

countenanced amongst Masons, that scurrility and slander are denounced, that the libertine is to them an unclean thing, and the liar the meanest, most contemptible, most detestable, most grovelling of creatures in the form of man.

Yes, at the very threshold of Freemasonry, the truth dawns upon the neophyte—he discovers that he has joined a Brotherhood differing from all other secret societies. It is not because its ritualism and symbolism are so much more sublime than those of daughter associations; it is not because its obligations are of a more solemn and stringent character, that the neophyte is impressed with this difference; but he gradually comprehends the fact as he advances slowly, step by step, along its mystic stairs, that Freemasonry not only teaches that a brotherhood exists among true and upright men, who are seeking more light, but that by means of that mysterious light they are learning, slowly but surely, to appreciate the goodness and greatness of the Creator, and to comprehend his Fatherhood. The mists of sectarian teaching and bigoted training in particular and narrow-minded schools of theology, are gradually wafted away from the mind's organ of vision; the innate soul begins to see clearly through the fog that enshrouded it; and being free, it soars forth, grasping everywhere truths that before were hidden from its view. The priest-ridden dogmas of a bigoted church vanish; he now comprehends that the Great Architect of the Universe is something more than the man-created God of a sect, or a church, or a party,—that he is a loving, divine Father,

who, while he listens with pleasure to the prayer of the earnest Christian, be he Catholic or Protestant, will not turn a deaf ear to the supplications of the follower of Mahomet, or forget the devotions of the poor Hindoo. He is the Father of the human race, and not the Defender and Champion of a sect, or the revengeful Persecutor of a creed.

This we view as the first great and important lesson in Freemasonry; the neophyte has washed from his soul the prejudices of race and education, and his mind has already absorbed "more light." He glories in the study that this opens out to him. No longer trammelled with the horrible thought that his brother, who pronounces not his Shibboleth, is a man condemned by a wrathful God to tortures eternal, ingenious in their cruelty, and to which the rack of the Inquisition and the stake, the wheel, and the punishments of the Bourbons two centuries ago are as mere playthings,—we repeat, no longer believing in so horrible a dogma, that drags the Divine Being down to the level of the gods of Mythology, he commences to study the real attributes of that Creator whom he now views as a Father of Love and of Kindness.

The true Mason gradually learns these great lessons, which after all are but simple truths; he, now that the light of Masonry has penetrated his mind, comprehends that he has a mission here on earth to perform. He is not to pretend, or to live, as if he thought this beautiful green footstool of the Creator, with its snow-peaked mountains, its tempestuous oceans, its smooth and placid lakes, its fertile valleys, its fruits, its flowers, its foli-