

*Fraters of the Canadian Branch of the United Orders of the Temple and St. John of Jerusalem—Greeting :*

V. D. + S. A.

It is with more pleasure than I can well express, that I now meet you, and have the privilege assigned to me of congratulating you on the attainment of our wishes, in the establishment of a National and Independent Great Priory of Knights Templar for the Dominion of Canada. Circumstances which were quite unforeseen, and which it is not now necessary to refer to, prevented our memorial being fully brought to the notice of H. R. Highness the Grand Master until last year, when I received a communication from the Arch-Chancellor, the Hon. Judge J. F. Townshend LL.D., of Dublin, saying that he had received the commands of the Prince of Wales, addressed to him as his Arch-Chancellor, to inform the Canadian memorialists that H. R. H. had directed their petition to be dealt with at the next Convent General according to the statutes, under his advice as the Arch-Chancellor of the Order. The Convent General did not meet until the 29th of last October, when, in the absence of H. R. Highness in India, the Earl of Limerick, Great Prior of England, presided, who, with his wonted feelings of good will and interest towards the Canadian branch of the Order, not only brought forward the memorial, but moved and warmly supported the motion of a resolution, seconded by the Sub-Prior, Major Shadwell H. Clerke, that the prayer of the petition be adopted, by admitting Canada into the union of the Templar Body of England and Ireland as the National Great Priory of the Dominion of Canada. To this the Convent General acceded in the most cordial manner, as intimated to me a few days after the meeting, by the courtesy of the Great Prior Lord Limerick. A certified copy of this resolution, signed by the Arch-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, has also been lately forwarded to me, which together with the Patents under the sign Manual of H. R. H. the Grand Master, authorizing the formation of the Great Priory, and naming me as the first Great Prior, will now be preserved in the Archives of the Canadian Order, as a lasting memento of our complete independence as a Sovereign Body, sprung from the good old English stock.

Sir Knights! Much as I prize the high honor that has fallen to my lot—and be assured I do feel it as such—of becoming the Supreme Head, under Royal authority, of this National Grand Body, I feel prouder and more gratified after having introduced, and for so many years conducted the affairs of the Order in Canada, in maintaining your good opinion; and the more than cordial manner with which you have always been pleased to receive me and the steady support and co-operation you have so long afforded me, has now been in the most gratifying and constitutional manner more than crowned by success, in the establishment of our independent National Great Priory, without severing our connection with the Parent Body. I trust you will give me credit for the sincerity of my motives when I say it was not in the least degree the love of authority or a desire to enforce “the one man power,” that induced me so persistently to maintain my own opinion as to the advisability of continuing a dependency of the Great Priory of England, until the time arrived when we could separate with honour and dignity to ourselves. Looking to the future of the Order, when I shall no longer be at the head of affairs, I never allowed expediency to stand in the way, being determined, if possible, to ensure the Order being placed upon a firm basis, and its future status permanently secured.

## OF THE CONVENT GENERAL AND UNION OF THE ORDER.

It may not be quite clear to some of our fraters why we should still wish to continue under the “Convent General;” but I need scarcely point out to you, that as a National British Society, no more honorable position could be held than that of being united with the other national branches of the Order over whom H. R. H. the Heir-apparent to the Throne is the governing power, and which Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen has been pleased especially to patronize. This I look upon alone as a great distinction and privilege, the countenance of Her Majesty being a guarantee of the purity, through conservative doctrines and Christian principles, of our Order.

The avowed object of this Templar Union was to incorporate the branches in England, Ireland, and Scotland under one Royal Head, by the reciprocation of rites, privileges, and disabilities; as, correctly speaking, there should not be any separate bodies in the society, which is or should be, one, and indissoluble; although want of knowledge of the correct principles of the Order in some cases, and political exigencies