

**FREEMASONRY**  
In  
**RUSSIA AND POLAND**  
**1770-1822**

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AUTHORISED TRANSLATION

REVISED BY THE AUTHOR

**Dr. ERNEST FRIEDRICHS**

MASTER AT THE MILITARY SCHOOL

GROSSLICHTERFELDE

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Re-typed by W. Bro. Colin Wilson SLGR PProvDepGReg (Middx). LGCR  
Windmill Hill Lodge 5843 Middlesex.  
Bishopsgate Lodge 2396 London.  
Osborne Lodge 2169 Hants & Isle of Wight.  
Medina Lodge 35 Hants & Isle of Wight  
E-mail: [cwi2694889@aol.com](mailto:cwi2694889@aol.com)

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## **PREFACE.**

Freemasonry in Russia and Poland was once a fact.

In Russia and Poland as well as in Austria it was political opinions and political currents of thought that dug its grave. The most zealous and the most active of these grave-diggers were those who everywhere and at all times from the first day of its existence to the present day have striven to kill freemasonry, viz:- in Roman Catholic countries the Clerical, in Russia the Orthodox Party. They were not very particular about the means used in trying to suppress it, and many a Brother was obliged on account of his love for the Brethren and his neighbours to give up all his goods and chattels and suffer imprisonment or exile for many years. It is true that their treatment at the hands of the Inquisition in Italy, Spain and Portugal, was still worse and more cruel. But little by little a healthier state became the lot of those afflicted countries, and today Freemasonry is again in a flourishing condition there. In Russia, however, it still sleeps the sleep of death--as is also the case in Austria.

In Russia, indeed, there has never been any question of its prospering, or of its really attaining its full powers, as has been the case in other states in spite of all the clerical attacks and acts of hostility. Russian Freemasonry was always a very weak plant, which, apart from its not having had sufficient time allowed it to flourish properly, possessed in itself but a little stamina and power of resistance to defy the heavy storm when it came. Is it a wonder then that it was uprooted by the first storm which swept over it?

It will, therefore, not always be a pleasant picture which will pass before our eyes. Notwithstanding our sympathy which is assured by all the disasters that burst over Russian Freemasonry from without, a want of moral force, the need of a strong and inviolable bond between the individual, in a word, a lack of true and genuine love of the Brethren stands out so prominently that unfortunately a good portion of our sympathy is again lost.

Nevertheless, the picture we get of Russian Freemasonry reveals many a bright and beautiful spot, and the cloud is again and again pierced by many a ray of sunshine. Most of these rays of sunshine, however, are due to German Freemasonry—which of course is a special source of pleasure to us Germans.

Russian Freemasonry is at the same time a picture of *German* civilization.

It was German Brethren who in Russia sowed the first seeds of fraternal affection and of love to one's neighbours, and who tried to introduce enlightenment and instruction into the country which at that time was so intellectually poor and so destitute of culture. So long as Freemasonry existed in Russia, it was German Brethren that led the van in Russian Masonic life, and many Lodges worked in the German language.

It is not without reason that in what has just been said we have spoken almost exclusively of Russian Freemasonry. “Why not also Polish Freemasonry!” one involuntarily asks from the point of view of the present day. To this question the simple answer might be given that the two had nothing to do with each other. It is not only that scruples of a historical and political nature might be adduced, the country of Poland in the form in which we know it today not having definitely become a part of the Russian Empire until the year 1815, that is, a few years before Freemasonry in Russia closed its Temples for ever, but there are also scruples which have their origin in Freemasonry itself—the connection between the Lodges of both countries appears, namely, to have been a very loose one. But, on the other hand, it might be considered that, even though Poland did not pass over into the full possession of the Russians until 1815, it had long been a mere dependency of the Russian Empire—it is only necessary to think of the mock king Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski—and further that the Freemasonry of both countries, even though the single Lodges kept up hardly any intercourse with one another, had much that was common to both; in particular there stands out in each of them, especially at the time of their creation, an inclination to follow and depend on German Freemasonry. A link in the chain would, therefore, be missing, if no notice were to be taken here of the Freemasonry of Poland.

The present work is intended first of all for the Masonic Brethren, especially for the German Brethren, who, if they penetrate a little deeper into the history of their own Masonry, must needs after the above explanations take up the study of Russian Masonry, and learn much that will be to the advantage of *their own* Lodge, often enough too, what must not be done. But the work is also further addressed to all those who stand outside Freemasonry. The subject will be new to most readers, for is it not true that in German Masonic reference books, which are to be found in every larger national library, there exists about Russia and Poland but very short notices, and these contain much that is incorrect, while in Russia and Poland themselves one is not much better of in this respect. With the exception of a few short articles in several reviews, only Pypine, who has also made himself a name in the field of Slavonic literature, has treated Russian Freemasonry in greater detail, but only in so far that he that he collected a great amount of material for fixing dates. In this collection he promises, it is true, a connected history of the development of Freemasonry, but unfortunately he was carried off by death within a year of giving his promise.

This book only offers the principal features of the history Freemasonry in Russia and Poland, thus corresponding to the “Library for Freemasons” which is being published at the same time by the same firm. For anyone who wishes to make a more thorough study of the subject I can recommend my more detailed works. *viz:--“The History of Former Masonry in Russia—according to Materials supplied by the “Landes-Loge” in Berlin, and the Libraries of St. Petersburg and Moscow. By Dr. Friedrichs. Berlin 1904. (Ernest Siegfried Mittler and Son).”* “*Freemasonry in the Prussian Town of Warsaw—a Contribution to the History of the Grand “Landes-Loge” of the Freemasons of Germany. Zirkel-Korrespondenz. By Dr. Friedrichs. No.12.1905. (E.S.Mittler and Son).”*

To all intents and purposes, however, these lines are quite sufficient. Possibly through them one or another outsider will not only feel an interesting the Freemasonry of these two countries, but will also extend this interest to the object and aim of Freemasonry in general. In this way the book will fulfil a double purpose. Should anyone imagine that he is about to get an insight into the “secrets” of Freemasonry, he will certainly be disappointed. Do what I will there is nothing “to betray”.

Of real “secrets” I know nothing myself. We Freemasons have no secrets; nor can we have any, for all our more important publications –in fact, the whole of our “science” is contained in every national library and can be consulted by everyone. I shall again refer at the proper place to this point on which even among the best educated persons the strangest ideas prevail.

## **Freemasonry in Russia.**

### **1. The Earliest Beginnings of Freemasonry. Forerunners and Varieties of Freemasonry.**

Older Masonic Manuals make the statement, which is as false as it is categorical, that Peter the Great was the first Freemason in Russia, and that through him the first Lodge in the Empire was founded. They also supply further details with embellishments, where and when and on what occasions he was won over for Freemasonry. According to them he brought it with him from England, that country to which the most ancient traces of Freemasonry point, and where just at the time when Peter was studying there, through a new organisation and through a transformation of working Masonry into spiritual Masonry fresh life was being infused into the Lodges.

Who was it that won over Peter for the new covenant? It was of course the man, who is considered by the English as the best qualified representative of both working and spiritual Masonry, *viz*, Sir Christopher Wren, the builder of the great palace at Winchester, of the beautiful Pembroke College, Cambridge, and of that unsurpassed masterpiece, St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Peter's solemn initiation was therefore, consummated by this Sir Christopher Wren, but who entered with him at the same time into the new brotherhood? They must and could only have been two persons, his most intimate friends and at the same time his most eminent counsellors—Lefort and Patrick Gordon. In Masonic circles the latter was especially in favour, several Gordon's having assumed leading parts in Freemasonry.” What a marvellous thing the imagination is!” we exclaim involuntarily. How well it understands the much out of nothing! It makes one feel very sorry to be obliged to approach these beautiful magic images somewhat closely and to ask its ingenious conjurors: - “Whence come all this Knowledge?” No answer follows, nor can any answer follow, because not a tittle of all this is true. Nowhere, whether in Russia or elsewhere, is the slightest proof of such an assertion to be found.

The enquiry as to why such great efforts have been used to make Peter occupy this position is not difficult to answer. With the view of making a European civilised state out of his kingdom that was becoming petrified in Asiatic barbarity, Peter had recognised his first task to be the education and instruction of his people. But did not these two words “education” and “instruction” stand on the banners of Freemasonry? If it was possible to claim him for the alliance, it would have been an honour for him and at the same time for the Lodge. As so often in life, so also in this case, the wish was simply the father of the thought.

Other names of those times which are often mentioned with predilection, may likewise be disregarded, *e.g.* that of James Keith the well-known Scotchman in political history, and that not only in Russia where he won rich laurels by his warlike exploits, but also in this country

where as a Prussian field-marshal he enjoyed the same sterling renown as a military commander. James Keith was a Freemason, it is true, but he belonged not to a Russian, but to an English lodge, and just as he was a member of an English Lodge, there were also of course many Freemasons living in Russia who were members of a Lodge either in England or Italy or France; but no Russian Lodge was in existence.

Among Peter's successor's we find no trace of Freemasonry either. Was it even conceivable? In Peter's case it was possible, for was not, as we have said, his principal endeavour to ingraft civilization—western civilization—on his country; of his successor's of whom, on account of their short reigns, Peter's consort Catherine Alexievna, his grandson Peter Alexeievitch and later Ivan Antonovitch, must be eliminated, and of whom, therefore, only the two women Anna Ivanovna and Elizabeth Petrovna come under consideration, this cannot be said, however willingly we might be to do so. Anna Ivanovna only loved—but not education and culture, and Elizabeth Petrovna, even when her *amours* now and then left her time for ruling, took no interest whatever in Freemasonry, not even in her leisure hours. But Freemasonry, needs for its development and prosperity the support of the powers that be, just as it desires itself to be in its turn a support of those powers.

In consequence of the ever increasing communication with Western Europe Freemasons naturally went to Russia in greater and greater numbers; nevertheless, they did not succeed until later—under Catherine—in making themselves independent *i.e.* in founding Lodges.

That in the meantime the ground was being prepared for them is shown by other circumstances. Systems, which had humanitarianism in common with Freemasonry, were well received in Russia; they desired, as also did the latter, to work for and build up the spiritual welfare of mankind, but that they did become absorbed in this *one* unique aim of Freemasonry, the moral thought. They pursued at the same time other purposes which were right worldly, as, for instance, when some of them wanted to find the philosopher's stone.

Among these the most prominent on account of the great numbers of their Followers were the *Strict Observance* and the *Rosicrucians*. Who were the *Strict Observance* and the *Rosicrucian's*?

The *Strict Observance* has its name from the implicit Obedience the members were obliged to vow to their superiors in the order. When and in what way they made their entrance into Russia it is hardly possible to decide; perhaps from France, its native country, where the *Strict Observance* sprang into being about the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the continuation of the Order of the Knights-Templars which had been destroyed 400 years previously. It formed adherents not only in Russia, but also in Germany and in Italy, who were probably attracted to it principally by the pomp and luxury which were displayed by the Order. For instance, about the year 1774, in other words, just at the same time when Freemasonry was making its first feeble attempts to gain a footing in Russia, the whole of Courland was in the hands of the *Strict Observance*.

As the head of the *Strict Observance* we must, perhaps, consider another system, which was likewise very widely spread, *viz* the *Clericatus*, so called because at its head there was an ecclesiastic, one who was actually in holy orders. Accordingly its adherents laid most stress on the spiritual element in the Order and did wonders in praying and fasting. Moreover, they also seem to have searched for the philosopher's stone.

This, however, was most thoroughly done by the *Rosicrucians*. Where they took their origin is not quite clear; not even their name is clear. Are we to think of that John Valentine Andreä who at the time of the Thirty Years' War founded a society "for the improvement of the Church and for the founding of the lasting welfare of states and individuals" and in his publications with an illusion to his name made use of a St. Andrew's Cross with four roses, or of the German nobleman Christian Rosenkreuz who is mentioned by Andreä in his writings and who was initiated in the East by wise Hindoos into the secrets of the elixir of life and of the philosopher's stone? No one knows, and probably no one ever will know. But it is clear that in Russia as well as in Germany the Rose Cross Order had many adherents.

Whatever judgement may be formed about the Strict Observance and the Rosicrucians, however justified may be the heavy charges that have been brought against them, charges which originated to a great extent among Freemasons, and among which expressions such as "obscurants" and sordid "swindle societies" are almost mild, this at all events is irrefutably certain that among the Russian adherents are men who are far above such suspicions. Their work on behalf of the general public and their self-sacrificing love for their fellow-men shines in so bright a light that no calumniating can throw a shadow upon their characters, and indeed, is only on account of these men that the systems have been mentioned at all. These men were above all the two Rosicrucians Schwarz and Novikoff.

