

any actions but those of morality and munificence, is a stronger argument than any I can produce. I shall, therefore, say no more on this matter; and I should not have said so much if I did not know that you are capable of feeling the force of these arguments; for you have too much discernment to suffer yourself to be directed by that prejudice and caprice which has so much dominion over the common rank of women. If, with a pleasing figure and a graceful manner, you possessed only a common way of thinking, I should love you only as women are commonly loved; that is to say, for the gratification of desire and for self interest. But my affection is founded on a sense of your real merit, on the dignity of your mind, and the simplicity of your heart. If this affection is of any value with you, preserve it, Madam, by returning to your reason, and by dissipating those transient clouds which have eclipsed, for a moment, that favorable opinion you have hitherto entertained of me; and permit me to assure you, by the faith of a Mason, that my love shall endure as long as my life."

NON-AFFILIATION.

Among the questions now being discussed in Grand Masters' addresses and the reports of Correspondence Committees, that of non-affiliation appears to occupy a prominent place, and it is, on all hands admitted to be one of the sources of danger in the future.

Notwithstanding the importance of this subject, and in spite of all that has been written and printed during the past ten years, there does not appear to have been any general comprehension of the causes leading to the increasing evil of non-affiliation, and with one exception no common sense application of an adequate remedy. Writers generally seem to think that they must surround their propositions with a certain quantity of smoke to excite the admiration of the multitude, and this process seems to obfuscate their own ideas to such an extent that they fail to give us any adequate comprehension of what they would do if they had the power.

The diagnosis of the complaint is, however, a very simple matter, and the remedy somewhat surgical in its nature, is very easily applied, once we are convinced of its necessity and propriety.

The prime cause of non-affiliation is one for which Lodges themselves are to blame, and is merely an effect which will continue until the cause is removed.—This cause is the over-crowding of Lodges with a membership among whom there is no real bond of affection, because the business being transacted by wholesale, individuals are brought together without the slightest inquiry into their personal habits and tastes, and without any regard for that union which ought to distinguish the children of the mystic tie. The leading idea seems to be that a Lodge must have work and plenty of it; this carries with it a necessity for candidates and plenty of them; and, hence a looseness of enquiry fatal to the idea of making each stone fit with such exact nicety that wooden mauls may alone suffice to adjust it. Nevertheless the true aim of Masonic association is to aggregate men specially selected for their mental and moral qualities, and to afford a bond of union stronger than a three-fold cord and free from the disintegrating influences of the outer world. This

requirement cannot be complied with while the present standard of fitness exists and governs. We now seek to ascertain that a candidate has no bad qualities, and rarely, if ever, inquire whether he has any positively good ones. Instead of scrutinizing his tastes, habits, and propensities, as if he were about to marry into our family, we accept his personal appearance and the recommendation of a friend as sufficient guarantee for the most intimate fellowship and participation in our time honored privileges. We hazard nothing in saying that such was not the intention of the Fathers, and they never supposed that Lodges would ever be suffered to grow into such unwieldy proportions that the members should be comparative strangers to each other, and when meeting abroad need the formality of an introduction as a prelude to the ordinary civilities of intercourse between gentlemen.

It is, however, difficult to see how it should be otherwise, when, as it is frequently the case, Lodges run up a membership of two, three, and four hundred members, or how it is to be expected that there should be unity or accord of feeling among the masses thus fortuitously thrown together. What follows? Why naturally lukewarmness, then neglect, and then some other attraction provides for total forgetfulness of the Lodge and its duties, and one after another drops off without his absence being noted, until the secretary, making up his accounts at the close of the term, finds that so many brethren are in arrears for dues; another year, perhaps, rolls around and their number is increased, and the Lodge, to save itself from carrying so much dead weight, strikes them off its roll, and they go to fill the ranks of the non-affiliated. To the individuals this, as a general thing, makes but little difference; they had seen as many degrees conferred as they cared for, and, the conferring of degrees being the staple of Lodge attraction, nothing is left to make them regret the privilege of membership.

More than this they find little or no difficulty in visiting, whenever they happen to feel like it, because in the too liberal spirit of the day, no one cares to offer censure, or even want of respect to a brother, merely because he has not paid his dues; and so the earnest, zealous, industrious Mason, who pays his dues, attends his Lodge, and discharges the duties of Masonry according to his ability, finds himself on a par with those who neither work nor pay. Bad examples are notably contagious, and thus many a brother is led to imitate those whom he observes to be sipping the honey without in any way aiding in its production.

We see, then, that to avoid the tendency to non-affiliation we must, to a certain extent, restrict the luxuriant growth of our Lodges, make them homesteads instead of mass meetings, and not allow their numbers to increase beyond the point where all may be well acquainted, and enjoy the meetings as reunions of friends and brothers instead of mere ceremonials, tickling the ears and feasting the eyes but leaving the heart untouched.

And then the final remedy can be applied with absolute certainty of success. Draw the line of demarcation between the workers and the drones, so that there can be no mistake about it; close your doors without fear or favor against every man who is not in affiliation with some regular Lodge. Let the Mason who voluntarily remains in a state of non-affiliation be regarded as never having been initiated—dead, in fact; and this evil now looming up