

acts fully accord with the unchanging laws and constitutions of our ancient fraternity, and which this Grand Lodge has hitherto sought to enunciate, to uphold and maintain; and may the Most High prosper them and you in all your lawful undertakings, and may He evermore abundantly bless the Grand Lodge of Quebec, and our beloved Order throughout the whole world. So mote it be.

[The Grand Master then closed his address, thanking the brethren for their courtesy, forbearance, etc.]

“THINK OF THIS.”

Under the above heading, the *Corner Stone* comes out very plainly with regard to the dire result which must in time follow, if we continue our wholesale system of suspension for non-payment of dues—a form of punishment regretted within the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Canada, by insisting upon delinquents being forced to pay annual dues during the period of suspension, an iniquity so unjust that we are astonished to find it has a single advocate in the country. The fact is, that many men are actually suspended for non-payment of dues when poverty forces them into that position: these are the Brethren who feel the unmerited punishment keenly, and seldom attempt to re-instate themselves. A remedy should be found for such cases, as it is a disgrace to us to permit an honest Mason's name to be blackened on account of his financial circumstances, and it is a still greater disgrace to us to annually *fine* such a brother, when we refuse all the rights and privileges of Freemasons. That such is the case no brother of experience can deny, and we heartily endorse the following utterances from our New York contemporary:—

“We find the following remarks upon the unwise legislation of many Grand Lodges, touching the individual rights of Masons, among the

official proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Alabama:—

“We know of cases where wise and true Masons have suffered from the over strict enforcement of such laws, and, doubtless, could facts be ascertained, many of the recent suspensions for N. P. D. are cases where poverty alone caused the dereliction. Shall good Masons be disgraced for such a cause? Verily, we fear the ‘almighty dollar’ has closed the eyes of Dame Charity, and that the business of collections is becoming the *ultima thule* of lodge duties! If the wrong we suggest really exists, let it be righted at once, for we cannot prosper while treating those of our own household unjustly and uncharitably. The Man is greater than the Dollar, and we prefer the greater to the less.”

“Were we editorially to express these most true and timely remarks we would be assailed by some of the organs of the self-sufficient rulers of Masonic opinion in the local districts, who appear to believe that in allusion to an unpleasant truth lurks the elements of treason. Still official figures should never lie, and we find in those of Maine the alarming fact that, within three years, 1879, 1880, and 1881, no less than 64,514 members have been lost to our fraternity through suspension for non-payment of dues.

“It cannot be imagined that this immense body of deserters are all stricken by poverty, and we are constrained to seek for some other cause for this remarkable decadence in Masonry which, if not stayed, will lead to the virtual extinction of our institution before the close of the present century. We most emphatically assert that, unless a radical change be wrought in the legislation and administration of Masonry according to prevalent American ideas, this catastrophe must occur. There are in this state alone thousands of men of comparative wealth and of marked influence, voluntarily re-