

## MASONIC COURTESY!

If there be anything for which Freemasonry should be pre-eminently distinguished in the conduct of its professors, it is a spirit of courtesy. All the obligations of the master mason teach, as their leading precept, the spirit of kindness and brotherly regard. Differences of opinion they do not pretend to prevent. In the very nature of things these must exist among Freemasons as among other men. Beyond an unquestioning submission to the authority of the antient landmarks, the utmost freedom of opinion and of expression alike are accorded to every brother. But one restraint exists or should exist, and that is a restraint begotten of the very principles of the order. The brother is expected, nay more, is enjoined by the most solemn pledges to keep ever before him the five points of fellowship, in any discussion, involving difference of opinion, upon which he may find it necessary to enter. To differ from a brother is not necessarily to become estranged from him, nor to induce others to become so. His personal character should still be as sacred, as if no difference had occurred. Masonic dissensions in this respect, should present a strong contrast to ordinary political disputes, concerning which it is unfortunately too true that they partake more of the nature of personal quarrels, than of public differences in relation to the well-being of the country.

It is to be regretted that the distinguishing traits of masonic debates do not on all occasions characterise them. Freemasonry is often scandalized and the profane amazed, by the tone in which masons too often speak of each other where differences of opinion prevail. Instead of a calm and temperate consideration of the points in dispute, we have in a great many instances, nothing but the bitterest vituperation. The character of the brother Mason instead of being guarded with the fidelity due to a sacred and solemn obligation, is sought by every species of inuendo, and by every epithet of abuse to be degraded not simply in the estimation of the fraternity, but in that too of the profane. Obligations, the most solemn that man can voluntarily take, are laid aside, in the effort to destroy the brothers standing and character; and the world is constrained, in spite of our glorious motto, "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth," to exclaim, "see how these pretentious freemasons hate one another!"

The unhappy differences which have occurred in this jurisdiction, unfortunately have given some painful illustrations of this tendency on the part of Freemasons to forget, in the moment of difference, what is due to the masonic character. That portion of our Québec brethren which has unadvisedly seceded from the mother Grand Lodge of Canada, has been especially unfortunate in having the championship of men, to whom masonic character is as nothing, and whose highest delight appears to be the unthinking use of the weapon of vituperation. Were