

## **Masonry in Business**

HOW many brethren in this lodge are worth a hundred thousand dollars?" inquired the New Brother of the Old Tiler in the anteroom.

"I don't know. Jones and Brown and Robinson and Hitchcock, certainly, and perhaps Wilson and Moore. You want to make a touch?" The Old Tiler looked curiously at his questioner.

"A friend of mine is interested in forming a company," answered the New Brother, "and I intend to invest with him. As I want to see it succeed, I'll go to see all the wealthy men and ask for subscriptions. We are going to manufacture a patent elevator device, that. . ."

"Why confine your list to those in this lodge? There are more men with money outside the lodge than in it."

"But I have no right to ask them to invest money in a company just because I am interested in it!" The New Brother looked very virtuous.

"Have you a right to ask brethren to spend money on your behalf because you belong to the lodge?" The Old Tiler looked shocked.

"Why, of course. We are brethren, are we not? Brethren help each other, don't they?"

"I see no reason why any brother should spend money exploiting an invention, just because you are interested," answered the Old Tiler. "Masonry is not intended to influence a man's business. If these brethren think well of the invention they will invest. If they don't think well of it, they won't. But Masonry does not enter into the matter."

"But it would mean much to me and to my friend, if this company should succeed and make a lot of money!" explained the New Mason.

"Suppose it doesn't succeed, and loses a lot of money?" suggested the Old Tiler. The New Brother began to write in his notebook.

"That won't happen," he answered as he scribbled. "This is bound to succeed. But any business man takes a risk in any company in which he invests."

"Now we get to the root of the matter!" exclaimed the Old Tiler. "They are to help you, because of their Masonry, which is mutual with you both; but if they lose, that's because they took a business risk!"

"If the company was to develop a Masonic property or build a temple, I could see that your common Masonry might make an appeal. But I see no reason for anyone to buy stock in your company except a business reason."

"A mutual lodge membership may serve as an introduction between any two men to discuss anything of interest to one, in which he hopes to interest the other. Your mutual lodge membership is a guarantee that you will receive a welcome. It ought to guarantee the other man that you will not abuse his time and confidence by taking up the one to exploit the other. He has the same right to expect consideration from you that you have to expect consideration from him. But you have no right to expect him to suspend his business judgment just because you are both Masons.

"If you have what you believe is a good proposition, and, therefore give your Masonic friends an opportunity to make some money, your motive in listing the wealthy members of this lodge is commendable. But you have no such idea. You hope they will win, and so, help you to win. But if they lose, that's their lookout. That is not Masonic.

"Masonry does not butt into a man's business. Only insofar as it guarantees that a brother is honest is it a help in business. As it promises mutual esteem and helpfulness it smoothes the business path. But when you use Masonry to make the other fellow do something financial which he otherwise wouldn't do, it is not a proper use of Masonry. Ask your friends to help you-that's what friends are for. But don't ask strangers, merely because they are fellow lodge members, to risk their money unless you are willing to begin by not using Masonry as a means to private gain! Your friends will help you-brethren not close friends expect you to treat them in a brotherly way. It's not brotherly to go to wealthy strangers and say, 'I want some money from you, because we are both Masons!' " The Old Tiler stopped, short of breath.

The New Brother looked up from his busy writing , "I could hardly, keep up with you!" he exclaimed. "You talked so fast. But I'm sure I got most of it. This will make a dandy speech!"

"Speech?"

"Certainly. I have no intentions of getting any subscriptions from anyone. I was after material for a talk I have been asked to give on Masonry in Business!"

"Upon my word!" cried the Old Tiler. Then he chuckled. I hope you will see that I am invited inside to hear it," he said good naturedly.