

which we sometimes read a description in the daily papers. It will be readily understood, that most thinking Masons had long since become thoroughly disgusted and disheartened; in fact, very many Lodges in France had for years preferred to declare themselves dormant rather than shamefully live on. Only one hope remained, the Grand Master was not appointed *ad vitam*, and the next election was no longer far distant. Murat had been appointed on June 9, 1852; Art 30 of the Statutes provided for a renewal of election every seven years, but as the election was confirmed by the Constitutive Convent—October 28, 1854—his appointment was regarded as bearing that date. The now election ought therefore to have taken place October 28, 1861, but Murat, in convoking the General Assembly falling due May 20, 1861, had warned the Grand Orient to take that opportunity of renewing the election, in order to avoid double journeys and expenses to the deputies. Already the attention of the brethren had been called to the liberal tendencies of Prince Jerome Napoleon, as exemplified by his parliamentary conduct, which contrasted favorably with the Ultramontane votes of Prince Murat, and there is no doubt that canvassing on a large scale had been used to promote his possible candidature. The first open act of hostility was an article in the March-April number of the "*Initiation*," respecting the approaching election, and contrasting the two princes much in Hamlet's style, with regard to the Two Pictures. At some time in April a number of the Paris Masters addressed a letter to Prince Napoleon. Space will only admit of short extracts. "Whereas Prince Murat's attitude of late incapacitates him from acting any longer as the representative of the Craft, whereas we have finally decided not to re-elect him, but have cast our eyes on you, who, though not yet the representative of the Craft, have nevertheless always proclaimed its principles aloud; whereas it behoves us under present circumstances to choose a leader who will, etc., etc., we have decided to nominate and elect your Imperial Highness, and beg to remind you that being a Freemason you owe certain duties to the Fraternity, etc., etc."

The Prince's reply, stating his readiness to accept the office, if elected, was received by the Masters, April 19. About the same time, or shortly afterwards, appeared a circular of Murat to the Lodges respecting the election. It speaks of an intrigue organized amongst some Masons, desirous of utilising Freemasonry for political ends, to produce a schism on the occasion of the election. The name of an illustrious prince having been used to cover these machinations, the G.M., desirous not to enter into rivalry with a member of the Imperial family, had inquired of Prince Jerome whether he intended to stand; and this prince had answered, that having ceased to occupy himself with Freemasonry since 1852, he should certainly decline a nomination. Murat therefore warns the brethren against these intriguers, but disclaims any idea of wishing to influence the election. It appears that Jerome omitted to inform Murat of his change of views until May 17, and the latter was thus placed in a very equivocal position, because at the time his circular appeared Jerome's letter was already in the hands of the Paris Masters. On May 2 a decree of Murat suspended the author of the newspaper article in question, as being in the highest degree disrespectful to the G.M., whose civil actions it had ventured to criticise. About the same time Rex's reported several brothers for daring to *intrigue* to procure the nomination of Prince Jerome, and denounced them as factious. On May 14 they were consequently suspended. Two of them were members of the G.M.'s Council. Among the names of nine others we meet with that of Jouast. This wholesale suspension of voters was certainly a curious way to avoid influencing the elections! After all this it is easy to conceive that when the Grand Orient met it was in no very equable frame of mind.