Few subjects have been so fertile as Free-Masonry in the growth of legend and myth. If we may believe some of its over-enthusiastic members, the Archangel Michael was the Grand Master of the earliest Masonic lodge; the builders of the Tower of Babel were wicked Masons and those who held aloof from the impious work were Free-Masons. Others trace its origin to Lamech and others again tell us that the first Grand Lodge in England was founded by St. Alban in 287. Its adversaries are equally extravagant; if we may trust them it is the precursor of Antichrist and a survival of Manicheism; it is supreme in European cabinets and directs the policy of the civilized world in opposition to the Church. Every pope in the nineteenth century fulminated his anathema against it. The Abbé Davin assures us that Jansenism is the masterpiece of the powers of evil and that it has become, in the form of Masonry, the most formidable of secret societies, organized for the destruction of the Christian Monarchy. If there are zealous Spanish Masons who assure us that the Comunidades of Castile and the Germania of Valencia were the work of Masons; that Agustín and Pedro Cazalla and the other victims of the auto of May 21, 1559 were Masons, and that the unfortunate Don Carlos was a victim to Masonry.

Descending to the sobriety of fact, Masonry emerges into the light of history in 1717, when Dr. Desaguliers, Anthony Sayer, George Payne and a few others formed, in London, an organization based on toleration, benevolence and good-fellowship. Its growth was slow and its first appearance in Spain was in 1726, when the London lodge granted a charter for one in Gibraltar. Lord Wharton is said to have founded one in Madrid, in 1727, and soon afterwards another was organized in Cádiz. These were primarily for the benefit of English residents, although doubtless natives were eligible to membership. As yet it was not under the ban of the Church, but its introduction in Tuscany led the Grand-duke Gian Gastone to prohibit it. His speedy death (July 9, 1737), caused his edict to be neglected; the clergy represented the matter to Clement XII, who sent to Florence an inquisitor; he made a number of arrests, but the parties were set at liberty by the new Grand-duke, Francis of Lorraine, who declared himself the patron of the Order and participated in the organization of several lodges. Clement sustained his inquisitor and issued, April 28, 1738, his bull In eminenti, calling attention to the oath-bound secrecy of the lodges, which was just cause for suspicion, as their object would not be concealed if it were not evil, leading to their prohibition in many states. Wherefore, in view of the grave consequences threatened to public tranquility and the salvation of souls, he forbade the faithful to favor them or to join them under pain of ipso facto excommunication, removable only by the Holy See. Prelates, superiors, Ordinaries and inquisitors were ordered to inquire against and prosecute all transgressors and to punish them condignly as vehemently suspect of heresy, for all of which he granted full powers. Thus the only accusation brought against Masonry was its secrecy, but this sufficed for the creation of a new heresy, furnishing to the Inquisition a fresh subject for its activity.

The nature of the condign punishment thus threatened was left to the discretion of the local tribunals, but a standard was furnished by an edict of the Cardinal Secretary of State, January 14, 1739,
pronouncing irremissible pain of death, not only on all members but on all who should tempt others to
join the Order, or should rent a house to it or favor it in any other way. The only victim of this savage
decree is said to have been a Frenchman who wrote a book on Masonry; it is true that, in this same
year, 1739, the Inquisition in Florence tortured a Mason named Crudeli, and kept him in prison for a
considerable time, but the death-penalty [300] was a matter for the secular authorities and in Florence
these were not under control. Indeed, when the Inquisition offered pardon for self-denunciation, and a
hundred crowns for information, and made several arrests, the Grand-duke interposed and liberated
the prisoners. (5) Even when the arch-impostor Cagliostro, in 1789, ventured to found a lodge in Rome and
was tried by the Inquisition, the sentence, rendered April 7, 1791, recited that, although he had incurred
the death-penalty, it was mercifully commuted to imprisonment for life. (6) He was accordingly
imprisoned in the castle of San Leone where he is supposed to have died in 1795.

The Parlement of Paris refused to register the bull of 1738 and when, in 1750, the jubilee attracted
crowds of pilgrims to Rome, so many had to seek relief from the excommunication incurred under it
that Benedict XIV was led to revive it, May 18, 1751, in his constitution Providas, pointing out
moreover the injury to the purity of the faith arising from the association of men of different beliefs,
and invoking the aid of all Catholic princes to enforce the decrees of the Holy See. (7) When thus,
without provocation, Rome declared war to the knife against the new organization, it naturally became
hostile to Rome, and when its membership was forbidden to the faithful, it was necessarily confined to
those who were either indifferent or antagonistic to the Roman faith.

