

was brought before a Committee of Grand Officers for consideration, and by referring to my address of that year, you will find that I at that time expressed the opinion, that the creation of a General Grand Lodge having jurisdiction over the several States of the Union, would neither be expedient nor desirable.

In submitting, however, the whole subject to your careful consideration, I do not wish it to be understood that I either decidedly oppose or approve of the suggestions which have been made. All I mean to convey to you is, that thus far I have not been able to satisfy my own mind, as to the wisest course to be pursued under our present circumstances. But I earnestly request for it, that thoughtful and calm investigation which the great importance of the matter, imperatively requires at your hands; and I would suggest, that its consideration be referred to a special committee, who may be able to report during the present session.

#### THE MASONIC ASYLUM.

The next subject of importance to which I would now direct your attention, is the proposed Masonic Asylum. Acting upon the suggestions made by the Board of General Purposes, a circular, containing a series of questions has been addressed to each of our subordinate Lodges; their replies to which will enable us to ascertain the views and wishes of the craft generally, upon this very interesting and important question.

It appears to me, that we are not yet in a position, which would warrant so large an expenditure of money as would be required for the erection and endowment of such an establishment as the Masons of Canada would wish to see associated with their name and order. Neither do I believe, that there exists any urgent necessity for the immediate expenditure of money for this purpose; for although we must all admire the princely benevolence displayed by the Masons of England, in their great Masonic charities, we at the same time also know how widely different our position and circumstances are from theirs. Every warranted Lodge under this jurisdiction has, doubtless, its little list of widows and orphans, whom it gladly relieves to the utmost extent of its ability; and this Grand Body, also, has never yet turned a deaf ear to the appeal of poverty or distress; but if you were carefully to examine as to the position and circumstances of the parties respectively, who have thus received relief and assistance at your hands, you would, I am convinced, find that but very few of them, if any, would accept your bounty, if coupled with the condition, that before they could become recipients of it, they must become the inmates of a Masonic Asylum, and such of you as have had an opportunity of visiting asylums erected for aged and indigent Masons, either in England or elsewhere, and have carefully observed the inmates of these institutions, must admit the fact, that in this country, we have but few representatives of that unfortunate class of cases amongst us. The whole funds of our Grand Lodge, (with the exception of that portion which is absolutely required to defray contingent and other expenses), are, I consider, sacred to benevolent purposes; and if these are prudently invested in public securities, we shall be enabled without encroaching upon the principal, effectually to relieve and assist all who have claims upon our benevolence.

#### A BUILDING FOR GRAND LODGE PURPOSES.

It has also been suggested that the time has at length arrived when Grand Lodge should have a suitable and permanent place of meeting, and that a building should be at once erected in some central position, where the meetings of Grand Lodge should be held, and where the office of the Grand Secretary should be permanently established. With this suggestion I feel disposed to concur, but, until it is finally determined, whether our boundaries are to be enlarged or whether our jurisdiction is to remain as at present, it does not appear to me that we could prudently proceed to take action even in this matter at present. The whole subject, however, as to the disposal of the Asylum Fund and the various interests connected with it, having now been before Grand Lodge for several years past, I entertain no doubt, but that you will, during the present session, be able to arrive at a wise and satisfactory conclusion with regard to it.

#### "THE WORK."

It having been decided at our last annual meeting that in order to secure uniformity in our Lodges, an exemplification of "the work," as it is technically called, should be given upon the second day of the present session, I some time since appointed a committee, composed of Bros. Harris, Bull and White, upon whom this duty will devolve. These brethren, with such aid and assistance as I could render them, have devoted much time and thought to a careful preparation for the proper discharge of the duty imposed upon them. I must confess that individually I am nervously apprehensive as to any attempt at innovation or change in the *lex non scripta* of Masonry. A system which has come down to us from our ancient brethren, hallowed, beloved and approved by our fathers in the mystic art, is not to be rashly interfered or tampered with; and if through inadvertence, or because it seemed more consistent with our modern notions, any change has crept in, I would gladly favor an immediate return to the old paths and traditions of our Order, for, as an ancient writer quaintly remarks: "They are the registers, the chronicles of the age "they were made in, and speak the truth of history "better than a hundred of your printed communications." I much regret that the pressure of business will prevent our distinguished and Right Worshipful Brother Richard Bull from assisting in the exemplification of a work, to the careful arrangement of which his best skill and ability has been most earnestly devoted. In connection with this subject, I may add, that it is intended to appoint a Standing Committee on Work, to whom all communications on that subject will in future be addressed.

#### THE BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES.

Upon carefully examining the published proceedings of our Grand Lodge for the last few years, I have been much struck with the amount of labor which devolves upon, and is so ably performed by our Board of General Purposes; and I am sure that I but express the prevailing sentiment of Grand Lodge when I say that we, as a body, are deeply indebted and most grateful to them for their efficient and valuable services. This Board is composed of our most intelligent and best educated members; and although it is doubtless considered as a very