

Judge Not!

WELL, they'll have to show me!" cried the New Brother to the Old Tiler, on guard in the anteroom with sword in hand.

"Who will have to show you what?" inquired the guardian of the door.

"The committee appointed to investigate a couple of petitions for reinstatement on the rolls of this lodge!" answered the New Brother. "Old Brother Godfrey was dropped for nonpayment of dues thirty-six years ago. He has never petitioned this or any other lodge for membership since. Now he wants to reinstate himself. A brother Jenkins I never heard of, who was raised forty years ago and took a dimit thirty-one years ago, wants to come back -- he's never affiliated in all that time."

"I've heard of those cases," mused the Old Tiler. "I helped raise them both."

"You can't tell me they haven't put their eyes on our Masonic Home! Having reached an age which shows them some practical use for the fraternity, they now propose to pay a year's dues, and then get into the Home to be taken care of for the rest of their lives! But not if I can stop it!"

"Softly, softly, my brother!" warned the Old Tiler. "It is against the laws of the Grand Lodge to disclose to any one how you have voted or intend to vote on any application for membership."

"Well, and I won't then!" cried the New Brother. "But they won't get in!"

"Are you not previous in judgment?" inquired the Old Tiler, gently. "Seems to me you'd better wait and hear what the committees have to say on the matter."

"What could the committees say? I won't let any softhearted committee pull anything on me. I love the lodge too much!"

"Don't love her so much you forget that the 'greatest of these is charity!' " warned the Old Tiler. Nor that these whose motives you judge are yet your brethren, sworn to the same obligations.

"I happen to know something about these cases. Brother Godfrey was a spoiled child. As a young man he had so much money that he didn't know what to do with it. It was just carelessness that he allowed himself to be dropped N.P.D. He didn't care for Masonry. He was all for travel, a good time, balls and parties and races and such. About ten years ago his wife died -- he had a good wife and he was very fond of her. It changed him. He felt differently about many things. He commenced to do something for some one beside himself. He still has more money than he can spend. There is no possibility of his becoming a charge on the lodge. And I happen to know why he wants to come back. "

"Why is it?"

"He's ashamed of himself!" answered the Old Tiler. "He offered to pay all the back dues, with interest. I told him we couldn't accept that; that he couldn't buy his way back into the lodge. But he is no worse off than another in like case. If he tells the committee what he told me, that

he is old enough to know better and to value brotherhood; that he wants again to be a part of our gentle Craft and to make up for what he has lost all these years, they will doubtless report favorably. This lodge will not override its committee unless someone has something personal against him. "

"Oh, well, that's different, of course!" The New Brother looked a little ashamed. "How about Brother Jenkins?"

"Well, he's different, too!" smiled the Old Tiler. "Brother Jenkins was a young man full of promise, fire and energy. He had a good position, a good income, a fine wife and four little children. Then he fell and hurt his head; he was two years under the doctor's care. They had no

money, she went to work. Of course the lodge helped. He got his wits back and went to work again, but he couldn't do any but physical labor. Something was gone from his mind. He was not crazy, but he couldn't think hard or long. So he became a carpenter. He paid back to the lodge every penny it had spent on him. Then he took his dimit. He couldn't afford the dues and he wouldn't let us carry him. Somehow he brought up his children; they are all happily married now. The wife is dead, worn out. He is alone, with an income quite sufficient for his simple needs, and four stalwart children to care for him if it isn't enough. Now that he can afford it, he wants to come back into the lodge he loved and left."

"Oh, you make me so ashamed! I'm a first-class moron and no Mason at all, to judge before I knew!" The New Brother looked at the Old Tiler remorsefully.

"It never pays," grinned the Old Tiler. "I don't believe any one will want to drop a black cube for Brother Jenkins, do you?"

"Not I" cried the New Brother.

"Didn't I tell you not to tell how you would vote?" chided the Old Tiler. But his eyes smiled.