

was war a hundred times refined and sublimated compared with what war was in the days when the Church took in hand the difficult task of reforming it and robbing it, one by one, of its avoidable horrors. Even as early as the days of Constantine, she succeeded in abolishing the wholesale massacres that followed victory. And a new spirit—the spirit which found its best expression in the courtly days of Christian chivalry—entered into war when the first Christian Emperor offered a reward to the soldier who brought his prisoner alive from the field of battle. 'Let us call to mind,' says Montesquieu, 'the massacres committed by kings and by Greek and Roman generals, the ruin of cities and nations, the ravages of Timour and Genghis-Khan, who devastated Asia; then shall we discover to what extent we are indebted to Christianity for beneficial changes in government, and in rights of war, so rudely and inhumanly defined by the law of nations. The debt of gratitude which society owes to the Church is immense, were it only for mitigating the evils of war and securing to the vanquished their lives and liberty, their laws, possessions, and religion.' Some time ago we dealt editorially with the services which, during the middle ages, the Popes rendered to the cause of humanity and international peace by the Truce of God, by the pressure of ecclesiastical penalties, and by the free use of the power which vested in the Papacy as the central court of appeal and of arbitration for the Christian world.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the benefits which the Papacy has conferred upon Christian society by freeing the slave and raising the dignity of honest labor to the height which it enjoyed in its golden age—that of the mediæval guilds at their best period. It would not be easy to overstate the physical and moral evils of the system of slavery in vogue during the pagan days of the Roman Empire. In his *History of Slavery and Serfdom*, Dr. John Kells Ingram says that, 'on a moderate computation, the slaves in Italy, in the hey-day of the Republic, reached the enormous total of 21,000,000 to a free population of only 7,000,000. The system then pursued brutalised the slave, cast a stigma upon honest labor, degraded and impoverished the poor that were free. The Church altered all that. 'Her course of action,' says Baluffi, 'was measured, not sudden nor revolutionary.' So broad and deep and festering a social sore naturally took time to heal. The Church's action on behalf of the slave resolved itself into three kinds: (1) She abolished the distinction of classes, and proclaimed the equality and fraternity of all men in the sight of God; (2) she (especially through her monastic Orders) raised the moral dignity of labor; and (3) she gave an unexampled impetus to the movement for enfranchising slaves. Not alone the priesthood, but the episcopate, were open to manumitted slaves in the early Church. The noble church of St. Vitalis (Ravenna) was dedicated to the memory of a martyred slave. The monks were the pioneers of modern free industrial life. They removed the stigma of contempt attached to labor, worked for work's sake and the love of God and neighbor, and softened and sweetened everywhere the lot of the tiller of the soil. In over forty Councils, Popes and bishops enacted laws for the protection of slaves, for their gradual emancipation, erected schools and asylums for them, sanctified their manumission by solemn religious services, and excommunicated all who attempted to deprive them of their liberty. Both in the East and the West the monks emancipated the slaves on lands given to them. Alms were collected for the enfranchisement of slaves, and the practice of manumitting them, as an act of devotion, and of leaving them their liberty by will, was encouraged by the Church everywhere. The result of all this is stated by Lecky: In the twelfth century 'slaves in Europe were very rare; in the fourteenth century slavery was almost unknown.' It had been mitigated into serfdom and villeinage. And these, in turn, gave way to the absolute liberty of the free and untied laborer.

As far back as the seventh century, Archbishop Theodore, the Pope's Legate, denounced slavery in

England. Among the numberless other ecclesiastics who, with the encouragement of the Popes, strove for the slave or serf were Las Casas, Cardinal Ximenes, Soto, Suarez, the Doctors of the Sorbonne, Cardinal Cibo, the Papal Nuncio Consalvi, the great apostle of the negroes (the Blessed Peter Claver), and, in our own time, Cardinals Lavigerie and Ledochowski. Two great religious Orders—those of the Trinity and of Our Lady of Mercy—were founded, and blessed by the Popes, the one in the twelfth century, the other in the thirteenth, for the redemption of Christians enslaved by the Mahomedans. Among the numerous Popes who issued special fulminations against the enslavement of fellow-men were St. Zachary, St. Symmachus, St. Gregory the Great, Alexander III. (whom even Voltaire honors as the subverter of slavery), Pius II., Paul III., Urban VIII., Innocent XI., Benedict XIV., and Pius VIII. The remonstrances of the last-mentioned Pope to the European Powers contributed in no small measure to the abolition of the African slave-trade and the nameless horrors of the 'middle passage.'

With the great religious revolution of the sixteenth century, the worker dropped back into dishonor. In England, slavery was restored at the Reformation, and a peculiarly terrible form of child-servitude existed in the English coal-mines till the nineteenth century was far advanced. In Scotland, after the Reformation had been firmly established, free laborers were turned in large numbers into slaves by the Acts of 1579 and 1597. The odious function was entrusted to the Kirk Sessions. A learned article in the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1899, shows that 'about six hundred little ecclesiastical courts' were, in 1597, empowered to reduce to perpetual slavery 'perhaps a tenth of the inhabitants of Scotland.' In the coal and salt mines of Scotland slavery existed till the year 1799, when it was abolished by Act of Parliament. British and German workers are now, in the dawn of the twentieth century, slowly winning back the eight hours' day and other rights and privileges which the Catholic Church had won for the sons of toil as far back as the Guild days of the middle ages.

Notes

On One Leg

The *British Weekly* (a Nonconformist organ) commends the Pope's action in regard to Modernistic errors as the only possible one; for it recognises in that rehash of old heresies the active principles of outright infidelity. On the other hand, a 'yellow' clerical writer in a Wellington politico-religious contemporary opines (with much fervid speech) that, on account of its resistance to this infidel movement, the 'Romish' Church has got one leg into the grave. Which reminds us once more of a saying of Douglas Jerrold: 'People with one leg in the grave are so terribly long before they put in the other. They seem, like birds, to repose better on one leg.'

The Idol-trade

A returned missionary, now touring New Zealand 'scaring up' funds (as our American friends put it), has much to say regarding the idolatrous practices of the people that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death in India. He might have added that a goodly number of the idols are supplied by manufacturers in Birmingham and Philadelphia who (for all we know to the contrary) may be piously subscribing to missionary funds with one hand, while polishing off a Buddha with the other. In fact, the chief market for Philadelphia-made and Birmingham-made gods is said to be India. The chief demand is (we are told) for Buddhas and Ganesas. The most expensive kind are marble Buddhas, two feet high, which sell for £12. 'The models,' says an authority before us, 'must be accurate, for the devotee of India must have all details traditionally exact, as every band, every color, every

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