

## SUBSTITUTES AT FUNERALS

"It's too bad!" complained the New Brother, "I've got drawn on a funeral committee on the very day I want to play golf. I wonder if I can find a substitute?"

"Very likely," answered the Old Tiler. "The world is full of substitutes who perform the duties of people too lazy, inefficient, and careless of the rights of others to do it themselves."

"Oh, come now, don't be so rough!" The New Brother winced. "Going to funerals is all form. Why, I never even saw this deceased brother! What difference will it make to him or his family if I go to his funeral myself or get someone else to go for me?"

"No difference at all," agreed the Old Tiler. "The only person to whom it will make any difference will be you."

"The difference it will make to me will be the difference between being bored and having a good game of golf!" asserted the New Brother.

"It will make other difference." The Old Tiler was very emphatic. "One of them is that the only importance Masonry has is what it does to a man's heart. Objectively, it is of less importance than the necktie he wears. The important part of Masonry is its leavening power on that part of a man which is the ego, the person, the individual.

"The effect Masonry has on a man's heart is aided by the mechanics of Masonry; temple, lodge room, dignity of the order, its public appearances, the respect it shows to its dead, its educational work, appeal to the general public, its secrecy, its reputation of being above party and politics, its alliance with all religion and its participation in none. These make Masonry objective, but they are the outward semblance of the inward and spiritual Masonry. These you ought to know for yourself: charity, relief, brotherly love, truth, knowledge, self-sacrifice, tolerance.

"But how can you separate the inward and spiritual from the outward and objective? We build beautiful temples and meet in handsome lodge rooms, to express our love for our belief. We make lodge work dignified, well done, impressive, to express to ourselves our sense of the dignity of the truths we teach. We conduct the funeral of a deceased brother, not to make a show before the world, but to express to ourselves our regret that a brother has departed and our conviction that he has but traveled upward to that Temple Not Made With Hands, where the Supreme Architect waits for all who have been builders upon earth.

"The world does judge by externals. As we make an impressive appearance at a funeral, so do the profane judge us. If we make a poor and straggling appearance at a funeral, we are judged by those who do not know Masonry from the inside. Therefore it is important to those who care for the good name of Masonry that our funerals are well attended and

that we conform to these outward marks of grief which custom has made essential at a funeral.

"It is usual to have a funeral committee. In large lodges it is more essential than in small, because in small lodges everyone knows everyone else and goes to a funeral because he wants to. In large lodges we don't know everyone, and unless we have a committee we don't put up the right kind of 'front' at a funeral. The more obscure and unknown the brother, the less the size of the lodge turnout. Hence the committee, chosen by lot or alphabetical order.

"In this lodge we have many members and we chose fifty brethren by the alphabet. Once in twenty funerals your name will be drawn. If we have five funerals a year, which is average, you will be called upon once in four years to aid your lodge to show its respect for the grief of the family of a departed brother, and show the profane that Masonry honors its own.

"You can get a substitute. I will substitute for you if you wish. I have no golf game to attract me. I substitute for a many good men. Sometimes I substitute because of a real reason; business, absence, illness. Sometimes I substitute because a man is too careless and too lazy to do his own work. But then, nothing I can do will help him. For the sake of the lodge I go in his place. For his own sake I try to show him what a mistake he makes in delegating to another the duty he owes his fraternity.

"Masonry means something in my heart. It means more as its reputation grows. If anything I can do aids that reputation, I am glad. When is this funeral you want me to attend for you?

"I don't want you to," answered the New Brother. "I've got to go now..."

"What's your hurry?" asked the Old Tiler.

"I want to see the Secretary and tell him to put me down as a possible substitute next time, when someone does what I was going to do- miss my chance to do my last duty to one of my brethren."