

Before the Gavel Sounds.

Measuring Parties.

We observe in the pages of our genial contemporary *The Fraternal Brotherhood* that some ingenious ladies have devised the following novelty in the way of Lodge entertainments:

"Two cards are sent to an address, each having hung on the corner a little silken sack, and the cards bearing the inscription: '____ Lodge No. --, Thursday evening, February 16, 1899, at ____ Hall, ____ St., Refreshments,' and in addition the timely stanza:

'A measuring party is given to you,
'Tis something novel as well as new.
The invitation is in the sack
For use in bringing or sending back
Two cents for every foot you're tall,
Measure yourself on door or wall,
An extra cent for each inch give,
And thereby show how high you live;
With music and song, recitations and pleasure,
We will meet one and all at our Party of Measure.'"

This entertainment is not by any means to be confounded with the once popular rural game of "Measuring Tape"; in which two young people stand facing one another, join hands (left with right) and then with a smart movement extend the arms outwards horizontally. We must not be understood as endorsing this obsolete sport.

Story of Lincoln.

This Lincoln story is told in *Sh. Stories: A New York firm* applied to Abraham Lincoln some years before he became President for information as to the financial standing of one of his neighbors. Mr. Lincoln replied as follows:—

"Yours of the 10th instant received. I am well acquainted with Mr. X and know his circumstances. First of all, he has a wife and baby; together they ought to be worth \$50,000. Secondly, he has an office, in which there are a table worth say, \$1.50 and three chairs worth \$1. Last of all, there is in one corner a large rathole, which will bear looking into." Respectfully yours, A. LINCOLN.

The Colonel's Pet Charity.

The old Colonel is a mighty decent fellow, but he likes to expend his good nature and assistance upon objects that are near him. Accordingly, when he read in the evening paper one Friday that a family living within a few blocks of his home were in a terrible state of destitution, without food or fuel, he felt quite broken up. Saturday afternoon saw him around with a nice basket of provisions, that he got his wife to put up, knocking at the door of his indigent neighbor. A little girl came to the door and the following things were said:—

Colonel—Well, my Little girl, where is your father?

Little Girl—Oh, he's out.

Colonel—And where is your mother?

Little Girl—Oh, she's out with Paw.

Colonel—And who does all this wood belong to? (pointing to a pile of wood deposited in front of the house).

Little Girl—Oh, that belongs to Paw; a kind gentleman just sent it, and Paw will take it in when he comes home.

Colonel—And where is your father and mother?

Little Girl—They're at the Thee-ayter.

A New Fraternal Heresy.

For years we have been accustomed to regard with even mind and serene confidence the assaults of numerous opponents upon our fraternal systems of insurance. In spite of the shot and shell poured from many an old-line fortress, and from a good many unseen "swamp batteries," the forces of fraternalism have steadily advanced. But now a new and dangerous enemy is in the mesquite.

A writer in the *Empire State Workman* has deliberately attacked the "Smoking Concert," better known as the Lodge "Smoker." For attacks upon our rites we are ready, thrice ready. But the sacred "Smoker" is somewhere just behind our fifth rib.

How often will this never-ending contest of defamation break out again between our L. A. Nicotine and her detractors—the contest that has been waged since the chivalrous Raleigh brought home the weed to a realm whose king wrote learnedly, almost sensibly, but impotently, against tobacco, and killed the importer, cutting off the head and leaving the pipe still lighted?

What is it to us to defend the "Smoker"? Nothing. The institution is not of our creation, and is not, as "D." of the *Workman* seems to think, a recent invention. Tobacco-Parliaments are an ancient, if not venerable, device; even in Knickerbocker's day they were much of an antiquity. It may be that modern science will wipe them out, and tobacco-smoke will disappear with black powder. Already scientists have met in formidable conferences and declared against that birth-right of freemen—the right to spit. Perhaps the "Smoker" must go.

And still we regret. The memory of long-vanished smoke seems to us like the golden haze of an Indian summer-day, when we look longingly back on those old times in the little lodge-room at Bell's Corners. How right everything seemed on those occasions when we set the fine-cut on the pedestal, and each brother selected his churchwarden and the coal oil lamp grew dim where it swung from the low ceiling. It did seem good to be a lodgeman when that good-natured giant, Bro. Gallinger, stretched his long legs across the floor, and puffed and smiled and thought of the little wife up the Town Line road, who chased him out of the parlor, and would hardly let him smoke in the kitchen lest he should spit on the rag carpet. Things seemed good when old Jim Fullerton, the lodge "kicker," grew mellow and soft under the nicotine; and the Treasurer told some of those queer stories of his, which can only be told in lodge, for their light gossamer humor floats only on the tobacco mist, and cannot endure the outer air. Yes, when we walked home in the small hours, and hung up our best clothes where they would be aired against next church-time, and combed the smoke wreaths from our then abundant locks, we felt that the night was not ill spent. There is fraternity in the "Smoker," and more than one weed burns out when brother smokes with brother.

Personally we don't smoke.