

cieties. The poor preacher was afterwards drowned, and Brother Joe to this day is still an "outsider," running the risk of Heaven on the broad commons of Masonic humanity.—*Masonic Advocate.*

THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE MASONIC PRESS.

The position of the Masonic Press and the *role* of a Masonic editor are not ever a "bed of roses." There are difficulties attendant on all journalism, on all editorial labours, but the Masonic press is very heavily weighted for the race. Owing, in the first place, to the peculiar teaching and aspects of Freemasonry, the normal difficulties of all journalism are increased a hundred fold. For Freemasonry assumes a position of absolute neutrality in all matters purely political and religious, that is to say, it passes no opinion on those questions which divide mankind in the two great "zones" which are respectively marked—"religion" and "politics," and hence the serious difficulty of a Masonic editor. It is a most arduous labour, requiring great care and greater skill to avoid in treating on the current subjects of the hour, whether entirely or not only quasi-Masonic, impinging on one side or the other, and touching, however gently, those neutral sections of thought, teaching, and discussion. We flattered ourselves that we had done so. We had hoped that our abstinence from all political or denominational preferences was as clear as it was avowed by us, was as distinct as we believed it to be consistently Masonic on all occasions. It appears, however, that we have been in error all this time, self-satisfied deceivers. A correspondent of thirty years' Masonic standing informs us that our remarks upon "Ultramontanism" have been for some time exceedingly "offensive" to him and to others. We are exceedingly sorry for the announcement, and regret the use of so hard a word, as we had reason to believe that our language was not unacceptable to a very large circle of readers. For we have, in our own opinion, been alike most careful, moderate, discreet, and fair. We have not said even half what we might have said, or a third of what we felt on the facts submitted to us. We have, from the first, endeavored to point out to our brethren that the habitual violence and unseemly language of the Ultramontane press, and of many high Roman Catholic authorities, were one thing, the rights and feelings of our Roman Catholic brethren, quite another. While we have endeavored to openly, as we always shall, (*pace* our correspondent), to maintain intact the undoubted rights of Roman Catholic Freemasons, we shall always denounce that bigotry which refused the rites of the Roman Catholic Church to Bro. Armourer-Sergeant Johnson; that brutality which in a distant country disturbed the body of a poor departed Freemason, and used the sacred symbol of the Cross as if to hallow a deed of sinful violence and wrong. From time to time we have to read the outrageous language of the Ultramontane advisers of the Pope, of Cardinals, and Bishops of the Roman Catholic persuasion, of lesser lights and petty imitators; and what are we to do? Are we to leave them all unnoticed? Are we to pass by them in silence or in contempt? Is it not on the contrary, our bounden duty to enlighten our readers as to the attacks which are daily and hourly made, and which impose often on the weak-minded and the ignorant, and are yet as mendacious as they are unmerited? We think so; and we feel sure that on this point we shall have the warm approval of our much-maligned and insulted Craft, alike as to the propriety of the course we have pursued and the moderation of the language that we have employed. For, be it remembered always, alike to the praise and credit of the *Freemason*, that it has never condescended to join in any partizan clap-trap or intolerant language against Roman Catholics *qua* Roman Catholics. We have, on the contrary, often been discreetly silent when others have been loquaciously open mouthed; we have restrained the barbed arrows of invective when others have been loud in heated denunciations of the Church of Rome as a religious institution *per se*. We have always advocated freedom of conscience, and "liberty of prophesying," as well for Roman Catholics as for any one else, and we defy the most captious critic, and the most hasty assailant, to point out a single passage in which we have done despite to the great principle of absolute and Masonic toleration. Certain unwise words and unseemly acts of the Roman Catholic authorities have come before us, and we have dealt with them practically, and treated them conscientiously, and we must beg to tell our worthy correspondent that we shall continue to do the same, whenever in our humble opinion the paramount interests of Freemasonry require such notice, or demand such animadversions in respect of Ultramontane tactics, or ignorant "accusers" of our "brethren." Our correspondent has seized with great adroitness on a little incident in respect of some humble Protestants at Minorca, which we transferred to our pages, and demands, somewhat excitedly, "what has this to do with Freemasonry?" We never said it