

Cama Manuscript
(early 18th century)

<http://www.freemasonryresearchforumqsa.com/cama-ms.php>

At the time when Bro. Dr. Begemann was publishing his classification of the "Old Charges" (vide A.Q.C., I., 152), he ventured the opinion that the Spencer family was derived from the Grand Lodge family through a lost intermediate version which combined the characteristics of both. Hardly were his words in type, and not yet printed, before the discovery of the Cama MS. proved how true was his judgment, as it turned out to be a fair example of the missing link, a sister document, fulfilling all the conditions, but not the actual link itself. That is to say, Dr. Begemann does not think it the actual MS, which the writer of the Spencer Version must have had before him, but practically identical in form with it.

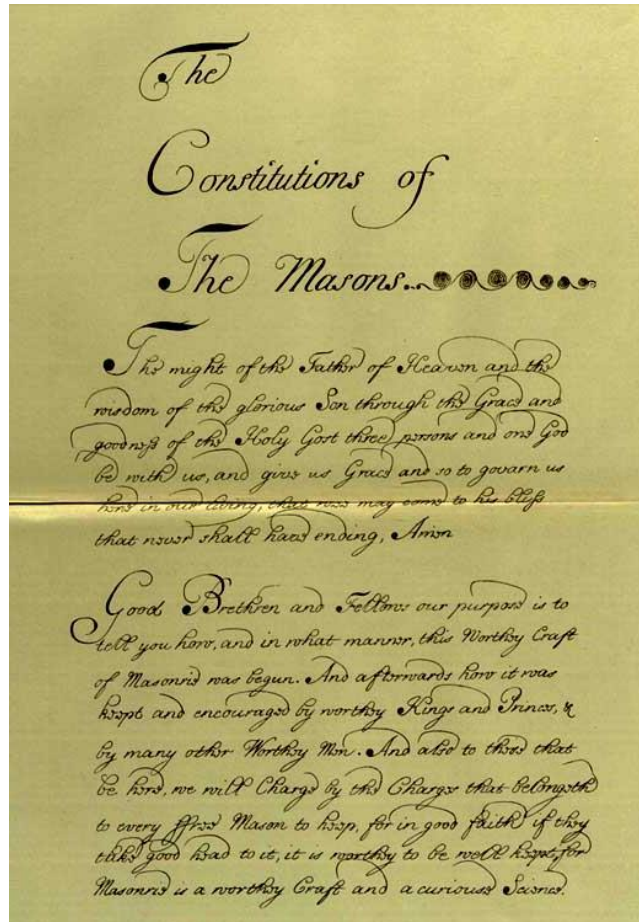
The Cama MS consisted originally of four sheets of paper (sixteen pages), stitched together book-wise, but at the time it first came under my notice the first outside leaf had been torn off and disappeared, leaving seven leaves only. Fortunately, this leaf had not been written on (perhaps it contained a title), the MS proper beginning on the second leaf, so that nothing of value has been lost. The last page also is blank, the text, therefore, covers thirteen pages, eight inches wide by twelve-and-a-half high, with a good inch margin on the left. It had been kept folded in four, twice doubled, and the paper is consequently broken cross-wise, but luckily so that very little is absolutely undecipherable. The document has since been marvelously repaired and mounted on guards.

Like most of these old manuscripts, its history cannot be carried back very far and its origin is unknown. It was found on the premises of Bro. W. J. Clarke, stationer and printer, 37, High Street, Margate. The business had formerly belonged to Bro. Brasier, a member of the Margate Lodge, and the supposition is that it had belonged to the latter's uncle, Bro. Osborne, who, after leaving the printing business, kept the King's Head Hotel, Margate. The Brasier's seem to have been quite unaware of its existence.

At the time of its discovery (March 1888), the Margate Lodge was interested in a case for the Masonic Charities and resolved to turn the MS to account. It was offered to me for seventy-five votes, and on applying for aid to Bro. D. P. Cama, Past Grand Treasurer, our brother, immediately supplied me with the necessary number of votes, and thus secured the manuscript for our Lodge. Hence the name, "Cama Manuscript."

As regards the date, it is impossible to fix it with any degree of precision, "early 18th century" being the nearest approach obtainable. Its place in Begemann's Classification is "Grand Lodge Family, Grand Lodge Branch."

As we only give the first page in facsimile, the Transcript has been printed line for line and page for page. It has never before been reproduced in any form.



