

dictated by the victorious generalissimo of the Allied and American forces.

But the overthrow of the Kaiser does not necessarily mean the restoration of peace to the world. In their anxiety to encourage their friends and embarrass their enemies the statesmen of both belligerent parties have pledged themselves to principles and programmes which, whether realised or disowned by their authors, are likely to mark a new era in the history of mankind. The world outlook of 1919 is not that of 1914; the old order is gone for good, whatever may take its place. To preach for years the overthrow of autocracy, the uplifting of democracy, the right of peoples whether weak or strong to determine their own form of government, the banding together of nations into one great league to enforce disarmament, compulsory arbitration and international peace, and when the opportune moment comes to do nothing to put these high-sounding principles into operation is to court swift and terrible disaster. If the diplomatists of Versailles, closing their eyes to the past and their ears to the present, determine to follow the methods of the Congress of Vienna rather than the peace proposals of President Wilson, then, indeed, may men pray for peace.

The President of the United States, more than any other single individual, is responsible for the overthrow of the Germans. By his skill and diplomacy he kept his country clear of the war until the protection of American interests demanded intervention; and when, at last he felt it necessary to call his compatriots to arms, they responded with an eagerness and unanimity that astonished both friend and foe. By his soul-stirring messages to mankind he converted what seemed to many a sordid contest for economic predominance or territorial expansion into an unselfish crusade for liberty, peace, and justice. As he played the leading part in bringing the war to an end, so too, it is hoped, he will exercise a powerful influence in shaping the terms of peace. He has pledged his own honor and the honor of his country to certain well-defined proposals. If he can succeed in winning over the diplomatists of Versailles to his views, though the practical difficulties in carrying out his plans are well-nigh insuperable, his name will be held in benediction by the Old World as well as by the New: if he fail at the Congress, then it only remains for him to do what he did in his dealings with German autocracy, to appeal from the governments to the governed. If he has the courage to adopt this course, he need have no fears about the verdict of the people.

Now, that the great war has come to an end, one may well inquire how the victories of the Allies and the downfall of Austria and Germany are likely to influence the Church? During the vicissitudes of the contest some people seemed convinced that the triumph of Germany would spell another *Kulturkampf* against the Church, more violent and more widespread than that initiated by Bismarck and Falk; while others were equally confident, from their knowledge of the Governments of France and Italy, that the success of the Allies would be hailed as a victory by the friends of Atheism and Freemasonry. Both parties were probably equally sincere, but both were influenced by their prejudices rather than by facts. Religious considerations played an insignificant part in the councils of the men responsible for the war, and however zealous may have been their professions of sympathy during the struggle, the Church had good reason to be equally cautious in her dealings with the leading belligerents. While there is but little ground for hope that the war would lead to a great religious revival in Italy and France in face of which the Governments of these countries would be forced to modify their attitude of hostility to the Church, there is still less ground for believing that the downfall of the Austrian Empire involves the extinction of Catholicity in the territories of the Habsburgs. If, indeed, the power of Austria had been broken before defeat and revolution had destroyed the autocratic sway of the Czar, then the situation, from the point of view of the Church, would have been undoubtedly serious. With Austria weak and

Russia victorious and united, the way would have been open for the enforcement of Orthodoxy throughout Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

But, as matters stand at present, there is no need for alarm about the future of religion, even though the principle of self-determination should be applied to the former provinces of the Empire. In Austria proper, where the population generally speaking is German in race and language, no peculiar difficulty will arise; in the Tyrol, whatever may be its ultimate political fate, there is no danger that autonomy or union with Italy will damp the religious fervor of its generous people; in Croatia and Slavonia, where the Jugo-Slavs constitute the predominant element, the union of bishops, clergy, and people in their prolonged struggle for freedom affords sufficient warranty for the belief that the new political situation that has arisen carries with it no danger for religion. So long as the Jugo-Slav movement is led, as it is at present, by men like Monsignor Jeglic, Prince-Bishop of Laibach, Monsignor Bauer, Bishop of Zagreb, and Monsignor Mahonic, Bishop of Veglia, there need be no fear that by ceasing to be Austrian subjects the Jugo-Slavs will cease to be Catholic. And with one slight reservation the same might be said about the Czecho-Slovaks of Bohemia, whose clergy for the most part stand in the very fore-front of the nationalist movement. In proof of this assertion it is sufficient to quote from the solemn declaration issued to the press by a meeting of the clergy of Prague:—

"We, Czech ecclesiastics," they declared, "conscious of springing from the people, and being indissolubly attached to them by the bonds of blood, language, and traditions, are determined to stand side by side with them in the struggle till victory crowns our efforts. We claim to belong to Saints Cyril and Methodius, the apostles of the Slavs; and we declare that the solemn words of our writers and deputies, as well as the nationalist oath, express exactly what we feel and believe. We declare that the establishment of an independent Czecho-Slovak State is an act of justice pleasing to God. And, believing that perfect harmony is indispensable for the achievement of our aims, we declare that the Czech Union is alone competent to act in the name of the nation, and we reject in advance any private or party negotiations concerning the future of our country."

"We will stand or fall with our people" were the striking words used by the clergy of Krems in announcing their adhesion to the cause of Czecho-Slovak independence. The one difficulty that will arise will be the presence of a large German-speaking Catholic minority, and also the fact that a large number of the bishops are of German origin. But these are matters, we may hope, that will adjust themselves in time, once the irritating and dividing influence of foreign intervention is removed. In Galicia, where the most of the inhabitants are Catholic, no complication need be expected if, as may be assumed, the province is incorporated into the new kingdom of Poland. The absorption of Catholic Transylvania by non-Catholic Rumania might possibly lead to a campaign against Rome, but in view of Rumania's insecurity of tenure and of the wisdom of conciliating the newly-won population, it is not likely that any Government would commit such an act of folly.

One serious danger in connection with the reconstitution of South-Eastern Europe, might spring from the establishment of a Greater Serbian Kingdom, though the religious fanaticism of some of the former promoters of such an establishment may have been considerably modified by the events of the last five years.

Whatever may be said of Austria, there can be little doubt that, apart from the spread of Bolshevism and disorder, the dissolution of the Russian Empire could hardly fail to profit the Catholic Church. In the first place, it ensures the independence of the one nation that can compare with our own in its prolonged struggle for religion and liberty—Catholic Poland. A new, united, strong kingdom of Poland, whether it be a monarchy or a republic, if true to the traditions which have characterised its people for centuries, cannot fail