

why the Freemasons did not press any measures against them. It is noticeable that when, in the year 1868, Professor Gneist, Grand Master of the Lodges, and leader of the party of progress, had got ready a bill to be presented to the Diet, for the persecution of Religious Orders, a hint was enough and the bill was suppressed. The time for it had not yet come.

Still, in the four years that intervened, Bismarck contrived to render great service, in various places, to the cause of *de-catholizing* Europe. The Spanish revolution of 1868 was effected with Prussian gold: the creation of Bismarck's brain, it was carried into execution by a trio of Freemasons, Prim—Serrano—Topete. Poor Isabella II. had for some time held, nominally, at least, the reins of government; but she was a Catholic, and had even gone so far as to offer the Holy Father the aid of 20,000 men in case of an assault upon Rome. Accordingly she was to be set aside in the interests of the secret conspiracy against the Church. Bismarck lent his aid to the deposition of the Queen. The Catholic journals were in the right when, as early as the autumn of 1868, they maintained that the strings of the revolution in Madrid were being pulled in Berlin. But people were incredulous, and little notice of the saying was taken at the time. When however a Hohenzollern laid claim to the throne of Ferdinand the Catholic, a light was thrown on the events that has just taken place, and every eye was directed to the now imminently impending Franco-Prussian war. The thread of the plot had been lost, and the world had ceased to connect cause and effect. The Catholics of Germany were completely hoodwinked—to such an extent indeed, that it was dangerous even in the best-meaning circles to betray any want of confidence in Bismarck and his Government. Men had become so used to blind trust in the revival of the base policy of the Lower Greek Empire, that we cannot wonder how Catholic soldiers could throw themselves into the fight with a patriotism no less ardent than that of their Protestant Companions in arms. Even when, on September 20th 1870, Victor Emmanuel laid his sacrilegious hands on the Patrimony of the Church, the Catholics of Germany looked on with apparent indifference. Those who were at the time full of interest in the fate of Rome felt shocked at the scandalous apathy and misplaced confidence of those who had returned home from Northern Italy; but they consoled themselves with the hope that "as soon as the accursed French rascals were got rid of, our King would help the Pope." But those who were more far-sighted forebode the outbreak of a dreadful persecution, and were of opinion that the sooner it broke out the better. Doubt could no longer be entertained that Bismarck had, with servile cunning, first made and then thrown out his nets to bring, at the proper time and with true Prussian barefacedness, the unsuspecting fishes within the power of the Masonic Empire. Even enlightened Princes of the Church put their trust in this ally of the Secret Societies. As soon as the first flashes had left the heavily charged religious thunder-cloud, one of the most honorable of our Catholic noblemen declared in an assembly of brave sons of the Church, that in matters connected with the faith he stood unreservedly by the infallible Pope, but in political matters by the infallible Emperor. And it is this infallible Emperor, or rather I should say his first Minister, whom such persons are helping and *must* help to advance modern paganism, and to drive the Church of Christ down into the catacombs, of which the breathing vents are to be closed, that so the hated flock may die of suffocation. Thus will be worked out the consummation so devoutly wished, as one of the poets of the Sect sings in verse:—

"Humanity shall fresh and beauteous rise  
From national decay and from the death  
Religion brings in its train."—HERWICH.

Yes, the real question is that of the final victory of atheistic humanity over the Cross and over every form of positive religion. At this price has Prussia become what we now see her; and she must increase and wax still more mighty, in order that before the monster Empire of Central Europe, every other Power, whether in the heavens above or on the earth below, may be obliged to hold its peace.

I often call to mind how, towards the end of the Franco-Prussian war, when every day fresh reports reached us of new victories gained, a Catholic Countess broke out, at a highly aristocratic table in North Germany, into the following words: "In every additional victory of ours over the French, I suspect an additional danger for the Church." The lady was right. The subjection of France involved nothing less than the annihilation of the last of the Catholic powers. For France has at all times, and especially in her outward action, been a Catholic Power. Napoleon the Third himself was forced into a semblance of Catholic policy; it was the sole means of making himself and his decayed and effete Cesarism possible in our age. No sooner was France humbled to the dust after the catastrophe of Sedan than the Piedmontese cannon thundered outside the walls of Rome. This, however, was but the first instalment paid to the Freemasons. But as soon as France lay prostrate and powerless, a *tabula rasa* was made of all the Catholic powers of Europe, and it was time to pay the full salary of Bismarck's secret allies. Amidst the shouts of military triumph could be heard the shrieks of the Sect exulting at the downfall of Romanism and the supremacy of Germanism—expressions significative of a religious rather than a political meaning. These birds of night screamed against Internationalists in black coats, against the ambition of a Pope who was in prison, against the political danger annexed to Papal infallibility. It was not a little remarkable that the most rabid agitators were notorious Freemasons.\* I may mention some leaders of the Sect, Gneist and Bluntchli. Immediately after the year 1850 the Paris and Brussels Grand Lodge set on foot another measure, the removal of the schools from the jurisdiction of the Church. This indeed was one of the earliest indications of the Empire having become Masonic. Henceforth the State alone and singly was to have superintendence of

\* The English Freemasons, we are told here are very tolerant, but on the continent the Sect distinguish themselves by their burning hatred of all positive religion. I recommend your readers to make acquaintance with a little work, the title of which is 'The Silent War of the Freemasons against the Throne and Altar, founded on Documents.' 'Der Stille Krieg der freimaurerei gegen Thron und Altar, aus Dokumenten.' Freiburg: Herder, 1873.

