

few months since—or, to be more precise, since 1880—Bro. Clabon himself was troubled as to what could be done with the accumulation of the Fund of Benevolence, and now he comes forward to advocate the opposite course. At that time he submitted a proposal to Grand Lodge as to the disposition of the then annual surplus, but he did not appear to know his own mind, for after formally proposing his motion and allowing it to be seconded, he withdrew it, and that, too, in a manner which we at the time remarked to be something more than unbusiness like—simply childish. After a lapse of but twenty-four months he again brings forward a proposal which has the appearance of being as hastily conceived as was that which, after short reflection, he thought fit to withdraw, and to this last suggestion he invites the consideration of the Craft. In doing so we think he would have done well to put forward some arguments to induce the brethren to believe he was better informed on his subject, as well as more at heart in his proposition, than he was when he last figured at Grand Lodge as a would-be reformer of the Fund of Benevolence. Had he done so, we hardly think he could have justified the step he now proposes.

All he could have urged was simply what he did, viz., that the Lodge of Benevolence had in its expenditure exceeded its income by some 2,000*l.* during the past year. We ask, why was this? Was it not in consequence of a feeling existing amongst some members of the Board that there should not be a surplus after the proposition brought before Grand Lodge in March, 1880? Such is the opinion of many brethren, and if we take the trouble to compare the grants recently made with those of the past, it would appear that figures are in favor of such an argument.

During the whole of the four years prior to Bro. Clabon's proposition, there were but thirty-five grants recommended to Grand Lodge of sums

of 100*l.* and upwards, viz., one of 200*l.*, four of 150*l.*, one of 125*l.*, and twenty-nine of 100*l.*; while during the two years which have succeeded it, thirty-six such recommendations have been submitted, viz., three of 250*l.*, five of 200*l.*, eight of 150*l.*, and twenty of 100*l.* Thus we see that not only have the recommendations for large grants been more than twice as numerous, but they have also been for much larger amounts, facts which, of themselves, will account for the additional expenditure. If the income of the Fund of Benevolence is insufficient to meet the expenditure, the proper course to adopt is, in our opinion, to lessen the grants either in number or amount, but as the former course might be deemed inconsistent with our Masonic teaching, the latter alone remains. Previous to March, 1880, when so much was said as to the excessive surplus of the Benevolence Fund, grants of 100*l.* each were looked upon as the maximum to be given, there only being six cases in which that sum was exceeded in the course of four years, but immediately it became known that the income of the Fund was in excess of the expenditure to a large extent, the whole scale was altered, and the grant of 100*l.*, which was previously considered a handsome amount, was at once relegated to third, and even to fourth place.

We do not wish to question the judgment of the Board, but we do say that the brethren who have proposed and supported such large sums have erred—they have really been carried away by the arguments used by Bro. Clabon in March, 1880, and we think the best course to adopt, in order to relieve the pressure on the Fund, is for Grand Lodge to refuse to confirm anything more than the income derived from present quarterages and other existing circumstances will allow. To imagine that an increase in the dues in 1882 will afford a permanent relief is absurd. It is well known that the more money there is to spend, the more applicants will