

what is not, we have, as a rule, refused to act in the capacity of jurist.

Further, the diversity of rulings in the different jurisdictions is so great that it is an utter impossibility to decide on many, very many matters of importance, as to what is the proper construction.

This is a great defect—probably the only one—in our system of Grand Lodge Sovereignty.

We wish there could be some plan devised by which, not only laws but Ritualistic work could be made uniform.

Probably a solution of the difficulty could be obtained by a convention of delegates from the several Grand Lodges being called, and by a series of give and take arrangements, to agree on a Code and Ritual that would be a good deal more satisfactory.

We are not oblivious to the fact that many of such delegates would be so imbued with the perfection of their own Grand Lodge system, that it might be difficult to persuade them that there were flaws therein, but as "in the multitude of counsel there is wisdom," in the end, a good deal more uniformity might be obtained.

These reflections have been brought to our mind by the receipt of a letter from a brother in Kentucky, which contains a number of questions, some of which are of a more peculiar character than others which have preceded them, and breaking, for once, our usual rule, we feel tempted to express our views.

Our brother puts the question as to whether a lodge can put a pecuniary fine on a member for disorderly conduct in the lodge room.

The only Masonic penalties we know of, are Reprimand, Suspension, or Expulsion.

Now comes a peculiar one. He asks if it would be Masonic to make By-laws, so as to pay members so much per week, sick benefits, "*no matter what his ability for self-support may be.*" And further, if E. A.'s and F. C.'s could be compelled to pay monthly

dues for the purpose of sick benefits.

In the face of the declaration, which every candidate is required to take before his initiation, it does seem strange to us, that such a question should ever arise.

If such a system as is spoken of by our brother should prevail, how could a candidate say that he was uninfluenced by "mercenary motives?"

Our brother asks further, if it is Masonic to have a general communication at any other time than on or near the full moon? The lodge can fix the time for its meetings to suit itself.

The next question reads, "Does the Conclave of the United States include the Blue Lodge also?" We presume by the "Conclave" is meant the Grand Encampment of the U. S. K. T., and by the word "include" he means, have the authority over?

If we are correct in this supposition, we would say to our brother that *no body, under whatsoever name, has any authority over the Blue Lodge, except the Grand Lodge of the State in which it is located, and further, the Blue Lodge, nor its Grand Lodge, per se have any concern in regard to, or knowledge of, the doings of any other, so-called, Masonic body.*

This we believe to be sound Masonic doctrine, in spite of the action of one or two Grand Lodges who have plainly exceeded their functions, by defining the position of certain other bodies, of which they could not possibly have any official knowledge.

The final question of our brother is, as to the Ritual generally used.

The only answer to this is, that there is unfortunately as great a diversity in this matter, as in law. It is a kind of a "go-as-you-please" matter, and if it were not for the fundamental portions, which are fixed and immutable wherever the sun shines, or the stars display their brightness, a brother travelling into another State and witnessing the work, never having seen it done any way but just as it is done "to hum," might suspect