

historical organization in 1717, but many of our able thinkers claim to have found, in traditions and in histories of other ancien^t rites, sufficient evidence to convince them that it had an existence centuries before the date mentioned. With this view, however, our German brethren refuse to agree, claiming that no trustworthy evidence has been found going to show that it existed earlier than the year 1717. This is the reason that our Craft is never termed "ancient" by the Masons of Germany. Their view in regard to its origin is succinctly stated by Bro. Findel, of Leipzig, in his "Spirit and Form of Freemasonry." He says: "Historical research has discovered that the Masonic Fraternity has come forth from the building societies of the middle ages; and that the forms of Masonry are founded upon the judicial usages of the Germanic tribes. The three classes—Apprentice, Craftsmen and Master—were not known to those societies as three degrees. With them the Brotherhood consisted only of fellows—that is of *all* such as were admitted into the Guilds."

According to our German brethren, therefore, Masonry is definable as a comparatively modern speculative society, based upon the usages of ancient operative ones. They also hold that when the Fraternity was instituted in 1717, it had only one degree—the other two being added some three years afterward; and, also, that not only were the lectures and illustrations prepared years after the Fraternity was first established, but the allusions to the Temple and Temple builders, together with the Chapter degrees, were added to the work after the year 1732.

Such, briefly stated, is the reason why Masonry is not honored in Germany with the appellation of "ancient." So much I thought it might be of interest to say. To enter into any discussion in regard to the matter, however, it is neither my purpose nor my province to do.

Entertainments, called "Schwestern clubs," are given in some German Lodge-rooms, once each fortnight, during the winter season. To those, the members invite their lady friends. Intellectual food is the only kind served at such gatherings, and this, the ladies assist in providing; it rarely consists of Masonic "hash." It usually is made up of lectures, readings, essays, poems, etc., on miscellaneous subjects—interspersed with vocal and instrumental music. Long before the date fixed for such an entertainment, two brothers are appointed to arrange the programme and superintend the festivities. The same members are not asked to officiate more than once during a winter. The ladies bring some kind of fancy work with them and sit at tables extended across the Lodge-room.

I cannot speak too highly of such gatherings. Indeed, I know of nothing more pleasing than to watch the kindly faces and flying fingers on such occasions. Why not transplant those German entertainments to our Masonic vineyard? They would surely root and flourish there. To insure their success, it would be only necessary for our brethren to insist upon the ladies coming with their work. "Schwestern clubs" without needlework, crocheting, or knitting, would be like life without song, or toasts without wine, or soup without salt.

Our Fraternity is honored by the membership of many of Germany's most illustrious sons. The Crown Prince was, for several years, Grand Master of the "Grand National Mother Lodge," of Berlin, and, while such, delivered a number of Masonic addresses. At the present time he is "Deputy Protector of Masonry"—the Emperor, himself, being the "Protector." If our Craft has reasons to be proud to-day of its adherents in the Fatherland, it can point with no less pride, to those who have gathered with it in the past. Not only has it been honored by the membership