

ADDRESS.

BRETHREN: We are once more assembled in Grand Lodge to take counsel together, and to discuss the interests of the fraternity which we represent. It is fitting that we should make it our first duty to invoke Divine protection and power, so that we may be guided by His wisdom in our deliberations, and attended during our labours by His blessing.

As day after day of the year just ended has passed away we have been reminded of the uncertainty of life, and as one by one the members of the human family have been carried off, never more to return, we have been admonished that we too must be prepared to meet our inevitable destiny, "to leave our place among the living to take it with the dead."

Our last annual communication was saddened by the absence of two of the most distinguished members of our Order, whose earthly career had been run, and whose loss we have not yet ceased to mourn with true and heartfelt grief. Now we are summoned to attend to their last resting place the mortal remains of our honored brother, M. W. Bro. Aldis Bernard, Past Grand Master of this Grand Lodge, who died on the third of this month at San Jose, in California, whither he had removed not many weeks ago in search of health. M. W. Bro. Bernard was so well known to the members of the Grand Lodge, as to make it a work of supererogation on my part to dwell at any length upon the important part taken by him in our proceedings, since the formation of the Grand Lodge. He was a member of the convention assembled at Hamilton in 1855, when this Grand Lodge was formed, and was then elected to the position of Deputy Grand Master, to which office he was re-elected in the two succeeding years; and in 1860 the great services which he had rendered to the Craft were acknowledged by having the honorary rank of a Past Grand Master of our Grand Lodge accorded to him; and from the time the Grand Lodge was formed down to the day of his death, he took a lively interest in its affairs, and was one of the most active and useful counsellors at the Board of General Purposes, as well as at our annual communications.

He was possessed of great judgment and tact, and had the command of choice and eloquent language. His tender heart was easily touched by the tale of distress, while the firmness of his character enabled him to advise with caution and to act with decision. Many now present will recall his manly utterances in the cause of right, truth and justice; and his eloquent appeals on behalf of the poor, the afflicted, and the distressed, still ring in our ears.

His cordial greeting will be no more experienced by his brethren. His familiar and genial face will be missed at our annual gatherings.

M. W. Bro. Bernard took an active part also in public affairs. He was a useful member of the City Council of Montreal for many years, and was elected to the high position of Mayor of that city for the year 1874, the duties of which important office he discharged with credit to himself and advantage to the citizens.

I have learned that the remains of our esteemed brother are now being brought to Montreal, the place of his residence for a great part of his life, and that they will be interred with Masonic honors on Saturday next, when I am confident many members of Grand Lodge will attend to bear testimony to the high esteem in which our departed brother was held amongst us.

During the past year it has been my privilege to attend several of the Lodges in different parts of our jurisdiction. It is most gratifying to me to assure you, and I am confident it will be agreeable to you to hear, that I found them in every instance efficiently conducted and ably worked. I attribute the marked improvement which is to be observed in our Lodges in great part to the frequent inspections by the D. D. G. Masters, and the greater interest taken in Masonic matters than prevailed in years gone by.

NEW LODGES.

In accordance with the Report of the Board of General Purposes adopted at our last Annual Communication, I received and continued the dispensation which had been previously granted for holding.

Prince Arthur Lodge at Flesherton, in the County of Grey.

I have also granted fifteen other dispensations for the formation of new Lodges as follows:

1. Prince Arthur Lodge, at Arthur, in the County of Wellington.
2. Langton Lodge, at Langton, County of Norfolk.
3. Highgate Lodge, at Highgate, County of Kent.