

It is painful to consider how Masonry has departed from its traditions, and from the true path of usefulness, in France and some of the southern nations of Europe. There have always been uneasy and ambitious spirits in those lands to mark out new courses and introduce changes. They have applied the Masonic name to a multitude of organizations which are in no wise entitled to be thus denominated. They have changed and amplified the ancient system so that the fathers would not recognize it. They have introduced a spurious ritual—an illegitimate rule of lodge work and government—while they have prevented the objects of genuine Craft Masonry, and substituted aims of their own devising.

A score of years ago, Bro. C. W. Moore, after a lengthy visit abroad, wrote of Continental Masonry in terms of adverse criticism. "Masonry had hardly assumed an organized existence on the continent of Europe before the work of innovation manifested itself in the form of change, improvement, or amplification. The original, beautiful in its simplicity, was made to represent a dazzling deformity, and was so bereft of its primitive, distinctive features as with difficulty to be recognized by those who had sent it abroad. It was made to assume more shapes and undergo more changes than the fertile brain of Proteus ever conceived. Thus a new regime was established. The scepter of Judah passed into the hands of strangers. The good old mother of Masonry was obliged to disown relationship with several hundred strange children—return to her own England, leaving her continental offspring to enjoy as best they might the fruits of disobedience, and the consequences of the removal of the 'ancient landmarks which the fathers had set' for their direction and government."

If such criticism from so eminent an authority was deserved nearly a quarter of a century ago, much more applicable is it now, when so many

more divergencies from the ancient plan of Masonry have been brought to view.

In the countries alluded to there is now a multitude of rites, degrees and systems, which are scarcely to be reckoned Masonic, except for the name they assume. They may do some good, but they do not operate along the lines which were originally marked out. They may give opportunity to discuss questions of sociology and science, and so dispense some light to each other and the community at large—they may emphasize the rights of man and render aid in the way of needed political reforms—but they do not stand for the Masonry of the fathers, nor are they doing its legitimate work.

We may well rejoice that we observe so few of these unwise divergencies in the Masonry of English speaking countries. In Great Britain and her dependencies, and in the United States, our fraternity retains its primitive features. It stands on the old foundations, and yet makes progress. It yields to no entangling alliances. It still maintains its independence of all political and religious controversies, refuses to expend its strength in mere sentiment or empty speculations, and exerts a force upon the superior side of life to make its own members wiser, better and happier, and at the same time to bless society at large by its ministries of practical good.—*Repository*.

HOW MASONRY STARTED IN CALIFORNIA.

California Lodge, No. 1, of San Francisco, recently observed an anniversary occasion, which was made especially edifying by a historic address given by Bro. J. D. Stevenson, who showed how Masonry was first established in an organic form on the Pacific coast. From a report of his address in one of the daily papers we gather the following interesting particulars:—