

UNITED ORDERS OF THE TEMPLE AND HOSPITAL,
FOR THE DOMINION OF CANADA.

OFFICE OF THE GRAND PRIOR,

LAPRAIRIE, 25th April, 1873.

To the Eminent Preceptors of the several Preceptorics under the Grand Priory of Canada :

EMINENT SIR KNIGHT,—The Statutes of the Convent General, enacted under the Conventions formed between the Orders of the Temple in England, Scotland and Ireland, and recently promulgated, having given rise to some misapprehension that material alterations had been made in the internal organization of the Order, I have considered it advisable briefly to point out the object of the changes now adopted, and to request you will, at as early a period as possible, make them known to the Members of the Order under your immediate jurisdiction, at the same time recommending a careful perusal of these Statutes.

The advisability of uniting the order of the Temple, in the British Empire, under one head, and assimilating the ritual and ordinances, has for some years past been under consideration, and a Committee was selected from the three National Grand Bodies to carry this into effect, in consequence of which a confederate body has been formed named the "Convent General," for the purpose of regulating the whole affairs of the Order, of which HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES, is Supreme Head and Grand Master.

Beyond a change in the nomenclature, taken after a careful research from historical authority, no very material alterations have been made.

The changes are simply these :—

1. The existing Grand Masters in the Empire are to be termed Grand Priors, and Grand Conclaves or Encampments, Grand Priories; under and subordinate to one Grand Master, as in the early days of the Order, and one Supreme Governing Body, the Convent General.

2. The Term Great is adopted instead of Grand, the latter being a French word; and Grand in English is not Grand in French. Great is the proper translation of "Magnus" and "Magnus Supremus."

3. The Great Priories of each nationality, England, Scotland and Ireland, with their dependencies in the Colonies, retain their internal government and legislation, and appoint their provincial Priors, doing nothing inconsistent with the supreme statutes of the Convent General.

4. The title Masonic is not continued; the Order being purely Christian none but Christians can be admitted, consequently it cannot be considered strictly a Masonic body—Masonry, while inculcating the highest reverence for the Supreme Being, and the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, does not teach a belief in one particular creed, or unbelief in any. The connection with Masonry is, however, strengthened still more, as a candidate must now be two years a Master Mason, in addition to his qualification as a Royal Arch Mason.

5. The titles Eminent "Commander" and "Encampment" have been discontinued, and the original name, "Preceptor" and "Preceptory" substituted.

6. Past rank is abolished, substituting the chivalric dignities of "Grand Crosses" and "Commanders," limited in number and confined to Preceptors. These honors to be conferred by his Royal Highness the Grand Master, the Fountain of Grace and Dignity, as a reward to Knights who have served the Order.