

he went to his own gate under the umbrella of another brother, who was going that way."

"I do not see as you had so much farther to go than he. He lives about the same distance from the lodge that you do."

"Very true; but then he went directly home, while I had to go in a direction away from home to make a call."

"Oh, ho! you have been out to make a call in such a night as this! The demand must have been urgent."

"It was a case of urgency, even a question of life and death."

"Why, really, one would think you had assumed the roll of a physician."

"No, wife, not a physician, but I am endeavoring to act the part of the Good Samaritan."

"You are very sure that you do not include in your list of duties that other injunction to 'visit the widow.'"

"That is exactly what I have been doing. This night it was my duty to 'visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction,' and I have done it."

"Oh, I thought the truth would come out at last. Who might the widow be who has made sure of your good offices."

"Wife, I have always been a true, and have endeavored to be a kind husband to you, but such groundless taunts and insinuations are unbearable."

"I really do not see what you will do about it, as long as you give me cause for suspicion."

"But when have I given you just cause for suspicion of my fidelity to you?"

"When? To-night! How? By avowing the fact that you had visited a widow at this unseemly hour, and refusing to give her name!"

"I have not refused to give her name. On the contrary, I had begun to inform you of all the circumstances for the purpose of personally interesting you in the case, when you declared your disbelief of what I had already told."

"So you wanted me to become your assistant in this matter of visiting widows at ten o'clock at night."

"No; I should not have asked you to do that. It would have been unnecessary; but I did hope to enlist your feelings in her favor to the extent that you would use your influence in her behalf with your female friends to enable her to do something toward her own support."

"Where does this paragon of perfection reside, who has so excited your sympathies?"

"About a mile out on the Fleming road, in the old tenement which has stood empty so long."

"Who is she?"

"A stranger here. She came here last week, her husband too ill to travel, was taken to that miserable dwelling, and before his case was made known to those who would have gladly assisted him, he was overpowered by a disease unchecked by medicine, and died commending those he left to the brotherhood of which he was a member."

"What kind of people are they?"

"Poor as poverty itself—not remarkably intelligent, but with every indication of humble honest worth."

"There are children, I suppose."

"Three: a girl of ten and two boys aged respectively eight and five years,"

"What does the widow propose to do?"

"Hardly anything as yet. The funeral of her husband takes place to-morrow, and after that we must see what we can enable her to do for herself."

There is no need to explain anything pertaining to this scene, for the conversation explains itself. We can only say that it is not a fancy sketch, but that it gives the relation of an experience that one Mason in the world has passed through.

SCENE SECOND.

"Has any brother 'round the lodge anything to offer for the good of Masonry, in general, or of this lodge in particular."

The regular business had been performed, a candidate had had exhibited to him the sublime mysteries and lessons of the Master Mason's degree. The little band there assembled was about to "part on the square," until another summons should assemble them "upon the level." The Secretary had closed his record and the gray-haired Master was about to remove his hat while he invoked the Divine blessing. He had arisen to perform this closing ceremony of the lodge, but before addressing the Divinity he asked the question placed at the head of this scene.

The question had been answered a hundred times before, sometimes by the relation