

divisions of the globe, in the language of symbols; and any one who is able to read and explain the symbols of Freemasonry, will find an inexhaustible treasure of laws and precepts, which teach him to be a good and noble man. The youthful mind is particularly susceptible to the impression of its influences; often they are unimportant episodes of their childhood, but often occurrences of more importance, which we never forget, but remain vivid in our recollection, even into our oldest years.

So the Freemason's life begins with a youth, in whom the impressions which are made on the youthful Masonic mind, are vividly revived, felt and preserved. All those who are about to become Freemasons, either the one who has attained the highest elevation of intellectual gifts and education, the enthusiastic hero, or the plain, though honest man, but one who is continually striving for advancement; who only brings with him the good-will and determination to fill his place to the best of his ability. Everyone appreciates the seriousness of the moment; they all have the fullest conviction that this step is of the highest importance through life, and cannot be retraced. With mature consideration and firm resolution, the applicant enters the precincts of the lodge, where he is received by the "Preparing Master," who reminds him most conscientiously of the importance of his intention, and after permission is received from the Presiding Master, he is permitted to enter the Temple. Here he now stands as a searcher. He searches for truth, he searches for friends who will assist him, and who will unite with him in serving the world at large, where the strength and good-will of a single individual would be of no avail with the hope of being beneficial and successful.

Why is the novice blind-folded? Assuredly, not for the reason that he could not reveal the names of those who are present, in case he should

be rejected. Cases of rejection for good and sufficient reasons, which were brought forward only at the very last moment, are in the annals of Freemasonry very rare, so that in such isolated cases, such precautions need not to be resorted to, as we make searching inquiries into the candidate's social standing and character. We have a full right to expect he would not be of such a low, mean, treacherous disposition; and lastly, in the worst case, what misfortune would it be, or what consequences would it have, for any of the brethren in our present age? The candidate is blind-folded, undoubtedly, only for this reason,—that his attention is not drawn to or divided by unimportant objects, but that he may be the better enabled to listen more attentively to what is said, and better comprehend the sublimity of the lessons taught in the fullest sense, and by suspending the faculty of sight from the outside world, it is easier to concentrate other thoughts which unite soul and heart.

Confidentially and expectantly stands now the candidate before us; he does not feel himself entitled to judge about the ceremonies of his initiation. He only has the firm intention to answer shortly but in a dignified manner, such questions as may be put to him; but in all other respects he entirely trusts himself to his ever-present guide, to whom he clings with the same confidence a child reposes in its mother.

You will now begin your first journey, are the words of the Master, which mean, symbolically, the preparation for initiation. The last spoken words give just enough time to enable the neophyte to ask himself, "Where shall I travel to? As to my knowledge I am already in the lodge into which I am about to be received;" but he will be kept in suspense. He feels a strong, supporting arm taking hold of his, and with a slow, hesitating, but firm step, begins his first journey; at the end of which, he is informed that