

perity and harmony of American Masonry, which must ensue should the recommendations of the committee be adopted by the Grand Lodge of Ohio in October next. This is a duty from which no true Mason can shrink. There can be no delicacy about it. The affair is not a local one, belonging exclusively to Ohio, with which other jurisdictions have no right to meddle. It affects the Fraternity throughout the length and breadth of the land. Therefore, not only the journalists, but every Grand Lodge in the Union, should take up the subject and discuss it in all its bearings.

At the suggestion of the late Grand Master of Ohio, the committee have lit a fire-brand and thrown it in our midst. Can any true Mason do less than rush to the rescue and extinguish it, before a fatal conflagration ensues?

Our brethren in Ohio are on the very verge of committing a great blunder. We hope and trust and believe that the Grand Lodge, when the subject comes up for discussion next year, will exercise sound sense and prudence, and reject the entire report. But, in the meantime, it is the prerogative and duty of all American Masons who desire a continuance of that unity of law, custom and harmony of sentiment which can alone preserve the institution in this country from disintegration, to raise their voices and take part in the preliminary discussion.

Kindly, therefore, and in friendly and fraternal spirit, but yet with inflexible adherence to what we deem to be truth and right, we propose to examine the various points presented by the report of the committee. If no one else follow us, we shall, at least have the conscientious satisfaction of knowing that we have sought, by doing an unpleasant duty, to avert a great calamity.

Preliminary to touching the report itself, it will be proper to say a few words about the recommendations of the Grand Master, which led to the appointment of the committee and the preparation and presentation of the report.

Grand Master Battin was indefensible and inexcusable in the position which he took that this was a question of race or color. We may pardon our French and German brethren for supposing that the non-recognition of "Colored Masons" is owing to our national hatred of the negro. The intervention of an ocean—the infrequency of inter-communication—and above all, the difference of language, necessarily place them at a disadvantage in their appreciation of the motives which influence our conduct. But the Grand Master of Ohio is an American Mason,—he has lived among us—he knows how free our Institution is from political influences—and he knew, or should have known, by careful inquiry before he undertook to say anything on the subject—that the questions of color and race do not enter and never have entered into the American dealing with the recognition or non-recognition of these "Colored Lodges."

It is a fact of which every Freemason is fully aware, that the "so-called Colored Lodges" have not been recognized, not because their members are colored men, but because we know their organization was in defiance of all recognized principles of Masonic law—because their lodges are not and never have been in possession of legal warrants—because they undertook to issue warrants under the authority of a Blue or Master's Lodge—and because, consequently, we could not, without satisfying ourselves, look upon their members in any other light than that of Clandestine Masons.

Grand Master Battin therefore gratuitously insults—although of course he did not intend to do so—the common sense of the whole body of American Masons, when he intimates that they are so ignorant of the principles of Masonic universality and equality, and so inconsistent in their practical views as to believe that the Indian and Mongolian races may be made Masons, but that the African race is excluded from the same privilege.

We protest therefore, as American Masons, against the charge, that the "so-called Colored Masons" of this country have been refused a recognition on account of a national prejudice against their color. Some few European Masons, altogether ignorant of our language and our policy, have made this accusation; but American Masons have always denied it. Indeed, our history refutes such a charge. The nation which could manumit four millions of people,—could give to them all the rights of citizenship, and elevate many of them to high official positions, such as senators and representatives in congress, members of state legislatures, judges, etc., cannot be charged with a prejudice against the race for which it has voluntarily done so much. No,—we believe, and it is, we think, the belief of all American Masons, that the only qualifications required of a candidate for initiation, are that he should be "a man, free born, of lawful age, and under the tongue of good report." He who comes to our temple with these qualifications, be he white or black or brown, has a right to admission if he can pass the ballot; an ordeal to which men of all races must be subject.

Indians, of the red race: Japanese and others, of the Mongolian race, and colored men of the negro race, have been initiated in regular lodges of this country and other countries, and their legitimate Masonic status has always been recognized.

The Grand Lodges of America have hitherto refused to recognize the so-called