

worn in England, differing only in slight details of ornamentation.

In the United States of America the ordinary apron is simply a white skin, the E.A. wearing the left corner turned up; the F.C. the right corner turned up; and the M.M. both turned down. Individual Brethren, however, are permitted considerable additional ornamentation, if they care to go to the expense, as exemplified in several specimens exhibited.

MASONIC SPREAD.

A custom honored from time immemorial by the fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons is that of having refreshments either before or after Lodge communications. In "ye olden time" the Lodge meetings would be held in, or close to, an inn or tavern, where "good ale" was brewed and where an abandonment to conviviality could be enjoyed without let or hindrance. Thus were the spirits enlivened and the ties of friendship bound closer together by the strong cords of intimacy. And so has come down to us from out of the distant ages, before the revival, the good example of sociability that characterized the rise of Freemasonry. We follow to-day, to a degree calculated to do honor to our glorious ancestry, their noble example.

Our English brethren have their spread before the meeting, while we in America have it after the close of the Lodge. It is a common thing, we are informed, for a notice to be sent to the members of a Lodge in London stating that "the brethren will dine together at 6 o'clock at the 'Holborn,' or some other place. The advantage of this is that dining at that hour gives ample time to finish their meal; smoke their perfectos and be ready for the work of the evening, which being concluded allows the brethren to reach their homes in good season, without carrying with them an indigestible welsh rarebit, or the dyspepsia germs of lobster salad. The natural result, of course is a good night's rest and a clear

head in the morning, two things most devoutly to be wished.

The argument urged by those who advocate the after Lodge spread is that the brethren having had their "treat" will not be so well inclined to attend the meeting, but will tarry awhile at the table and until too late to go. And again they say that having eaten a hearty meal immediately before the Lodge meets, they are apt to be a little dull of intellect and sluggish of thought. They forget that this meal takes the place of their dinner at home and differs from it only by the company, except that the conviviality of the occasion, the freedom from household restraint, may lead to greater excesses and thus create an undesirable condition of mind and body.

It is also claimed that the after Lodge to spread tends to secure a larger attendance at the meetings, and with the "feed" in prospect, will lead the brethren to remain to the close of Lodge. He is not much of a Mason who is only a belly-Mason, and the Lodge does not lose much by his absence. A man who attends a Lodge simply because there is going to be a spread, will not be interested in the work, but will sit uneasily in his seat and be impatient for the close of the Lodge.

Our own belief is that the spread before the Lodge is much preferable. Of course we are so accustomed to the after-Lodge banquet that it would be like an "innovation" to attempt to change it.

As the Lodges call from refreshment to labor, let the brethren think of this matter, and when called from labor to refreshment, let them enjoy the spreads that may be prepared for them, either before or after the meeting.—*Masonic Standard*.

The I. O. F.

The Independent Order of Foresters are inaugurating a vigorous winter campaign, and for the months of November, December, and January are remitting to new members the registration and certificate fees, which applicants usually have to pay upon joining.