

1931/13.1.19

43, Charlton Road,
Manchester, Aug 3/69.

My Dear Mr. Wether.

I am obliged by your letter. The difference to which I chiefly alluded as existing between the Prussian & English Comites in the latter having no Esquires - the Rites of Justice being elected from the Rites of Grace or of Honor - which I hold is far the better course - the proper one. I should fancy that Dr. Burnes introduced the English form from the Grand-du Simple Masonic Order, but what is applicable in the case of one is inapplicable in the other. The old order (early 14th Cent) had no such custom as that now existing in the English. I see the fees of Esquires are deducted from those of Rites of Grace, but if any one becomes an Esquire for the Rite of Honor of Grace, the is not promoted the fees are retained, of course they go to a good cause no one would object, but this is scarcely the way to look at it.

Will you to admit Knights of Grace to
the Knighthood of Justice for merit; I take
it that in that case you have no need
whatever for the former. Your information
that most of the Knights of Grace & Esquires
are eligible for promotion, only increases
my difficulty of judging what the Constitution
of the Order is, Nine people out of Ten
would I should think infer from the facts
that the K. of Grace were ineligible on the
score of pedigree for Justice, & the Esquires
even for Grace - This is what I have
always inferred. Feudal Germany
seems to have a more liberal constitution
than 'the nation of Shopkeepers'. I do not
gather from your favor why, those who
are eligible for promotion have not been ^{promoted}.
Does it depend on the individual Caprice of some
officer of the Order; or on the push or
petition of the Member himself.

A man may have better pedigree for his Son, than I

The rule laid down for the Knightlord of Justice
seems an unfair one, & yet it is very small
proofs that are required extending only over two
generations. My family have been Conservatives for
generations, therefore you will see when I say ^{as I know} that
that I write entirely from Conviction, — The whole
tone of Society is opposed to exclusionary & aristocratic
institutions, & the Royal family would never
dare to place themselves at the head of an
order like that of St. John, even under Modified
Management they would only venture to
connect themselves with it when it had become
a very powerful association, which I doubt
the possibility of its becoming. The fact is
that you occasionally find a more Chivalric
feeling in the descendant of a pauper than
that of a Peer, it is a phase of mind for
which education only very partially accounts.
It seems to me, however, that if we are to have
the old order, a person eligible for Justice

ought not to be allowed to become a Serjeant
-brother or Esquire, but should at once take
his proper position. If it is decided that Mind
shall not rank with Pedigree or dust & ashes
You seem then to require the degree of Grace, &
a meretricious Esquire or a clown person might
be admitted. If you admit a man a
Knight of the Order, what right has he would
to be informed whether he is a Knight of Justice,
with a pedigree, or of Grace without. Only
two Knights might nominate a Knight
Hodge his predecessor, & give the Chapter General
the power ^{of accepting} ^{him a} ^{man} of accepting or dispensing with his
franchise. Any one Knight might appoint an
Esquire, Donat, or Chaplain without pedigree,
Even these might on occasions of merit be
promoted to Equestrian rank.

I merely write you these by way of discussing
the merits of the present Constitution - I may be wrong,
but I have the feeling that it is scarcely calculated
even to make the association a great & enduring
Confederacy in England in its present form. They
at the same time wish you every success.
and remain Truly Yours
Wm. Pitt Rivers