

Hep! Hep!

THANK you for tiling," smiled the Old Tiler, as he resumed his sword after a trip for ice water. "What are they doing in there now?"

"Fighting like a lot of snarling puppies!" responded the New Brother disgustedly. "My idea of Masonry is not a red-hot discussion every meeting, as to whether or not Jim Jones is or isn't, or we ought or ought not, to spend eleven dollars for something or other."

"Go on, tell me what your idea of Masonry is!" The Old Tiler's voice was sardonic.

The New Brother had crossed swords with the Old Tiler before. "Not much I won't, and have you blow my ideas full of air holes!" he retorted. "But you tell me why some lodges pull so well together, have such harmonious conception of their goal, and others, like ours, are always fighting. "

"Did you ever see I do-fight, with only one dog?" asked the Old Tiler. "Did you ever see a boiler explode without too much steam and not enough water in it? Did you ever see a team of horses take a heavy load uphill all pulling different ways?"

"A lodge can't fight unless it has something to quarrel about. We are having a series of floor fusses because we have about three or eleven alleged brothers who don't know anything about military drill! If they had heard an old drill sergeant say, 'hep, hep, hep,' a few thousand times, they'd get 'hep' to themselves. At first they'd be like the soldier son of the proud old Irish mother watching her boy parade and saying, 'Ah, do yez moind, they is all out o' step but him!' After a while they'd learn that they couldn't keep in step by going as they pleased -- they'd learn to watch the fellow to the right and the chap to the left.

"In a lodge there are brothers who won't stay in step, not because they can't, but because they are too busy watching their feet to see the other fellow's shoes. Take Biggsby, now; Biggsby is the big fellow with the overgrown grip on a nickel, who is forever and always blocking business by insisting on a detailed explanation of every appropriation. He isn't in step. Our lodge is rich enough to spend some money without worrying. Biggsby thinks that if we don't pinch ten cent pieces until they coppers, we are going to the Masonic Home!

"Isn't it right to have someone watch the appropriations?" interrupted the New Brother.

"Watch 'em by all means," answered the Old Tiler, "and kick if anyone tries to slip something over. But watching is one thing and objecting to the wishes of the majority because of private beliefs regarding the sacredness of two-bit pieces is another. No one cares if Biggsby wears out a dollar's worth of shoes saving a ten-cent car ride. They are Biggsby's shoes and that's Biggsby's business. But in lodge he should get in step and not object to lodge expenditures on personal grounds.

"There should be no politics in Masonry, but there never was a lodge that didn't have politics in its elections. If Jim Jones lobbies trying to get Bob Smith elected, and Frank Robinson spends time and effort to get Bill Brown elected, no special harm is done, unless they keep up their fight after it is won and lost. 'Some people never know when they are licked' is not always a compliment. In a lodge with real spirit, Bill forgets after he loses his fight and works for the successful candidate. In a lodge where Bill isn't 'hep' to his Masonry or himself, he carries a grouch, tries to make the successful chap unhappy, gets in the way of the machinery and generally stirs up trouble.

"You are just beginning in Masonry. You have joined a good lodge. What's happening in there is just a phase. Those fellows will learn, in time, that when ten or forty or four hundred men form a real Masonic lodge, as a body they are something bigger and better than ten or forty or four hundred times the bigness and goodness of the individuals. A true lodge spirit provides a lot of give and not much take. When every member is 'hep' to the other fellows' ideas – when every member makes a distinction between conduct for himself and what his organization should do – when each of us thinks of his fellow-member as his brother in heart as well as in organization, then your lodge develops real lodge spirit and stops foolish fighting."

"I see," answered the New Brother. "A lodge, like a piece of machinery, squeaks if it isn't well oiled. If any part of it is out of order, the whole suffers. And because Masons are human beings, we are not perfect and so no lodge is ever perfect. But we can make our lodges better by sinking individual desires for the good of the organization."

"Well, well!" said the Old Tiler. "Almost do you persuade me you have the makings of a real good . . ."

But then there were three raps, and the New Brother is still wondering what the Old Tiler meant to say "fellow" or "Mason" or "officer!"