Cama

The Constitutions of the Masons

The might of the Father of Heaven and the wisdom of the glorious Son through the Grace and goodness of the Holy Gost three persons and one God he with us, and give us Grace and so to govern us here in our living, that we may come to his bliss that never shall have ending. Amen.

Good Brethren and Fellows our purpose is to tell you how, and in what manner, this Worthy Craft of Masonry was begun and afterwards how it was kept and encouraged by worthy Kings and Princes, & by many other Worthy Men. And also to these that be here, we will Charge by the Charges that belong to every Freemason to keep, for in good faith if they take good head to it, it is worthy to be well kept, for Masonry is a worthy Craft and a curious Science, and one of the seven Liberal Sciences. The names of the seven Liberal Sciences be these: the first is Grammar, and it teaches a man to speak and write truly. The second is Rhetoric and it teaches a man to speak fair and in soft terms. The Third is Dialectics or Logic and it teaches a man to discern or know truth from falsehood and the fourth is Arithmetics which teaches a man to reckon and count all manners of numbers. The fifth is Geometry and it teaches a man the measure and measurement of the Earth and of all other things of the science called Masonry. And the sixth science is Music and it teaches a man the craft of song and voice of tongue and organ, harp etc. The seventh science is Astronomy, which teaches a man to know the course of the sun, the Moon and the stars. These are the seven Liberal Sciences, which have all been founded on this Science of Geometry, for it teaches a man measure, ponderation and weight of all sorts of things on Earth for there is no man that works in any Craft that he does not work by some Measure or Measurement and there is no man that buys or sells but by some measure, Measurement or weight, so that merchants, craftsmen and all of the seven Sciences likewise, the ploughmen and tillers of all sorts of seeds and grains, vine planters and setters of all sorts of fruits and trees are hereby directed by Grammar, Arithmetics, Astronomy or any of the other Sciences. No man finds Measure or Measurement without Geometry therefore this science of Geometry is the most worthy and is the foundation of all the others.

HOW this worthy science was first began I shall tell you. Before Noah's flood there was a man who was called Lameth, as it is written in the Bible in the fourth Chapter of Genesis. And this Lameth had two wives; the name of one was Adah and the name of the other Zillah. By his first wife Adah he had two sons; the name of one was Jabal, and the other Jubal. And by the other wife, Zillah, he had a son and a Daughter; the son's name was Tubal Cain and the Daughter's was Naomah. These four children founded the beginning of all the crafts in the world for Jabal founded the Craft of Geometry and he had flocks of sheep and land in the field and first wrought a house of stone and wood, and his brother Jubal founded the craft of Music; he was the father of all such instruments as the harpe and the organ. And Tubal Cain was the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron, and the daughter found out the craft of weaving. These children knew well that God would do vengeance for the Sin either by fire or Water, wherefore they wrote their sciences that they had founded in two pillars that they might find after Noah's flood: one of the pillars was of marble for it will not burn in any fire, and the other stone was called Laternes for it would not drown in any water.

Our intent is to tell you truly how and in what manner these stones were found wherein these sciences were written. Hermerines, who was Cub's son; this Cub was Sem's son and Sem was Noah's son. This same Hermerines was afterword called Hermes, the father of wisdom. He found one of the pillars of stone wherein the sciences were written. And he taught them to other men.

And at the Building of the Tower of Babylon, Masonry was made much of and the King of Babilon, the Mighty Nimrod, was a Mason himself as it is reported by ancient histories and when the city of Ninive and other cities of the east were to be built, Nimrod the King of Babilon, sent there Masons, at the request of the King of Ninive, his Cousin, and when he sent them forth he gave them a charge in this manner: that they should be true to one another and love truly to each other and that they should serve their lord truly for their pay so that their master might have honour and all that belongs to him. Several other charges he gave them & this was the first time that any Mason had ever had any charge of his craft.

Moreover, when Abraham and Sara, his Wife, went into Egypt and there taught the Seven Sciences to the Egyptians, he had a worthy scholar whose name was Euclid, who learned right well and became a great master of the seven sciences, and in his days it befell that the lords and the Estates of the Realm had so many sons that they had gotten by their wives and some other ladies of the Realm, for that land is a hot land and had plenteous generations and they had no competent livelihood to support their children wherefore they took counsel together with the King of the Land how they might find their children honestly as gentlemen, but could find no manner of good way and then they proclaimed through all the land that if there were any man that could inform them, that he should be well rewarded for his travel, and he would be held well pleased, After that this cry was made, there came this worthy clerk Euclid, and said to the King and the Lords: 'If you give me your children to govern, I will teach them one of the seven sciences whereby they may live honestly as gentlemen, under the condition that you will grant them, and that I may have power to rule them after the manner that the science ought to be ruled', and the King and his council granted this anon and sealed his comision and then this worthy clerk Euclid took to him those lords' sons and taught them the Science of Geometry in practice to work in stone all manners of worthy works that belong to the building of churches, temples, towers, castles and all other kinds of buildings and he gave them a charge in this manner.

