

the lights of Heaven are blazing with increased splendor on ten thousand altars and give the answer of the nation to the foolish blasphemer.

BELGIUM.—Take another Catholic country, Belgium. Here we shall learn what Catholic energy can do. In 1879 the Law of Misfortune banished religion from the schools. The law was drafted by a man who had declared: 'Catholicism is a corpse that bars the way of progress and will have to be thrown into the grave.' This law excluded all religious instruction and debarred all graduates from the religious schools from the teaching professions. The Catholics arose—bishops, priests, and people. It was the beginning of the long vacation. They declared: 'This is not a time for speeches and deputations, but for actions. We must by the end of the vacation have a Catholic school, even if only a shed, by the side of every State school in Belgium.' They gave up tobacco, etc., to help the cause, and hired and opened sheds and halls and rooms, and wonderful to tell, when the schools reopened, by the side of every State school there was a Catholic school—and the Catholics triumphed.

In 1884 (the next elections) the Government was put out of office and Catholics took the reins and have held them ever since. The result the whole world knows to-day. 'We shall astonish the world by our moderation,' said one leader; and this has been their strength. 'Love thy neighbor,' was the basis of all their work. Article 14 of the Belgian Constitution reads: 'The freedom of religions and their public exercise, as well as the right to the expression of opinions on all subjects are guaranteed, with the exception of misdemeanors committed in exercising this liberty,' State and religious schools are equal; power is not used unjustly; sectarianism is unknown. In secondary religious colleges there are 18,000 pupils—in State secondary colleges 6000.

I may be permitted to point out here the Catholic principles by the application of which Belgium attained her strength of nationhood. Within ten years the Catholic legislators, most of whom were trained in the Catholic University of Louvain, had revised the Constitution.

Belgium and Labor.

Study for a moment another phase of nation-building—the conditions of the worker. Take their treatment of labor problems so prominent among us to-day. I shall tabulate a few of their measures. Universal suffrage was passed modified thus: (1) Every Belgian had one vote. (2) Every Belgian who was married and had some property had two votes. (3) Every Belgian able to give certain proof of education had three votes. (4) She has proportional representation of all parties. Speaking of this, a famous French lawyer said: 'We have before us the most complete body of legislation which the history of this century can show in any country.' The Government thoroughly investigated the conditions of labor and laws were passed regulating workshops, trades unions, pensions for working men, insurance against accidents while at work, Sunday rest. In 1895 a special Department of Labor was created, and legislation followed on. Working men's dwellings, wages, the abolition of the truck system, the illegality of attaching or assigning wages, labor inspection, child labor, woman labor, a law of conditional condemnation and liberation which many larger countries have since imitated under the name of the First Offenders Act.

No Poverty.

With a population of seven and a-half millions, they have practically no unemployment and no dire poverty. Before the war the inhabitants numbered 7,000,000, all of whom were Catholics except about 28,000 Protestants and 13,000 Jews. There was a total absence of any sign of poverty. In London it is calculated that some million pounds sterling is given every year to undeserving beggars. Belgium provides labor for this class, and those who will not work are taken to a labor area and compelled to work. This keeps impostors off the streets.

A hard-headed, hard-working, progressive people,

the Belgians have attained prosperity by sheer hard work. They reclaimed 250,000 acres of marshy and sandy land to fertility and increased it in value from £6 to £60 per acre.

Railways.—They nationalised the railways, use them to develop commerce, and out of the railway revenue are able to pay the interest on their national debt. And they have the cheapest travelling rates in the world. A Catholic people this, with 5419 secular priests, 6237 priests of religious Orders, 29,303 Brothers and nuns—a Catholic people living an intensely religious Catholic life and making their country one of the most progressive and prosperous in the world.

Workers' Interests.

They have 7000 miles of railway—a far greater mileage than that of England—used not merely for money-making but to help the people—e.g., (1) Commercial travellers can travel 15 days continuously for 16 shillings. (2) Men going to work pay one-fifth ordinary fare. (3) Working men's homes have special exemptions from taxes. (4) Government lends at 2½ per cent. to help men to buy their own homes. (5) Government cut down by one-half all legal expenses of transfer or sale of property where workers are concerned.

All this is attained by Catholic statesmen putting into practice the Catholic principles learned in Catholic schools and Catholic Universities from Catholic teachers trained by the Catholic Church. 'Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.' The Catholic Government of Belgium helps all to serve God as their conscience dictates, with strict impartiality. Ministers of all religions receive good salaries from the State. 'Love of the neighbor with them means a love that finds expression in action. The Church has all that is needed for right government and justice. Belgium has used her power and the whole world knows what Belgium stands for to-day.

Spain: Capital and Labor.

Let us take another Catholic country—Spain,—to see how employers, moved by Catholic principles, treat their workers. The popular idea is that Spain is backward and unprogressive. Unprogressive! Yes, if by progress you mean the presence in every town of divorce mills, grinding out murky misery, of huge industrial corporations without souls or thought for the souls of others, whose wheels grind multitudes beneath them in the depths of hopeless pauperism. But judged from a Christian standpoint, Spain certainly is progressive and cultured. Take this instance of the relation between Labor and Capital, for it is typical of the country. Mr. Joaquin Orus, manufacturer of Saragossa, has set rules for his workmen. Here are a few:—

(1) Every five hours overtime will be taken as a day and paid for as a day. (2) In weeks which have only five working days workmen will work one hour more a day and draw a full week's wages. (3) Those who have worked for two years get the following advantages:—A sick workman will get his full wages for three months; half wages for the next three months; and quarter wages for six months after that, and to have medical and druggists' assistance free, from the doctors and chemists employed by the firm. (4) If a sick worker is to receive the Last Sacraments all the employees of two years' standing will attend thereat with lighted candles. (5) If he or she dies, the employer will pay for a hearse, will pay for burial in consecrated ground, and for the saying of a Mass for the deceased. (6) Every worker who shall complete thirty years of uninterrupted service with the firm will have the right to cease work on a pension equal to half his wages, payable weekly till his death. (7) On July 16, the Feast of our Lady of Mt. Carmel, the Patroness of the factory, Mass will be said, and there will be a general Communion. If it be a working day the employees will be paid full wages and the day kept as a holiday. This date will be celebrated by a fete for the purpose of drawing closer the bonds which join together the workers and their employers.