

CONDITIONS OF LABOR IN THE CATHOLIC MIDDLE AGES.

When people read so much about the eight-hours working day, they are inclined to ascribe the movement to socialistic or anarchistic influences (says the *Catholic Watchman* of Madras). They forget the working-man is trying earnestly to return at least in some respects to the conditions of labor that prevailed in the Catholic Middle Ages. If their methods are not much in accordance with the order-loving Catholic Church, yet their objects have the full sanction of the great Pope of the laborers, Leo XIII.

The laborer of the Middle Ages lived in entirely different circumstances. There were no great factories, there was hardly a question of competition, and there was no work done by artificial light. His work lasted as long as there was daylight and varied considerably in accordance with the season. In the short winter days he would work no more than eight hours, whilst in the long summer days he worked sometimes double that time. Yet on an average he worked but 2852 hours a year whilst a modern workman, laboring for ten hours a day, works 3000 hours a year.

The reason is that the Middle Age workman observed all the Catholic festivals, in those days far more numerous than at present, amounting yearly to 115 free days. Though his working day was often long, yet there was not the nervous strain of the present day, and he was not merely part of a machine but an intelligent worker, and his average of working-hours during the year was considerably smaller than that of our workers. Even the free Saturday afternoon which they are clamoring for now is a relic of the olden days when the festival started with first Vespers on its vigil and the Catholic workman was given his opportunity to attend the services and go to confession.

Again the Trade Unions so powerful at the present day are but a substitute for the old guilds where master and man met amicably and where differences were settled by the voice of all interested. We talk about democracy: would to God we had the democracy of the Middle Ages when Catholic principles were the foundation of life in all its aspects. There are not many social students among us—all C.T.S. tracts are read except those belonging to the Social Series. With the result that Catholics know little or nothing about social questions and their history, and that they are easily led to believe that it is "democracy" that is ruling the world without the Church, whilst, as a matter of fact, after four centuries of Reformation people have lost their faith and their money, and they cannot find anything better than to go back to the despised methods of the Catholic Middle Ages.

Lay apostles should make it their duty to study social questions, for many a Catholic young man thinks that the social enlightenment of the present day prevents him from being a faithful Catholic and the ignorances by which we permit souls to be lost is sinful. Whatever good there is in the present social movement is based on Catholic principles: whatever evil there is in it is the sad heritage of the Reformation. If you want to talk and think sensibly about social matters, then begin by reading the great Encyclical of Leo XIII. on the condition of the working people, called by its first phrase *Rerum Novarum*; and your eyes will be opened to the marvellous light shed there on social questions, and you will have to admit that without the Church the world at large, and the worker in particular, will have no chance.

The memory of our purest and noblest joys remains with us like a fountain of perpetual youth, while that of the wrong we have done is the only pain which follows us with unrelenting persistence.—*Brilliant from Spalding*.

O Mother of God! if I place my confidence in thee, I shall be saved; if I am under thy protection, I have nothing to fear; for the fact of being thy client is the possession of a certainty of salvation which God grants only to those He means to save.—*St. John Damascene*.

IRISH REGIMENT SAVES THE DAY.

The *New York World* writes as follows of the 69th Regiment of New York (Irish), forming part of the "Rainbow" Division of the U.S. Army:—

Down at Camp Mills were a number of old Rainbow men who welcomed with cheers the place where they got their intensive training. Because of the quarantine regulations they were not able to talk to relatives and friends, but all were buoyantly cheerful. The spirit of all was put in the ecstatic words of one: "We can close our eyes and see a big strip of h—, but this is sure a little bit of heaven!" A combined impression gained by those who were permitted to talk to the returning warriors on the boat emphasised the realisation that the "fighting Irish" of New York's Old 69th are the fated heroes of France. No matter where they swept into battle, whether brigaded with the British or French, or fighting as a 100 per cent. American unit, no matter what the odds against them, they always gave the Germans more than they could handle.

Almost single-handed, eye-witnesses said, they saved the day at the Battle of Champagne. They fought in the Argonne and elsewhere. Always the scene of their bravery was carpeted with German dead. Their own losses were appalling, one non-commissioned officer placing the casualties, killed, wounded, and missing, at 2000.

Private Ray Davis, of Chicago, attached to the famous 149th Artillery, told how the French christened the 69th the "Green Devils." He explained:—"We furnished the artillery support for the 69th. You folks have heard a lot of this bunch of New York Irish. But I was there in the Champagne—and I tell you the Light Brigade had only a skirmish in comparison with their task! The Boches were sweeping forward, and it seemed impossible to stop them. The French Blue Devils were fighting in the line. They retreated no disgrace to them—and said to the Irish, 'Come on. You can't stop them.' The 69th replied, 'To — with the Germans: follow us!'"

"They stayed right there, and with the aid of our artillery, held, and then swept back the German hordes. The 69th was cut up, but they exacted terrible cost. In front of their positions one could see nothing but dead and dying men in the grey-green Hun uniform."

Corporal Walsh said he was standing near "Jim" McKenna, beloved major in the 69th, when the latter cried, "Oh, my God!" and collapsed. When Walsh reached him he was dead, a victim to shell-shock. Father Duffy, the famous regimental chaplain, was wounded slightly in the Argonne campaign. Walsh said he is recuperating in a base hospital in Bordeaux.

"FIRST WOMEN" WERE IRISH.

The first woman to whom a public monument was erected in America was "Margaret of New Orleans," who was Margaret Houghery, nee Gaffney, a native of Ireland. A statue commemorating this noble woman stands in a public square in the city of New Orleans.

The first woman to fight for American liberty, and the first of her sex to receive a pension from the Government for services in the War of the Revolution, was an Irish woman, Margaret Cochran, the wife of John Corbin, a cannoneer in the Pennsylvania Artillery. At the siege of Fort Westington on November 16, 1776, when her husband was killed at his post, she instantly took his place, and by her dexterous handling of the gun wrought death and destruction in the ranks of the Hessians storming the fort.

The first female school teacher mentioned in American records was "the good Mistress Healy," who taught at Cambridge, in 1680. She was the wife of "William Healy, Irishman," who located in that university town as early as 1664.