The first is that they should be true to the King, and to the lord that they serve, and to the Fellowship whereof they are admitted, and that they should love one another and be true to one another and that they should call each other his fellow or else his Brother, and not his servant, or knave nor any other foul name, and that they should truly deserve their pay from their lord or the Master of the work that they serve and that they should ordain the wisest of them to be the Master of the works, and neither for love nor lineage, riches, or favor, to set another that has little cunning to be Master of the lord's works whereby the lord should be evil served and they ashamed, and also that they should call the governor of the works Master in the time when they work with him. And he gave them other charges that are too long to tell, and to all these charges he made them swear a great Oath that men used in that time, and he ordained for them a reasonable pay whereby they might live honestly, and also that they should come and assemble together once every year to consult how they might work best to serve the lord for his profit and to their credit and correct within themselves the one that had trespassed against the Craft and that was how the Craft was grounded their life. And that worthy clerk Euclid gave it the name of Geomity and now it is caled through all this land Masonry.

Since long after, when the children of Israel came into the land of the Jebusites, which is now called Jerusalem, King David began the Temple that is called, Templm Domini, with us the Temple of Jerusalem. The same King David loved Masons and cherished them and gave them good pay, and he gave them the charges in the manner as they were given in Egypt by Euclid and more other charges as you shall hear afterwards, and after the decease of King David Solomon, King David's son finished the Temple that his father had begun and he sent for Masons into divers countries and gathered them together so that he had fourscore thousand workmen that were workers in stone and all were Masons and he chose three thousand of them to be Masters and Governors of his works.

And Hiram, King of Tyre, sent his servants unto Solomon for he was ever a lover of David and he sent Solomon timber and workmen to help forwards the building of the Temple and he sent them one that was named Hiram, a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtaly. He, as a master of Geometry, and of all his Masons carvers, engravers, and workers and casters of brass and all other metals that were used about the Temple. And King Solomon confirmed both the charges and manners that his father had given to Masons and thus was that worthy Craft of Masonry confirmed in Jerusalem and many other Kingdoms.

Curious Craftsmen walked about full wide in divers Countries, some to learn more craft and cunning, and others to teach them to those that had but little, and so it befell that there was a curious Mason that was named Greens that had been at the building of Solomons Temple, and he came into France and there he taught the science of Masonry to the men of France and there was one of the regular line of French royals named Charles Mertell, and he was a man that loved well such a craft and drew to this Greens and learnt of him the Craft and took upon him the charges and manners, and afterwards, by the grace of God, he was made King of France and when he was King he took Masons, and did help to make men Masons and set them to works and gave them what he had learned of other Masons and confirmed them a charter to hold their assembly, year after year, wherever they would like and he cherished them right much and thus came the Craft into France.

England in all this season stood void of any charge of Masonry until St. Albans's time, and in his days the King of England, who was a pagan, built a wall around the Town that was called St. Albans, and St. Albans was a worthy Knight and steward of the Kings household and had got the government of the Realm and also the Town walls and loved Masons well and cherished them much, and he made thei pay right good as was the Realm for he gave them 2 a week and 3 to their cheer for before that time, through all the land, a Mason had but a peny a day and his meat until St. Alban amended it and he gave them a Charter of the King and his counsel and gave it the name of assembly and was there himself and helped to make Masons and gave them charges as you shall hear afterwards.

After the death of St. Alban there came into England divers Nations so that the good rule of Masonry was destroyed untill the time of King Athestone that was a worthy King of England and brought all the land into rest and peace and built many great abbies and other hildings. And he loved Masons and had a son named Edwin that loved Masons and was a great practicer of Geometry and drew himself to the Commune and talked with Masons to learned the Craft from them and afterward, for the love he had of Masons and the Craft, he got from the King his father a Charter and Commision to hold an Assemhly where they would, within the Realm, once a year, correct within themselves any faults and trespasses that were done within the Craft. And he held one assembly himself at York and there he made Masons and gave them charges and taught them and commanded that rule to be kept for everafter and gave them the Charter and Commision to keep and made one ordinance that it should be renewed from King to King. And when the assembly was gathered together he made a cite that all old m any writings or understanding of the charges and manners, which were made before in this land or in any other, that they should bring and show them and it was proved there were found some in French some in Greek and some in English and some in other languages and they were all to one intent and purpose and he made a book thereof how the Craft was founded and he himself commanded that it should be read or told when any Mason should be made and given him his charges and from that day until this time manners of Masons have been kept in that form as well as men might govern it. Furthermore, at divers assemblies certain charges had been made and ordained by the best advice of Masters and Fellows.

