

was there, and even my watch had been kept wound up. My new acquaintance was the steward of the steamer, and he told me that he discovered the theft and recovered the plunder. I immediately offered him all the money in my wallet, but judge to my astonishment when he refused the reward.

"Do you remember Rising Sun Lodge, Shanghai?" he asked. "You remember Kwong Li Eei?" He held out his hand and gave me the Master Mason's grip. "Well that's me."

H. KELLAR, 32°

ARE PRINTED RITUALS UNMASONIC?

According to the report of the last Grand Lodge Communication of the U. G. Lodge of New South Wales, that body is publishing under its sanction a printed ritual of all masonic ceremonies to be distributed among the brethren. We very much regret the action of the Grand Lodge of N. S. W. We look on it as a most dangerous innovation, and a grave violation of the ancient landmarks of the order. The Masonic Ritual has been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. It has preserved a remarkable uniformity in all its essential parts. Though we sometimes hear of the want of a uniformity in working, we venture to assert there is no more difference to be found in the working of lodges in any country than there is in the pronunciation of English-speaking people. There is as little difference in Masonic working amongst well-informed Masons as there is in grammar and pronunciation amongst well-educated English-speaking people. The defect in the one as in the other, is to be found in the ignorant and the idle. Any Mason who is not prepared to devote a sufficient amount of time and attention to properly learning the Masonic Ritual is unfit to occupy the chair of King Solomon.

Our brethren in N.S.W. seem themselves to be fully convinced of the im-

propriety of their conduct. The very care they take to point out the precautions taken to prevent the outside public getting a peep at the work is sufficient to condemn them. Either it is wrong to print the Ritual or it is not; this is a question that should admit of no compromise. If it be wrong to print it, no amount of precaution will make it right. Either the Masonic Ritual should be laid bare to the outside world, or it should not. If it should, no precaution is necessary. If it should not, no precaution can possibly be sufficiently effective to justify its publication. Once it is printed and circulated, it is as much out of the control of the Grand Lodge as a Master Mason's certificate. Without any fault of the possessor, it may fall into hands for which it never was intended. Take the least objectionable case. A brother may die; his son—who may or may not be a Mason—his executor, a clerk in his employ, his wife or daughter, perhaps a boarding-house keeper or servant girl, would of necessity get possession of the work, despite all possible precautions.

We hope the Grand Lodge of New South Wales will stay its hand before it is too late. We are told by a very ancient writer that a word which has once passed the lips can never be recalled. The same may be said of the publication of a book. This step is certainly—to put it very mildly—an alteration in the established usages and customs of Ancient Freemasonry. How can the Grand Lodge compel any member of the craft to adhere to the usages and customs, laws and landmarks of the Institution when itself as a corporate body, has been guilty of such a flagrant violation of them?—*Australasian Keystone.*

So the Masonic ritual—the ritual, too, spelled with a big R—"has been printed in handy form, with a flap cover, and will thus be found most convenient." Yes, "most convenient" for men without minds, or memories, or apprehension of the dignity or secrecy of Freemasonry. We are