

way I knew how, but I cannot boast of any great success, and I wish you would advise me in the matter. I'll tell you how I have failed, and you will then be the better enabled at once to point out and rectify my errors. My lodge only meets once a month, and although I have been a diligent and punctual attendant at all of its meetings, I have found that for several reasons I could not succeed in learning the work there. In the first place, we did not always have work, and when we did, even month after month, I could not get a sufficient grasp on the ritual to hold it, and make it assuredly my own. Then, very naturally, it occurred to me to visit other lodges, night after night in the same week, so as to bridge over the ordinary gaps between the meetings of my own lodge, and thus aid my memory by drilling it continuously after only the shortest possible intervals. The system was plausible, but it didn't work. Somehow I got mixed, terribly mixed, and here I am now, a Mason of some two years' standing, and yet amazingly ignorant of the work of the craft, so far as my ability to perform it is concerned. What shall I do? You are an experienced Mason, and a skillful worker—tell me."

Bro. Tunker is a skillful worker. He *knows* the work, and he admirably *performs* it; he is at once correct and impressive. When *he* makes a Mason, he is *well* made. All the rough corners are knocked off, and a living stone is built into the Temple of Masonry, so that it will bear the test of the plumb, the level and the square.

"Bro. Slake," said Bro. Tunker, "I will answer you to the best of my humble ability, after the manner that you have requested. I will first point out your errors, and then correct them. You are right in supposing that you cannot succeed in learning the work at the meetings of your own lodge *ALONE*, and you are also right in despairing of learning the work by frequently visiting *other* lodges. Were

you to continue visiting every night for a year you would likely be no nearer your object, and possibly farther from it, than you are now. My experience proves, that *after* you have learned the work you may profitably visit lodges, with a view to learning what errors in verbiage and style to *avoid*, and perhaps while you are noting styles of work to *avoid*, you may occasionally note some worthy of being copied. A lodge is something like a college—it is a place to recite, not to learn lessons. Perhaps it ought not to be so in either case, but it is so. The work must be learned out of the lodge—take that for granted. The next question that arises is, Where, and how?

"One way, and an excellent one, is to learn it privately from a skilled Past Master. But you should be sure that he *is* skilled, that he has the true work, or else you may only duplicate his errors. There are many who are only too ready to set themselves up as Masonic teachers, who should themselves be Masonic learners. We know how often charlatans in the profane world dignify themselves with the title of "Professor," without having any profession whatever, or any idea except that of practicing on the credulity of their followers. In like manner some brethren are empty professors. I am sorry to say it, but it is true. O, yes, they *say* they have the old work, the true work, but if it is the old work, then give us something a little less antiquated, and if it is true, then truth is masquerading, and should be compelled to unmask itself. Be sure that you do not get instruction from one of these unreliable "professors," or else you may have a great deal to unlearn, and unlearning you will find to be much more difficult than learning. Now there is a certain way to avoid this danger, and it is, to get your work from a brother authorized by the Grand Master of your jurisdiction to teach it. He may be a Deputy Grand Master, or some other