

31 *On the Territorial Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge.*

The first in order and importance, since it aims at the root of the matter, is that of *Secresy*. *A secret society, say they, ought to be declared illegal. No body of men should be permitted to meet together ostensibly for a public object whose doings are not open to public inspection in detail—for the public is the judge of what is loyal and true.*

Before that tribunal we lay our cause. The world I maintain is composed of a chain of secret societies. Every private family is in itself one! Composed of the master or head, subordinate officers (as it were) and members of the household, each with a proper sphere of action and particular duties attached in the arena of the society at large. All are amenable to the law, and any infringement of the same is punishable according to its enormity. A certain amount of secresy is a *necessity*, and it were well if there were more, as regards the private concerns of every family. A morbid curiosity to obtain unduly an insight as to the private affairs of others, is alike unlawful and to be despised; for success in social life is to be traced in a great measure to the exercise of commendable secresy.

Lastly each family contributes its share towards accomplishing public objects of utility, and each member thereof is in a greater or lesser degree a public actor in the great drama of life. What is true, then, of families is no less true of Freemasonry. *We are a secret society and pride ourselves in the possession of that which were unwise, that all alike should know. So far as our doings ought to have publicity, so far they are made public.*

Leaving aside the case of families, let us turn our attention to governments. It is acknowledged on all sides, that no regularly planned system of government exists, equal to every emergency, without its secret service, forming a conspicuous part of its organization. What is true of the one, and not to be gainsaid in the other, is applicable in its fullest sense to Masonry. We are perfect in our organization; we profess to have the public good at heart, and our influence for good is felt and acknowledged by all creeds and parties in every quarter of the habitable globe. We claim nought but what is a reasonable amount of secresy in our dealings with each other. We labor *not* to subvert but to build up and uphold the government and people, and from both we claim that recognition and encouragement which all alike deserve to receive whose institution is founded upon the purest principles of morality and truth. Looking back to the ages of antiquity and glancing over the pages of the world's history we see enrolled the names of the great and good, and our masonic record displays to a cavilling minority a list of monarchs and potentates, clergy and people, renowned in their generation, who have been firm supporters of our order, and active members in the working of our time-honored institution. H.

ON THE TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION OF THE GRAND LODGE.

Judging from the commotion caused by the recent formation of the Grand Lodge of Quebec, it would seem as though the nature of masonic law respecting the formation of Grand Lodges, and the sanction necessary was not sufficiently understood even by many well informed masons.

The principles, however, that should guide us in forming a right judgment in this important matter are not obscure; with a little attention to the historical development of our present system of Free Masonry, it would appear to be hardly possible to avoid perceiving them.