

1864.—May.—Magnan, having restored order and won the general approbation of the Fraternity, induced the Emperor to restore to the Craft its right of election, and was immediately re-elected by the Grand Orient. He died May 29, 1865.

1865.—June 5-10.—Meeting of the Grand Orient. General Mellinet was elected Grand Master. A movement in favor of abolishing all high degrees made itself strongly felt, and the motion was only lost on the 7th by 86 votes to 83—a very narrow majority.

1868.—In this year even the Supreme Council made advances towards a more liberal constitution. The lately appointed Sov. G. Commander, Crémieux, caused his appointment to be confirmed by the Lodges, and thus abrogated the hitherto existing right of a Sov. G. Com. to appoint his successor—a great blow at the autocratic nature of the institution.

1869.—July 8.—The Grand Orient passed a resolution that neither colour, race, nor religion, should disqualify a man for initiation. This procured the friendship of the Supreme Council of Louisiana, the first Grand Body to receive ex-slaves, but entailed the rupture of amicable relations with almost all the other Grand Lodges in the United States.

1870.—June.—At the General Assembly, Mellinet resigned the office of Grand Master, which the Grand Orient resolved to abolish, and until the confirmation of a resolution to that effect, elected and installed Babaud-Larivière.

1871.—September 6.—The Grand Orient confirmed the above resolution, the Grand Master resigned, and was appointed President of the Council. In 1872 he was succeeded by St. Jean, M.D., as President. Although it is possible that true Freemasonry might exist without a Grand Master—as in older days—subsequent events have proved that this was only the first step in a series, marking the decadence of the French Craft, and which resulted in its being ignored entirely by almost all the Freemasons of other countries. The Lodges had become filled by men of advanced socialistic ideas. Their influence made itself felt in a sphere which should have been jealously kept free from political or religious controversy; and the French Fraternity, which, as we have seen, never did possess a distinct idea of the true purposes of the Craft, or of its history and origin, gradually and surely effaced every landmark till it arrived at its present pitiful condition. One landmark, that it should not interfere in the politics of its native land, it had, from the very first, constantly overstepped; the deposition of the Grand Master—himself the type of a constitutional monarch, was the reflex action of the Republican feelings of its members. We shall next see it intermeddling in the most ridiculous fashion with international politics, and finally effacing the very name of the Deity from its records. One single virtue it retains; it still exercises great charity in the narrowest sense; charity in its divine signification, in its highest attributes, it has seldom exemplified. At various times, individual Lodges have indeed excelled in *all* that Freemasonry should be, and I regret that space forbids my doing justice to those Lodges and their works; but, as a whole, the Freemasons of France have ever been vain, ambitious, frivolous, contentious, and wanting in dignity and independence; and their representative bodies, whether Grand Lodge, Grand Orient, or Supreme Council, have been arbitrary, quarrelsome, slavishly subservient to the Government, repressive towards their Lodges, bureaucratic, and devoid of all idea of their true mission. "Englishmen look on Freemasonry with veneration, Germans with awe. Freuchmen

"*Handbuch.*" As I am not in a position to search the archives of the Grand Orient, or the files of the French Masonic press, the remaining facts to be now related are given on the authority of the "*Handbuch*," which probably contains all matters of more than passing interest.