

MONTANA—1877.

The Grand Lodge held its Thirteenth Annual Communication at Helena, Oct. 2, A. L. 5877. M. W. Julian M. Knight, Grand Master, presiding.

A portrait of the Grand Master faces the title page—a good steel engraving.

The Grand Master's address is very clear upon the point raised by the French Orient :

"It is often said that we make religion of Masonry. 'Religion is the golden cord that unites man to God; Masonry the silver line which runs from man to man.' We do not pretend to place Masonry on a par with religion; but its mission is one of peace; it unites men of every country, sect and opinion, and brings them to one common altar. And while it does not compel a belief in any particular creed or religion, it does require of each initiate that he profess a belief in the existence of God—the Supreme Grand Master of the Universe. It teaches reverence to God—that there is a life beyond the grave—a hope in immortality."

and brother Knight speaks honestly and well as to the ballot :

"The world is full of men with little or no principle; and unfortunately for us too many of them have got into our Lodges. There are Masons who seem unable to speak well of any one; who are always ready and only too willing to circulate a slander against a brother. Any slanderer is detestable, but more especially a Masonic slanderer. We cannot be too guarded in our words and actions. Masonry teaches us to regard a brother's honor as our own, and to protect his good name whenever unjustly assailed. Masonry does not teach us to expose and perhaps magnify a brother's faults, but to be charitable toward one who errs: to hide his faults from the world, while we admonish him privately, and by precept and example assist him in regaining the position he has lost through folly or error.

"One of the greatest evils in a Lodge is the misuse of the ballot. The evil may come by a clear ballot for an unworthy candidate, or by a black-ball for a candidate who is every way worthy to become a Mason. Masonry is defrauded in every case where the ballot is cast with an unworthy motive. I am aware that in nine cases out of ten rejections are right; and that ten men are wrongfully initiated where one man is wrongfully rejected; and that if our outer doors were more closely guarded, there would be less necessity to purge our Lodges of unworthy members. And while I feel that it is the positive duty of each member of a Lodge to cast a black-ball when he feels that the applicant is unworthy to become a Mason, I must unqualifiedly condemn the motives of that brother who uses it to gratify a petty personal spite, and thereby refuses admission