

THE LATE THOMAS B. HARRIS, ESQ.

The death of Mr. Harris, late Grand Secretary of the Masonic fraternity in Canada, took place on the 18th ult., at Hamilton of which city the deceased was a resident, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. Early in the month he was seized with an attack of acute rheumatism, which finally gave way to a low type of typhoid fever, ending fatally. Mr. Harris, though not one of the oldest Masons in the country, was a devoted student of masonry, an active labourer in the order, and had held almost every position of honour that it was possible for his brethren to offer him.

Thomas Bird Harris was born at Bristol, England, on the 22nd July, 1819, and subsequently removed with his parents to the family estate at Viveham, near Barnstaple, in Devonshire. He passed some time in learning business in his father's store, which he ultimately left to take a position in London. In the spring of 1848 he sailed for New York, and after spending some time in that city and in Toronto, he finally settled at Hamilton, where he commenced business as a dry-goods merchant. In this trade he remained until 1856, retiring in favour of his brother. Since that time he devoted himself to Masonry. Mr. Harris has also held important offices in connection with the St. George's Benevolent Society and the Hamilton and Gore Mechanics' Institute. From a biography which appeared some time ago in the *Craftsman* we have culled the following brief sketch of his Masonic career:

Bro. Harris was first brought to Masonic "Light" in St. Andrew's Lodge, No. 449, E. B. Toronto, on the 14th January, 1848, and was passed to Fellow Craft degree on the 16th January, 1849, and raised to the sublime degree of Master Masons on the 27th March, 1848. He subsequently, on his arrival at Hamilton, affiliated with Lodge of Strict Observance, No. 833, E. B., in which Lodge he discharged the duties of Secretary for the unexpired term of the proper officer, and was made Junior Warden for the year 1851.

During the year 1853 he with others petitioned for and obtained a warrant from the Grand Lodge of Ireland to open the St. John's Lodge, No. 231, and by the unanimous wish of the brethren was nominated its first Worshipful Master, being re-elected to the same position on two consecutive elections. He was again elected in 1856, and in 1863, and, after a ten years' rest, was, by the unanimous desire of the members, again called to the Oriental Chair for the years 1863 and 1869. He was elected Secretary for three years, 1854, 1855 and 1857, 1863 and 1871.

and Treasurer for the years 1856, 1867, In 1855 R. W. Bro. Harris was a petitioner for a Warrant of Constitution from the Grand Lodge of England for Acacia Lodge, No. 954, now No. 61 Hamilton, and was nominated the first Junior Warden, and



*Thomas B. Harris*

THE LATE THOMAS BIRD HARRIS, GRAND SECRETARY A. F. AND A. M. OF CANADA. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ECKERSON & Co.

