

Discounts

You know Briggs, the tobacco man?"

"I buy my cigars from him. " answered the Old Tiler.

"Have a cigar that Briggs didn't sell!" answered the New Brother, offering his case. "I have bought my last one from Briggs!"

"Too expensive?" asked the Old Tiler. "Thank you for a match, too. I'll supply the habit, though!"

"Much too expensive!" agreed the New Brother. Briggs is a member of this lodge and I wanted to give him my trade, but he doesn't appreciate it."

"I always found old Briggs a very decent sort of chap," answered the Old Tiler, surprised. "We have bought lodge smokes from him for years. Many brethren give him their trade. What's he done to you?"

"Sent me a bill marked 'please remit!' That's something I don't like. My credit is good. I always pay my bills."

"Why did Briggs do it?"

"I suppose he wanted the money! I had intended to pay the bill, but I was short last month, so I let it go over. And then comes this insulting note!"

"Pay full price for the goods?"

"Oh, no. Briggs always gives always gives a little discount to the members of his lodge."

"As a piece of Swiss cheese you are the smallest round hole filled with bad air I ever saw!" snorted the Old Tiler, disgustingly. "First you ask for and take a discount, because of a common brotherhood, then you keep your brother waiting for his money, and finally you get peeved when he asks you for it and propose to take your trade elsewhere. I have heard of small potatoes and few in a hill, but I didn't know we had nubbins in this lodge that grew in hills all by themselves!"

"Why, how you talk!" responded the New Brother, indignantly. "Is it your idea of brotherhood to talk to me that way?"

"It surely is! In the most friendly manner I am reminding you of your faults! You treat Briggs in a most un-Masonic way and then grouch about the way he treats you! Asking for discounts because of a common Masonry is a most un-Masonic practice. You don't say to a merchant, 'Mr. Jones, you and I belong to the same church, therefore give me a discount.' You don't say 'Mr. Brown, You and I belong to the same country club,

therefore give me a discount.' You don't say, 'Mr. Smith, you and I graduated from high school in the same class, therefore give me a discount! But you do say to old Briggs, 'Briggs, you and I belong to the same lodge, therefore give me a discount. If you don't, I'll buy elsewhere. And if you favor me I'll keep you waiting for your money and when you ask me for it I'll get peeved!"

"Masonry is not a purchasing society, a mutual benefit association, or a cooperative buying plan. When a Mason can buy from a Mason it is a pleasant custom to do so. Members who can help each other financially without loss to themselves should do so. But we should not use our common Masonry as a lever to make men favor us financially. We shouldn't demand discounts. Masonry should make us charitable, not irritable. We shouldn't visit on a brother the sins we commit. You were delinquent about that bill. Instead of being peevish, you should pay without taking a discount, and apologize to old Briggs for being so neglectful of your obligation!"

"Like vaccination, Masonry either takes or it doesn't. If, seeing another Mason, you say to yourself, 'He wears the same pin I do. I wonder what he will do for me?' Masonry hasn't taken with you. But if you say, 'That chap wears a Masonic pin! I wonder what I can do to help my brother?' your Masonry has taken."

"Briggs likes to favor his brethren. Most of us won't let him give us discounts. I pay Briggs just what I'd pay any other cigar merchant, and glad to. I even walk out of my way to buy from Briggs, because I like to help him. The lodge takes no discount when it purchases cigars. Why should it? It's not an object of charity. Briggs ought not to have to subsidize as customers his own lodge members. Yet you complain of a bill!"

"Wait a minute! I didn't think. I'm on my way now to buy a whole lot of cigars from Briggs at the best price and to pay my bill and tell Briggs I am sorry and . . ."

"Oh, I knew all that before!" grinned the Old Tiler. "You are not a bad potato, you know, just a little one. But you will grow!"

"And one of those boxes of cigars is for you!" ended the New Brother.

"Discount offered me for lending yourself to be my verbal chopping block!" grinned the Old Tiler.

"Not at all!" cried the New Brother. "Payment in full for half an hour's conversation!"