

FREEMASONRY IN IRELAND.

BY W. BRO. W. J. HUGHAN.

The second oldest Grand Lodge is Ireland, constituted 1729-30, at Dublin, but a Grand Lodge had a prior existence at Cork. There are 382 active lodges on the roll, the last number, as will be seen by reference to the official Calendar for that country, or to the "Cosmo," being 1014. The defunct numbers of lodges extinct are used again for new lodges, so that for many years there has been no actual numerical revision, and as some lodges are only known by their numbers, this curious state of things is likely to continue. The precedence, so to speak, is no indication of age, as with the English and Scottish registers, No. 11 being of A.D. 1865, and No. 354 of A.D. 1797.

There are 37 lodges in Dublin (under very direct supervision, none more so in the world), 84 in Antrim, 47 in Down, and then they run in provinces from 26 down to five. There are seven in regiments, and abroad the numbers are (or were until quite recently) 15 each in Victoria and New Zealand, 14 in Queensland, nine in Tasmania, and four in Ceylon. One lodge each appears under South Australia, Isle of Man, Gibraltar, Malta, Constantinople, Ontario, and two each at Bermuda and the Mauritius. In all—

Dublin Lodges,	-	-	37
Provincial,	-	-	271
Colonial, &c.,	-	-	67
Military,	-	-	7

382

The Grand Master's Lodge, without a number, was founded in 1749, and No. 1, Cork, in 1731. As I have given a number of transcripts of old warrants in the *Freemason*, there is no need to refer at length to that point now, nor to the roll of Grand Masters, especially as my list of the Masonic Rulers in Ireland has been incorporat-

ed in this year's official calendar, and the previous one has been discarded.

There are 145 Royal Arch chapters and 41 Knight Templar preceptories. All these take the same numbers as the lodges under whose wing they work. Thirteen Rose Croix chapters are chartered, and are active at the present time, and, like with our Supreme Council in England, those degrees beyond the 18° are worked from headquarters only. The Craft and these "High Degrees" mutually recognize each other, and none others are allowed to be worked in Ireland.

ORIGIN OF MASONRY.

Upon the base of the "Cleopatra Needle," which Egypt has given to America, are certain mysterious characters which so closely resemble the emblems of Freemasonry that prodigious stir has been caused among Masons in this country as to the real character of the inscriptions. If they could be shown to be truly Masonic they would establish the great antiquity of the Order which is so boastful of its age and descent. Among Masonic scholars the widest difference of opinion exists as to the age of the Institution, some dating it back to the time of Solomon, or even remoter time, and others ascribing its genesis to the period since which comes within the range of "ancient history." Still there seems to be a prevalent opinion that however ancient the Institution may have been, and whatever traces of it can be discovered in remote times, the Masonry of to-day is a reconstructed and modernised system.

An eminent Masonic authority (Colonel Thomas Picton), who takes this view of it, says that the origin of modern Masonry can be attributed to Lord Bacon. In the "New Atlantis" there is a description of Solomon and his house, and it is there said that the King set apart different days for prosecuting the arts and sciences. The "New Atlantis" was excessively popular among the learned men of Bacon's day, and