

amicably arranged, and his most ardent desire to be instrumental in cementing the Order—"L'homme propose, mais Dieu dispose," was sadly exemplified in his sudden and lamented death on the very day of the meeting of Great Priory.

Our good Frates of the United States, who, a few years back, made a pilgrimage to Europe, will, I am sure, look back with mournful pleasure to the kind and hospitable reception they met with from him at "Alton Towers."

#### CIRCULARS ISSUED.

I regret that my first official act, as Great Prior, should have been the necessity of issuing the circular of the 4th of December last (see Appendix A), to repudiate the advocacy of secession and the formation of another independent Templar body in Canada. Had not the truth of such a movement been authenticated to me by an official of this Great Priory, I should not have thought it worthy of notice. There is, however, no difficulty, when desirable, in forming Provincial Priors for any of the Provinces, which would place them exactly in the same position to this Great Priory as it formerly stood to that of England, and as the Grand Commanderries of the United States do to their Great National Council, "The Grand Encampment."

With regard to the implied wish to adopt the system pursued across the line, I can only say that, delighted as we all are to cultivate the most intimate relations with our good Frates of the United States, I think, with very few exceptions, we infinitely prefer our own English system. In this we are not singular, and I hope I may be pardoned for quoting an extract from a letter to me, of 27th July, 1876, by one always looked upon as an authority on Masonic and Templar matters, whose fearful and untimely death we all so truly deplored—our late respected and talented Fratre, George Frank Gouley. He says: "Your letter clears away some doubtful points in my mind, and I can frankly say that I am in full accord with your views, and trust that some day our American work may be corrected so as to conform more sensibly and harmoniously to the ancient Templar system."

#### PROCEEDINGS IN CONVENT GENERAL.

The subject which now particularly engages our attention is, the action taken by Convent General in October and December last, which called forth my circular and the protest issued in your name on the 19th March (see Appendix B). While, owing to the death of the Great Prior of England, it has not yet been finally arranged, I am happy to be able to inform you that the Great Sub-Prior is using every means in his power to bring about a settlement, and has explained his views to me, which I

am convinced, when laid before you, will be concurred in as the only practical way of satisfying all parties.

It is with pain I record the state of confusion into which the Order has been thrown, by the inconsiderate action of some of the English representatives at Convent General. This continued re-opening of questions which should be regarded as having been finally settled, is not calculated to raise respect for the Order, or for those who cannot rest content unless they have everything their own way.

What has taken place is the more to be regretted, as it shows that a certain section of our Order in England is leagued together to upset existing regulations, that had, before adoption, been under careful revision for a period of four or five years; and that the parties composing it are embarked in a retrograde movement, with but little regard either to the history or the unity of the Order to which they belong.

England, or this dominant section for the time being, of her Great Priory in Convent General, seems to ignore our rights to a voice in these matters, and without the slightest reference to us, passes resolutions in Convent General of which we disapprove. Undoubtedly the general statutes contain a provision for altering them, but it could never have been contemplated that such alterations were to take place without the consent of the other nationalities. Canada joined the Union satisfied with the existing laws, and thus gave in her allegiance to the Convent General, and she cannot be expected to observe any infringement which, in this case, actually changes the Order to a totally different organization.

If Convent General assumes the right to make rules for us, it is high time we should assert our own rights, and, in my opinion, we neither can nor ought, as I know our Great Priory will be firm in refusing, to submit to any such assumption. I say so with the deepest loyalty and most profound respect for our Grand Master, a feeling I know to be equally shared in by all the members of this Great Priory, and I will uphold his authority, and bear him true allegiance as long as he is pleased to rule over us, but I confess to the same feeling which actuated the saying of Junius—"That the subject, who is truly loyal to the Chief Magistrate, will neither advise nor submit to arbitrary measures."

The fact is, that the Great Priory of England has so long been the autocrat of the Templar Order that it is difficult to persuade some of its members that it is now merely one of a federated union, and they seem to be indisposed to recognize either Ireland or Canada as independent and co-equal members of the federation, while it is equally plain that neither Ireland nor Canada will