

Please accept the enclosed olive leaves from the site of the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem Priory at Rhodes.

With fraternal and courteous esteem,

HENRY R. COLEMAN.

[The leaves enclosed have been placed in the Grand Lodge Library.—ED. KEYSTONE.]

[NOTE.—Grand Master Spry has received a letter (with leaves enclosed) from the same source, and we are glad to learn from it that there is every prospect of Royal Mother Solomon Lodge at Jerusalem being resuscitated. This body has been almost dormant for a number of years. Canadian Masons will be glad to hear of its revival.—ED. CRAFTSMAN.]

THE MARK DEGREE.

The fact that His Royal Highness the Grand Master was made a "Mark Master Mason" at Golden-square a week ago, suggests alike consideration and reflections not a few to the thoughtful Masonic student. It is not a little remarkable to realize the present distinguished position of the Mark Degree. Its practical existence under Lord Leigh may be dated only within a generation, and it has now a very effective organization and numerous adherents. Some of the most distinguished members of our craft enroll themselves in its ranks, attend its meetings, and claim its honors. And yet who can tell us anything certain about it? The learning of a Gould or Hughan would fail them, were we to press them for a clear, consistent narrative of the origin, progress, and history of the Mark Degree. As far as the grade itself is concerned it is confessedly a "crux" about which much mystery exists. "The Mark" seems to have been unknown to or passed over by the Revivalists of 1717, and though traces of it in the last century exist,

they are few and far between, and comparatively late. No early English minute book alludes to it, and the marked difference as between the English and Scottish craft in this respect deserves to be carefully noted when we treat on the subject. In Scotland on the contrary the Marks are almost, if not entirely, synchronous with their earliest authentic minutes, which go back to A. D. 1600 in round numbers; and we think Bro. D. M. Lyon, the great authority on Scottish Masonic history, will agree with us when we say that all known Masters and "Fellows of Craft" seem to have had a Mark. What then is the cause of this great divergence of custom, this absolute difference of procedure? It is neither easy to be accounted for, nor susceptible of distinct explanation. There is undoubtedly a great difference of normal procedure which confronts the most credulous, and must strike the most careless. What the relation is of the older Marks to the Mark Masons of to-day is another "crux," equally difficult and equally hazy, equally hard to digest and harder to explain. Some connexion there probably was but what that was, is reserved for the labors of a Hughan and a Gould, a Murray Lyon and a Rylands satisfactorily to explain. Up to date therefore all is mystery in respect to the Mark, and such it must remain. Much stress has been sometimes laid on the existence of Immemorial Mark lodges, as a proof of the antiquity of the degree. But knowing how often this word "immemorial" is used most improperly, and without any historic warrant, we do not ourselves set much store by that fact in itself. The ritual of Mark Masonry is undoubtedly modern, as likewise the division into two grades. Perhaps in one sense its modernity is its recommendation. At any rate it flourishes and expands, and its now many friends may surely and truly say, "nothing is so successful as success."

[We are pleased His Royal High-