

assent or concurrence of the convocation of an organization which it does not recognize, and who do control it, for the qualifying of the W. M. elect, to enable him to preside over the Lodge, created by the Grand Lodge, which thus virtually would be acknowledging its lack of supremacy, and its dependency upon the will and pleasure of an outside body or organization, of which it has no official knowledge or control.

"There is no Masonic author of any importance, that we are aware of, except Mackey, who claims that the Past Master's 'degree,' as such, existed before 1795, when it was introduced into the American Capitular system, by Webb, Richards, Fowler, and others. But, in 1798, the Hartford convention accepted it, and from this time, so far as the American Chapter was concerned, it became a *de facto*, whether *de jure* or not.

"Chase, in his Digest, says:

"It certainly is not older than the last part of the last century."

"In its origin, 'the Holy Royal Arch' of Dermot, was evidently intended for a select degree, and a very exclusive one, from the fact that it was to be confined to Past Masters only.

"Now, who, or what was a Past Master then?—one who had been elected to preside over a just and legally constituted Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, and had served his time (or term), and this is the law of that jurisdiction to this day.

"The Royal Arch degree, or, as it was then called, 'the completion of the Master's part,' became popular, and many wished to obtain it, who were not, and who never expected to become a W. Master of a Lodge; but, as only Past Masters could obtain it, what was to be done?—call on the inherent powers of the Grand Master (of course), who, by his dispensation, permitted them to 'pass the chair.' Thus, by equivocation, 'whipping the d—l around the stump,' they become 'virtual Past Masters,' and obtain the 'degree' (as now termed), but, in reality, pass the chair in the Lodge.

"Now, Webb & Co. had no more right, authority or justification to introduce the ceremony of the 'secrets of the chair' as a 'degree' into the Chapter, than Dermot had to introduce the Royal Arch; yet, both succeeded. Most of the writers of the present day, who have examined the history of this so-called degree, would like to, or are at least willing to get rid of it, if they could, admitting it to be a misnomer, and placed without due authority; but they do not know how. Some are for kicking it out, 'sans ceremonie'; some one thing, some another. Drummond is willing to be rid of it, 'did that not' break up our system, as it came down from the *Fathers*.

"Now, W. Brother, the argument in your last report of 1877, is a strong argument in favor of the 'Antient Ways,' and unless the 'might now be supposed to be a tremendous innovation,' is made to be, more 'than a might be supposed,' and a literal fact. Then, it is of no force whatever; for age, or length of time, cannot be claimed to be the philosopher's stone that will change error into right, or that will prove the Past Master's degree to be the precise same thing as the ceremonies of the chair, in the installation of a W. Master of a Lodge; and, unless you show that the P. M. degree is older, even than R. A. Chapters, you must admit that the said degree is not a supposed, but an actual departure from the 'Antient Ways,' and unquestionable innovation, whether tremendous or not; and if the 'Fathers' have been guilty of error, then we had better try the more 'Antient Ways' of

the Grand Father, & the innovation of it.

"The fact that it exercising the right coming apparent to like Patrick—" that faith, he'd just like it is not a bit more elect; if they do in who has been but a chair at all.

"Installed Master veys the information on the completion or termed plain 'hors stump,' passing th and calling him Pas the O. B., than the 'scalawag' in posse hard to oust. We c comes of him, if you side! God bless th tion; it will need it, where they of right public obligation of tender into the Valle

M. E. Comp. W Priest.

R. E. Comp. J. retary.

Held at Portlan
M. E. Comp. H
Number of Cha
members, 3,994; re
51st.

The Grand High
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"Question. 'A can degrees; night is app further progress; state sustains them. After objections groundless, didate again petition rejection?'

L. "Answer. The Cha