*John Eugene Schwarz* is commonly regarded as the father of Russian Freemasonry. From the Masonic point of view this is not correct, for as we have said, he was a Rosicrucian and not Freemason. How then did he obtain this decorative surname? A public that judges impartially and that understands how to estimate the value of a public man will give its judgement not according to whether such a one belongs to any particular party or system to which he has been sworn in, but will consider simply and solely his actions. Right thinking people in Russia and also all those who in any way came into contact with Schwarz could not but be completely indifferent as to whether he was a Freemason or a Rosicrucian, or whether he belonged to the Strict Observance or again to one of the very numerous smaller systems, of which we will speak later.

Now who was Schwarz, and what did he accomplish? Petroff writes about him as follows in his "History of Russian Literature:"- "Russian Masonry trained many enlightened and noble men who proved themselves in the highest degree to be useful collaborators in the various branches of the Russian administration; it declared war against the philosophy of the Encyclopadists and of that corruption of morals which this philosophy had provoked in Russian society. At the time of the mighty spreading and the prosperous position of Masonry in Russia Schwarz was at its head. At first he taught German and later Philosophy at the University of Moscow. In doing so he imbued the young students above all with the thought that knowledge has no meaning if it leads to atheism and immorality. All his lectures were directed against the scepticism and the materialism of the Encyclopadists. In order to infuse into the young people a real love of knowledge, he founded learned societies, which helped him in his endeavour to spread scientific enlightenment. He won the great sympathy and the profound gratefulness of both the higher and the lower classes in Moscow. The foundation of schools, the publication of manuals and books of a moral and religious tendency, the opening of printing offices and bookshops, the training of teachers, the sending of them abroad with the view of completing their education, the founding of hospitals and chemists shops—these are the characteristics "of Schwarz's enlightened activity and of the blessings it produced."

Thus we read, as already stated, in Petroff's "History of Russian Literature," a manual of moderate size, in which, as in other histories of Russian literature, whole sections are devoted to Russian Freemasonry. Where, then, do we find in our histories of German literature anything about German Freemasonry? We may ask not altogether without reason. While Freemasonry in all other countries has become public property, and public opinion has had to consider it, it seems as though German freemasonry wishes ever to be the violet that flowers in secret. Is it right that it should be so? Is it not strange, and is it not at the same time a pity that, outside the narrow circle of the Brethren no one really knows that just the greatest among the "intellectuals" of Germany were Freemasons? Who knows Lessing, Wieland or Goethe as Freemasons? Who knows what they found in Freemasonry, and what they did for Freemasonry? It is but very recently that endeavours seem to have been made, which forsake this course of "secrecy" and are anxious to do something for the common good. It has always been otherwise in every other country, even in Russia, and it was held in high esteem that Freemasonry had left its mark on Russian civilization.

The course which had been commenced by Schwarz was continued by *Nicolai Ivanovitch Novikoff*. Although he belonged to a St. Petersburg Masonic Lodge from 1777 to 1779, yet he returned to the Rosicrucians after his removal to Moscow. What his reasons were is not evident, though they were scarcely either aversion or animosity. These contrasts between single systems were not so prominent in Russia in those days, for there were frequently enough who at one and the same time belonged to several systems.

An ardent friend of the people and an enthusiastic patriot, Novikoff staked his all for the moral betterment of the Russian people. Even the non-Masonic press looks back upon this man with pride. He was the founder of the first Russian periodical, the "Utrenni Swet," and the "Moscow Gazette" was very successful under his editorship. As in these papers, so, too, by means of smaller publications and books he worked indefatigably and undauntedly for the enlightenment and thereby the moral betterment of the people. As a practical man he created a considerable amount of national schools. In addition to this he opened printing-offices in which he had manuals for his schools printed and at the same time also other books with a tendency to religious morals and enlightenment, which were then sold for a few kopeks, or else given away. Further, he built hospitals. As, however, only a very small fraction of the population could profit by them, he set up chemist's shops which dispensed their medicines gratis to the needy. Charitable societies were created by him in several quarters of the City of Moscow, and he also started that great society which made it its duty to supply with bread and victuals over wide districts the people who were starving in consequence of the failing of the crops. A calamity which so frequently occurs in Russia. This is something which no private individual before or since has managed to do. The speech which Novikoff held at the opening of the latter institution must have been so exceedingly convincing and inspiring, for did not a rich Moscow merchant immediately afterwards make him a present of his fortune of several millions of roubles?

Surely nothing more need be said in recommendation of Novikoff. Should then—to recur to the thought already touched upon above that all the Rosicrucians were only "obscurants" and "sordid swindle societies,"—Schwarz and Novikoff have been the only "white crows" among them? Does not after all stream from these two, whose whole surroundings it is impossible to think were solely a bad set, on to the rest—of course I am here only speaking of *Russian* Rosicrucians—a little brightness which causes them to shine in a less unfavourable light?



This is Novikoff in so far as he appeared before the public. If, now, in the case of a man who knew how to do such much good in such a perfect manner, it is a matter of course that his mind was like a precious stone, yet it is interesting to see from fragments of his own writings, how he believed it was still necessary to work out his own education. In the Rumjanzoff Museum at Moscow there are several reports by Novikoff, so called "Confessions," which the Rosicrucians had to send into their superiors in the order (according to Pypin):--"Sincerely and with a pure heart I confess that I have not grasped the meaning of the beautiful columns on which the holy Order rests, *viz.* the love of God and of one's neighbour, or rather I have understood it wrongly by thinking that man of himself was capable of loving God and his neighbour. Indeed, I was blinded to such an extent, that I imagined I fulfilled the commandment of their meaning; but now I thank my redeemer with tears, that He has permitted me to become conscious of my blindness and to recognise it. He has made me comprehend and feel that love, even the blissful sensation of poor sinners, is the gift of God, which He gives to his saints to taste of, and to enjoy. There are moments in which they feel love for their neighbours, and cherish the strong and most blissful confidence that they also love God. But these moments are transitory. Daily when I rise and when I lay me down to sleep, unworthy though I am, I pray to the Father of the Universe in the name of His Son, Our Redeemer, that He will awaken me this sweetest of sensations, and I will thank my merciful Redeemer for having not unfrequently granted me in His mercy to cherish the ardent desire to love God and my neighbour; and this holy and divine truth He sealed by the sacrifice of His soul for those that He loved—for all sinners. And yet what a stranger I still am to his love! Often, only too often, I have no desire, for the sake of one of my friends, to rise early or go to bed late, or in bad weather to go and errand. My pride and my blind self-will often will not allow such sweet sensations to rise within me. I am convinced that the pure, unblemished prayers of our wise and sympathizing forefathers, and of our highly esteemed superiors are efficacious to us, and that they direct the grace and blessing of the Almighty down upon our native country..... As regards the unfolding of love in my heart, and the uprooting of all that is uncouth in it, and as regards the meeting of everyone half way in a friendly manner, I avow openly and sincerely that to this end I use all the strength that becomes mine through the mercy of his Redeemer; nevertheless, I feel that even now I often make mistakes in my judgement of rudeness and friendliness; but thanks to my merciful Redeemer, I also at once feel those mistakes, am sorry for them, suffer in my heart on account of them, and beg and implore His Grace that it may confirm me in my sincere and true desire to be friendly towards every one and to fall out with no one, and in my endeavours to let everyone to depart from me contented."

We must not leave Novikoff just yet. It is credible that this man whose whole life had been nothing but the purest love of his fellows and sacrifice for the welfare of humanity, very soon found himself within the walls of Schlüsselburg, where he languished for nearly five long anxious years, and where poison and daggers were to be seen alongside powder and the hangman's rope.

Petroff, the literary historian, who has already been referred to, writes on this subject as follows:- "The secret character of the Masonic society to which Novikoff belonged, its secret rites, its enormous wealth in material possessions, and its wide spread charities aroused the discontentedness of outsiders and his companions. With them even many well educated persons became discontented, because the Masons, in their endeavours to penetrate all the secrets of nature, would not study Nature *per se* by means of scientific experiments; they declined to accept the results obtained by the natural sciences, and believed in various so-called secret sciences, *e. g.*

Alchemy, magic, and the Cabbala. Although the philanthropic activity of the Masons should have attracted the sympathy of the Church, the latter was dissatisfied with them on account of their arbitrary interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and on account of their mingling pure Christian teaching with ancient heathenism and Modern Judaism. Novikoff had also taken the field in earnest against the Jesuits who just at that time enjoyed to the full the protection and sympathy of the empress” To this may be added a few supplementary remarks which are given by Fisher, the publisher of the *Eleusinian*, in his work entitled, “Masonry in the Orient of Russia during the Reign of Catherine II.” “When this establishment (one of Novikoff’s printing-offices as above mentioned) he says, was as yet scarcely half-finished, it was unexpectedly destroyed along with its founders. It is well known that from the earliest times a strong antipathy has prevailed between the rich Moscovite nobles who are fond of living in independence, and the court nobles of St. Petersburg; the sovereigns have also found it to be more politic to attract the Moscovite magnates to their persons, and weaken and leave desolate the ancient capital of the empire. This alliance of well-to-do men could not fail to create a sensation at court. In particular its members were suspected of being Freemasons, and before long a considerable number of heavy charges were brought against them. It was declared that they promoted an enlightenment which was contrary to all the principles of monarchical states; that they endeavoured to secure the favour of the people by the distribution of victuals and medicines, and that they had an arsenal hidden away in their cellars for the equipment of an army. And now the die was cast. The prefect of police received orders to set a watch all round the institute, to seal everything, and to search for arms. He found neither cannon, nor a large provision of gunpowder, but a considerable number of rifles and pistols, not hidden away, but quite conspicuous in the houses of several rich officials who were at the same time enthusiastic sportsmen.” The consequence was that Novikoff was arrested at the beginning of 1792 and only released from the Schlüssenburg after the death of Catherine by a rescript of Paul I on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1796---a dark page in the political history of Russia, a glorious page for the Freemasons of Russia!

Besides the Rosicrucians and the Strict Observance there was in Russia quite a number of other systems, which, however, never disposed of a large membership; consequently they need not delay us long. To these belonged the so-called “*Illumanati*” who were imported from South Germany, and who with their “enlightenment” are said at the beginning to have inspired even Goethe and Herder with enthusiasm, but before long were prohibited in all countries as being a danger to the state. Further, we may mention the so-called *Melissino System*- so named after the Russian Lieutenant General Melissinno; - it was exceedingly rich in prayers and vows. The *Avignon Society of New Israel* also claims our notice; the members were at the same time alchemists, conjurors of spirits, and Chiliasts.

All these systems found adherents in the larger towns; we know there were Lodges at St Petersburg, Moscow, Riga—here Herder was a member of the Lodge “To the Sword” which belonged to the Strict Observance—and Archangel.

## II. Freemasonry under Catherine II

Elizabeth Petrovna was succeeded, after the short-lived reign of Peter III, by the latter’s consort, Catherine, whose influence was soon to make itself felt. If we read the pamphlets and books about Catherine which have come to us just lately from England and Switzerland, we are inclined to think that the whole of her life’s work was nothing but a moral failure, and that she

was completely absorbed in the profession of a Phryne. After all, it is very strange that just those persons whom people are beginning to feel as a scourge even in London, and in Zurich and Geneva, because they not only preach free love in theory, but also carry out their theory in practice, -- it is strange, we say, that just these persons that reproach Catherine with their own principal maxims! Were it not an empress, but a lady of the student proletariat, they would admit that she had the right "to sew her wild oats." Moreover, it must not be forgotten that at that time morals were not at a specially high premium in any country, nor in any society whether high or low.

Whatever may be thought of Catherine's ideas about morals, or of the cultivation of her affections, - we may, indeed, condemn both severely - there can be no doubt as to her statesmanship and the cultivation of her mind. At that period education found its home in France, being personified by such men as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, d'Alembert, and Grimm. It was no wonder that Catherine was a most enthusiastic reader of their works! But her sharp intellect at once recognized the impossibility of putting into practice for her people the ideas which she drew from these works. Materialism, atheism, and the democratic revolutionary tendencies which the philosophy of those men proclaims, could only be fatal, if applied to a people that was so little matured as the Russians were. In its education she needed more reliable supports, and these offered themselves just at the time when she was looking out for them: they were the Freemasons.

