

to the ground." What matters it to these people that an honest and true-hearted Mason must ever be on the side of right ; or what care they for the good Masonry has accomplished ! The tide of Masonic charity has no ebb within the craft, nor ought it to have ; but our opponents judge without knowledge and condemn without trial ; and although many outsiders profess to know a great deal more about Masonry than we do, they somehow fail to count in our Masoric orphan houses, homes for aged brethren, and Masonic charity written on every instrument of the craft. Believe our calumniators, and for once the world can gather grapes from thorns and figs from thistles. If we have declined to reply to our assailants, or if we have refused, under great provocation, to return "railing for railing," it is simply because we have faith in the omnipotence of truth and the consciousness that the essential principles of our Order have an immutable basis. Truth will prevail sooner or later, and in the meantime we can afford to wait. The enemies of Masonry never weary of representing it as a cosmopolitan society of evil-doers—an association whose ramifications extend through every grade of society, and everywhere working out its deadly purposes against the social and religious interests of the community ; while some wise men—very wise men if you will—are more than satisfied that our relationship to the Prince of Darkness is at least one of intimate cordiality, if, indeed, it does not reach the length of a very close community of interest or even an identity of purpose. (Laughter.) I am ready to admit that in these days such extravagant ideas

DO NOT PREVAIL VERY GENERALLY.

but even the qualified charges to which reputable writers attach their names are not in any respect more remarkable for truthfulness. Now, to condense the substance of many charges made against Freemasonry and present them in the shape of two propositions, they would read somewhat as follows :—

1st. Freemasonry is dangerous to the State.

2nd. Freemasonry is antagonistic to religion and morality.

In the main, it will, I think, be found that the objections most frequently urged against the craft lie close to one or other of the above propositions. Of course it is not to be supposed that all our opponents hold to both propositions or to either as it stands, but substantially I say the above propositions cover what may be termed the anti-Masonic case. Now, before applying the principles of the craft to the charges in question, let me convince you by reputable evidence that I am not placing before you a "man of straw" for the purpose of knocking it down, nor shall I trespass upon your time by making anything like long extracts. Sir Christopher Bellew said :—"Lord Palmerston is much more than a hostile statesman. He would never have such influence on the continent if he were only an English Cabinet Minister. But he is a Freemason and one of the highest and greatest of Freemasons. It is he who sends what is called the Patriarchal voice through the lodges of Europe." So that after all, if we are to believe Sir Christopher, it is "Freemasonry" that moves the secret springs of European politics. But the late Major-General Burnaby is given as the authority for the following extraordinary story :—"It is alleged that the General was commissioned to obtain and preserve the names and addresses of all the Italian members of the Foreign Legion enlisted for the British service in the Crimean war. This was in