

Music

IT'S A SHAME! Our music! We don't get nearly what we pay for!" complained the New Brother.

"Is that so!" exclaimed the Old Tiler. "I thought Brother Henderson trains and leads a very good quartette."

"Brother Henderson, I suppose, is a competent musician," answered the New Brother, "but he hasn't much voice. People who can't sing ought not to. Why did the Master appoint him? We pay for our music; why can't we get it."

"I take it, then, if you were Master, you would not have re-appointed Brother Henderson director of the choir?"

"I certainly would not."

"And how would that have affected Brother Henderson?"

"Oh, I'd be sorry for the poor old chap, of course. But age must give way to youth. He can't expect to sing forever."

"How would it affect the membership of the lodge not to have him there?"

"It would affect them pleasantly. We'd have good music, without his quavery voice."

"My son," answered the Old Tiler. "You are right in theory and all wrong as to practice. Perhaps I can make you see better. Brother Henderson's voice is not what it once was. But Brother Henderson is still Brother Henderson."

"Not long ago I was so unregenerated as to go to a ball game. A once great pitcher was on the mound and they pounded him all over the lot. When they took him out to give place to a younger man, there was heartier cheering than when the game was won. The cheers were for what the old pitcher was in days gone by; the joy he had given, the work he had done, the manly way he played the game."

"John L. Sullivan was more famous in defeat than in victory; fight fans revere the memory of Lanky Bob Fitzsimmons, no less that he was finally supplanted in the ring by a younger man, because of the fair, square, hard hitting, honest fighter he always was."

"Brother Henderson has done something for Masonry. Year after year he has directed the choir and sung in this lodge. We pay him a pittance, but what he has given is not paid for by money. Never the funeral, no matter how cold or dreary the day, that Brother Henderson hasn't given the comfort of his voice to those who mourn. Never the entertainment for charity that Brother Henderson has not sung himself hoarse for. Never

the sick man getting well that Brother Henderson didn't appear at his house to sing some cheery songs.

"I have seen Brother Henderson at a funeral sing with dry eyes when I knew his heart was breaking for some brother he loved; why? To comfort those who remained. I have known him to sit up many a night with the ill. He is first to respond to any call of distress. He is a Mason through and through. And I'll tell you a secret he doesn't know I know. The checks he gets from lodge for singing he signs over to the charity fund.

"Brother Henderson has not a good voice now. But we are a lot of old timers. We take in new members slowly. All the old timers love Brother Henderson. They would rather have Brother Henderson on the job than the shade of Caruso to lead the choir. For every cracked note he sings, they see a cracked heart he mended. For every false note he sounds they remember a false step he corrected for some wayward brother. For every husky note he whispers, they see the husky strength with which he has served the Craft through nearly sixty years.

"If you want to be unpopular, just say something to any of our membership about Brother Henderson retiring.

"Brother Henderson isn't perfect.. He's human. And, like all singers, he hates to admit his voice isn't what it was. But what does it cost us? We pat him on the back and tell him how beautiful his voice is, and how we enjoy it, and Brother Henderson is heartened and encouraged in his declining years.

"He would work just the same if we took him off the choir, but he would be cut to the heart to think we didn't like his voice any more; the voice he wore out in our service and for the comfort and the strengthening of his brethren.

"If we were a commercial organization we might have to think of value received! But we are brethren who love and comfort each other. What Brother Henderson has done entitles him to whistle in the choir, if wants to; and he could direct and never sing a note, and we would still tell Brother Henderson that his voice is lovely! For that kind of a lie the Great Architect loves, my son; even as He must love Brother Henderson and . . . where are you going in such a hurry?"

"To a committee room, to see how many times I can kick myself in five minutes, and then to tell Brother Henderson his solo touched my heart . . . only, Old Tiler, it is you who touched it!"

The New Brother gulped as he went to kick himself; but the Old Tiler grinned.