enemies to the “flowing

bowl," and the subjoined entry shows in a practical fashion the grateful sense they had of the merits of the accomplished artist who lent his aid in catering for their gastronomic entertainment and pleasure :—

Dec. 23, 1802.—“A motion being made of the long practice that Robert Balderston, sineor, baker, has had in assisting in making ready the dinner for the brethren on St. John’s Day ought to be made a Mason, which being taken into consideration by the brethren then present of him being a good cook, and his other good services, he was entered an Apprentice Mason, honorary, and signed the laws and regulations of this society.” At this time the principal dishes that graced the table at the feasts of the craft consisted of beef and greens and veal “florintins.” A singular compliment was paid to Br. Balderston’s culinary skill in 1815, when a new office—that of “Piebaker” to the Lodge—was created and conferred upon him.

In 1806 the Lodge subscribed a further sum of £10 10s. in aid of the scheme for building a Masonic Hall in Edinburgh.

Feb. 21, 1810.—“The brethren having met according to an appointment for the purpose of going to Grangemouth, when they were accompanied with some of the brethren of the Operative Lodge, here, and a party of our sister Lodge of Carron, and then proceed to Grangemouth for the purpose of celebrating the laying of the foundation stone of the new Custom House, when we

first saw a stone laid by the contractor, Brother Alexander Easton, and assisted by some of the brethren, and there was deposited in that stone a bottle containing the following coins of his present Majesty's reing (viz):—A five shilling and threepenny pice in gold, a shilling and a sixpence in silver, and two farthings in cooper, all wrapt in hemp covered with a cooperplate with this inscription : 'Grangemouth, 21 Feb., 1810.—In the fiftieth year of his present Majesty, King George the Third, built a new Custom House [on] the property of the Right Hon. Lord Dundas, Kerse.' Thereafter another stone was laid and finished in a masonic form by the Right Worshipful Master of Falkirk Lodge, Brother James Richardson, and the whole concluded by prayer from the Rev. Docter Wilson, one of its members."

On St. John's Day, 1810, the brethren were seemingly in a devout frame of mind ; for, instead of indulging in the usual procession, they went to the Parish Church, where they had a suitable sermon from the Rev. Doctor Wilson, who took as his text 2d Peter, i., 6 and 7. The discourse, we are told in the minute on the subject, "described brotherly kindness and charity in its proper vew, and displayed Masonry in its puerest light." The brethren afterwards dined together, and the same evening, under a dispensation from the Grand Lodge, constituted the Caledonian Lodge of Grahamston and Carron, which seems not yet to have been provided with a charter.

On June 28, 1811, it was reported that, in accordance

with authority previously given, £30 had been borrowed from the Maltmen's Society to defray debts due by the Lodge, and that the Master (Br. James Richardson) and Br. Thomas Duncanson had given bills for the amount. The process of decadence had now fairly set in, and went on until the Lodge was overwhelmed by accumulated difficulties.

By 1811 the Lodge premises had become so much the worse for wear that the brethren had to dine on the St. John's Day of that year in the Red Lion Hotel, and on September 14, 1812, Bro. William Black presented an account (£55 16s. 10d.) for extensive repairs which he had been instructed to carry out. The claim was found to be just, but, as there were no funds in hand, the Lodge "authorised the R.W.M. and Treasurer to grant their acceptances for the above sum in name of the Lodge, payable in three months from date."

By December 27, 1813, the liabilities of the Lodge had increased to £143 10s., with £47 18s. 6d. owing it (£35 6s. of this by "the honourable Justices of Peace").

Dec. 27, 1814.—"The Right Worshipful Master, taking into consideration the low state of the funds of the Lodge, thought it proper to avoid the expense of a fire and wine at the Cross, which was done accordingly."

It is pleasant to observe that, although pecuniary trouble assailed the fraternity on every side, they did not scruple to do a liberal thing when a worthy purpose

was to be served. The minute dated Jan. 13, 1815, states that "a request being made to the Right Worshipful Master, in name of the Rev. Mr. Henry Belfrage, for the use of the Lodge-room for the Sunday evening school, it was decreed by the brethren that he was to have it gratis."

