

Old Tyler Talks

WBro. Carl Claudy, PM

ANONYMOUS

The nicest thing happened in lodge tonight," began the New Brother enthusiastically to the Old Tiler in the anteroom. "I don't know when I have been more touched."

"Tell me about it," suggested the Old Tiler.

"Brother Wells said he had received an anonymous letter from some brother of the lodge inclosing a \$5.00 bill, which was to go towards buying a birthday present for Brother Wells' boy. He told us about his boy being injured in an automobile accident and how he has struggled with the doctor's bills. He said he had bought the boy some books with it; and that it would be the biggest part of the lad's birthday. When he thanked the unknown brother, I would have cried, if I wasn't a pantsweaver."

"Why did the unknown brother send his gift anonymously?" inquired the Old Tiler.

"Oh, didn't I tell you? That was the prettiest part of it. The letter said the present wasn't from any one in particular, just from the 'Masonic spirit' and came because the 'agent' – that's what the anonymous brother called himself - he benefited from instructions received from Brother Wells. Wells is always instructing someone, so he can't tell which of dozens of men sent it."

"That was a nice thing to do," agreed the Old Tiler. "Brother Peters' work bearing more fruit."

"Peters? Peters? I don't think I know him. . . ." the New Brother considered thoughtfully.

"He's dead ten years," explained the Old Tiler. "You never saw him in lodge, but he started the idea. He made a talk once in lodge about lodges not being Christian or Jewish or Mohammedan, just Masonic. He didn't see why Masons shouldn't observe the lovely things in any religion. He didn't want to inject religion into the lodge, he would like to see brethren take part in the generosity taught in all religions."

"Brother Peters had a comfortable income; could afford it. But it cost him some effort. And gradually we found out about it by comparing notes and asking questions. Brother Peters had made himself the lodge benefactor. He learned which brethren were poor and had children, and he sent them all birthday gifts. He always had a list of the sick, and they all had flowers and visits. If a widow didn't have much she got a ton of coal or a cord of wood, or some man

appeared and told her he had been hired by the Masonic Society to clean off her snow. But no one knew, until his talk started us to investigating, that he was the individual who had made this lodge a Giver with a capital G. He'd draw a square and compasses on the package, or just a letter G, beside the address. He had a lot of fun out of it. When he died, he had the biggest funeral this town ever saw.

"The anonymous five dollar bill must have come from Brother Peters - someone else was indeed the agent, but it was Brother Peters' idea here. Of course it wasn't his originally."

"It's a pretty idea, too – using Masonry to make someone happy. Some brother who doesn't expect a visit from you – you go and see him on his birthday, just to let him know you are thinking of him; think of the joy he'd have. Half a dozen boxes of flowers sent to as many hospitals marked for birthdays would give sick people a lot of pleasure. A few small greenbacks, sent like Brother Wells received his, without a name, but with a letter; can you imagine anything more joyful?"

"There is no taint of alms about a birthday gift – the proudest of the poor might be happy to be so remembered. I recall one old lady who got money from someone in this lodge once - there was nothing in the envelope except the ten spot and the card saying 'Birthdays should be merry; the lodge hopes yours will be.' I knew her - she insisted I find out who did it, so she could thank him. Of course I couldn't. But I have always thought that whoever he was and is, he and Brother Peters found out more about how to have a good time than most of us know."

"There isn't any patent on the idea, is there?" demanded the New Brother. "I can do that if I want to, can't I?"

"Of Course you can," responded the Old Tiler.

"Will you find out and tell me where to send them?"

"I will not. If I did the work, you wouldn't have the fun. Besides, I supervise no brother's gifts. The Master will tell you. . . "

"You said it wasn't Brother Peters' idea originally. Whose idea was it, in the very beginning?"

"Someone who said, 'Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, my brethren . . . ' "

"Oh!" said the New Mason. And again, "Oh!"