While the papal commands were ignored in France, they had been eagerly welcomed in Spain. The bull
In eminenti received the royal exequatur and the Inquisitor-general Orbe y Larreategui published it in
an edict, October 11, 1738, pointing out that the Inquisition had exclusive jurisdiction in the matter. He
promised to prosecute with the utmost severity all disobedience to the bull, and called for
denunciations, within six days, of all infractions, under pain of excommunication and of two hundred
ducats. The edict was to be read in the churches and to be affixed to their [301] portals, thus giving an
effective advertisement to the new institution by conveying a knowledge of its existence to a
population thus far happily ignorant. (8)

The Inquisition, however, was not allowed long to enjoy the exclusive jurisdiction claimed, for Philip
V, in 1740, issued an edict under which, we are told, a number of Masons were sent to the galleys,
while the Inquisition vindicated its rights by breaking up a lodge in Madrid and punishing its members.
(9) There was thus established a cumulative jurisdiction which continued, for State autocracy and
Church autocracy were alike jealous of a secret organization of unknown strength which, in troublous
times, might become dangerous. Fernando VI manifested this by a pragmática of July 2, 1751, in which
he forbade the formation of lodges under pain of the royal indignation and punishment at the royal
discretion; all judges were required to report delinquents, and all commanders of armies and fleets to
dismiss with dishonor any culprits discovered in the service. That, in spite of these repressive measures,
Free-Masonry was spreading, may be assumed from the publication, about this time, of two editions of
a little book against it, in which this decree is embodied. (10) Padre Feyjoo assisted in advertising the
Order by devoting to it a letter in which, with gentle satire, he treated it as a hobgoblin, imposing on
public credulity with false pretences, although there might be evil spirits among the harmless ones. (11)

The Inquisition meanwhile was not idle, though it did not imitate the severity of the papal government
or of the royal edicts. In 1744 the Madrid tribunal sentenced, to abjuration de levi and banishment from
Spain, Don Francisco Aurion de Roscobel, canon of Quintanar, for Free-Masonry; in 1756 the same
tribunal prescribed reconciliation for Domingo de Otas and, in 1757, a Frenchman named Tournon
escaped with a year's detention and banishment from Spain, although, by endeavoring to induce his
employees to join the Order, he was reckoned as a dogmatizer. Another case about the same time reveals a strange indifference, possibly attributable to hesitation in attacking a dependent of a powerful minister. A priest named Joaquin Pareja presented himself, April 19, 1746, to the Toledo tribunal and related that when, in 1742, he accompanied the Infante Phelipe to Italy, he lay for some months in Antibes, where he made the acquaintance of Antonio de Rosellon, gentleman of the chamber to the Marquis of la Ensenada, who talked freely to him about Free-Masonry, of which he was a member. He had but recently learned that Free-Masons were an infernal sect, condemned by a papal bull, and he had made haste to denounce Rosellon. No action was taken for eighteen months when, on October 13, 1747, the tribunal asked the Madrid inquisitors to examine Rosellon, after consulting the Suprema. The Suprema promptly scolded it for its remissness and ordered it to make inquiry of other tribunals; the customary interrogations were sent around with negative results and, on January 8, 1748, the fiscal reported accordingly; there was but one witness and therefore he recommended suspension, which was duly voted. Some twenty months passed away when suddenly, September 7, 1751, the Suprema recurred to the matter and wrote to Toledo demanding a report. Toledo waited for more than a month and then, on October 16th, replied that it referred the whole affair to the Madrid tribunal as Pareja and Rosellon were both in that city. This probably ended the case.

Free-Masonry was growing and extending itself throughout influential circles. In 1760 the Gran Logia española was organized and independence of London was established; in 1780 this was changed to a Grand Orient, symbolical Masonry being subordinated to the Scottish Rite. In this we are told that such men as Aranda, Campomanes, Rodriguez, Nava del Rio, Salazar y Valle, Jovellanos, the Duke of Alva, the Marquis of Valdelirias, the Count of Montijo and others were active; that the ministers of Carlos III were mostly Masons and that to them was attributable the energetic action against Jesuitism and Ultramontanism. To what extent this is true, it would be impossible to speak positively, but unquestionably Masonry afforded a refuge for the modern spirit in which to develop itself against the oppressive Obscurantism of the Inquisition.