The Freemasons, who had just begun to settle in Russia, set themselves in their Lodges dead against the philosophy of the French which preached godlessness and immorality, and for which they substituted pure faith in God without any narrowing dogmas. Further, although their chief aim was to throw a bond of brotherly love round the whole earth, they required above all from their followers the most sincere and most faithful recognition of the supremacy of the state. Did not such support come to Catherine most opportunely? And did not these very men individually pursue the objects she had set herself to attain? The fostering of the arts and sciences, the improvement of health, and the education of the people--this was Catherine's programme and these were the ideals of the Freemasons. Must not the latter, therefore, have been extremely sympathetic to her? She thus gladly reached out to them the hand which they sought.--If later times brought about many--very many--changes, there it is that we must seek on whose side the fault was.

The public in general, here in Germany, as everyone knows, is very much inclined to underestimate the work and the achievements of the freemasons. The reason for this is to be sought for in their self-chosen exclusiveness, and their extreme sensitivity to any contact with the outer world. This thought might make it seem as though in the above explanations we had exaggerated the value of Russian freemasonry, being looked at only from the Masonic point of view. Let us, therefore, quote the criticism of an objective judge, that of Petroff, the literary historian who has already been frequently referred to. His opinion is objective, because he was so far removed from Freemasonry, that he did not even know it by hearsay; it is, therefore, only possible that he obtained his results by scientific experiments. In his history of Russian literature he says: -- "The catch-words by which we may characterize the tendency which was followed by the sciences in general and literature in particular (under Catherine II) are: -- the philosophy of the French, the raising of the national conscience, the introduction of new literary currents of thought, *and the spread of Freemasonry, which, to a certain degree, was to serve as a counterbalance for French philosophy.*

### 1. The Grand “Landes-Loge” in Berlin and the Grand Lodge in London.

When did the *earliest Masonic Lodge* first see the light in Russia? The merit of having introduced Freemasonry into Russia belongs, as has already been mentioned, to a German. Together with a few Germans who had been taken to St. Petersburg by their office or their business, Bro. *Von Reichell* who had been appointed head of the scientific section National Military School for the sons of nobles, and who before his appointment had belonged in Berlin to the Lodge “To the Three Golden Keys” which worked according to the system of the Grand “Landes-Loge” founded according to the same system the Lodge “*Apollo*” on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1771. It was comprised of only 14 members, 10 of whom were Germans. Of the remainder 3 were from Alsace-Lorraine, and only one was a Russian: the “général de Narischkin, écuyer de Sa Majesté l’impératrice de Russie,” as he registered his name in the lists. No lucky star hovered over Reichell’s first creation; it had itself committed a serious error by wishing in spite of the very small number of its members to build its own Lodge, in consequence of which financial difficulties at once arose. Further, its existence was also rendered bitter from another quarter.

In June of the same year a Lodge was also founded at St. Petersburg under the patronage of England. This Lodge—“To Perfect Concord”—as well as the Mother-Lodge to which it was subjected—the Grand Lodge in London—not only did not recognise the one which had been founded by the Germans, but declared it to be illegal, and thus cut off all possibility of life.

This is not intelligible to an outsider without further explanation. He will ask if it is a fraternity for one Lodge—in this case an English one—to enter the lists against another—a German one – and even to aim at its very existence. To such a question, which is a reasonable one, we can only reply that among brothers of one family many things occur which are not very pleasing. The struggle which now took place is also remarkable from another point of view, whereby we receive an illustration of what has often happened in the political history of England and Germany: The Englishman with arms akimbo, without regard for those about him making straight for his goal and of course attaining it; the German constantly hesitating and politely looking about him lest he should give the slightest offence, and, for all that, arriving too late.

The London Grand Lodge had in the meantime sent the Berlin “Landes-Loge” which had handed over the documents of its constitution and its rituals to the Lodge “*Apollo*,” and thereby entered into the relationship of a Mother-Lodge exercising its protection, the categorical declaration “that the London Grand lodge had the exclusive right of constituting other Lodges in the whole world.” And before doing so it had already appointed *Elagin*—a Privy Councillor, Senator, and Member of the Imperial Cabinet—to be the “Grand Master of and for all the Russians.” This, of course, made a disagreeable impression in Berlin, and as a matter of fact the situation was such that it was a question of bending or breaking. As they could not make up their minds to the latter, they had recourse to putting off the consequences, by shifting their position, and offering polite objections, whereby, of course, they lost everything. The apprehensions which were entertained in Berlin were, it is true, not altogether without foundation. If opposition was offered to England on account to a gain in Russia which was still uncertain, it might through the foundation of English Lodges on German territory endanger the acquisitions of Masonry which was still in its infancy there. That was and still is a weakness on the part of us Germans, that we like to look on, and admire what is foreign, and to adopt from it what perhaps we ourselves have in a better form. Accordingly it might have been easily

possible, in such a struggle, for the English to have obtained a footing in Germany and for English Lodges to have flourished at the expense of the German ones. But, on the other hand, a compensating justice has always taken care that when we have been on our knees for some time before the foreigner, German thought and German national feeling have awoke again with elementary power, and driven everything foreign before them. The leaders of the Berlin Lodge did not realise this; they looked upon it, indeed, as a gain when the Grand Lodge in London declared that it did not intend to found any Lodges within the German Empire, if the full right was allowed it to do so in Russia. The meaning of this was that with us nothing was won, and in Russia everything was lost.

This then was the result which had been arrived at by the diplomatists of the Berlin and London Lodges; in all their deliberations one thing they had forgotten—something which, however, lay on the surface, namely, to make an exact examination of what those most concerned—the Russians—intended to do in the matter. In the meantime the strangest of circumstances came to light.

The Lodge “Apollo” had, indeed, for the above mentioned reasons very soon suspended its work. On the other hand, however, Reichell opened a new Lodge in St. Petersburg as early as May 1773. This was the Lodge “Harpocrates” of which Prince Nicolai Trubezkoi became the head.

Encouraged by this success Reichell rested not from his labours, which were also crowned with success. What a genius of work this man was, and what a power for work he possessed, may be seen by any one who knows the difficulties incurred in such creations, in the fact that in the same year 1773 beside the Lodge “Harpocrates” above mentioned he created at St. Petersburg the Lodges “Horus”, “Latona”, and “Nemesis”. Further, the Lodge “Apollo” which had been closed a year before, was solemnly re-opened, but under entirely different financial conditions. In addition to this a Lodge “Apollo” was founded at Riga, and the Lodge “Isis” at Revel.

During this time the English did not remain inactive. In the year 1774 they opened at St. Petersburg the Lodge “To the Nine Muses;” further the Lodge “Urania” and the Lodge “Bellona;” at Moscow the Lodge “Clio” of which “Catherine *is said* to have been the patroness; and at Jassy in Moldavia the Field Lodge “Mars,” *i.e.* a Lodge the members of which were exclusively soldiers serving in the field; this last worked there during the Turco-Russian War.

Then there were the forces of the opposing parties. Reichell’s Lodges in no way acknowledged by the English, and not only abandoned by Berlin, but already surrendered to the English; and the English Lodges staying on their bond. Then it was that Reichell showed not only an immense capacity for work, but also a firm will and above all a heart for his own and the German cause. Was all for which he had staked the best of his years to be blotted out by that one stroke of the pen from London? Was the stately number of Brethren who after mature reflection and with faithful conviction had joined the system of the Grand “Landes-Loge” at Berlin, *i.e.* the Swedish System, to discard it all at once with a light heart, and to pass over with flying colours to the opposing-the English-System? Supported by his friend, the above named Prince Nicolai Trubezkoi, with whom he had founded the so-called Princes’ Lodge “Osiris” —a Princes’ Lodge, because the majority of the members were princes—he entered into correspondence with Elagin, and these negotiations which only lasted a short time, must have been carried on in an exceedingly clever and convincing manner by Reichell, for it is incredible what he accomplished. *On the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1776 Elagin abandoned the English System and accepted the Swedish System of Berlin, and that with the whole of his Lodges.*

In this affair Reichell had found a strong support in Count Panin, one of Catherine's ministers who stood high in her favour, and who as ambassador in Sweden had become very much attached to the Swedish System. Further, we also know from political history that Panin was always one of the principal supporters of Prussia in the Russian Cabinet. Was not this assistance given from the first? And did not perhaps Catherine herself intervene with that end in view? Catherine did not like the English; her self-glorifying nature felt itself injured by British supremacy on the Sea. On the other hand her views often coincided with those of the Prussian king, and she frequently followed his advice. But of the latter she knew that in him Masonry had not only a friend, but also an active member, for not long before, on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1774, he had even accepted the patronage of the Grand "Landes-Loge" in Berlin. Is it not very probable that, in the deliberations and negotiations on this subject, about which she was kept well informed even to the smallest details, she placed all her influence on the side of Prussia? And Elagin! Well, he was a courtier, and as such was at the beck and call of his Sovereign; he was not a man of one single purpose, but, as will soon be seen more clearly, one of the many whose motto is "I am not particular."

## 2 The Swedo-Berlin System in Russia.

The union of the whole of the Lodges under *one* head produced at first really fine and healthy fruit. The list of Lodges in 1777 contains the names of 18 Lodges working under the constitution of the *Provincial Lodge of St Petersburg* according to the *Swedo-Berlin System*, among which were 10 at St Petersburg alone, 3 at Moscow, 1 at Revel, 1 at Archangel, 1 at Polots in the Government of Witebsk, 1 field Lodge at Kagodury in Moldavia (perhaps the one at Jassy above referred to, of which nothing more is known). Members, as well as the highest officials, among whom, besides Elagin, the above mentioned minister, Count Panin, and Prince Gabriel Gagarin, together with Major General Melissino, Knight, who, as soon as Masonic Lodges had been established, had given up his own system which was an imitation of the Strict Observance, all worked with ardour and devotedness at the task which now fell to their lot, and the single Lodges as well as the Grand Provincial Lodge showed signs of power and prosperity. Above all they considered it to be their duty to appear before the world as the backbone of the nation, and, therefore, kept everyone most carefully at a distance, whose course of life and position did not bear looking at with a magnifying glass.

Nevertheless, their glory lasted a decade, for the Provincial Lodge which had been founded according to the Swedo-Berlin System on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1776 had already disappeared again in the year 1785, never to be seen again. How did this happen?

However much Reichell's action speaks for his warm German heart, no light was thrown onto the matter itself. The English supremacy had been cast aside, but how did they expect to continue their course? What happened, for instance, when it was desired to constitute a new Lodge? Berlin had surrendered its right once for all. These were in the hands of England. As this became evident soon enough, they consoled themselves with the thought that even if the constitution had to be sent for from that country, yet the work could be done according to the Swedo-Berlin System. Such a state of things was simply absurd, and this alone had been sufficient to destroy the whole edifice like a pack of cards. But other causes were also added.

It is nothing new that just those children, whom we love best, turn out least successfully. This was the case with the three Lodges, the Lodge “Apollo” at St Petersburg, the Lodge “Apollo” at Riga, and the Lodge “Osiris” at Moscow.

The Lodge “Apollo” at St Petersburg, as will be remembered, was the first Lodge to see the light in Russia. With great sacrifices of time and money Reichell had succeeded in calling it into existence. In consideration of the task which from the first fell to its lot through this favoured position, it ought to have risked everything in order to become, under his leadership, a real pioneer of civilization and of brotherly philanthropy. But, as we have seen, it had failed after little more than a twelve month. Once again put onto its feet by him, it offered on Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> 1776 which may be called Reichell’s *fête* day, for on that day he had at last seen all his devotion and self-sacrifice rewarded by the union of all the Lodges under the Swedo-Berlin System—the grievous and disgraceful spectacle of being conspicuous by its absence at the meeting, thereby proclaiming that it excluded itself entirely from union. But it was not enough that it wilfully stood aside as it were in a sulk; very soon it became a traitor of the cause which it should have represented and upheld.

Whose fault was it? Simply and solely that of the Master of the Chair. And who was that? Von Rosenberg, the “*aventurier*” as some of the documents of the time called him. Von Rosenberg had fought with distinction against the French under the command of Count Luckner during the Seven Years’ War; but later he had gone over to the enemy. While on service he had been ordered to Paris and Metz, where he had been promoted to the Higher Grades of French Freemasonry. His instability led him back to Germany, where he founded a Lodge at Hamburg. He then travelled on as far as St Petersburg, where by reason of his Masonic activity at Hamburg and the Higher Grades he had acquired in France, he soon played an important part in the Lodge “Apollo.” Many gifts seem to have qualified him for this leading part. A contemporary wrote of him as follows: -- “...he had a great knowledge of all externals in Freemasonry, and, generally, was a man of various abilities. He spoke German, Italian, and French and understood Greek, Latin, and English; he drew well and had a considerable talent for music. In his intercourse he was very cunning. There is no doubt that he could be very prepossessing when he liked, and he was also endowed with a certain urbanity which suited him very well.” This is about right. In any case, it is a fact that the members of the Lodge “Apollo” at St Petersburg swore by their Master, and completely abandoned Reichell, the founder of their Lodge, and not only their founder, but the whole system.

