

At Madrid intelligence has been received from Manila that a Spanish man-of-war had captured two German merchantmen laden with 2,000 rifles destined for the pirates of Polo—a circumstance which has caused some sensation in the Spanish capital on account of the projects respecting the Philippine Islands which have been attributed to the German Government by the Spanish Press.

RUSSIA.

A St. Petersburg letter, dated October 5th, states:—The Protestant clergy of Russia have already made common cause with the schism and the Old Catholics; and an alliance, insincere, but prompted by hatred towards Rome, seems to show that these clergy will take a prominent part in the next Protestant synod. A few days ago, Lipinski, the Calvinist Superintendent-General of Vilna, arrived at St. Petersburg, and had many colloquies with the chiefs of the Russian clergy. A project is mentioned of a union of all the anti-Catholic sects, to assail the Holy See; and with this view there are appearances of a new Congress of Old Catholics.

Courland.—The Noblesse of Courland are pronouncing with decision for the Pope, and against Bismarck. It is a striking fact, that though there are vipers and scorpions in this world, there are also noble souls, who, by invisible yet real links of union, belong to the Church, and therefore belong to the Pope, let the Emperor William I. say and do what he pleases. His recent pretensions to be a theologian form a singular appendage to his reputation as a conqueror and a reformer.

MALTA.

A welcome piece of intelligence comes from Rome concerning the British garrison stationed at Malta. Canon Taggiasco has presented a gold pen to the Pope, sent to his Holiness by the Catholic soldiers among the garrison of Malta. In an address accompanying the gift the donors express the hope that the Pope may soon be able to announce with it the triumph of the Church.

THE PERSECUTION IN PRUSSIA EXPLAINED.

(GERMAN CORRESPONDENT OF THE 'LONDON TABLET.')

MYSTERIUM INIQUITATIS.

You are not expecting me to furnish you with a detailed account of the latest measures taken with reference to the Church in Germany. Your readers will have become familiar with them from what has been published in the newspapers. It will be my object in this communication to call your attention to the prime mover of the inconceivable persecution now raging, and to lay bare before your eyes the real springs by which the Imperial machinery is set at work.

We Germans have been asking ourselves ever since the termination of the war which was so fatal to France and to the Catholic Church, how it has come to pass that at a moment of unusual awakening of patriotic feeling, as well as of unmistakable need of internal harmony, an opportunity has been seized of introducing confusion into a nation that has so lately secured union, and of alienating the minds of at least fifteen millions of loyal Catholic subjects. This wondrous and mysterious political *faux pas* of Bismarck is indeed an enigma, and all the more so because when he was entering upon his 60th year he said out as plainly as words can speak: "I am no longer a young man, but were the theories of the enemies of the Church to gain the ascendant, I should be glad that my life were prolonged until the 'ship of fools,' freighted with modern theorists, was dashed to pieces upon the rock of the Church." Yet this is the very man who has ended by making himself the wildest champion of the most extravagant modern theories. This is the man whose great political ability no one can call in question, that has thrown the fearful torch of discord—a discord of creeds—into the fabric of German unity which has just been completed. This is the man who used to acknowledge that Catholics were the most loyal of subjects, who even complimented them upon the fact, and now makes a war of extermination upon the Church, having no other excuse than the miserable one of its fancied opposition to the State. And all this at a time when at any given moment he may take it into his head to involve us in a new war! How then is this riddle to be solved? Let me try to throw some light upon this "mystery of iniquity" through the mediums of some facts which partly came to my knowledge as early as December 1870, at a time, that is, when we Catholics in Germany were building our hopes upon Prussia, with more confidence as the sequel shows, than wisdom.

No sooner had the *quondam* Pomeranian Baron Bismarck, who filled an insignificant post in the Federal Diet of Frankfort, set sail upon his diplomatic career, than the Baron von Linde recognized in the poor country gentleman the cliff on which the ancient and historic German Constitution was to be stranded at no very distant period. Bismarck attempted no concealment about his enthusiasm for Prussian supremacy in Germany; his daring character urging him ever on to new designs, in which the downfall of Austria and the union of Germany under Prussian rule played an important part. Scarcely had he been placed at the head of the Ministry, when he pushed that military despotism, under which the people had already winced, to its last extremity. His project was rejected by the Chambers year after year, but this did not prevent him from levying the taxes on his own responsibility. Braving the national discontent, the term of three years military service was enforced by law, and he proceeded to erect a number of new and costly barracks, all of which were placed, so to speak, on a war footing. The Prussian army was not only to be equal in magnitude and efficiency to that of Austria, but was to be its superior in theory and practice. Scarce was the Schleswig-Holstein war—in which the Austrians fought with more valour and success than the Prussians—brought to a close, than a rupture threatened between the two great German powers. The impending quarrel, thanks to the treaty of Gastein, was for the moment averted; Prussia was seen to be too weak to compete single-handed with the Austrian Empire; it was forced to strengthen itself by union with another power, and it effected a union with Italy bound hand and foot to the Freemasons. This alliance between Bismarck and the Lodges took place in the spring of 1866.

