

THE CANADIAN CRAFTSMAN,

AND

MASONIC RECORD.

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

"The Queen and the Craft."

{ \$1.50 per annum
in advance.

VOL. XVI.

PORT HOPE, ONT., MAY 15, 1882.

No. 5.

EGYPT, THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES AND FREEMASONRY.

BY BRO. T. B. WHYTEHEAD.

A country whose history is bound up with allegorical teachings, and much of whose story has been decyphered from the hieroglyphs of its stone monuments, must naturally have a deep interest for a society of Masons whose system is based on allegory and illustrated by symbols. It has occasionally been thrown at our society that our ceremonies are childish, that we are like overgrown children with toys, and that our teachings are beneath the notice of men of reason and education. But if this be so, what is to be regarded as worthy of the attention of rational men? I know of no system of morality, religion or history that is not a system of symbolical teaching. Certainly there is no religion that is not from beginning to end a series of symbols, and the more we analyze them the more we shall find that this is the case. Why, even our very language, our every-day conversation, embraces a mass of symbols. We talk symbolically, and our speech is full of unconscious metaphor. Hence comes one reason, I think, why Freemasonry is so widely popular. It commends itself to the human mind from the very fact that in its symbolic language and teaching we find a chord of sympathy which draws us

into closer union on common ground. Dr. Oliver, in one of his many learned works, "The Book of the Lodge," has well explained the system of Masonic symbolism, and shows the valuable uses to which it is put. The cowan would reject all symbolism, and call it childish and ridiculous. Then the Bible is ridiculous, our churches are ridiculous, and prayers are ridiculous, for in the Bible, in our churches, in our prayers, is to be found such a maze of symbolism as can be discovered nowhere else. And in ancient Egypt we take a special interest, because we find that in that country, in the early ages, a system of morality and religion was taught by means of a ritual, and in a secret manner, in many important respects resembling our own legends. It was in Egypt that the great Jewish leader, whom our Masonic legends tell us was one of the Grand Masters who presided over the First or Holy Lodge, obtained his knowledge. The Sacred Writings tell us that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, which no doubt means that he was initiated into the priestly mysteries, by which medium the wisdom was preserved, and these mysteries he doubtless communicated subsequently to his brother, to Joshua,