

attachment to our time-honored landmarks, but of its substantial welfare and material prosperity.

When Lord Zetland succeeded to the supreme direction of the Craft it was slowly emerging from angry contests and heated discussions. Under his auspices nearly three Decades of peacefulness and harmony have succeeded in effacing all memories of older conflicts; and our Brotherhood, happily united in the bonds of fraternal harmony and concord, has been free to devote itself to its own proper work—the tranquil celebration of its ancient ceremonies, the peaceful manifestation of its distinguishing principles, the increase of its numbers, and the augmentation of its material prosperity. May such continue,—not that material prosperity is everything, nor should it ever be made by us any safe or abiding test of our real Masonic development, but we all shall wish that our Order may fairly continue to share in the general prosperity of the times in which our lot is cast; and that it may succeed in gaining, and that it may endeavor to retain in its expanding material prosperity, the good opinion and the flattering confidence of its fellow men.*

If we look now at the social condition of English Freemasonry, we are also able to discern that it is in truth one of progressive and decisive improvement. We do not mean in saying this, to allude merely to a question of "caste" or degree of society. On the contrary, we have always been among those, who have openly advocated the admission of bona fide operative lodges, if possible; we believe that the general framework of Freemasonry would be strengthened by their reception. Therefore in saying that there is a general improvement in the social status of our Order, we must not be supposed to imply, that we are in favor of anything like an exclusive or select association; but what we would rather wish to imply and to turn attention to, is the fact, a good omen ever in itself, of the far greater care manifested generally in the admission of candidates. No doubt, in some instances, this Masonic virtue of commendable caution may be still further most properly increased; but, on the whole, after a careful survey of the past annals and present position of our Order in England, they must be very inattentive observers who are unable to discern marked tokens of a higher tone, and more refining influences amongst ourselves.

For the last twenty-five years, those who have interested themselves in the real welfare of the Craft, must have rejoiced to notice, almost universally abounding, manifestations of social progress and amelioration. We do not mean in saying this to cast stones at anyone, least of all at those who preceded us as Members of the Order; neither do we wish to make an idol in any sense, of those illused and often misunderstood words "general respectability." But we think that all will concur in this, that, as in society generally, late hours and protracted sittings are now to a great extent discountenanced, so the less such a possible charge could be brought forward by any against Freemasons the better for us all, as the prolonged, if agreeable, seances of what has been humorously termed the "Knife and Fork Degree" when too much cultivated or considered, do not tend to promote the best interests, or to educe the true spirit of our beneficial and benevolent Brotherhood.

* While these remarks were going through the press, Lord Zetland had passed away from us all, full of years and honours, leaving behind him, amid many mourning regrets, an ever grateful memory to that good old Craft he served so long and so faithfully, and ruled so wisely and so well for the long period of six-and-twenty years.