

"I now present to your notice the working tools of the 4th degree. They are the fork, the knife and the tumbler."

THE FORK. is an instrument which enables even the most inexperienced Mason to secure (sometimes by reaching across the table) the most delicate and succulent morsels which adorn our Festive Board to delight the eye and stimulate the jaded appetite. It is further intended to be the means of conveying the various portions to the aperture which has been especially designed to receive them, and which reduces all nutriment to a common level; more especially should this implement be used when partaking of Peas, as, if conveyed to the mouth by the knife, these vegetable globules often prove elusive.

THE KNIFE. when properly ground and sharpened, is used in bringing crude matter into due form, assisting us to dissect the anatomy of even the most venerable Rooster, and to further prepare and divide the same to suit the dimensions of the afore-said aperture so that it may not be filled to excess, and thus prevent the flow of fervid eloquence which should at all times be the distinguishing characteristics of a convivial Mason.

THE TUMBLER. enables us with accuracy and precision to ascertain and determine the quantity of liquid we find most conducive to the preservation of our general joviality, and while all tumblers have not got that mark upon them commonly known as the "pretty" the skilled craftsman can measure his tot by the aid of the two or three finger rule.

But as we are not to be as speculative, but rather as Energetic and Operative Masons we apply these tools to morals; in this sense:

THE FORK. points out that we should not at all times sit still and wait for what we most require, but should reach out, secure and retain, profiting by our opportunities, and assimilating the knowledge gained by our experience. Nor should we forget that the little things in life require to be looked after lest they elude our grasp and be lost beyond recall.

As the prongs of the Fork are all equal and mutually assist each other, being joined together in ~~one~~ complete structure, so are we all equal when met together as Masons, and the Fork should teach us to stand shoulder to shoulder and practice those four qualities which cannot be too strongly recommended to our notice, namely, straightforwardness in our dealings with one another, sympathy with the failings of a brother, good temper in our differences of opinion, and fidelity to the sacred tie which binds us together.

THE KNIFE. points out the value to patience and assiduity, for as it is required to be sharp and in good condition to enable it to cope with some of the problems which confront it, so we are taught to take care of our mental and corporeal faculties, that we may not be left behind in the battle of life. It also teaches us not to cut off more than we can comfortably consume, but to limit our desires in every station of life, so that rising to eminence by merit we may live respected and die regretted.

THE TUMBLER. indicates the necessity of moderation in all things, for as it has no graduated scale by which to measure its varying contents, the user must exercise his discretion as to the quantity of liquid poured therein. — So we are expected to ascertain and not to exceed the limits of our own internal economy, for as the tumbler will only hold so much without detriment to its surroundings, so we should learn our capacity and thus avoid either overflowing with untimely hilarity, or confusing our mental or physical powers— for as the perfect tumbler rings true whether it be empty or contain liquid, so should the perfect convivial mason ring true after labour in the Fourth degree. A cracked tumbler is always despised and rejected.

Thus the Working Tools of the Fourth Degree teach us to bear in mind and act according to the Cardinal virtues of Prudence and Temperance, so that when we shall be summoned to drink the Tylers toast, after partaking of all the good things which a most bountiful prudence has bestowed upon us, we may rise and depart homeward with the gratifying testimony of a contented mind, an equal poise, and a clear brain.

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