

PARLIAMENTARY LAW, AS APPLIED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MASONIC BODIES.

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CONTINUED.
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— CHAPTER XIII. —

— OF THE MOTION TO AMEND AN AMENDMENT.

As it is possible that the proposed amendment to an original proposition may be as objectionable to some of the members as the main proposition itself, and may seem, in their opinion, equally to require a change, and as the same condition might occur in reference to the amendment to the amendment, and so on *ad infinitum*, there would not seem to be any reason why the proposing of amendments to amendments might not be illimitable, or limited only by the will of the members of the assembly. But the fact is, that such a piling on of questions, to use the parliamentary phrase, would result in great confusion and embarrassment. "The line," says Jefferson, "must be drawn somewhere, and usage has drawn it after the amendment to the amendment, which is called the amendment in the second degree." This is a rule founded entirely on the principle of expediency; but the reason for it is so evident, that all parliamentary bodies have concurred in recognizing its existence.

If any part of the amendment to the amendment be objectionable, the only way of effecting an improvement in it is to reject this amendment in the second degree; and then, after giving it the improved form which may be desired, to propose it again as an amendment to the amendment. Thus, pending a certain question, it is proposed to amend by inserting a form of words which may be represented by A B. This it is proposed to again amend by inserting C D after A B. This is admissible; but if it were desired to amend C D by adding E, so as to make it C D E, this would be an amendment in the third degree, and, therefore, would not be admissible. The only way of reaching this result would be to reject the proposition to insert C D after A B, and then to move an amendment to the amendment A B by adding C D E.

When an amendment to an amendment to an original motion is pending, the question must first be put on the amendment to the amendment. If this be adopted, or rejected, then the question will recur on the amendment; and if this be rejected, then on the original motion; or, if the amendment be adopted, on the motion as so amended. All the rules which affect an amendment in the first degree are equally applicable to one in the second, except that the latter cannot be amended.

Before dismissing the subject of amendments, it may be proper to say that an amendment need not be of the same character as, or germane to, the original motion. "Amendments," says Hatsel, "may be made so as totally to alter the nature of the proposition; and it is a way of getting rid of a proposition by making it bear a sense different from what was intended by the movers; so that they vote against it themselves." Thus, it would be admissible to offer an amendment to a motion, striking out everything after the word "resolve," and inserting new words of an entirely different or even contradictory import.