

should not have been the case anywhere; but all who recall the circumstances of our late civil war, will remember the "rush" into the craft that occurred then. Men put on Masonry as they would a helmet, to protect them from peril. The demand for the degrees of Masonry was prodigious, and the supply was equal to the demand. Even Military Lodges were warranted, and Masons were hastily made to order on the field of battle. That was a period of overproduction. Many rough ashlar were received then, which to this day are rough enough. Not a few of the personal stains on the escutcheon of Masonry have been owing to a period of war, the perils of a field of bloody conflict, and the consequent overproduction of Masons.

Another period of overproduction, is when a country is eminently prosperous, money plenty, and candidates everywhere ready to pay handsomely for the right to share in the secrets of the craft. Shoddy rich men usually make shoddy Masons. Gilding, under these circumstances, has often been mistaken for refined gold. An applicant for Masonry should be refined, for if he be not so upon entering, he will likely never be so thereafter. Freemasonry is not a hospital for the cure of moral ills, but an aggregation of sound men, physically, mentally, and morally. But all men are not sound in all these particulars—very far from it. The scrutiny of a committee of inquiry, and the test of the ballot, are intended to ascertain the qualifications of a candidate, and ordinarily do ascertain it, but not always. Masonry does not claim to be infallible; and it is sometimes imposed upon, but its purpose is always to detect the unworthy, before initiation, if possible, and afterwards, if such unworthiness manifest itself afresh. But it is difficult to be guarded against them when times are "flush," candidates plenty, and great financial prosperity knocking at the doors of all our lodges, demanding admission.

Still another period of overproduction, is, singularly enough, during "hard times," when money is scarce, the lodges poor, and candidates comparatively infrequently offering themselves. Then it is, also, that poor material is built into our moral edifice. Then it is that there is an overproduction of Masons, even when but few in the aggregate are being added to the craft. Lodges are too anxious for members. Brethren drum up recruits. The money of a candidate is looked at more closely than himself.

It will thus be seen that Freemasonry is always in danger of a glut of Masons—in time of war and in time of peace, in time of commercial prosperity and in time of financial distress. We cannot, therefore, be too careful in scrutinizing the qualifications of every applicant for Masonry. As the *Kansas Light* says, "There is not one man in five that is of the right material to be made a Mason," so that if we take the whole five, where are we? Covered in with rubbish. Let it not be. Let the Masonic crop be not large, but good. Let us have Masons who are true to their obligations, active and earnest in sharing in the work of the craft, and life-long lovers of the Fraternity, through sunshine and storm. Let us restrict our production of Masons, carefully select our material, and the result will be that the high character of Freemasonry will be fully maintained, and its repute so spotless that even no one in the profane world will dare to cast a stone at us.—*Keystone*.

UNDERSTAND THE FRUITS OF MASONRY.

If the symbolism of the compass and square was more strongly impressed upon the mind of the initiate, Masons would not, sometimes, malign to the profane, one whom in the lodge-room he is apparently pleased to call "brother," but would make an honest effort to live up to the duties and