



MASONIC PROCESSION AT BOLTON.—CHURCHGATE.—(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

GRAND MASONIC FESTIVAL IN LANCASHIRE.

THE election of the Right Hon. the Earl of Ellesmere, (late Lord Francis Egerton), to fill the important office of Grand Master of the Freemasons of the Eastern Division of Lancashire, was celebrated with great ceremony at Bolton, on the 9th inst. From an early hour, the town was crowded with visitors from all parts of Lancashire, and adjoining counties. The Temperance Hall, Little Bolton, was fitted up for the occasion, and an organ placed in the gallery, at which Mr. George Pitt, of Manchester, presided. Notwithstanding the rain, which fell heavily during the morning, the members of the fraternity continued to arrive; and, when the business commenced, there were nearly 500 present.

At twelve o'clock, Stephen Blair, Esq., D.P.G.M., opened the Provincial Grand Lodge in due form, and an appropriate prayer was offered up by the Rev. Gilmour Robinson, P.G.C. for the Western Division of Lancashire.

The Deputy Grand Master then stated that the Earl of Ellesmere, the Provincial Grand Master of the Province, had been prevented from attending the meeting as early as was expected, in consequence of the consecration of the new Church at Worsley, by the Lord Bishop of the Diocese.

The usual annual business of the province having been transacted, intimation was given of his Lordship's arrival. His Lordship was installed with the customary pomp and ceremonies, the Right Worshipful Deputy Provincial Grand Master for West Lancashire, Brother John Drinkwater, taking the leading part in the business. The brethren having paid the usual homage, and the officers whom his Lordship had installed, having been similarly complimented, the Grand Lodge was duly and solemnly closed. The Craft Lodge was closed also, down to the first degree.

The business of the Lodge being thus concluded, the brethren proceeded to form in procession in front of the Temperance Hall. The weather, fortunately, had now cleared up, and the town presented a gay and animated appearance. The bells were ringing merrily, mingled with the roar of cannon firing a salute; flags were flying on various buildings in the town; and the streets were lined with thousands of spectators, from the Temperance Hall to the parish Church. Every window from which a glimpse could be had of the noble Provincial Grand Master, and the fraternity in general, was densely crowded, chiefly by Lancashire Witches, whose beaming countenances seemed to say that such a body of men could not be associated for any other purpose than a laudable one. At the Star Inn, Churchgate, a line of banners, of various descriptions, from the top of the Museum to the opposite side of the street, and in front of the house, were hung up, chained to their perches, a number of beautiful paroquets, cockatoos, &c., of different colours, which had a very novel appearance. The Engraving shows this extremely gay scene, from a clever sketch, by a Correspondent.

The procession having entered the parish Church, the brethren occupied the body of the edifice, the galleries being left for the accommodation of the public. The evening service was read by the Rev. John Sheffield, of Rochdale. The Rev. Gilmour Robinson, P.G.C.W.L., preached a very excellent and appropriate sermon from the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, 1st chap. and 22nd verse—*"Abstain from all appearance of evil."* After the sermon, a collection was made in aid of the funds of the Bolton Dispensary, amounting to the handsome sum of £30 3s.

At half-past five o'clock, the members of each Lodge formed in procession, and proceeded from the Temperance Hall to the Grand Banquet, provided in St. George's School, which was tastefully decorated, and had a very pretty appearance, the walls, drapery, &c., being adorned with Masonic banners, emblems, &c. The banquet was provided by Mr. Ward, of the Swan Hotel, and both the provision and the wines were excellent. The number who sat down was about 300. The Provincial Grand Master, the Earl of Ellesmere, took the chair.

We regret that we have not space to report the entire proceedings. After the customary loyal toasts, the health of the Provincial Grand Master was proposed by the Rev. Gilmour Robinson; and his Lordship, in returning thanks, thus gracefully referred to his recent elevation to the Peerage. "Allusion had been made, by the reverend gentleman who proposed the toast, to the novel name which he would henceforth have to bear—viz., Ellesmere. [The company here rose and cheered most enthusiastically.] He named the circumstance, not with a vain pride of his elevation—not with any feeling of triumph—but as a matter suggestive of deeper and more honourable reflection. He alluded to it on account of the name with which he had now parted; and he could assure them, that, deeply as he estimated the condescension of the Crown, and greatly as his gratitude was called forth by that gracious condescension, he could not part with his old name without a feeling of regret. (Cheers.) He brought it with him as a stranger into this county, and he could not but remember that it was associated with the connections which then commenced, and had continued to the present time. He alluded not to any political connection, but to those of a resident landlord, and to friendships established, which were far more endearing than any mere political connection could possibly be. (Applause.) With that name he had succeeded in establishing, in his own neighbourhood, a mutual feeling of goodwill, and that feeling towards himself he trusted he should not forfeit in parting with the name. (Continued applause.) The name he had now to adopt was one which had been dormant for centuries, and which, whilst it gave him a due sense of the honour conferred, would also impose upon him new duties, in the discharge of which he might hope to render himself more extensively useful to his fellow-countrymen. (Applause.) It was in this sense that he reconciled himself to the assumption of a new name. (Continued applause.)"

The Earl of Ellesmere, previously to retiring, proposed "The Ladies," assuring them that there was nothing in Masonry inconsistent with due submission to our wives. (Great laughter, in which the ladies heartily joined.) He meant, of course, that degree of submission which was expected, and which, he trusted, would ever be exacted, in all well-regulated families. (Continued laughter.) At the same time, he was bound to say that there were some secrets which Masons were bound not to disclose; and he would recommend all his brethren to allay the fears of their wives or sweethearts by convincing them, by their conduct, that, in their secrets, there was nothing to lessen in any degree that devotion and admiration of the sex which form the happiness and the ornament of our lives. (Cheers.)

The noble Chairman retired at nine o'clock; and, after several more Masonic toasts, songs, and glees, the Lodge was closed, and the proceedings terminated at half-past ten o'clock.—*Abridged from the Bolton Chronicle and the Preston Guardian.*