

## THE RITE OF DESTITUTION

There are many lessons taught the initiate in his progress through the degrees. Each of the steps in preparing the candidate has some special meaning; as the drama unfolds many of the things that preceded become clear as the reason thereof is explained. The outward preparation of the candidate has its symbolic meaning which is explained in the ritual. The ceremony which has been called the "Rite of Destitution" has a strong appeal to the candidate because of the poignant lesson taught.

Inasmuch as the first degree is symbolical of birth, and the lodge is a symbol of the world, it is proper that the candidate should be (as at birth) entirely destitute. As he makes his progress and acquires some worldly goods, it is natural for him to think that he is self sufficient. No thought of brotherly love can exist without charity. In teaching a moral principle it is easy to state a general rule of conduct, but to make it most effective an actual incident is necessary. When the candidate is asked that pertinent question he finds himself destitute, he is most embarrassed for a moment. It is immediately explained that the incident was for a purpose, and this is explained to him: the lodge was not trifling with his feelings but teaching him that as far as he is able, he must be charitable.

This little lesson of fundamental conduct does not only teach almsgiving but that charity is comprehensive and includes kind deeds, kind words, kind thoughts. Sometimes a word of cheer, a smile, a gentle word will replenish the depleted spirits of a dejected fellow human.

This lesson taught is not forgotten very soon because of the emphatic presentation of a moral principle in an effective manner. Precept and example mingled together stays longer within one's heart.

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