

prohibition of the free exercise of the Catholic religion. It assails her jurisdiction, for it forbids to priests belonging to religious orders all exercise of the sacerdotal functions. It assails her sacred right of property, for it inflicts upon her the loss of so many religious houses built and maintained by the alms of the faithful. Finally, it inflicts the penalties of confiscation and of exile upon men who have never been brought to trial, much less convicted of any crime against the State. And in the common ruin are involved the convents even of religious ladies, who are now condemned to spend in exile the lives they so nobly risked in tending the wounded on the battle fields and in the hospitals, or which they had consecrated to the education and service of the poor of Christ. We will not dwell upon others of the penal laws lately passed, such as that against preachers, whose discourse may be interpreted to be antagonistic to the policy of the empire, or the law forbidding the young to become members of religious confraternities; or the decree forbidding the dedicatory of an ecclesiastical province to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. Nor will we speak of the still more stringent measures, which, with growing shamelessness of persecution, are now openly announced as to be put into operation against Catholics. We have said more than enough to show the violence of the German persecution.

(To be Continued.)

THE H. A. C. B. SOCIETY.

A BRANCH of the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society was, it may be stated, inaugurated in the school-room, Dunedin, on the evening of St. Patrick's Day last. This society was established in Melbourne some years ago, and has proved most successful, numerous branches being now in existence throughout the colony of Victoria. Some months previously a movement was set on foot by Mr T. B. Shapter for the establishment of branches of the society in Dunedin and throughout the Province of Otago. Mr Shapter shortly afterwards left Dunedin, but the movement has since been carried to a successful issue by the energetic efforts of Mr F. J. Bunny (Secretary *pro tem*), and a few other gentlemen who joined the society at the first meeting. A sufficient number of members having joined, office-bearers were appointed, and the services of Mr M. G. Joyce (of the St. Ignatius branch, Richmond, Victoria) were secured for the opening of the new branch in Dunedin. On the occasion of the formal inauguration in St. Joseph's school-room, the room was tastefully decorated with flags and evergreens in honor of the occasion. There was a numerous attendance of members and intending members, as well as of ladies. Mr Joyce, as presiding officer, having read an opening address, the members were initiated, and the office-bearers installed as follows:—President, Mr E. Carroll; Vice-president, Mr Robert Carroll (late of No. 1 branch, St. Francis, Melbourne); Secretary, Mr F. J. Bunny; Warden, Mr C. Bunny; Guardian, Mr C. Fearon; Treasurer, Mr E. Downey. The Secretary read a telegram from Mr Shapter, congratulating the members on the success so far obtained. The Secretary, after referring to the obstacles which the movement had encountered, and which had been overcome, said that those present would doubtless be pleased to learn that, notwithstanding the fact that their expenses up to the present had been very heavy, they were now only a few pounds on the wrong side. The objects of the society were, it was said, aid in case of sickness or death, and the promotion of social intercourse between its members. The Dunedin branch now numbers twenty-six benefit members and six honorary members, and it is expected that fresh accessions to its ranks will soon be made.

Branches of the society have also been established in New Zealand, in almost every town on the West Coast, and at the Thames. Authority for opening branches at Oamaru and St. Bathans has been received. Already thirty have intimated their intention of joining the Oamaru branch. Active steps are now being taken for the formation of branches at Lawrence and at Invercargill, and the Lawrence one will probably have a very large members' roll. We hope to be soon in a position to give details of the several branches of this excellent society in New Zealand.

On the occasion of his late visit to Hokitika, the Right Rev. Dr Moran, in referring to an address from a local branch of the Hibernian Society, was reported in the 'West Coast Times' as follows:— "His lordship expressed the pleasure with which he received it. He said he was asked in the address to give the society his patronage, and he gave it most willingly, because he approved of it, and he would be very glad to see that all in the community who could join it would do so. It was not every society of which he could say he same. There were societies and societies. Some were banned by the Church, and others were blessed. The Hibernian Society was one of the latter. There was no secrecy in it, and the Church abhorred secrecy. Whenever there was secrecy there was suspicion. Men who meant to do right had nothing to fear from an open disclosure of their proceedings; but where those proceedings were kept secret, there were just grounds to suspect that there were evils."

From the preface to the manual of the rules of the society, we learn that, at a conference of delegates from the Irish Australian, Hibernian, and Albury Catholic Benefit Societies, held in Melbourne in April, 1871, these societies were amalgamated, and formed the nucleus of the present flourishing H. A. C. Society, with its large roll of members and numerous branches. The much desired union of the several Catholic Benefit Societies having been effected, was regarded as a matter for sincere congratulation, and it was believed that rapid as had been the progress of these societies when acting independently of each other, it would be far surpassed by the present society. The hope entertained at the amalgamation of the societies, to judge from the reports appearing from time to time in the Melbourne 'Advocate,' and from what we have heard here, has been in the last two years abundantly fulfilled.

