

Subscriptions

I don't hold with this subscriptions idea at all," announced the New Brother to the Old Tiler. "Masonry should be a self-supporting institution and not ask for contributions."

"Yes, yes, go on, you interest me. So does the braying of the jackass, the gurgling of a six months old child, the bleating of a lamb and the raucous cries of the crow."

"You can call it that if you like," defended the New Brother, "but asking for contributions to build a temple is all wrong."

"Just what do you mean, that Masonry should be self supporting?" asked the Old Tiler.

"Why, it ought to get along on its dues and fees!"

"Do you think You can get along entirely on your salary? You don't borrow money to build a house, or to aid you in. Your business?"

"That's different!"

"How is it different? You borrow to build a house, and the house is security for the loan. Someday you pay it back and own the house. We borrow from our members to build a temple and . . ."

"But that's just the point. We don't borrow, we beg. And we don't pay back, we just grab the temple and the fellows that have paid for it have nothing to show for it."

"Suppose we 'beg' as you put it, sufficient contributions from our membership to build the temple and own it outright," answered the Old Tiler. "The money we then spend on it is upkeep, overhead. We won't charge ourselves rent because we won't be paying on a loan. In our present temple the lodge pays that rent. With no rent to pay we will have more in the treasury. With more than it needs in the treasury a lodge may reduce its dues or spend more in charity and entertainment. The mere reducing of the rent charge will soon equal, per capita, the entire contribution asked of any individual brother."

"But apart from the dollars angle, a temple is more than a mere pile of stone in which is a room where Masons meet. The temple expresses Masonry to the world. As it is beautiful, solid, substantial, massive, permanent) so does the fraternity appear. As it is paid for, free from debt, a complete asset, so does the institution seem. A poor, mean temple argues that lodge members have so little belief in their order that they are not willing to provide it with proper quarters. As a beautiful church expresses veneration for the Creator, so does a beautiful building for Masonry express veneration for the order and reverence for the Great Architect in Whose shadow we labor and to Whom all temples of Masonry are erected."

"Our brethren have undertaken to erect a beautiful temple. They want a meeting place which is convenient and comfortable, in which they can take pride and which will show visitors that Masonry here has love for its tenets. By a new temple they want to express the love they have for the vision of brotherhood. So they say, each to the other, Brother, how much will you give?' and brother answers brother, 'All I can afford,' and does so.

"We are asking less than \$2. a month, less than ten cents a day. But it is enough. Each brother will make some little sacrifice for the order he loves. When the temple is built every brother will feel that it is truly his temple, in the actual sense of personal ownership. He may look at a block of stone in the wall and say to himself, 'That is mine; I paid for it.' And what a Man buys because he loves it, he cherishes. Nothing which we could do will more thoroughly solidify our Masonry. When finished, the building will be our temple in the truest sense; not only that we went down into our pockets and paid for it, but ours because we put our hearts into it. And what a man puts his heart in, he defends, upholds, makes better.

"If we ask \$100 from each brother, we will give every brother \$1,000 worth of pride of ownership. We build not only for the brethren who should shoulder the burden in the heat of the day, but for the brethren who come after.

"Our ancient brethren who built the temples of the middle ages for all to see and revere, left their mark on time and history and on the generations which followed them. We will leave our mark on generations of our sons and their sons and their sons' sons after them, because we are willing to make a freewill offering to that which, next to God, is the greatest heaven of our life, the fraternity which makes a man love his fellow men."

"Oh, stop talking! Twice while you have been lecturing me I have mentally increased my subscription. Now I have doubled it. Hush, or I won't be able to buy shoes for the baby!"

"Don't start things, then!" grumbled the Old Tiler, but he smiled as he held out a fresh subscription blank and a fountain pen.