

### *XVIII. In Morocco*

**A**T the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge held in the month of February, 1881, a matter of peculiar interest first finds attention at the hands of the brethren of this jurisdiction.

Shortly before the date of the Annual Communication, the Most Worshipful Grand Master (J. Headley Bell), had received a petition signed by a number of brethren praying to receive a dispensation to open and meet as a Regular Lodge at Gibraltar. Provision was further requested that the place of meeting should be ultimately removed to "some city in Morocco." The petition was accompanied by a letter from Right Worshipful Brother Robert Stewart Patterson, who had been the first Worshipful Master of Prince Rupert's Lodge, and who in this instance was the prime mover in the scheme.

The Grand Master considered the matter of too great importance to determine by himself, and, as the Annual Communication was near at hand, the matter was left in abeyance until that time, in order that Grand Lodge might make a decision in respect of the request. The Board of General Purposes expressed their

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feeling of gratification at the request of Worshipful Brother Patterson, and recommended that such a dispensation, and upon the terms submitted, be granted. It seems strange that no further reference was made in connection with the matter during the business session of Grand Lodge in 1881. In the month of July of that year, however, Grand Lodge met in Portage la Prairie to lay the foundation stone of a new building. The Board of General Purposes made a special report at this communication recommending the granting of a charter to "Al Moghreb al Aska Lodge," to be numbered 16 on the Grand Register of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. This motion was carried, and the charter subsequently issued.

A few days after the charter had been issued, the Most Worshipful Grand Master received a copy of the Quarterly Communication (May) of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, in which the following item appeared:

GIBRALTAR.—The Grand Lodge of Manitoba, Canada, had granted a Charter to a Lodge in Gibraltar, which had opened in May last. Holding this to be an encroachment on the rights of the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland, and Scotland, which exercise exclusive Masonic jurisdiction in that colony, the Committee have directed the Scotch Lodge at Gibraltar not to recognize the Lodge there, holding of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, and recommend to the Grand Lodge to co-operate with the Grand Lodges of England and Ireland in any resolution they may adopt in vindication of their rights.



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In August, 1881, the Grand Secretary of England addressed a communication to our Grand Master, reading:

I am commanded by the M.W. the Grand Master of England to address you on a subject which has come to His Royal Highness' knowledge, viz.—the establishment of a lodge in the British Colony of Gibraltar.

With reference to this action on the part of your Grand Lodge, I am directed to remind you that Gibraltar is a colony belonging to Great Britain and Ireland, and consequently under the exclusive joint jurisdiction of the three Grand Lodges of that Kingdom, namely those of England, Ireland and Scotland.

I am further directed to point out that the Grand Lodge of Manitoba was established entirely and solely to meet the Masonic wants of that colony, and certainly not with a view to founding Lodges in other colonies of the British Crown, a prerogative which has not been claimed by any of the British North American Grand Lodges, and which never could be considered by the Grand Lodge of England.

The M.W. the Grand Master of England further fails to see any good object to be attained by thus seeking to establish the Lodge in question, and which His Royal Highness has felt it is his painful duty to direct the English Lodges in Gibraltar not to recognize.

I am, therefore, commanded by the M.W. the Grand Master of England to protest against the recent action of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, and to express a hope that on consideration, you will view the matter in the same light, and will advise your Grand Lodge to withdraw its sanction and warrant from the body now needlessly disturbing the Masonic harmony of the English, Irish, and Scotch Lodges in Gibraltar.

SHADWELL H. CLARKE, Grand Secretary.

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The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba expressed surprise at the attitude taken by the Grand Lodges of the Mother country. In justification of his stand he mentioned a few instances which he considered parallel to the action of his own Grand Lodge. After some consideration, he caused a cable to be sent to Worshipful Brother Patterson, instructing him not to constitute the Lodge, nor yet install any officers in Al Moghreb al Aska Lodge. This information was communicated to the several Grand Lodges in Great Britain and Ireland.

