

THE WORKING TOOLS OF A CONVIVIAL MASON

I now present to you the working tools of the convivial Mason, as practiced and utilised by members of Mulberry Lodge. They 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 delicate and succulent morsels which adorn our festive board to delight the eye and stimulate the jaded appetite. It is further used to convey the various portions to the aperture which has been specially designed to receive them, and which reduces all nutriment to a common level. More especially should this implement be used in partaking of peas, which, if conveyed to the mouth by aid of the knife, often prove very 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 into proper proportions to suit the dimension of the aforesaid aperture, so, that it may not be filled to excess, and thus prevent that flow of fervid eloquence which should at all times be the distinguishing characteristics of the convivial mason.

The Tumbler enables us, with accuracy and precision, to ascertain and determine the quantity of liquid which we find best conduces to the preservation of our general joviality, and while all Tumblers have not an engraving or marking upon them commonly known as "the pretty", the skilful craftsman can measure his "tot" by the aid of the two, or three finger rule.

But as we are not met here as speculative, but rather as energetic and operative Masons, we apply these rules to our Morals:

In this sense the Fork points out that we should not at all times sit down and wait for what we most desire, but should reach out, secure, and retain it, profiting by our opportunities, and assimilating the knowledge gained by our experiences. Nor should we forget that the little things of life require to be looked after. And as the prongs of the Fork are equal and mutually assist each other, being joined together in one compact structure, so are we all equal when 23 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 your notice, viz, 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 of patience and assiduity, for as it requires 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 chew, but to limit our desires in every station of life, that, arising to eminence by merit, we may live respected and die regretted.

The Tumbler inculcates the necessity for moderation in all things, for as it has no graduated scale by which to measure its varying contents, the user must exercise his own judgement as to the quantity of liquid poured therein. So we are expected to ascertain, and not exceed the limits of our internal economy, for, as the Tumbler will only hold a certain quantity without detriment to its surroundings, so should we learn our capacity, and thus avoid either overflowing with unseemly hilarity or confusing our mental and physical powers. And as the perfect Tumbler rings true whether it is empty, or whether it contains liquor, so should the perfect convivial Mason ring true after labour at the Supper Table. A cracked Tumbler is despised and rejected.

Thus the Working Tools of the Convivial Mason 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 Tyler's Toast, after partaking of all the good things which a bountiful Providence has provided for us, we may arise and depart homeward with the gratifying testimony of a contented mind, and equal poise, and a clear brain.