

SPARKS FROM A MASONIC ANVIL.

Few Brethren are aware of the struggles in Scotland for Masonic freedom during the early part of this century. The Grand Lodge of Scotland, from its institution in A. D. 1736 down to recent years, has never recognized other than the "three degrees" as pure and ancient Masonry. Within the present decade, however, this exclusive body has thought fit to incorporate the "Mark degree," and for the future the Constitutions will read that the accepted degrees are the Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason, *including the Mark Degree as the second portion of the Fellow Craft Degree*. To prevent confusion in the "working," none but Master Masons are allowed to receive the Mark degree, which may be given in a Craft Lodge at any of the meetings. It seems a strange arrangement to connect the Mark Degree with the Fellow Craft and yet confine it to Master Masons, especially when we have never been able to trace a record of the *Mark Master's* Degree being confined to any but Master Masons! The earliest minute known in Scotland regarding Mark Masonry we have already presented to the Craft. It is dated A. D. 1778, and mentions that the *Mark Master* was permitted to be bestowed on Fellow Crafts, but the *Mark Master* on *Master Masons* only. This accords with the earliest records in the United States containing allusions to Mark Masonry, and is confirmatory of the fact that the *Mark Master's* Degree was never received by Fellow Crafts, so that the Grand Lodge of Scotland has no authority for declaring it to be a portion of the "Second Degree," and is equally destitute of authority for placing it under their protecting wing. The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons for Scotland has exclusive jurisdiction by right over Mark Masonry in that country, and still exercises its authority in that respect as an equal, but not a rival, of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. The Grand Chapter was founded in 1817 (although, of course, Royal Arch Masonry dates long before that period), and it is with respect to the objections urged against its institution by the Grand Lodge that we have now to do, and forms the special feature of this "Spark."

At a Quarterly Communication of the Grand Lodge, held the 4th day of August, 1817, amongst other resolutions agreed on were the following: 1. Grand Lodge of Scotland recognizes only the three degrees. 2. Necessary to guard against inroads of certain orders which have attempted to be introduced into Lodges and at processions. 3. Acts of Parliament in favor of Masons render it imperative to preserve the purity of the Craft inviolate. 4. All Lodges warned not to admit any member of these degrees objected to, on pain of the penalties provided for. 5. Resolutions to be printed and circulated, that none may pretend ignorance, and that the laws may be strictly enforced.

These resolutions were intended as an attack on the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, which was formed during 1817, and having been carried, the next step was a bolder one! Bro. McIntosh tabled the following motion: "That no person holding an official situation in any Masonic Body which sanctions higher degrees than those of St. John's Masonry,* should be entitled to sit, act, or vote in the Grand Lodge of Scotland." At the following Quarterly Communication, held the 3rd day of November, 1817, we find by an excerpt from the Grand Lodge Records that this inquisitorial proposition was "read and duly seconded, and after a very full and deliberate discussion, the question was put, it being understood that those who were favorable to its adoption should vote AGREE, and those of an opposite opinion should vote NOT, when one hundred and fifty-five voted AGREE, and twenty-seven voted NOT, making a majority of hundred and twenty-eight in favor of the motion!"

"Whereupon the Grand Lodge enacted and resolved "That from and after St. John's Day first, the 27th of December, 1817, no person holding an official situation in any Masonic Body which sanctions higher degrees than those of St. John's Masonry shall be entitled to sit, act, or vote in the Grand Lodge of Scotland." "And further resolved that the above resolution shall be printed and circulated among all the Lodges holding of the Grand Lodge of Scotland," etc.

For the Grand Lodge of Scotland, or for any Grand Lodge to pass resolutions expressive of their opinions that pure Craft Masonry, or St. John's Masonry, consisted only of the "Three Degrees," we conceive would be but just and right, and in accordance with the facts of Masonic history, and if not correct, they were still entitled to express their belief; but surely it was an act of great injustice to thus exclude Brethren from the "Quarterly Communications" who took office in *other* degrees of Masonry, wholly unconnected and independent of the Craft degrees. We conceive that so long as Royal Arch Chapters assemble, and so long as the other *adopted* Masonic degrees meet without infringing on the liberties and privileges of Craft Lodges, they cannot

*"St. John's Masonry," i. e. the "Three Degrees," *excluding the Arch*, and all degrees beyond. In Scotland the term means the E. A., F. C., M. M., and Mk. Ms. Degrees only.