

## ON BEING ASKED TO JOIN

"I think it's an outrage," announced the New Brother with great emphasis, talking to the Old Tiler.

"Sure it is!" answered the Old Tiler.

"Why don't you have it stopped, then?"

"I dunno, what is it?"

"You just agreed with me it was an outrage. And now you don't know what it is!"

"No, I do not. But I am wise enough to agree with out-of-temper brethren. Then they don't get out of temper with me. So suppose you tell me what is an outrage?"

"All these brethren who try to get me to join things! Ever since I was raised they have been after me. Jones wants me to join his Chapter and Smith says as soon as I do I must come in his Council, and Robinson wants me in his Commandery and Jackson says I mustn't think of going York but must go Scottish Rite, and Brown tells of what he is going to have done to me when I join the Shrine, and Peters wants me to become a Veiled Prophet and Lem says I mustn't forget the Tall Cedars, and old Jerry tells me he'll never let up on me until I join the Eastern Star... it makes me ill."

"You sure do get sick easily," answered the Old Tiler.

"But I'll attend to it. Tomorrow I will see to it that at least ten brethren tell you you are not good enough for the Chapter, not wise enough to join the council, not brainy enough for the Rite, not sincere enough for the Commandery, not a good enough sport to stand the Grotto, Tall Cedars or Shrine initiation and not decent enough to join the woman's organization. That'll fix it all right and you can be well again."

"Hey, wait a minute! What do you mean, I am not decent enough for the women or good enough sport to stand the Shrine? I'm perfectly decent and as good a sport as-"

"Gently, gently! I did not say you were not- I said I'd arrange with a lot of brethren to tell you you were not."

"But why?"

"You get peeved when they tell you the other thing- I thought that was what you wanted."

"Our wires are crossed somewhere!"

"No, it is you who are cross and therefore not able to see straight," snapped the Old Tiler. You say it's an outrage that many brethren invite you to join with them. What is there

outrageous about it? The brother who wants you in his Chapter sees in you good material out of which to make a Companion. The Knight who wants you in his Commandery thinks you will grace its uniform, live up to its high standards, conform to its usages. The brother who would like to have you in the Scottish Rite thinks you have brains enough to appreciate its philosophic degrees and believes that Albert Pike had such as you in mind when he wrote 'Morals and Dogma.' The Noble or the Veiled Prophet who asks you to come with him thinks you are a good sport, able to be the butt of a joke for a while that others may laugh, and that you may, in turn, enjoy the antics of others. They all take you for a regular fellow.

When you are asked to join the Eastern Star a great compliment is paid you- you are selected as a man fit to associate with fine women; you are accepted as a gentleman as well as a Mason, a man women will be proud to know. That is your outrage!"

"I never looked at it in that way. Masons do not ask others to join with Masons in Masonry and I suppose I thought- I felt-"

"You didn't think; you just thought you thought." The Old Tiler was smiling now. "Think again. There is every reason why Masonry should not ask the profane to be of it. Masonry is bigger than any man. It never seeks; it must be sought. But once a Mason the matter is different. The lodge has investigated you. You were found not wanting by your fellows. Why wouldn't your brother ask you to join another organization in which he is interested and which he thinks will interest you?"

"Well, but-"

"There is no 'but' which fits! There are many Masonic organizations, each filling its place. Chapter, Council, and Commandery extend the symbolic lodge story. The Scottish Rite tells it to the end in another way. Shrine, Grotto and Tall Cedars are happy places where Masons play. The Eastern Star practices charity, benevolence, kindness, the gentler side of life. None duplicate; all have work to do. The better the workers, the better the work. It is no outrage that they pay you the compliment of asking you to join with them."

"But I haven't the time; I don't know if I could afford it."

"That is another story. All these organizations cannot make you more a Mason than you are now, but they might make you a better one. Whether you have the time or the means needed is your affair. It would indeed be an outrage if any one questioned you about that. These brethren who ask you to join with them think you have leisure enough to be a better Mason and of sufficient means to indulge that laudable ambition."

"Oh, of course, you are right and I am wrong, as usual. I guess I'm a-"

"A Mason," suggested the Old Tiler, gently.

"And a prospective, Companion, Knight or whatever it is they will call me when I join the Scottish Rite and all the rest!"