

But oh, how loth was the father to leave his child! He felt and acted as though in *his* death everything would die. It was useless to tell him how many orphan children there are who grow up happy and respected. In *his* grave would be buried the life and hopes of Winnefred. At all places, church, school, Lodge, she was ever with him or near him, and the two were inseparable.

Little Winnefred was a thoughtful and precious child, as all young persons, raised in that way by doting parents, are inclined to be. With dark, curling hair, strong muscular limbs, and gleaming eye, she was not at all the model of the novels, nor such a child as one would expect the daughter of her father to be. She was extremely reticent, which was, perhaps, fortunate for the peace and welfare of the Kingville Lodge, for it used to be said that little Winny Francis was allowed by the genial old Tyler to hear and see things up in his little ante-room, which none but Masons, as a general thing, are supposed to hear and see. On one occasion, by a singular oversight, she had been left fast asleep behind the Treasurer's desk, while George Hildebrand was undergoing the "amazing trials" of being made a Past Master, and she astonished the whole Past Master's Lodge by waking up and asking George "why he didn't wear his hat like the rest of them?" It is needless to say that the Kingville Past Masters always made the oriental chair a lively and jovial place to *their* candidates, and that 1848 was long before Mackey in 1856 threw *his* wet blanket over all the fun and good-nature of the Past Master's degree.

George Hildebrand being thus interrogated, and naturally supposing the query to be one of "the amazing trials," aforesaid, told the little maid that he had left it in the ante-room. Upon which she cheerfully started after it, but, very unexpectedly, was not permitted by the genial old Tyler to return.

Brother Francis died in the fall of 1848, little Winnefred being at the time about ten years of age. It was a sad day. Nature wept. The leaves were falling; blossoms had faded: the birds had flown; the sun was withdrawing below the Junior Warden's Station; never is a Masonic funeral so sad as upon an Autumn day, when it threatens rain.

"Destruction upon destruction; the whole land is spoiled; the earth mourns; the heavens above are black; all the people sigh; tears run down like a river: they cease not without any intermission; our heart is faint; eyes are dim." Such passages as make up the burden of Jeremiah are most appropriate on that day. Never had the Masons of Kingville Lodge realized the keenness of sorrow as they did when the first earth was thrown upon that coffin, and the poor little orphan, twice orphaned, with shriek upon shriek, broke from every detaining hand, threw herself wildly into the grave, and pleaded to be buried with her father. The strongest men wept. The hollow square was broken past remedy, and in the return procession, eyes shone red with weeping that were all unaccustomed to tears.

At the meeting of the Lodge, which followed the return from the grave, the Master read from a paper that had been deposited in his hands several months before, the "dying request" of Brother Francis. There was perfect unanimity among the sixty brethren present to accede to the wishes therein expressed, viz: "That the Worshipful Master of the Lodge should qualify as guardian of the girl, and the members, individually, should take it on themselves, when needful, to counsel and direct her education and manners until she should become of age.

The business was put in proper shape upon the books, and the brethren of Kingville Lodge felt what they had assumed would be but a pleasure and no burden.

Not so at the meeting called a month afterward. Then it was announced to the brethren by the Worshipful Master that "he had qualified as guardian, given the proper security, and called at the bank for a transfer of the funds." But a catastrophe had occurred that very week. A thievish book-keeper had defaulted and absconded with all the available funds of the bank, and it was feared they never would be reclaimed." So it turned out. Neither the rogue nor the *proceeds* of his roguery were ever reclaimed. At the end of six months the Lodge had boldly to face the question whether they would assume the support and education of little Winnefred. General Quitman wrote that he would contribute \$100 toward it, and that was all he could possibly do, doing justice at the same time to the incessant calls made upon that noble and generous brother, and remembering, too, that the relationship in which Mr. Francis had stood to him was only that of third or fourth cousin.

It is a pleasant part of my subject to narrate, that there was not a dissenting vote upon the plain question of assuming the charitable burden. Differences there were, and they were debated with some acrimony, as to the best method of operation, but every hand was raised in approval of the main question; and when the Lodge was temporarily "called off," and Winnefred brought in from the Tyler's room, (where she had unquestionably heard every word of the debate, for the genial old Tyler was accustomed to leave his door half open so that he might hear)—I say, when the little lady was brought in and welcomed as "the Freemason's Orphan Girl," every one