

In 1766 the number had again risen, namely, to 357, or an addition of 100 lodges in six years. In the first year of this century, the number returned by Grand Lodge amounts to 581, or an increase of 224 lodges in thirty-four years.

This, though a considerable increase, no doubt, is not very striking in itself, and we might fairly have expected a larger increase, did we not remember, that for the greater portion of the above period, the "Achol Masons," as they were called, had a Grand Lodge of their own, and their lodges are not included in this enumeration; while the old York Grand Lodge was also still in existence, though it had at the close of the last century practically succumbed to the preponderating influence of its more prosperous southern rival.

In 1815, the first record after the Union gives the number of lodges on the roll of the Grand Lodge as 655, and this number seems only on the whole slowly to have increased until the year 1843, in which year our Order lost its lamented Grand Master, H. R. H. the Duke of Sussex, when the roll of lodges had risen to 721. Thus during the earlier portion of this century, and the space of nearly thirty years, the increase of lodges had been only 66.

At the installation of Lord Zetland in 1844, the lodges holding warrants from our Grand Lodge and acknowledging its supreme authority, were 733 in number, while at the close of the year 1870, when he resigned the high post he had so long and so admirably filled, our English lodges had risen in number to 1,344.

This is an increase of 623 lodges in twenty-six years, or an annual increase of twenty-four lodges in round numbers. As we know at the close of 1871, our Annual Calender exhibited the names of 1,372 lodges, and at the close of 1872 the number had still further risen to 1,417, there seems moreover to be little doubt but that our Order is still on the increase, and that succeeding years will witness the addition of fresh names and fresh numbers to our Masonic Calender.

These figures though simple enough in themselves, are full of very interesting consideration for all English Freemasons. In the first place, they clearly mark the steady, continuous, and, let us hope, permanent progress of our Order; and they also show us this, how under good government and wise regulations the Craft has flourished in a most remarkable degree. We should not be doing justice to our own feelings, or to those we know of many English Freemasons, if we did not take the opportunity of reiterating the opinion we have before publicly expressed, how much our Order in this country owes to the wise government and benignant "regime" of Lord Zetland. Though he was more than once attacked, and very unjustly, during his Grand Mastership of twenty-six eventful years, he ever followed that wisest of all courses, he took no notice whatever of the idle cavil or the frivolous complaint, least of all did he ever condescend to answer the anonymous comment or the personal imputation. His government was unfailingly marked by strict and constitutional adherence to the great Masonic principles of order and law, of impartiality and fairness, of consistent firmness while yet of considerate toleration. He might fairly at the close of his Grand Mastership, say, as an older Grand Master of ours said "*Si monumentum quaeris circumspice*;" if you wish to learn what my rule has been, you have only to view the Order nearly doubled numerically during my presidency, and displaying in numberless ways, and on every occasion, unmistakable proofs not only of its unflinching