

ployed the language of signs and symbols, solemn performances, and dramatic representations; nothing was written except in symbols and hieroglyphics.

About 1,000 B. C. the Temple of Solomon was built, not, however, by Israelitish masons and carpenters, but by Phœnicians. Solomon himself in his letter to King Hiram confesses that he has no mechanics among his people. Hiram Abiff, the Sidonian builder, was the Architect, and he brought with him all the mechanics from Phœnicia, while the Israelites performed the work of common laborers.

The Israelites were too exclusive in their character, too intolerant towards other nationalities and tribes, too nomadic in their mode of living, and had too great an aversion to manual labor and mechanics in general, as to admit the supposition that they, during the short period of the building of the Temple and the house of Solomon, would change their nature and take a fancy to architecture. The state of bondage in which the Israelites had been kept for centuries, was certainly not congenial for the development of enlightened ideas. The nomadic mode of living and aversion to manual labor, their fondness for an idle life, was the cause that prompted Pharaoh to order the slaying of all the first-born among the Israelites. That character the Israelites or Jews not only manifested during their Egyptian bondage, but also during that of the Babylonian captivity, and in all times to the present day.

Only one small number of the Israelites exercised certain mystic rites, namely: the Essenes. They, how-

ever, did not practice architecture; they were exclusively an ascetic sect, a religious body, a kind of monks. Their society was formed about 600 B. C.; it was, however, greatly despised by the other Israelites. It existed during the time of Christ, who as well as St. John the Baptist, was, no doubt, acquainted with them, and who never spoke against the Essenes.

We have neither any reason to suppose that either Solomon himself, or the Priests of his people patronized the mysteries of the Phœnician builders, or, as we generally term it, "Masonry."

Solomon, no doubt, was a wise man during a part of his life; in later years, however, his habits became the very opposite of those of a true Mason, and a man who, like Solomon, had to attend to 700 wives and 300 concubines, had certainly neither time nor mind to think of cultivating Masonic principles.

Under the reign of his son Rehoboam, the tyrant, the decay of the Israelitish nation commenced. Ten tribes revolted and seceded, and elected their own King Jeroboam, while only two tribes remained loyal to Rehoboam. The ten tribes were styled the Kingdom of Israel, the two tribes the Kingdom of Judah. Feuds and internal wars, and wars with neighboring tribes were continued for several centuries, until Salamanassar the Assyrian king, about 720 B. C., subdued the two kingdoms, drove off the ten tribes, the Israelites, and made the other two, those of Judah, tributary. The ten tribes became lost, and were never again found; even at the present day some enthusiasts are in search of them. The