

I am glad to say that during my administration of the office of Grand Master I have not had submitted to me for decision any matter requiring my direct interference. I am compelled to remind brethren that all matters of Masonic complaint and jurisprudence should, by the Constitution, be referred through the Grand Secretary, and that his opinion, however valuable, is not that to which official weight is attached. The District Deputy Grand Master is the direct channel of communication in such matters.

Shortly after the last communication of Grand Lodge, the following old jewels were presented by our esteemed Most Worshipful Brother Harington, representative of the Grand Lodge of Quebec near the Grand Lodge of Canada: 1st, Square—the gift of H. R. H. Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, father of our Queen. 2nd, Key—the gift of Prince William Henry, Duke of Clarence, and William the Fourth. I now lay these relics before you, and I am sure they will be carefully preserved, both out of regard to their original and illustrious donors, and to him who has now given them to us.

The Grand Lodge Regalia, the purchase of which was authorized at the annual communication of 1873, has at last arrived and enabled the officers and brethren to appear in their proper jewels and clothing. I am informed it has cost £200 sterling but it was an indispensable outlay.

BRO. PARKINSON ON MASONRY.

At a dinner given in Aberdare, Scotland, after the close of a presentation to Bro. Parkinson, he thus discoursed on Masonry abroad: "Seven years ago I wrote a paper entitled 'What is the good of Freemasonry?' and sent it to the late Mr. Charles Dickens, who did me the honour of publishing it in his periodical 'All the Year Round.' I then declared the Craft to be 'Blessed by crowned, and banned by tattered heads, the essence of evil according to some men, and a fountain of goodness if you listen to others;' and it has sometimes seemed to me that the description gains strength and force as the years roll on. Here, in England, where we have inherited from our fore-fathers all the blessing of religious toleration and civil liberty, we can hardly understand the venomous rancour with which so innocent and beneficial an institution as Freemasonry is assailed, and many of us were at first disposed to smile at attacks which seemed childish in their meanness, spite, and misconception. But the perseverance with which these attacks were repeated, and the unrelenting hostility displayed, has stimulated inquiry and caused the reasons for their enmity to be better understood. Not to go over an old story, I would ask students of history to note that whatever nations are free, happy, prosperous, and law-abiding, where there is constitutional government and religious liberty, Freemasonry flourishes; the most exalted personages in those realms are proud to enter its ranks and avow their allegiance to its principles. On the other hand, it continues oppressed by spiritual tyranny or civil despotism, the light of Freemasonry is dreaded, and it is proscribed as a thing accursed. There is at this time no country in Europe where it is so dangerous to admit to be a Freemason as in Spain, and we all know the distressed condition of that unhappy country. Italy furnishes a stronger example still, for so long as she was opposed by misgovernment Freemasonry was punished by imprisonment, confiscation, and banishment, while directly she became free, lodges multiplied, and a Grand Lodge, presided over by the distinguished patriot Mazzini, was established. In Rome itself, it is important to know—and I pledge my personal credit to the fact, for I have taken unflinching means to inform myself, and it is beyond dispute—that Italian and English Freemasonry are absolutely identical. All the gossip as to the incendiary designs of Italian Freemasons, their conspiracies against the State, and their lawless compacts, are absolute inventions of the enemy. Doubtless, in times past Italian Freemasons, smarting under the horrible misgovernment of their country, endeavoured to release the principles taught by the Craft, but now that Italy is free, Masonry there is precisely what it is here, and it would be as sensible as truthful to brand this meeting as composed of assassins and conspirators, as to believe the same charges against the illustrious men who rule the Craft in Italy. Let us never forget, whenever Freemasonry is called in question, that Italy's past and present history, and the position of the Craft in that country then and now, furnish the most complete answers to assailants. It is for them to prove that light, freedom, order, constitutional government, and religious toleration are imperilled when Freemasonry is allowed to pursue its way without suppression or interference. This makes the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Rome one of the greatest Masonic triumphs of the century, and it is gratifying to find that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales readily recognized its importance, and that one of his earliest acts as Grand Master was to place the Grand Lodge of England in official communication with that of Italy. Brethren, by our Masonic laws and obligations, no lodge can flourish in any district without conserving and strengthening respect for duly constituted authority, obedience to the law, loyalty