

in it), which we carefully commend to the notice and the patience of our many and suffering brethren.

We have been perusing the quarterly papers and returns of Grand Lodge, and we are struck with this fact, that between the months of June and September, since the last quarterly communication, in fact, nine lodges have been added to our English muster roll, and that 1508 lodges, nominally, are on the list of English warranted lodges. And even that number, we are inclined to believe, does not quite exhaust the Calendar, as since this return was printed other warrants have probably been granted, and as we ourselves know, applications are being made almost daily for warrants for new lodges. What a wonderful fact in itself does this increase of our lodges present for our reflection and consideration. At the beginning of the present century the number of lodges "returned by Grand Lodge," we are told in the July number of the "Masonic Magazine," for 1873, amounted to 584, an increase of 224 lodges in thirty-four years. And now, in 1874, despite a large number removed, despite erasings and renumberings, we have 1510 names of lodges, in round numbers, reported by the Grand Secretary—an increase of nearly 1000 lodges in 73 years. In 1873, the Calendar contained the names of 1329 lodges, in 1874 of 1469 lodges. Thus, we note that close upon 200 lodges have been added to our numerical strength in two years, very nearly an average of 100 per annum, up to midsummer, 1874. When our new Calendars are published in November, in all probability, some other additions will have been made to the long roll of English lodges. Thus far, we think we may fairly assume, that we are progressing at the rate of 100 lodges per annum, and that, supposing too, the present rate of increase is maintained, and that nothing occurs to check or hinder the extension of our prosperous and united Order, in ten years' time—say 1884—our English Grand Lodge will number about 2500 warranted lodges. There are those amongst us, who affect to think they see evil in the increase of our Order, and who are inclined to shake their heads at the applications for new warrants. We entirely dissent from such ill-founded and narrow views of the subject, and we will give our reasons for so doing. In the first place, we think that, according to the Book of Constitutions, the appointed number of lawfully made Masons under our Grand Lodge, for "good and sufficient causes them thereto moving," applying for a warrant, according to the provisions of the Book of Constitutions, and duly recommended by the Provincial authorities should be encouraged in forming new lodges. Many of our popular lodges are far too numerous and unwieldy for Masonic sympathy and work, and sociality, from that very cause to suit the position or gratify the not unreasonable Masonic aspirations of many of our younger brethren. Whenever a lodge excels 80, or at any rate 100 members, a "swarm" of industrious Masonic bees (not drones) should be encouraged from the mother hive. For each such new Hive of Masonic industry and pleasant fellowship is, like its prototype in nature, to gain to the brotherhood of workers, a nucleus of other equally active little communities in due time, and a fosterer of strength and unity, of good will and light. It very often happens alike in London as in the provinces, that some of our lodges become, through material prosperity, so well to do and often so exclusive, that the hardest of all tests of admission, the most severe of all probation, are alike the voice of introduction and the word of favor. There is a tendency in Freemasonry, as in everything else human, to be led by cliques and sects, and if you belong to neither one nor the other, in some particularly famous lodge, you have not the slightest chance of passing successfully through the grave ordeal of the ballot. And without seeking to derogate for one moment from the absolute and inalienable right of all our lodges to exclude any one they think fit from the roll of members, we yet feel that cases may arise, and they often do arise, where many worthy brethren who are unable, from some cause or other, to join particular lodges, should be permitted to form new lodges, according to the wise and liberal provisions of the Book of Constitutions in that respect. And in the next place, we entirely disagree with those who think that we weaken old lodges, or unduly increase our body by granting new warrants. We, on the contrary, strongly hold, that, supposing all the preliminaries are arranged in a Masonic spirit, and on true Masonic principles, each accession to our Order is to be hailed with pleasure by every sincere and thoughtful Freemason. It is said in some things, that nothing "deadens like custom," and sure we are, that lodges, like everything else, are apt to become sleepy and indifferent, careless of anything but routine, alike in work and refreshment, and intolerant of improvement or change. Hence we are always requiring, so to say, a little Masonic revival amongst us, a little new blood thrown into the stagnant veins, a little awakening of the old "dry bones" of good old-fashioned easy-going Masonry. Every new lodge properly founded, and as properly ruled over, has a distinct place to occupy, and a mission to fulfil, in the economy of our little Masonic world. That then we conceive to be a very one-sided view of things, which deprecates new lodges, for fear of interfering with vested interests, or which condemns any active brethren, whether in town or country, to a practical exclusion from the rights and privileges and benefits of Free-