

WHITE RIVER LODGE No. 153



Brotherhood & Friendship

It is customary, at the erection of all stately and superb edifices, to lay the first or foundation stone at the North-East corner of the building. You, being newly admitted into Masonry, are placed at the North-East part of the Lodge figuratively to represent that stone, and from the foundation laid this evening may you raise a superstructure perfect in its parts and honourable to the builder. You now stand, to all external appearance, a just and upright Mason and I give it you in strong terms of recommendation ever to continue and act as such. Indeed, I shall immediately proceed to put your principles in some measure to the test, by calling upon you to exercise that virtue which may justly be denominated the distinguishing characteristic of a Freemason's heart; I mean Charity. I need not here dilate on its excellences: no doubt it has often been felt and practiced by you. Suffice it to say, it has the approbation of Heaven and earth, and like its sister, Mercy, blesses him who gives as well as him who receives.

In a society so widely extended as Freemasonry, the branches of which are spread over the four quarters of the globe, it cannot be denied that we have many members of rank and opulence; neither can it be concealed that among the thousands who range under its banners, there are some who, perhaps from circumstances of unavoidable calamity and misfortune, are reduced to the lowest ebb of poverty and distress. On their behalf it is our usual custom to awaken the feelings of every new-made Brother by such a claim on his charity as his circumstances in life may fairly warrant.

Whatever, therefore, you feel disposed to give, you will deposit with the JD; it will be thankfully received and faithfully applied.

JD moves to a position in front of WM and facing Candidate, holds out alms-dish and makes appeal: Have you anything to give in the cause of Charity?

Candidate: ...

JD lowers alms-dish and, if Candidate does not answer quickly, proceeds with second question: Were you deprived of everything valuable previously to entering the Lodge?

Candidate gives affirmative.

JD: If you had not been so deprived would you give freely?

Candidate gives affirmative.

JD turns right and faces WM, takes Step and gives EA-Sign which he holds, and retains wand in crook of right shoulder: Worshipful Master, our new-made Brother affirms that he was deprived of everything valuable previously to entering the Lodge or he would give freely. *Cuts Sign and resumes position on right of Candidate.*

I congratulate you on the honourable sentiments by which you are actuated; likewise on the inability which in the present instance precludes you from gratifying them. Believe me, this trial was not made with a view to sport with your feelings; far be from us any such intention. It was done for three especial reasons: first, as I have already premised, to put your principles to the test: secondly, to evince to the Brethren that you had neither money nor metallic substance about you, for if you had, the ceremony of your initiation thus far, must have been repeated; and thirdly, as a warning to your own heart, that should you at any future period meet a Brother in distressed circumstances who might solicit your assistance, you will remember the peculiar moment you were received into Masonry, poor and penniless, and cheerfully embrace the opportunity of practicing that virtue you have professed to admire.