

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 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 funds. But a catastrophe had occurred in 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 towards 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, 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 "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 present of the full assemblage of the Lodge, kissed her and called her "his little sister," and promised to be a brother to her.

And so they proved, every one of them. It soon became necessary, of course, instead of letting her board around, to assign her a *regular home*, for she would soon have become a vagabond among all that large grasp of families, who petted and spoiled their little guest, and would have brought her up on sponge cake and honey. It soon became necessary, of course, to have systematic arrangements as to *her clothing*, for on her birthday seventeen bonnets, fifty-eight pairs of socks, and over two score of aprons were sent in to her as presents, and no other articles of costume. But she was made to know that this was only for her own good, and she readily acquiesced, under the proviso that she was to be allowed to make frequent and regular visits to the other.

Upon one thing she insisted from the beginning, viz: that she should be allowed to attend *all* the Masonic meetings. This she would in no wise be denied. To secure this favor, she had requested leave to board with the genial old Tyler, Brother Peg, the poorest man, I believe, in the Lodge, and the one who had the hardest time to get along in the world. Regardless of the poor fare, she chose this as her permanent home, doubtless moved partly