

### A PRIVATE MEMBER'S DUTY.

This is a subject about which so much has been written from time to time that one can only hope at best but to reiterate many of the ideas that have long since grown familiar.

In the first place, it may be taken for granted that no lodge can fairly be successful unless the officers and members are fully alive to their duty and responsibilities. Many Masons evidently imagine that the whole responsibility of the lodge rests upon the shoulders of the few of their numbers who occupy the chairs. Now, while this in a measure may be true, it cannot be denied that upon every member rests a certain amount of responsibility. No lodge can be successful without active, intelligent, painstaking officers, but a lodge may sometimes possess these essentials without rising above mediocrity. Let the officers of a lodge be ever so efficient, if they do not have the co-operation of the members, they cannot succeed to any great extent. And this is one reason why we find so many lodges in a weak, unhealthy state. They have, perhaps, a large membership, and still it is quite possible they may have such a small average attendance as to find difficulty in getting a quorum. We have seen such lodges where, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the officers, little or no headway was being made. This is one of the great drawbacks. Members get careless and indifferent, become irregular in their attendance, and actually forget their night of meeting. How can you expect a lodge to prosper in that way. A candidate is initiated into a lodge, he is told of the excellent teachings, the noble precepts and grand truths that are inculcated, and the many benefits arising from the Order. This is all very nice, very encouraging, and he feels he has reason to be doubly grateful for his admission into such a

society. He attends regularly, he scarcely misses a night for a while, he lives up to our principles. In a short time he finds out how many members belong and is more than surprised to find that not more than fifteen per cent. of them ever attend. Now what a shock this must be to him to find that among all the brethren who have subscribed their names to the articles of our constitution, only such a few ever think it worth while to attend. Surely he must feel that our institution cannot be what it was represented or more interest would be taken in it by its members. This being his impression, and yielding to the influence of their example, it is not surprising to find he too soon becomes irregular in his attendance, and we must confess that when we look at the many drones that hover as it were around the outside of our hives, we are not surprised that the greater proportion of those regularly attending our lodges are made up of the younger brethren. This is not as it should be. If our institution is (and we believe it is) all that has been said of it, why should we forget the duty we owe to it in attending our regular communication.

We think if every M. M. would sit down for a moment he would be able to remember that there is some certain named distance, which, if he is within, he is expected to be present. Can it be that he has forgotten that distance! Perhaps so, and if so, why not forget just as easily many other duties.

It must be poor encouragement indeed for the officers and a few of the brethren to attend night after night and find many who are within a stone's throw of the lodge-room regularly conspicuous by their absence. We do not know how to get over the difficulty; we do not know any stronger motive that could prompt men to be faithful than what has already been impressed on every Master Mason in the course of the ceremony that elevated them to the proud dis-