

you from the bottom of my heart. I know, we all know, how good and holy a thing Freemasonry is. How excellent are its precepts, how perfect its doctrines! But forgive me, if I remind you that some of our friends outside are not so well acquainted with its merits as we ourselves, and that a most mistaken idea prevails in some minds that because we are a secret society, we meet for political purposes, or have a political bias in everything we do. I am delighted, Brethren, to have this opportunity of proclaiming what I am satisfied you will agree with me in, namely, that we have as masons, no politics, that the great object of our order is "to strengthen the bonds of fraternal affection and make us live in pure and Christian love with all men;" though a secret, we are not a political body; that our Masonic principles and hopes are essential parts of our attachment to the constitution and our loyalty to the Crown.

It is not too much to say that this speech fairly took its hearers by storm. Although the sentiments expressed were the same as in reply to the address of congratulation, there was a crisp freshness and earnest fervour about this last utterance which went straight to the hearts of those who listened to it. The allusions to erroneous conceptions concerning the spirit of the order and the solemn earnestness with which the Prince defined the limits and aims of Freemasonry, met with thoughtful approval; but the closing sentences, in which he claimed for Freemasonry a spirit of broad Christian charity and an alliance with the principles of constitutional government, roused a perfect furor of enthusiasm. How much better the Prince's extempore speech was than his prepared answer to the address, was in everyone's mouth, and a better and more appropriate climax to the proceedings could not have been devised. When the Grand Lodge was closed, and the new Patron of the Freemasons of Ireland had received parting salutations and left the room, he was being escorted down stairs by the Duke of Leinster, when his Highness asked if he could not be shown over the new lodge rooms, of which he had heard so much. There was a momentary embarrassment; the rooms were unfinished; they were not prepared for the compliment it was proposed to pay; the Prince might not be so favourably impressed as if he saw them for the first time next year, when it is confidently hoped he will come over, accompanied by the Princess, and a banquet on behalf of the Irish Masonic Schools shall be inaugurated, at which ladies and brethren shall be present. These were the first natural impulses of those interested. It was felt that the time and the thought given by Captain Huband to the details of these several buildings would be better appreciated when the final strokes had been given them; but notwithstanding this, it was eventually decided to take the Prince round.

He expressed his satisfaction several times to the brethren who accompanied him. The boys and girls from the Masonic schools had been brought into the city on the chance of their obtaining a glimpse of the Prince, and when the latter heard this, he immediately asked to be taken to the Grand Lodge Room, where they were waiting. There he delighted the modest little maidens by putting questions to them, respecting their studies and the discipline of the school, and after general leading questions to the authorities in attendance, the new patron left, the crowd outside taking up the cheering of the brethren within, and every Mason present satisfied that the much-talked-of affair had gone off well.