

interests and legitimate wishes of all the Powers ; and it was only reasonable to think that the moment had been favorably chosen for an international discussion, wherein ways and means could be devised to secure the world safe and lasting peace.

The voice of the Vicar of Christ was one of the first to echo the sentiments of the Russian Emperor. "If ever," said the illustrious Pontiff, in the consistory of February, 1899, "nations have been unanimous in showing peaceful dispositions, it is certainly in these days when the words peace, tranquillity, rest, are in every mouth. Sovereigns and governments attest aloud that they have but one desire and one end in view, to guarantee to all the benefits of peace. The dislike to war of the various peoples of the earth is growing more and more manifest every day. And what more wholesome dislike could there be? For, if the shedding of blood may sometimes be necessary, it never happens without an enormous number of calamities following it. And how much greater will these calamities become with the immense standing armies of to-day, the rapid progress of military science, and the machinery of war so multiplied and perfected ! Nothing, then, is more important than to banish from Europe the horrid spectre of war ; and all that is done to bring about this end should be considered a work of public utility."

In these words it is easily seen that the Holy Father had entered entirely into the project of a peace discussion long before the International Conference had been decided on. His influence would have powerfully contributed to the success of any meeting having in view the maintenance of universal peace. What a spectacle it would have been, and what a subject for an historical pen-picture, to see the representatives of the great nations of the earth discussing disarmament, with the legitimate leader of Christendom at their head, guiding them, and dictating with them terms of universal peace ! Judge, then, of the surprise of the world