

The Catholic World

BELGIUM

A NEW EDUCATION BILL.

The Belgian Government has laid before the Parliament its new Education Bill, which some are sanguine enough to hope will finally settle the education question, or at least remedy the grievances under which Belgian Catholics have too long suffered. The three chief features of the Bill are that it makes elementary education compulsory on all children between the ages of six and fourteen; that it will improve the salaries of all teachers; and that it will organise in all schools a course of professional teaching for children who have completed their elementary education. Compulsion will cease for all children at the age of thirteen if they have obtained a certificate of having completed their elementary education. The salaries of teachers in schools (not adopted or entirely supported by the local authorities) will be placed on the same footing as in these latter schools. The managers of the non-official schools will receive a grant of about twenty to twenty-four pounds a year from Government for each class, provided its master is certificated. All teachers will receive every two years during thirty years an increase of four pounds in their salary. Teachers who are members of religious communities will receive like treatment provided they are certificated. In all schools the Government will take on itself two-thirds of the payment for the bi-annual increase of salaries. Assistant teachers will henceforth receive lodging-money. This will be doubled for married teachers and headmasters and mistresses.

ENGLAND

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUES.

The fourth International Conference of the *Federation Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Femmes* was held in London recently, Mgr. Bidwell officially representing the Holy Father. The 'open meeting' at the Cathedral Hall was attended by a large number of members of the C.W.L., and his Eminence Cardinal Bourne presided over an exceptionally interesting meeting. On the platform were the Bishop of Southwark, Canon Sutcliffe, Mgr. Bidwell, as well as the Duchess of Norfolk, Lady Denbigh, the Baronne de Mirbach, representing the German *Frauenbund*, the Vicomtesse de Velard, representing the *Ligue Patriotique des Françaises*, Madame Le Roy Liberge, of the *Action Sociale de la Femme*, Mrs. James Hope, president of the C.W.L., Miss Streeter, and Miss Margaret Fletcher. After a brief opening speech of welcome from Mrs. James Hope, who spoke for the C.W.L., highly interesting papers were read by the French, German, and English delegates.

FRANCE

SUPPORT OF CATHOLIC MISSIONS.

In supporting Catholic missions France continues to figure as the most generous nation. Her contribution, according to the latest report, being 3,106,830 francs. The next largest contribution, 1,828,832 francs, came from the United States. Germany gave 980,067, England 373,314, Belgium 356,314, and Italy 272,384.

GERMANY

CATHOLICS AND THE EMPEROR.

Catholics took their fair share in the rejoicings attendant on the Kaiser's jubilee (writes a Berlin correspondent). And not without cause. In his first speech from the throne, in 1888, the Emperor declared he would regard it as a duty to preserve freedom for all creeds, and to bring about religious peace in Germany. Bismarck commented with a smile that 'the weapons formed in the Kulturkampf against the Catholic Church were but laid aside in the fencing school,'

but the Emperor has not permitted them to be taken up again. If the Empire has progressed, we have progressed with it. It is only necessary to look at the statistics of the Church in Berlin itself to be convinced of this. In the capital in 1870 there were about 75,000 Catholics, who had two churches and two small chapels to serve their spiritual needs. In 1900 these numbers had grown to 187,569, and ten years later, the last statistics available show 243,020, so that Berlin has, after Cologne, more Catholics than any diocese in Germany. In the course of the twenty-five years, the completion of which Kaiser Wilhelm is celebrating, some forty-five churches and chapels have been built in the capital, and still the number is insufficient. It will be remembered that it was decided to signalise the Emperor's jubilee by a collection, the proceeds of which were to be employed towards the Christian missions of the Fatherland in the German colonies. The proceeds of this collection were placed in the Emperor's hands during the jubilee celebrations. The Protestants, who are of course largely in the majority, raised 3,300,000 marks, and the Catholics have collected the fine sum of 1,700,000, making a total of 5,000,000 marks. At the head of the Catholic deputation which brought this offering to the Palace was Prince Von Lowenstein Wertheim, Gen. von Stimaceker, and Herr Cahensley, of Limburg, the Director of the Work of St. Raphael for Emigrants. The Catholic deputation presented to the Emperor an 'edition de luxe' of a history of all the Catholic missions in the German colonies copiously illustrated.

PORTUGAL

THE GOVERNMENT AND CHRISTIANITY.

Afonso Costa continues the evil work of endeavoring to injure and, if possible, ruin Christianity in Portugal and the Portuguese colonies. It will be remembered (remarks the *Catholic Times*) that like the French Separation Law, the Masonic decree or so-called law for the separation of Church and State in Portugal provided for the formation of Cultural Associations. The object in both countries was to weaken and devitalise the Church. The authority of the priests was to be lessened and that of lay folk, who might be mere nominal Catholics, increased. In France, thanks to the loyalty of the Catholic population, the cultural scheme fell through. The laity refused to have anything to do with it. The French Catholics were faithful to their creed and their clergy, and those Frenchmen who were unbelievers declined to further the project. In Portugal, however, Costa, who hates Christianity in every form, has induced some of his minions to attempt to form Cultural Associations in order that divisions may be sown amongst the Catholics. In this way efforts have been made by the disloyal Catholics of the associations to capture some of the most important churches in Lisbon, such as the Graca, and the churches of San Domingo and San Vincente de Fora. Costa's stratagem is not, however, likely to have any real success. The Masonic separation decree has been declared by the Holy Father null and void, and it is reported from Portugal that the churches at which the Cultural Associations seek to exercise authority have been placed under an interdict. The faithful will find other places where they will meet for worship, and Costa's minions will not long keep up the pretext of taking an interest in religious services. It is announced that the money devoted by the Government to the purposes of religion in the Portuguese colonies is to be withdrawn. This step was, of course, inevitable. Costa needs at home all the funds he can lay his hands on, for the Republic is practically bankrupt.

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