

Meanest Master

WE, HAVE the meanest Master in captivity!" stormed the New Brother to the Old Tiler.

"Softly, softly!" cautioned the Old Tiler. "What has the poor man done now?"

"Refused to help me out of trouble!" answered the New Brother. "And he could have done it, just as easy. . . ."

"Tell me about it," suggested the Old Tiler. "Maybe there are extenuating circumstances!"

"That's just what I told him!" replied the New Brother, hotly. "At the funeral of Brother Picus, two weeks ago, I was a pallbearer. I was late, and didn't go to the temple to see the lodge opened, but drove my car directly to the church. There was a big crowd, of course; Brother Picus was much beloved. I couldn't find a parking space. I drove around the block and finally found one and backed in. When I came out of the church a cop was standing by my car and I had a hard time to keep him from taking me to the police station! I finally convinced him that I had to act as a pallbearer, but I got a summons to go to court the next day.

"I took it up with the Master. He knows the Captain of that precinct. All he needed to do was to see him, but he wouldn't move in the matter. I think that was mean and maybe un-Masonic."

"Sounds very bad, to me," answered the Old Tiler, noncommittally. "What did the cop say you did?"

"Parked in the wrong place," answered the New Brother. "I didn't see any sign!"

"That all?" asked the Old Tiler.

"No -- he said I had left my engine running and he had stopped it."

"Well, did you?"

"Why, yes, I did. I knew I'd only be a minute in the church. The old car starts so hard so I just let her run."

"Oh, you did. Well, now, that makes it look even worse!" grinned the Old Tiler.

"I don't think I understand . . ."

"You will in a minute!" answered the Old Tiler, grimly. "The Master has a right to complain to me that you are a mean Master Mason! You go to a funeral and break two regulations; one of no, one of great importance. Then you ask the Master to intercede, ask

that the police Captain elude his duty, all because you are a Mason! You try to make Masonry the father of special privilege and hide behind your apron, while a profane would have to pay the penalty of lawlessness! It looks very bad, my brother, but not for the Master."

"Oh, I say, Old Tiler! You are rough!"

"I haven't started yet," answered the Old Tiler. "Let me tell you . . . "

"But they were such little violations!" interrupted the New Brother.

"They were not!" answered the Old Tiler sharply. "You were a menace to society. Parking wrong is no crime; it is merely an inconvenience to others. But leaving your engine running is a serious offense because of the possibility of damage. Gear shift levers have been known to engage themselves. Small boys who want to drive a car like Dad have been known to get in cars with engines running and damage themselves and other people. I'm glad the Master had sense to let well enough alone. What did the judge say?"

"Well, he said pretty much what you said!" answered the New Brother, shamefacedly. "He only fined me ten dollars, although he might have plastered fifty on me. Said he would have turned me loose for the wrong parking, considering the reason for my haste, but that there was no excuse for leaving the engine running."

"Sensible judge!" remarked the Old Tiler. "Masonry is no mother of special privilege. There is no reason why a Mason should be permitted to get away with anything his profane brother can't do. Masons are supposed to be the pick of the community. They are taught to revere their country and its laws. Oh, I know this is a mere police requirement. But police regulations are as necessary for comfort and safety as amendments to the Constitution. Of all people, Masons ought to observe them. When a Mason breaks a regulation, he should take his medicine. Your Master showed good judgment not to interfere. Had he done so successfully, he would have taught you that you could break the law with impunity, because Masonry would 'square' it for you. Instead of being the 'meanest' Master, I am inclined to think we have the most intelligent Master in captivity."

"I suppose you are right. Somehow, I never see the things the same way after I talk with you. I guess I'll have to speak to him, after all."

"Speak to who?" asked the Old Tiler.

"I had about made up my mind I wouldn't speak to the Master any more!"

"We sure did make a mistake!" answered the Old Tiler.

"Who did?"

"We did. We took in a child, and the Masonic law requires us only to accept grown up men. grinned the Old Tiler. "Next you'll be sticking your tongue out at me, or slapping me on the wrist, or refusing to play in my anteroom!"

To his credit be it said, the New Brother blushed.