



Semper idem—Semper fidelis.

PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETORS BY BROTHIER HILL, No. 2 PLACE D'ARMES, MONTREAL.

VOL. I.

SEPTEMBER, 1860.

No. 5.

The Canadian Freemason

A Journal devoted to the interests of Freemasonry, is published monthly, by Bro. Hill.

No. 2 Place d'Armes, Montreal.

It contains the most interesting new relative to the craft, report of the Grand Lodges, &c., while the original articles coming as they do from the pens of Brothers of known ability, as Masonic writers, will, we trust, be found both interesting and instructive. All communications on Masonic subjects, jurisprudence, exchanges, &c., must be addressed to Dr. Cunynghame, Editor of the Canadian Freemason, and on all other matters connected with the journal to the publisher.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION:

\$1.00 per annum if paid in advance, \$1.50 if paid three months after the time of subscribing.

To those of our subscribers who are in arrears, we would call their attention to our terms, \$1.00 at time of subscribing or \$1.50 at the end of three months.

THE PRESENT STATE OF MASONIC SCIENCE IN GREAT BRITAIN.

BY REV. GEORGE OLIVER, D.D.

"In that time, through good Gemetry, The great craft of good Masonry Was ordaind and made in this manere, Yc counterfeyt of this cleray, y tere, At these lordys prayers they counterfeyt Gemetry, And gaf hyt the name of Masonry— For the most onest craft of alle."—*Ancient Masonic Ms.*

"Laws convenient, proper, and effective, at the time in which they were made, have been altered to accord with the altered circumstances of Freemasonry, and the extension of the lodges and locality of the fraternity. Such alterations must, however, be made in Freemasonry in accordance with the landmarks of the Order, which in this, as in all other cases, must be kept holy and inviolate.—*Freemason's Quarterly Review*, 1848.

In my letters to the Earl of Aboyne, P. G. M. for the counties of Northampton and Huntingdon, on the Johannite Masonry, I threw out a hint that,

on account of the altered state of society, since our present Lodge Lectures were framed by the Lodge of Reconciliation, and enjoined by authority, in 1814, a new revisor was become necessary, to meet the requirements of an improved mode of thought arising out of the many extraordinary and unexpected sources of information which have been thrown open to the Fraternity, by the rapid strides that science is making at the present period, and the many new vehicles for the propagation of knowledge which have become accessible by means of literary and philosophical societies, reading rooms, mechanics' institutes, and the exertions of itinerant lecturers, to familiarize the most abstruse scientific and philosophical subjects to the capacities of all classes of mankind, which unite their aid to enlighten the understanding, and improve the morals of the present generation.

Since the publication of these letters, I have given my undivided attention to that particular subject, and am now fully convinced that such a revision would be attended with essential benefits to the Order. The Masonic experience which I acquired, during my occupation of the chair of a private Lodge, for eleven years in the whole, succeeded by the sole management of a large and populous Province for nearly the same length of time, enables me to speak with some degree of confidence on all subjects connected with the details, as well as the general principles, of the Order. And having observed, with feeling of sorrow and regret, its sensible decline in my own Province, since the period of my decadence from that high office, a few remarks on the above subjects may neither be unacceptable nor inappropriate.

Some years ago, the Grand Lodge of Ireland issued a paper of Queries to every private Lodge under its jurisdiction, that the general opinion of the Craft might be collected: "as to the best means of improving the Order of Freemasonry." Amongst these queries we find the following: "Is the Order improving or declining? If declining, to what cause do you attribute its decay? What is the prevailing opinion, among persons not of the Order, respecting Masonry? Is Masonry reputable or disreputable in your neighborhood? What measures would you recommend for improving the condition of the Order?"

If some such course were adopted by other Grand Lodges, it might lead to a very useful result; for we frequently hear the inquiry repeated by the non-masonic world, in the present stirring times, and whilst science has been so rapidly on the advance, what has Freemasonry accomplished? This is a question which every right-minded bro-

ther would rejoice, for the credit of the Order, to see triumphantly answered, by a detail of the advantages which mankind have derived from its successful exertions, or the happy application of its principles to the general benefit of society.

Now it is well known that the operation of Freemasonry is confined, in a great measure, to morals; although it is not without just claim to some degree of merit as a teacher of science. And if we trace its progress for the last thirty years, in every quarter of the globe where it flourishes, we shall find it fairly entitled to its share in the polite literature of the day, sanctioned by Grand Lodges, and patronized by wise and benevolent Grand Masters. These writings have contributed not a little to the general amelioration of the morals, and improvement in the tastes and manners of men, which distinguish the nineteenth century of Christianity.

The system of Freemasonry at the present day is marked by an adherence to the good old custom, so strongly recommended and assiduously practiced by the Masonic worthies of the last century, and imitated by many other public bodies of men, of assembling the brethren of a Province annually under their own banner, and marching in solemn procession to the house of God, to offer up their thanksgivings in the public congregation for the blessings of the preceding years; to pray for mercies in prospect, and to hear from the pulpit a disquisition on the moral and religious purposes of the Order. It is to this custom that we are indebted for those invaluable treasures of Masonic literature that are exhibited in the printed discourses of our clerical brethren. As for instance, those of our Rev. Brothers Harris and Town, in the United States of America, and many other talented and pious brethren, in England and elsewhere, whose names it would be tedious to enumerate.

This custom is sufficient of itself to insure the popularity of the Order, and create a respect for its holy principles in the public mind. I much regret that a practice so consonant with the original design of Masonry should have been discontinued in my own Province, and exchanged for other public observances, which, though they may be innocent, are a novel introduction; and, in my opinion, an application of divine Masonry to purposes that were never contemplated in its original institution. This hint may not be without its use in other localities; and if the one most needs be done, let not the other be omitted.

The above custom would also be a means of promoting and encouraging that great attribute of the Order—EQUALITY. But lest this principle