

The Canadian Craftsman.

Port Hope, June 15, 1882.

WELCOME THE STRANGER.

If brethren only studied the principles of Freemasonry a little more than they do, they would not, in many instances, be so cold and formal to the stranger who makes application to visit the lodge. One of the most pleasing features connected with our society should be the kindly smile and courteous welcome with which we greet the visiting brother. The Master of the lodge, when a visitor sends in his card for examination, should always appoint (when feasible) on the examining committee, an experienced Past Master and gentlemanly brethren. There is very much in the selection of the members of the committee. They, on retiring, should at once introduce themselves to the visitor in the same manner that they would if they met him in the counting-house or office. After the introduction, they should require him to retire with them to one of the ante-rooms, and after inviting him to sit down, commence the examination. These are the ceremonies of Part I., and here we would remark that the examination ante-room should be a comfortable, cosy little place, with table, chairs, carpet, stove (if necessary), etc., but no spittoons. The visitor should be made to feel "at home" from the start. This is the important feature in Part I.

We now turn to the examination, and we have heard hundreds of them. The stranger may be a prim and pre-

cise genius, and an adorer of Mackey, who says "the charter should be exhibited," and may ask to see that instrument. If he does, well and good—obtain it for him, although we view it, generally speaking, as a piece of humbug, because we think a Mason should always satisfy himself before he goes to a lodge that the one he proposes to visit is a legitimate one. Still, where clandestine or bogus Masonry is rife, as it is in Ontario under the so-called Grand Lodge of that name, it would be, perhaps, just as well that the visitor should demand the charter. To return, however, to the examination. The committee should always bear in mind that its members are not sent there to show how much knowledge they possess, but to ascertain the Masonic acquirements of the stranger. A mere formal examination is always very unsatisfactory—it not only gives a loop hole for "Book-Masons" to creep in, but as the regular categorical questions differ in different jurisdictions, it really does not exhibit the knowledge of the visitor. For example, let a Canadian Mason examine an American brother according to the formal questions and answers of the lectures, and the latter would be quite unable to answer him, and if the voucher depended upon his answers, it would not be given. In the same way an English or Canadian Hiramite endeavoring to visit a New York or Ohio lodge, would answer the query "Whence came you?" in a manner far from that in accordance with American Masonic teachings. Yet the Canadian, English and American visitors might, at their respective homes, have been "shining lights" and "glib ritualists."

The examining committee, after