

by a warrant from the Earl of Eglington, under authority of the Mother Kilwinning Lodge, Scotland, dated 27th October, 1779, is from R. W. Bro. Neilson *himself*, taken from an article in the *Freemason* of the 30th October, 1876. As many of your readers may not be in possession of the issue of that date, I beg to annex extracts from the article in question, by which it will be seen, if I am in error, how it originated. From not having ready access to documents to verify my assertions, I am necessarily obliged to depend on the information received, from which I can quote to authenticate my views, and was therefore quite satisfied that Bro. Neilson (a well-known Dublin Solicitor and most zealous Masonic antiquary) must be correct.

Freemason, 30th December, 1876.

IRISH HIGH KNIGHTS TEMPLARS.

"Extract from a circular of Em. Com. John Fowler, dated at Dublin, 30th January, 1806:

"The warrant of the Grand Kilwinning Chapter of High Knights Templars, granted by and holden from the Royal Mother Lodge of Kilwinning, Scotland, the true source from which any legal authority could be obtained, as every one the least conversant in the Masonic history of the Kingdoms and Knights Templars Masonry must know, . . . this warrant is signed by the Earl of Eglington, the then Grand Master, and the rest of the Grand Officers in the year 1779, and was always acknowledged and acted under." . . . A concluding note signed by the Secretary and Registrar further states: "The Grand Chapter of Knights Templars was held by virtue of the full power granted by the Royal Mother Kilwinning, as expressed in the body of the warrant." To this R. W. Bro. Neilson adds: "The warrant referred to is dated 27th October, 1779, and is at present in the custody of the Irish Grand Chancellor, and from the original Lodge Minute-book it appears that the first time the High Knight Templar degree was conferred was on the 1st of May, 1780. A copy of the book of constitutions of the early Grand Templar Encampment is in possession of Bro. Charles Scott, R. N., Omagh. The Most Eminent and Sublime Commander Bro. John Fowler referred to was a member of the first Volunteer Lodge of Ireland No. 620, having joined them on the 27th February, 1792, and continued a subscribing member until his death on 25th January, 1856. He was Deputy Grand Master of Ireland from 1814 to 1825, and on ceasing to be D. C. M., was appointed Grand Sec-

retary, which office he held until a short time before his death."

[Signed] JAMES H. NEILSON,
5 Upper Mount Street, Dublin.

Since my address was published, I have been favored with a letter from Bro. Neilson (which corroborates Bro. Hughan's statement), informing me "that his Lodge, the Mother Kilwinning, never worked any other degrees than Craft Masonry, and only the 'Mark' from the 2nd December, 1677, to 20th January, 1731, being 54 years from the first day it was worked." He had examined every page of these invaluable records from the first of 11th December, 1642, up to August, 1876, a period of 234 years, for this special purpose, having "himself the original Kilwinning High Knight Templars Lodge [Ireland] records, where the information of the late Bro. John Fowler was extracted. The Irish daughter of Mother Kilwinning, worked every degree up to the 18°, on the Mother's Craft Charter."

I send you this information, as I think it may be of interest to the readers of THE CRAFTSMAN; I am but myself a searcher after truth, and only too glad to find that my remarks are of sufficient interest to attract the attention of brethren more able and better informed than myself to elucidate the connection between the Templar Order and Freemasonry; and I may remark in this connection, that Bro. Hughan's single grain of criticism has borne such abundant fruit that I have already received from various sources marked copies of the *Freemason*. Even those personally unknown to me have in this way called my attention to it, and by letters, *almost* asking me to justify the error into which it would appear I had been led—and I am glad it is so, as I would have every Templar seek to know the truth, and have no wish or desire that belief or disbelief should rest merely on my "*ipse dixit*."

I quite coincide with Bro. Hughan, that were our Templar Order to ignore the Masonic connection, it would leave us without a status, at the same time, favoring the theory that we are the legitimate descendants of the true order, I consider the Masonic designation and initiation of Masonic observances as out of place, there being no authority for them whatever, excepting that derived from modern Masonic manufac-