

which we quote: "He ought to be true and trusty; of good repute; held in high estimation among the Fraternity; skilled in Masonic knowledge; a lover of the Craft; exemplary in his private conduct; courteous in his manners, and steady and firm in principle." These, we maintain, are essential qualifications, for, as his power is great, so are his responsibilities correspondingly great, and the consequences of a lack of them cannot but be disastrous to the Lodge over which he presides, as well as to the Fraternity at large; and yet, how often, alas! do we find Worshipful Masters possessing but few of the required qualifications.

It is frequently urged as a sufficient reason for this, that, in some Lodges, especially those in the country, where the number of members is limited, it is impossible often to find a Brother properly qualified, and willing to undertake the responsible duties of governing a Lodge. Now, while we admit that, in some instances, this may be true, we cannot but regard it as a very unfortunate circumstance, that there are to be found so many inefficient and incompetent Worshipful Masters. We have no hesitation in saying that this, more than anything else, injures our glorious cause, and, even, in some localities, brings it into disrepute. Sufficient caution is not exercised by members of Private Lodges in the election of him who is to preside over them, because they, through ignorance or carelessness, do not attach sufficient importance to this matter. To all such we wish to raise a warning voice, to beware of incompetency in the Brother whom you exalt to this responsible and time honored position. Every member of Society at large exerts an influence for good or for evil over those with whom he associates and comes in contact, and how much more is this true in a society like ours, and especially as regards him who is at once placed in the position of both ruler and teacher. As is the Master, so is the Lodge over which he presides. We may lay this down as a maxim which will invariably be found to be true. In a world like ours, composed of individuals of all degrees of intelligence, cultivation, and moral susceptibility, it is not to be wondered at that we find a vast diversity of opinion as to what constitutes a model of excellence, which can be held up for imitation and example: but in a society like that of the Freemasons, where plans and precepts for our guidance are so plainly laid down, it is difficult to imagine how such numbers can differ so widely in what they conceive to be the duties and responsibilities of their position. We have known some Worshipful Masters, who devoted a great deal of time and energy in the getting up of Masonic rituals and set formularies, and when they had delivered themselves of these, before their Lodge, with school-boy exactness and monotony, congratulate themselves on, not only having performed their duty, but as having distinguished themselves as Masters, in a manner worthy of imitation—while at the same time their Lodge is shamefully ruled as regards discipline and Masonic harmony.