

capable of doing something in the way of righting their wrongs. In the course of not many months an assembly of delegates from all the branch associations took place at Mainz, under the presidency of Professor Dr. Franz Ritter, of Freiburg. These meetings commenced on October 3, 1848. On that day was born that gigantic institution, the General Congress of Catholic Germany. The Mainz Congress was the first; the Metz Congress last September, was the sixtieth. Volumes would be required to tell the work accomplished at these sixty congresses. Did twenty-four timid men ever before originate a national movement so great and deep?

The Swiss Catholic Congress of 1913.

All well-conducted newspapers tell the world of the transactions of the great German Congress; not so in regard to these meetings in the smaller countries. But a congress deserving special mention is that of the Swiss Catholics, held this autumn at St. Gall. A short reference to it should be interesting, particularly to the Catholics of Australia and New Zealand, who are now beginning to set up Catholic confederations for themselves. The Swiss, like you, are a *pusillus grex*, a small flock, surrounded by a vast Protestant and infidel population. They are a million and a half in round numbers. They held their triennial national congress this year at the old cathedral city of St. Gall, a city of some interest to all Irishmen, for it gets its name from St. Gall, an Irish monk who, in the seventh century, converted the province round about it. Like Ireland, the province and city of St. Gall have never swerved in their allegiance to the Catholic faith. The Swiss 1913 congress was full of verve and enthusiasm. Eighteen thousand men walked in the opening-morning procession; 240 banners floated in the breeze; 18 bands thrilled to electric life the light Swiss mountain air. The congress was carried out in imitation of the German congresses. The cathedral and the churches were filled every morning to overflowing; and I should not omit to say that the preachers did not forget to pay their toll of gratitude to that Green Isle far away, whose missionary sons brought the faith to so much of Switzerland and South Germany. They spoke of Gall, of Killian, of Totnan, of Columbanus—'those never-to-be-forgotten representatives, in other days, of faith and Christian culture,' as one of the preachers said. Dr. Jann, a noted Capuchin preacher, speaking from the pulpit of St. Gall's Cathedral, concluded his sermon thus:—'O glorious St. Gall, deign to look down upon us to-day who are striving to maintain the glories of thine ancient Catholic Switzerland, and bless this golden harvest of religion and culture, which this morning waves so richly around thy grave.' Enthusiasm was helped on very much by the workingmen's choirs. They sang religious and national songs in perfection—an art in which the Swiss take the palm. The congress was divided into sections—social, charitable, educational, political. The workingmen's social section discussed questions relating to social reform, the cost of living, strict observance of the Sunday, factory laws, employment of women and children, and insurance for the sick and the aged. The most impressive speaker in this section was Herr Widmar, town councillor of Zurich. He reminded his hearers that Christian effort towards well-being must be grounded on the Ten Commandments and on the doctrines of the Gospel, and he bade them remember that there was no heaven to be enjoyed here below, that the way to Golgotha was really the way to happiness and peace. The *Gesellenverein* (apprentices' union) was an important section. The principal speakers were its director-general (Father Claudius Hirt) and Dr. Schohl. This *Verein* or society, originated in Germany years ago by Father Kolping, has 25,000 Swiss members. It is doing admirable work among boys, apprentices and young men in both countries. The education section attracted 350 professors and schoolmasters, who debated points relating to freedom of education, character formation, the means for child-training most suited to changed modern conditions, school, not sex, hygiene, and so on. Professor Fischer, of Lucerne, made a powerful appeal to parents to do their duty towards their children, espe-

cially in their infant period. He insisted on the doctrine acknowledged among pedagogists, that a man's character is formed during the first seven or eight years of his life.

Strong Speaking at the Political Section.

Here some important questions were discussed, among them, that of 'proportional representation'—a method of election of great consequence to minorities. The principal speakers at this section were Herr Zaumberger, a leading journalist of Zurich, Herr Baumgartner, also a newspaper man, and Herr Adalbert Wirz, a member of the Upper House. Herr Zaumberger delivered a powerful speech, full of thought supported by facts. He dwelt on the injustices under which Swiss Catholics suffer even at the present time. He contrasted the Edict of Constantine with the present laws:—'The Edict of Constantine, 1600 years ago, gave freedom of worship to all religions. Have we, men of Switzerland, that to-day? Surely not, so long as the Bishop of Basle must get Government permission every time he gives Confirmation, every time he consecrates a church. Surely not so long as Catholic processions and demonstrations in the open air are forbidden; so long as in a certain canton a parish priest may be forbidden to say daily Mass. That is not freedom; that is brutal tyranny over conscience.' The speaker also spoke warmly against the laws excluding the Jesuits from Switzerland, and those forbidding the foundation of new monasteries and convents. 'Surely to a religious people like the Swiss a convent is of more value than a new kino-theatre or a new vaudeville house; a Jesuit is more useful than a modern variety artist; a nun incomparably superior to a ballet dancing girl. Yet for the latter there is liberty; for the former there is not liberty.' The speech of Herr Baumgartner was another vigorous trumpet-call to Swiss Catholics never to rest till they had smashed up all those legal restrictions, which now hung over themselves, their schools, and their Church: 'Forward, Swiss Catholics!' he exclaimed. 'Forward in solid ranks to claim and maintain your rights. This is the spirit of the fourth Catholic Congress of St. Gall; this is the spirit that rises from the graves of your fathers here in this grand old fighting canton of St. Gall. Be brave in insisting on your rights; this spirit will be fruitful of great good to Holy Church and to our dearly loved Fatherland.'

Speech of Senator Wirz.

Herr Wirz is one of the ablest members of the Swiss Upper House. He took 'Catholic Politicians' for his subject, and scourged with scorpions that class of so-called Catholic politicians, common in France, Spain, and Italy, and perhaps elsewhere, who run with the hare and hunt with the hounds; who are all things to all men in order to gain as many as possible to help them along with their private wheelbarrow, who in the proper *milieu* talk loudly of liberality and broad-mindedness, who declare religion to be one thing and politics another, yet, on the plea of being Catholics, climb on the shoulders of their fellow-Catholics into position, office, and wealth, and then forget them and all Catholic interests; nay, sometimes secretly and cowardly betray these interests. These selfish, private axe-grinders are a pest in Catholic politics.' In order to keep office they betray the most sacred interests of the Church. 'We know only one Catholicism,' said the speaker; 'the distinction between a religious and a political Catholicism is to us unknown; we will not be half-Catholic but all-Catholic. What we do not understand is an indistinct, a watered-down, a white-livered Catholicism. We are united on the platform of religion. We stand true and fast by the Pope and his teaching. He is the centre of Church unity, the upholder of Catholic principles and Catholic truth.' Whenever the Holy Father's name was mentioned it was greeted with loud applause—with *vivats* and *vives* and *vivas* and *hochs*—in the languages of four races—German, French, Italian, and Romansh. The couns differed, but the sentiments and ideas were all one. This is a characteristic of these great congresses—the extraordinary reverence shown to the Pope and the bishops, the representatives of Catholic authority.