

THE WORKING TOOLS OF THE DINING ROOM

The Working Tools of the Dining Room are the Fork, the Knife, and the Tumbler. The Fork is an implement which enables even the most inexperienced Mason to secure - sometimes by reaching across the table - the most succulent and delicate morsels which adorn the festive board and stimulate the jaded appetite. It is further intended to convey the aforesaid morsels to the aperture which nature has provided to receive the same, and which when filled and properly used reduces everything to a common level.

The Knife, when regularly ground and sharpened enables us to dissect the anatomy of the most venerable rooster set before us, and divide it into portions suitable for the aforementioned aperture, so that it may not be filled to overflowing and thus hinder that flow of general conviviality which should at all times be present at the Festive Board. More especially should the knife be used when partaking of peas, as these small green globules often prove to be most elusive.

The Tumbler is used to measure our work, and as all tumblers are not of equal size and may be unmarked, the skilful craftsman should be careful to measure his tot by the rough and ready although sufficiently accurate method of the two or three finger rule. But in this room as we are not merely free and accepted or speculative masons, but rather energetic and operative, we apply these tools to our morals in this wise.

The Fork teaches us that we must not at any time during life sit still and wait for that to come to us which we most desire, but should reach forward, grasp and retain it - thus profiting by experience and assimilating the knowledge gained thereby. And as the prongs of the fork are equal, being jointed together in one composite structure, so they naturally strengthen and support each other. Thus we, as Masons, should stand upright, shoulder to shoulder, practising those cardinal virtues we profess to admire, namely temperance, prudence, fortitude, and justice.

*from the talks of W. B. F. F. (no. 1211)  
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The Knife teaches us that just as it must be kept sharp and in perfect condition to contend with the problems it faces, so must we preserve our mental and corporal faculties in their brightest splendour, if we are to achieve success in life. It teaches us too that we must never cut off more than we can chew, but should limit our desires in every station of life, so that success may be won and our departure regretted.

The Tumbler teaches us the value of moderation in all things, and as the perfect tumbler rings true whether it be full or whether it be empty and is cherished, <sup>as</sup> ~~so~~ the cracked tumbler is despised, rejected and cast aside, so too the perfect Mason must ring clear and true at all times after his labours in this room.

Thus the Working Tools of the Dining Room teach us to bear in mind the value of restraint and sobriety, that when we have partaken of the Great Architect's gifts of food and wine we may depart homewards with level steps and equal poise and the gratifying testimony of true brotherhood and a clear conscience.

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