

the urbanity and general good qualities of those appointed to take the office of President of that Committee, but he thought that to carry out the recommendations of the committee would be to effect a vast improvement.

The motion was then put from the throne, and carried.

BRO. J. RANKIN STEBBING, P. G. D., then rose and said, that he proposed to occupy Grand Lodge a few minutes, to take their vote upon an important question. He begged to propose, in the words of the motion that he had placed on the paper:—

“That in the opinion of Grand Lodge, no future Grand Master should hold that office for more than five years in succession, unless in the case of a Royal Prince.”

It was his desire that the annual election of Grand Master should take place as now. No alteration whatever should occur in the present mode, which had answered extremely well, but that they should place a limit on the retention of that office by not allowing it to be held for more than five years by the same Grand Master, however distinguished. This he said was no new notion; it was but reviving a state of things that formerly existed, when it was an uncommon occurrence for a Grand Master to hold office for a longer period than two, three, or four years. It was desirable to associate with Grand Lodge as many distinguished noblemen as possible. In former times they had had thirty-two Grand Masters whose period of office was under two years. This was found extremely beneficial, and they found that when in those times a brother was re-elected for four or five years, it was for some special quality. Lord Byron sat for five years as Grand Master; he was very assiduous in his duties, and that was the cause of his re-election. It was true that in Scotland such an arrangement was not fit and practicable, but they must compare like things with like. They would find that certain peculiarities in Scotland rendered a comparison in this respect between England and Scotland inapplicable. He thought that the proposed change would hold out incitements to the Peers of England to flock round the Masonic Throne, which he held must be extremely beneficial to Masonry. He would put it to the brethren present to consider what would be the effect if the rule obtained in private lodges which obtained in Grand Lodge. Whenever the practice of continuous re-election was adopted in private lodges it had the effect of bringing such lodges to decay. The matter was therefore of an importance which demanded that he should boldly declare his sentiments without being thought to cast reflections upon anyone. Their Past Grand Master had been most assiduous and efficient, and he made no complaint, but the complaint he did make was this, that where they had a Grand Master for a quarter of a century they had only the same stream of thought pervading all the proceedings. What, he would ask, would be the condition of the State if statesmen were all of one opinion? and what would be the condition of the Church if our bishops were all of the same mind? (laughter). Take any country, any people, any institution, any profession, and if there is only one description of opinion they did not have a strong institution, profession, country, or people. He would not detain them longer at that late period of the night; he cast no reflections on the Past Grand Master or the incoming Grand Master, of whom nothing could be said so kindly, but he would ask them to vary the statesmen in Masonry, and make Masonry stronger, and if they did so, as it had flourished in the past, so it would flourish again.

BRO. RAYNHAM STEWART'S notice of motion,

“That no brother shall hold the office of Grand Master (unless he be a Prince of the Blood Royal) for a longer period than five years, at the end of which time he shall retire from office for at least one year.”

was then spoken to by BRO. DENNOCH, who said that the relinquishment of office for one year, after the expiration of five years, would have a most beneficial effect, as it would give the Grand Master a rest which, by that time, he would need. This was found to work well at the Bank of England, where the Directors are obliged to retire for a year after a certain term of service.

BRO. BRACESTONE BAKER reminded the brethren that though this question had again been brought forward, it had been disposed of most effectually ten years ago. The same resolution was brought forward by BRO. STEBBING, in June 1860, when he supported it by the same arguments he had used to-night, but it then produced no more effect than he (BRO. BAKER) expected it would produce now. Only four banes were then held up in its favour in a very large Grand Lodge. (Hear). He went on to say that if the proposed alterations were effected with regard to the Grand Master, they might as well apply the same rule to the Grand Treasurer, Grand Secretary, &c., and more especially to the Provincial and District Grand Masters, if the rule was worth anything it must be consistent; he pointed out a fact which seemed to have been unnoticed, that the constituency of Grand Lodge was every year altered, inasmuch as from 4 to 600 Brethren every year became Junior Wardens, &c., as such members of Grand Lodge. He concluded by moving the same amendment as was moved in June 1860, declining to entertain any proposition the effect of which would be to fetter it in its selection annually of a Grand Master.

This amendment was seconded by a BROTHER, who said, that though there might be some arguments in favour of the motions, those against them were much stronger. He thought that they must be unanimous in their vote. They all knew how the Craft had flourished under the late Grand Master, he thought that the Craft was now in a very flourishing condition, and he deprecated any change. Why, he would ask, should a Grand Master be precluded from holding the throne for ten years? They had the power of election.

BRO. CLABON said that he should hardly have risen, but it happened that he belonged to a society where the proposed altered method had been in vogue, and it worked most disastrously.

It was argued by a BROTHER, that the adoption of this resolution would limit the future members of Grand Lodge in their decisions. But it would do another thing, it would compel them to re-elect the Grand Master. He did not mean to say that the resolution pledged them to that course, but if a Grand Master were not retained in office for the term prescribed, it would imply dissatisfaction. He thought it a remark worthy the consideration of the lodge, that they were not called upon to elect men merely because they were peers of the realm, but because they were meritorious. He thought, therefore, that the amendment should be carried.

EARL DE TABLEY rose and said, that as Peers of the Realm had been alluded to, perhaps he might be allowed to say a few words on the present occasion. Much had been said, and well said, by BRO. STEBBING, as to the period for which the Throne should be occupied. But he (Earl de Tabley) could only say, that it would be a disadvantage to any one ascending the Throne to know that the time was limited as proposed. What was best for the country and best for Masonry was a strong Government, and therefore he would most cordially vote for the amendment, and trusted it would be supported by