

EXCURSION OF FRENCH MASONS.

The French Freemasons are very anxious for rehabilitation with the Grand Lodge of England, and for a renewal of the old *entente cordiale*. Bro. Hubert, in the *Chaîne D'Union*, eloquently discourses *more suo* on this point, and expresses an opinion that the time has come when the English Grand Lodge may consider its determination in this respect. Far be from us any remarks which might tend to keep up a feeling of tension or separation. If, however, a *rapprochement* be possible, it can only be so on certain distinct grounds and definite principles. To cry "peace where there is no peace," to "daub the wall with untempered mortar," can only result, humanly speaking, in another divergence, and another severance. It is no doubt greatly to be deplored that English Masons cannot visit French lodges, and that French Masons cannot be admitted into English lodges. But on whom rests the blame for all this? We may add, certainly *not* on the Grand Lodge of England! When the French Grand Orient departed from its old landmarks and the landmarks of Cosmopolitan Masonry, and erased the belief in God from its formularies openly and avowedly, and distinctly, it made so "new a departure," that the Grand Lodge of England, faithful to its ancient and honorable traditions, and the universal principle of Freemasonry, had no alternative left it but to take the course it did take, and propose and order a sentence of "non-intercourse" until better days might arrive. As Lord Carnarvon eloquently put it, the adoption of such dubious phrases as *solidarite humaine*, etc., etc., in no way removed the legitimate objections of English Masons to so sweeping and serious a charge, nor altered the objection of the Grand Lodge of England to such deliberate tampering with the long standing and well considered first principle of Cosmopolitan Freemasonry. Since then

another change has taken place in this very section of the Constitutional laws of the Grand Orient, and a declaration practically that Freemasonry is not religion, takes no heed of general or individual professions of faith, and is of entire toleration for all religious opinions, is now put forward as the ground for a change in English Masonic public opinion, and as perfectly sufficient itself, wide extending and all embracing enough, to justify the Grand Lodge of England in renewing intercourse, and removing the prohibition which at present undoubtedly exists, as regards the interchange of civilities and visits, except on certain assured preliminaries. In the meantime we hear strange stories of what is going on in the lodges at Paris and in France, that, as honest journalists, we cannot profess to think either that the "pear is ripe," or the time has come for any such accommodation of matters. Our authorities may be in possession of more precise information than we are, but if theirs is anything like ours, never at any time in its history was French Freemasonry under the Grand Orient of France in a graver position of doubt, dissolution, and danger. And yet we say all this with deep regret, though it must be said, as an act of duty and loyalty to our own and Cosmopolitan Freemasonry. We always sympathize with the French Freemasons. We know so well their peculiar troubles and difficulties, and how much may even be advanced by way of allowance and extenuation, as regards the perpetual warfare in which they are involved, for their more questionable utterances and vehement assertion of certain views and feelings which jar so much on the more peaceful and less combative sentiments of English Freemasons. We wish them well, we trust that they may yet emerge from their difficulties, and that morass in which they seem to be floundering to the disapproval and sorrow of all Anglo-Saxon Freemasons; and none will rejoice more