Rosenberg was acquainted with Prince Kurakin, the Russian ambassador at Stockholm, the latter had become a Freemason there, and took such an interest in the Order to which he belonged, *viz.* the Swedish System, that he was anxious to introduce it in his native country. Rosenberg was willing, and when they both succeeded in persuading King Gustavus III of Sweden during his visit at St Petersburg to appear as a guest in the Lodge “Apollo”, and, when, into the bargain, the King’s brother, the Duke of Södermanland—later King Charles III—declared himself willing to accept the patronage of the Lodge, Rosenberg had won over all the members for his plan, and the Lodge “Apollo”—and with it several other like-minded ones—abandoned the Swedo-Berlin System, and passed over to the purely Swedish System on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 1779. The latter Lodges were those which had come into existence a year before, *viz.*: the Lodge “To Benevolence”, the Lodge “Phoenix”, and the Lodge “To St. Alexander,” all three at St Petersburg, the Lodge “Neptune” at Cronstadt and the Lodge “To the Three Battle Hammers” at Revel.

The *Lodge "Apollo" at Riga* had not joined the union, though for quite different reasons. We should like to call its motives pure ones, but from the point of view of tactics they were wrong, because they led to isolation and therewith to exhaustion.

The Lodge "Apollo" at Riga had always displayed the most faithful devotion for the Mother-Lodge, the Grand "Landes-Loge" in Berlin. At first this was not made easy for it, seeing its foundation took place during the time of the tension between Berlin and London, and the Mother-Lodge with its weak attitude was truly anything but an attractive model. But the thought that for their native country German civilization was more profitable and more necessary than English, strengthened its members in its determination, and helped them to hold out in spite of all the unfavourable circumstances. Belonging originally to a German country, they believed that their principle duty was to render German civilization to what had previously been German territory, and they thought that this could be done all the more assiduously by limiting themselves to a smaller circle. Their aspiration was thus to make propaganda in Lifland, Courland, and Esthonia, and in case of success to constitute a special provincial Grand Lodge. As a matter of fact success was not wanting. The Lodge "Apollo" was soon so strong that it was able to proceed to the foundation of a second Lodge at Riga, the Lodge "Castor", and at the same time it opened the Lodge "Pollux" at Dorpat. It was now possible to set to work to carry out their favourite idea, when all at once it was clear that they were on the wrong track. They did not wish to have the constitution of their Provincial Grand Lodge from England, and they could not get it from Berlin. What was then the result? The three Lodges stood alone. Yet, how necessary union was, became evident soon enough.

The physiognomy of the Lodge "Apollo" had considerably changed in the course of a few years in consequence of its rapid increase. A number of members had joined it, who were in no way satisfied with the administration of Bœtefeur, the founder and leader, and they were probably right, for it appears as if in consequence of old age and ill health Bœtefeur had become very self-willed and disputatious, and wanted to make the Lodge a 'Refuge.' The discontented members gathered round the person of Baron von Ungern-Sternberg, the second Master of the Chair, soon forming the majority, and the above censured mistake was now revenged. How easy it would have been to find a way of getting out of the difficulty by mediation and by conciliation, had they been in touch with the rest of the Lodges! Instead of being able to apply to a Lodge in the neighbourhood, which was under the same patronage, and in which alone the circumstances of the case would have been understood and suitable help afforded, they had to apply to Berlin, and in doing so the first thing they did was to commit an error. The answer was not, as it should have been, that at such a great distance it was impossible to comprehend the details of the case, but, with a reference to the very great merits of Bœtefeur in founding the Lodge the decisive reply was sent that he was in the right. Such a precipitate judgement naturally raised the ire of the rejected majority.

This mistake in Berlin was succeeded by another. At Riga, beside the two Lodges "Apollo" and "Castor", were two others of more ancient date, which originally belonged to the Strict Observance, but which after separating themselves from the latter became independent. Among these four Lodges an exceedingly lively and friendly intercourse had been developed in the course of time. That, moreover, the Lodges of the Strict Observance were not on the wrong track is evident from the fact that one of them, the Lodge "To the Sword", supported a free school at its sole expense for poor orphan children. Formally they were perfectly right in Berlin when they forbade the affiliated Lodges all intercourse with the above mentioned Lodges, which from a Masonic point of view were not at all considered legitimate. But when the



Brethren at Riga write again and again to say how much they value the intercourse with these highly esteemed and dearly beloved Brethren, when they beg them not to destroy this friendship which is offered, if for no other reason, yet on account of outward communal circumstances, a way out of the difficulty ought to have been found in the interest of all. Berlin ought not to have been satisfied with the mere reference to a paragraph of the law. Riga was, of course, guilty as well; here again had to pay for their short-sightedness which has been proved above. Had they not taken up such an isolated position, the other Lodges would have intervened as mediators.

“Whom the gods wish to punish, they smite with blindness”, one is really inclined to exclaim at the third decision which came from Berlin. Quite a number of members, who had previously belonged to the Strict Observance, had joined the Riga Lodges “Apollo” and “Castor”. The Strict Observance worked in the so-called Higher Grades. *i.e.* Grades which are above the usual division into Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master Grades. That such an edifice, under certain circumstances, up to the 33 Grade, as was the case with the Rosicrucians, became a vain toy, is clear. The members who passed over from the Strict Observance--and with them many others--would certainly have been satisfied with the three Grades; had not the Grand “Landes-Loge” also had a few more Grades. The Riga Lodges, however, were obstinately excluded. But he who knows how much stress the Russians lay on externals, understands that this request of the Riga Brethren for the granting of Higher Grades recurs again and again, and, he who hears that the reason given for the refusal was that the Grand “Landes-Loge” could not think of it until the Lodge “Apollo” had concluded peace with Bœtefeur, its Master, is not surprised that “*on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1785 the Lodges “Apollo”, “Castor”, and “Pollux” renounced the protection hitherto enjoyed of the Venerable “Landes-Loge” of Germany at Berlin, and submitted themselves to the Venerable Provincial Lodge of the Russian Empire, of the English System, of which the Venerable Bro. Elagin was the Provincial Grand Master.*”

He had seen the ship sinking—why should there not for once be a captain who thought first of all of his own precious life? He had returned to the English System long before. The only thing that could have stiffened the back of this pliant man would have been simply and solely the strong hand of his sovereign, but she no longer took any interest in Freemasonry. Where then was he to find any power? We can answer for it with our conscience when we herewith take leave of the *man* Elagin; his *name* must be mentioned again, and Catherine’s change must, of course, likewise be discussed.

Another Lodge, *the Lodge “Osiris” at Moscow*, had, as mentioned above, assumed a special attitude to the union. Many have been inclined to the view that this “Princes’ Lodge”, as it was usually styled for short, would not “have anything in common” with other ordinary mortals out of self-sufficiency and pride, an opinion, the justification of which cannot be denied altogether, for are not the same characteristics to be found even nowadays, and that not only in Russia? Nevertheless, we should like to say a word in favour of the contrary view, namely, that this Lodge showed an altogether correct feeling and good sense. It said: “Russia for the Russians!” Why should it let itself be controlled from outside? The name of its head, Prince Nicolai Trubezkoi, who had always proved himself to be a devoted friend of Reichell, and also of von Zinnendorf, the Berlin Grand Master, is a sufficient guarantee that the ignoble motives just named were not the leading ones.

### 3. The Russian Lodges until the First Suspension of Work in the Year 1794.

The way Freemasonry will now take in Russia has been already outlined in the above explanations. Instead of *one* system, three come into the foreground: - *The Swedish Provincial Lodge* under Prince Gagarin, *The English Provincial Lodge* under Elagin, and the independent *Russian National Lodge* under Prince Trubezkoi. The first two had their seats at St. Petersburg, the last at Moscow. Numerically all 3 systems enjoyed an extraordinary success; unfortunately it must be added that Freemasonry in Russia had become fashionable. Advantage was also taken of these crowds of new Masons by the Rosicrucians, and by the Strict Observance who had their stronghold at Moscow. At the same time there was a great number of Lodges spread over the whole of Russia that worked entirely for themselves. How much good all these corporations accomplished for suffering and needy humanity, and how useful they might have been in promoting its education had they only worked together with unanimity! What power was lost uselessly without this union! Nevertheless, there was also many a point within the individual systems and the individual Lodges which required an early solution.

The *Swedish Provincial Lodge* which had been constituted on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 1779 by a rescript of the Duke of Södermanland, was the first to set to work with honourable intention and great energy. It at once put an end to one bad state of things which had also made itself very much felt in the rest of the Lodges during the previous few years. The German members had been joined in the course of time by many Russians who could not speak German at all, or who could speak it but a very little; the work, however, had always been carried on in German. This mistake was now removed. The Swedish Provincial Lodge filled up the principal offices doubly; alongside the Provincial Grand Master Prince Gagarin it had 2 deputy Grand Masters, Rschewski, the President of the Medical Corps, for works in Russian, and the already frequently named Von Rosenberg for works in German. There were also for both languages 2 Grand Orators and 2 Grand Secretaries. The double appointments brought in their train certain features into the work which bore fruit. We soon see the Swedish Provincial Lodge disposing over a stately number of Lodges, 9 in St. Petersburg alone, 3 in Moscow, and one each at Cronstadt, Revel, Mitau, and Pensa (not far from Nishni Novgorod) and 1 Field Lodge at Kinburn in the Government of Taurida.

The Swedish Provincial Lodge also met the wishes of its members in other respects. We know how great the wish of certain of them had been to be promoted beyond the three lowest degrees. It was for this purpose that it created the higher degree with the name of "The Phoenix Chapter."

As has already been said, a Lodge at Revel - the Lodge "To the Three Battle Hammers" - was subject to the Swedish Provincial Lodge, with the opening of which is connected a story, which, it is true, is of no importance for the development of Masonry, but is worth mentioning here, because it is so very characteristic of the political situation in Russia itself. The approaching opening of the Lodge had also been heard of outside Masonic circles. To the half-educated Freemasonry has always been something like the veiled image at Saï's, and attempts have often been made to raise the veil. Now Major Grenet, the custom-house officer, thought he would do this in his own way - and how? He knew who the bearer was, that was to carry the documents and rituals from St. Petersburg and, therefore, he compelled him on his arrival to enter the custom-house office, and requested him to deliver up everything. When, of course, he refused, the custom-house officer simply called in his *employés*, bade them lay hands on him and relieve him of his papers. Nothing was simpler. Fortunately, the custom-house officer's

Comment [D1]:

superior belonged to the Lodge which was about to be founded, and he ordered him to give them back again.

Elagin's *English Provincial Lodge* was also thriving and increasing. Its main strength lay at St. Petersburg and in the Baltic Provinces. It had 3 Lodges at St. Petersburg, 3 Lodges at Riga, 2 at Revel and one at Dorpat and Libau respectively; further, 1 Lodge at Kieff, the Master of which was Von Ellisen, who became more prominent later on, 1 Lodge at Archangel, and 1 at Schkloff in the Government of Mohileff. It is true that it very soon had the misfortune to lose 2 of the Lodges again, viz. The Lodge "Apollo" at Riga, which was already passing through another phase by adopting the Swedish System together with its Deputy Master of the Chair, Baron von Ungern-Sternberg, and the Lodge "Pollux" at Dorpat, which joined the Strict Observance. For us Germans it is perhaps also of interest that the Orator of the Lodge "Hygeia" at St. Petersburg was Augustus von Kotzebue, who already at that time enjoyed no inconsiderable fame in Russia as a teller of tales and a writer of dramas.

Thus, both systems managed to gather about them a very large number of followers. It has already been stated above that besides these regular Masonic Lodges there sprang up into being a great many others which worked for themselves independently of every recognized system. According to a report, which, by the way, is not always reliable, 145 Lodges are said to have existed in the country - a very large number for so short a space of time! In this number were also included the Lodges of the Strict Observance and of the Rosicrucians which had likewise extended their borders. But they did not appear to have done anything whatever for the real good of their fellow creatures.

