

# THE CANADIAN CRAFTSMAN,

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BY REV. G. M. ST. N. RITCHIE, CHAP., JULY 27.

Again, Worshipful Master and Brethren, it is my privilege, as your Chaplain and a duly accredited priest of the Church of Christ, to welcome you to this public acknowledgment of the obligation to religion which devolve on you as members of the most ancient Craft the world is cognisant of. Ever since the establishment of the religion of Jesus Christ, at all events ever since religion and Masonry were brought into contact with each other, our Craft has proved her faithful handmaid. The catacombs of Rome would not have proved the welcome refuge that they did to Apostolic converts had not those who designed and built them made known the secrets of the wondrous galleries and modes of ingress and exit to those persecuted brethren. Then it was that the primal Order of Master Masons, struck with the fulfilment of their own traditions in the doctrines of the christians, grafted upon their ancient stock those higher degrees to which some of us have the honor to belong. Then it was that that most exquisite Order of the Rose Croix was instituted, an Order beautiful alike in its allegorical teaching and its impressive ritual. Then it was that the Knights Templar banded themselves in holy brotherhood to rescue from its pagan usurper the Holy City and the Holy Sepulchre within its circuit. Then it was that the United Order is said, under St. John's successor in the see of Ephesus, to have established the periodical worship of all the members of the Chapter that could be gathered together. But, brethren, I am not led to these remarks with any view of establishing our antiquity, or even of dwelling with pardonable satisfaction upon it. We go back still further in the mists of ages past to trace the foundation of the Craft. Ten centuries before the christian era, Masonry was a powerful combination of the most artistic as well as the most skilful and scientific men of all nations, who with Hiram of Tyre as their architect, and King Solomon as their Grand Master, erected the most marvellous building the world has ever, or ever can, bear upon its bosom. Yes, and thirteen long centuries before even this period, when the Tower of Babel fell to ruins, and the builders thereof ceased in terrified confusion to wield either compass to design, or trowel to erect, those who remained with a glimpse of the true religion in their hearts formed themselves into a society, a quasi-religious order, for the foundation of fenced cities. We are thankful for these traditions, not because they enable us to boast of long descent, but be-