

THE CRAFTSMAN

AND

CANADIAN MASONIC RECORD.

Bro. J. J. MASON,
Publisher

}

'The Queen and the Craft.'

}

\$1.50 Per Annum,
in advance.

VOL. VII.

HAMILTON, ONT., SEPT., 1873.

No 1

THE PRESENT POSITION OF ENGLISH FREEMASONRY.

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The laws of progress and prosperity which relate whether to Individuals or Societies, seem on the whole ever to be marked here, with certain distinct and invariable characteristics of similarity and of sympathy. That there is a great and essential difference between the laws which control, and the causes which affect Individuals and Societies, is no doubt true, but, still we shall not be far wrong in asserting at the outset, with the experience of historic ages before us, that, at any rate, certain great and distinguishing features are common alike both to individual and corporate life in the world.

If to-day, for instance, we seek to unfold in biography the life of some great character of former days, to trace if possible for our own instruction, the development of nascent genius or the characteristics of later years, to bring before us the "tout ensemble" of that legacy of thought, or worth, or greatness, or goodness of intellectual brilliancy, or of moral excellency, which has been bequeathed to admiring posterity, we generally find, that, some clear and connected principles of conduct have humanly speaking animated those efforts, and moulded that career.

So too, if we turn our attention to the history of some "Societas" of human antiquity and earthly organization, if either on personal or public grounds, we seek to ascertain the veritable history of its earliest origin or its latest manifestation, we shall as a general rule find, that, all human societies seem to be marked by certain unfailing laws of growth or decay, of failure or success.

The history of any society, unless the most trivial, or the most meaningless, or formed for ignoble objects and unworthy purposes, has ever a certain interest for us all, as very often, it serves not only to throw a light on the general history of the past, but to bring into clearer view or more graceful lustre, the hopes and struggles, and longings and expectations of other mortals like ourselves, who once combined together, or assembled together to promote some high end or advance some holy cause. And if this be true as regards most of the sodalities and societies of former and forgotten years, how specially true is it of our Masonic Order, whose history has so much in it, to commend itself to the