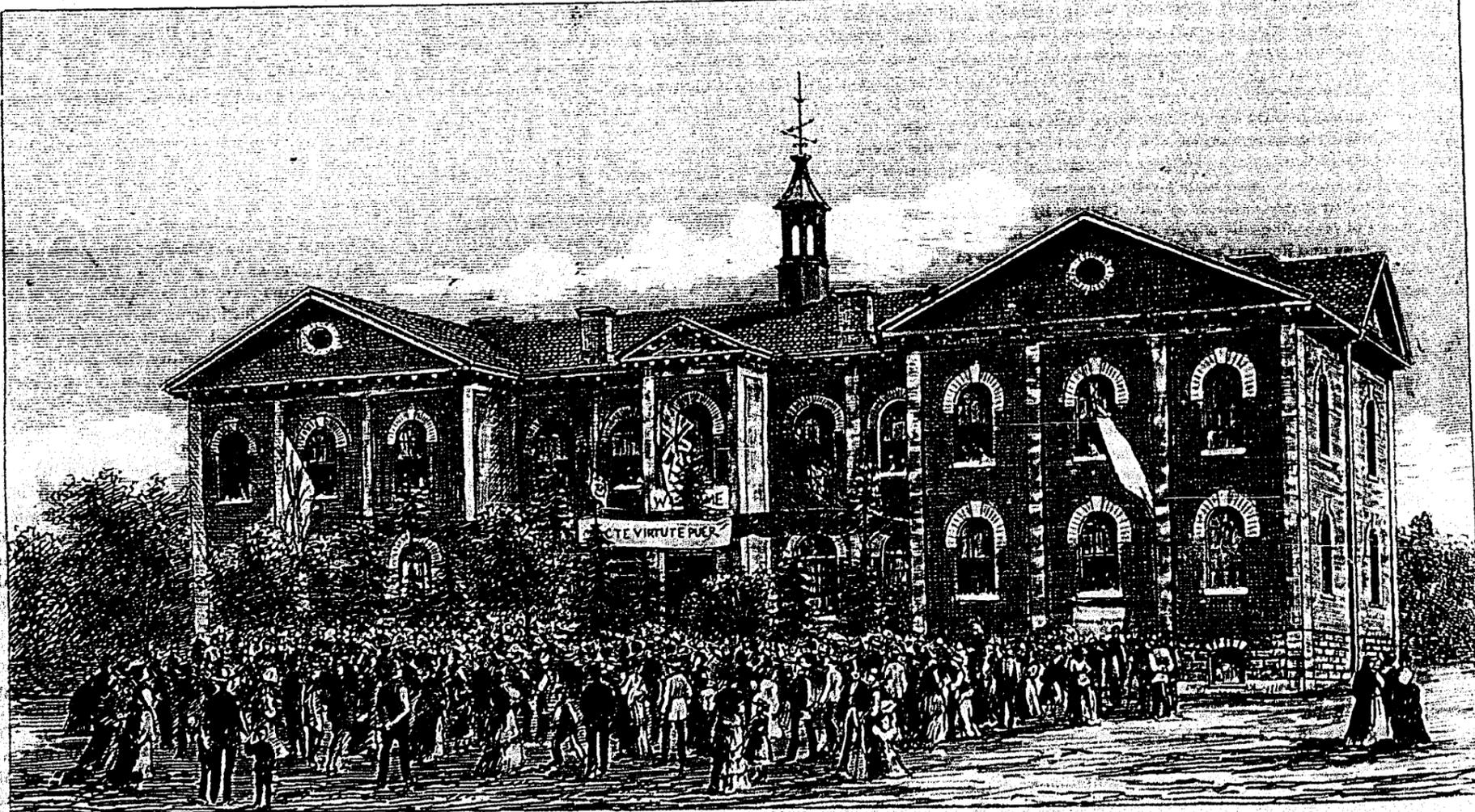
afterwards filled the office of Secretary for several consecutive years. This Lodge at its organization was chiefly composed of Masters and Past Masters of the city Lodges, and he had the honour conferred upon him of being elected to the Oriental Chair in 1863-4, and afterwards for services rendered, was elected Honorary Member thereof with full privileges of ordinary membership.

During the year 1853 a movement was put on foot by the Lodges working under the Grand Lodge of Ireland, having for its object the consideration of the condition of Masonry in the Province of Canada West, and the advisability of seeking from the parent Grand Lodge more extended powers of self-government; and in accordance with resolutions passed by King Solomon's Lodge, No. 222, Toronto, a Convention of all the Lodges working under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Ireland was held in the Masonic Hall, Hamilton, on the 21st November, 1853, at which Convention W. Bro. T. B. Harris, being then W. M. of St. John's Lodge, No. 231, was honoured by being chosen President, and on every subsequent Convention on the same question he was similarly chosen, and from this beginning sprung a determination to endeavour to unite the whole of the Lodges working under England, Ireland and Scotland, under one Grand Lodge.

In accordance with the resolve R. W. Bro. Harris, as President, was, with four other brethren, appointed to attend a meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge for Canada West, which assembled at Niagara Falls on the 19th July 1855. A large number of the Craft being present, the opportunity was utilized by a frank discussion of the then absorbing topic, and, after mature deliberation, it was determined that a Convention of all the Lodges in the Province of Canada should be called to meet at the City of Hamilton on the 10th October, 1855, at which latter meeting was organized the present Grand Lodge of Canada. Commencing with 30 lodges, and now numbering 240 lodges, so rapid has been the spread of the Order under the new order of things.

R. W. Bro. Harris was elected first Grand Secretary, 1855, Grand Registrar in 1856, during which latter year he also discharged the duties of D. D. G. Master of the Hamilton District. In 1857 R. W. Bro. Harris was again elected to the office of Grand Secretary, and has ever since been re-elected to the same position by the almost unanimous vote of the brethren, he having now held the office for fifteen years, and to his indefatigable exertions may be attributed much of the present prosperous position of the Grand Lodge.

R. W. Bro. Harris is also the accredited Representative of the Grand Lodges of Kansas, Tennessee, Missouri, and Oregon, and of the Grand Orient of Luaitano, Lisbon, in the Grand Lodge of Canada. From official records we gather the information that Bro. Harris has been the



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