

THE CRAFTSMAN

AND

Canadian Masonic Record.

Bro J. J. MASON, }
Publisher. }

"The Queen and the Craft."

{ 1.50 per Annum,
in advance. }

VOL. IX.

HAMILTON, ONT., MAY 1, 1875.

No. 5.

THE NARROW ESCAPE.

UPON one of the lovely farms that lie along the Delaware, dwelt Israil Israel and his fair young wife, Althea. The blasts of war which was desolating the land, long delayed to reach their border, and as yet each true-hearted American, their neighbor, dwelt unmolested under his own vine and fig-tree. It is true that many of the young men, the forward, the enterprising, the crossed-in-love, and the bowed down in debt, had enlisted; and in their communications, blood-stained from the various battle-fields, awakened sympathy and gladness, by turns, among their friends at home. But Mr. Israel felt no call to leave the blooming wife, and the merry twins, whose voices was his home music, for the stern music of war. He served his country in a more quiet, but perhaps equally efficient way, by working sedulously in his vocation, paying the large taxes incumbent on the war drafts, making an occasional loan to the Government from his thriving treasury, and nursing up the promised twain whom Providence had vouchsafed as the fruits of wedded love. But the sounds of strife began to come nearer his district. The defeats upon Long Island, and the dark season that followed, sent many a poor fellow back to his neighborhood, maimed, or ragged, or starving.

Such appeals were not suffered to fall unheeded. There was bread to spare in the buttery; there was raiment and to spare in the old clothes-press; there was shelter and to spare in the big gable-roofed house; these were bountifully dispensed to suffering patriots at the hands of the kind hearted Israel or his affectionate spouse; for Israil Israel was a Freemason. It is with such as he that our pen is most pleased. There is a freer flow at its point when it glides upon this topic. Brother Israel was a Freemason. He was what a writer styles "a born Mason; a Mason in the bud and flower; a Mason in the milk and grain; a Mason in the lint and thread, in the cloth, dye and garment; thoroughly a Mason!"

Therefore the man was liberal—it is one of the virtues of Masonry to be liberal—and patriotic; the world-wide attachments of the Craft do not, in the least, blunt delicate homesympathies which are natural to us all.

The Masonic Lodge in his vicinity acknowledged the superior ability of Mr. Israel, and placed him at the head of the various finance boards, relief boards, and emergency boards, which that emergent season demanded. This position necessarily made him the medium of payment for the various Masonic charities of the district. It must be confessed, however—and the circumstance is related not to disparage the brethren, but to show the general state of poverty and distress prevailing—that the drafts drawn upon the lodge treasurer, for the aid of the poor at home, and the prisoners in the prison-ship at New York, were usually cashed from the pocket of Mr. Israel himself. Quarterly dues could not be collected to keep pace with the demand; there was too much pressure from without, to justify a resort to harsh measures for collection; so Mr. Israel trusted to the future consideration of his brethren, and favored the orders from his private funds. At the close of the war, when a general statement of the finances of the lodge was made, there was found to be due this noble-hearted Mason more than two thousand dollars in gold and silver. When the suffering patriots passed near his door, on their disastrous retreat from Long Island, an opportunity was afforded for a liberal display of his disinterestedness; for though provisions were