

right to claim to be any part or parcel of Ancient Craft Masonry, or to be recognized by the bodies thereof as such; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the G. C. of R. A. Masons of the State of Louisiana, refuse to acknowledge the G. Orient of France as a Masonic body, and interdict all Masonic communication with it, the bodies subordinate thereto, or with the Masons of its obedience, by the Masons of this Royal Arch jurisdiction."

The Grand Secretary reports on correspondence, reviewing three years' accumulation of Proceedings. He notices Canada for 1875, 1876 and 1877, and has the following on the degree of Past Master:—

"This pseudo DEGREE is peculiarly American, and, so far as we know or can ascertain, is *not worked* as a degree by any other jurisdiction. We had occasion to examine into this 'degree' in 1846, in our then Grand Lodge, and the conclusions ultimately arrived at, have only been strengthened by reading and observation since, viz: That it is anomalous, and has no proper or rightful claim to be considered a degree in Masonry whatever; that it is not only worthless as such, but a misnomer, whose only mission seems to have been to create annoyance and confusion, which, judging from the various and contradictory opinions expressed by American Masonic bodies, writers and officials, it seems to have accomplished fully. The first we hear of it as a 'degree' is, on its introduction by Webb into the Chapter series, evidently to make the Chapters independent of the Grand Master, and get rid of the annoyance or trouble of asking his permission to 'pass the chair in the Lodge,' that thus, becoming a Past Master (virtual), the party might apply for the Royal Arch—this necessity growing out of the requirement in the constitution (O. B.) that the Royal Arch is conferable upon none but Past Masters.

"This style, title or nomenclature being copied, what was known as the 'secrets of the chair,' became known, and for the first time (in the Lodge), as the Past Master's degree, and, the most objectionable of all claims ever made for, or in favor of, it, was successfully made, viz, that it qualified the W. M. elect to preside. In Cross's visit to Virginia in 1816-17, he so thoroughly indoctrinated that jurisdiction with its propriety and necessity (see Dove's History), that it passed in 1818 the celebrated law relative to installation, and which is maintained in that jurisdiction to this day, that before installation, the W. M. and Wardens elect must be invested with the Past Master's degree.

"This was subsequently advocated and sustained by one of the most popular Masonic writers and Ritualists of the day, who, in support of it (the Past Master's degree), maintained that it qualifies the W. M. elect to preside; and in support of this argument (and to maintain its antiquity as a degree), garbles the following quotation from Preston, viz:

"A private examination is always understood to precede the installation of every officer," which he renders thus:

"A private examination is understood to precede the installation of the Worshipful Master." See Monitors, etc.

"If the above assertion were true, it would do away with the supremacy of the Grand Lodge, from the fact that it does not acknowledge, or claim the control of the Past Master's degree, or claim it as belonging to the Lodge series, and is therefore dependent upon the