A disturbing element was furnished by Cagliostro who, in his two visits to Spain, founded the lodge España, in competition with the Grand Orient. This attracted the more adventurous spirits and grew to be revolutionary in character. It was the centre of the foolish republican conspiracy of 1796, known as the conspiracy of San Bias, from the day selected for the outbreak. Arms were collected in the lodge, but the plot was betrayed to the police; three of the leaders were condemned to death but, at the intercession of the French ambassador, the sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life. The chiefs were deported to Laguayra where they captured the sympathies of their guards and were enabled to escape. In 1797 they organized a fresh conspiracy in Caraccas, but it was discovered and six of those implicated were executed.

In the troubled times that followed, the revolutionary section of Masonry naturally developed, at the expense of the conservative. There is probably truth in the assertion that the French occupation was assisted by the organization of the independent lodges under Miguel de Azanza, one of the ministers of Carlos IV, who was grand master. The ensuing war was favorable to the growth of the Order. The French armies sought to establish lodges in order to popularize the "intrusive" government, while the English forces on their side did the same, and the Spanish troops were honeycombed with the trincheras, or intrenchments, as these military lodges were called.

With the downfall of Napoleon and liberation of the papacy, Pius VII made haste to repeat the denunciation of Masonry. He issued, August 15, 1814, a decree against its infernal conventicles, subversive of thrones and religion. He lamented that, in the disturbances of recent years, the salutary edicts of his predecessors had been forgotten and that Masonry had spread everywhere. To their spiritual penalties he added temporal punishments-- sharp corporal affliction, with heavy fines and
confiscation, and he offered rewards for informers. This decree was approved by Fernando VII and was embodied in an edict of the Inquisition, January 2, 1815, offering a Term of Grace of fifteen days, during which penitents would be received and after which the full rigor of the laws, secular and canonical, would be enforced. Apparently the result was inconsiderable for, on February 10th, the term was extended until Pentecost (May 14th) and inviolable secrecy was promised. Fernando had not waited for this but had already prohibited Masonry under the penalties attaching to crimes of the first order against the State and, in pursuance of this, on September 14, 1814, twenty-five arrests had been made for suspicion of membership.

Thus, as before, there was cumulative jurisdiction over Masonry. The time had passed for competencias between the Inquisition and the royal courts; it was too closely identified with the State to indulge in quarrels, but still there was jealous susceptibility and self-assertion. As early as 1815 this showed itself in the prosecution of Diego Dílicado, parish priest of San Jorje in Coruña, because he had reported the existence there of a lodge to the public authorities and not to the Inquisition. Several cases, in 1817, show that when a culprit was tried and sentenced by the royal courts, the Inquisition insisted on superadding a prosecution and punishment of its own. Thus when Jean Rost, a Frenchman, was sent to the presidio of Ceuta by the chancellery of Granada, the Seville tribunal also tried him and ordered his confinement in the prison of the presidio, at the same time demanding from the chancellery the Masonic title and insignia of the prisoner and whatever else appertained to the jurisdiction of the Inquisition.

The Madrid tribunal, May 8, 1817, sentenced Albert Leclerc, a Frenchman, for Free-Masonry; he had already been tried and convicted by the royal court and a courteous note was addressed, as in other similar cases, to the Alcalde de Casa y Corte, to have him brought to the secret prison, for the performance of spiritual exercises under a confessor commissioned to instruct him in the errors of Masonry, and to absolve him from the censures incurred, after which he would be returned to the alcalde for the execution of his sentence of banishment. So, in July 1817, the Santiago tribunal collected evidence against Manuel Llorente, sergeant of Grenadiers, and the Suprema directed that, as soon as the secular trial was finished, he was to be imprisoned again and tried by the tribunal.

For this punctiliousness there was the excuse that the papal decrees rendered Masonry an ecclesiastical crime involving excommunication, of which the temporal courts could take no cognizance. This duplication of punishment may possibly explain the extreme variation in the severity of the penalties inflicted. In 1818 the Madrid tribunal sentenced Antonio Catalá, captain in the volunteer regiment of Barbastro, to a very moderate punishment, alleging as a reason his prolonged imprisonment and ill-health. The Suprema sent back the sentence for revision, when the abjuration was changed from de levi to de vehementi. Then the Suprema took the matter into its own hands and condemned him to be reduced to the ranks for four years' service in the regiment of Ceuta, which was nearly equivalent to four years of presidio. On the other hand, in 1819, the sentence was confirmed of Martin de Bernardo, which was merely to abjuration de levi, absolution ad cautelam, a month's reclusion and spiritual penances. Greater severity might surely have been shown in the case of the priest, Vicente Perdiguera, commissioner of the Toledo tribunal, when, in 1817, the Madrid tribunal suggested that, in view of his notorious Free-Masonry and irregular conduct, he should be deprived of his office and insignia and of the fuero of the Inquisition. To this the Suprema assented and with this he escaped.

