

THE CRAFTSMAN

AND

Canadian Masonic Record.

By I. J. MASON,
Publisher.

"The Queen and the Craft."

1.50 per Annum,
in advance.

VOL. XI.

HAMILTON, ONT., FEB. 1, 1877.

No. 2.

THE WOUNDED CAPTAIN.

BY S. C. COFFINBURY.

"Oh! Heavenly Father, temper the wind to the shorn lamb! I am a widow and my child is an orphan!" Thus exclaimed Clara Arthur, pressing her little daughter Eda to her bosom.

Alas! how often, during the war of the rebellion, has that piteous voice of anguish burst from the heart of the bereaved, and been borne by the spirits of the departed to the land of peace, when it was echoed by the lips of angels up to the throne of God. How often, alas! has it been the doom of the widow and fatherless to be abandoned by the world to their prayers, their anguish and the tears of pitying angels. While ambition was planning campaigns, battle-fields and conquests, and philanthropy was suing to humanity for pecuniary means to execute them, and to comfort the weary soldier, their instrument,—how many bereft widows and orphans were left to wander hopelessly and cheerlessly from door to door, or to tread the path to shame and infamy, there to sink into a dying life—a living death!

It is when war unchains her dark angel and sends her shrieking among men, with her scourge of spears in one hand, her torch of blood and rapine in the other, to spread desolation and death, that the hearts of men are barred against the wail of suffering and the cry of despair. It is then when humanity is listening to the boom of the cannon, and watching the fortunes of the battle-field, that the noble and the good, who have been taught the pure lessons of "brotherly love, relief and truth," from the deep but pure fountains of all good, are felt to fill a wide gap in the ranks of humanity, and to quietly and patiently work out and demonstrate the profound problems of the divine mystery, "on earth peace, good will among men." They hear the orphans' cry and widows' wail.

It is in the village of S——, in the State of ——, that Clara Arthur and her daughter Eda are introduced to the reader. The mother appears to be about thirty years old, the daughter eight. They were both beautiful; the one as a woman in the fullness of maturity; the other as a child in the purity of innocence. The neat, yet plain room in which they are seen, indicates a comfortable but unostentatious manner of living. While there is nothing wanting for comfort and convenience, there is an entire absence of those meretricious appliances of luxury that indicate that aristocratic assumption which, in the present day, is so apt to gain upon and usurp the more rational aspirations of the domestic household in pretentious ostentation.

There is something grand in the lofty and affectionate anguish of a woman. As we gaze upon her, under the ministrings of the angel of sorrow, her womanhood enhances, and her very weakness and tenderness swell into strength of grandeur; she rises above us from our groveling plane, and we look upwards as to an angel, to contemplate her sublimity; we see her in an upper, a holier sphere than that from which we look. There she stands, a being of a purer mould—a link of gold between angel and men—between earth and heaven—too lofty to elicit our pity, too poor to affect our tears, too sublime to accept our condolence; our words of consolation fall an empty mockery at her feet. We can only gaze and wonder in a spirit akin to awe.