

Mirror Lodge

HOW do you like it now you've been a member six months?" asked the Old Tiler.

"I am discouraged, " was the dejected answer of the New Brother.

"Tell me about it," suggested the Old Tiler, leaning his sword against the wall and shifting in his chair.

"Maybe I expect too much. My dad was a Mason and he always thought a lot of it - he was a Past Master and a trustee. He talked much about the friends he made in lodge and the spirit of brotherhood there, and how Masons helped each other. I have found none of that. I come to the meetings and listen to the degrees, of course, but the rest is all talk so far as I can find. I don't know any one in lodge. I am not really a part of it - I just play audience."

"You remind me of a story," grunted the Old Tiler. "A chap came to a wise man and said, 'I'm not popular. People don't like me. They leave when I come around. I like people; I don't like to be unpopular. What's the matter with me?'"

"The wise man looked his inquirer over and then said, 'What do you do when you are alone?'"

" 'I don't do anything when I am alone,' was the answer, 'I am never alone. I hate to be alone. It bores me. I bore myself. I have to be with people to be happy.'"

"The wise man smiled and answered, 'How do you expect not to bore other people if you bore yourself? The man who has no resources to interest himself, cannot interest others. Go, read, think, reflect, get an idea, a personality, a smile, a story, an accomplishment – learn something, do something, be something, amuse yourself, please yourself, interest yourself, and you can please, interest and amuse others!' "

"You mean I find no brotherhood in lodge because I bring no brotherhood to it?"

"You get it!" exclaimed the Old Tiler. "Masonry offers treasure for her children who take it. But it has to be taken. She doesn't stuff her treasures down your throat. Your father was a Past Master. That means he gave years of service to the lodge. He was a trustee – so he was well known, liked, trusted. Men do not get well known, liked and trusted by sitting in a corner listening. They get up and talk, get out and work, do something, serve their fellows, to be known and liked. Your father brought rich treasures of service, interest, ability to his lodge. His lodge gave him back honor, responsibility, respect, love. You sit on the benches and listen! We made you a Master Mason but only you can make yourself a good one. We give you privileges - only you can enjoy them. We give you opportunities – only you can use them. We did all we could for you. Now you must prove yourself."

"Many a man comes into the lodge expecting a special reception committee, crowding around him at every meeting, saying how glad it is to have him there. Many a man is disappointed. You had our undivided attention as a candidate, as an Initiate, as a Fellowcraft, and when we made you a Master Mason.

"Now it's your turn. We are through with your candidacy - you are now a part of the lodge. Every privilege has a duty attached. When you perform those duties, other privileges await you. If you never perform them, you will get no farther. The responsibility we assumed in approving you as a man worthy to be a Master Mason and sit with us must be shared by you. Your responsibility is to be a good lodge member. There are good Masons who are poor lodge members, but they are not the beloved ones. The beloved lodge member, like your father, finds labor and service and takes his pay in the spirit of fraternity, in the love and admiration of other men, in the satisfaction which comes from playing his part."

"But what can I do – what is my first step?"

"You want to make friends in the lodge?"

"I surely do."

"Then be a friend! I am told that the Master read tonight that Brother Robinson is ill. Go and see him. Old Willis is back at work after being sick a year. Call him up and tell him you are glad. Hungerford just returned from the West. He is out of a job and wants help. Ask him to come see you. Maybe you can help him, maybe you can't. But if a brother takes an interest in him, he will be heartened and given courage. Ask the Master for a job – he'll use you, never fear. A sister lodge comes to visit us next month. Offer your car to the chairman of the entertainment committee. Bob always has trouble getting enough for his personal column in the Trestleboard; scout around, learn a few things, tell him them. I understand you play the piano. Offer your help to the choirmaster when he needs someone to take the organist's place. There are one thousand and one ways a chap can make himself known and liked in a lodge. All you have to do is look for them."

"I see . . ."

"Not yet, you don't! But you soon will. When your eyes are opened you'll see the lodge as a mirror. Look at yourself in it and see just what you are. And if the reflection is dejection, dissatisfaction, unhappiness, it is because those are you. When you look in the lodge and see yourself happy, busy, well liked, giving service and taking joy in brotherhood as a return, you will know that you are a real Mason, a real lodge member, a real son to a father who learned that the secret of Masonic joy is to give, that it may be given back to you."

"I'll begin now! Don't you want to get a smoke? I'll stay on the door until you come back!"