

ner, hotel on the other, and two porters in the middle as *touts for licenses*."

"Touts for licenses?" said Mr. Jingle.

"Touts for licenses," replied Sam. "Two coves in white aprons, touch their hats as you walk in. 'License, sir, license?' Queer sort, them and their masters too, sir."

As Jack Bunsby, another of Dickens's characters, would say, "The bearing of this here quotation lies in the application of it." My application is this. Can a discriminating Masonic public draw a parallel between the "two coves in white aprons touting for licenses," and two illustrious Deputies of the Supreme Councils, *also in white aprons, touting for thirty dollar fees through the towns and cities of Ontario and Quebec*.

As regards the real value of these High Grade Degrees, I can speak with authority, being possessed of about all of them. As I said before, some are interesting, some amusing, and all harmless. To a Master Mason they are of no practical utility, he already having all that Masonry can give him, as regards rank, benefit or position. Still if he is possessed of Masonic curiosity and a spirit of research, if he can spare the time and can afford the expense. I can with good conscience recommend him to take them, if it can be done conveniently, and he is *not victimized by enormous fees*. If they will do nothing else for him, they will at least entitle him to affix certain mysterious numbers to his signature, to wear a variety of costly jewels, and to call himself by magnificent titles, such as "Illustrious Brother," "Sovereign Prince," or "Sovereign Grand Inspector General." To my mind, and in this I am sustained by most Masonic writers, the Grades or Degrees known as the "Rose Croix," and "Kadosh" are by far the best, and singularly enough these are Templar Grades, properly belonging to the "Order of the Temple," and of which it was somewhat surreptitiously deprived. They have no connection with, and are out of place in the hotch-potch aggregation of "Side Degrees," which form the principal ingredients in all the High Grade Rites. The Order of the Templar, I may here observe, is not in any sense a Masonic Rite or Order, although the degree of Royal Arch Mason is now required as a pre-requisite for admission to it. It is a Christian Chivalric Order, and is generally considered to be a genuine continuation of the old Knightly Order of the Temple of the Crusades, and admission to its ranks is eagerly sought after and highly esteemed.

MAITLAND.

## Ebb and Flow.

We have in Masonry, as well as in all similar associations, what may be termed an ebb and flow of apparent prosperity. We have times when everything seems to be on the high tide; when work is rapidly coming in; when applicants are numerous and persistent. Then the Lodge is well attended; a deep interest is manifested, and a general good feeling pervades the whole. There are also times when we seem to be on the ebb tide of prosperity; when from various reasons, there is but little work to be done; candidates for our mysteries are few in numbers and far between. Then the interest of many begins to wane. They who before were interested only in the novelty of our ceremonies, and excited by the large amount of work being done, become lukewarm; their attendance upon the Lodge is exceedingly rare. Slight and frivolous reasons will suffice as an excuse for staying away; the payment of dues is neglected, until at length they become a burden, and then follows exclusion from membership or suspension, thus increasing the already too large lists of non-affiliates throughout the country. Many of our Lodges are now in something of the condition I have just portrayed. During our late civil war, and for a number of years subsequent, the incoming tide ran high. Candidates were numerous and urgent—oftentimes anxious for us to waive, by dispensation or otherwise, those safeguards so wisely thrown around the ballot by our constitution. Every Lodge was crowded with applicants; special communications were necessary and of frequent occurrence; and all were largely attended. Ask any brother the question, "How is your Lodge prospering?" and the prompt reply would be, "splendid"; we were never doing so well before." Now circumstances are changed. Hard times and stagnation in business of all kinds have materially affected our Institution, and prevented many from knocking at our door for admission; while the great influx of other societies with high-sounding titles, holding out inducements both novel and attractive, has had a tendency to draw away some who would otherwise have sought admission into Masonry. In consequence, comparatively little work is now being done, and not a few of our Lodges are realizing that lukewarm condition I have alluded to; yea, many are getting despondent over the general apathy which seems in a greater or less extent to prevail. This ought not to be so, nor do I believe there is any good reason for it. That a Lodge is doing a large amount of work is not always a sign of real, genuine prosperity. In the rapid increase of members we are less liable to guard with care our outer door, so that the unworthy find little

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