

A.—The authorities give very little light on the subject of honorary membership, and we are left to be guided by such analogies as may be found to apply to the circumstances of each case, and by what we suppose to have been the intention of the By-law in question.

In the absence of a direct provision specifying the privileges and rights to be enjoyed by honorary members in this Lodge, it is reasonable to suppose that the privileges assigned to an honorary member would at least be equal to those enjoyed by an ordinary member. He would be entitled to sit in the Lodge, to debate and to vote. He would also be, in general, entitled to hold office, and this By-law plainly implies that an honorary member may be elected to office, but that privilege is coupled with a condition, "that should he take office, he shall be placed on the list of subscribing members."

From the reading of the whole of this By-law, it appears that honorary membership is to be conferred as a mark of respect, or in consideration of the brother's services or zeal in the cause of Masonry. The election of an honorary member to office is an additional mark of respect, and it should not be regarded in the light of a punishment, by which he is to be deprived of an honor before conferred on him. The clause in question may be read to mean that while an honorary member is in office, and only during that period, he is to pay dues, and it may be regarded as a temporary suspension of his privilege of exemption from dues as an honorary member.

According to this By-law, one of the obligations attached to the acceptance of office is the payment of dues, but there is nothing to indicate that the acceptance of office is to deprive the officer entirely of his status as an honorary member.

Having once been elected as an honorary member by a vote of the Lodge, we think that that honorary

membership can only be lost by some action taken for the express purpose of bringing it to a termination. A brother may resign his honorary membership, and if the Lodge accepts his resignation, that ends it; or the Lodge may, by a prosecution for un-Masonic conduct, put an end to all the brother's rights and privileges, including the honorary membership.

If the members of the Lodge wish to deprive a brother of his honorary membership, they would surely never think of doing it by electing him to office. They would probably, in the first place, pass a resolution asking him to resign. It does not seem reasonable to suppose that a brother could be deprived of an honor which he has, by conferring on him an additional honor.

On the whole, we are of opinion that according to the proper construction of this By-law, if an honorary member is elected to office, and accepts the office, at the end of his term of office he resumes his former position as an honorary member without a vote of the Lodge.

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The Essex, (Mass.,) *Mercury* states "that the Rev. Mr. Chainey, pastor of the First Unitarian Church, of Evansville, Ind., having become a Rationalist, and startled his congregation by publicly denying the existence of God, and asserting that prayer was a hideous mockery, in consequence charges were preferred against him in his Masonic Lodge, and he was expelled for un-Masonic conduct." This is as it should be; for as no Atheist can be made a Mason, so if any member of the Fraternity subsequently lapse from the Masonic creed, which especially declares a belief in the existence of the Supreme Being, he should at once be excommunicated from the Society.