

THE CANADIAN CRAFTSMAN,

AND

MASONIC RECORD.

J. B. TRAYES, P.D.D.G.M.,
Editor & Proprietor.

"The Queen and the Craft."

{ \$1.60 per annum
in advance.

VOL. XIX.

PORT HOPE, ONT., DECEMBER 15, 1885.

No. 12.

MASONIC CANADIAN STRIFE OF 1854 to 1858.

BY ROB MORRIS, LL. D.

For the CANADIAN CRAFTSMAN:

In the rapid march of events that characterizes the last three decades, there are few persons who can recall the contest short, sharp and bitter, which grew out of the establishment of the present Grand Lodge of Canada. As I may say with Virgil's hero, "I was a part of it," so far as being in the confidence of the leaders, and as there are few of my contemporaries of that period now upon the Masonic stage of action, I propose to make up the first of my monthly series for the CANADIAN CRAFTSMAN, from personal memories of that event. I will not take the trouble of overhauling the documents, but draw from recollection. This may lead to a few inaccuracies, but upon the whole my memory retains quite tangentially the events of thirty years ago, better indeed than those of more recent date.

It cannot be denied by any intelligent reader of Masonic history that the course of the United Grand Lodge of England toward her colonial lodges at the period named, was harsh, cold, and unfraternal. Neglect was the best that could be said of it; but tyranny was the word most commonly used by the brethren placed in the dependant position referred to. Among the

pleas for independence made by Wilson and his adherents 1854 to 1858 were, refusal to supply them with certificates even when the money had been sent to London, intolerable delays in correspondence, contemptuous silence at their complaints, etc. The brethren in London were under the control, not so much of the Grand Master or Deputy Grand Master as the Grand Secretary, an aged brother, infirm, negligent, if not incompetent, who had long enjoyed the emoluments of the office, and in common with the English Masons of that day held foreign Masonry in little respect. It was the day of Grand Secretaryism even in this country, the phenomenon being presented in many of our Grand Lodges of an officer elected to be merely a *salaried clerk*, yet assuming and holding firmly all the reins of government, controlling the finances, appointing the committees, and electing the officers even the highest. A curious history could be written under the caption of Grand Secretaryism.

Freemasonry in Canada, especially Upper Canada, was affected largely by the independent spirit of American Masonry. A considerable proportion of the membership of the lodges was made in the adjacent States of New