

Original by Air Mail.
Duplicate with photos &c by surface mail.

"Assaroe",
Vacoas,
Mauritius.

23rd September, 1946.

W. Bro. G. H. Biscoe,
Secretary, Library & Museum Committee,
Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire,
Lower Nick,
Near Worcester.

Dear Brother Biscoe,

Thank you very much for your letter of 9th June which reached me on 1st August, and also for the copy of "A Catalogue of Masonic Medals in the Museum of the Province of Worcestershire" which arrived safely and in excellent condition on 16th instant.

I am deeply grateful to you for your kindness in making me a present of this extremely handsome volume - I am unable to express my gratitude to you in adequate manner. Here again, if ever one was in doubt, is tangible proof of the strength of one of the finest tenets of Freemasonry - the bond of friendship - which, alas, is becoming sadly rare in our ordinary everyday life outside the Craft. Thank you so very much indeed.

You will note from the dates which I have given above that the delay in the transit of surface mails between the Mother country and this Colony is somewhat abnormal; my original letter to you seems to have taken a month to reach you, while yours took almost two months, and the book over three months, to arrive here. And yet the other day I had an air letter from London eight days old. I suppose it is a sign of the somewhat chaotic times in which we live.

In 1930 I started a small collection of Masonic medals in my Lodge here - the Lodge of Friendship No 1696 - but my activities were short-lived, and I exchanged the trowel for the sword in 1939. Having obtained my release from the Army towards the end of last year, I have been amusing myself anew with our tiny "museum".

I am interested to note that in your Provincial Grand Lodge Museum you have a specimen of a medal which was issued in Paris in 1858 to commemorate a service held there for the souls of a number of Mauritian Roman Catholic Freemasons who died in Mauritius but at whose funeral Christian prayers were refused by the local R.C. Bishop because they were Freemasons. I refer to your exhibit No. 265.

May I be permitted to suggest that the description, as given in your catalogue, of this medal, if it is the same medal as

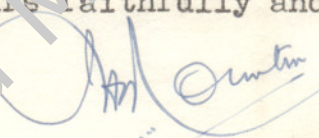
I beleive it to be, a specimen of which we also have in our museum, is somewhat misleading. When I first read your catalogue I was led to beleive that the Triple Esperance Lodge is in Paris, and that the Bishop of Paris had refused Christian burial to Freemasons in Paris.

I am taking the liberty of sending you, by sea mail, photographs of the obverse and reverse of our medal, together with a translation, from which you will see that, though the medal was struck and issued in Paris, and the service for the souls of the dead Freemasons was held in Notre Dame de Paris, they were Mauritian, members of the Triple Esperance and La Paix Lodges in Port Louis here, who died here, and it was the Bishop of Port Louis who had refused them Christian burial.

Please do not think that I am "looking a gift horse in the mouth" - far from it, and I shall treasure this volume among my most precious possessions. But I realise that you, as a Freemason, must be a perpetual seeker of the truth, and as I am in a position to supply you with accurate details of an event which occurred in this country, but which is somewhat ambiguously described in your catalogue, I felt that you might be interested in hearing the full story. I do hope that you will accept the photographs and translation in this spirit.

With renewed thanks for your kindness, and with kind regards,

Yours faithfully and fraternally,



(F. R. G. Rountree)

Enclosures (Sea mail copy only)

BRONZE MASONIC MEDALLION

Grand Orient de France, Loge de la Triple Esperance, Port Louis,
Mauritius, 1858.

Probably the property of the late W. Bro. Edward Edgard Mayer (b. 1814),
30° (Grand Orient of France).

Presented to the late W. Bro. H. G. Hitchcock, O. G. R., by Mr.
Stafford Mayer, son of the probable original owner, and on W. Bro.
Hitchcock's death, by his daughter, Mrs. P. Bacon, to the Lodge of
Friendship, No. 1696, Phoenix, Mauritius.

Description:

Size: Diameter 2 inches.
Thickness 3/16th-inch.

Very beautifully embossed medallion as shown in enlarged photographs
attached.

Translations of the French inscriptions follow.

Inscriptions (Translations):

Obverse: Outer ring - "Grand Orient of France - Triple Esperance
(Three Virtues) - Faith, Hope, Charity"
Inside the Outer Ring - "Glory to God" "His Highness
Prince L. Murat, Grand Master of the Orient"
Initials within the Irradiated Triangle (left) - "GOF"
(Grand Orient of France).
Initials within the three interlaced triangles (right)
- "ITE" (La Triple Esperance)

Reverse: "To the glory of HIM the Great Architect of the Universe
by the Initiative and Devotion of W. Bro. Describes
(Jean Antoine Martial Aime), Treasurer of the Senate in
Paris, Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, 32°, Delegate
of the four Lodges of La Triple Esperance, Orient of Port
Louis, Mauritius, inspired by the sentiments of the
Brethren of these four Lodges met together in open Lodge,
a solemn service was celebrated at Notre Dame de Paris,
on 20th July, 1858 A.D. with the approbation of His Grace
Cardinal Morlet, Archbishop of Paris, for the repose of
the souls of W. Bros. Lechelle (Louis Marie Jean Baptiste),
Cheneaux (Gustave), Diverger (Louis), Penard (Julius Pierre),
and Chipault Berichon (Rene Gabriel) of La Triple Esperance
Lodges, and Lafontan and Cesari of De Paix (Peace) Lodge,
Orient of Mauritius, who died at Port Louis and for whom
the Roman Catholic Bishop of that Orient refused prayers
at their funerals on account of their being Freemasons. LET"
(The initials at the end are as yet unknown).

The Masonic Rooms,
Phoenix, Mauritius.
20th July, 1946.