

organised and kept together by the Catholic congresses and by the Volksverein, offered a stubborn, persistent, pacific resistance to the plans of the Iron Chancellor, who at last, finding that persecution seemed rather to strengthen than to disintegrate the Catholic host, was forced at last to acknowledge for the first time in his career that he was beaten. For some years past and to-day the Centre Party, by which name the Catholic members are known in the Reichstag, have held, and now hold, the balance of power, and we have the spectacle of the German Government actually looking gratefully and hopefully for its very existence to those whom it formerly persecuted.'

The efforts of the Bible-in-Schools League, the educational disabilities under which we labor, the growing aggressiveness of Socialism make organisation imperative. By opposing a united front to these forces allied against the Church, by protesting as with one voice from the Catholic body against all unjust laws and treatment, we shall not only vindicate our rights, but succeed in gaining the victory. Hence I wish our Catholic Federation every success. It will supply in New Zealand a long felt want.

CONSTANTINE'S DEVOTION TO THE CROSS

When Christianity was little more than 300 years old (says the *Sacred Heart Review*) the history of Constantine the Great was written by Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine. An extensive literature on Constantine has grown largely from this ancient work. We have at hand a volume published in London in 1637. It contains a translation of 'Eusebius, His Life of Constantine, in Four Books.' The motto below the title is significant: 'Wisdom is most commonly found in him that is good and virtuous.' The translation was made by one Wye Saltonstall, an Oxford scholar and a Protestant, who tells us—in quaint phrasing and seventeenth century spelling—why we should know the history of Constantine.

He was a scholastic emperor that loved the clergy and scholars; which made the Bishop Eusebius thus requite his prince by writing his history. And therefore all those whom virtue and learning have advanced to temporal or spiritual dignities, will not think it below them to patronise the history of the Emperor Constantine who advanced both the temporal and spiritual affairs of the world, and was commended by a whole synod to be *Pater Patriae*, the father of the Empire.

It is a duty incumbent on the Catholic reader to review the story of Constantine, in this year of special commemoration in Rome of his victory won through the Cross, and of the promulgation of the Edict of Milan. 'I will only make a plain and perspicuous narrative of Constantine's actions,' wrote Eusebius. 'The relation of his famous and worthy achievements will be pleasant and delightful to the well-disposed reader. . . . And thus we will begin this history from the Emperor's childhood.'

Constantine's Strength and Courage.

The account of the childhood of Constantine is meagre. He was the son of Constantius Chlorus and Helen, and the old chronicle relates that he was a hostage in 'tyrants' houses.' Though he conversed with wicked men he was not infected with their evil manners. While he was still of tender age—'before the first hair appeared on his smooth chin, to change his sweet aspect into a more manly countenance'—Constantine displayed such strength and courage that 'they who reigned at the time began to fear and envy him, which the young man observing, he fled away secretly,' seeking the house of his father who, shortly, 'departed out of this life, and left his eldest son to succeed him.'

And so Constantine came to rule over his people, administering his affairs so wisely and well that he was soon enabled to turn his thoughts to other issues. 'He resolved to aid and help the distressed parts of the world,' says Eusebius,

. . . and beholding that city which represents the world, being the empress and queen of the Roman Empire, held in subjection by tyrants, he said he should take no joy in his life if he should suffer the queen of cities to be thus grievously afflicted, and therefore he provided himself of strength and forces to suppress and extinguish their tyranny.

Vision of the Cross.

Now approaches the turn in the tide of Constantine's affairs which affected the destinies of nations—when his soul opened to the truth that the victory he hoped for must be won under the banner of Christ, in the Sign of the Cross.

He earnestly prayed unto God, and besought Him, that He would reveal Himself unto him, and that He would assist him in his purposes and resolutions.

The Emperor's prayer was heard, and a sign given to him. The narrative tells us:—. . . as he was praying about noon-tide a divine and wonderful vision appeared unto him, which were scarce credible, if himself had not related it. But seeing this victorious emperor did, with an oath, confirm it to be true, when he related unto me who intend to write his history, long after when taking notice of me, he admitted me to have familiar conference with him; who can doubt of the truth of his relation, which afterwards in process of time was confirmed in a miraculous manner? When the sun was gotten to his meridian height, so that it was a little past noon-tide, he said that he beheld the sign of a cross lively figured in the air or sky, with an inscription in it containing these words: *In hoc vinco*. By this conquer. And that he himself and his whole army which marched with him did wonder at so strange a prodigy.

Much troubled in mind to know the meaning of the vision the emperor thought and studied till night came on, and in his sleep Christ appeared unto him with the former sign of the cross and commanded him that he should make the like figure and that he should wear it in his banner when he joined battle with his enemies.

The chronicle continues:—

As soon as it grew day, he rose up, and acquainted his friends with the vision which he had seen, and then sending for the best goldsmiths and lapidaries, sitting on his royal throne, he described unto them the shape and figure of the cross, and commanded them to make the like with gold and precious stones, which figure we chanced to behold. For the emperor himself vouchsafed to show it unto us.

With minute detail, Eusebius describes the Labarum:—

Description of the Labarum.

The figure of the cross was in this manner. The staff was straight, long, and inlaid with gold; the cross-bar was figured in the form of a cross, on the top whereof was a golden crown beset with precious stones. In which was our Saviour's name inscribed and expressed in two letters (PX) which did perspicuously express the name of Christ (in the Greek form). Which letters the emperor did afterwards use to carry in his helmet. At one of the corners of the cross-bar hung a thin banner of lawn, curiously embroidered with gold and precious stones, in a strange and admirable manner; this banner, fastened to the pendant, was as long and broad as the cross. The stem or staff was longer than the colors or banner, and under the cross at the side or border of the banner, there were the pictures of the emperor and his children drawn to the middle or breast high. So that the emperor used this salutary badge as a defensive or divine charm against his enemies. And he commanded that his army should carry and bear the like cross in their colors.

Yet another step towards acquiring the knowledge of the Christian religion was taken by Constantine. He sent 'for divers priests and religious men' to instruct him and to interpret the meaning of the vision of the sacred sign.

They answered him that the Christ he had seen in his vision was the only begotten Son of God; and that the sign of the cross which appeared unto him, was a token and trophy of the immortality and victory

Better Teeth

AT HOWEY WALKER'S,

Less Pain.

QUEEN STREET, AUCKLAND,

Less Expense.