

The Square

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The ethics and good reputation of the Craft have been impressed on the public more by the word "Square" than by any other means, although "Level" is a close second. A "square deal" is a phrase that can be understood by one of only moderate I.Q. It implies open and honest bargaining wherein the transaction ends in mutual satisfaction to the contracting parties. As with other symbols, it is impossible to explain the meaning of the Square completely by means of language. If this were so, we would miss the charm of symbolism and speculation. But being indefinite, we have the privilege of reading a variety of meanings and abstractions into it, depending on our skill and experience. No other working tool so predominates a degree as does the Square in that of the F.C. It appears at the opening and closing of the degree, in the reception and obligation of the candidate, is the first of the working tools put into his hands and is, besides, one of the greater lights. If we translate the letter "G" of our Lodges to the Greek gamma, an inverted "L", standing for gee, the earth, and geometry, measuring the earth's surface, we find this letter is also a square, and is ever present in our Lodges, whether at Labor or refreshment. This Square is essentially a try-square and is distinguished from the carpenter's square. The arms that include the angle are not necessarily of equal length. Indeed, in operative masonry it would be an advantage to have them of unequal length, for on occasions the workman, when using this tool, might find it inconvenient to use a long arm for lack of space, whereas by adjusting it, the desired trial could be made. This applies also to our own personal Square. If the degree of accuracy or error of the moral problem under consideration is not revealed by one position of the Square, it should be applied in another manner. Thus we may approach the truth. Further, our Square is to be tried on our own work, not on that of a brother. He should be encouraged to try his Square on his own work, and in a manner that satisfies his own conscience. As previously mentioned, the Square of the F.C. is a try-square, and therefore any marks of measurement are out of place. As an E.A. he is already in possession of an instrument for carrying measurements. There can, however, be no objection to decorating one or both arms of this useful tool in any way that might make it a thing of beauty and a joy to the possessor. And it is exactly so with our personal Square. Masonry concerns itself more with the broad principles of conduct rather than with degrees of efficiency, for such degrees vary with the talents that have been entrusted to us, the environment in which we live and the arches of experience through which we have passed. So, no two of us have the same decorations on the arms of our try-squares. With the passing of time, we constantly add to the decorations or alter them according to our experiences in life, and finally, we hope to apply this Square with satisfaction to the Perfect Ashlar.