

NON-ATTENDANCE AND NON-INTEREST.

ANOTHER CAUSE.

To the Editor of "True Knight":

Having in a recent issue of your valuable journal given my views on the above caption as to the cause producing the effect, mentioning more or less what may be termed ritualistic causes, I now would like to give a short review of what I believe to be another cause why members of the Order are so fast losing interest after being initiated.

Every candidate, before his application can be, or even is considered, promises faithfully to obey all laws governing the Supreme, Grand, and Subordinate Lodge to which he may belong. Now, the question arises: Does he fulfil his promise? A long intimate knowledge of members and lodges, both Subordinate and Grand, leads me to think that he does not. Now, if not, why not? The answer is simple. We are all taught more by observation than by anything else. The new made candidate observes only to quick that other and older members do not live up, either to the law or spirit of the law, and he, in consequence, thinks that he is entitled to the same right. There are many of our laws which are more honored in their breach than their observance. Not that I think it is done intentionally, but through utter carelessness. Ten members take the trouble of studying the laws of the Order, and every member seems to be a law unto himself. One cannot help, in reading the various Pythian journals, to notice how many breaches of the law occur, apparently without any restraining hand. Now, what becomes known is necessarily only a small part of what occurs, and does not become known. A few instances will make clear my meaning. Take the law governing suspension for non-payment of dues. How many Masters of Finance in our lodges know their duty in the premises? How many of them have studied the Supreme Law (Section 262), or the Grand Lodge Law (Section 141, exactly the same reading)? The inclination is to keep a member twelve months in arrears on the books of the Lodge as long as possible, as long as there is hope that he yet may pay. The inclination is a good one, so is the intention, but is it lawful? Certainly not. The sections referred to are peremptory and mandatory, and leave the lodge, or rather the M. of F. no option. I often wondered why it should do so, until it occurred to me, that by not doing according to the strict letter of the law an injustice may be done to many. To make myself clearer, I will suppose a lodge has 101 members, and is entitled by its membership to a certain representation and vote in the Grand Lodge. Suppose those 101 members include, say, but two members who ought to have been suspended for non-payment of dues, but have been kept on the books and the roster of the lodge. Does not that lodge gain an increased representation in the Grand Lodge unlawfully? Of course, supposing always that representation in the Grand Lodge, like ours, is based on one representative for every hundred members or fraction thereof. Now, having this increased representation the lodge may decide close questions in the Grand Lodge through its representatives. Now the lodge knows that it has done wrong, and having gained additional voting power in the higher lodge, does it not follow that the members of such lodge must lose the respect of the laws? If they break one law, why not others? It always reminds me of the legal

maxim, that if in a basket of supposedly fresh eggs you find one bad, you have a perfect right to mistrust the quality of all. It is a well known fact that it is better to repeal or strike a law, from the Statute Books than have it broken, thereby bringing into contempt all of the laws, which may be good. Again, look at the laws regarding saloons. I read in many of the Pythian papers, and the secular press as well, that at the late encampment of the U. R. in Indianapolis, the members of that body were very conspicuous with their uniforms in many of the saloons and drinking places of that city. Of course it was hot, but what of it? Better to take off your uniform or slack your thirst with anything else, anywhere else, than break the law. If you can break the law right under the eyes and noses of the Supreme body, can it be wondered at, that new members, take it for granted, that our laws are made to read well, but not to fit well? And so I might go on with many instances, each one showing not an intentional disrespect of our laws, but rather a carelessness, and it don't matter this time evasiveness, that does the work as effectively as it could be desired. As a cure for this, I would propose that each officer in a lodge should familiarize himself with the laws bearing directly on the duties of his office. Having done so, he could, when occasion arises, set the brothers right, when unintentional infractions of the law are contemplated. I think our laws lack one section which I would embody, and that is the duty of every member, not in a ritualistic sense, but concise and compact compendium of his duties as a member of the Order, in a legal sense. This section I would give to every applicant, and make him learn it, so he may know it by memory, and I would not admit him to membership until he does know it, and promises to keep and uphold what he has learned. A new member would then know what is expected of him, and he would know beforehand what the laws of the Order are, and what he obligates himself to perform. This is, in my opinion, another cause for non-attendance and non-interest in lodge work.

I propose, Bro. Editor, to contribute more on this same subject from time to time, until I have given all causes which in my opinion tend to diminish interest and consequent falling off and out of the Order.

EMIL PFERDNER,
Far West Lodge, No. 1.

ORIENTAL HOTEL

W. E. FOWLER, Manager.

The Oldest Established Hotel in the City.
Accommodation for 150 Guests.

THE MOST CENTRAL AND POPULAR RESORT

First-class Table.
Free Bus meets all trains and boats.

Rates \$1.00 per Day and Upwards.

308 Water Street, Opposite Hudson's Bay Store,
VANCOUVER, B.C.