

**NOTES ON LAU:  
DERMOTT G.S.  
AND HIS WORK**

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Notes on Lau: Dermott G.S. and His Work by Witham Matthew Bywater

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**WITHAM MATTHEW BYWATER**

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WORK.

BY

WITHAM MATTHEW BYWATER, P.M. No. 19.

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LONDON.

1884.

H B

S K H  
Bywater

[Privately Printed.]

DEDICATED  
TO MY  
BRETHREN  
OF  
"ANTIEN" DESCENT.



## P R E F A C E .

IN presenting the following pages\* to the notice of my Brethren, it is right I should explain, that when looking about for material with which to sketch a brief history of my Lodge at its Centenary in 1869, I was permitted by the kindness of the late Grand Secretary, Brother John Hervey, to examine the old books which formerly belonged to the Grand Lodge of the "Antient" Masons. The contents so greatly interested me, not only as affording information of the general business of that body, but as illustrating the Masonic career of a Brother who contributed so largely by his zeal to advance the cause of Masonry in the last century, that I was led to make more copious notes than otherwise were required for the immediate object I had then in view.

\* Read before the Members of the Royal Athelstan Lodge, No. 19, May 1884.

In his lifetime, and in the brief notices which have since occasionally appeared, I venture to think Laurence Dermott has been somewhat roughly treated, and motives have been imputed to him which recorded events scarcely justify. As a zealous and consistent upholder of Masonic law, it was no small honour—it must have been a source of gratification—to him, during his long tenure of office, to have furthered the interests of Masonry by his devotion, both as regards time and labour, to the duties which fell to him to discharge.

In submitting the following “Notes on Laurence Dermott and his Work,” it is my desire to present him as he appears in the old records, where, by his work and his manner of doing it, he may plead for himself, until a competent writer shall do justice to his memory and fame.

W. M. B.

5, *Hanover Square, W.*

*December 5th, 1884.*



NOTES ON LAURENCE DERMOTT  
AND HIS WORK.

THE prosperity and amazing growth of Freemasonry in England, as manifested by its having quadrupled the number of its Lodges within the present generation, is a constant theme of wonder. It has so far exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine of a former generation, that we are led to regard the struggles of the last century with no little degree of interest; and as oftentimes, apparent evils ultimately are productive of unexpected benefits, so the spirit of opposition which was then engendered was destined to work a positive good to the Craft. Thus sympathies were evoked and attention given to an Institution which otherwise might have been regarded but with indifference.

Leaving to the speculative mind the task of weighing probabilities and determining what might have been the condition of Masonry to-day had not the Schism of 1738 awakened a feeling of emulation, and whether the apathy and lethargy of

a preceding age might not otherwise have been reproduced, we will proceed to consider the events which exercised the minds of our Brethren in those days, and strengthened the foundation for the work which is now being so successfully carried on, under the patronage of our illustrious Grand Master.

We are reminded by the author of "Ahiman Rezon" that "it has been the general custom of all my Worthy Brethren who have honoured the Craft with their Books . . . for Free Masons to give us a long and pleasing History of Masonry from the Creation to the Time of their writing and publishing such accounts." It is therefore with a sense of relief that, for our present purpose, a retrospective glance beyond the last century is unnecessary. The circumstances immediately preceding the Schism need be merely alluded to, as they are fairly well known to most enquiring Masons. Many time-honoured misstatements, complacently repeated by almost every writer of the old school, were for a long time accepted as history; but thanks to Brothers Gould, Hughan, Norton, Whytehead and others, to all of whom we are so deeply indebted for the new light which their investigations are shedding upon the past, many illusions are being dispelled and new facts by degrees revealed. It may be briefly stated that the revival of Freemasonry in the South of

England was brought about in 1717, when the four existing Lodges constituted themselves a Grand Lodge, under the title of "The Grand Lodge of England," as distinctive from the York Masons, who designated themselves "The Grand Lodge of *all* England." The Grand Lodge in the South became a flourishing body, not undisturbed however by occasional discord, which it is no part of our business to discuss here. But in 1738 many worthy Masons, being dissatisfied with certain irregularities and innovations which they averred were contrary to ancient Masonry, and after much discontent formed themselves into a separate Grand Lodge. Their proceedings soon had the sympathy and approval of the Grand Lodges of Scotland and Ireland, who gave them countenance and support. "To disappoint the views of these deluded Brethren, and to distinguish the persons initiated by them, the Grand Lodge (of England) readily acquiesced in the imprudent measures which the regular Masons had adopted; measures which even the urgency of the case could not warrant." The result was soon evident. The seceding Brethren of Grand Lodge now styled themselves "ANTIEN" Masons, in accordance with the accepted appellation of the York Grand Lodge, and designated the Brethren who had introduced the *new* plans, "Modern" Masons, which terms have long distinguished the two