the schools. The Church and her Ministers were, by the well known law of *Pulpit Abuse* (*Lex Lutziana*, or § 130a) amenable to punishment for the free proclamation of the Gospel. The prosecutions, in virtue of this law were soon too numerous to be counted; they rained down upon the head of the poor Clergy. At the present time many a score of priests are in prison for so called seditious preaching, and of course when set at liberty they will be welcomed home by their flocks. It may well be imagined that in consequence of this arbitrary despotism the Catholics, even of the better classes, are kept in a state of continual excitement, and are afflicted with troubles that are becoming all but unbearable. Wherever there is a distinguished and therefore an influential priest, a telling and popular speaker, an apostolic preacher, there secret agents of the police are sent *ut captant eum in sermone*, that they may catch him in his speech. It is not a matter of any difficulty to pick out a proposition which may be construed into bearing a mischievous meaning: the accusers are the witnesses also for the prosecution; and the judge, inspired from above, knows to what decision he must come. The victim is hurried off to "durance vile," under lock and key, while the people are for the time a guide the poorer, but in possession of a grievance and the objects of an injustice which they will not easily forgive.

(To be continued in our next).

## HISTORY OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

By the Abbé J. E. DARRAS.

(Translated from the French for the NEW ZEALAND TABLET.)

5.—INVENIENTIS INFANTEM POSITUM IN PRÆSEPIO.

THE evangelical *Primogenitum* is, then, in itself alone, a demonstration. It supposes an entire order of doctrines and facts, which could only be familiar to a contemporary author; it implies a social state, constitution, laws, customs, an acquaintance with which might possibly have been acquired subsequently,—since by retrospective studies we know them to-day,—but which a foreign writer would never have thought of recalling, in a circumstance where the use of this word—*Primogenitum*—might seem not only superfluous, but further, evidently dangerous, by the improper interpretation that might be given to it. The Evangelists were not moved by any preoccupation of this sort; they registered a fact, precisely in the manner, and under the existing conditions in which it had been brought about. Nothing more, nothing less; and a very little reflection on this subject will convince one that this method of proceeding gives to their word a character of authenticity truly incontestable. The continuation of the narrative of St. Luke furnishes a new proof of the same kind. Having given birth to her first-born son, "Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." Transport the scene to any centre other than Judea, and the East in general; these indications, so precisely noted, lose their meaning, and will appear incoherent. Our expression, "inn,"—the nearest term to that used by the Evangelist—is yet far from conveying an exact translation of the word; and the idea it presents to the mind is completely foreign to the historical reality. There was no such thing as an "inn" according to our sense of the word, either at Bethlehem or in any other part of Palestine. Even in our day, the scant establishments of this kind, to be met with, are European importations; and the natives do not frequent them. Hospitality, among the Jews, continued to be held sacred in each family. The houses of the rich had an apartment destined for the reception of guests; the poor man's roof, or the tent of the shepherd, was alike generously shared with the stranger who presented himself. As in the time of Abraham, the custom still prevailed of washing the feet of the traveller. But at the entrance of each small village, a shed was erected for the men and merchandise of those caravans which were either not abiding there, or else were too numerous to have recourse to private hospitality. This is precisely what St. Luke means by the Greek term, *Kataluma*, (place where burdens are unloaded.) There, each traveller had to provide, as he thought proper, for his own wants. Beside the caravansary—for this oriental term suits better with the customs of the East—the animals had the "*Præsepium*," where they rested, and took the food distributed by their masters. These preliminary notes will enable us to understand perfectly the *ensemble* and each detail of the Gospel narrative. Joseph and Mary arrive late in the evening, at their journey's end. Bethlehem is filled with the crowd who resort thither to be enrolled; so true is it that the family of David—one of the most numerous and most important of Judea—was not extinct! All the houses in the town are filled, and in proof of this, the caravansary itself is encumbered. The illustrious travellers retire to the "*Præsepium*," a temporary shelter, which they share in very truth, with the animals. There, Jesus Christ, the Son of God—the Word made Flesh—is born into the world; and the Angel, the first Evangelist of these good-tidings, says to the Shepherds:—"Behold the sign by which you shall know the Saviour, the Christ, who this day is born to you: you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger." This sign, according to our modern notions, would be hopelessly vague. Where find, in the middle of the night, in one of our villages, the house which contained the blessed manger? But the shepherds know well what the "*Præsepium*" of Bethlehem means. They know it by experience, it is there they go themselves, in case of need, to shelter their flocks. So they do not hesitate for a moment; they hasten to the spot; they find "Mary, Joseph, and the Infant, lying in the crib." The sign indicated by the Angel is for them as precise a token, as it would be vague in one of our modern towns. The shelter which exceptional circumstances had forced on the Holy family, was, we say, temporary. In effect, when the magi come to adore the Son of God, they will no longer find him in the "*Præsepium*," which Joseph and Mary had quitted to take up their abode in a house of Bethlehem. "And entering into the house," says the Gospel, "they found the child with Mary his mother." "Here," adds St. Epiphanius, "there is no longer question of the "*Præsepium*," nor of the cave, but of the hospitable dwelling, which had succeeded the temporary shelter." 1.