

a corner stone of principle—a great truth which gives assurance of trustworthiness, as a basis on which to build a masonic edifice in harmony with the demands of our nature and the laws of our Creator.—*The Masonic Review.*

TOO LIBERAL, BY FAR.

We have been pleased with some remarks of Grand Master Coffinbury, wherein he urges, as a matter of importance, a close scrutiny into the intellectual capacities of candidates presented for initiation into our Order. The Grand Master, after referring to an admitted fact that many persons have been proposed for affiliation with our fraternity whose educational training has been sorely neglected, most justly remarks:—

“In order that such individuals may not penetrate far into the mysteries of the Sons of Light—if permitted at all to enter, the only true intellectual test has been established by Masonic law, in the rule that no candidate can be advanced unless he shows a competent intellectual capacity, and a proper moral appreciation by his proficiency in the science. If he can and will not, or if he would and cannot, learn, then he is unworthy, because he is incapable of becoming a Master in the art. This is one, and perhaps the only object of this grand Masonic provision. This rule has in many Lodges been grossly neglected; and perhaps no other rule, if neglected, is attended with greater calamity to the Order, for it is the very touch-stone which is to try the value of the matter that is to compose the several vessels of the temple.”

This is sound advice, and founded upon gospel truth. The error, however, does not lie with the individual members who, for reasons of either friendship or interest, may be induced to propose persons for candidature without well weighing other deviants than those of a moral character, but can be mainly attributable to the ill-advised and constantly augmenting desire of our Lodge to judge their efficacy by numerical strength in membership.

The fact is, that in the State of New York we have too many Lodges, which, if they were consolidated, might prove of double the efficiency of which they are now capable. But what makes the matter still worse, is that the number is constantly augmenting, as the ambition of individual or the internal discussions of existing Lodges prompts solicitation of dispensations, under which newly-created bodies work until their admission into the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge, a privilege which can scarcely be refused with umbrage to the Grand Master sanctioning the initial step, or to worthy individuals, identified with the undeveloped enterprise.

As a matter of course, the financial necessities of new Lodges demand a rapid increase in membership, otherwise the burden of charity falls with irksome gravity upon the charter members. With a view of gaining financial strength, inducements are illegitimately tendered to the profane to enter this newly-created branch of the institution, and to propitiate the influx of incomes, the strict interpretation of the Masonic requirements are overlooked, or in some instances wholly disregarded. Is it to be wondered, then, that amid this leniency men of a low intellectual calibre continue to pass the barriers the wisdom of our forefathers interposed.

In those branches of Masonry avowedly devoted

to the cultivation of the higher mysteries, a corresponding bad effect, in a Masonic point of view, is experienced; for generally the more ambitious of the blue craftsmen, unmindful of their personal disqualifications, regard deprivation of further elevation as evidence of hostility to the system they have already embraced. Let there be a remedy invented for this growing ill.—*The Mystic Temple.*

INDUSTRY AND HONESTY.

Common and homely virtues are industry and honesty, but not on that account beneath our notice. The bees love not drones, nor do men the idle and lazy; for those who are so are liable to become dissipated and vicious, and perfect honesty, which ought to be the common qualification of all, is more rarely met with than diamonds. To do earnestly and steadily, and to do faithfully and honestly, that which we have to do—perhaps this wants but little when looked at from every point of view; but how often do we see men greatly talented fail therein.

Idleness is the burial of a living man; for an idle person is so useless for any of the purposes of men that he is like one that is dead, and unconcerned in the changes of the world. Such a one only lives to spend his time and consume the fruits of the earth. Like a beast of prey, when his time comes he perishes; and, in the meantime, does no good. He neither ploughs nor carries burdens; all that he does being unprofitable or mischievous.

It is a vast work that any man may do if he never be idle; and it is a great way that a man may go in virtue if he never goes out of his way by a vicious habit or a great crime; and that man who spends much time reading good books, if his parts be answerable, will obtain a large stock of knowledge.

To learn and to do. This is man's work when he listens to his soul's requirements; for thus only can his reason increase, his intellect expand, and his soul grow.—*The American Freemason.*

OUR SISTER GRAND LODGES.

VIRGINIA.

From the proceedings of the last annual convocation of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, held in December, 1867, we make the following extract from the address of the Grand Master, Bro. Edw. H. Lane:—

“No lovelier spectacle is ever presented than that of an assembly of men coming together for the glorious purpose of spreading the cement of brotherly love and affection. Masonry does not consist, as some erroneously suppose, in mere forms and ceremonies. We reverence our Ritual for its beauty, antiquity, and the great truths and useful lessons taught thereby. The preservation of our noble institution depends upon a rigid adherence to the ancient landmarks; by them every Mason is taught—nay, it is enjoined upon him, “carefully to preserve and never suffer them to be infringed, or countenance a deviation from the established usages and customs of the fraternity.” The rites we practice, the usages that exist, and the customs that prevail among us, are by no means to be regarded as constituting the sum total of Masonry. In addition to these, (which every Mason should guard well,) it is founded upon great and fundamental principles, recognized alike by the Christian, the patriot, the