

ESSENTIALS TO LODGE PROSPERITY.

Among the many helps which contribute to the progress and prosperity of a Masonic lodge, some things count as essentials. They constitute the agencies and forces which cannot be overlooked, or set aside, if the organization is to be made strong and useful according to what is possible where the right means are employed.

For the prosperity of a lodge it is essential that men of intelligence and character should compose its membership. The larger and controlling element must be of this stamp if any considerable measure of success is to be reached. If a lodge falls into the hands of men who have no standing in the community—whose characters and conduct do not show that moral principle is the ruling quality of their lives—it cannot be expected to flourish. Like seeks like, and a lodge which falls into the hands of men who are not much esteemed by their fellow citizens, will hardly gather to itself the best material of the neighborhood. They who are drawn into such a lodge will naturally be influenced by the lower instead of the higher motives, and so will be likely to become a drag instead of a help to the association; or, if some accessions of a better stamp are gained, very probably such new comers, not finding the condition to be what they anticipated, will quietly fall out and seek a more congenial fellowship. The first essential to lodge prosperity is that the organization shall be composed of sensible and well-informed men who sustain a good reputation in the community where they reside. Beginning with such a class, however small the number, and accepting no additions unless of similar material, one most important condition of prosperity will be observed.

Another essential is that the members shall learn the art of meeting and working together. Very good

people often disagree. Paul and Barnabas were alike honest and high-minded men, and they had a hearty devotion for the same cause, but they differed as to plans and methods. Thus we have the record: "And the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder, one from the other." A lodge may include in its membership the best sort of people—men who have influence in society because of their ability, and who are known to be just and honorable in all their dealings—and yet there may be so much friction in the management of its affairs as to prevent the realization of any large measure of success. A want of unity among members is a barrier to success. Brethren in a lodge may have the gifts of culture and moral enrichment, but unless they can come together in true accord, each being willing to show some subordination of personal feeling to what others may desire, they will hardly make their organization strong and efficient. Positiveness of thought and character is an excellent trait, but Masonry teaches that something may well be yielded for the general good. Only as a broad and liberal view is taken, and consideration shown for the opinion of others, will it be possible to create a wholesome atmosphere in the lodge room, or prepare the way for those accomplishments so much to be desired.

The prosperity of a lodge must likewise depend upon its understanding and expression of the principles of Masonry. If a lodge is regarded only as a sort of social club, bearing the legends of good cheer and pleasant companionship, however it may be a ministry of delight to genial brethren, it will not fulfil its largest and most legitimate work. The relations of sociability may not be ignored in the lodge, but it must never be forgotten that genuine Masonry rests upon principles, ideas and truths that keep the life to its higher unfolding—that these moral features