

NORTH CAROLINA.—1890.

THE 103rd Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina was held at Raleigh, on January 14th, 15th and 16th, 1890.

Grand Master SAMUEL H. SMITH, reported that during the past year, fourteen new Lodges have been instituted, some dormant Lodges revived and large accessions to membership have been made. He has the following timely remarks upon the secrecy of the ballot:—

In a few of our Lodges there appears to be an uncertainty or a lack of knowledge of Masonic laws and usages, which is, to say the least, lamentable. Several letters have been received by me detailing the result of a ballot, and showing that such ballot had been canvassed and members who had cast a black-ball discovered by inquiry, in and out of the Lodge. The ballot is a sacred Masonic institution, and its secrecy should be inviolable. A Mason who endeavors to extort from another what manner of ballot he has cast, or even reveals the character of ballot cast by himself, thereby violates his solemn obligation and is guilty of grossly unmasonic conduct. It is the duty of every Worshipful Master to impress upon his Lodge the impropriety, nay, the positive criminality, of any discussion or inquiry regarding the ballot after it has been taken and the result announced.

And under the heading "Unworthy Masons" we find the following:

Masonry, the hand-maiden of religion, like its mistress, is liable to imposition. Some are admitted to its fold who are unworthy of membership; others, alas! renounce their solemn obligations, and bring shame and disgrace upon the holy cause they have voluntarily espoused. Not infrequently the drunken and profane, the profligate and dissolute man, retains his membership in a Lodge without protest, and upon his death the community is scandalized by the gorgeous ceremonial which attends his obsequies. The cause of Masonry must suffer from such disgraceful exhibitions, and the Lodge which permits them cannot be too severely censured. No matter how notoriously immoral or even criminal a man may be, if he remains in good standing upon its record, his Lodge must accord him all Masonic rights, privileges and burial. After his death, protests, such as have come to me from suddenly awakened fellow-members, are totally unavailing. No man can be tried and condemned by Masonic law without the opportunity of being heard in his own defense. Death has not only sealed the lips of the accused, but has indelibly branded upon his Lodge and each individual member thereof the shame and disgrace which their neglect or indifference has permitted to tarnish their record.