

On the subject of the Incorporation of Lodges, a practice strongly condemned by many thoughtful brethren here as well as in New Jersey, the Grand Master says :—

“One of the Decisions I have reported, (No. 19.) is based on the action of this Grand Lodge at its eightieth Annual Communication, in 1867, on which occasion it emphatically condemned the practice of Lodges obtaining charters from the civil authority, while it approved of the incorporation of Lodge Trustees. (*Proceedings of 1868, page 235.*) This subject has been brought into view by the difficulties with which one of the Lodges of this jurisdiction is now surrounded in consequence of its being a corporation in the eyes of the civil law.

“The clear and able opinion of that sound Masonic jurist, M. W. William Silas Whitehead, on this subject, as set forth in his address as Grand Master, to this Grand Lodge in 1867, so fully covered the ground, and was so emphatically endorsed by the Grand Lodge, that it should be read by all who desire light on this question. For the benefit of those who may not have access to the proceedings of 1867, I make the following extracts therefrom :

“I have lately given this subject some examination, and the conclusion to which I have arrived is, that the incorporation of Masonic bodies is subversive of the true principles of Masonic government, and inimical to the prosperity and perpetuity of the institution.

“It sweeps away the appellate jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge and Grand Master, and subordinates the Masonic to the civil authorities upon questions strictly Masonic.

“If it should become necessary, for the purpose of holding the title of real estate or investing money, that an incorporated company should be created, I would recommend that, in all cases, some association outside and independent of the Lodge should be chartered. In such cases, while courts would have control over the body which might be chartered, they would have no control over or right of interference with the affairs of the Lodge.”

The G. Master pays a fitting and affectionate tribute of respect to the memory of departed brethren, “honored and beloved,” not only of his own, but of other jurisdictions, special reference being made to the sudden and terrible death of Brother George Frank Gouley, of Missouri.

Poor Gouley ! in the universal lamentation evoked by his death, one cannot help recalling the words of Tacitus :

“Flebunt Germanicum etiam ignoti : * * * * extinguitur ingenti luctu provinciæ, et circumjacentium populorum. Indolere exteræ nationes regesque.”