

REPORTS ON CORRESPONDENCE.

The practice of having a committee on correspondence has been very generally adopted by the Grand Masonic Bodies in this country, says the *Masonic Advocate*. The duty of such committee is to prepare a review of the proceedings of all other Grand Bodies, and submit the same at each annual meeting, when, without reading, it is ordered to be printed in connection, or as a part of the proceedings of each annual meeting. The character of these reviews depends wholly upon the ability and disposition of the writer. When properly prepared they present an epitome of Masonic matters pertaining to each Grand Jurisdiction, and embrace a large amount of valuable information of general interest to the Craft. Many of these writers, however, fail to appreciate the position they occupy. They seemingly imagine that in their appointment full license is given to attack, criticise, and even abuse Grand Lodges holding fraternal recognition and relations with the one they represent. In printing such reports Grand Lodges give a *quasi* endorsement to opinions and sentiments that no body of Masons would approve if duly considered by them. It would be well to have all such reports referred to a committee of well informed Masons for examination, and let this committee report what portions of it should be approved or rejected, as the case may be. As pertinent to this matter we clip the following from the address of the Grand Master of Maryland before his Grand Lodge at its recent annual meeting:

"I believe that harmony between Grand Lodges would be promoted if they would exercise some authority over their respective Committees on Correspondence. I am fully aware that the reports of these Committees do not come up for adoption by their Grand Lodge, and that the views expressed by the Committee are not to be taken as the views of the Grand

Lodge, and that the Grand Lodge *in general* should not be held responsible therefor. I say *in general* because there are certain cases in which the Grand Lodge ought to be held responsible. There are cases in which the Committee has used insulting language towards a sister Grand Lodge—as for instance, characterizing its acts as shameful, disgraceful and infamous—such language as between individuals would be calculated to provoke a breach of the peace—and the offense has been made known to the Grand Master or Grand Lodge under whose authority the language was published and such Grand Master or Grand Lodge has failed, after due time elapsed, to take proper action on the subject.

A Grand Lodge is not only *ultimately* responsible in such a case, but it is also justly to be held *primarily* responsible in those cases where it retains in the important position of Reporter on Correspondence one who is well known to such Grand Lodge, from his previous conduct in this respect, to be unfit for the position. It is common law that if a man keep a dog that he knows has the habit of biting people, the man will be responsible in damages to any person that dog may bite. I wish it to be distinctly understood that these remarks have no special application to any particular case. It is true that my attention was called to the general subject by a particular case, in which I considered that the action of the Grand Lodge of Maryland was criticized in improper language. But that matter has been adjusted by correspondence with the Grand Master, and by the statement on the part of the Reporter that he utterly disclaims any intention to wound the feelings or personally insult this Grand Lodge or its Grand Master, whom he holds in high esteem."

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Out of 260 lodges in Mississippi, 230 own their own halls.