

Britain and Ireland, their rise, splendor and dissolution, and the connection with them of the Operative Masons of the Middle Ages.

It remains only to say something of the styles of architecture that distinguished them, and especially of Gothic Architecture, that rich and wonderful style, which was the invention and glory of the Masonic Fraternity. This we shall attempt in another paper.

### THE EMBLEMATIC COLOR—BLUE.

The Koran and other sacred books of Oriental literature are enlivened with legends and myths almost as full of suggestions as the emblems of Freemasonry themselves. This is the very genius of Oriental literature. The Lord of heaven himself, when He condescended to become incarnate, that we might know something of the mercy and goodness of God, adopted this very style, attractive as it was to His hearers by usage and education, and taught his profoundest lessons under the guise of familiar story and legend.

One of the most pleasant and instructive myths of Freemasonry is that which explains the selection of the color, *blue*, as the emblematic color of the craft. King Solomon had greatly preferred scarlet. It was the priestly color. It is a splendid and attractive hue. It was the tint of the royal robes referred to, so long afterwards, by Jesus as he stood on the Mount of Beatitudes, and picking up a scarlet Anemone, held it before the listening multitudes, saying: "Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."

In the Grand Council at Jerusalem, where this and other questions of profoundest weight were discussed, the King of Israel presented his views and enforced them with all the argument at his command. It was difficult to maintain an adverse opinion in the presence of such a man. God had given him wisdom and understanding exceeding much, a wisdom that "excelleth that of all the children of the east country and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men." He had spoken "three thousand proverbs and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall."—I. Kings, iv.

Yet the first principle incorporated in this organization, which the three men assembled for the purpose of perfecting, was that which was symbolized by the emblem worn on the breast of King Hiram—that is equality. And although much had been yielded to King Solomon by his two companions, in deference to his admitted wisdom, and the divine source from which it emanated, yet when it came to practical questions, and to questions of symbolisms, orders in architecture, and the like, the two experienced Tyrians, far his elders in point of age and personal application, would not yield.

King Hiram spoke: "There is a color yielded by the sea, the product of a shell, that has not its equal upon earth for richness and glory. Admitted that the scarlet of the hill-flower is dazzling, yet as a color it is not permanent. Purple is the most permanent, as it is the most gorgeous of colors, and its sheen, reflected back from a royal garment open to the light of day, is transcendently magnificent. This color is one of universal application, for does not the sea surround the world? Send, if you will, to your royal brethren, the monarchs of Egypt, of Arabia, of Sheba, of Persia, and inspect their wardrobes of state, and you shall find without exception, purple is adopted as the color symbolizing beauty, grandeur, durability and universality."