

The Committee on Jurisprudence was undoubtedly right in holding that the question of exemption from Lodge dues is a matter within the control of the Lodge, and in reporting that it would be inadvisable for Grand Lodge to interfere, as suggested by the Grand Master, by the adoption of a regulation prohibiting the enacting of by-laws to exempt members from the payment of Lodge dues, after they had paid such dues continuously for twenty-five years. Yet we are with the Grand Master in entertaining serious doubts as to the advisability of any subordinate Lodge making an exemption of this kind, unless it be in excellent financial circumstances, and even then the exemption should not, in our opinion, be made general, but at the choice of such Brethren as come within its provisions. This would enable old and worthy Brethren, who find the payment of Lodge dues a burden, to continue in membership with their Lodges without the payment of further dues, but it would not satisfy us that those who are well able to fulfil the duties and obligations resting upon them, and especially in regard to the small contribution for Lodge expenses and the relief of a poor, distressed Brother, would be warranted in taking advantage of such exception. There are always needy Brethren to be helped; and the duty of Masonic charity terminates only with the call that summons to render an account of how duty has been performed, or with previous inability. That Mason has learned but poorly the teachings of our Order, and profited but little by that upon which he was raised, who would turn aside his feet from the path of charity, withhold the ministering hand, or in any way seek to relax the five-fold tie that binds him to his Brethren the wide world over in the bonds of relief and Brotherly love, for no better reason than that he has been already bound by those silken yet indissoluble bonds for a period of twenty-five years. "Once a Mason, always a Mason," is as true in regard to Masonic obligations as it is of Masonic privileges.

We cannot but congratulate the Grand Master upon that portion of his address which so emphatically and so eloquently deals with the Masonic virtues of temperance and morality. The Grand Lodge passed upon the liquor habit, and declared the selling of intoxicating liquor to be a Masonic offence in its jurisdiction.

The total membership in Wisconsin is 13,387, showing a net increase during the year of 236, upon which we congratulate.