Every man that is a Mason, ought to take right good head to their charges, and if any man finds himself guilty of any of these charges that he amend himself against God and especially you that are to be Charged take good head that you may keep these Charges right well for it is a great perril for a man to forswear himself upon a book. The first charge is that you shall be a true men to God and the holy Church and that you make no error nor heresy by your understanding or descretion but be wise men and descreet in everything and also that you should be true liegemen to the King without treason or any other falsehood. And that you know no treason nor treachery but you amend it if you may or else warn the King or his council thereof and also that you be true each one to another, that is to say to every Mason of the Craft of Masonry that the Masons allowed and you shall do unto Them as you would like them to do unto you. And also that you keep all the counscels of your fellows truly, be it in Lodge or in Chamber, and all other counscels that ought to be kept by the way of Brotherhood and also that a wowed Mason shall not be a thief as far as he may write or know, and that you shall be true to the Lord or Master that you serve and truly see to his profit and his advantage. And also you shall call Masons your Fellows or Bretheren and no other foul names, and also you shall not take your Fellow's wife in villainy nor desire ungodly his daughter nor his servant nor put him to any disworship and also that you shall pay truly for your meat, and drink wherever you board whereby the Craft may not be slandered. These be the charges in general that belong to every true Mason to be kept both by Masters and Fellows.

Rehearse I will other charges in singular for Masters and Fellows. First, that no Master or Fellow shall take upon him any lord's work nor any other man's work unless he knows himself able and sufficient to perform the same so that the Craft has no slander nor disworship thereby, but that the lord may be well and truly served. Also that no Master shall take no work but that he has taken shall be reasonable so that the lord may be well served with his one good and the Master to live honestly and to pay his Fellows truly their pay as the manner is. Also that no Master nor Fellows shall supplant any other of their work that is to say if he has taken any work in hand or else stand Master of any lord's work he shall not put him out except he be unable of cunning to perform the work. And also no Masters nor Fellow shall take any Apprentice but for the term of seven years, and that the Apprentice be able of birth, that is to say, freeborn and whole of his limbs as a man ought to be. Also that no Master nor Fellow take no allowance of any that is to be made a Mason without the consent and counsel of his Fellows, and that he that is to be made a Mason be able in all manner

of degrees. That is to say, freeborn, come of good kindred true and no bondman, and that he have his right limbs as a man ought to have. Also that no Mason take an Apprentice unless he has sufficient occupation for to set him one, or to set three of his Fellows or two at least, on work. And also that no Master or Fellow shall take no man's work to task that used to be or was a journey work. Also that every Master shall give pay to his Fellows as they deserve it so that he be not deceived by false workmen. Also that no Mason slander one another behind his back to make him lose his good name or his worldly goods and also that no Fellow within the lodge shall be treated with misanswer or reproachfully or ungodly without some reasonable cause. Also that every Mason shall reverence his elder and put him to worship and also that no Mason shall be a common player at hazard or at dice or at cards or any other unlawful game whereby the craft might be slandered; and also no Mason shall use any lechery nor be bald whereby the craft might be slandered, and also that no Fellow shall go into the city or town at night without having someone or more of his companions with him to bear him witness that he was in honest places Also that every Master and Fellow shall come to the assembly if it is within fifty miles about him if he had any warning, and if any would trespass against the Craft. Then, to abide the order of the Masters and Fellows, to make them accord if they can and if they cannot then to go to Common Law. Also that no Master nor Fellow shall neither make mould nor square nor rule to any layer, nor set any layer that is within the lodge or without the lodge to hew moulded stones. And also that every Mason shall receive and cherish strange Fellows when they come over to the Country and set them awork if they will, as the manner is, that is to say, if he has moulded stones in his place, or else he shall refresh him with money unto the next lodging. And also that every Mason shall truly serve the lord for his pay and every Master shall truly make an end of his work, be it a task or journey if he has his demands and all he ought to have. These charges that we have now rehearsed unto you, and all the others that belong to Masons you shall keep, so help you God and your Hallidom (Godliness).