By 1817 the Lodge property again required seeing to, the following being the report concerning its state in the December of that year:—"In the stair several loose steps. In the entry to hay loft several holes. In the Lodge five panes broken in one window, two in another, and one in another. The outer shutter of one window unhinged. The whole of the forms shattered and loose. The Secretary's chair completely broken down, and part of it away. The leather covers torn off the Wardens' chairs, and one of the elbows off the Junior Warden's chair. One branch of one of the hanging candlesticks amissing, and two broken. No fire-irons except a pair of tongs, and the fender much bent. The whole of the office-bearers' clothing and jewels in pretty good order."

In 1825 the Lodge was still so out of repair that the brethren could not meet in it on the St. John's Day of that year. They dined instead in the Crown Inn, where they appear to have enjoyed themselves immensely, no shadow of the approaching ruin intervening to mar their mirth. "Seldom," says the minute, "have the members of any Lodge spent on a similar occasion an evening of so much delight and true Masonic spirit as on this

occasion"—which is pretty good for men who were financially about on their "last legs."

By 1829 the brethren's obligation to the Maltmen had grown to £120, and on February 17, 1835, the latter demanded payment of the debt, with interest. So the evil day had at last arrived. Negotiations were attempted, with a view of tiding over the embarrassment, but the creditors were obdurate. Ultimately, however, the Maltmen offered £200 for the property, and there being no alternative, it was unanimously resolved to accept that tender.

The last election of office-bearers, before the long dormancy of this ancient Lodge, took place on December 8, 1837, when the appointments made were:—George Simpson, R.W. Master; David Buchanan, Senior Warden; Michael Callander, Junior Warden; Robert Black, Depute-Master; James Turner, Secretary; Peter Booth, Treasurer; James Warden, Clerk; William Scott, Chaplain; and Francis Watson, Tyler.

On March 6, 1838, the brethren met in the house of Br. Michael Callander to receive from the officers of the Maltmen's Society the price of the property, and to pay the bill due the said Maltmen's Society of £120, with £20 interest thereon, also the accounts due by the Lodge to Russel & Aitken, writers (£24), and to Br. Booth (£41).

Oct. 1, 1838.—"A meeting of the office-bearers of the Lodge having been called this day for the purpose of

considering of a letter received by the Treasurer of the Lodge from Mr. Adam Smith, writer, threatening to charge upon the decret at his instance for expenses of process of sequestration at the instance of the office-bearers against Lewis Towers [late tenant of the Lodge] being restricted to £8, and Brothers David Buchanan and Michael Callander having offered to pay one pound each of these expenses out of their own pocket, the Treasurer, P. Booth, was requested to advance the balance, although he had not as much belonging to the Lodge in his hands, and he agreed to do so upon the promise of being repaid from the first of the funds collected by the Lodge, or take possession of articles belonging to the Lodge, if they could be found, in compensation thereof; and said expenses were paid to Mr. Smith accordingly."



CHAPTER VI.

Dark Days—Long Dormancy of the Lodge, and its Re-Opening as Lodge St. John, No. 16—Building of the Masonic Hall—A Great Masonic Revival—Conclusion.

FOR more than a quarter of a century after the date of the minute last quoted the fortunes of Masonry in the Falkirk district—where in former days the kindly institution flourished as in an atmosphere peculiarly congenial—were reduced to the lowest possible ebb. The ancient Lodge, whose history we have, with such incomplete materials as are at our disposal, endeavoured to trace, fell altogether out of sight. The whole of its property, as we have shown, had been alienated, and those who were wont to be most devoted in promoting the principles and interests of the fraternity were so discouraged that they at length subsided into inactivity, if not into indifference. Meetings were no longer held; office-bearers ceased to be appointed; and the society, in fact, sunk into a state of suspended animation, with no prospect that it would ever again awake to a fresh career of usefulness and energy.

Meanwhile death was gradually thinning the ranks of

the old members, and the few remaining links connecting us with the Masonic generations of the latter years of the past and the early years of the present century were becoming worn and weak. The Carron Lodge, once prosperous and enthusiastic, had already fallen dormant, and the name of the Operative Lodge of Falkirk, too, disappeared from the roll of the Grand Lodge. Those were the days of the craft's darkest adversity in this part of the country, there being for a considerable period only one Lodge in our immediate neighbourhood—viz., Lodge Zetland (No. 391), which had been established in the enterprising port of Grangemouth, and did much to keep alive the expiring embers of Masonic vitality. At length, however, there dawned a brighter era.