The action of the Most Worshipful Grand Master was endorsed by the Board of General Purposes, and a recommendation included in their report to the effect that "the Worshipful Master of the said Lodge be instructed to hold the warrant in abeyance for six months, and if in that time the Lodge be not removed to Morocco, in accordance with the original intention when said warrant was issued, that it, with all the Lodge Books, Papers, etc., be returned without further delay to this Grand Lodge."

The Board expressed the opinion that they did not consider they had overstepped their authority or prerogative in establishing a new Lodge in what they termed unoccupied territory. This opinion is somewhat far-fetched. There is no doubt that Gibraltar was the place where the Lodge was to be *first* constituted,



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and the complaint of the older Grand Lodges was because of this fact, and they did have Masonic jurisdiction there. The name Morocco did not enter into the language of the complaint of the three Grand Lodges of the United Kingdom inferentially or otherwise.

Before the resolution of the Board of General Purposes could reach Worshipful Brother Patterson, he had constituted the new Lodge. He had also taken upon himself authority which he did not possess, and had convened what he was pleased to designate "an occasional" Grand Lodge, at which he constituted a Territorial Grand Lodge. He then conducted the ceremony of installing the officers of Al Moghreb al Aska Lodge at that meeting.

When this information reached Masonic headquarters in Manitoba, the action of Worshipful Brother Patterson was immediately challenged by our Grand Master. The unconstitutional (occasional) meeting of Grand Lodge was repudiated and termed "illegal." The upshot was that in July, 1882, an order was issued demanding the return of all documents including the warrant to the Lodge which had been improperly used. The Grand Master revoked and recalled the special commission which had been issued to Brother Patterson.

No communication advising the attitude and decision of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba was sent to the Worshipful Master nor to any other officer of Al Moghreb

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al Aska Lodge. The contention of the officers of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba was that no recognition could be given, inferentially or otherwise, to the Lodge or its officers, as it had not been regularly constituted. This decision of Grand Lodge was communicated only to Brother Patterson as all correspondence in connection with the projected Lodge had been conducted through him up to that time.

Brother Patterson paid no heed to the demands of the Grand Master, nor did he acknowledge receipt of the correspondence which had been sent to him. Failing to receive any information or explanation, the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba caused a copy of his letter to Brother Patterson to be inserted in "The Freemason," a Masonic periodical published in London, England.

This had the effect of bringing a direct reply from the Lodge, and we can summarize the communication briefly and obtain an idea of the position of the members of Al Moghreb al Aska Lodge.

It was claimed over the signatures of the officers and members of the Lodge that they had not been in sympathy with the unconstitutional acts of the special deputy, and at first had discountenanced Brother Patterson's idea of establishing a Territorial Grand Lodge. They claimed that by reason of Brother Patterson assuming powers which he did not possess, the Lodge



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was thereby placed in an awkward position, not through any specific act of its own, but solely by the actions of a brother who was the duly authorized deputy for the Grand Master. He made them parties to the illegal meetings, not as a member of the Lodge, but in the capacity of the special Grand Lodge Deputy. This unfortunate rift was adjusted later; the necessary healing by Grand Lodge taking place at the Eighth Annual Communication. The Lodge by that time was definitely domiciled in Tangier, and, as this created no invasion of territory claimed by any other jurisdiction, the original objections from other Grand Lodges were withdrawn.

At a later date, we find that Brother Patterson appealed against the ruling and decision of the Grand Master. The appeal was considered at a special meeting of the Board of General Purposes, held 20th February, 1883. The decision of the Grand Master was sustained, and Brother Patterson was given a further term of three months in which to return his commission.

The Lodge continued on the Register of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba until the Annual Communication held in 1890, when the Charter was suspended "for failure to submit returns to Grand Lodge." The last report received by us from Al Moghreb al Aska Lodge in 1888 showed they had a membership of 26 members,

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but, from that date up to the year 1890, no returns were received by Grand Lodge.

The Masonic territory of Manitoba contains quite enough problems within its own boundaries without travelling half way round the globe to meet other unnecessary problems. Our experience in connection with this Lodge in Tangier is sufficient justification for us to mind our own doorstep before going further afield. It ought to suggest to the Craftsmen of this Province that we should concentrate upon home affairs, and leave the overseas problem as it concerns Freemasonry to older jurisdictions.