

MASONIC POWER.

THAT the Institution of Masonry is one of great influence will readily be admitted by all who are acquainted with its mystic organization; but it is not, as some suppose, an Institution of sinister power, for though it doubtless benefits many of its members in their business interests, this is not its special purpose. Many men who are not Masons, as the world knows, do just as well in the fortunes of trade and business as any that are Masons, and therefore it should not be alleged that Masons support one another in business and in pursuit of office and place, for it would not be true. Indeed we should be glad to see more mutual support in business among the Craft than generally obtains in those days, and it would give a much brighter reflection upon the practical workings of the Order than we now see.

To be sustained in either his business or office a Mason must be something else than a mere member of the Craft. If he is a true man, imbued with the spirit and principles of Masonry, he will be found right in any position, and he may hope for success in any calling or undertaking. In Masonry, as it is in other institutions, the spirit and manners and principles of the man give him success much more than any nominal relationship ever can do.

The power of Masonry, where it has any, is chiefly found in its fraternities and charities, and these many never experience, because they so act as to ask no favors of any one. They are Masons because they love the principles and philosophic teachings of the Order. They have seen something of its work, and they have joined the association because they believed that the organization is one of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. All such connections as these show its great moral power, as well as its distinguished relative worth.

As an Institution of *patronage*, we believe the Masonic is not even as good as many others, for anything like clannishness or partiality or especial patronage, except for cause, is contrary to the spirit and general teachings of the mystic circle.

Masonry loves to show its power, especially in grand humanities and in free and generous fraternities, where liberality of sentiment is intelligently tolerated, and where none is made a favorite at the expense of the many. Intelligent qualifications, of course, give prominence in any association, and so it often is in Masonry, and yet at the same time personal ambition and sinister aspiration are considered at all times out of order.

As an organization of moral power it perhaps stands unequalled, for its obligated intelligence is more binding and of stronger influence upon the general actions of life than those of any other society with which we are acquainted.

This power no doubt makes many better men and better citizens than they would have been if they had never become Masons. Yet we yield the point that true and honorable men anywhere are as good as any Masons, though they never belonged to the Fraternity. The Mason may probably understand more of the theory of fraternity and charity, and yet he may not excel his outside brother in any of life's higher nobilities. It will therefore be seen that some men are good Masons in spirit and principle and honor who never were Masons, while others have utterly failed to become Masons though they have taken all the degrees.

The seed sown by the mystic Fraternity can only germinate and grow in good soil, and this may be given as the reason of that Masonic defectiveness we sometimes see, and which at times reflects such great dishonor upon the Fraternity itself. Making no pretensions to civil power or government, or any attempts at theological or religious dictation, it quietly takes its position in society, and goes on in its work without any boastings or display, or ever asking for a word of praise from any class of men, whether they are in power or out of it.

As harmless to the outside world as the child at the breast of its mother, and ruled by the law of non-interference in regard to all other organizations and associations, its operations are quiet and peaceful and its history therefore is one of "peace on earth and good will to man."

It makes no litigations, creates no discords, sheds no blood, makes no widows, and knows nothing of orphanage, except in its sympathies and charities.

It never proscribes, because it has no faith in proscription as a theory of reform or of human government. Its liberality of sentiment is the measure of its charities, and wherever it fixes its empire it is only to stay while it has its supporters, and where it is not wanted it retires with becoming grace and without a single murmur.

Men and organizations of different kinds have for ages been waging war against its very existence without even knowing the alphabet of its genius or the power of its name. What it is, they have often tried to divine without a single success, and all their efforts to destroy it have been equally abortive. Its very being has continued to