

"denominational" differences, and uniting with the Catholics in one great effort against the forces of disruption.

By far the most vigorous resistance, however, has been offered by those ancient and tried friends of religious freedom, the great Centre Party, or Christian Peoples' Party, as it is now named. Its chief organ, *Germania*, is intimately associated with the Secretary of State, Herr Erzberger, and during these last weeks it has contained almost daily articles in which he, the busiest man in the Central Empires, has expounded his views. One of these views is that, under present conditions, the separation between Church and State is sooner or later a foregone conclusion. The necessity, therefore, of ensuring the temporal welfare of the Catholic Church under the altered conditions is all his care. Thus he wrote in December:—"In the event of the separation, which in the long run is almost inevitable, our aim would be the fulfilment of the following three conditions:—Respect for the Church, and practical recognition of her institutions; a just and equitable settlement of her pecuniary claims; and educational legislation resembling that which obtains in Holland, whereby the denominational schools are subsidised in exactly the same way as the so-called State schools." And again a little later:—"Spiritual as is the mission of the Church, the field of her activity is here on earth, and she is as little able to dispense with the necessary means of subsistence as any other society. If it is to come to separation, the question of ecclesiastical funds must be settled in a satisfactory manner." The bishops, headed by Cardinal von Hartmann (Archbishop of Cologne), decided, however, to be no parties to the political opportunism of Herr Erzberger. In a joint pastoral they declare themselves in no faltering terms:—"Before all the world we raise our voices"—(voices that we are thankful once more to be able to echo in England)—"and in the name of you all protest against the separation of Church and State. We Catholics of Prussia will never consent to this. Separation of State and Church! The vital bond which for many centuries has existed between our people and the Church, and still does exist, is to be rudely severed. Our country is to cease to be Christian as a State. The name of God is to disappear from public life, and, what is worst of all, religion vanishes from the schools. Does not such a sin verily cry to Heaven? It is a wrong and a crime against the Lord. A State without God, without religion! You know how little security is afforded by external regulations unless the voice of conscience makes itself heard. Matrimony will be profaned and family ties will be relaxed. Imagine what terrible havoc in the entire spiritual fabric of the nation this signifies!" The bishops then look ahead:—"Terrible things," they say, "are impending. Do not ignore the overwhelming seriousness of these times. It is the enemies of religion who think that now their hour has struck. They will stake everything to attain their goal. You must defend yourselves against this, all together like one man, inflexible and invincible. Avail yourselves of all your political rights, Catholic men and women, youths and maidens! Catholic societies and organisations, we appeal to you. Raise protest after protest against the wrong it is proposed to do you. And do not yield in your resistance until they abandon the attempt to lay hands on your sacred treasures!" And shortly after the issue of this uncompromising appeal, Cardinal von Hartmann was assured of the close sympathy and co-operation of the Vatican.

Then the Minister of Education, evidently deeming it prudent to allay the fears he had aroused, announced, at the beginning of the New Year, that a Commission had been formed to investigate the entire question, and gave his assurance that no precipitate action would be taken. All memoranda and reports bearing on the subject would be carefully considered by the members of the Commission, and the Commission would include representatives of every denomination. His assurances did not end there. It was not, and never had been, he said, the intention of the Government to interfere in questions of dogma or ritual. The decree prohibit-

ing religious instruction was rescinded, and it was further stated that the final decision in the matter of separation would rest with the National Assembly. The whole question is, therefore, still in abeyance. Herr Erzberger meanwhile has continued his own campaign in *Germania*. His words take world-outlooks; they imply a certain penitence for the past; they are awake to the necessity of a league of consciences as the successful preliminary to a League of Nations. "They say Peace, and there is no peace," is his burden. "Men ever seek," he says, "the realisation of their ideals where it is not to be found—in Socialism, in Freemasonry. Peace and freedom, not false, hypocritical, and deceptive words, can be bestowed upon the world only by God. The Church, entrusted with the task of guarding these precious treasures, and distributing them among mankind, has never been unfaithful to her mission. It is not the Church's fault that the world-conflagration was kindled. It is not her fault that the war lasted so long. The Pope spoke out often enough for peace and freedom. People wanted to make the world happy without the Church, to conjure up a better freedom, a new peace. The so-called humanitarian movement was choked in a stream of blood. It is a mystery how, after such a failure, anyone can still propose to base a League of Nations on the same humanitarian foundation. If the co-operation of the Church and Papacy are excluded, Christ also will refrain from participation, and nothing will come of it but a meaningless phrase, a vast new lie. How much has been written during the war which, for the honor of mankind, had better have remained unpublished! Opportunism and the catchwords arising from it, still appear to hold the field. Or may we dare to hope that the human race has been brought to reason by its awful visitations, and will once again seek the ideals for which it thirsts at their source?" We are left to wonder.

CATHOLICISM IN JAPAN.

"Les Missions Catholiques" recently published an interesting letter of Mgr. Rey, Archbishop of Tokio. His Lordship states that the same obstacles continue to surround his work for religion, but that more than ever he places his confidence in God, and that proof of this Divine protection may be seen in the fact that all existing circles of Christianity continue to flourish. Mgr. Rey pays tribute to the zeal of the nuns and priests who labor so earnestly both in the cause of education and in the performance of good works. An association called "Le Seimeukai" has been formed for the past pupils of the boys' colleges. The members meet every month for the discussion of religious, philosophic, and scientific questions. A similar society has also been formed in the Convent of the Sacred Heart for its past pupils, and other Catholic women. These good ladies meet for the making of vestments and other requisites for the altar, and they have already, Mgr. Rey tells us, accomplished much good service in the diocese. During 1917 the Sacerdotal Jubilee of M. Evrard, one of the Vicars General in Japan, was celebrated with ceremonial and rejoicing. M. Evrard assisted in the formation of the Diocese of Tokio.

St. Paul says in one place that his apostolic power is given him to edification, and not to distinction. There can be no better account of the infallibility of the Church. It is a supply for a need, and it does not go beyond that need. Its object is, and its effect also, not to enfeeble the freedom or vigor of human thought in religious speculation, but to resist and control its extravagance.—Cardinal Newman.

We direct the attention of our South Dunedin readers to an announcement in our advertising columns by Mr. G. A. Munro, King Edward Street, who has opened up a stock of prayer books, rosaries, scapulars, etc.

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