

The Canadian Freemason

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NOTICE.

We have mailed copies of our first issue to the Secretaries of Lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Canada, and other jurisdictions, as far as we are acquainted with them. Our list being incomplete, many are necessarily omitted ; but we trust that this will not be looked upon as neglect, or want of courtesy, as we wish every Lodge in Canada to become acquainted with us through our columns ; and upon receiving a notification, we will immediately forward a copy to such as may have been missed.

Publishers are requested to send works for review addressed to the Editor of the CANADIAN FREEMASON, No. 2 Place d'Armes, Montreal, Canada East.

A FEW WORDS UPON THE GROWTH OF OUR INSTITUTION IN CANADA.

If we may judge of the prosperity of Freemasonry and its objects in this Province by the annual returns of the Grand Lodge of Canada since its establishment, we might unhesitatingly aver that never was the order so rapid in its growth and so flourishing in its position as at the present time. The large number of warrants issued within the last five years, together with the Dispensations applied for and granted, would, at first glance, seem to justify us in arriving at such a conclusion. But we remember reading elsewhere that "they mistake the nature of the Masonic Institution who estimate its strength by its numbers, or measure its prosperity by the length of the roll of its initiates ; these are not the standards by which either the one or the other are to be determined. Its strength is in its principles, and its prosperity in the

character of its members"—and are therefore led to ask ourselves the question, "Is this large addition of lodges, and the surprising increase of membership amongst us, a reliable evidence of the *real prosperity* of Masonry in its purity?" We fear not ; and think the cause is the want of proper discrimination being used in the choice of those whom we permit to participate in our privileges. Too much caution cannot be used in such choice, and every Brother should be fully satisfied in his own mind, previous to passing of the ballot-box as to the *external qualifications* of the candidate ; and if he is not convinced they are such as should be required, rather reject, even to the chagrin of a friend, than bring one amongst us, who may prove unworthy.

"The *internal qualifications* of a candidate," says Dr. Mackay, "are those which lie within his own bosom, and are not patent to the world. They refer to his peculiar disposition towards the institution—his motives and design in seeking an entrance to it. Hence they are known to himself alone ; and a knowledge of them can only be acquired from his own solemn declaration."

"The *external qualifications* are those which refer to his outward fitness for initiation, and are based on his moral and religious character, the frame of his body, the constitution of his mind, and his social position. A knowledge of these is to be acquired from a careful examination by a committee appointed for that purpose." And we would strongly recommend our brethren to read carefully and attentively the worthy Doctor's remarks in Chap. I. of his Text Book of Masonic Jurisprudence, and feel convinced that a clearer light will consequently dawn upon many as to "the qualification of candidates," and an inestimable amount of good result therefrom.

Let every individual member of the craft weigh this question well,—and should he, upon self-examination and reflection be able to charge himself with laxity, in properly testing the qualification of candidates, let him bring the knowledge of his past shortcomings, and the evil that may have resulted therefrom, to bear upon his future actions—always keeping in mind that although a committee is appointed to enquire into these matters, yet it is the duty, as also the privilege of each, to investigate for himself, and should anything unfavorable come to his knowledge, to guard his brethren from bringing amongst them, one who, although affiliated, might prove an injury to the craft.

ANCIENT HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY.

From the researches of various individuals, particularly of Bryant and Faber, it seems now to be most satisfactorily determined that all the ancient mysteries, as well as the absurdities of Polytheism had their origin in distorted traditional accounts of the Universal

Deluge ; but that the former, at least the higher mysteries, differed from the latter, inasmuch as a pure Theism, and the immortality of the soul, were rigidly inculcated. In the early ages of mankind, all branches of science, and, among these, Architecture, were entrusted entirely to the Priests, or to such as they might admit by initiation ; but Religion, as explained by the mysteries was the grand object,—science a subsidiary one.—But after a period of 400 years, during which Greece had advanced much in civilisation, it is highly probable that some of the initiated attached themselves more to one branch than to another. About the year B. C. 1060 a portion emigrated to Asia-Minor and gave to that Country the name of Ionia. Here their solemnities received the name of the Dionysian Mysteries, and they seem to have been no longer practised chiefly for inculcating Religion, but as a necessary initiation or purification of the mind before the candidate could be admitted to the privileges of an *Architect*. Building was peculiarly the object of this new Association, and its Members were in after time known as the Dionysian Artificers. All bodies which required initiation before admission to their privileges, have ever since been guided by the same principles. The initiation however differently conducted, was a Religious Ceremony, indicating a purification from the vices of the world. This was the case with the Essenes or primitive Christians (not an anti-christian sect as Josephus alleges) ; it was so with the Templars ; it was the same in the first days of the Order of the Bath ; and it is the same with Free-Masonry.

In England it has been alleged to have existed in the days of St. Alban, towards the end of the second century, and its history has been carried down, with great care, by Preston in his illustrations, till the close of the eleventh century. But there is not the smallest proof that the Masons then spoken of were more than a Society of Builders, or that any secret ceremonial of admission was employed by them until the establishment in that Country of the Hospitalliers or Knights of St. John, on account of whose patronage, Free-Masonry is usually denominated St. John's Masonry, and has long been dedicated to that Patron Saint.

Although we cannot with precision determine the epoch of the introduction of Free-Masonry into Scotland, its existence in that country, at a very early period, is generally admitted.

One of the first Lodges of Free-Masons in Scotland, of which we have any account, is that of *Kilwinning* in Ayrshire ; but we have not been able to trace back the history of that Lodge with any certainty, beyond the end of the fifteenth century. How long it had been in operation before that period, cannot now be discovered.

Free-Masonry soon received the special