

THE BLACK BALL

Much has been written and said about the menace of the black ball, about the reputations that have been besmirched, the tears that have been shed, and the hearts that have been broken by its misuse. This is perhaps only too true, but at the same time we must admit that it is also our protection, and as such must be recognized.

If "investigating committees" were a little more careful in their labors and a little more active in their investigations, there might be less use for the "negative vote", and chapters might have less cause to regret the election of certain members. However, it is not the "honest" casting of a black ball that disturbs a chapter, but the ball that is cast for spite or revenge or for some petty personal reason. It is difficult to understand how any member of the Order of the Eastern Star who has knelt at the altar and taken our obligation can cast a black ball for spite or revenge, or to get even with any officer of the chapter. Yet such, we are sorry to say, has frequently happened.

Investigating committees are appointed in open chapter, and any member knowing ought against a candidate is not only invited, but requested, to bring all information to the committee, that they may make a reasonable recommendation to the chapter. If information is withheld, which the committee has no way of finding out, the committee may unknowingly make an erroneous report, and the member sits back complacently and casts a black ball, when it might have been avoided by giving the proper information to the committee.

If, however, the member feels at heart that the applicant is not a desirable person, and the reason is justifiable, then the member should cast the negative vote. There are times, perhaps, when the member has a just complaint that she does not care to reveal even to an investigating committee, and in such case assumes the burden of the vote. We are not prone to criticize this, but it is the "revenge vote", the "spite ball", that so demoralizes a chapter.

When the applicant is above reproach, when the committee has made a fair and complete investigation, and every effort to find out the standing of the petitioner, and then some one casts a black ball because, forsooth, they did not like the one who

brought in the petition, or as one recently remarked, "she did not want the Worthy Matron to have too easy a time", or that the petitioner was a friend of some one else that "she didn't like", then we are prone to exclaim that the fault does not lie with the "black ball", but with the laxity in casting the "white ball."

A member with no more honor than to cast a black ball for revenge or spite is not worthy to be a member, and the "black ball should have been used on her petition when her application came in." Words are inadequate to express one's feelings about things like this in our beautiful Order, and we like these quotations from the Bible:

Let him that is without fault cast the first stone;

Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you.

We would just like to add that the member who is guilty of the "Black Ball" habit is not worthy of membership, and the sooner the chapter is rid of such an incumbrance the better it will be.

"Be not weary in well doing."