



## Semper idem—Semper fidelis.

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

VOL. I.

MARCH, 1861.

No. 11.

### 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 news 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.

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

#### THE MEMORIES OF A WINTER.

BY THE EDITOR.

"As ye whom social pleasure charms,  
Whoso bears the tide of kindness warms,  
Wha, hold your being on the terms,  
Each aid the other!"  
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,  
My friends, my BROTHERS! — Burns.

We promised some sketches of the companions of Burns, during the winter he spent in Edinburgh, — friends, rather, for many of the masonic acquaintances he made during that winter remained his fast friends during the residue of his brief and chequered life. They are worthy of record here, not alone for their disinterested friendship to the Poet, but for their own excellencies and on account of their prominence in the Craft. How often does it happen that a very trivial matter changes entirely the current of a man's life, and affects him for weal or woe even down to the grave. A private letter written by a friend of Burns, commendatory of the first Edition of his Poems, arrested his steps just as he was about to sail for the West Indies, and changed his destination to Edinburgh — to popularity — to enduring fame! Had he

gone to the Islands, he might have survived the ordeal; but it is more likely that, with his temperament, and the weight of sadness resting upon his heart at the time, he would have found an obscure and early grave: a trifle changed the current of his life; he went to the Capitol, threw himself into society, called into activity all his powers, and won an immortality as enduring as the mountains of his native land!

#### ALEXANDER FERGUSON

was the Worshipful Master of Canongate Kilwinning, as heretofore stated, and placed the wreath on the brow of Burns, as Poet-Laureate of the Lodge, on the evening of the first of March, as narrated in our last number. He remained a warm friend to the Poet ever after the occasion alluded to. Burns repeatedly acknowledged his friendship, in prose and verse, with all the gratitude of his fervent and impulsive nature. It is Ferguson, doubtless, whom he represents as addressing him in the following stanza:

"No longer mourn thy fate is hard,  
Thus poorly low!  
I come to give thee such reward  
As we bestow."

"Alexander Ferguson, Esq., of Craigdarroch; Advocate and Assessor of the Burgh of Canongate," was Master of Canongate Kilwinning Lodge from June 1784, to June 1787 and appears to have been a man in easy circumstances, a fine lawyer, and something of a wit. Burns refers to him in "The Whistle," as

"Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law."

It was he who figured a contestant for the Whistle in the contest for that celebrated relic, and won it. Burns gives the history of the bauble as follows:

"In the train of Anne of Denmark, when she came to Scotland with our James VI., there came over also a Danish gentleman of gigantic stature and great prowess, and a matchless champion of Bacchus. He had a little ebony whistle, which at the commencement of the orgies he laid on the table, and whoever was the last able to blow it, every body else being disabled by the potency of the bottle, was to carry off the whistle as a trophy of victory. The Dane challenged the Scots to the alternative of trying his prowess, or else acknowledging their inferiority. After many overthrowings on the part of the Scots, the Dane was encountered by Sir Robert Laurie, of Maxwellton, who after three days and three nights' hard contest, left the Scandinavian under the table,

"And blew on the whistle his requiem shrill."

Sir Walter, son to Sir Robert, before-mentioned,

afterwards lost the whistle to Walter Riddel, of Glenriddel."

During Burns' residence at Ellisland the Whistle, being in possession of Captain Riddel, descendant of Walter, and a neighbor of Burns, he determined to submit it to another friendly contest between himself and two other descendants of him who won it as a trophy from the Dane, namely, Alexander Ferguson and Sir Robert Laurie, M. P. The meeting took place at Friars' Carse, and Burns was present by invitation to witness the trial and result. The prize was won by Mr. Ferguson, and Burns left his record of it in "THE WHISTLE." Such things entered into the fashion of the times, but would hardly be commended at the present day.

Mr. Ferguson possessed superior attainments, and much kindness and amiability of disposition. He was thrown from his horse and died, three months before the Poet.

#### LORD ELCHO.

"For though he was of high degree,  
The fiercest pride, nae pride had he,  
Nair than an honest plowman." — Burns.

During this memorable winter, the Hon. Francis Charteris was Grand Master of Masons in Scotland; and it was he who presided in the Grand Lodge on the evening of the 13th of December, when Burns was presented, and who gave the toast—"Caledonia, and Caledonia's bard—Bro. Burns," which was echoed by the entire meeting with "multiplied honors and repeated acclamations."

The Hon. Francis Charteris was the only son of Francis the fifth Earl of Wemyss, and was born on the 31st of January, 1749. In 1780 he was chosen Member of Parliament, and on his father's succession to the Earldom of Wemyss, in May 1787, Mr. Charteris succeeded as Lord Elcho. He was an active and influential member of the House of Commons, and succeeded in carrying through it some important measures. In later years he devoted his attention to agricultural pursuits, which he studied minutely, and in which he became proficient.

History does not tell us when or where he was initiated into Freemasonry, but he was a very active and zealous member. He was prominent as the Master of the St. John's Lodge, Haddington; and on the 3d of March, 1779, he became a member of the Canongate Kilwinning, "where he carried a motion to the effect that all members of the Haddington Lodge should, while in the Canongate Kilwinning, be full members thereof, and vice versa." This was a very singular motion, and it is more singular still that it was adopt-