

of innocence. Thus the white curtains of the tabernacle and the priest's vestments signified that purity of the heart and life most acceptable unto God. "Let all your garments be white," was no more than an injunction to upright living—to the keeping of the soul free from the stains of sin.

In the Christian Scriptures white is used in the same way of symbolical suggestion. It is the color which distinguishes the raiment of angels and glorified saints. When our Lord was transfigured on Mt. Hermon, it is said that his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became as white as the light, or as snow. That occasion or representation may be said to furnish the very highest form of symbolism.

In the Apocalypse, also, we find suggestive allusions as to the moral import of white, for it is said that "fine linen, clean and white, is the righteousness of saints;" and again it is declared that "The armies which were in Heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

There is a well understood appropriateness, therefore, in making special use of the lamb-skin, or white apron, whenever a candidate is received into the Masonic Brotherhood. The initiate is thus reminded that he should have pure and upright intentions—that he should be influenced by disinterested motives in seeking to become connected with the Masonic organization. More than this, it is impressed upon his mind at the outset that Masonry demands of its adherents purity of heart and rectitude of conduct. White symbolizes righteousness; and when the lamb-skin is presented to the initiate as the distinguishing badge of a Mason, and the solemn words of the ritual are spoken in connection with such presentation, he may well realize the fact that he has entered a society where much will be required of him.

—*Ex.*

THE OLDEST CITY IN THE WORLD.

Damascus is the oldest city in the world. Tyre and Sidon have crumbled on the shore; Baalbec is a ruin; Palmyra is buried in a desert; Nineveh and Babylon have disappeared from the Tigris and the Euphrates. Damascus remains what it was before the days of Abraham—a centre of trade and travel—an isle of verdure in the desert; "a presidential capital," with martial and sacred associations extending through fifty centuries. It was near Damascus that Saul of Tarsus saw the light above the brightness of the sun; the street which is called straight, in which it was said "he prayed," still runs through the city.

The caravan comes and goes as it did 1,000 years ago; there is still the sheik, the ass, and the water wheel; the merchants of the Euphrates and the Mediterranean still occupy the streets "with the multitude of their wares." The city which Mohammed surveyed from a neighboring height, and was afraid to enter "because it was given to man to have but one paradise, and for his part he was resolved not to have it in this world," is to-day what Julian called the "Eve of the East," as it was in the time of Isaiah, "the head of Syria."

From Damascus came the damson, our blue plums, and the delicious apricots, of Portugal, called the damasco; damask, our beautiful fabric of cotton and silk, with vines and flowers raised upon a smooth, bright ground; the damask rose, introduced into England in the time of Henry VIII.; the Damascus blade, so famous the world over for its keen edge and wonderful elasticity, the secret of whose manufacture was lost when Tamerlane carried the artist into Persia; and the beautiful art of inlaying wood and steel with gold and silver, a kind of mosaic engraving and sculpture united—damaskeening—

—with which boxes, bureaus and