On the 14th of November, 1863, a small but earnest meeting of Masons was held in the Blue Bell Hotel for the purpose of devising measures with a view either to the formation of a new Lodge or the revival of the old Lodge of Falkirk. Alexander Macfarlane, Esq. of Thornhill, presided, and there were also present Bros. William Dick (Grahamston), Henry Weir, William Scott, William Morrison, David Macfarlane, John Lawson, John Marshall, Alexander W. Askew, John Inglis, James R. Borthwick, George Brownlee, and David Baptie. The proceedings were most harmonious, and it was agreed that a strenuous effort should be made forthwith to bring about the re-opening of our venerable local Lodge, which had been in abeyance for about twenty-five years. Accordingly the

co-operation of the resident surviving members of that Lodge was sought, and except in one case, which need not here be specified, it was cordially granted, the after-named respected Masonic veterans (the last of whom, alas, has now gone hence), signing the petition for the necessary authority:—Brs. Thomas Jeffrey, Alexander Ronald, Alexander Hodge, William Wallace, David Buchanan, Michael Callander, William Dobbie, George Lightbody, James Sawers Pender, and James Black. The petition was endorsed by the Master and Wardens of the Zetland Lodge (Grangemouth) and Ancient Brazen (Linlithgow), and Sir Alexander Gibson-Maitland, Bart., Provincial Grand Master of Stirlingshire, kindly promised to do all in his power to further its success—a promise which he zealously and completely fulfilled. The result was that the Grand Lodge granted a working warrant, under the sanction of which a communication was held on the 25th of April, 1864, Br. Alexander Hodge being appointed R.W.M. *ad interim*, while Brs. J. S. Pender and Alexander Ronald acted as Senior and Junior Wardens respectively. A deputation from Grangemouth, headed by Br. Andrew Cowie, R.W.M. there, was present on the occasion, and lent valuable assistance. At this meeting and others which followed, a number of brethren affiliated from sister Lodges.

On the 13th of December, 1864, the first regular nomination of office-bearers since 1837 took place, with the following result:—Br. David Macfarlane, R.W.M.;

Br. John Lawson, P.M.; Br. James Sdeuart, D.M.; Br. A. Macfarlane, S.M.; Br. W. Dick, S.W.; Br. John Inglis, J.W.; Br. J. A. Henderson, Treasurer; Br. W. Scott, Secretary; Br. George Liddle, S.D.; Br. John Ross, J.D.; Br. J. R. Borthwick, Architect; Br. H. Weir, Jeweller; Br. A. Hodge, B.B.; Br. A. W. Askew, Steward; Br. John Marshall, I.G.; Br. William Finlayson, Tyler; and on the evening of St. John's Day (December 27), the installation ceremony was duly performed by Br. Denovan, P.M. of Lodge Zetland (Grangemouth), the proceedings being followed by a dinner in honour of the Evangelist's anniversary. Br. Macfarlane continued to fill the chair for several years, during which the membership steadily increased.

A strict search and diligent inquiries were instituted for the recovery of the old charter, which, however, has never been found, and in due course a new one was issued in favour of the resuscitated Lodge, which was ranked as No. 16 in the books of the Grand Lodge, and was named "St. John." The brethren were exceedingly desirous of getting back their old number (14) and, that number not being vacant, it occurred to them that they should endeavour to induce the Grand Lodge to allow them the position of 14 bis—an idea which, on advice, they ultimately abandoned. The colour adopted for the trimming of the clothing was pale watered blue, and a new set of jewels was ordered, it having been found impossible to regain possession of that formerly in use.

It is not necessary that we should refer at much length to the subsequent history of the Lodge, which now, as Lodge St. John, No. 16, is re-established on a firm basis, and has, to all appearance, a bright and prosperous future awaiting it. Especially of late years its progress has been remarkable, and in point of strength and efficiency there are probably few similar societies in the provinces so advantageously situated.

After its revival the Lodge was at first in the habit of meeting in the Blue Bell Hotel. Accommodation was next secured in Wilson's Hall, and a change was subsequently made to the Lorne Hall, which, on the whole, proved best adapted to the purposes of the craft. It began to be felt, however, that it would be much more satisfactory for the Lodge to have premises of its own, and in January, 1879, during the able Mastership of that worthy and esteemed Brother, the late Mr. John Gillespie, whose untimely death cast such a gloom over the Masonic community, and was so much regretted by the public at large, a committee was appointed to consider the subject and report thereon. Early in February that committee recommended that the Lodge should build a hall and adjacent conveniences above and behind the fire-engine house immediately to the east of the Town Hall, and a plan for giving effect to this scheme was submitted by Br. William Black, architect. The proposals thus practically brought forward were cordially adopted, and it was agreed forthwith to lay the matter before the Feuars, the pro-