A real Masonic spirit and real Masonic love seem to have prevailed and to have produced good fruit only in one Lodge, viz. In the third system, mentioned above of the *Russian National Lodge at Moscow*. It could boast of no great following:- only 2 Lodges at Moscow and one at Riga. On the other hand, however, it was all the more successful, on a small scale. It is reported of the Russian National Lodge that its chief aim was the settling of the differences which existed between the Lodges of the Freemasons and the unrecognized systems, viz. The Rosicrucians and the Strict Observance, both of which were well represented at Moscow, and that it actually succeeded in uniting them all by bonds of friendship and of brotherly love both in civic life and in mutual intercourse - verily an aim ardently to be desired!

In other respects we hear little from the Lodges that is gratifying. The Deputy Grand Master of the Swedish Provincial Lodge was, as we have read above, Von Rosenberg, the same Rosenberg, who had been the evil spirit of the Mother-Lodge of the whole of Russia - The Lodge "Apollo" at St. Petersburg; and he was so here, too. Whereas he might hitherto have been looked upon merely as an eccentric and self-sufficient fellow, and whereas his passing over from the Swedo-Berlin System to the purely Swedish might be explained according to the point of view even as meritorious, seeing that he preferred the original system to the variation, it now became suddenly clear as daylight that the Brethren had allowed themselves to be led by one who was totally unworthy of their trust - by one who was nothing but an "aventurier".

In accordance with his entreaties he had been sent to Stockholm, from whence he intended to fetch the sole genuine documents and rituals. After some time he returned home with them, and there was joy - great joy - throughout the Swedish Provincial Lodge. This joy, it is true, was somewhat checked, when he asked 14,000 roubles for his travelling expenses. Nevertheless, the money was voted to him in consideration of the recovery of such important

and long desired papers. But what was discovered when they were examined more closely? That they were only a copy of what they had long possessed from Reichell, not an iota more. Von Rosenberg was of course turned out of the fane. This was no loss, but the Lodge itself had to suffer under such a mistake made by one of its highest officials, even though this was not shown by a decrease in the *number* of the members. For this, as already pointed out, Freemasonry had become too much a matter of fashion: the Lodge only changed as far as quality was concerned.

Freemasonry had become fashionable - too much so and purely fashionable. The work *per se*, the improvement of self, the separation from the dross and passions of the body, and the doing of real good to real sufferers, were lost sight of by many, and nothing remained but amusement. This is clear from two reports which, even if the colour is laid on thick, on the whole give us a correct picture. Reinbeck, a court councillor who has already been quoted, wrote as follows: - "The Russians joined this union (*i.e.* the Lodges) with an eagerness, which union, as a matter of fact, stood in need of restrictions; the more so because the real object was considered of little importance, but degenerated into carousing, costly amusements, and even financial speculations. Any one who is acquainted with the spirit of the nation will allow that this turn of things was inevitable. Here was an opportunity of killing time under the tempting cloak of secrecy, and of indulging in their love of show in the decoration of the higher and the highest degrees, and many a one found the means of replenishing his coffers. Great zeal was shown in the enrolment of members, indiscriminately and without any other consideration than the receiving of the subscriptions, of the employment of which little more was ever heard. At last, especially in the capital, there was scarcely anyone, even of the lowest classes, who had not been a Freemason. Nevertheless the spread of freemasonry in this way, even in its' state of extreme imperfection, evidently exercised an advantageous influence on the middle classes of society in bringing them nearer together, in laying the foundation of the great sociability, which characterises well bred Russians greatly to their advantage, and in circulating principles which as regards morals and character were certainly not without happy results." This description is supplemented by what Bergmann, attorney-general at Riga, wrote: - "In Russia, especially at St Petersburg, affairs were in a most wretched state. It was a strange medley of men from all parts of the world - men who knew nothing of either Order or Obedience, in fact so-called Masons, who had not the slightest idea what they were to understand by Masonry; for England and France had sent their wares to market; ignorant travellers had brought them to St Petersburg; and what had escaped their memory, was supplied by their impudence. England and France endeavoured to populate the imperial capital, and at last the Freemasons became so numerous that coachmen and lackeys erected Lodges and made proselytes. No one in my time troubled himself about the object in view; the secrets were always represented in pictures, and were at length, in the highest Melissino degree, left to the reflection of those new members who could rack their brains in counsel with their Master. In my time at St Petersburg, the worst was that, with the strange systems and their development, morality with all social virtues was neglected." This is neither a gratifying nor a pleasing picture. For all that Reinbeck's last sentence must not be overlooked, who tries to be just to the inner value of Freemasonry, and to whom on the whole only the outer excrescences give any cause for blame.

These disagreeable circumstances were crowned by a special scandal, the swindle affair of Cagliostro. It is scarcely credible that this man was able to gain a following out of the most fashionable and best educated classes, and that not in Russia alone! What did he tell about himself? He said that for life he was indebted to the love of an angel for an earthly woman, and that he was the direct messenger of the prophet Elijah, called to lead the faithful to a higher

perfection through a physical and a moral new-birth. He, the anointed of God, was able, he said, to perform all kinds of miracles and knew all secrets which were revealed only to the most intimate of the celestial glory. Through him the inner soul of the finite creature could unite with the omnipotence of the Infinite. And what did the police report of his native town Palermo say of him? That he had been punished for brawling, pimping and forgery.

At Mitau a Temple was erected by Count Cagliostro - or as his real, less euphonious name was: Joseph Balsamo. There he carried on "Egyptian Masonry," and everything that took place there was obscure, fantastic and mysterious. Quite new or Russia was the fact that he admitted ladies to the work, at the head of whom stood his wife, the beautiful Lorenza. It is true that she played an even greater role in the gentlemen's Lodges where she conjured up spirits for large sums of money, and sold tinctures of life and universal panaceas, and, when this failed to draw she was not ashamed to call into requisition the charms of her own person. And what did Joseph do? He kept up a strange intercourse with the ladies with a view to the improvement of the human race!

This then was a serious matter - so serious that Catherine herself was aroused. We have already stated above that Catherine's enthusiasm or Masonry had died down; in a word she had become indifferent to it. How was it possible that this woman of a strong will and a quick eye, and conscious of the aim she had in view, should continue to take pleasure and interest in this society which was divided against itself, was rent by feuds, and constantly changed from one system to another? What could she do with a retinue of Masonic "Coachmen and Valets?" Such people were ignored by her. But now affairs had come to a pretty pass, and the lioness suddenly roused herself from her sleep. For a time, however, she played with her victim, and then she destroyed him.

She played with her victim, *i.e.* she poured out the cup of her irony and her sarcasm over Cagliostro's victims. In her three satirical comedies, "The Siberian Conjuror," "The Deceiver" and "The Infatuated One," she lashed the "Deceiver" and his "Infatuated Ones" most unmercifully. Unfortunately - whether intentionally or not - she confused "Egyptian Masonry" and Freemasonry in general, and that in spite of its very many imperfections and weak points all the good in it had not been destroyed, may be proved by again quoting the testimony of Petroff: - "Several plays were written by Catherine against Freemasonry. In these plays she represents the Freemasons as deceivers or as deceived, as people who made gold and sold the elixir of life, as alchemists, and as ghost-seers. When developing the fundamental idea of the comedy entitled The Siberian Conjuror, she wrote to Baron Grimm: - The Siberian Conjuror is that theosophist who produces all the charlatanry of Paracelsus. In the comedy The Deceiver we have that notorious Cagliostro who transforms small diamonds into large ones, who knows remedies for all diseases, who has the power in himself to conjure up spirits, and to whom but a short time before Alexander of Macedonia had appeared. Thereby, however, she only presents to the world the bad side of Freemasonry basing her narration on stories which were current in society at the time; *but it's humanitarian and moral side she passes over all together.*

Those were heavy blows for Masonry, and worse ones were still to come. The French Revolution broke out, which, if dangerous for Freemasonry in Germany was mortal for Russian Masonry. "The Freemasons have made the Revolution!" This cry was heard both in France and in Germany, and was heard louder and more vehemently in Russia, loudest of all of course where its source has always been sought for *viz.* In old Polots, the head-quarters of the Jesuits, who felt themselves so much at home in that country. Catherine was a shrewd and cautious

woman and whether there was any truth in this cry or not, she obviated the danger. She had already raised her hand, as we know, in consequence of other disagreeable incidents, and now she struck a blow which of course was a mortal one. All Lodges were closed. At the beginning of the year 1794 went forth Catherine's "wish" for a dissolution, and in the course of a few months even in the remotest corners of Russia no more Lodges were to be found.

### 111. Masonic Prospects under Paul 1.

Catherine's son, Paul 1, was himself a freemason. It is said that he was introduced to Freemasonry during a journey which he made through Europe, when he was still the czarewitch, in company of his wife, and of Prince Kurakin who was a most devoted son of Masonry. Was it not natural then that the association which had been outlawed and banished by his mother should look forward to being re-installed and rehabilitated? And this expectation seemed as though it were perfectly justified, for immediately after his coronation, Paul summoned to Moscow the Freemasons of that city, with Professor Matthäi, the Master of the Chair of the former Lodge "To The Three Swords" at their head, and took counsel with them "in a brotherly spirit and without ceremony" as to what should be done. At the conclusion of the negotiations "he embraced each single one as a Mason and gave him the Masonic shake of the hands". This promised very well, and that "a committee was now appointed to examine the documents, to collect the ruins of Masonry and to organise the whole," was but logical. After so much recognition and so much encouragement on the part of the sovereign followed in 1797 - the prohibition of Freemasonry which "was carried out with great strictness".

This sudden change in his manner of looking at things and in his attitude to Freemasonry would cause surprise in a man of ordinary capacity, but Paul was mentally deranged, and it was just his acting by fits and starts that was characteristic of his disease. But does such an explanation clear up everything? No, for Paul was not so ill so as not to be able to grasp what would be the consequences of his action. On the contrary, as soon as it was a question of an advantage for his own person, of something that added to his lustre, he was suddenly quite normal in the choice of his means. This change of attitude was, therefore, perhaps, preceded by well weighed considerations; nay we may add that they were considerations with a real genuine background.

It was about this time that the Knights of Malta who were hard-pressed by Napoleon Bonaparte turned to the Car Paul for protection. According to the information conveyed by Paul to Count Litter, a Knight of Malta, Freemasonry was a hindrance and even a danger to the aims of this order. He was, therefore, obliged to decide in favour of the one or the other. The Maltese Order was something definite; it was a power, whereas Freemasonry as really nothing, or at any rate something altogether indefinite which might perhaps have a future, but perhaps it might not. Could Paul find the choice hard to make? In addition there was a something which though altogether unpolitical, has often decided questions in politics, *viz.* Paul's principal mistress, the extremely beautiful Anna Lopuchin. It was possible for him to make her a Grand Cross Lady of the Order of the Knights of St. John, but "pretty Annie" among Freemasons was no longer conceivable after the famous "Egyptian Masonry"! Thus it was that Paul became the Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of St. John at Malta, and Freemasonry was prohibited.

Further, it is said that the Jesuits set going every imaginable and unimaginable expedient against Freemasonry. Nor does this seem to have been impossible.

#### 1V. Freemasonry under Alexander I. The Re-opening of the Lodges and the Definite Closing of them in the Year 1822.

After Paul's tragical life and death the throne was ascended by Alexander I. Although at the beginning of his reign a renewed prohibition was issued against secret societies, including the Masonic Lodges, it was directed more against the other secret societies than against the Freemasons in particular, and is to be traced back less to his own initiative, than to the temper of mind of the administrative officials who were still in office from the previous reign. Even if he was not a Freemason himself, as has been repeatedly asserted, he was certainly in no way hostile to freemasonry, if we may judge from his natural disposition and ways of looking at things. If he provided for the intellectual improvement of his people by the building of district schools and grammar schools, by reforming the theological academies and the old universities, and by founding new ones - if throughout his reign a certain liberal vein is to be met with, which rendered possible the entrance into the country of foreign books and newspapers, and which in so far gave the Church liberty of conscience, that even the "Duchobores" were tolerated, how was it that Alexander is said to have stopped Freemasonry from pursuing these same principles and aspirations? That a need of Masonry was felt far beyond Masonic Circles is borne witness to by Reinbeck: - "The inactivity of Masonry in Russia makes itself especially felt among young men. And even when loving fathers and venerable philanthropists receive well-brought up sons into the alliance *en famille*, the latter still feel the need of the life-giving way of looking at things which is so indispensable to the genuine Mason; nay, more, I am very much inclined to connect with it the lack of principles which the advancement of culture by the side of is so strikingly universal among the higher and lower classes in Russia. There is no means left of influencing the cultured classes, a work, in which, in just such a state, an institution like Masonry is especially suitable to accomplish much, and the various educated classes have no centre of union left; they remain strangers to one another. That the state feels the want of Masonry, is seen by the close observer, wherever generally useful and benevolent works are proposed which are frustrated by the coolness, the covetousness and the lack of caution on the part of those to whom the execution of them has to be entrusted."

