

room of the Lodge, before the genial old Tyler went to his rest, and had peeped through the door, and familiarized herself with every step in the congregating, purging, tiling, lecturing and opening of the three degrees.

It was better than a feast with a prince to have seen that sweet girl as she entered, the brethren all rising to receive her, forming a bower of bands over her as we do when we take the "Perfect Square," and she walking up so stately, though all alone, under that living bower up to the East. She had written out and committed to memory the prettiest little "good-bye" you ever heard. There was prose in it, and there was poetry in it.

About the middle of it a little song was to be introduced, all about

"I'll come again;

"I'll come again;

"I'm sure, dear friends, I'll come again."

But, bless your soul, she only got half way through the first line, which was something about "the swelling surges of the tempestuous main," when she broke clear down. She threw her arms around George Hildebrand's neck, smashing his new hat irrevocably, and then threw herself into his official lap, cracking the embroidery on his new fine apron beyond repair, and finally declaring with all the earnestness of childhood, that "she did not want to go." There was a general snivel went up and down those parallel lines. The hands that had just been clasped together to form the human bower were unclasped to use, as Adam used his, before handkerchiefs were invented. The scene became positively ridiculous.

However, that is nothing. Little Winnefred went North to the boarding school and turned into hard study. One month she wrote a long, long letter to the Lodge. It was read in open Lodge. It was voted on by the Lodge. It was entered on record by the Lodge; and I, who write this masonic tale, have read the records, as Job says, "with mine own eyes."

The eighth letter hinted at ill health. The ninth letter was short and sad — "My cough hurts me so, I cannot write any more to-day." The tenth letter was dictated by an amanuensis, and was accompanied by a physician's opinion, that, "unless she improved very rapidly, she had better be removed South." Not improving speedily, nor, in fact, at all, the eleventh was a short but earnest epistle in her own hand writing, but written from her sick bed, to the tenor "that she hoped some brother would come after her, for she wanted to be hurried beside her father." When *that* letter was read in the Lodge, so many of the brethren "asked for leave to retire," that the Lodge had to be closed prematurely, although there was a "trial" on hand and "the third" to be conferred that same night.

Yes, the cold winter of Pennsylvania had been too much for dear Winnie, and she was coming home to die. George Hildebrand left his business, and went in person to bring her. In person he bore her in her easy chair, no heavy weight now, wrapped up in the old cloak, down to the steamboat, waited on her almost as her poor father used to do, and so brought her home.

She had feared she would not last to arrive. But she did, and even for several weeks after it.

Did I mention that, about a year before, a strolling painter, of course poor and a brother Mason, had strolled into that neighborhood, got in debt for board and wanted to "make a little raise," and offered to paint a portrait of little Winnefred for the Lodge.

By good fortune he "hit" a capital likeness. Sir Thomas Lawrence couldn't have done it better. The Lodge paid him enough to shove him on a