

MASONIC INCONGRUITIES.

In the long history of Masonry there has never been, to our knowledge, anything that has created so queer a relationship between Masons as now exists in the State of Ohio. The leading members of the Scottish Rite in that State, most of whom were Knights Templar, succeeded in forcing the Grand Commandery of Ohio to declare that certain other organizations are legitimate Masonic bodies, and all others spurious, and prohibiting Knights Templar under its jurisdiction from joining any body not recognized as legitimate by the Grand Commandery, under penalty of expulsion. A number of Scottish Rite Masons residing at Columbus, Ohio, and who were also members of Mount Vernon Commandery, No. 1, K. T., at that place, withdrew from membership in the Scottish Rite bodies and renounced their fealty to the Rite in the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States. They then proceeded to organize Scottish Rite bodies under another Supreme Council. For this act they were expelled from the bodies from which they had already withdrawn, and also from the Mount Vernon Commandery No. 1, K. T., of which they were members, under the enactment of the Grand Commandery.

We do not propose in this connection to discuss the right of the Scottish Rite Masons to absolve their allegiance to one Supreme Council and transfer it to another. The government of this Rite is an autocracy, in which even the right of petition is denied, and hence for one or any number of members to think or act in opposition to its edicts is rebellion. The power to expel members for cause or without it exists, without even the form of a trial, and may be exercised at will. The Grand Commandery K. T. of a State has full powers to make laws for the government of Sir Knights under its jurisdiction. This government, however,

is a representative one, and the right of petition is conceded to the humblest member. Sir Knights have it in their power to elect such representatives as will legislate for their interests. There is no occasion for rebellion. If obnoxious laws are enacted they can be soon repealed. The members of Mount Vernon Commandery No. 1, above referred to, had no right to defy the edicts of the Grand Commandery of Ohio, even though they knew their rights had been trampled in the dust. Their expulsion was just and necessary to maintain the dignity of the Grand Commandery.

Now comes the incongruities of the situation. Fourteen Sir Knights and Princes of the Royal Secret are under the ban of the highest penalty that could be inflicted upon a criminal by their Commandery and Scottish Rite bodies. As Master Masons and Royal Arch Masons they are still in good standing, and in Lodges and Chapters can meet on equal footing, and preside over those who they cannot associate with as Sir Knights and Princes. They are men who stand high socially, and enjoy the respect and confidence of the community where they reside. But the Grand Commandery of Ohio says that they are not worthy to be Knights Templar, and must be disgraced by expulsion from all the rights and privileges of the Order.

This condition of affairs was brought about by an unwise and unlawful act of the Grand Commandery of Ohio, in legislating upon a matter wholly outside of its jurisdiction, which the Grand Lodge of Ohio utterly refused to do. A majority of Masons of Ohio have placed the seal of condemnation upon it, and the *Masonic Review* and the Masonic press and correspondents generally proclaim it an outrage. Those who were instrumental in forcing this unfortunate state of affairs are welcome to all the glory there is in it. Unless taken off suddenly they will live to see their act