

BLUFF

"You are the only man in the lodge I can talk to and say what I think!" announced the New Brother to the Old Tiler.

"Do you think me the only one with understanding, or am I the only man stupid enough not to take exception to your remarks?" smiled the Old Tiler.

"I don't exactly know," confessed the New Brother. "You are not offended when I say that which you don't agree. For instance, I think there is a lot of bluff about Freemasonry. You won't get offended with me; you'll probably convince me I don't know what I am talking about."

"Assuredly I am not offended," answered the Old Tiler, "but give me some examples of Masonic Bluff. To me, the fraternity seems honest, upright, aboveboard, simple, sincere."

"Oh! It intends to be," rejoined the New Brother, impatiently. "But it does bluff. For instance, we prate about 'Masonic light,' 'further light,' 'more light,' yet Masonry never gives it to you!"

"Don't you mean it never gives it so an ignorant and unintelligent man can understand it? I have been Tiler for more years than you have lived. I have grown old and gray in Masonry, always getting a little more light through its gentle ministrations. Now you try to tell me it is all a bluff!"

"There, there, old chap, don't get sore! I am puzzled as to why we promise so much and give so little."

"I think we promise much and give more!" retorted the Old Tiler. "We give the path at the end of which the light shines in glorious brightness. Masonry is not a school, a college, a university. It doesn't attempt to hold classes, to use textbooks, to pump the young and uninformed mind full of information. It veils its truths and their application in symbolism and allegory. Masonry points the way to study, to new vistas, to a new beauty to life, a new truth to philosophy, a new meaning to religion.

"The simple facts and the simpler faith of the ritual are learned in a couple of lessons. But the inner meaning requires many lessons. Earnest students have spent their lives trying to reach the bottom of the well of information which is Masonry, nor ever plumbed its depths. Masonry teaches men how to think, and to think for themselves. Masonry teaches men the real beauty of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. Masonry instills into men's minds a new conception of God. It makes no difference what religion you follow, Masonry amplifies it, clarifies it, helps you to understand it. No man with a heart in his breast and a brain in his head can stand before a Masonic Altar without a new conception of his relations with his fellow men. If he hears with deaf ears he is a Mason in name only.

"Masonry's ritual is a key by which to read the symbols. If you are lazy, or unable to think, Masonry safeguards herself by requiring effort of you. If she wrote every truth she has, she would cast the pearls of her wisdom before the swine of brethren who cannot appreciate her. The winding tortuous road of knowledge is difficult; Masonry's wisdom is only for those with the brains and the perseverance to pursue her secrets through her symbols into the broad light of understanding."

"You mean that if I find the 'further light' of Masonry a bluff the fault is in me and not in Masonry?"

"Absolutely! That so many learned men devoted their lives to fathoming Masonry should show the young Mason that when he is entitled to wear the square and compasses he has just begun! Masonry has vast knowledge, but only for those who look. Masonry gives a wonderful reward, but only for those who are willing to follow where she leads.

"The bluff in Freemasonry is in the minds of brethren who expect all and give nothing; who try to appear Master Masons when they are but lodge members. The bluff is not in the system of philosophy we call Masonry, but in the unthinking, dull-witted, unimaginative, and non-useful members of the lodge who are Masons in name only!"

"Ouch!" cried the New Brother, "I shall go away from this company to hunt the library!"