

A Lodge Is Born

WHAT did you think of it?" inquired the Old Tiler of the New Brother as they came out of the lodge room in which a lodge had just been consecrated, dedicated and constituted. "It isn't often that we have a chance to see that ceremony."

"I don't care if I never see it again," returned the New Brother. "It's hot in there, and it struck me as a lot of blah, just words which mean nothing. Why do they have to go to all that bother? Why the corn and wine and oil? Why not just say, 'you are a lodge-go ahead and work,' and have it over with?"

"Would you have the Master say, 'this lodge is open and 'this lodge is closed' for an opening and closing ceremony?" asked the Old Tiler.

"I wouldn't go as far as that," answered the New Brother. "But this ceremony leaves me cold. I can't see any sense in having this new lodge anyhow!"

"Oh! So that's it!" The Old Tiler smiled wisely. "You are objecting to the beautiful ceremony we have just witnessed because you are not in sympathy with the creation of a new lodge at this time and place!"

"I wouldn't say that." The New Mason flushed.

"Did you, by any chance, happen to want election to an office in the new lodge, and they chose someone else?"

The New Brother made no answer.

"There will be other new lodges!" comforted the Old Tiler. "And you are a little too young in Masonry to aspire to office in a new lodge. But I can't let you keep this wrong attitude about one of the really beautiful ceremonies of our beloved order. Have you ever attended the graduation exercises of any grammar school, high school, or college?"

"My little girl graduated from the eighth grade into high school last week," answered the New Brother. "Why?"

"It's at least an even bet that you saw half of that ceremony through wet eyes," answered the Old Tiler. "As you watched all those fresh young faces, boys and girls leaving childhood for youth, taking the big step that is between the grade schools and high school, facing the unknown future so blithely, was not your heart touched with a knowledge of all the disappointments and heartaches these happy and carefree children must undergo?"

"Of course."

"You wouldn't be a human father otherwise! To me a consecration, dedication and constitution of a lodge is something like that. The new little lodge starts out so bravely. It is composed of Masons who have had no Masonic responsibilities. Sometimes one can find an old Past Master who will go into the new line, but generally they are new and untried officers. They satisfy the authorities that they are competent to confer the degrees, but who knows their abilities to form a new lodge into a coherent whole, their tact in keeping harmony, their knowledge of the necessity for practicing brotherhood in the lodge?"

"They come here, these brave bright brethren, and the Grand Lodge performs this beautiful ceremony. The corn, the wine, the oil, are poured for them. They are consecrated to God, dedicated to the Holy Saints John, and constituted a member of the family of lodges under this Grand Lodge. Masters of other lodges are present to wish them well. Some come bearing gifts-the jewels the officers wear, the working tools, perhaps a modest check from the lodge which sponsored them, to help the new thin treasury get a start.

"They have no traditions to steady them. They have no matters of common knowledge to bind them together. They have no past of which to talk. All they possess is their mutual Masonry and their mutual responsibility-their hopes, their fears, their plans and their determination. An unwritten page is theirs on which to record their Masonic future. The Mystic Tie is all they know of lodge life. The Grand Master pronounces them a lodge, the charter or warrant is presented and they are born. To me it is a simple, beautiful, pathetic and interesting sight, and one I never tire of seeing."

"I am a fool." The New Mason spoke with conviction. "Old Tiler, why did the Senior Deacon gather up the corn that was used and put it carefully away?"

"He couldn't gather the wine and the oil, since they were spilled for good," answered the Old Tiler. "But that little horn of corn will be kept until this new lodge itself sponsors another new lodge, then to be offered to them, that they may be consecrated with the same corn poured for the Mother Lodge."

"Oh, I *am* a fool, indeed," cried the New Mason. "Please take me with you to the next such ceremony, will you?"

The Old Tiler grunted. But it sounded like a promise.