It casts doubt upon the reported extent of Free-Masonry that, in spite of the vigilance of the Inquisition, the number of cases was so small. From 1780 to 1815 they amount in all only to nineteen. Then, in 1816, there is a sudden increase to twenty-five; in 1817 there are fourteen, in 1818 nine and in 1819 seven. Possibly there may have been others tried by the civil or military-courts, which escaped inquisitorial action, but, in view of its jealous care of its jurisdiction, these cannot have been
numerous.

Yet all authorities of the period agree that, under the Restoration, Masonry flourished and spread, especially in the army; that it was the efficient source of the many plots which disturbed Fernando's equanimity, and that the revolution of 1820 was its work, backed by the widespread popular discontent aroused by the oppression and inefficiency of his rule. When, in January, 1820, the movement was started by the troops destined for America, in their cantonments near Cádiz, there was a lodge in every regiment. Riego, who led the revolt, was a Mason, and so was the Count of la Bisbal who ensured its success when, at Ocaña, whither he had been sent to command the troops gathered for its suppression, he caused them to proclaim the Constitution. At Santiago, the first act of the revolutionaries was to sack the Inquisition and to liberate the Count of Montijo, grand master of the Masonic organizations, who lay in the secret prison.\(^{(23)}\)

We shall have occasion hereafter to see the ruinous part played by Free-Masonry, and its offshoot the Comuneros, during the brief constitutional epoch from 1820 to 1823. With the restoration of absolutism the Comuneros disappeared and Masons became the object of persecution far severer than that of the Inquisition. They were subjected to the military commissions set up everywhere throughout Spain, and those who would not come forward and denounce themselves were declared, by an order of October 9, 1824, to be punishable with death and confiscation.\(^{(24)}\)

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**Notes for Book 8, Chapter 12**


5. Acta Latomorum, I, 43-44.

6. Compendio della vita di Giuseppe Balsamo, denominato il Conté Cagliostro, che si è estratto dal Processo contra di lui formato in Roma l'anno 1790 (Roma, 1791).

   The importance attached to the case is indicated by the formal removal of the seal of secrecy and the semi-official publication of the volume. The edict imposing the death-penalty is quoted on p. 80.


10. Fray Joseph Torrubia, Centinela contra Francs Massones, Segunda Edicióo, Madrid, 1754. From the dates of the approbations it would appear that the first edition was issued in 1751 or 1752.

11. Feyjoo, Cartas, T. IV, Cart. xvi. This letter must have been written between 1751 and 1754, as it alludes to the Centinela, while the second edition of the latter alludes to the letter. Feyjoo refers to another recent book on the subject by Fray Juan de la Madre de Dios, which I have not seen.


The Portuguese Inquisition was as prompt as the Spanish. See "The Sufferings of John Coustos for Free-masonry," London, 1746, and it continued after the reforms of Pombal, as appears from "A Narrative of the Persecution of Hippolyto Joseph da Costa Pereira Furtado de Mendoza... for the pretended crime of Free-masonry," 2 vols., London, 1811.


In this list is not included the curious case of the Bishop of Havana, Juan José Díaz de la Espada y Landa, accused of Free-Masonry in Cuba by the zealous inquisitor Elosua in 1815. The matter was transferred to Spain and was suspended November 11, 1819 (J. T. Medina, La Inquisicion de Cartagena de las Indias, p. 416). It does not seem to have interfered with the position of the good bishop, who retained his see until his death, Sept. 12, 1832 (Gams, Series Episcopp., p. 152).


The "Memoirs of Don Juan van Halen" (London, 1830) which had an extensive circulation in many languages, are of no historical value. He was a real personage however, whose dextrous treachery in deserting the French, in 1814, is described by Toreno (Historia del Llevamiento etc., III, 323). In 1822 he was on the staff of Gen. Mina in Catalonia (Memorias del Gen. Espoz y Mina, III, 7) and, in 1838, was in high command in Valencia (Manifestacion del Gen. Córdova, p. 13).

In 1818 his name occurs as on trial in Toledo (not in Madrid, as he represents) and the charge was impeding the Inquisition, not Masonry and conspiracy-- Catálogo de las causas etc., p. 131 (Madrid, 1903).