Thus sprang up, even though at first without direct official permission, several Lodges, the rapid prosperity of which, both quantitatively and qualitatively, is a proof of the need of that which is offered by Freemasonry. Among these must be mentioned in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the two Lodges which worked according to the French system, and in the French language, *viz.*: - "Les Amis Réunis"; and "De la Palestine"; further, the three Lodges which worked according to the Swedish system, in the Russian, German and French languages, *viz.*: - "Alexander to the Crowned Pelican", "Elizabeth to Virtue", and "Peter to Truth", all in St. Petersburg.

These Lodges, which at first all worked in secret, must, however, have fulfilled the conditions and expectations which were required of them from the highest authority, for there now followed in the year 1810 their official recognition and confirmation. Henceforward the spirit of animation was very great. Most of the old Lodges were renewed; some under other names, and quite a number of new ones were added, for instance, at Cronstadt, Poltawa, and Bialostock, even at Tomsk in West Siberia and at Feodosia in the Crimea. The terrible year 1812 produced a period of inactivity, especially at Moscow. The enthusiasm for the Masonic cause was, however, so great that in a comparatively short time all traces had disappeared. The

war again called Field Lodges into existence; we meet with them at Mauberge in France and here in Germany at Frankfurt-on-the-Main in 1813 and at Grumbinnen in 1814.

Among the members were included Russia's best men - Michael Speranski, who did so much for the Russian Constitution and the Russian jurisdiction; Benkendorf, the confidant of the Czar Alexander; the ministers Rasumovski and Balasheff; Prince Lobanoff; Prince Alexander Ypsilanti, the undaunted champion for the liberation of Greece; most of the officers of the noblest regiments of the guards - those of Semenovski and Preobrajenski; of Germans who were serving in the Russian army, Prince Hohenlohe, Lieutenant-General von Schöler, the extraordinary ambassador of the King of Prussia at the Russian Court; the poet Kotzebue, etc.

According to the principles herein proclaimed and according to the actual results, which becomes evident by the fact that 10 years after the official recognition of Freemasonry 31 Masonic Lodges - without counting the considerable number of Rosicrucians and of the Strict Observance - were again spread over the whole country, a very favourable horoscope might have been cast for Freemasonry. Even though all hopes were shattered this time, very different were the causes from the first time. Previously its ruin was within itself, whereas now it was carried away by political waves alone.

It is true that the picture we should like to take away with us of these years of its activity, the last of its existence, is tarnished by a stain, which cannot be washed out even by the most favourable judgement, viz.: the dispute between the Grand Directorial Lodge (Provincial Lodge) and the Grand Lodge "Astræa", and even if it was not a question of the fundamental ideas of Freemasonry, but rather of the outward construction, yet, for all that, as above stated, it was a stain.

And what was this dispute about? At first the *Grand Directorial Lodge "Vladimir"* constituted itself as the head of the single Lodges. At its head stood Boeber, State Councillor and Director of the St. Petersburg Military School, who was one of the leading spirits in the revival of Freemasonry, and was on that account frequently consulted by Alexander. To the diocese of the Grand Directorial Lodge "Vladimir" belonged the Lodge "Peter to the Truth", in which with the consent, nay, the propaganda of Dr. George von Ellisen, State Councillor and Master of the Chair, the idea arose of only acknowledging the three lowest Degrees, those of the Apprentice the Journeyman and the Master. As the Grand Directorial Lodge worked according to the Swedish System, or in other terms with high Degrees, it was under these circumstances no longer possible for the Lodge "Peter to the Truth" to remain in the union. It would have been desirable, and with this clear statement of the matter it would have been very easy for the separation to have been accomplished peaceably by arbitration. Von Ellisen, however, introduced into the affair a note which was anything but unlimited courtesy, so that one is easily inclined to declare from the very outset that he and his opinions were wrong, whereas it was merely a question of the decision between two opinions, both of which being equally justifiable had an equal claim to existence.

The Lodge "Peter to the Truth" was soon followed by others, and indeed by the greater number, which were constituted under a special *Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodge "Astræa"*. Even though the first impulse to the formation of the "Astræa" was given by the Lodge "Peter to Truth" with its demand that it should be willing to recognise only the three lowest Degrees as legitimate, in its further development the "Astræa", did not keep to this narrow programme, but declared that it was in no way opposed to high Degrees, *per se*; on the contrary, it accepted



all high Degrees, not only the nine of the Swedish System as required by the Directorial Lodge, but also, for instance, the 33 of the French System. Further, it only intended to leave every one liberty of movement, being indifferent whether he wished to work altogether without high Degrees or with them, or with a certain number of them. On this basis the "Astræa" soon won a large following, which to no small extent was composed of deserters from the Directorial Lodge, so that the latter dwindled away considerably. Who knows whether, with this multiplicity of systems, it was on the right way to real prosperity? It did not prove this, nor could it do so, for time failed it. Alexander, the friend of Freemasonry and its Lodges, suddenly ordered them to be closed again - this time for ever!

For Russia, as well as for other countries, hard times had set in. Alexander had become a changed man, for Metternich's evil influence was already upon him.

It is true that fermentation was going on in many countries. Secret societies and unions with the express object of overthrowing the head of the state, made their appearance. In Italy the Carbonari, in Spain and Portugal the revolutionary Constitutionals had the power in their hands. But who were the Carbonari and the Constitutionals? Freemasons - at all events Pius VII. Assured the whole world by his condemning edict that they were so, and the alarmed Alexander who had just discovered a similar society in his own country, *viz.*: the wide spread "Alliance for the Public Welfare", the chief object of which was the making away with the sovereign, - this alarmed Alexander was constantly assured of it by Metternich, by the Jesuits, and by Haugwitz, the former Prussian Minister of most ill-starred memory, who himself had been a Freemason. How could he resist so many assurances? *On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1822 he put forth the order that suppressed all secret societies to which Freemasons belonged.*

In the course of the same year communications were received by Count Kotschbei, the Minister of the Interior, from all the Lodges of the Empire that the order had been carried into effect. Nor have they been opened again since, although individual Brethren naturally kept up an intercourse for some time; but how far removed such intercourse is from co-operation in the Lodge, can only be rightly estimated by a Freemason.

*In the year 1826 followed another prohibition* by Nicholas, which was really superfluous as the Lodges no longer existed. It was called forth by the conspiracy of the Decabrists, those December men of the year 1825, who in the accomplishment of their ideals did not shrink from the most realistic of all that is realistic - from murder. The conspiracy was discovered. At its head stood Pestel, Prince Sergius Trubezkoi, Nikita Muraveff, Sergius Muraveff Apostol, Prince Chakovskoi, and Bestuscheff, who had all been Freemasons. But it must be expressly emphasised that Nicholas did not allow them to be accused and sentenced, because they were Freemasons, but because they were the leaders of the revolutionary "Alliance for the Public Welfare". That he once more dissolved the Lodges at the same time as "this Alliance" and similar societies, is explained by the fact that he considered them to be "secret societies"; in the former sense he never once raised an accusation or a complaint against them. Pestel, Sergius Muraveff Apostol, and Bestuscheff expiated their crime by death on the scaffold, a death which was exceedingly horrible on account of the accompanying circumstances. The rest of the conspirators with heavy iron chains on their feet, their heads shorn, and wearing prisoner's dress, were carried off on wretched carts without seats 1750 miles to Siberia where they became human wrecks, and where they died.

## Freemasonry in Poland

### 1. Freemasonry in Poland until the suspension of work in 1794.

A very similar picture as far as Masonry is concerned is also presented by the Kingdom of Poland, the country *κατέεσχίην* of political confusion; here, as there, no unity, no constancy. But we need not be surprised at this, for, if any human institution needs peace for its development, it is Masonry. And what were the chances of peace in Poland, especially at the time when Masonry was about to take root? Have all the bonds of firmness and constancy ever been loosened in any kingdom so much as here? Has any other state been bandied about so much as Poland? Therefore it was that Freemasonry, though from time to time it did develop with great activity, was never able to prosper properly.

That which must strike everyone in the first stages of Freemasonry in Poland is a predilection for, and a leaning on German Masonry, which is not a general trait in the life of the Polish people. It is, however still more striking that, when this need for support had been satisfied in a most practical form. *i.e.* when, in the part of Poland which had become Prussian, German Masonry had erected its own Temples, very soon—but without any culpability on the German side—this milk of human kindness was transformed into poison. On the other hand the connection between the Polish and the Russian Lodges was very slight. Just as nowadays the former Kingdom of Poland has in no way become a really Russian country, in the same way there was no *essential* connection between the Polish Lodges and their sister Lodges in Russia. The political aversion of the two hostile cognate races also suffocated the brotherly love of Masonry.

The earliest beginnings of Freemasonry in Poland are to be met with about the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, therefore somewhat earlier than in Russia. *The earliest constituted Lodge of which we know the name was the Lodge “Les Trois Frères” which was founded in Warsaw in 1744.* This Lodge has a special interest for us because it was in close touch with our Lodge at Königsberg “To the Three Crowns” which today is still in a flourishing condition.

Its co-founder was Prince Stanislaus Lubomirski who did so much for the improvement of Warsaw, that the city had a medal stamped in his honour. Another founder of the Lodge was Prince Adam Czartotyski who was considered as a very likely candidate for the empty throne of Poland. He worked assiduously for the welfare of his country and became the father and counsellor of a greater than himself, for, at the celebrated military school founded by himself at Warsaw he had Kosciuszko, the son of his farmer and Poland’s greatest hero, educated at his own expense.

The Lodge “Les Trois Frères” and also the Lodge “Au Bon Pasteur” which came into existence a few years later, passed through many changes. They were often suppressed, but they always revived. The name of the founder of the Lodge “Au Bon Pasteur” also deserves to live on in the mouth of posterity on account of the hard fate which Masonry brought upon him, and which he bore with patience for Masonry’s sake. Jean de Thoux de la Salverte, military engineer at Brünn, had to pay dearly for his extraordinary zeal in the cause of Masonry by spending many years in the citadel of Spielberg near Brünn and afterwards in the fortress of Komorn to be finally banished from the country. But all these hard blows made his pet child only the dearer to him, so that as soon as he again felt settled in Poland as colonel of a regiment, he set about the foundation of a new Lodge, *viz.* the one just mentioned “Au Bon Pasteur.” It is, however,

characteristic of the man and of his time that he renounced Masonry and left his newly won fatherland for 5 years in order “to study Alchemy and Cabbala,” and to introduce them into his Lodge.--As already stated, both Lodges, “Les Trois Frères” as well as “Au Bon Pasteur” suffered many vicissitudes; for a time they also worked according to the Strict Observance.

The High Degrees were introduced into Poland at the same time as “Les Trois Frères.” Beside these Lodges others developed gradually, both at Warsaw itself and in the Provinces. Among the latter the one which from our standpoint seems worthy of mention was a Lodge which, it is true, only worked for a few years, *viz.* the Lodge “To the Three Plumb Lines” at Dantzic, which at that time still belonged to Poland. This Lodge was inaugurated by Germany—by the Grand Lodge “To the Three Globes” in Berlin.

*A Grand Lodge was constituted in 1769* and the first step it took was to declare itself independent of England. The Lodge “Les Trois Frères,” in which were evidently a great number of German Brethren, soon received from the Grand Lodge the permission to employ the German language. It also ceded the Lodge “Union” to the French-speaking Brethren

The first division of the Polish Kingdom took place in 1772. In itself it hardly made any impression on the Lodges; but the following few years showed a decided turn in Masonic life. *The Grand Lodge which had been created but a short time before, and which had laid such stress on its independence of England and on its self-sufficiency, was closed, its place being taken by the Provincial Mother-Lodge for Poland, which had had itself constituted by the Grand Lodge of London.* Was such a step taken so simply and smoothly as that? If a man gives up his liberty in ordinary life and returns to a position of dependency, he must have been moved to do so by reasons of the weightiest kind. Can it of been otherwise with the Grand Lodge? The only possible explanation is to be found in the occurrences which took place in Freemasonry in Russia where the struggle was raging for the supremacy between the grand Lodge in London and the Grand “Landes-Loge” in Berlin, a struggle which ended in the defeat of the English. Is it not probable that the latter, having learned a lesson in shrewdness by sad experience, won the victory by staking all the means in their power at the right moment, knowing that the Poles were so fickle in their opinions and so little conscious of the ends they had in view?

