

the inculcation of great moral truths, and those virtues which in all ages have been deemed of paramount importance are impressively set forth and explained in the ritual. So it is the initiate is reminded of the fact that Masonry is organized upon a basis of principles and rules concerning duty, having moral as well as social characteristics and tendencies.

In the Masonic system great stress is laid upon the four cardinal virtues, which in all ages of the world have been regarded as potent factors in the regulation of the conduct of life. The significance of the word *cardinal* will be appreciated when we consider that it is derived from *cardo*, meaning primarily the hinge of a door, and secondarily that upon which anything depends or revolves. By cardinal virtues, therefore, reference is made to those moral principles and qualities which are of the first rank and exercise a controlling influence upon the life. The four virtues, to which such pre-eminence is given, have been differently named and classified; but as adopted into the Masonic system, and there emphasized, they commonly take this form: Temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice.

The first of these virtues is defined as "that due restraint upon the affections and passions, which renders the lower nature subordinate to the higher, and frees the mind from the allurements of vice." Temperance was presented by some of the ancient philosophers under the name of moderation, their teaching being to this effect: That men ought to hold their conduct within certain prescribed limits, and not rush into the excesses of folly and shame. Masonry urges this course. It puts temperance as first of the cardinal virtues, because it implies those fundamental relations which man sustains to himself—because it calls for restraint and self-denial without which the individual life cannot appear in its real greatness.

Fortitude is recommended as the

second of these important virtues. Not only is this an essential quality in itself, but it is the guard of almost every other virtue. Fortitude is that firmness of purpose, that strength of the will, by which a brave soul can resist evil and be faithful to the right under all circumstances. Masons are solemnly charged to stand firm in their allegiance to duty whatever may be the hazard, and the nobility of such adherence is impressively illustrated in the ceremony of introduction into the Order as well as by the text of the ritual.

Prudence is the third of those primary virtues on which the establishment of the Masonic character is said to depend. In the ordinary use and meaning of this word it perhaps suggests no more than a due appreciation of what is proper to be done under all circumstances. A prudent man will cause his life to be conformed to the dictates of reason; he will not be carried away by the waves of passion or impulse, but his words and deeds will be regulated by a due discretion. Prudence, however, in the Masonic sense, implies more than this restraint of thought and cautiousness of behavior. It is the synonym of wisdom—that wisdom which charges life with a potent force and adorns it with a heavenly grace. Wisdom includes knowledge and a good understanding—a perception of the best things of life and duty, and a purpose for their realization. In Masonry great emphasis is placed upon equality, even the arrangement of the lodge, the Master's place in the East, and his personification of King Solomon, being intended to make prominent that wisdom which in the lecture of the first degree is declared to be the characteristic of every Mason.

Justice is the fourth of the cardinal virtues. If named last in the ordinary classification, it is by no means the least of those moral excellencies specially commended. To be perfectly just is an attribute of the