

the influences which have finally misled him. But it is, no doubt, the most conspicuous illustration yet furnished of the force of some temptations which at the present day Roman Catholicism holds out even to intelligent minds. There are men who enter with enthusiasm at the outset of life into the speculations and visions of modern discovery, who are intoxicated by their novelty and attracted by their promises. But they discover after a while that they are being led into regions they had never contemplated, and they are startled to find that they must be content with many tentative conclusions. They were laudably ambitious to undertake the mountainous ascent which was proposed to them, but they become alarmed when they suddenly find themselves in mid air on the face of some difficult slope. In this perplexity a guide appears, who offers, not indeed, to gratify their original ambition, but to assure them of the safety they fear they have forfeited; and to commit themselves to his hands appears, at all events, the least of the risks open to them. They close their eyes, abandon all individual enterprise, and submit to be led, on the sole condition that they shall be guaranteed ultimate security. It is not a dignified or lofty type of mind, but it is too common a one. Minds may, in fact, be divided into those which can and those which cannot stand alone, and there are a large class who are born to be governed, mentally and morally. If they happen to fall under healthy government, all is well; but, if not, if they get loosed from their old moorings and find themselves drifting; they are at the mercy of the first pilot who will jump on board and seize the helm. It is the strength of the Roman Catholic Clergy that they are always ready to undertake this responsibility, but it is not every day that they find so good a ship drifting as the Marquis of Ripon. It is a melancholy spectacle; but it indicates a weakness which is not an English characteristic, and, though we may grudge to the Roman Catholic Clergy Lord Ripon's wealth and such social influence as he may retain, we may be sure that the material advantages he may bring to them will be their only acquisition. Fountains Abbey passes once more into Roman Catholic hands, but it is not the defection of a stray peer which will undermine the steady devotion of the English mind to a free and independent career of religious and political development.

The London *Freemason*, quoting from the above, says:

"It is notorious that the Freemasons are under the especial ban of the Church of Rome. That Church tolerates no secret society, except that of the Jesuits; and the first sacrifice which would be demanded of a convert like Lord Ripon would be his withdrawal from the Craft. As the first pledge of his new obedience he has to abandon his honorable position in the brotherhood, and to renounce a harmless and kindly association, in which he might for years have held the foremost place. It was justly said that the reasons must have been overwhelming which could induce him to take so unwelcome a step, and they arise from nothing less than the important change in his religious convictions which we have stated."

The government of our exalted brother was indeed a purely constitutional government of Freemasonry, alike "de facto" and "de jure." And yet to-day we have only sorrowfully to record the premature and unforeseen close of his administration of the Grand Master's office, and the abrupt termination of so much good promise and such admitted efficiency. Despite much regret, both on personal and public grounds, that such a step should have been deemed needful, and that such a sacrifice should be required, we yet feel bound to record in the pages of *The Freemason* alike our fraternal grief, and our fraternal gratitude. For the memories of Lord Ripon's Grand Mastership, and of our exalted brother personally, will long linger, we do not hesitate to say, among the happiest traditions of our Order. We shall recall in years to come, what an example he set to all Freemasons amongst us, old and young, by his zeal and love for Freemasonry, and though, alas! he now has left our Order, apparently under the claims of imperious proscription, yet amid obloquies very many, and assailants not a few, even too, amid the childish and shameless persecution of the Church of Rome, some of us may gladly recollect, that Freemasonry has had in our generation no truer advocate, no warmer admirer, and no more zealous friend, than our distinguished brother and late Grand Master, the Marquis of Ripon.

MARK MASTER MASONRY.

By Bro. William James Hughan,

The earliest minute which chronicles the work of a Mark Master's Lodge in America is dated "Halifax, 16th Nov., 1784." At least it is the earliest so far made public.

In England we have not yet seen any of so early a date, and if any such exist, it would be well for their character to be certified for the information of the Craft universal.

In Scotland there is a Record of 1778 which we have already announced, and so far as we know, it is the first yet discovered in point of antiquity.

All these minutes unite to prove that the *Mark Master's degree* was conferred non