

## PROGRESS OF GRAND LODGE IN 1885.

Now that the Grand Lodge and the "Cosmo" Masonic Calendars are issued for 1886, we have before us the latest figures and details respecting the progress and present condition of the Grand Lodge of England. Taking the Grand Lodge Calendar for our guide (as it was issued later than the "Cosmo," and therefore contains a few more lodges), we find that the last warranted lodge bears the number 2129; which means an increase of 58 lodges as compared with the edition for 1885; each issue having to do with the year immediately preceding that for which it is published.

During the last ten years of Calendars, say 1877 to 1886 inclusive, it will be noted that there has been an increase of 481, 1877 having 1648 and 1886 no less than 2129 lodges; the largest increase being for 1878 (really 1877), when 77 were added to the roll. The average during the decade has been 55 new lodges per annum.

Since the period of December 27th, 1813 (termed by Bro. Hughan the "Blessed Union"), there have been 2059 lodges chartered, making with those then in existence a grand total of 2707. The rate of increase *per year* has been some 12 lodges from 1814 to 1833, exactly 22 lodges from 1833 to 1863, but from 1834 to 1885 it has exceeded 52 per annum. During this period there have been many erasures, arising out of financial and other reasons, especially the formation of new Grand Lodges; but notwithstanding these heavy reductions, there are still on the roll the very large number of 1951 active lodges "scattered over the four quarters of the globe."

There are now 43 Provincial and 28 District Grand Lodges, besides many groups of lodges, greater in number than some Grand Lodges, which are not dignified by any such titles. Some are very large, and muster on their rolls several thousands of members, *e.g.*, East Lancashire with 95, West Lancashire with 84, West Yorkshire with 69, Kent with 53, and Devon with 50 lodges, and then again districts such as Victoria with 85, New South Wales with 66 (*an advance of eight lodges each*, since the issue of the former Calendar), and the East Indies, with its 109 lodges, divided into five District Grand Lodges. These districts begin with Gibraltar, Malta, Turkey and Egypt, and having particularized the numerous offspring we have in the East Indies; the Eastern Archipelago, China, Borneo, and Japan are duly chronicled. Then Africa seeks our attention, and certainly makes an excellent show with its three District Grand Lodges (Western, Eastern and Natal), and 16 lodges not under any district, numbering a total of 59 lodges dotted round the coast, in evidence of the "Mystic tie," which connects that great Continent with "dear old England."

Passing these by with a friendly word, we come to the West Indies and Central America, including Jamaica with its ten lodges (No. 573 being omitted for 1886) and various Isles of the Sea, in which Masonry flourishes as the "green bay tree." North America is represented by Montreal and Newfoundland District Grand Lodges, and one lodge at Halifax unattached. In South America there is one District Grand Lodge, and some seven lodges scattered over various parts—Demerara, Montevideo, Valparaiso, &c. Then Australia and New Zealand enter the field with their 20 lodges, notwithstanding that South Australia has "swarmed," and is now independent, happy, and prosperous. "Last scene of all," No. 103, Fiji, concludes the extraordinary Masonic panorama being looked at.

Grand Lodges over which H.R.H. the Prince of Wales has the honour and pleasure of ruling as our beloved and esteemed Most Worshipful Grand Master.

In Royal Arch Masonry, gratifying progress has likewise been made, and the rate of increase suggests that the "root, heart and marrow" of freemasonry is at length receiving the support it deserves. Much of this increase of interest in the Degree is due to the labours of the Grand Scribe E., who never loses an opportunity to utilize his welcome services and abilities at special assemblies of chapters, whether it be convocations for centenary celebrations or other important meetings.

There are on the roll at the present time the large number of 682 chapters, being distributed as follows: Provinces and Channel Isles, 418; military, 3; Colonies, 127; and London, 134 chapters. East and West Lancashire head the list with 37 chapters each, followed closely by Yorkshire with 26, and then Devon chimes in with 27, Cheshire and Hants and Isle of Wight having 20 each. Kent is fifth, as respects numbers, with 18, being exceeded by Devon, Cheshire, and Hants, though they have fewer lodges. North and East Yorkshire have 15; Cornwall, 14; Durham, 13; Middlesex and Surrey, 11; Cumberland (with Westmorland), Somerset, Staffordshire, Sussex, and Warwick, 9 (*each*); Northumberland, 8; Berks (with Bucks), Derby, Dorset, Lincoln, Norfolk, and Suffolk, 6 (*each*); Leicester, Monmouth, Nottingham, North Wales (with Shropshire), and Wilts, 5 (*each*), and the numbers then lessen from four down to one (Herefordshire).

Bro. Hughan tells us in his "Origin of the English Rite of Freemasonry" that "in 1813 the proportion of lodges to chapters in London was seven to one; but in 1884 it is five to two." This proves the immense strides Royal Arch Masonry has made of late years, and we hope yet to see the day when all healthy, vigorous lodges have chapters attached to them throughout England especially, so that what has been termed the "English Rite" may be fully worked and appreciated in the country of its origin.

The "English Rite," as it is termed, or the "York Rite," in error, by some, is peculiar to this country, and is due to the union of the two rival Grand Lodges in 1813, being brought about on the condition that the Royal Arch Degree was recognised. From December, 1813, Royal Arch Masonry has been an integral part of the Craft, the completion of the Third Degree, and the consummation of the ceremonies adopted by the United Grand Lodge of England.

Although it is not, strictly speaking, a *Degree* as now worked or acknowledged, it actually is one to all intents and purposes, and, in our opinion, when conferred as the completion of, and in connection with the Master Masons' Degree, has no equal, as a ceremony, amongst all the numerous Masonic Degrees which claim the attention and support of the Craft.

Though the chapters are not yet as numerous as we should like to see them in this country, still the progress made of late years has been most gratifying, and at the present time there are considerably over 500 active chapters working in England, side by side with upwards of 1400 lodges.

W.P.H.