

ence to all that is noble, sublime and esthetic so great that he has no idea for, and therefore cannot appreciate the beauty of Freemasonry; and in either case he made a mistake in joining the Institution, and the brethren who proposed and elected him also mistook the man.

Granted, however, that a Brother feels himself deceived in his expectations after he has for some time been a member of a Lodge, he has at any time the privilege to withdraw by tendering his resignation, (as an officer of the Lodge only he cannot resign during his term of office); in fact it would be a benefit to our Institution if all malcontent and disappointed members were to resign and withdraw from it, there would still be plenty left, and the Lodges would undoubtedly work better and more harmoniously than they now work with such an element of indifference and dissatisfaction. But such a Brother should not defer tendering his resignation until his dues have gone in arrears; he should not require from the Lodge or the Craft at large a continuation of guarantee of rights and privileges, which at any time he might fall in need of applying for, but he should without delay resign and sever those mutual obligations.

Having thus considered the question of *right* of suspension for non-payment of dues *abstractly*, we now come to that tender point, where the law, if carried out to the letter, without regard to particular circumstances, would in certain cases operate harshly and in some isolated cases even inhumanely, and hence masonicly. In this respect, however, our law of suspension for non-payment of dues does not stand alone. There is hardly any penal clause upon our Statute book of the land, which in some isolated cases does not, if carried out to the letter, operate harshly, arbitrarily, or even unjustly. But while the Court has no power to set aside the penalty imposed by statute upon any person convicted of having vio-

lated the same, no matter however extenuating the circumstances may have been; nor while no Court can withhold judgment upon a debt clearly proven, nor the officers of the law abstain from the performance of their duty by enforcing the execution, however poor, sickly, and in actual distress the defendant may be. We, as Freemasons, have no such cast iron bands encircling our penal clause, which provides for the suspension of non-payment of dues; we have the power at any time and at all times, whenever we find it necessary or desirable, to declare by resolution that the dues of a Brother in arrears be remitted, and thus obviate his suspension. No Judge of any Court has such a power. But, although no one could successfully dispute the existence of that power in any Lodge, yet there are some Brethren who, from an exceedingly high degree of sensitiveness on behalf of those brethren who through misfortune are rendered unable to pay, see insurmountable obstacles in the way in order to obtain the passing of such a resolution by the Lodge.

In reference to the amount of dues in question,—about four or six dollars,—they speak of it as if the same were sufficient to provide a family with food, fuel and clothing, besides paying that Brother's other debts; and regarding that poor Brother's position, they represent it as the most galling, humiliating and degrading act to expect of him to reveal to an intimate friend, to a Brother Mason, the fact that though willing, his depressed circumstances do not allow him to pay his dues. These volunteer spokesmen for the poor Brother are ever ready to censure those who express their views as regards the ability to pay of defaulting brethren, and hold that nobody can judge that subject better than the defaulter himself. But these censurers take it upon themselves to judge that which nobody can see or estimate, namely, the extent of another man's feelings