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THE OLD TYLER.

At the outer door, well-armed, he long hath stood,
The faithful sentinel of mystic hours,
None pass or repass, but the favored few—
So truly hath he kept the outer gate.
When winds have swept the skies in fearful gale,
When Winter's cold congealed the nightly air,
When Summer's heat poured down its burning rays—
He still for duty cared, and held his trust
Like one commissioned by the higher powers.
His jurisdiction ne'er was intervened—
So conscientious was he—that none should
Pass the sacred threshold which he guarded
With such Masonic care.

We have met this good old Tyler—often met him—and often stopped at his outer gate to have a passing word. He is now gray in years, and his form is bent with the weakness of age. Long years ago he first saw the *light* of the Temple in a distant State. Then the craft was a small band in Israel, and the obscurity of the Order made it seem little and insignificant in the eyes of the world.

To join the fraternity then was largely a venture in the dark compared with the present day, for the simplicity of its ancient prestige held the institution in modest reserve, while the crowds held themselves aloof from it, because it was far from being popular. The Churches even looked upon it with suspicions and jealousy as a semi-infidel association, and in most instances protested against their ministers and members joining it; and in many parts of the country it was no easy matter for outsiders to find out who were Masons, for there was then no display of jewelry such as we have in these days. Even the fact of being a Mason was ordinarily concealed from the world. It was none of their business. It never is any of their concern; and, therefore, as all know, it is not necessary to carry an emblem of any sort to convince any Master Mason that we are one. There used to be, and there is yet, a sort of private way for giving this information, which, after all, is much to be preferred to any other.

This much of Masonry the old Tyler could teach us, as he had had long years of experience, and though most of the time he was outside of the Lodge-room, he had by critical attention, gathered more knowledge of the history of the Lodge, and of the character and standing of the members, than perhaps any other officer in it. Many a long yarn has he told us while we smoked our cigar at his stove.

"Brother Tyler," we asked him, one night, "did you ever have any one come up here who was not a Mason, who wanted admission to the Lodge-room?"

"Why, yes," said he with a laugh, "I once had a woman to knock at the door, and I opened it, and asked her to walk in and take a seat, which she did, for she knew me as I had once done some painting for her."

"Mr. Tyler," said she, "I'm in hunt of my husband, and he told me he was coming to the Lodge to-night, but to tell you the truth, I am very much afraid he has gone somewhere else."