

consent of the Grand Lodge, or Grand Lodges, from which their respective warrants emanated, for this purpose. Most of the Grand Lodges in the United States have been formed in this way, and every Grand Lodge has sanctioned this mode of action, so that the practice and principle are beyond dispute. I need only name Iowa, Texas, California, Minnesota, Oregon, Kansas, Grand Lodges all comparatively of yesterday, and all formed in this, and in no other manner.

With what show of reason, then, can we discard this acknowledged principle and practice? England, Scotland, Ireland, assumed it, and the Grand Lodges of the United States have followed out the assumption. What decent apology can we give for attempting to discard it now, only because our northern brethren have followed in the common path?

Nice distinctions have been drawn, and all kinds of contrasts and comparisons invoked, to show differences between the case of the Independent Grand Lodge of Canada and all antecedent precedents. I have been unable, thus far, so far to stultify my own intellect as to appreciate them as proving distinctions in principle. Two, or a dozen sets of facts, may fall within the fair application of the same principle, though, in many respects, variant from each other. It requires none of the subtle logic of special pleading to make this obvious to every unprejudiced and clear-minded man; but when a set of facts, having no common analogy whatever with another set of facts, are drawn into a controversy, and made the basis of an argument, those who rely upon them ought at least to be able to show their assimilation, as bearing upon the principle they are relied on to sustain.

The Canadian Masonic action of the 10th of October, 1855, has, in some quarters, been treated as analogous to the various Masonic revolutions in the state of New York. To my own conceptions no analogy was ever more absurd. Had England experienced a division of her own Grand Lodge, by revolutionary means, on the soil of England, at home, the cases would have had some resemblance to each other; but they have no more resemblance of revolution now than the formation of the last Grand Lodge of Michigan—by Lodges holding warrants from the Grand Lodge of New York—has of revolutionary action towards that state. Michigan had the right to go alone when she was masonically and constitutionally strong enough, on well recognized principles; as Vermont had, and many other States, and as they did without exception from any quarter.

And precisely with as much propriety might Massachusetts, with her two warranted Lodges in Vermont in 1794; New York with the same number, and England itself with its one, granted through its Provincial Grand Master of Lower Canada, declare the Grand Lodge which those subordinate Lodges formed

to be un-masonic and revolutionary, as they may now make such an assertion as to the Independent Grand Lodge of Canada.

Until it be proved—which it has not been, and cannot be—that the constitutions and charges of Edwin transmitted to us some “ancient land-mark,” recognizing Grand Lodges in their present manner of formation, and recognizing also the powers now claimed by the Grand Lodge of England and its supporters, as well-established portions of legitimate ancient masonic law and right, it is worse than idle to maintain, in the face of the masonic usage and precedent of the last one hundred and forty years, that a competent body of regular lodges existing in a state or territory where there is no Independent Grand Lodge, have not the right to form one. *If they have not, it is more than doubtful whether there is a legitimate Grand Lodge on the continent of North America.*

I have thus far treated this important question as masonic history, principle and usage bear upon it; and I most sincerely regret that it was not placed upon this sole ground from the beginning. Broadly sustainable as it is here, it needed no other argument to contribute any additional support. Still there are other facts connected with the formation of the Independent Grand Lodge of Canada, which cannot be forgotten, and ought not to be forgotten, in considering the subject.

The Masons of Canada were, to a large extent, men whose birth-places were abroad. Their Lodges existed by power derived from abroad. The sympathies of their members were largely with their mother country across the ocean, and this natural and honorable feeling was all powerful with them to prevent any rashness or disrespect towards those foreign masonic jurisdictions to which they acknowledged allegiance. Knowing and feeling the inconveniences of their position, the neglect of their wants, and the denial of their just rights, they submitted to years of humble complaint, of brotherly solicitation, of many petitioning and of mild remonstrance—and they submitted in vain. No kind response, no appreciation of self-evident wrongs breathed its gentle breath across the broad Atlantic. They were compelled at last, unwillingly, to realize that all foreign hope was ended, and that the future of their masonic happiness must depend upon themselves. Thus situated, forty-one lodges holding warrants of constitution under the authority of the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland, after circulating notice of their intention for several months, assembled at Hamilton, on the 10th day of October, 1855, severed all foreign connection, and constituted themselves a Grand Lodge for Canada.

The wrongs and grievances to which I refer have been sometimes denied, and the representations of these forty-one lodges have been cavilled at by enmity and hawked at

by ignorance; but an earlier justification has already come than the new Grand Lodge could have anticipated, and its own truth is sustained, even from the mouths of its opponents. On the 23rd day of October last, the body of Canadian masons which styles itself “The Provincial Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Canada West, under the United Grand Lodge of England”—*which body still acknowledges and adheres to its foreign allegiance*—memorialized the Grand Lodge of England upon its position, and in that memorial has set forth substantially the existence of the same grievances which had been previously set forth, and which, having been treated with scorn and contempt in the quarter to which they were addressed, had forced the forty-one lodges to their independent action of October 10, 1855.

Had the forty-one lodges of Canada postponed their action and continued to bear oppression longer, subsequent events have shown that “scorpions” were doomed to succeed the “whips,” and that while they remained within the portal of foreign jurisdiction, they must leave all hope upon the outside. At the Quarterly Communication of the Grand Lodge of England, on the 4th of June, 1856, when a petition from Canada West was alluded to by a member upon the floor, which petition had been presented to the Grand Master, and notice had been given of a motion by brother Portal, “for granting privileges to the Prov. Grand Lodge of Canada West,” the Grand Master announced, *even before the motion was brought forward*, that he should “refuse putting it from the Chair.” He went on to remark that “the Grand Lodge had nothing to do with the petition,” and added, that he was perfectly justified in ignoring it.” He refused also to read a part of the petition.

Upon this practice the Grand Lodge of England is a myth, having no substantial entity whatever, or, if it has any appreciable existence, it is but as the shadow of the Most Worshipful Earl of Zetland. I know not how these occurrences may strike the minds of the brethren of this Grand Lodge; but I am compelled to admit that no intellectual chemistry can find any thing in my own conceptions which has the least affinity for them. A Grand Master quite as many years as any other living brother on this side of the Atlantic, and—so far as I know—on the other, I have a right to believe that the masonic world will give me credit for having no disposition to restrict the legitimate prerogatives of that exalted station; but when the brother thus situated, and thus responsible to the masonic world at large, assumed an entire personal control over petitions; gratuitously refuses to put motions growing naturally out of them, even before they are offered, and withholds from his Grand Lodge the contents of papers in which that body is interested, I can see