I am well aware that some ascribe the date of this secret treaty to an earlier epoch, namely, to the very commencement of the above-

named year (the *Monde* January 29 30, 1872); and a foundation for this view is offered in the proclamation issued by the Chief Lodge of Berlin, in which document the "Brothers" were invited to put themselves in communication with the Government at the very time when the political conflict was at its height. But I think that this foundation is more apparent than real. For the tempest raised by the smaller Lodges against the proclamation was so terrible that the Chief Lodge was obliged to withdraw it; while, on the other hand, the party of progress, under the direction of the most notorious of the Freemasons, went to such lengths in their attacks upon the Prussian Premier that no one could possibly have suspected the existence of a secret understanding between himself and the Sect. And further, the Prussian Minister put forward on every occasion, with such prominence, his Christian and mediæval Conservative principles that modern Liberalism and its Masonic organization could scarcely have thought of a bond of union between itself and the man of whom it stood in dread.

But higher than Christianity, higher than sound political government and Germany, in the estimation of the country Pomeranian squire, stood the elevation of Prussia. To this idea he was ready to sacrifice any and everything. The hour of this sacrifice struck in the early part of 1866, when the war with Austria had been planned out. From this time a complete transformation took place in the principles of Prussian statesmanship. Let me explain my meaning.

The Christian portion of the Prussian people were thoroughly opposed to a war with their brothers of Austria; including Catholics, Lutherans of the Old School, Conservatives, such members of the "Junker" school, and even all those upon whom the mighty man who held the helm had been accustomed to lean. But the people, with the exception of the scum floating on the surface of the seething capital, would hear nothing of an unjustifiable attack upon peace-loving Austria; indeed here and there a menacing attitude was assumed towards the war. The danger was no slight one that the Landwehr, if called out, would refuse to fight against the Austrians. Now it would not have suited the purpose of the war-loving Premier to oppose the popular feeling: this would have entailed the loss, not only to his war-plan, but even of his own personal reputation; and to levy the income tax independently of, nay in opposition to, the vote of the Diet, (from which for three long years he had met with so much opposition) would have been a breach of the Constitution. In this quandary he grasped greedily at the only available support; he allied himself with the Freemasons. Immediately they placed at his disposal many trustworthy members, scattered over various portions of Germany, and further threw into the scale the whole weight of their moral influence, by means of which he was to be enabled to execute his plan of Prussianizing the whole of Germany, as well as in due time to carry out their own secret designs. Here we have the whole of the problem. Bismarck is the servant of the Freemasons, but at the same time he is their master: so long that is, as he keeps his word to them. The Secret Brotherhood will do his bidding to constitute a Prussian Universal Empire; but they will take a terrible revenge if he plays them false.

In the month of May, 1866, what went by the name of public opinion in Germany experienced a sudden and unexpected change: From the tone of the newspapers and the Liberals—these for the most part members of the three symbolical grades of the Sect—we should have been led to suppose that no fundamental objection could be raised to the war, since nothing short of an appeal to arms could suffice to settle the feud between Prussia and the rest of Germany, Austria included. The Sect of the Freemasons, whose very life is war with the Church, had to be held together with fair promises. So the Chancellor undermined and in part overturned the petty thrones around: a task which he found not so very difficult. He had made himself master of the diplomatic secrets of almost every Court in Europe. Things happened during the Campaign of 1866, and above all in that part of it which was entrusted to the *armée corps* of Bavaria and Baden, that cannot be accounted for on any supposition short of a secret understanding with the enemy. No sooner was the battle of Sadowa lost, and the Peace of Prague signed, than the Freemasons received an unparalleled acquisition of fresh force in both North and South, the first fruits of their labors. In the north of Europe, Austria, prostrated by her late reverses, and in despair at the prospect opened out before her, gave free scope within her territory to Liberalism and Freemasonry, violated the Concordat entered into with the Holy See, drove the Church out of the schools, persecuted the Clergy, and, in a word, severed herself from all that remained to her of the venerable traditions of her Catholic forefathers. Thus the Church and the Papacy were deprived of their strongest and firmest support. The Secret Society in the fair plains of the Danube were beside themselves with joy, and hailed the disaster of Sadowa as a victory for their party; whilst they put out a torrent of foul and unfounded accusations against everything Christian, whether in the Government or in society at large. To any one unacquainted with the jargon of the Lodges, it was not difficult to penetrate behind the scenes and to see what was really going on. In the south of Europe the Sect had gained a great step towards its end when the temporal power of the Pope was taken from him. We must not suppose that the busybodies who scoured Italy, had in their heart of hearts the realization of their watchword, "national unity." War with the Church has ever been, and is now, the real aim of all their actions. The plea of nationality was a mere mask—a trap in which to catch the simple—a bright colored ray meant to light up a deed of darkness. Defeated on sea and on land Piedmont was still able to get possession of Venice "free, gratis, and for nothing," and by this acquisition advanced many miles nearer to the walls of Rome. Let the French garrison now be ousted from the Eternal city, nothing more will stand in the way of accomplishment of the secret programme. Here again the plans of Bismarck were as one with the desires of the Brotherhood. Prussia had to condense her strength; the newly annexed provinces were to be united to the old territory under one organization; the Southern States of Germany were to be reduced to a state of vassalage; then would come the time to rid the world of the last remaining Catholic nation—France. Here we have the reason why the Prussian Catholics were treated with the greatest respect, and