The impulse for the formation of the Provincial Mother-Lodge had come from the Lodge “Au Bon Pasteur,” which has so often been referred to, and which on this occasion itself again experienced a change. Through numerous new members who were introduced to it from a club which had been dissolved by the well known leader and statesman Ignatius Dzialinski, who played a very important part in the Four Years Parliament, and later even became Kosciusko’s representative in the highest National Council—having become very influential through these members, and having assumed the new name of “Catherine to the North Star,” the Lodge managed to prevail upon all the other Lodges, which had become fairly numerous both in the Kingdom of Poland and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, to recognise it as a Grand Lodge.

Of the other Lodges which were not Masonic, but worked according to the Rite of the Strict Observance we should like to mention the Lodge “Charles to the Three Helmets” at Warsaw, because to it belonged the weak, but good-natured and art-loving King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski. Can it be true that, moved by the influence of his Brethren alone, he gave the kingdom the Constitution of the year 1791, which was so full of promise and had been so long yearned for?—Rosicrucian Lodges are also to be met with.

The great majority of the Lodges employed the Polish language, but at the same time we find a few Lodges working in French and German.

The Provincial Mother-Lodge did not continue long, because it could not manage to keep for any length of time the unity and union which it had hoped for and striven to obtain. Soon we see a French Lodge which received its confirmation from the Grand Orient of France, then others which were constituted by the Duke of Brunswick, and besides these the strict Observance and the Rosicrucians, and finally, even though only on a short, but all the less inspiring visit, Cagliostro with his Egyptian Rite.

This confusion was put an end to in 1782 by the great patriot and statesman Count Ignatius Potocki through the *union of all the Lodges in Poland under one Mother grand lodge*, a name which after an elaboration was soon changed into the *Grand Orient for Poland and Lithuania*. Potocki obtained its acknowledgement by all the foreign Orients. This Grand Orient, which might have accomplished a grand work under the guidance of this man who was so talented and so enthusiastic for masonry, collapsed again soon after Potocki's departure for foreign countries. However, we find here still a number of celebrated names, such as the brother of the Grand Master Stanislaus Kostka Potocki, well known as a general, as a minister of education, and as the excellent translator of Winckelmann's "On the Art of the Ancients;" further, Count Francis Xaver Woyna, the great connoisseur of music and translator of many theatrical pieces; the poet Ignatius Tainski, really better known through his daughter Clementine Tainski-Hoffman, Poland's greatest authoress; then, Prince Michael Casimir Oginski, important both as a politician and an economist. Oginski was also a candidate for the Polish throne in 1764, and as a lasting work he left behind him the so called Oginski Canal, which he began at his own cost, and which unites the Niemen and the Dnieper. But the absence of Ignatius Potocki's Masonic genius was felt everywhere, and as a report to the Grand Lodge says, Freemasonry fell into a state of anæmia. It is true that individual Masons played an eminently active part in the great political struggle of the year 1791, for nearly all the champions of the Constitution of the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1791 belonged to the Lodges.

Then followed the second and third division of Poland. In those districts which thereby came under the rule of Russia every trace of Freemasonry disappeared in consequence of Catherine's decree of the year 1794.

It is perhaps also worth mentioning in this section that the Great Orient for Poland and Lithuania kept in close touch with German Masonry, and among other works it founded at Insterburg the Lodge "The Prussian Eagle."

Further, we must not overlook the fact that the Great Orient sanctioned the founding of a Ladies' *Lodge*. Ladies had already been introduced as guests. The first Grand Mistress is said to have been Theresa Tyskiewicz; better known are the names of several of the members, such as, Princess Lubomirska and Princess Rzewska, whose husbands also enjoyed a reputation as Freemasons.

## II. Freemasonry in Prussian Poland.

In those districts which were now under Prussia Freemasonry assumed quite a different aspect. All that had stood in connection with the Polish Grand Orient disappeared, and in its place the three Prussian Grand lodges undertook the work, in South Prussia as in New East Prussia. The first to appear on the scene was the Grand "Landes-Loge" in Berlin, and as early as the year 1793 it founded the Lodge "To the Hive" at Thorn. This was followed by the Grand Lodge "Royal York to Friendship" with a Temple at Kalisz, and great activity was developed by the Grand Lodge "To the Three Globes" in towns like Kalisz, Plock, Gnesen, and Posen.

The Grand "Landes-Loge" deployed its activity not only at Thorn but also at Bromberg and at Bjalostock, and above all it chose as its field of labour the capital of the former kingdom. If our chief interest is now directed to these Lodges, the reason is that the material as our disposal is greater, and on the other hand, the conditions in the provinces were only the reflexion of those in the capital.

The *first Prussian Lodge* which worked at *Warsaw* was the Lodge "*To the Golden Candlestick*" It was opened in July 1797, and, as was natural under the circumstances, consisted almost exclusively of officers and officials. Beginning with 14 members, after two years it counted 50, and in the year 1801 as many as 72, so that the foundation of a second Lodge was taken into consideration. As a matter of fact this latter came into existence in 1802 with the name of "Frederic William to the Column," and it, too, developed numerically so fast that three years later the Lodge "To the Temple of Wisdom" was founded by it.

It is worth while throwing some light on the way which the young Prussian Lodges conceived their mission, and on what they considered to be the chief object of their existence. An advance-post, as it were, in a country with a foreign language and a foreign civilization they wished to plant and propagate there German customs, German training, and German culture. What was the best way to attain this object? It did not suffice that they gave their members opportunities of absorbing Masonic knowledge with the accompanying instruction and edification; they conceived rather a general scientific and artistic education. For this purpose a Library was founded in connection with a reading-union, in which Masonic books were also to be found, the stress, however, being laid on works treating of philosophical and æsthetic subjects in general. But this collection of books was not intended for the advantage and pleasure of members alone; it was also to be of use to their relations and friends, and then to carry out its food to the common people who were yearning for knowledge, and thus to become a missionary of civilization. Was it not just the right moment for the satisfying of this yearning? Was it not at this time that in the German poetic woods was heard a rustling which was able to breathe upon those who were longing for poetry and art a new breath of life and a new power?

The library which was founded by the Warsaw Brethren, their friends, and their wives, contained a number of books which were most closely connected with Masonry, religious, philosophical and historical. It also found room for the intellectual geniuses of antiquity, for the works of Homer, Vergil, Livy, and Tacitus. The principal place, however, was occupied by modern German literature. We find there Matthias Claudius's "Wandsbecker Boten," Jean Paul's novels, Herder's "Letters on the Improvement of Mankind" and his "Terpsichore," further, Wieland and Eschenburg's translation of Shakespeare, a few of his dramas in the translation by Schlegel which is still considered to be the best, Goethe's idyll "Hermann and

Dorethea” which had just come out, Schiller’s Ballads and dramas—all creations of modern and of the latest times. Ought not this to be an indication for us as to how we should place ourselves in reference to our time with its modern authors? For were not Schiller and Goethe at that time just such revolutionists in the field of poetry and art as our moderns are today, and many an orthodox writer raised a hue and cry on their account as is done on account of the writers of the present day. But the Warsaw Brethren stood on a higher level and believed in the power of the rising stars.—Beside these books there was a collection of paintings, copper engravings, maps, plans, coins, instruments, and, in short, everything and anything which could educate and rejoice the understanding and the sense of taste.

The above mentioned Lodge “To the Temple of Wisdom” through the year of its foundation—1805—takes us back to the time when the State of Prussia was shaken to its foundations and received such heavy blows that the Masonic edifice also trembled and was on the verge of falling. The French troops which had already become the masters of our narrower fatherland, now also took possession of the province acquired a short time before. Soon after Napoleon had held his triumphal procession into Berlin, his soldiers also garrisoned Warsaw. The life of the Lodges in Prussia ceased entirely for many years to come, whereas at Warsaw and in South Prussia, and, indeed, in all the possessions we had acquired in the former Kingdom of Poland, German Freemasonry was extinguished for ever.

The Lodges “To the Golden Candlestick” and “Frederick William to the Column” held on for a while; but when we consider that a great number of their members were Prussian officers and officials, their dissolution was the most natural thing in the world. The former continued to exist until the beginning of the year 1810 when it communicated to the Mother-Lodge the official announcement of its final dissolution. The latter the Lodge “Frederick William to the Column” —made a final attempt to save itself by receiving into its Halls a great number of Poles, whom it had previously declined to have anything to do with, and by giving it another name, *viz.*, To the Samaritan;” but soon there came so many gentle and broad hints from the minister of the police that it, too, was obliged to close its doors.

Very different was the affairs in the Lodge “*To the Temple of Wisdom*” or as it were more properly called “*Swiatynia Madrosci*,” for this Lodge was not really a German Lodge at all. Its members were Poles and in their proceedings only the Polish language was used, the correspondence with the Grand “Landes-Loge” being carried on in Polish with the German translation annexed. When the Lodge was constituted, the Grand “Landes-Loge” had insisted on one condition only, namely that the master of the chair should know German. This condition was fulfilled by the first Master of the Chair, the Royal Polish ex-adjutant general and colonel, Peter von Reyck; all the rest of the names are pure Polish and for the best part belong to the better noble families. The “*Swiatynia Madrosci*,” lost nothing through the confusion caused by the war. On the contrary, it even gained something, with the surrender, it is true, of what was not hard to sacrifice, for it separated itself from the Mother-Lodge in Berlin, and advocated the re-establishment of the late Polish Grand Orient. But we need not judge too harshly. If the new condition of things restored their fatherland to them, is it to be wondered at that they preferred to return to it? Moreover, the Prussian supremacy, on account of the shortness of its duration, had had little opportunity of demonstrating to the annexed state the advantages of its system. If, therefore, we wish to be seen just, we must not reproach them too severely with their defection. But, for all that, the words with which only a few years before they addressed the Grand “Landes-Loge” in their petition for a Constitution fall very strangely on our ears:—“We assure you,” they declared, “most solemnly as Brethren that we shall endeavour to make ourselves

worthy of your love,” and “that our election as Brethren and members shall take place in a legal and practical manner as far as human power and knowledge can effect it, in order that we may receive members that will be worthy of our association; this we assure you most solemnly, for we understand the value and necessity of it. Each one of us, therefore, will strive, by a faithful observance of the duties of the Order, to prove himself worthy of the Constitution that is granted to us.” And how lacking in love was the farewell which the daughter took of the mother! No word of regret is to be found in her communications; on the contrary, we are struck with the intentionally business-like tone.

As such the Lodge “Swiatynia Madroski,” was, it is true, closed. All the members, however, united with a number of the former Brethren, and on January 9<sup>th</sup> 1809 opened the new Lodge “Le Temple d’Isis,” which was nothing but the Lodge of the same name which had existed before the Prussian seizure. Unfortunately, its sole aim was, by a vigorous suppression of everything German, to bring Polish nationality into the foreground, and by removal of all connection with Prussian Freemasonry to revive the Polish ex-Grand Orient.

For the sake of completeness it must also be mentioned that beside our Lodges the Strict Observance intended to establish Lodges. But by what trifles important things are sometimes frustrated is displayed in a letter written by the Master of the Chair of the Lodge “To the Golden Candlestick,” who wrote on this point as follows:-Among other things it is said that Herr Goldbeck, the postmaster-general of this town, has been entrusted by the heads of the Strict Observance with the task of founding a Lodge here. No objection can be raised against this man on the subject of a moral life, but as he has withdrawn entirely from society, having got married only a short time ago, and being still desperately in love with his wife—in other words, is at present useless for any kind of business, there is nothing to fear at least as far as he is concerned; but this state of things cannot last for ever.” Neither at that time or later did anything become of the Strict Observance. Perhaps “Brother Goldbeck was still desperately in love with his wife and useless for any kind of business.

