

Massachusetts; and considering the names it bears, and the history of the formation of the Grand Lodge of that ancient Commonwealth, I have been more than surprised at some of its positions.

The Report begins with the expression of a great deal of sympathy, and expresses the opinion that an independent organization is essential to the effective and proper working of the order, in the opinion of the entire craft in Canada; but professes to find "well-tried principles" in the way of recognition, and then states the question at issue to be, "whether it is consistent, with the recognized laws or customs of freemasonry, for any lodges under a particular jurisdiction, to secede from the parent body without its consent, and to form, of their own authority, a new body, having an independent existence and independent powers."

Although the question might have been stated with greater fairness, I do not object to it, as thus expressed. And I feel no difficulty in saying, that if the consistency of such action is denied, *Massachusetts herself has no legitimate Grand Lodge whatever.* She asked no "consent" to "secede" from the "parent body," by either of her Provincial Grand Lodges. Both on the 2nd day of January, 1783, when the old Massachusetts Grand Lodge assembled, after an entire suspension of eight years; and in August 1837—when her Saint John's Grand Lodge met, after a suspension of more than twelve years—we find no such idea dreamed of, so far as she has seen fit to disclose her history to the masonic world. The Grand Master of one of her Grand Lodges laid in his shroud of glory under the King's Chapel, and the other also had passed away from earth. An assumed "elective supremacy," in the one case, and a silently assumed *right to act*, in the other, were all that were thought necessary in those "good days of old." Nor was more thought needful when the Massachusetts and St. John's Grand Lodges, united in 1792, and formed the present Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

If all this action was not secession, by what name is it to be described? Who ever heard, among it all, that the "consent" of the "Grand Body" was asked, and who so ignorant as not to know, that upon self-assumed authority, Massachusetts inaugurated a "new body, with an independent existence and independent powers." This being true, the committee of Massachusetts must either disavow themselves, or admit that independent action is to be enjoyed by them only in common with others.

I quote another paragraph from the report of the Massachusetts Committee:—"Each Grand Lodge in the United States rules and governs without interference from any other, all Lodges within the civil jurisdiction of the State in which she is situated—holding the

territories as common ground, wherein each Grand Lodge is free to charter Lodges at pleasure, until each territory by being regularly admitted to the Union as a State, acquires the right to form a Grand Lodge, for itself. Your Committee are aware that this has sometimes been done before admission as a State; but although it may be alleged in excuse that territories are States in process of formation, we still think the practice illegal, and not to be justified in any case, the only safe rule, in our opinion, being that laid down."

The first portion of this opinion admits of no controversy;—no one denies its truth and correctness. The second portion has no truth to sustain it, and, if Massachusetts holds to it, she stands alone. I would be highly thankful to know, *when, where, and by whom* any such rule, as to the Grand Lodges of the territories, was established and *what* Grand Lodge has either assented to or acquiesced in it. For myself, I know of none. If such Grand Lodges are of doubtful validity, I cannot withhold the question, whether my own native and loved State is not now in full masonic communion with Minnesota, Oregon and Kansas?—and if she is not, why she does not inform her sister Grand Lodges that her masonic compasses do not embrace them in this circle of masonic brotherhood.

The Committee of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts find no difficulty in deciding, that all the reasons given by the formers of the Grand Lodge of Canada make out only a case of "simple inconvenience;" hold the action they have taken to be rebellion; assert that "in masonry there can be no long-continued oppression," that "there can be no temptation to tyranny, for nothing is to be gained by it," and that "within certain bounds the will of the majority is absolute." They then most fraternally call the Grand Lodge of England "our venerable mother," protest against the newly formed Grand Lodge of Canada by resolution, and forbid all masonic communication with it or with any Lodge or individual having any connexion therewith.

It is doubtless always "inconvenient" for masonry to be governed by a power three thousand miles off and across an ocean. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts itself found it so at the close of the revolutionary war, and remedied the "inconvenience" by its own act. Canada, even more inconveniently situated than Massachusetts, has simply done an act of the same kind. Is it possible, in the worlds or in Heaven's high chancery, to hold one to be loyal, and the other treasonable? That "side of the majority" which "within certain bounds is absolute," and which the Massachusetts Committee see so clearly to be a protection against "oppression and tyranny," has been prostrated upon the floor of the Grand Lodge of England by the despotic will of the present Grand Master, and has, at this mo-

ment, as every well-informed mason knows, only a mythical existence, at least within that Grand Lodge of "our venerable mother."

In the full meaning of the second resolution passed by the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, at the recommendation of its committee, a very large range is taken. Carried out to its results, as it obviously reads, some seven or eight State Grand Lodges, all their subordinates, and all the members of each, are literally excommunicated from association with that Grand body,—inasmuch as that number of Grand Lodges have agreed that they will have "connexion" with this same independent Grand Lodge of Canada. If this was actually intended, it seems to me to open a fountain of bitter waters, illy adapted to promote the growth of charity and brotherly love.

I have examined, with some care, the communications of some masonic writers on this highly interesting subject, with a view of learning all that was accessible; and I am obliged to express my surprise at what has appeared in relation to it in some of the leading masonic publications. It has been contended in one quarter that the recognition of the Independent Grand Lodge of Canada by the Grand Lodge of Ireland is of no great importance, *because she had only about fifteen lodges in Canada, and did not burthen them with charges so harshly as the Grand Lodge of England did the lodges holding warrants under her.* This is a singular argument to be urged, and very naturally leads to the inquiry, why, if Ireland's acknowledgement is of no importance, Scotland's refusal is of even as much weight, when it is known that she had a far less number of lodges in the Province under her care. If in a territory free and open for the admission of warranted lodges by different foreign Grand Lodges, the question of right and wrong is to be settled by the greater or lesser number of lodges introduced by each, then we have introduced a new masonic rule of practice, the existence of which is yet unknown to our constitutions, and equally unknown to the intellectual tribunals of masonic equity and justice.

And it has been contended too, strange as it may seem, that since the separation of Canada from France, the three Grand Lodges of Great Britain and Ireland, have "held and improved" that Province, (to use the language of the writer,) as a "coparcenary or a partnership inheritance, with a joint right of succession"—as "one heir holding the premises as an estate in common." With such a view of her position, Canada might well complain that this interesting masonic partnership of the rose, the shamrock and the thistle, did not transact its business under some regular partnership title, and issue its lodge warrants in the name of the firm. It might also have been important to enquire, in what respective individual proportions these joint partners of "Canadian masonic rights