

of initiation, and even went the length of contriving an ante-room and inventing a password. The password, in fact, was the bulwark of protection against invasion by the philistines. Every member, quite rightly, swore to keep it secret, and much conjecture ensued as to its actual worth and composition. The question arose as to whether the guard could properly refuse admittance to anyone who could pronounce it. If he could not refuse, then it was the bounden duty of every member to protect the secrecy of the password as he would protect his own life. Maria Smith declared that if Charlie Mitchell, for instance, who boasted that he knew the password, were to whisper it, like the real members, at the door, they could not refuse to admit him, and that if he were admitted they could not refuse to provide him with proper regalia.

That was a serious situation. For, what good was a temperance lodge if any drunken loafer could enter at will, demand regalia and observe every sacred ceremony? The Chief Temperar, who in the common walk of life was the blacksmith, advised us to wait until the iron was at least in the fire. He did not think it possible for any outsider, especially Charlie Mitchell, to know the password, but he urged the members not to pronounce it aloud when they presented themselves for admittance, but to whisper it. He admonished them also against repeating the word aloud to themselves, while at work or in periods of meditation, because no one knew what enemy might be within hearing at that very moment.

Henry Perkins was the guard. He accepted the position with becoming gravity, and afterwards made the profound declaration that no one would get by him without giving the password.

The password, in all seriousness, was the cause of much conjecture during the next fortnight, because someone rashly had said that it was the name of an article of food in daily use. The folly of giving even a clue was discussed generally, and here and there one or two names, and one in particular, stood the brunt of considerable criticism. Guesses as to the actual word were made on all hands. "Meat" was the favourite and "Bread" was a close second. Most of the old women guessed "Tea" and two or three were sure it was "Butter". Whatever it might be it caused much conjecture and even aroused some debate.

A debate, indeed, and in keeping with a good old practice, became the form of the forthcoming evening's entertainment. It was the second Lodge Night, and perhaps there are others

*The Importance of the Password*

*A Good Old Practice*