

Standing up in his place in the Lodge, the chairman, or other member appointed for that purpose, announces to the presiding officer that the Committee to whom such or such matters had been referred is ready to report.

The question which now ought to be put to the meeting by the presiding officer is: "Shall the report be received?" But here the fiction of the parliamentary law, like the fiction of the common law in many cases, supplies the place of fact, and the question is supposed to be put and carried by the silent acquiescence of the members, and the chairman then reads the report.

But although it is taken for granted, when there is no opposition, that the report has been received, it is competent for any member to move that it be not received; the effect of the adoption of such a motion would I think, be to suppress the subject altogether and to dismiss its further consideration, unless a motion was also made to recommit the report. Cushing says, that "it is not apparent what the precise effect of the decision would be—whether the Committee would be discharged and the matter there stop, or whether the refusing to receive the report would be equivalent to a recommitment;" but he admits that if the report so rejected be the final report of the Committee, which had adjourned without day, the Committee would be *functus officio*, unless revived.

It is, I think, most reasonable to suppose that, if the assembly refuses to receive the report of the Committee, the matter necessarily drops, unless revived by a subsequent resolution to recommit the report. The Committee, in making its report, has accomplished the duty confided to it, and nothing more remains or is competent for it to do. To refuse to accept the report unconditionally, is to give the *quietus* not only to it, but to the subject-matter on which it is based.

But on the announcement of the chairman that the Committee is ready to report, if a motion be made to receive it, or if there be no express opposition made, it is tacitly received, then the next thing is for the chairman to read it. "The parliamentary usage is for the chairman to read the report in his place and then to hand it to the clerk, who reads it again. But in popular assemblies and in Masonic Lodges this formality is not adhered to. Sometimes the chairman reads the report and sometimes the Secretary reads it for him, and it is not read the second time unless the second reading is called for.

The reading of the report is its reception. It is, therefore, an error, although a very common one among persons unacquainted with parliamentary law, to move, after it has been read, that the report be received. This has already been done, and such a motion would now be unnecessary and out of time.

The report having been received and read, the Committee is thereby discharged, in the case of a final report, from any further consideration of the subject, and is virtually dissolved. It is unnecessary, therefore, to make a motion for its discharge.

The next question, then, that comes up is the disposition to be made of the report. And here it is usual for the friends of the report to move that it be adopted. Now, the report may be made, as has already been said, in three forms: as a mere expression of opinion, as that expression accompanied by resolutions, or simply as a resolution or series of resolutions.

If the report be in the first of these forms, it does not seem necessary