

Gambols on the Green

IT'S DISGUSTING!" began the New Brother. "Morton must think more of his stomach than he does of his Masonry. Insisting on expensive refreshments for ladies' night. What's the use of a ladies' night, anyhow? Jenkins is trying to start a ball game and Elliot wants a picnic! All this isn't Masonry!"

"Why isn't it?" asked the Old Tiler.

"What a foolish question. You know that Masonry isn't just enjoyment and foolishness."

"I've been a Mason half a century," said the Old Tiler, "but maybe I don't know what Masonry is. Certainly I don't know all that it is. Who told you these chaps who want refreshments and ladies' nights and ball games and picnics thought these were all of Masonry?"

"But they are not dignified! Masonry is grave, impressive, grand, solemn. Picnics and ball games and entertainments are frivolous. They can't mix."

"Go on, you interest me strangely," commented the Old Tiler. "Tell me, is it irreligious for a church to have a picnic or a social?"

"Why-er-I suppose not. But it isn't the church that has 'em, it's the Sunday School."

"Where they train children to be good, love God and come to church. The minister should know better than to try to impress children with the Fatherhood of God by holding a picnic! Any church entertainment which makes people come and laugh and know each other better and make money to decorate the church is wicked. I would speak to the district attorney about it, if I were you."

"Now you are laughing at me!" protested the New Brother.

"That's more than anyone else will, if you keep on chattering," went on the Old Tiler. "Masonry is all you have said it is, and a great deal you haven't said. Religion is more than going to church. If God call stand seeing His ministers, and those who love and follow Him, having innocent enjoyment in an entertainment or a ball game or a picnic, it should not hurt Masonry to do tile same thing.

"Masonry is strong only as its bonds are strong. Its greatest bond is not charity, relief, knowledge, learning, ritual, secrecy-but brotherhood. The feeling you have for one who has sat in lodge with you is brotherhood. You have sworn the same obligations, seen the same work, experienced the same emotions-there is a bond between you. Whatever makes that bond stronger is a help to Masonry.

"A picnic brings Masons together informally. It brings children together to play. You learn that Smith is different from what he appears in the lodge-there he is shy, retiring,

almost insignificant. On a picnic lie is in his element; playing with the children, having a good time with the men, helping the women-and you like Smith better. There are a thousand Smiths and a thousand of you, and it is a picnic or a ball game or an outing of some sort which brings you together.

"Ladies' nights show women that Masonry is innocent, happy, good. They learn what sort of men their husbands and brothers and sweethearts and sons see every week. They learn to associate a name and a personality with a position; they discover that the Master s human, the Secretary is nice, the junior Warden decent, the Senior Warden delightful. Such contacts spread the good repute of the order. Some men don't get as much out of the lodge as they might; it's their fault, perhaps, but we are not supposed to look for our brothers' faults. If the ladies' night makes the come-but-seldom brother feel that his lodge is doing something for him, it is worth while.

"There are other uses for money than hoarding it. There are better ways of spending it than upon new costumes and furniture. One good spending is to make someone happy. If this lodge has spare funds to provide some pleasure for it's ladies, we should so spend it. If we have cash to finance a picnic or a ball game, it's wise to use it so. The gravity and solemnity of the third degree will not be hurt by the fun you have, any more than our reverence for the Creator is damaged by a Sunday School picnic or a church entertainment.

"Son, Masons are human. We arc not better or different or larger, finer or more learned than our fellows. We strive toward perfection by means of a fraternal vehicle which the years have proved to be strong, well made, able to carry us to happiness and honor. If it could be damaged by picnics and ladles' nights, it would have fallen to pieces long ago. If its dignity was so slight that it was injured by a Masonic ball game, it would have been a laughing stock the day after baseball was invented.

"Get outside of Masonry and look in on it; see it for what it is, not for what it merely appears to be during a degree. When you see Masonry as love for one's fellow, brotherhood between men, charity to all, and reverence for God, you won't think that gambols on the green of life can hurt it."

"I have to go in lodge now," the New Brother announced.

"What's your hurry?" asked the Old Tiler.

"Got to support the motion to spend enough to give the girls a real feast!" grinned the New Brother, as he retied his apron strings.