

tation tax to Convent General, which in Canada had always been looked upon as a very unnecessary one to impose upon us; but, it is to be feared the result of the compromise will be to establish three separate systems, which in time will become more and more dissimilar, and thus defeat the object of the Union.

The root of the failure lay in the Convent General. To assemble a Convent General annually anywhere, was unnecessary, and the idea, however specious, of meeting in London and Dublin alternately, ended in a collapse of the whole system. The meetings of Convent General should never have been fixed at all, but summoned when required by the Grand Master; and I am happy to say that this has now been decided upon.

Our representative at the Great Priory of England, V. E. ; Frater Emra Holmes, informs me officially that he has ascertained that the meetings for the future, of Convent General, rest upon the *ipse dixit* of our Royal Grand Master alone.

To my mind there cannot be a doubt that the revised system, by reverting to first principles, is calculated to raise the status and dignity of the Templar Order in the British Dominions, as correctly representing the once celebrated Chivalric Order from which it derived its name; whilst the attempts to continue it as a mere fanciful degree of Masonic invention, is preposterous, having neither historical facts nor truth to recommend it.

The lack of interest shown in the history of the Order, is principally the cause of the ignorance that prevails, so few Brethren will take the trouble to read and study the subject, taking things just as they found them, and thinking nothing more about the matter.

THE DIRECT DESCENT THEORY.

My views with respect to the origin of the Templar Order and its connection with Freemasonry, have been considerably modified; however, it is the privilege of everyone to change his views as new sources of information are brought to his knowledge. I cannot agree with the learned author of a "Concise History of the Templar Order," who does not think the Ancient Order ever

found any shelter in the Masonic body, he holds that Masonry as a speculative matter did not exist until the time of Elias Ashmole, at the commencement of the last century.

There is very little doubt that during the early days of the Templar Order, when in the zenith of their power and wealth, a connection *did* exist between the two bodies. Those warrior Monks, when assisting at the erection of the magnificent Churches and Cathedrals that still remain, and constructing their houses and Preceptories, employed the Fraternity of Freemasons skilled in Ecclesiastical architecture, not the mere builders of walls or stone masons, but the scientific leaders of the Craft, many of whom were of high rank and great learning, and whose chief patrons were the order of Benedictine Monks, who had also drawn up the Rule for the Templars, this affinity between them probably tended to promote a feeling of sympathy at the time of the persecution of the Templar Order, when its members denounced and dispersed sought refuge and concealment amongst those they had at one time employed in their service. Although the rules of the Order required the Knights to be of noble birth, men of all professions and ranks of society were to be found, who had allied themselves to the Order, either by affiliation, or by joining the class of "Freres Servientes," such as the Squires, Mer-at-Arms, Artisans, &c., &c., to whom in common with the Knights, the confiscation of the property of the Order had brought utter ruin and desolation.

The Masonic Fraternity, no doubt, were glad and proud to assist men who had belonged to an Order so famous as the Templars, and who were still capable and anxious to render themselves useful to the secret Fraternity of Builders, whose intercourse (from their wandering life) with people of various nations, views, and beliefs, disposed them to offer shelter to a body of men persecuted for the more liberal opinions they had entertained in advance of the age.

By this connection of the Templars with the skilled architects and workmen of the Masonic Fraternity, who were patronized and constantly employed in the architectural