### **III. Freemasonry in the Grand Duchy of Warsaw.**

The Grand Duchy of Warsaw had owed its existence to the condescension of Napoleon. Frederic Augustus, King of Saxony and Grand Duke of Warsaw was nothing but the vassal of the great conqueror. Would it not have been very natural that the French should also take possession of the Lodges? What was there in the way of their substituting Lodges of *their own* system for those that had been suppressed? But they did not do this. It is true that the *Grand Orient of France*, which moreover, already possessed several Lodges in the Kingdom of Poland, very soon founded the Lodge “De la Fraternité;” nevertheless, it not only did not attack the existing Lodges, but it managed to establish friendly relations between both systems. If, therefore, from this side no danger threatened the Prussian Lodges, it might have been assumed that, as the next liege lord in the country was the King of Saxony, he would, in case of any aversion for the Prussian Lodges, have replaced them by Saxon Lodges. In that way the Lodges would have remained German. But this was not done either. The Saxons made no attempt whatever to make their influence felt in the country, and that simply because they had already accomplished little enough themselves in their own country on account of the variety of their systems. Further, the matter had no interest whatever for Frederic Augustus, for he was not a Freemason himself.

The field was thrown open to the Poles, and that they now occupied is as much as possible to their own profit, must not, as already stated above, be taken amiss of them. We can only blame the way in which they treated the existing Prussian Lodges, which in part had been Mother-Lodges to them.

A prominent position, as we have already seen, was taken by the Lodge “Le Temple d’Isis,” which had arisen out of the “Swiatynia Madroski.” It was joined by older Lodges which during the Prussian occupation had remained inactive, and it was strengthened by new foundations in Warsaw itself and then in Cracow, Thorn, Bromberg, etc. The ground was thus ready for the re-opening of an independent Grand Lodge. On January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1810 was constituted the *Grand Orient National du Duché de Varsovie*.

The *Grand Orient National* quickly extended its borders; in the following year it had already 13 Lodges under its jurisdiction. The year 1812 acted, of course, as a check with its awful confusions caused by the war, so that for some time work in the Lodge ceased of itself. In October 1813, however, the waves of the wild struggle had become somewhat wild again; at any rate, the Grand Orient and a few of its Lodges gradually resumed their activity.

The war had also swept away many victims among the Freemasons. On March 12<sup>th</sup> 1814 the Grand Orient held a funeral Lodge act for Prince Poniatowski. We Germans, too, gladly acknowledge the glorious deeds of this man who, after having been wounded in the battle of the nations at Leipzig, found a hero’s death in the waters of the Elster. At these funeral rites in its halls the Grand Orient set up the portrait of the deceased, as well as other souvenirs, and all the arrangements were carried out with great ostentation and solemnity. A wish of the general public, all classes of which were closely attached to the deceased, was met by throwing open the lordly apartments to every one for the space of three days. By a resolution of Grand Lodge 4000 florins were distributed among the poor and wounded. The funeral oration was delivered by Francis Morawski, Poniatowski’s commander-in-chief, who had also taken a prominent part in the battle of Leipzig. This Francis Morawski is previously mentioned as a speaker in a Field Lodge at Sedan, from which it is clear that Field Lodges were also formed during this war. The higher grade officers, when they had recognised one another as Brethren, being now met together in large numbers, were glad to make use of this institution which for a few hours diverted their minds from the wretchedness and misery of the war, and raised them to something higher.

During those times officers were among the most zealous of Masons; this class more than any other pressed forward to join the Lodges in considerable numbers. Thus, for example, the Lodge “The United Brethren of Poland,” to which Prince Poniatowski belonged, was composed almost exclusively of high-grade officers. More striking—much more striking—it is, of course, when we find the Catholic Church also represented in the Lodges, and it was probably quite an exceptional case that a real Prince Bishop was a Freemason. The name of the Prince Bishop Puzina deserves to be specially enrolled in the annals on account of account of this his daring courage and his freedom from prejudice.

Of the remaining members—to mention only a few—our attention is drawn to the following, on account of their position in their Lodges and at the same time because they deserved well of their country:- Louis Guttakowski, the Grand Master of the Grand Orient, a most eminent



lawyer; at the same time he was the President of the War Council, of the Administrative Council and of the Senate; of lasting worth is his work entitled "Poland's Unhappy Fate," – Luszczewski, the Minister of the Interior and of Public Worship, the highly cultured Master of the Chair of the Lodge "Isis,"—Dmuszewski, the poet and excellent translator,—Osinski, also well known as a poet and a translator of Corneille and Voltaire,—Mattusiewicz, the translator of Horace, who only devoted himself to this kind of study in his leisure hours, whose principal province, however, was political finance; without exaggeration he was Poland's only finance minister, who during those hard times saved many millions to the state-treasury,—Baron de Bignon, the French Minister resident at Warsaw; he possessed an unusually skilful pen as a publicist, so that Napoleon left a considerable sum of money in his last will for the composing of a history of French diplomacy since the 18<sup>th</sup> of Brumaire; he accomplished this task by writing his brilliant "Histoire de France depuis le 18 Brumaire jusqu'à la Paix de Tilsit;" his "Souvenirs d'un Diplomate: la Pologne 1811-1813" are also well known,—Generals Count Tyskiewicz, Uminski, and Dabrowski, whose wounded bodies bore witness to the heroic courage which they had shown in the great battles of the year 1813, and before and after in all struggles for the independence of their native country, &c.

In conclusion it may be noticed that the only Lodge which was subject to the Grand Orient of France, *viz.* "De la Fraternité;" in no way felt itself isolated in this position, for a very lively and not only a superficial intercourse existed between it and the Grand Orient National. Moreover, in 1811 both Grand Orients had concluded a special mutual agreement as regards the acceptance of members.

#### IV. Freemasonry in Russian Poland.

In 1815 Poland was divided for the fourth time, and the kingdom stood henceforth under the rule of a Russian Viceroy. Freemasonry was not essentially affected by the alteration of territory which was thus again brought about. Of the Lodges that belonged to the Grand Orient National du Duché de Varsovie, those at Thorn, at Bromberg and at Posen, naturally withdrew; otherwise the general aspect of things did not change. In particular, nothing is to be noticed of a union between the Lodges of Russia and Poland, as might have been well expected. On the contrary, their connection remained very loose, nor was it drawn closer together by the correspondence which was carried on for some time with the St. Petersburg Grand Lodge "Astræa," for the Poles had anything but sympathy for their conquerors, and where could the Russians have suddenly received the necessary enthusiasm from? Moreover, they had enough to do with their own affairs.

Thus, as already stated, the *status quo* remained. The Grand Orient National du Duché de Varsovie dropped the last part of its title, and instead called itself the Grand Orient de Pologne; its aims, its institutions, and even its officials suffered no change. Stanislaus Kostka Potocki, who had accepted the office of Grand Master as early as 1812, after the death of Guttakowski, still held that position.

It is true that the first official function of the Grand Orient was anything but pleasing. When Alexander greeted his Kingdom of Poland in November 1815 and at the same time sojourned three days in the capital, the Grand Orient had illuminated its windows in most gorgeous manner, and on a transparent were to be read the words "Recepto Cæsare Felices," an

inscription which would have better been unwritten, or were the authors of it really so blind that they had learnt nothing from the past? Otherwise the Grand Orient was very prosperous and extended its borders very considerably. After a three years' activity this Grand Orient, which by the separation of the three Lodges that had gone over to Prussia during the year of transition, had shrunk to 10 Daughter-Lodges, again already numbered 33, 8 of which were at Warsaw, and 2 at Vilna, where, too, the Provincial Lodge for Lithuania had its seat; further, there was one of each at the following towns: Cracow, Kalisz, Lublin, Minsk, Novgorod, Plock, &c. In consequence of the humble funds that were collected from this large numbers of members, it was also possible to set about building a new Grand Lodge, for which 300,000 Polish Florins were placed at the disposal of the promoters. The Grand Orient used every endeavour to be just too *all* the educated classes of the population; it also filled up the principal offices with Brethren of French and German descent. As before, it worked with high Degrees. The public of the single Lodges belonged altogether to the best circles, and among the names many were of high repute. In comparison with previous years a decrease in the number of officers makes itself perceptible, their places being now taken by the learned professions. We may now quote names such as the above mentioned Grand Master and Minister of Public Worship, Stanislaus Kostka Potocki, the founder of the Warsaw University, --Mianowski, the anatomist and physiologist,--Professor Strumillo, the creator of the Botanical Gardens at Vilna,--Professor Rustem of Vilna, the portrait --painter, --Chodzko, the Lithuanian writer of legendary history, --Brodzinski, the lyric and epic poet, Huminicki, the dramatist,--Count Brzostowski and Dominic Moninszko, the great philanthropists who released their peasants from "Robot" (statute labour) and who also started on their estates machine works, iron foundries, glass works, and mead manufactories. They erected boys' and girls' schools, and also had the children there taught gardening, the keeping of bees, forestry and hygiene. At their deaths the whole of their estates with all of the appurtenances thereof passed over into the hands of the peasants.

In the previous chapter a reference was made to the interest taken by the clergy in Freemasonry. During this period an even greater participation is noticeable. The above mentioned Prince Bishop Puzina we find again as the Master of the Chair of the Lodge "The Zealous Lithuanian" at Vilna, and many followed suit. In the same Lodge there was quite a number of prelates, canons and chaplains. *Vice versa*, we might say, Jews made their appearance for the first time in the Polish Lodges. The list of the Lodge "Bouclier du Nord" at Warsaw numbered 8 Jewish members all of whom were businessmen.

It was just at this juncture that the field, in which the seed had begun to spring up so well and was promising a still fuller development in the future, was laid waste by that terrible storm which here as well as in Russia washed away stalk and fruit, seed and soil, in fact everything. The reasons why the Russian authorities had closed the Lodges in Russia were the same for Poland; not only that secret societies existed here with similar tendencies, but the leaders of the Russian conspirators had also entered into direct communication with the Poles. For this Freemasonry was no more responsible in the one country than in the other.

## Conclusion.

*Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis!* "Times are changing and we are changing in them!" But in reference to Freemasonry in Russia this has not yet proved to be the case. Why, we ask ourselves involuntarily, has not the prohibition been removed in quieter times? What reproach is thrown into the teeth of Freemasonry at the present day? The accusations are still the same by which it has been persecuted since it came into existence, and wherever it has tried to strike root, without the slightest evidence having been produced to prove them. They are the same accusations with which it has been charged again and again here, too, in Germany by its enemies, namely that Freemasonry made use of its secret meetings to propagate political opinions which were dangerous to the state, and to spread irreligiosity. As far as the dangers political of opinions are concerned, we Germans ask the simple question:--Could men like Frederic the Great, the Emperor William I, and the Emperor Frederic have, in that case, been Freemasons? Would the Kings of Prussia, who did not themselves belong to the Lodge, have regularly requested a prince of the royal house to be the patron? And the Freemasons religion! That the Freemason follows with great interest every new phenomenon in this department, and discusses it in the meetings goes without saying; but this right which every educated man enjoys, must surely be also yielded to him. Otherwise he cultivates above all the ethical side of religion, and for the rest he lets every one seek his salvation in his own way. And now, what about the "secrecy" of the "secret society?" In the first place every closed society keeps the outside world in the dark as regards its private concerns, only allowing its own members to look into them. With its members, or rather, with the receiving of them, Freemasonry, it is true, must be specially cautious and particular, for it is a moral alliance which cannot obtain its object in any other way than by seeking to win over as its disciples only men of highly moral character. As this alliance is spread over the whole earth, and its communities number hundreds of thousands, certain secret tokens and words which are understood by all, are necessary in order that no unworthy person may force his way into its meetings. Finally, these tokens are simpler than papers of identification which under circumstances could not at once be recognised at such; for instance, a German visits a Spanish Lodge where perhaps there is no Brother who speaks German. This is really all there is of "secrecy" in Freemasonry; there is no reason whatever why an outsider might not listen to the rest. In the meetings an attempt is made, as has already been hinted at, by means of lectures especially on ethical subjects, to create in the members a taste for all that is beautiful, good, and true, and to lift their minds and souls out of the prosaic world of every day life to more ideal heights. Further, we endeavour by means of amusements, music, and not too expensive banquets, to draw the hearts of individuals nearer together. The Lodge is meant to be a home for each Brother, and this home he should also find when haply his lot is cast in far off lands, the Brethren in those lands being under the obligation to aid him by word and deed. "Do Good" is the motto that beams forth from every Lodge in golden letters. The wives and children of deceased Brethren are assisted as much as possible. Members themselves, who have fallen upon evil days through no fault of their own, are set upon their feet again. For solitary old members homes are built, and as far as the means allow, charity is bestowed in an abundant degree on needy outsiders as well as on needy Brethren. Does such an alliance really deserve the attacks with which the orthodox in both countries persecute it? One would rather think that they feel themselves compelled to give their assistance to an association which carries out in word and deed the injunction "Love one another."