"The Hibernian Catholic Society," the preface says, "as its name implies, is essentially a Catholic Benefit Society, and as such is open to Catholics of every nationality, yet, bearing in mind what

Ireland has done and is now doing for the faith, it is felt that to cherish the memory of that dear old land, from which nine-tenths of our members hail, is not incompatible with the objects of the society."

It may be necessary to call the attention of non-members of the society to the facts that it is a benefit society under the immediate sanction of the Church; that it is non-political; that there is nothing of a secret nature about it, neither signs nor pass-words being used, and that its meetings are open to the press.

The entrance fees and rates of subscription are as moderate as practicable, having regard to the benefits secured, a synopsis of which we subjoin:—A benefit member receives during illness one pound per week for twenty-six weeks, 15s. for the next thirteen weeks, and 10s. for a further period of twenty-six weeks; on death of wife, £10; at his own death his relatives receive £20. He has medical attendance and medicine for himself and family immediately on joining. If a single man, with a widowed mother and brothers and sisters under 18 years of age, he has medical attendance and medicine for them.

He has these on payment of an entrance fee, varying according to his age, from £1 5s to £3, and a weekly contribution of not less than one shilling or more than one shilling and sixpence, and a shilling per quarter to the incidental fund. Members must, at admission, be between 18 and 40 years of age, but a person above 40 and under 45 years can be admitted on paying an entrance fee of £3, together with a sum equal to what he would have paid had he been a member from the time he was 40 years old. Honorary and life-honorary members are provided for, and may, on payment of a small weekly contribution, secure medical attendance. A member removing has a clearance, which admits him into the branch of the Society in the locality to which he moves; and here we may remark that, with the number of branches which are so suddenly starting into existence in New Zealand of late, we may safely anticipate that every district or hamlet in New Zealand, having 30 Catholic men, will have a branch, and that to whatever part of the Colony a member removes, he will find a branch of his society and friends to extend the hand of welcome to him. The benefits, religiously, socially, and intellectually arising from this society are self-evident, and it has our best wishes.

ECCLESIASTICAL STATISTICS OF GERMANY.

(Compiled for this Paper.)

In this compilation we shall speak not of the German Empire, but of Germany. Our object is to give the statistics of the Church in the German Land. The recently established Empire does not include all Germany, and is not continuous with it; and whilst containing only a part of Germany proper, comprises within it other lands and other races besides the German.

An asterisk (*) however, will be placed before the names of the Dioceses and the Ecclesiastical Conscriptations of the Empire.

We have not been able to find any reliable authorities of a more recent date than 1850. An accurate idea, however, can be formed by allowing for the usual percentage of increase in population, &c.

In the year 1850, Germany had forty-two millions of inhabitants, of whom twenty-three millions were Catholics. Without counting some exempted Bishoprics—that is, such as are immediately subordinate to the Holy See, and some Vicariates Apostolic—this country had nine Archiepiscopal Sees, each of which had under it one or more Suffragan Dioceses. These constituted nine ecclesiastical provinces.

1. The Archdiocese of Vienna in Austria, Suffragan, Linz and St. Poelten.
2. Archdiocese of Salzburg, Suffragan, Trent, Brixen, Lavant, the See of which is at St. André, Gurk, Seckau, Loeben.
3. Archdiocese of Goritz in Illyria, Suffragan, Trieste and Capodistria, Parenz and Pola, Laybach.
4. Archdiocese of Prague in Bohemia, Suffragan, Leitmeritz, Koeniggrätz, Brdivois.
5. Archdiocese of Olmutz in Moravia, Suffragan Brunn.
- *6. Archdiocese of Munich-Freyisingen, in Upper Bavaria, Suffragan, Augsburg, Batisbonne, Passau.
- *7. Archdiocese of Bamberg, in the Bavarian Province of Upper Franconia, Suffragan, Eichstädt, Wourtzbourg, Spire.
- *8. Archdiocese of Cologne, in Rhenish Prussia, Suffragan, Münster, Paderhorn, Trèves.
- *9. Archdiocese of Fribourg, in the Grand Duchy of Baden, Suffragan, Mayence, Rottenbourg, Limbourg, and Fulda.

Besides these 9 provinces, there were 3 Bishoprics which were exempt, viz. —

- *1. Breslau in Silesia.
- *2. Osnabruck in Hanover.
- *3. Hildesheim in Hanover.

And 4 Vicariates Apostolic, viz. —

- *1. Luxembourg.
- *2. Saxony.
- *3. Anhalt.
- *4. The Vicariate of the North, comprising the Faithful of the three free cities, and those of Holeslein and Mecklenbourg.

In fine, two Delegations.

- *1. Brandebourg.
- *2. Pomerania.

Since 1850, we believe some changes have taken place. For example, the Vicariate of Luxembourg has been raised to the position of a Diocese in Ordinary, and a Vicar Apostolic, who is a Bishop in Partibus, has been appointed to Berlin.

As will be perceived, we do not speak of East and West Prussia and the Polish Province of Posen, though forming part of the present German Empire. The reason of this has been stated above.

The following table gives the number of canons, deans, and parishes, and Catholic population, in each of these Dioceses:—