

his reasons to the Master. This doctrine is taught by some authors, and it is known that much confusion has resulted in consequence of such erroneous teachings.

The petition of an applicant must be over one month. A petition can only be received at a regular meeting, and balloting for candidates can only be held at regular meetings—that is, the stated monthly meetings—and there must be an interval of one full month between the conferring of the degrees.

In Masonry no private matters of business or otherwise, no personal differences, no objections of religion or politics, constitute valid grounds for depositing a black ball. To do so would be wrong, as it would be wrong not to vote a black ball, or not to vote at all, where it was known that the applicant was guilty of crime, or unworthy to be initiated into the secrets of Masonry. A Mason ought never to shrink from the performance of a duty. A Mason should not be influenced to vote for an applicant because of friendship or association. His highest duty is to the institution. Neither should he recommend the petition of any one unless fully satisfied that the applicant is every way worthy, and will fully conform to the precepts and established usages of the Order.

The antecedents, circumstances, and social habits of the applicants are legitimate subjects for committees of investigation to inquire into. Religion, politics, and nationality are not proper subjects, and such inquiries are not only improper, but are contrary to and in violation of the spirit and principles of Freemasonry. The inquiry into the circumstances of applicants ought only to extend so far as that the initiation fee and monthly contributions will not subject the petitioner to inconvenience, or cause him to deprive his family of their accustomed comforts.

An applicant for the mysteries of Freemasonry must believe in a Supreme Being, the Creator of all worlds; he must be a freeman, of mature age, of sound body and mind, and possess correct moral principles, and be capable of appreciating the sublime morality of the institution, and be of a benevolent, humane, and charitable disposition. Immoral men, those physically deformed or imbecile in mind, are disqualified by the laws of Masonry from being admitted into the membership of the fraternity.

Freemasonry is a system of order, governed by laws having for their basis certain "landmarks," which are found, in the necessities of man, to promote his social happiness, to elevate and improve him intellectually and spiritually. These laws, to be beneficial and useful, must be strictly observed and adhered to. Every Lodge, in addition to the ancient landmarks, is also governed by the Constitution, rules and regulations of the Grand Lodge, which is the legislative governing body of the jurisdiction; also, by a code of By-Laws, framed in accordance with the above, for its own internal government. The Constitutions of the several Grand Lodges differ; therefore Masons must be governed by the local laws of the Grand Lodge of the jurisdiction where they reside.

The principles of Freemasonry comprehend the entire code of the moral law. To be a Mason is to be a good man. A good man will be an observer of law. The principles of Freemasonry, the ancient landmarks, the Constitutions and Laws of Grand Lodges, and the By-Laws of subordinate Lodges, all ought to blend harmoniously together, and in no part contradict each other or come into conflict. The By-Laws of Lodges ought to be simplified, and only contain such provisions as are necessary to systematize the working of the Lodge. Every By-Law should be faithfully lived up to. The time of meeting specified is as necessary to be observed as the particular stated night. Minutes and parts of hours are of importance to the man of well regulated mind; and who better than Masons understand the value of time? The officers especially of a Lodge, as well as its members, ought to be at the Lodge-room, so as to open the Lodge precisely at the time stated in the By-Laws. Indifference to a particular observance of

any one law ought not to exist in any of the officers or the membership. The Master is bound not only to observe the laws of Lodge himself, but strictly to enforce them also; and the more rigid the letter of the law is adhered to, the better will be the spirit of Masonry among its membership. These observations apply to every law established for the government of the Craft.

The Master of a Lodge ought to be well acquainted with the laws, usages, and customs of the Order. He ought to be a man of good judgment, discretion, and particularly ought to have his passions under good control. He ought to be an example of punctuality, faithfulness, zeal, devotion, and uprightness. If the Master is punctual in his attendance at the Lodge, the members will be punctual also. If the Master has the intelligence and capacity to instruct properly the members, they will also be intelligent Masons. Whatever his social dispositions may be out of the Lodge among his brethren and friends, in the Lodge he must maintain a dignity of character suited to the position which he occupies.

Freemasonry is a system of order and regularity; the work of the Lodge ought therefore to be conducted free from confusion. The Lodge being under the charge of the Master, and as he holds the gavel, he holds in his hand the authoritative emblem which can command order and regularity. The gavel should be used with the utmost caution; its monitions should never be disregarded. The Master is supreme in his Lodge; his word is law; from his decision there is no appeal; at least upon questions of Masonic usage he is, according to the general verdict of Masonic jurists, above all law during his term of office, so far as regards the membership of his Lodge, and is only amenable to the Grand Lodge for any misconduct or violation of the laws of the Order.

