

THE Masonic Observer.

[II.]

DECEMBER, 1856.

[2s. PER ANNUM.]

Grand Lodge of Emergency summoned for the 19th of this month, in consequence of the alleged illegality of the adjourned G. L., held on the 1st of October, was convened by the M. W. the G. M. in person, who was supported by a great number of past and present Grand Masters. The blue aprons mustered, likewise, in strong numbers, and there was a considerable gathering of Brethren from the Provinces.

The M. W. the G. M. having stated the reasons which induced him to overrule the decision of the last two G. L.'s, and to declare that the power of adjournment did not exist in G. L., called upon Col. Burlton, M. W. the G. M. for Bengal, to move the adoption of the Report of the Colonial Committee.

It was proposed that this could be done, the Past Deputy Prov. G. M. of the Province of Wight, claimed for G. L. as the supreme governing body of the craft, the right to decide on its own behalf.

The M. W. the G. M. however, refused to put the question. Col. Burlton then proceeded, protesting, first of all, against the M. W. the G. M. being conceived to be an unconstitutional exercise of power on the part of the G. M., and being threatened with removal from G. L.

The M. W. the G. M. of the Enoch Lodge, No. 11, proposed as an amendment to the Report, that the question had already been discussed in October. This likewise, the G. M. refused to put.

The Prov. S. G. W. for Oxford next moved, that the Grand Lodge should refuse to discuss any question so long as it was referred to the Grand Lodge on its own privilege and authority, which should be decided by the Grand Lodge and its predecessors.

The M. W. the G. M. expressed his opinion—except what was favourable to the views of the M. W. the G. M.—having been prohibited on the vital principle of the craft, the M. W. the G. M. was then permitted to read the Report passed in October, after a last, spirited speech by Lord Carnarvon.

The Dais opposed the two Resolutions as being the most beneficial—the appointment of a Colonial Committee for the Provinces of General Purposes,—and the circulation of the Report of the Provinces of the business to be brought forward at the next G. L. They did not, however, venture to divide on the question—Whether the Annuity Fund should be put on the same footing with the other two Funds as regards the Charity Jewel. The Dais clustered round the M. W. the G. M.—true to their instincts—and were out-voted by the blue aprons—true to theirs.

THE independence of G. L. is, for the present, in a state of abeyance; and after the strange scene which was lately enacted there, we cannot owe to our own surprise. Logic has but a poor chance against an authority which condescends to no argument, and which is backed by an unbounded pliability. The Book of Constitutions never contemplated the contingency of a suppression of all discussion. We cannot compliment the official speakers on their logic or their tact—their ingenuity either in proving the illegality of the October meeting, or in settling, under plausible language, the arbitrary nature of the Grand Master's act, in annulling the decisions of two Grand Lodges, and of two acting Grand Masters. In the first case, they gravely urged that, because there were only four quarterly communications, therefore a G. L. if adjourned at all, could only be adjourned to one of those four days in the year—forgetting that, independently of the self-evident absurdity inherent in this proposition, it proved any thing, it proved too much, and would be equally with the G. M. from adjourning a meeting. In the latter instance, they were hardly prudent in their open confession of faith in the G. M. as a SOVEREIGN LORD, an INDEPENDENT MONARCH, an UNCONTROLLABLE RULER. Grand Lodge is undeniably a patient assemblage; but what with an absolute refusal on the part of the M. G. to put any motion distasteful or dangerous to himself—what with a Dais (with some honourable exceptions) inseparably banded together—what with antique masons, who, after long absence from our deliberations, had been disinterred for the occasion—what with some thick-and-thin partisans, scattered through the body of the Lodge, adepts in cheering their friends, and hooting down their opponents, the generality of the Brethren ignorant of their real superiority in numbers, were much in the position of our respected countryman in the poem:

"John Bull, bewildered by the scene,
Stares, wondering what the d—l it can mean:
But as some hands applaud—a vena few—
Rather than sleep, why John applauds it too."

On the side of the Dais was might—we cannot flatter them by adding right—on the side of that great Constitutional Party which is fast growing into importance, was precedent, and the tenour, direct and indirect, of every law.

From the precedent of April, 1854, it is clear that the power of adjournment exists. Wherein then does the adjournment of April, 1854, and that of October, 1856, differ?