

SECRET SOCIETIES.

John Jones Desires to Be Further Heard in Defense of Colored Masons and Prince Hall Masonry.

Session of the State Board of Overseers at Champaign---Lodge of Perfection Election.

List of New Encampments of Odd Fellows in Illinois---Visit of the Grand Patriarch to Chicago.

Death of Two Distinguished Members of the Order---Pennsylvania's Preparations for the Grand Lodge Gathering.

MASONIC.

DEFENSE OF COLORED MASONS.

In a former issue of THE TRIBUNE the Hon. John Jones gave a partial history of the origin of colored Lodges in this country which he now supplements by a second letter on the same side of the same subject. It is proper to state that if any gentleman of the craft desires to offer any objection to what has been said in either letter he will be given the same hearing that has been accorded the colored delegate. Following is Mr. Jones' second letter:

To the Editor of The Chicago Tribune:

CHICAGO, Feb. 4.—Thanking you for the use of your columns to defend colored Masons, I would like, with your permission, to furnish a few more facts to show that colored Lodges in America are not clandestine. As I intimated in my first letter, it has been the aim and object of the white branch of the Masonic fraternity to decry, underrate, and invalidate our existence as Masons in this country through their periodicals, by Grand Masters' reports, and resolutions passed in their Grand Lodges. All their proceedings against us have been ex parte, without a "due trial, strict examination, or lawful information." Indeed, so great is their prejudice that they will not allow us to utter a word in their Grand Lodges or publish a line in one of their papers in our defense. This, we think, is very unkind. No other association in the world, having for its object the elevation of its members, and mankind generally, have ever treated any branch of the human family as we have been treated. Take the Christian Church: have not the Methodists at all times and under all circumstances fostered the colored branch of their Church? The answer must be in the affirmative. This is also true of all other Christian denominations.

All we ask of white Masons, their journals, Grand Masters' reports, or Grand Lodge resolutions, is to give us a standing upon our legitimacy and legality in this country and cease the stereotyped cry of Clandestine! Clandestine!! Clandestine!!! Bogus! Bogus!! We have been under the Masonic law for fifty years and defied all means of defense. Now that THE TRIBUNE has given us an opportunity, I mean to examine the question thoroughly and impartially.

The first colored man who was made a Mason in this country was Prince Hall in the Colony of Massachusetts in 1775. He was made in a military Lodge under the protection of Gen. Gage. These military Lodges (for there were several) were in the habit of making Masons under dispensation. The English Lodges made Masons of several other colored men at different times, and among them were Thomas Saunders and Boston Smith. These, in company with several others, in 1776, at the very time when Washington defurred for the first time the Union flag over the camp at Cambridge, organized and opened under a dispensation granted by this British traveling Lodge the first Lodge of Masons composed of colored men in America. Not content, however, with the limited powers of the dispensation he had received, ambitious to have his Lodge enjoy as full rights and powers as other Masonic bodies in the country, and as the welfare of the craft, its expansion and its perpetuity were his constant care, and things upon which he lavished every energy, he, with his associates, petitioned the Grand Lodge of England for a charter in 1782. His reason for this course was that there existed at that time two Grand Lodges in Massachusetts, viz: "Grand Lodge of Massachusetts" and "Provincial Grand Lodge," neither one recognizing the other. In his letter to Brother Moody at London, whom he empowered to present his petition, he states that he had been importuned to send to France for a warrant, but he says, "We thought it best to send to the fountain whence we received our first light for a warrant, who, we hope, will not deny us, nor treat us as beneath the rest of our fellow-men though poor yet sincere brethren of the craft." Although our charter, No. 459, was granted in London Sept. 17, 1784, we did not receive it until April 29, 1787, through the neglect of Brother Gregory, who did not take it from the office of the Grand Secretary, where it remained over two years.

Prince Hall was informed of the action of the Grand Lodge of England on his petition by a letter dated June 21, 1785, through the kindness of Capt. Washington, in which Brother Moody says: "In accordance with your petition, I have obtained the Constitution from the Grand Lodge, and from time to time have solicited Brother Gregory, your representative, to take it from the Grand Secretary, but he has failed to do so." To which Prince Hall replied acknowledging the receipt of the above letter and expressing his gratitude in the following:

BOSTON, MASS., Aug. 12, 1785.—Bro. William Moody—RIGHT WORSHIPFUL SIR. I received yours of the 21st of June, through the politeness of Capt. Washington, in which you inform me that you have gotten the Constitution from the Grand Lodge of England, in accordance with my letter in behalf of the African Lodge, for which kindness receive our gratitude.

By Capt. Scott I forward you an order, and you will oblige me by transmitting the document through him. Wishing prosperity to you and the Lodge, I am your affectionate Brother,

PRINCE HALL.

In order to show the readers of THE TRIBUNE the estimation in which Prince Hall was held, I will close this letter by making a few extracts from a letter from William White, then Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of England, to him:

Right Worshipful Brother: I have the pleasure of sending inclosed the printed proceedings of the Grand Lodge, by which you will perceive the flourishing state of our Society, and in account of Nov. 24, 1781, you will find accredited your donation to the charity fund, £10, sent by Capt. Scott, and that of the 18th of April last your donation of 1 guinea. . . . When you next write to me I should be obliged to you if you would let me know if the lodges in the inclosed list, which were constituted by the Grand Lodge of England, are yet in being, as we have never heard from them since the commencement of the late war in America, or, indeed, long before; and in case they have ceased to exist, which I rather apprehend, they ought to be erased from our list of lodges. I am much obliged for the account you gave respecting your own Lodge, &c. . . . I remain with fraternal regards, . . . Your obedient servant and brother,

WILLIAM WHITE.

The Lodges referred to in the list were Lodge No. 2 in Boston, constituted Feb. 15, 1749; New Haven Lodge in Connecticut, constituted in Nov., 1759; Providence Lodge in Rhode Island Government, constituted Jan. 18, 1757; Marblehead Lodge in Massachusetts, constituted March 25, 1760. These were white Lodges, and they had failed to do what they accuse us of not having done. I am rather of the opinion that it depends altogether on whose "ox is being gored." In another communication I will furnish extracts from Prince Hall's answer to the above letter, and other communications between him and the Grand Secretary and also a copy of the warrant issued to him.

JOHN JONES.