As Lodges are constituted now, having their warrants from a Grand Lodge, their officers and members are under obligations to support, keep, and abide by the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Lodge of their particular jurisdiction; hence these and the ancient landmarks form the code of laws by which they are governed. As the Constitution and Laws of the many Grand Lodges all differ one from the other, no code of Masonic Law or principles of jurisprudence can be universally applicable to the Craft of all the various jurisdictions. This is a matter that ought to be well understood, as it may prevent much confusion in the decision of Masonic questions.

The legislation of the Craft is confined to Grand Lodges. Subordinate Lodges meet for purposes expressed in the warrants, and to perform the functions for which Freemasonry was instituted. These are, to open and close the Lodge according to the Ritual practiced in each jurisdiction, to make Masons, to practice charity, to impart instruction, to perfect themselves in the work, and to transact the usual business of organized associations. The whole must be conducted in the most systematic and orderly manner. The Lodge during its sessions must be under the control and direction of the presiding officer. He ought to be well acquainted with the duties of the chair, and be vigilant and attentive to all that transpires in the Lodge. He ought to direct all the business so as to avoid confusion, and no officer ought to perform any duty of his office without first having been directed from the Oriental chair. The word of command must come from the Master, and obedience is the duty of all.

The Lodge being opened at the time prescribed in the By-Laws, and consequently the officers in their proper places, the Master directs the business as in his judgment is best to the interest of the Lodge, and according to circumstances. The reading of the minutes of the preceding meeting is usually the first business. The Master, however, may transpose the business. And here we may be permitted to remark that as it is becoming a practice for Grand Lodges to frame By-Laws for the government of subordinate Lodges—a course which we do not approve of, as centralizing a power already too great in Grand Lodges—it

would be well to leave the routine of business to the discretion of the Worshipful Masters, as no code of By-Laws, however voluminous, can provide for every contingency that may arise, and circumstances may occur in which the interests of the Lodge may be affected by being compelled to pursue a prescribed form.

It is unnecessary to notice the various business matters transacted in the Lodge. The members should be silent, and remain in their places while the Lodge is in session, and be particularly attentive to the proceedings. There should be no whispering while the minutes are being read, or reports of committees, or balloting, which are pursued in succession, or during the work of Entering, Crafting, or Raising, which, if candidates are present, are followed in order. If the Secretary has omitted something, or the record is at fault, a member may state the fact by respectfully rising and addressing the chair. The presiding officer must in all cases be addressed, if a brother wishes to speak. The minutes ought to show clearly all the transactions of the Lodge, and before closing the Lodge, and after reading the collections, the amounts and from whom received, the proceedings, as recorded, ought to be read. And as the brethren while in the Lodge meet upon the level, so they ought to part upon the square, and each maintain a rigid silence as to the proceedings of the Lodge, as best conducive to the harmony and welfare of the institution. — *World's Masonic Register.*

#### MASONRY IN BUENOS AYRES.

BY FINLAY M. KING.

Recent difficulties in the jurisdiction of Peru, as well as those with which our brethren of Buenos Ayres have had to contend, lead me to remark that the fraternity of the United States should be very charitable in the opinions they may form of Masonry in those distant climes. Masonic fidelity has often imperiled the lives of our brethren in both the countries referred to. It is the subject of rejoicing that a change is taking place. The highest ranks of society, and very many of the government officers in Peru, Brazil, Buenos Ayres, and in Uruguay, are contributing to the fraternal band, and joining their names and efforts to its progress and prosperity.

It was not long since that I fell in company with an intelligent and enterprising merchant from Buenos Ayres, who had long been a member of our fraternity, and he gave me many interesting facts in connection with Masonry in that region. It appears there are thirteen different Lodges in the jurisdiction of Buenos Ayres, having in all about 3000 members. They are under the supreme control of the Grand Orient of Uruguay, practicing the Scottish rite.

A few years since, the Roman Catholic Bishop of that country fulminated a bull against all Masons within his bishopric, and he went the length of declaring the marriage contract dissolved, and absolving the wife, *vinculo matrimonii*, in all cases where the husband refused to renounce Masonry. Some parties, as high in temporal authority as the bishop was in spiritual, appealed from his decree to his Holiness Pius IX., at Rome. After waiting a long time for a reply or decision upon the appeal, and receiving none, an inquiry was instituted as to the cause of the delay, when it was found, to the great satisfaction of the Roman Catholics of the La Platte, who were unwilling to bow to the behests of the bishop, that during a sojourn at Montevideo, in 1816, the venerable prelate at Rome, then a young man, received the degrees and took upon himself the obligations of Masonry! The successor of St. Peter could by no means violate the vows he had thus taken in his early years. The result was that the bull of Buenos Ayresan bishop fell harmless to the ground, and the Grand Orient of Uruguay is in as successful operation as ever. Masonry has taken a new start in the Argentine Confederacy, and its republican tendencies have not only relaxed the grasp and tyranny of the priesthood, but have exercised a powerful influence in ameliorating the condition and elevating the standard of society. Such