

THE CRISIS IN FREEMASONRY

in peril of instant and irrevocable expulsion on detection. So I said nothing, but walked to another room in Freemasons' Hall over his head, and took my seat as a Past Master in one of the oldest and most eminent Lodges in London!

Kindly note, furthermore, that when each of those wicked Visitors returned to their own Lodges after their crime, they automatically excommunicated the whole thereof; and as visiting is very common, it may well be doubted whether, on their own showing, there is a single "just, lawful, and regular Mason" left alive on the earth!

The above anecdote is exactly true in every detail, and shows one side—only one side—of the morass into which the narrow formalism of the authorities has plunged the Craft.

* * *

Now the Craft is the ABC of Masonry: it would be utterly impossible even to suggest the welter of the other degrees. In England, till a few years ago, a man like the Duke of C— did not dare to "recognise" or even to "tolerate"—

Himself!

He was the head of two divisions of Masonry which were not on speaking terms with each other.

Please do not request an excursion into the dreary realms of the higher degrees, which are, for the most part, more pontifically nonsensical than even the out-of-date and out-of-mind Craft Rituals, with their conflicting practices and vain formalities. Not one Mason—of any degree—in ten thousand has the slightest idea what the whole weary business is about.

Why then, in the name of King Solomon, should anyone become a Mason? What has that V.W.P. Pres. Brd. G. Pur. got for his thousands—to say nothing of the time he has devoted to attending stupid banquets, and learning by heart the interminable outpourings of—oh yes! of whom?

The answer to this two-headed question is really simple enough.

We ought to cross off the pettier human motives first: