

unfortunate brethren who, from some unforeseen calamity, without their own fault, have been placed in distress, and thereby disabled from paying their monthly dues. These are entitled to our warmest sympathy, and not only to that, but to all the aid at our disposal. We know them to have been industrious, economic, and honorable citizens, faithful brethren, ever willing and ready to act the true Brother Mason. They never spent foolishly, or squandered their own or their creditor's money; it was misfortune through sickness or otherwise that had so severely visited them that they were deprived of the necessities of life. On behalf of such a Brother, no Lodge would refuse to vote for a remission of dues; gladly and unanimously would the Lodge not only do that, but add something tangible for his relief. Those cases of real distress however, are fortunately so extremely rare, that a suspension for non-payment of dues of such a Brother, if ever it does occur, is so exceptional, that it is inadmissible as a general plea against punishment for non-payment of dues; and it is not improbable that where such a case does occur, it did so either through unpardonable carelessness of the Lodge in neglecting to enquire into the circumstances of the Brother before suspending him: or, in consequence of an unnecessary modesty or misapplied pride of the Brother, who forgot that in speaking openly to an intimate friend, or a Brother, he had a right to expect to find a warm, a feeling heart, and that he was not revealing his circumstances to a stranger.

We now come to enquire :

IS SUSPENSION THE PROPER KIND OF PUNISHMENT FOR NON-PAYMENT OF DUES?

On the face of it, no doubt, the punishment appears severe, especially when it is taken into consideration that it is the same as that inflicted in the first instance upon grossly immoral conduct and upon other masonic crimes. If it really were a fact

that a brother who is not guilty of any other offence than that of having refused or neglected to pay a few dollars for monthly dues, is punished in the same manner and to the same extent as he who has been proved guilty of an abominable crime, then there would certainly be strong ground for condemning that mode of punishment, but there is only an apparent analogy between the two punishments, and for the following reasons,—Suspension for non-payment of dues is in itself the *full measure of punishment*, which cannot be increased by expulsion or otherwise, and which may be removed at any time, at the option of the Brother so suspended, by payment of his arrears. Suspension for the other offences is in itself *not the full measure of punishment*; on the contrary, it is only an intermediate step to the real punishment of expulsion, unless the same is arrested either by the vote of the Lodge in the first instance by declaring when that suspension shall terminate, or by resolution of Grand Lodge, which possesses the prerogative of removing any suspension, nor can such a suspended Brother remove by his own act, that suspension. We therefore see that while there is an analogy in the name and in some of the effects of the two punishments, there is a vast difference in all other respects, and that therefore we cannot consider them identical. Masonic Lodges cannot impose and collect fines by process of law, nor can they punish either by imprisonment as Law Courts can do. Lodges can only punish either by temporarily depriving a defaulting or offending member of the rights and privileges of membership, or by making the same permanent. It differs not only in degree, but also in its nature; it does in one case bring neither odium nor disgrace in its train, while in other cases it inflicts an indelible stain upon the character of the party thus suspended.

The result of the investigation of this subject leads us to the logical conclusion that we cannot dispense