

the propounder of the question seemed to wish to be heard, as he cast an expressive glance toward the listener. The person to whom the inquiry was addressed merely gave his answer in the negative, saying, "I am not—never had that honor conferred on me."

"You ought to be. You should have applied long before arriving at your present age. Forty, I should think."

"Forty-five, sir."

"Indeed! That is worse and worse! You can scarcely appreciate your damages in living all these years without being a Master Mason."

"Yes, I have got along very well all my life without becoming a member of that institution."

"But just think how much better you would have succeeded had you been backed by such a powerful association."

"Greater success would have been problematic, no doubt."

"A problem easily answered. Why, my dear sir, to be a Master Mason is to be within the circle of the best society in the place in which you reside—"

"I believe I may say, without boasting, that I have always had access to the best society."

"And what an extensive acquaintance with the business men would it give you."

"I never had the slightest difficulty in making the acquaintance of business men."

"Besides, the fact being known that you were a Master Mason would give you patronage."

"Whenever I have been engaged in trade, I believe I have secured my full share of business."

"Well," said the voluble traveller, "if you have everything you wish, and have nothing further to ask for, you are the first man of the sort with whom I have ever met."

"I have learned to be content with my condition in life. To be a Master Mason might possibly augment my

sources of pleasure and enjoyment, but at present I do not think so. I am pleasantly situated as I am, and think for the present I ought to be satisfied with my lot."

"My dear sir, allow me to recommend you to become a Master Mason on your first opportunity."

"Thank you for the extraordinary interest which you appear to take in my welfare. When I feel the need of being a Master Mason I shall, undoubtedly, apply for admission."

Here the stage-coach entered a little town and drew up before the village inn to change horses and have the mail assorted, and the conversation was ended. There had been in addition to what is reported, a liberal sprinkling of oaths on the part of the principal speaker, which are omitted as giving no weight or strength to the arguments. When the vehicle again started the man so liberally advised was not on board, and the seat was only occupied by my friend and the voluble Master Mason. The hitherto silent traveller braced himself up for an encounter with the latter, as he was sure there was to be one. As our fresh team entered upon the ascent of a hill that bounded the village on the west, and the clattering of hoof and wheel for the time was subdued, the cross-questioning commenced:

"Are you a Master Mason, sir?"

"I have been raised to the Third Degree of Masonry," was the reply.

"Oh, I see, though your answer is hardly that of a real Master Mason—one who has made that sublime degree his study, as I think I may say, without vanity, I have done. You may examine me in all the tests known to the degree, and I think you will not find me lacking in any Masonic knowledge. I am considered among the brethren, to whom I am known, as a decidedly bright Mason."

"I have no reason to doubt your knowledge of Masonry—"

"I know and can give any lecture in the three degrees of the Lodge; I