

Banquet Night

"Once in so often," King Solomon said,
Watching his quarrymen drill the stone,
"We will curb our garlic and wine and bread
And banquet together beneath my Throne,
And all Brethren shall come to that mess
As Fellow — Craftsmen-no more and no less."

"Send a swift shallop to Hiram of Tyre,
Felling and floating our beautiful trees,
Say that the Brethren and I desire
Talk with our Brethren who use the seas.
And we shall be happy to meet them at mess
As Fellow-Craftsmen — no more and no less."

"Carry this message to Hiram Abif —
Excellent master of forge and mine —
I and the Brethren would like it if
He and the Brethren will come to dine
(Garments from Bozrah or morning-dress)
As Fellow-Craftsmen — no more and no less."

"God gave the Cedar their place —
Also the Bramble, the Fig and the Thorn —
But that is no reason to black a man's face
Because he is not what he hasn't been born.
And, as touching the Temple, I hold and profess
We are Fellow-Craftsmen — no more and no less."

So it was ordered and so it was done,
And the hewers of wood and the Masons of Mark,
With foc'sle hands of Sidon run
And Navy Lords from the ROYAL ARK,
Came and sat down and were merry at mess
As Fellow-Craftsmen — no more and no less.

The Quarries are hotter than Hiram's forge,
No one is safe from the dog-whip's reach.
It's mostly snowing up Lebanon gorge,
And it's always blowing off Joppa beach;

But once in so often, the messenger brings
Solomon's mandate: "Forget these things!
Brother to Beggars and Fellow to Kings,
Companion of Princes — forget these things!
Fellow-Craftsmen, forget these things!"

— *Rudyard Kipling*