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SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF ST. ANDREW'S LODGE,
No. 16, TORONTO.

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Masonry being diffused over the four quarters of the Globe, it need not surprise us to find it pressing forward in the van of civilization, following close upon the heel of the early settlers of the Province, and shedding its benign influence amidst the aboriginal forests.

What is now the metropolitan city of Upper Canada, was, in the year 1793, but a collection of Indian wigwams; innumerable flocks of wild fowl darkened the waters of the bay, affording sustenance to the natives, and tempting the adventurous emigrant to settle in their locality; yet from documents now in possession of the Craft, we find among the first things marking the change about to take place was the formation of a Masonic Lodge, to bind together the few sons of light who had found their way hither. This Lodge, afterwards identified through its members with St. Andrew's, met in this city, then known as Little York, under the name of Rawdon Lodge, from 1794 to the year 1800; and from that time downwards, Masonry has had a local name and habitation amongst us. Still, in 1820, when Governor Simcoe selected York as the seat of his Government, the number of its inhabitants did not exceed 1,000.

St. Andrew's Lodge met for the first time, under a Dispensation from the M. W. the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, on Friday, the 27th December, 5822, being the festival of St. John the Evangelist. It met at an Inn kept by one Jordan, on King Street, near the residence of the late Charles C. Small, Esq.

The R. W. Bro. James Fitzgibbon, Dep. Prov. Grand Master, having read the Dispensation, proceeded to install the following brethren as officers of the Lodge: Bro. Sir William Campbell as W. M.; Bro. Thomas Ridout (Surveyor General for Upper Canada) as S. W.; Bro. John Henry Dunn (Receiver General) as J. W.; Bro. John Beikie, Treasurer; Bro. Benjamin Turquand, Secretary; Bro. Thomas Fitzgerald, S. D.; Bro. Geo. Hillier, J. D. Having adopted a code of By-Laws, petitions for initiation into Masonry were received from the two sons of Bro. Senior Warden, (George and Thomas Gibbs Ridout); and at the regular meeting held on Friday, 21st March, they were balloted for, accepted, and initiated.

The Lodge having been thus duly put in working order, appears thenceforth to have been conducted with a regularity and correctness only to be accounted for, by granting that its originators were well-skilled Masons.

From time to time, important additions were made to their number. The late Bros. James G. Chewett, Dr. Widmer, Justice Sherwood, Justice Hagerman, and others, were initiated in the Lodge in its first year; and at the regular meeting, in November, 5823, the R. W. Dep. Prov. Grand Master presented the Lodge with its Warrant from the Grand Lodge of England, numbered 487 on the English Registry, and No. 1 on the Provincial.

At the regular meeting on the festival of St. John the Evangelist, (27th December) 5823, Bro. George Hillier was duly installed as W. M. of the Lodge.

Brother Hillier (I am informed by Bro. George Ridout) was a Major in the British army, and private secretary to Sir Peregrine Maitland, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada.

It is an established maxim of Freemasonry, that where brethren cannot meet in harmony it were better that one or both should retire. The early history of the Lodge exemplifies this wise maxim. A letter had apparently been received from Brother Stephen Jarvis, which was submitted to the Lodge; and at the meeting in August, 5823, the following resolution was put on record: "That the brethren, whilst they acknowledge the force and propriety of the reasons which have induced the determination announced in his letter, regret that such reasons should deprive the Lodge of so effective a member as Brother Jarvis." The letter on which this resolution was based has been lost; but I think there can be little doubt it referred to some misunderstanding with a brother.

A more pleasing incident appears in the visit of R. W. Bro. Simon McGillivray, Provincial Grand Master, at the regular meeting in March, 5825. He was unanimously elected an honorary member of the Lodge.

Bro. Hillier was succeeded in the Oriental Chair by Bro. Beikie, who was duly installed 27th Dec., 5825. Bro. Beikie appears to have filled the office of Clerk of the Executive Council, and was a Justice of the Peace for the Home District. He continued to act as W. M. till December, 5826, when from some cause unexplained, the Lodge suddenly ceased to meet, the minutes close quite abruptly on the 9th of that month. The only conjecture I can form on the subject is, that it was caused by the excitement then beginning to prevail throughout the United States and Canada, in reference to the abduction and supposed murder of one Morgan, a member of the Fraternity, residing in western New York; and who, having threatened to publish a work which would reveal the secrets of the Order, was suddenly abducted from home, and never afterwards seen by his friends. He was traced to Lewiston, and thence to Fort Niagara; but no further clue to his fate could be obtained. A Committee of the State Legislature, appointed to investigate the matter, reported that he had been murdered, and such was the belief of many, though no positive evidence to that effect could ever be obtained.

An intense excitement arose against the Masonic body, on whom the crime was charged, and a strong persecution of the Order followed. Masonry was too strong to be thus put down; but most of the Lodges in the Northern States ceased to work, as for many years few dared avow themselves to be Masons. As the larger number of the members of St. Andrew's Lodge held office under the Government of Upper Canada, and as the crime charged upon the Craft was said to have been perpetrated by Canadian Masons, it is not unlikely that these brethren deemed it politic to avoid any suspicion as to their impartial administration of justice, by yielding to the passing prejudice and abstaining from attendance at the Lodge; hence, I think, the discontinuance of its meetings at this time.

But from whatever cause, certain it is, that for