

CATHOLIC UNION OF IRELAND.

The Catholic Union of Ireland proposes to supply, under the above heading, trustworthy intelligence on Catholic subjects, domestic and foreign, likely to be of interest to Irish Catholic readers.

FREEMASONRY AND THE CHURCH IN BRAZIL.

We have already in this column given some details of the persecution of the Church in Brazil. In that country it is the Masonic lodges that are guiding the persecution, and, under their direction, it is assuming many of the fierce and impious characteristics of the Bismarckian despotism in Germany and in Switzerland. After the mockery of a trial, the Freemasons of Brazil have condemned to imprisonment the Bishop of Pernambuco for doing precisely what his solemn obligations demanded of him, and they are threatening the like penalty to other members of the Brazilian episcopacy. Nothing daunted by the menaces of the crafty prelates of Brazil will falter in none of their duties, and the Primate, Monsignor de Silveira, has recently addressed a brave, temperate, but uncompromising letter to his episcopal brethren on the crisis which has arisen. We regret that our space will not admit of our printing this letter *in extenso*, but we extract a few of the most important passages, "You know," says the Primate, "that the evil hour of triumph of darkness has come, wherein the spirit of error and of falsehood seeks to build up its throne on deplorable outrages to religion and to faith. . . . It is, evident, according to the pretensions which are now set up, that in future it is to the craft, and not to Holy Church, we are to look for the understanding of the Scriptures—for the maintenance of canon law—for the explanation of Papal bulls—for the interpretation of concilian decrees—since in Brazil it is the authority of the Masonic Orients, and not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that is to direct the Catholic Church. Religious anarchy, like a torrent let loose, is advancing with ruin and overthrow to everything that meets it in its headlong course. Before long, we, bishops of Brazil, shall be getting advice and orders by which it will be intimated to us that the ritual, the Pontifical, all our liturgy, all the disciplinary enactments of the Council of Trent, are now a dead letter. Soon, if the Masons get their way, ecclesiastical sepulture cannot be denied to duellists, to suicides, to public and notorious heretics—because, forsooth, it is the pleasure of the lodges! Soon they will issue processes against confessors and parish priests who will not absolve the sick notoriously tainted with the corrupting poison of the sect, even when they refuse the necessary retraction—because the lodges so will it. Soon those priests who, having failed in their sacred duties have been punished *ex conscientia informata*, will deem themselves completely released from the obedience they owe their bishops—because, again, the lodges will it. Soon, in fine, civil marriage, the separation between Church and State, will be laid as the corner-stones of that colossal and gorgeous edifice, raised with square and compass—because so the lodges will have it, and wish to decree it. In such trying circumstances, what, brethren, is our imperative duty? To raise our voices boldly, in word and in writing, and to prepare ourselves for the passive resistance which the Gospel recommends to us. And, in truth, we must obey, firstly, God, then Cesar—the lodges never. Let this be made manifest by letter, by pamphlet, by sermon, by imprisonment cheerfully endured. A compact phalanx, we shall not imitate the bad example of the ancient apostates, who, trembling before the threat of punishment, abandoned their sees or betrayed to pagan influence the sacred deposit of the Holy Books. A bishop who does battle for the cross and the Gospel is invulnerable. He is an inviolable rock, against which the waves will their might with ineffectual fury. Courage, brethren, courage. The bishops, armed with that cross which one day will be borne again in triumph, as it was borne of old across the ruins of the old Pagan Rome, will never bend down before the superstitious triangle of the temple decorated with the pillars of Zachin and Bovz. We have, brethren, on the summit of the Vatican our polar star, and, guided by it, we shall follow on our way without faltering. The great and immortal Pius IX. is our pastor—the infallible teacher of the faith—our only sovereign in the spiritual order. Permit me, brethren, though the least amongst you, to exhort you to persevere in that ardent zeal for the sanctuary which you have ever so constantly shown. United in a community of sentiment, let us uphold as far as in us lies, and with that strength which can come to us from heaven alone, the cause for which we are struggling. The awe-inspiring presence of our faithful and courageous predecessors in presence of the Sanhedron at Jerusalem ought to be ever on our lips, and, as we are their successors by virtue of the dignity with which we are clothed, so we ought to be the imitators of their intrepidity and their courage. We shall never yield, by a single iota, anything that touches on either doctrine or discipline, for the Church, the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ, does not walk in the tortuous paths of the dangerous novelties which the world calls 'progress.' It is our portion to maintain, in all their integrity, the definitions of the holy Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, presided over, as it was, by the same spirit of wisdom and fortitude which formerly came into the *cenaculum*, and confirmed the Apostles of the newly-planted faith. Let us be ready, if need be, to sacrifice ourselves, and to give up our lives, if necessary, since it is in our consciences rests the foundation of our glory, and we are bound to obey God rather than man. Let us pray with that ardent fervour, which charity alone supplies for the conversion of those bad children of the Church who will persist, with fatal tenacity, in remaining blind to the evil of their ways. Let us pardon our remorseless persecutors, and proclaim ourselves disciples of Him who, reviled and persecuted, from the height of His ignominious gibbet, opened His parched lips and implored pardon for His murderers. Let us bear our wrongs with invincible patience and resignation, and, like the Apostle, place all our confidence in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all consolation."