

THE CANADIAN CRAFTSMAN,

AND

MASONIC RECORD.

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FOR THE CRAFTSMAN.]

A MUSICAL GRAND MASTER.

BY BRO. ROB. MORRIS, POET LAUREATE OF FREEMASONRY.

In the "Mother Lodge Kilwinning," No. 0, at Kilwinning, Scotland, I find much valuable, and still more odd and curious history. Up to the year 1807, this lodge exercised the powers of a Grand Lodge, granting charters, authorizing deputations, laying corner-stones, etc., with a zeal which made it a dangerous rival to the Grand Lodge of Scotland itself, whose headquarters were at Edinburgh. Robert Burns was initiated July 4th, 1781, under that authority. Upon entering the Grand Lodge, in 1807, the right was reserved to "Mother Lodge Kilwinning" that her Right Worshipful Master and his successors in office for all time coming should be *ex-officio* Provincial Grand Master over the lodges of the Ayrshire District, and that its registered place should be No. 0. William Blair was the first officer of this class. On the 25th January, 1820, the Deputy-Provincial Grand Master, the Hon. Alexander Boswell, Member of Parliament, presided at the laying of the corner-stone of the Burns Monument, near the bridge of Doon, in the place of Alexander Hamilton, the R. W. Master, absent. This was the son of James Boswell, of Auchinleck, the celebrated biographer of Samuel Johnson. The father was Deputy-Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, 1776 to 1778. Alexander, of whom I am about to

speaking, was quite a poet and wrote "Jenny's Bawbee," "Jemy Dang the Weaver," "Good Night and Joy be with you a'," etc.

I visited the Burns Monument in 1878, and learned many interesting details concerning it. The planting of its corner-stone was a grand occasion for Ayrshire Lodge; deputations from twenty-four lodges were present, with bands of music, volunteer pipers and every appliance for making tuneful noises, of which tuneful Scotland is capable. To this day the old Masons of Ayrshire refer to that event as the proudest in their annals. The site of the monument is well chosen. There are few places in Scotland surrounded by so many literary and historical associations. The cottage in which Burns was born, the ruined walls of Kirk Allavary, the bridge over "Bonny Doon," and other places interwoven with the poet's life, are there within a short half mile.

The corner-stone was duly planted, having within its crypt the local newspapers and the British coins of the day. The inscription reads as follows:—"By the favor of Almighty God, on the twenty-fifth day of January, A. D. MDCCCXX, of the Aera of Masonry 5820, and in the 60th year of the reign of our beloved Sovereign, George the Third, His Royal Highness George, Prince of Wales, being Regent of the United Kingdom,