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THE SO-CALLED "AGNOSTIC" CASE.

The "so-called Agnostic case" is still exciting a great deal of interest and comment in Masonic circles, and the suspension of a brother on account of his peculiar religious views, although he could, and did, satisfactorily answer the constitutional questions, is likely yet to cause considerable discussion and ill-feeling in the craft.

The case stands this way: Can a body so alter its constitution, laws and edicts, so as to deprive a brother of membership? In other words: Can an association, based on certain broad principles, so change its constitution, &c., as to force a member out? Certainly not. The applicant for initiation into the Masonic mysteries, must answer certain constitutional questions satisfactorily, and so long as he can do so, no power on earth has the right to deprive him of his membership. A lodge or Grand Lodge, Master or Grand Master, have not the power to add new tests for members once admitted. If permitted in one direction, they would soon extend in others, and in time we should have each lodge with a catechism of its own, and some, too, of a very strong, cast-iron nature.

Again, it is very questionable, if the Grand Lodge of Canada, by its recent action in the Harrison case, has not placed itself in a very ambiguous position. She received from Bro. H. certain fees, for which he was

to receive and enjoy certain privileges, so long as he conformed to the laws of the Fraternity, the Constitution of the Grand Lodge, and By-Laws of his own lodge, as explained to him when obtaining our mysteries. We contend Bro. H. did all this, but in order to get rid of him new tests were added; and on these new tests, which he never subscribed to, and which one-tenth of the Masons in Canada would not subscribe to, he is deprived of his Masonic privileges.

Suppose Bro. H. chose to take this matter to the law courts, what would be the result? It is stated by several men, eminent at the bar, that in all probability the judgment would be favorable to the appellant, and the G. L. of Canada might find herself called upon *volens volens* to reinstate the brother. Such a position would be most humiliating, and yet, with their eyes open, the delegates at Grand Lodge ran that perilous risk.

The ground we take, is, that we have neither the right nor power to deprive a member of the privileges for which he paid, so long as he performs the contract made at the time of his initiation. We cannot examine him as to his views of religious faith. We have no authority to do so. On joining, we distinctly told him that no such test was required, and on that understanding he paid his fees and became a member. It is absurd to argue that under those circumstances we now have the right to deprive him of these privileges, by actually altering, without his consent, our prerequisites for membership.

Suppose, as we said in a former article, that a Grand Lodge was or-