

said Commons, hath ordained and established that such chapters and congregations shall nothwithstanding be holden; if they thereof be convict, shall be judged for felons; and that all the other masons that come to such chapters and congregations be punished by imprisonment of their bodies, and make fine and ransom at the king's will."

Thus I leave the matter, with hardly a perceptible hint as to the manner of degeneration from bodies of skilled architects to friendship societies, the only remaining connecting link of their origin being a few signs and marks emblematic of their early efforts. Their separation from the Roman Catholic Church doubtless contributed, in a great measure, to further the distinction; and, when we take into consideration the extreme privacy of their proceedings, it is not much a matter for wonder that no satisfactory record should remain explanatory of the transactions of the primary assemblies.—*The Architect.*

LANDMARKS AND LEGISLATION.

If there be a just criticism as to what constitutes the stability of Masonry, it is to be found in the direction of our legislation by all our Grand bodies throughout the jurisdiction of the United States, and it does not require profound research in knowledge of the history, literature and jurisprudence of Masonry to locate the reasons or answer the conundrum. So long as there is a lack of uniformity of legislation among all our Grand bodies, when eminent writers, thinkers, and scholars disagree as to what the ancient landmarks are, and what constitutes a landmark; when able jurists and members of the fraternity interpret the law to mean one thing and another quite a different thing, so long will laymen of the Order continue to ask for legislation, and I doubt not if one could see the Grand Lodge Constitution of fifty years hence it would not be recognized by the present gen-

eration of Masons. It is an unfortunate commentary that our institution so hoary with age should, at this late day, require so much legislation. It is undeniable that from year to year men come to our Grand bodies with some amendment to our Constitution, some law to be repealed, modified or changed. We are led to ask ourselves the question, "Is there no remedy for this growing tendency to more legislation?" We think the answer may possibly be found in a more sincere desire by the craft to live nearer to the spirit of Masonry, of our just and equitable laws, than to be always seeking notoriety in the direction of legislation that is neither wise nor Masonic. The tendency of the times is towards too much legislation, too many laws, and Masonic bodies are no exception to the rule. Is it not time that some of us become conversant with our Masonic law? and if we did, we think there would be fewer law-makers and more intelligent Masons.—C. C. ROGERS, *Wisconsin.*

SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE:

In a well-written and thoughtful article under the above heading the *South African Freemason* points out some of the defects in the administration of the Craft in the colonies, comparing the systems in vogue there with those adopted in America. It says:—"Instead of, like our American brethren, boldly taking the bull by the horns, and honestly asserting our right to act as *censores morum* of those who voluntarily place themselves under the obligations of the Order, we shrink behind a false charity and take refuge in every little legal quibble, until it becomes almost a hopeless task to purge our ranks from even the thief, the adulterer, or the drunkard. In the States they run the black sheep to trial with very little delay, and clear the good name and fame of the Craft without much scruple about hurting the tender feelings of the offender. Brethren, in all these things we require to