

## THOSE DISCLOSURES!

"I have just visited the Masonic library," began the New Brother, excitedly, "and I am much distressed."

"It is a shame," answered the Old Tiler, sympathetically. "It is the best we can do, as we can only afford just so much and so we haven't all the books we want. Even so there is a lot of good reading there and..."

"That isn't the trouble!" cried the New Brother. "What worries me is the apathetic attitude of the authorities of Masonry who permit so many books to be written about our secrets! I skimmed through some and all a man not a member of the lodge need do is read a few and he will know more Masonry than I do!"

"That is probably true!" smiled the Old Tiler. "But what of it? He will then be a well-informed man. You will remain ill-informed. Surely it is better to have well-informed profanes and ill-informed Masons than have both profane and Mason badly informed!"

"But the profane will learn our secrets! Where will we be when we have no secrets? How can Grand Lodge authorities allow brethren to publish what they have sworn never to reveal?"

"Oh! what makes you think these books contain secrets?"

"Why, I read them! There was one book which had an account of the great lights, and another which talked about Jachin and Boaz, and another which referred to the drama of Hiram Abif, and another which quoted old obligations at length to show the genesis of Masonic obligations and..."

"You are somewhat in the dark regarding the secrets of Freemasonry," observed the Old Tiler. "You can read of Jachin and Boaz, and Hiram in the Bible and the old obligations were printed long before they were incorporated in Freemasonry. The secrets of Freemasonry are not disclosed in the printed works of Masonic students. You are not to reveal anything not proper to be made known. You are not to describe the Masonic initiation. You are not to divulge the modes of recognition. But nowhere in any obligation of any degree in Freemasonry will you find any prohibition against teaching the principles of Masonry, or explaining the symbolism by which Masonry reveals her gentle teachings.

"In books learned Masons have expounded for you and me something of the meaning of Freemasonry; what it is all about, what it teaches, why it exists, what it can accomplish. It is not necessary to make a secret out of knowledge. It is not necessary that Masonry keep to herself the philosophy of conduct, morality, upright living, brotherhood, she has developed. That is for the world to read if it will. The pity of it is that so few will; that so many rob themselves of their Masonic birthright and refuse to read what has been written for them.

"Masonry is a far greater subject than most members of the fraternity know. The majority of us take the three degrees and stop. Not for us is there symbolism. Not for us is there an intimate intertwining between our order and the wise men, the knowledge of the past. Not for us is Masonry a welding together of the underlying principles which animate all religion, with the dogma left out. Not for us is there a literature, a tradition, a history. We let it all go by the board, content to wear a pin and pay dues and vote for a new Master...and call ourselves Masons.

"But a few of us in every lodge are not satisfied merely to be members; we want to be Masons in our minds as well as the records of the lodge. So we read and study. And once in a blue moon is born a Pike or a Pound, a Haywood or a Newton, a Mackey or a McBride, who interprets through the greatness of his vision that you and I may catch at least a glimpse of the vastness which is Freemasonry.

"They do that in books, but none tells what he has sworn never to reveal... why should he? But he explains the meaning of that which is hidden, so that we who have the key may understand. The trouble with our Masonic books is not that they tell which should not be told, but that we are not rich enough in our lodge to buy enough of the expositions of Freemasonry to educate all our brethren.

"Go back to that library. Take one or two books home with you. Read and reflect. When you find the Masonic author who has violated his obligation, show it to me, because I am an old, old man and I have heard of this forsworn author all my life, but I have never found him!"

"I'm going," answered the New Brother, "I wish I had more sense!"

"I don't!" came the smiling answer. "If you knew much there'd be no point in talking to you, and think of the fun we'd both lose!"