

furnish even a small hall for less than \$700.00 or \$800.00. There are exceptions, as in the case of one of our city Lodges with a debt of \$1,600.00, who expects, on good grounds, to be clear of debt in two years. But the utmost economy must be observed, for there are at times other expenses which we cannot foresee. Let me again repeat—better for a Lodge to exercise patience, and progress slowly, than by unhealthy growth to increase its numbers and revenue—easier far to replenish our funds, than to rid ourselves of incumbrances and hindrances in the shape of unworthy members. I have been in a position to observe closely the progress of new Lodges, and I believe they are more apt to admit members of doubtful usefulness than older Lodges. The anxiety to grow and prosper is so great that there is a danger of laxity. It is better to narrow our portals than to enlarge them; better in all cases to give Lodges the benefit of the doubt than those outside the pale. If there is a doubt or hesitancy, let the Lodge have the advantage; be sure the injury will not be inflicted on an institution we so much revere and honor; and let me here observe, after careful scrutiny, and painful experience and observation, that I am firmly convinced too many Lodges exist, and too many gain entrance and partake of our mysteries. I have no sympathy with, or belief in the statement, that a Lodge is unwieldy with 150 members; the largest Lodges generally work the most harmonious. Take a Lodge with 200 paying members, there is a revenue of \$1,000 per year, or say 150 paying members, yielding a revenue of \$750 per year; they then become self-supporting, and if doubtful materials offer they can afford to reject it, which some hesitate in doing. Far better for us as Lodges to conscientiously and strenuously oppose the formation of new Lodges, where they can reasonably be done without, or where

our Lodges are under the above numbers. When brethren suffer no inconvenience as to distance, and where sufficient and proper accommodation exists, our membership will increase almost as fast, Masonry will take a higher stand, will be more respected, and its advancement be of a more desirable character. Take the Lodges of this city, there are 14 Lodges in the city and vicinity, embracing a membership of not over 1,400 affiliated Masons, there is sufficient room here for over 2,000 members. We would, I believe, work more harmoniously, with less unworthy ambition and desire for office, sometimes at the expense of principle and honor, if merit and proficiency were the only ways to advancement, and were it not so easy to attain eminence. Under such circumstances it will be more valued, and will induce a greater desire on the part of aspirants to educate and prepare themselves for office. Another point, which very materially affects the financial standing of a Lodge, is the rapid changing of officers, and rapid entrances and exits. I think, after due consideration, the one year system is most injurious. Supposing a Master has so managed his Lodge as to have partial success for one year, and is looking forward to a second term, he naturally abates none of his vigor and earnestness, which I contend under the one year system, he will be more apt to do. The desire then, is for the rank, they are anxious to have rapid transit, the thoughts suggest themselves and are often acted upon, "only twelve meetings," "no use in over-exertion," a "medium year will pass me creditably;" but a Master so arranges that his second year is still more successful. There is no new Master that can take hold of the reins and direct a Lodge so successfully for a time, until he is acquainted with its workings. Take a successful financier: he is not removed from the management of a bank, warehouse or establishment in a short