

served, together with the most of the subsequent ones. We refer to the Lodge of Edinburgh, No. 1, Scotland. Now we know how rare it is in this country to find any lodge minutes much more than one hundred years old—indeed, the majority of the Minutes of our oldest lodges very rarely go back so far as that—Lodges, No. 1, of Boston, and Nos. 2 and 3, of Philadelphia, owning, perhaps, the oldest Minutes of any lodges in the United States. But those of A. D. 1599, do exist, and we have *fac similes* of them before us, which the reader may consult for himself in Bro. Lyon's "Freemasonry in Scotland." And these are not the *first* Minutes of the Lodge of Edinburgh, but only the earliest ones which have been preserved. They prove that Freemasonry was *not* born in 1717, but clearly existed 118 years prior to that time. And this evidence does not stand alone—it is corroborated by much more of the same kind. We will indicate, for example, the Charges of Masonry which are engrossed in the old Minute-Book of the Lodge Atcheson Haven, Scotland, in A. D. 1666; the admission of Lord Alexander and Sir Anthony Alexander (Master of Work to King Charles I.) into the Lodge of Edinburgh, in July, 1634; the like admission of Sir Robert Moray, in 1641; and the commission to "Enter and Pass Masons," granted by the Lodge of Kilwinning to Masons in Canongate, Edinburgh, in 1677—all of these are preserved in Minutes whose authenticity is undoubted, and *fac similes* of which are now before us. The Minutes of the Lodge of Kilwinning extend back to 1642; those of Alnwick Lodge, England, to 1701. Then we have contemporaneous printed evidence to prove that Elias Ashmole, the learned antiquary, by his own statement, was made a Mason in the lodge at Warrington, England, in 1646; and John, Earl of Cassillis, in 1672.

The truth as proven thus far appears to be, that Freemasonry is of an unknown antiquity; that it has been derived by us from the operative stone-masons of the middle ages, but whence derived by them is at present a matter only of tradition and conjecture. But this much is certain, it is the Mother Fraternity of the world, the oldest, ablest and best. Kings consider it an honor to be welcomed into a participation in its mysteries, and its tie is the closest that binds man to man. It is the oldest in time, best in principle, and widest in diffusion, of any Brotherhood on the face of the earth. This much we *know* to be true. Need we seek to claim more?—*Kystone.*

DECREE OF THE EMPEROR JOSEPH II.

INSTRUCTIONS of Joseph II., Emperor of Germany, to the Governors of his Provinces, with regard to the multiplication of Masonic Lodges:

Masonry has spread so rapidly in my dominions that there is hardly a little provincial town in which Lodges may not be found, and it is very necessary to establish some regulations on the subject.

I know nothing of their mysteries, and I have never had curiosity enough to attempt to unravel them; it is enough for me to know that Masonry is always doing something good—it relieves the poor, cultivates and protects letters; and on that account I will do for it more than has been done in any other country.

But, as reasons of state and good order require that these men be not left without any legal supervision, I propose to take them under my protection and to grant them my special favor if they conduct themselves well, on the following conditions:

1.—There shall not be at the capital more than one or two lodges, or—if it is impossible to receive all the Brothers in them—three at most. In cities where there are regencies, there may be one, or two, or three lodges. But in provincial towns where there is no regency, lodges are strictly forbidden, and any proprietor who suffers them to assemble in his house shall be punished as a criminal who permits prohibited games.

2.—Lists of all lodges and of their members shall be sent to the government, the days of meeting being given; and every three months they shall send an exact detail of the members who have been received in the lodge, or who have quitted it, but without announcing the titles dignities and grades which they have in the lodge.

3.—Each year the government shall be informed who is Master of the Lodge.

In return, the government grants to the Freemasons acknowledgment, protection and liberty; leaves entirely to their direction the interior of lodges and their constitution, and will never make inquisitorial visits.

In this way, the Order of Freemasonry, which is composed of a great number of worthy men who are known to me, may become useful to the State.

Signed

JOSEPH.

THERE are 543,474 Master Masons and 40,410 Knights Templar in the United States, of which number 20,649 Master Masons and 898 Knights Templars are in the State of Kentucky.