

THE TROWEL

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THE working tools of a Master Mason comprise all the tools of the Craft, but more especially the Trowel. The trowel is used by operative masons to spread the cement which unites the stones of a building into a substantial structure; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to use it for the more noble and glorious purpose of spreading the cement of brotherly love, which unites us into one close bond of brotherhood, in which no contention can ever exist, except that noble emulation of who can best serve and best agree.

But the trowel has in addition a deeper significance. Numerical values receive especial attention in Masonry, possibly because mathematics was the first of the sciences to help civilize the human race. Geometry is regarded as chief among the seven liberal arts and sciences,--its initial blazes before you. The 47th problem of Euclid is an important symbol in this degree.

The series, three, five and seven, occurs frequently among the symbols of Masonry, but the number three is most frequent; the three great lights, three lesser lights, three degrees in the Blue Lodge, three stations in the lodge, three stages of human life, three knocks and many other instances, which you will recall. The reason for this prominence is that three is the symbol of Stability.

Geometry teaches that three points are always in one plane and are always in equilibrium.

And this is the philosophic interpretation of the trowel. It presents three points. It is the principal working tool of the Master Mason, not only because it spreads the cement of brotherly love, but also because the close bond of brotherhood so constructed must always be in equilibrium and is firmly founded on Stability.

But there is yet another reason; the trowel in the hands of the operative mason is frequently required to remove from the bearing surfaces of the stone, such foreign substances as may have become attached to it while it lay among unclean surroundings and which would interfere with its perfect bonding.

The irregular block of stone came out of the quarry,--that is, the outer world; it entered the Apprentice degree, where by aid of the common gavel and the twenty-four inch gauge, it was shaped into a rough ashlar. It was then passed to the Fellowcrafts,

who, by use of their working tools made it plumb, square and level and fashioned it into a perfect ashlar.

However perfect an ashlar it may have been, when it received the commendation of the Grand Master, through contact with the world, it superficially acquired vices and faults, which unfit it for a perfect union.

The trowel in this relation may be regarded as referring to the three jewels of the Master degree, Friendship, Morality and Brotherly Love, which when worthily worn, so cleanse and purify, that the stone is in every respect fitted to be raised to its permanent place in the walls of the Temple of Masonry.