

WEST VIRGINIA—1890.

THE Volume of Proceedings for 1890 of the Grand Lodge of West Virginia contains the record of several special communications for constituting new Lodges and dedicating Lodge rooms, and also that of the 26th Annual Communication, held at Charleston, on the 11th and 12th November, 1890.

M. W. Bro. FRANK BURT, Grand Master, presided at the Annual Communication, and his annual address contains much that is of general interest to the Craft. An immense number of dispensations were issued by him during the year, but the following entry shows that he also knew when to refuse the granting of an improper application :

Minturn Lodge, No. 19, asked permission to permit petitioner to withdraw petition which I did not think wise to grant. The petitioner was a worthy man, but, because of a recent fault of his kindred, the Lodge feared that action on the petition might be influenced. While it is true that Masons, like others, are troubled with weakness of humanity, I did not believe my Brethren of Minturn Lodge would so far depart from one of our cardinal virtues as to condemn a worthy fellow, because of the faults of his kindred.

We quote the following from the Grand Master's address.—

January 20th, Mt. Nebo Lodge, No. 91, passed the ballot upon the petition of a candidate for the mysteries of Masonry. Two negatives appearing the candidate was declared rejected. Whereupon statements were made by three Brethren, that they might have made a mistake in casting their ballots, and other Brethren urged, in view of probable errors, that the ballot be re-taken. The Master ordered another ballot which was found clear—the candidate declared to be elected and a special communication appointed for his initiation. While it was very clear to me that no intentional error had occurred, yet in view of the sacred character of the ballot in contrast with the indifferent deportment of these three Brethren, who stated that they might have made a mistake—declaring substantially that they did not know how they had voted—I did not deem it for the best interests of the Craft to permit the initiation of the candidate. Two negatives appearing, the candidate was properly declared rejected and the Lodge should have then proceeded to other business. All further discussion should have been checked. The ballot is sacred as well as secret. The box is placed upon the Altar—the brethren are cautioned—the ballot is deposited with the solemnity of a Masonic salutation—the brethren know that one negative rejects, and certainly owe it to the character of the candidate to perform the responsible duty in a solemn and intelligent manner.

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