prietors of the engine-house and Town Hall. That body met the Lodge in the most liberal and friendly spirit, and consented to grant a ninety-nine years' lease on moderate terms. Subscription sheets were at once issued, and so hearty was the response made by the members of the Lodge that a handsome sum, amounting to over £220, was contributed within a month. It was then determined to proceed with the work with as little delay as possible—the contractors all to be members of No. 16. On the 8th of April it was announced that the subscriptions had increased to £252. The estimated cost of the building and fittings was £950. A loan of £300 was obtained from the Sir John de Græme Lodge of Oddfellows, and this, it is hoped, will be more than covered by the proceeds of the Grand Bazaar and Fancy Fair about to be held.

On the 6th of June, 1879, the foundation-stone of the Masonic Hall was laid with all the honours suitable to such occasions by Sir James E. Alexander, of Westerton, Provincial Grand Master of Stirlingshire, and on the same day Br. William H. Burns, Preses of the Feuars, laid the memorial-stone of the Town Hall, a reconstruction of the Corn Exchange. A grand Masonic banquet was afterwards held in the Crown Hotel—Sir James Alexander in the chair.

On the 11th of November the brethren of No. 16 met for the first time in their new hall, which, both as regards its internal and external features, gave the utmost

satisfaction. It is 34 feet long, by 25 feet 3 inches wide, and there is an ante-room behind, besides a retiring-room and other conveniences on the ground floor at the back. The Lodge-room has been suitably furnished, and is at once elegant and comfortable. Last year's festival in honour of St. John the Evangelist was held with more than the usual enthusiasm; for at the same time there was celebrated what was called the third jubilee of the Lodge, which, however, is certainly entitled to claim a greater antiquity than is thus indicated, as it was in existence long before the institution of the Grand Lodge in 1736.

Generally, the Lodge has been most fortunate in having its proceedings conducted by Masters who took a keen and intelligent interest in its affairs, and were devoted and consistent upholders of the principles of Masonry. Within recent years two of them, who occupied the premier office in a specially acceptable manner, and did much to advance the welfare and reputation of the society, received handsome, though amply-merited testimonials in acknowledgment of their valuable services. We refer to the late Br. John Gillespie and Br. William Black, the latter of whom was the predecessor of the present respected R.W.M., Br. James Haddow. Br. Gillespie's memory will long be cherished with affection as that of one in whom the spirit of fraternity and benevolence was ever conspicuous. To his exertions--which to him were verily labours of love--the Lodge owes no small portion

of its prosperity. By Br. Black the duties of the chair were performed with singular zeal, ability, and success—Lodge No. 16, while under his directing care, having been distinguished for its true and thorough working and for the excellent feeling by which it was pervaded.

Little remains to be added. The re-opening of the Old Lodge of Falkirk was soon followed by—if, indeed, it was not the means of bringing about—an extensive Masonic revival in the district. In the town itself Lodge Callendar (No. 588) was established, and has since gone on prospering and to prosper, and after a dormancy of no less than forty-five years the ancient Lodge of Carron (No. 139) was resuscitated. In 1884 two higher Masonic orders were auspiciously instituted, namely—the “Falkirk” Royal Arch Chapter (No. 210) and the “Zetland” Conclave (No. 11). The membership of these is composed of brethren of the Falkirk and neighbouring Lodges. Both meet in the Masonic Hall, and are presided over by Br. Wm. Black. In the Chapter, the degrees of “Mark,” “Excellent Master,” and “Royal Arch” are worked, while the Conclave is “authorized to impart the Mysteries and Privileges of the Order of Knights of the Red Cross of Constantine to worthy Master Masons, and the appendant Orders of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and St. John the Evangelist to Royal Arch Masons.”

Never before, in the course of its long and chequered history, have the position and prospects of Masonry been so satisfactory and encouraging in this town and district

as they are at the present time. Only the memory is left of departed dark days, while, to all seeming, the future is bright with hope and promise. To each and every branch of the craft in our midst let us, in conclusion, apply the words addressed on a remarkable occasion to the Tarbolton "dear brethren of the mystic tie" by Scotia's greatest bard, of venerated and immortal memory—

"May Freedom, Harmony, and Love
Unite you in the grand design,
Beneath the Omniscient Eye above—
The Glorious Architect divine."

THE END.

