

to the Throne, charity to all mankind, and affection to the brotherhood; and it is the bounden duty of every Mason, whatever his position in life, to co-operate with his brethren for upholding the Craft."

## PROFESSION AND PRACTICE.

MOST of our readers in the course of their experience have doubtless met with enthusiastic brethren who take it for granted that a Mason can do no wrong. These enthusiasts are thoroughly convinced that the vast majority of those who join the Order are the most benevolent, the most moral, and the very noblest members of society. The theory in their minds, like some religious theories of "conversion," is that the instant a man has been received into the mystic circle he becomes a new being. The ignoble become noble minded, the hard-hearted become sensitive, and the man of lax morals becomes a pattern of all the virtues. An enthusiastic over-estimate of the Order, such as this, although it embodies a great deal of truth, is certain to do harm. We have never undervalued enthusiasm, and indeed we regard it as a great moral force, but when a brother, bent, at all hazards, upon blowing the trumpet of fame for the Order, ventures to describe the whole of his confraternity in terms which would be flattering if applied to the saints, we cannot but think that such commendation is sure to excite antagonism. The enemies of Masonry, on the watch for holes in our garments, will assuredly take up such a challenge as this. They will not tell us that there are mean and ignoble Masons, mercenary Masons, they may add indeed, by way of capping the sweeping assertions of the enthusiast, that Masons generally are no better than other people, and are not to be distinguished from their neighbors for any of the special graces of character. Possibly a calm and clearthinker might be disposed to admit the general truth of some of these charges, but he would join issue with reference to the latter, and, on fairly reasonable grounds; he might urge that Masons are a carefully selected community, that whereas society is necessarily composed of persons of all classes and dispositions, the ranks of the Order are filled only with men whose characters will bear a close inspection. Granted that men of the middle classes, for example, are generally speaking good citizens, the Mason, as such, gives an additional guarantee to society for his good behaviour, in the fact that he has become a member of a fraternity which rigidly punishes any infringement of a code which, for high and pure morality, will bear comparison with any system of ethics which has yet attracted the attention of men.

In saying thus much for the Order, we should not unfairly beg the real point in dispute. In fact, we are willing enough to admit that there are indifferent Masons in the Order. A community of saints is quite unknown in this sublunary sphere. Wherever men are banded together for any noble object, there will be people who will seek admission to their ranks for purely selfish purposes. We are not, indeed, ignorant of the fact that the self-seekers who employ Masonry for purposes of their own are to be found in every social grade. We should be the last to assert that the Order is more frequently degraded for purposes of trade than for objects which appear less sordid, but which in reality are not one whit more reputable. The rich man, who desires to get into a circle which may be entered by the agency of Grand Lodge, is unfortunately to be found occasionally in our midst. Some men make Masonry an engine for obtaining power and distinction, and while in pursuit of this object they are often willing to stimulate a benevolence they do not feel. Thackeray has remarked, over and over again in his wonderful fictions, that rich people will do far more unkind things than persons of low degree. A poor man would blush to be seen squabbling over the expenditure of a few shillings. He would be ashamed to depart from his word, or to permit any one to think that he had done so. Some of our brethren who are by no means rich are the most active in all works of benevolence. They seek no reward for their labors, and would be astonished if they received any. But it has sometimes happened that a rich man has made his Masonic professions chime in with his personal interest. He does not indeed display the emblems of the Order over his door, or on his carriage, but there are other ways of trading on Masonry, and not a few candidates for social positions have first qualified themselves by joining a lodge. Some of our brethren have painful personal recollections of men of this class, who are all things to all men in the lodge room, but who greet a brother when they meet him in the street with the cut direct. The great man, who is seeking to make his way into society, forgets the humbler member of the fraternity when it is convenient to do so, and only wakes up to a general and cordial recognition of his Masonic associates when his personal interests are directly at stake. We do not hesitate to characterize men of this stamp as unworthy members of the Craft. They may be eloquent advocates of the claims of the charities, but they have no heart in the cause, and merely display a fictitious activity to suit their own convenience.

An insincere professor is, indeed, a very unpleasant person, and it is gratifying to