

## Could Be

I am much disappointed, " announced the New Brother, sadly, sitting down beside the Old Tiler during refreshment.

"Disappointed in what?" asked the wielder of the sword.

"Why, Masonry in general, and this lodge in particular," answered the New Brother. "Neither are what I thought they were."

"That's too bad," sympathized the Old Tiler. "Tell me about it."

"My dad was a Mason. He told me how helpful Masonry was and how a lodge stood back of a fellow, and how one brother would go out of his way to help another, and if you were in trouble, a brother would help you out of it. I believed it. But I have been a member here now for some time and I have seen none of that."

"Been in trouble, son?" asked the Old Tiler.

"I suppose everyone has some troubles."

"Have you been in any real trouble, in which you could have been aided by the lodge had the lodge known of it?"

"That isn't the question," answered the New Brother.

"No, I'll agree it isn't. So I will ask you the real question" said the Old Tiler, and his lips lost their smile. "How many brothers have you helped since you have been a member? How many shoulders have you slapped? How many men have you gone to and said, 'Jim, I know you are in trouble, count me in to help because we both belong to the same lodge?' "

"Why, how you talk!" replied the New Brother. "I hardly know anyone in the lodge, yet. How would I know whether they were in trouble?"

"The same way they would know if you were in trouble, of course!" answered the Old Tiler. "I am an old man and I have had a lot of trouble, most of which never happened. You complain that Masonry is a failure because you have not personally experienced its helping hand. You admit you haven't needed it. And you also admit you haven't held it out. Brotherhood means the relation between two brothers, not the relation of one brother to another and no comeback. If you can't be a brother, how do you expect a man to be a brother to you? You ask me how you would know if a brother is in trouble. How does anyone know?"

"Here are some stories I heard last week. Brother A, of this lodge, lost his wife two weeks ago. It was in the papers. Two brothers of this lodge sent their wives to his house to look after his children until he could make arrangements for a nurse. Another brother

of this lodge failed in business. Lodge action wasn't necessary, but two bankers and a businessman went to the poor failure and staked him, and put him on his feet. A brother of this lodge has a boy who is wild. Last week the boy went joy riding with too much hooch in him and smashed up a car which didn't belong to him. The owner wanted to put the boy in jail, where he belonged, but a brother of this lodge took the responsibility on himself, sent the boy to a farm during good behavior, saved a father from a broken heart and maybe society from a criminal. The home of a brother of this lodge burned down last month. It wasn't insured. He had just paid for it. Ten brothers of this lodge financed his new house; he will pay a dollar a week for life, or something, but he had fraternal help. Three brothers in the lodge tonight are out of work, and with little money. Before they go away someone will see that they, get a chance."

"But how do brothers know other brothers are in trouble? They don't get up in lodge and tell it!"

"How did you expect people were going to come and help you if you didn't let them know you needed help?" countered the Old Tiler.

"Why, I just thought maybe Someone would have enough interest in me to know . . ."

"Have you had enough interest in your brethren to know when they were in trouble?"

"I . . . er . . . why. . ."

"You needn't answer. In every lodge are the 'gimmies' and the 'lemme's.' The 'gimmies' are those who want things done, and the 'lemmies' do them. In every lodge are the 'haves' and the 'haven'ts.' It's up to the 'haves' to share with the 'haven'ts.' I take it you are naturally a 'have.' You have money, clothes, a good position. You are not in need of help from your brother. But some brethren are in need of help from you. It may be a dollar, advice, a word to an influential friend, a loan, it may be some of the things I have told you about. If brotherhood is to mean what you hoped it won't be because you get it, but because you give it. A Masonic lodge should never be in organization from which a man expects to get something. If everyone was disappointed because no one did anything, it would be a failure. It isn't a failure because most real Masons look for the chance to do something for some brother who needs help."

"Some brethren do a lot for idiotic new members, just by talking to them!" responded the New Brother remorsefully. "Do you suppose you could slip a dollar to each of those three who haven't any and tell 'em you found it on the floor?"

"Could be," answered the Old Tiler.

"And please believe I don't think it's I failure and the only thing about it which is disappointing to me is myself

"Could be," answered the Old Tiler.