

help them to build up their lodges, leaving entirely out of consideration the general system of laws which the payment of benefits renders necessary, as long as they are paid as they are to-day. If they decide that it is best they should pay them, they immediately jump to a broader conclusion; namely, that it is best for Grand Lodges to make payment compulsory. This, Grand Lodges would not undertake to do, unless they knew a way by which the Subordinate Lodge could force the payment of dues, other than simply depriving the members of benefits, and the result is that the Supreme Lodge is called upon and is forced to make laws which virtually make it become a collector of benefit premiums, and whose enforcement change the nature of the Order from that of a fraternal to that of a beneficiary society.

The Subordinate Lodges say to the Supreme Lodge, that inasmuch as they have entered into a health insurance arrangement with their membership, and inasmuch as it is absolutely necessary in order to conduct this business successfully, that the members be made to pay their dues promptly, the Supreme Lodge must come to their rescue by punishing those who fail to pay, regardless of the fact that in so doing the first great principle upon which the Order is founded, is violated for the sake of by-law benevolence.

No one will deny that the payment of dues is a necessity, for without money lodges could not assist those really in need, and meet other expenses which are unavoidable, but the day has now come when the members of the Order should look deeply into this matter and should ask themselves the question whether it is best to make their Order both fraternal and beneficial—whether laws which apply to one will apply to the other—whether one is not purely business and the other sentiment, and whether in their experience they have ever known business and sentiment to get along very well together.

Barring what we find in our Ritual, there can be no doubt but that the trend of Pythian law is nowadays more towards making the Order financially strong, than it is towards cultivating those high attributes of the heart which actuated the founders, and now that for the first time in the Order's history a slight decrease in membership is reported, it is exceedingly important that this matter of the payment of benefits be fully discussed—and, if it is found that in the way we arrange to pay them, we are jeopardising the best interests of the Order, another way should be found.

The question to be discussed is not so much whether we shall continue to pay benefits, but how we shall pay them—how we shall conduct this properly speaking, money department of the Order. No one advocates the Supreme Lodge wiping away the whole benefit system by one enactment—it has been a feature of the Order too long, has done too much good and too many members believe in it, for any such action. A way can be found to continue the payment of benefits, and still adhere to the original purpose of the Order. The Knights of Pythias can still be both a fraternal and a beneficial society, but, in order to succeed, those features must be entirely separated, and the latter must

be subordinate to the former. Benefits of all kinds should be handed over wholly to the Subordinate Lodges, and the Supreme Lodge in its legislation should leave them entirely out of consideration. Not receiving the benefit should be the penalty imposed for not paying the premium. Their payment should be treated by both the Supreme and Grand Lodges as a purely business transaction between the Subordinate Lodge and its members, and one which the Subordinate Lodge could manage without any assistance from either of them. And the Subordinate Lodge should no more compel a member to ensure his health in this benefit arrangement than it should compel him to insure his life. Why regard the benefit system any more a part and parcel of the Order than the Endowment Rank, and as that Rank has certain rules and regulations governing it, so let the benefit branch of the lodge have its own rules and regulations.

This would not allow those not in the benefit branch of the lodge to escape the payment of dues—their dues would not be as much as would be paid by those expecting to receive more in a pecuniary way, but they would still have to contribute towards the support of the Order. If they failed to pay and their lodges thought that they were able to pay, they could be punished by being denied, after the debt had been standing a year, the privilege of attending all conventions, until they place themselves in "good standing" again.

Dues could be receivable quarterly as they are now, so as to be lighter upon the members, and if at the end of a year a member had paid nothing and had not been excused by his lodge, he should be compelled to suspend himself, but not from the Order of Knights of Pythias—he should, until he committed some act necessitating his expulsion from the Order, still be a Pythian, but one who by his own act had suspended himself from every Pythian privilege, including the Endowment Rank. He should be known as an unaffiliating Knight of Pythias, and should have the right to take up again at any time those bonds of Friendship broken by himself.

Once let the Order cease severing fraternal ties as rapidly as it binds them—let it cease official "suspensions for non-payment of dues," and the result will be that there will be fewer heart burnings, and consequently more applications for re-affiliation:—let it cease providing that the amount of dues necessary for the support of the Order, exclusive of those for the payment of benefits, be demandable at shorter periods than one year, and the result will be that Lodge Conventions will be better attended. Fraternity and not balances will be the most prominent thought in the minds of members, and visiting brothers will not so often be turned away, because a Master of Finance has been careless enough to send a "receipt" without an "order!"

The Supreme Lodge in adding the last clause in Section XV, Article X of their Constitution, has given a hint to Grand Lodges that in the judgment of the Supreme Lodge weekly benefits should be under the control of the Subordinate, and this hint Grand Lodges should not be slow to take. It would be the first step towards