

The Crisis in Freemasonry*

By a Past Grand Master

THE conversation veered round to the subject of Freemasonry naturally enough. It was a perfect day for a final half round of golf; yet Ashford, plus 2, our captain, had gone up to town, excusing himself, with a certain brusque solemnity, on the ground that he had to attend Grand Lodge, of which he was, as books of reference attested, V.W.P. Pres. Brd. G. Pur.

"Must have cost him over a thousand, one way and another," remarked a long lean sallow man in the corner, who looked as if he had spent most of his life in the tropics.

"Oh, then you are a Mason?" chirped our favourite club Wit, a cross between a magpie and a monkey.

"Try me and prove me," murmured the dark man, without stirring.

"I'm the 28th degree myself."

"Shake hands."

The Wit was rather embarrassed, but did not quite see how to refuse. He complied, rather awkwardly.

The long man grimly smiled.

There was a curious tension among the crowd. We all felt as if we were present at some mysterious event, and as if the lean campaigner had us all at his mercy.

Thompson, the Secretary, threw himself (in the name of us all) frankly on that engaging quality.

The tall man took the bitten vulcanite of his briar from between his bicuspid.

"Our friend," he said slowly, "may belong to the 28th degree of the Ancient Order of Humbugs; but he isn't a Mason at all."

Johnstone rose to the occasion, and saved the situation by suggesting a general adjournment to the tee.

But I am convinced that I fozzled my approach to the

* The author of this article wishes to emphasise the fact that he regards his brother English Craft Freemasons as constituting the most high-minded and worthy class of men in the country, and their friendly and charitable activities as most useful and laudable. The opinions set forth are purely speculative considerations advanced in the interests of the Craft, which are seriously threatened by recent developments in Masonic movements, particularly outside England.