

Outside Activities

WE ARE coming to a pretty pass in our Masonry!" announced the New Brother, disgustedly.

"That has a familiar ring! No times like the old times, no days like the old days, everything going to the demnition bow-wows. They uncovered inscriptions like that in King Tut's tomb!" grinned the Old Tiler. "What's wrong with our Masonry now?"

All these extras in the lodge. First, we have a choir; that's all right, since music adds to the solemnity and beauty of the degrees. Now we arc forming a lodge glee club. There is to be a saxophone quartet and there is talk of a lodge band. A brother in lodge long enough to know better is organizing a dramatic society. If he has any dramatic instinct he should put it into the degrees. The Master is interesting some brethren in forming a Masonic club, and a lot of brethren are talking of a camping club, for summer fishing! This scattering of effort is a shame. We ought to put it into the work of the lodge; don't you agree with me?"

"I sure do; I think all our effort Masonic should be Masonic effort!" answered the Old Tiler.

"That's the first time I ever started a discussion with you and found you were on my side!" laughed the New Brother, triumphantly.

"Oh, I wouldn't go as far as to say I was on your side this time. Our efforts ought to be Masonic, but I don't see un-Masonic effort in a glee club, saxophone quartet, camping association, dramatic club, and so on. What's wrong with them as Masonic work?"

"Why, Masonic work is putting, on the degrees well, and making an impression on the candidate, and charity, and . . . and . . . "

"Go on, son, you are doing fine!"

"Oh, you know what I mean! Masonic work isn't going camping or playing a saxophone!"

"Isn't it?" asked the Old Tiler, interestedly. "Now, that's a plain statement about which I can argue until tomorrow morning! But explain why playing a saxophone in a lodge for the pleasure of the lodge isn't Masonic."

"Oh, the time spent could be better spent in – in listening to the degrees."

"Granted, if there were degrees to listen to. But you wouldn't put on a degree without reason? If the lodge neglects its degree work to listen to a quartet, the quartet does harm. But if the quartet brings down brethren who like music, and to whom we can then give Masonic instruction, why isn't it good Masonic work?"

"How about the dramatic club and the fishing association?"

"They are the same in intent. The dramatic club will gather together brethren interested in plays. It will develop histrionic talent which now doesn't exist. It will train men for sincere and well-managed degree work. But if it never led a single man into our degree teams, it would still be a bond of union between men who would thus get better acquainted; the better members know each other the more united the lodge.

"Fishing is an innocent and delightful sport. When Masons congregate to enjoy it and prefer the company of each other to others, it speaks very highly of the bonds of brotherhood. If I can afford it I will surely join. I'd much rather tell a fish that he has passed the other anglers, but me he cannot pass, in the presence of my brethren, than have to keep my thoughts to myself before strangers!"

"You think these extra growths on the body of the lodge don't sap its strength?"

"I don't think they are growths on the body of the lodge at all!" growled the Old Tiler. "Brethren who do these are not taking strength from the lodge! Banding together to sing, play musical instruments, fish, act in plays together, shows a real feeling of brotherhood. The more such activities, the more united we will be.

"All work and no play makes a Mason a stay-at-home. Our ancient brethren specified the usages of refreshment. They understood that playing was as necessary as working. If part of us can play together for our own pleasure, well and good. If, at the same time, we can give pleasure to others, well and better. And if we can pleasure ourselves, please others, and benefit the lodge by increasing its unity, why, well and best of all!"

"You sure are a salesman!" cried the New Brother. "I ought not to afford it, but . . ."

"What have I sold you?" asked the Old Tiler, interestedly.

"Memberships in the glee club, the Masonic club, and the fishing club!" grinned the New Brother.