I recall an unforgettable episode from my first exhibition in America. In one of the large cities a local collector of art and wealthy maecenat arranged a festive dinner in my honour. Everything was luxurious and on a large scale and the best people of the city were present. As usual, many speeches were delivered. The host and hostess, both already grey-haired, joyfully and cordially entertained the guests. Everything was magnificently arranged, and the hostess drew my attention to the rooms which were decorated in blue and purple flowers and said:

"It is precisely these shades which I adore so much in your paintings".

After dinner one of the lady guests present said to me:

"This is indeed a remarkable reception", and added confidentially: "Probably this is the last dinner in this home".

I looked at my neighbour in the greatest amazement and she, lowering her voice, continued:

"Don't you know that our host is absolutely ruined and just yesterday he lost his last three millions".

Naturally I was shocked. But my neighbour explained:

"Of course, it is not easy for him, especially considering his age. He is already seventy-four".
But the apparent steadfastness and calmness of the host and hostess and all the surroundings were in obvious contradiction with this revelation. After this conversation I began to take special interest in the host’s fate. Three months after this dinner they already moved to their former garage. It seemed that everything was lost, but after three years, this art patron was again a millionaire and again lived in his palacial home.

When I spoke to his friends about my astonishment, why his numerous acquaintances and after all the city itself, to which he had donated such huge sums, did not help him, I was told:

“First of all, he would not have accepted any help, and secondly, he is used to such financial storms.”

This last conversation took place in a large club, where near tall windows in easy chairs were sitting many distinguished members, reading newspapers and talking. My friend, pointing at them, said:

“These are all millionaires. Ask how often everyone of them ceased to be a millionaire and then became one again. Just guess, who of them is at present on the top of the wave, and who is nearing the abyss.”

And the club members continued to read quietly and to chat joyfully, as if no troubles ever disturbed them. I asked my friend, how he explained such a remarkable state of mind. He shook his shoulder and replied with one word:

“Steadfastness.”

Verily, the concept of steadfastness should be greatly stressed amidst other basic principles of life. Virility is one, goodwill and friendliness is another. Desire to work is a third. Perseverence and inexhaustibility is a fourth. Enthusiasm and optimism is a fifth. But amidst all these foundations and many other necessary creative conceptions, steadfastness always remains as a firm corner-stone, giving impulse and success to all progress.

Steadfastness is the result of true equilibrium, which has libra as its symbol. Such equilibrium is not a heartless calculation, neither despising the surroundings, neither conceit, nor selfishness. Steadfastness always stands in relation to responsibility and a sense of duty. Steadfastness will not lose balance, will not slip nor waver. Those who advanced firmly up to the last hour, are always steadfast.

In our days of confusion, disillusion, and narrow distrust, the quality of steadfastness is especially blissful. When people so easily become panic stricken, only a steadfast person can lead with healthy understanding and can thus save many from the horror of drowning in chaos. When people try to convince themselves of all sorts of prejudice, mirages and other nonsense, only a firm person can decide in his heart, where there is a safe
exit. When people become crazy, then even a short squall appears to them like an endless horrible storm. And only steadfastness will remind one of true co-measurement.

Perhaps someone will say, that steadfastness is nothing else than commonsense. But it will be more correct to say that from commonsense steadfastness is born. The concept of steadfastness is already an expression of reality. Steadfastness is required precisely here on the earthly plane, where there are so many circumstances, against which one has to hold out. Therefore, it is so useful, amidst many concepts of goodwill, co-operation and progress to understand the value of steadfastness. Not without reason is it always appreciated how firmly a person withstood against certain attacks, strain and unexpected blows. In such cases vigilance and presence of mind are praiseworthy, but steadfastness will also be acclaimed as something positive, and victorious.

As an example of steadfastness, I recall a story which I heard in San-Francisco.

A foreigner had arrived. Apparently he was wealthy. He was received everywhere in society. He acquired many friends. He won the reputation of being a good, wealthy and kind-hearted fellow. Once he asked his new friends to lend him ten thousand dollars for a new business. Something curious, though very usual, happened. All friends found sufficient reason to refuse his request. More than that, everywhere people showed coldness towards him and some even turned away. Then this foreigner went to visit another person who from the very beginning had been rather formal towards him. He explained his project and asked for a loan of ten thousand. This time at once the cheque book appeared on the table and the required amount was handed over to him. The next day the foreigner again came to see the same person. The latter asked: "What has happened, did you mis-calculate the amount, perhaps you need more?"

But the foreigner took the cheque from his pocket and returning it to its previous owner said:

"No, I need no money. What I need is a partner, and I invite you to join me." And they founded a company which became very prosperous.

And to all others so-called friends, who again smiled most friendly, the foreigner said:

"You have fed me with your dinners. Remember, my table is always served for you."

Dr. J. L. knows this story.

How many instructive experiences are given by life itself! Imagination is nothing else but recollection.