

communication, and then they find that they are often called upon to perform duties of which they know comparatively nothing, and to decide upon questions of which they never heard, and with whose merits they are wholly unacquainted. We speak now more particularly of the younger members of the Grand Lodge, whose votes count just as much as the veterans in deciding issues. When a question is propounded in Grand Lodge, each member should at once ask himself, "What is the Law?" and each one should be able to answer for himself by virtue of his own duties.

Take for instance the Grand Lodge of Missouri: Every Lodge chartered, and U. D., has been supplied with the "book of constitutions," (unless lost in the mail), yet we honestly and fraternally ask each Master and Warden, "Have you studied (not read) that book from beginning to end?" How many, we ask, can answer "Yes?" We venture not one in ten can.

We make this declaration purely from an average struck from personal observation. We regret to make it, but we believe, that in so doing we say no more for Missouri than may be said of every other Grand Lodge in the world,—in fact, we believe our state is more fortunate than many others, for the reason that our proceedings show a more consistent legislation than that furnished by many of our sister jurisdictions; yet this is no excuse for any Master or Warden not knowing the law and usage. It is not merely enough for an officer to *read* the law, but he must *study* it. A student could not merely read Blackstone, Coke, and others, and pass an examination in any court; he must study them, by reading them over and over again, year after year, until the principles are firmly fixed on the memory and thoroughly understood. There is not one man in a thousand who can read a code of law through and be able to remember or quote it by a single reading, and even in many readings the mind must be drilled by supposed or actual cases applied to the text to get the principles fixed on the memory in order to be able to refer to them in emergencies.

One of the greatest constitutional lawyers of this country (Hon. James A. Bayard, of Delaware), has made it a rule to read the standard works through once every year, for nearly thirty years, and has said, that at each reading he gathered new ideas, even after he knew them almost by heart, while yet a student, preparing for the bar. What a lesson is here for Masonic legislators and executors of the law, while in office! Not one in a hundred of our fellow citizens have ever read a law book or code of statutes through in their lives, but they are daily called upon to vote on laws which may affect the most sacred rights of their fellow citizens. They have not time to read them after the legislature assemblies, hence they have to be governed by the knowledge of others, or by their own common sense. Any legislature is fortunate if it contains even a half-dozen men who are thoroughly posted, yet all could be if they would only read the secular press in which the publication of laws is authorized by the states themselves. Any citizen who has the brass and ambition to run for the legislature, even as a political movement, should have brains and liberality enough to buy and study the constitution and laws of his State, so that when he takes his seat, he may be prepared to do justice to the honorable position he assumes. Now, while a legislator is not expected to judge and to execute the law, he is less culpable than a member of a Grand Lodge who, not only makes law, but executes it in his official capacity when presiding over a Lodge