

are fully and freely conceded. The Order of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, the oldest existing secret Society, is not obtrusive, and we never thrust ourselves before the public clothed in the Badge of a Mason, unless when carrying out those duties prescribed by Ancient Custom, or by the Constitutions, and even in these cases, a Masonic Funeral being the sole exception, a dispensation is made under severe penalties a previous requisite. As between the Lodge and the Association to which the deceased may have belonged, if the Brethren are to appear at all as Masons, the Lodge must have sole and absolute charge. No association can share in the performance of our Masonic funeral rites. Due respect can ever be paid by the Craft to the memory of a Brother who desired to be buried according to the rites of other organizations, by attending as individuals, and as a rule none are more ready to honor the memory of the deceased than Free Masons. However much personal feelings may urge us, it is not wise or prudent to break what may be considered a universal rule. The Grand Lodge at its annual Communication in 1871 endorsed the views of the then Grand Master, who held it improper to allow other Societies to take part in the conduct of Masonic funerals.

I was asked to grant leave to initiate a candidate who had lost part of one of his feet, and who used mechanical appliances to enable him to walk, and was unable properly to dispense with them during initiation, also a person who from a diseased hip joint could not stand upright, having both feet on the ground. Though both persons were well qualified in every other respect, yet on account of these physical defects I felt they must be debarred the privilege of being initiated. I hold that unless a candidate be in a condition to receive, perform and communicate all parts of the ceremonies and duties of the Order,

he is not eligible for the degrees. He must be capable of making himself known in the dark as well as in the light. Beyond the mention in the charges "that he be a perfect youth, having no maim or defect in his body that may render him incapable of learning the art, of serving his Master's Lord, and of being made a Brother," no provision is made in our Constitutions as to physical qualifications. Hence, if any doubt exists reference must be had to the Grand Master for his decision. As it now stands, each succeeding Grand Master may have more liberal or stricter views than his predecessors, and so the Brethren are left in doubt. I think it would be advisable, would give greater satisfaction to the Brethren, and would certainly relieve the Grand Master from the semblance of acting with unnecessary strictness, if some rule relating to the subject, and to the Masonic processions before alluded to, were laid down by the Grand Lodge, and made part of the Constitution, so as to withdraw these questions from among the *dicta* of Grand Masters.

I found as a general rule that the halls of those Lodges which I visited were well fitted and arranged. Within the past few years great progress has been made in these respects. In some instances, and I refer particularly to the Prince Edward Lodge, No. 18, Picton, to the Masonic Halls at St. Thomas and Chatham, the Brethren have adorned their Lodge rooms in a highly artistic manner, reflecting the greatest credit on their taste and zeal. I have remarked that those Lodges which give attention to the proper embellishment of their Halls, carefully guard the approaches by a close scrutiny in the selection of those who enter.

During the year the following Special Communications of Grand Lodge have been held, namely:—

1. At Galt, on the 30th December, 1879, when the new Hall of Alma Lodge, No. 72, and Galt Lodge, No.