

Wales, His Lordship the Marquis of Ripon, the Earl of Carnarvon, the Earl of Rosslyn, White-Mellville, the Duke of Leinster, and others—all which most clearly indicates the anxious solicitude of our noble and worthy Brethren of the Imperial Grand Lodges of Great Britain and Ireland, for the welfare, unity and progress of the Royal Craft in this far-off land of the setting sun.

THE LATE DUKE OF KENT.

You will doubtless be pleased in this connection, to have me allude to certain historic reminiscences and associations brought to mind during my recent sojourn in the Mother Country—as relating to the Masonic History of this Grand old Province of Quebec. It appears that no other actual Grand Master from either division of old Canada has hitherto visited the Mother Country.

This incident while not wholly devoid of interest in itself, but served to call to mind an event of far greater historical importance to the Craft in this Province, namely, the departure from Quebec after a residence of about two and a half years,—just fourscore years previous—of the first Grand Master of the Provincial Lodge of Lower Canada, His Royal Highness Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, the illustrious father of our beloved Queen. Those of you who, in 1869, aided in the formation of the Grand Lodge of the Province of Quebec, will, I am sure, be delighted ever to remember that you were but reviving the far-seeing Masonic policy of the Mother Grand Lodge of England, when, in 1792, she established the Provincial Grand Lodge of Lower Canada; and he is indeed highly honored to whose lot it falls to be a humble successor in the Masonic Government of the same territory, of its first royal and illustrious chief.

To indicate to you the deservedly high esteem in which our noble brother was held, I cannot do better than quote the dedication from the "Mason's Manual, comprising Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Most Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons in Lower Canada," and published in the early part of the present century:—

"To His Royal Highness Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Strathern, Earl of Dublin. Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter; and the Most Illustrious Order of St. Patrick, a Field Marshal, and Colonel of the First, or Royal Scots Regiment of Foot, Past Provincial Grand Master of Free and Accepted Masons in Lower Canada, &c. &c., &c."

*"Most Worshipful and Illustrious Sir and Brother :*

"Our intention is not in this dedication to resort to the usual mode of complimentary address; because it is entirely unnecessary. Your Royal Highness despises such adulation, and the public do not require to be informed of your exalted character: it lives at present in the memories of all your Brethren in Lower Canada, and posterity will find it in the annals of Masonry."

"Our design is merely to express the grateful sense the Brethren in this Province entertain in the fostering care and valuable patronage which your Royal Highness was pleased to extend towards the Masonic Institution during your residence in this part of her Majesty's Dominions."

"Without these exertions, we should never have had occasion to compile the little work to which we prefix this sincere and just acknowledgment to your Royal Highness; that whatever good effect the Mason's Manual may ultimately produce, is primarily attributed to your Royal Highness' zeal and active perseverance during the year 1792."

"Your Royal Highness' most faithful Brethren, and most humble devoted servants,  
(Signed.)

"The Committee of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Lower Canada."

The truth of this interesting dedication is fully verified by the history of the craft in this Province, nor can I forbear calling to your mind a memorable incident which well illustrates the excellent spirit and prudence of our Royal Provincial Grand Master, while here at that time in command of his Regiment. When in 1792, a "member" was being chosen for the county of Quebec,—and there was almost a riot,—His Royal Highness delivered a noble speech to the people,—in which occurs, among others, this truly Masonic sentiment,—“Let me no longer hear the hateful talk about French and English. You are all of you the equally beloved subjects of the King.”

It is, moreover, a matter of very deep interest to the craft, that the illustrious grandson of our noble Brother, the Most Worshipful, the Prince of Wales, is now the distinguished Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, and a zealous patron of our order, and also the illustrious chief of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, &c. It is indeed a happy omen, that now, as of old, Kings and Princes are promoters of the Art,—that they do not think it derogatory to their dignity to exchange the sceptre for the gavel,—to patronize our mysteries and join our assemblies.