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J. B. TRAYES, P.D.D.G.M., }  
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## THE WORKING TOOLS OF A FREEMASON—THE TWENTY-FOUR- INCH GAUGE.

BY G. F., JR.

We are taught by our esoteric work to apply the different implements of manual labor to the theoretic basis of speculative Freemasonry, and by so doing we instruct the neophyte, by the aid of these every-day symbols, many of the important lessons of a moral and social nature, which are so characteristic of our fraternity.

The twenty-four inch gauge, as every Craftsman is aware, is the first implement placed in the hands of the workman, to enable him to measure and ascertain the size and extent of the work in which he is about to engage, so that he can compute the time and labor it may cost. Now, this is the twenty-four inch gauge of our ancient operative brethren, but we, as speculative Freemasons, apply it emblematically to a far more important service. From it, the Worshipful Master informs us, we should derive a lesson of daily admonition and instruction; for as it is divided into twenty-four parts, it recalls to our mind the division of the day into twenty-four hours, and so directs us to apportionate them to their proper

objects, viz.: Prayer, Labor, Refreshment, and Sleep.

Now, what a vast amount of food is here given us for contemplation and solid thought. It is very easy to glibly run over these things according to the letter of the ritual, and then let the neophyte forget all about it. But the earnest student of our mysteries, will note that these explanations of the working-tools must of necessity be brief, and are only the seeds, which the craftsman plants in the mind of the neophyte, there to grow, expand, and develop.

The neophyte looks at the twenty-four inch gauge, the first instrument of labor that has been given to him; he recalls to his mind the solemnity of the scene, the impressiveness of the ceremony, he has only a few minutes before being brought to light, and he begins to see and partially understand the speculative character and hidden philosophy of our fraternity. Here he holds in his hand a little instrument that he has seen and handled many times before without a thought, or, perchance,