

trouble which bids fair to loom larger than ever on the horizon of our day. Twenty-three years ago these words were written, and they are truer now than they were then. Leo XIII. did not hesitate to call the evil by its true name when he described it as a state of slavery. Five years ago Hilaire Belloc wrote a brilliant book in which he pointed out that the menace of such slavery was daily assuming more alarming proportions, and that it was fast becoming actually a State institution. "Where," he says, "there is compulsion applicable by positive law to men of a certain status, and such compulsion enforced in the last resort by the powers at the disposal of the State, there is the institution of slavery; and if that institution be sufficiently expanded the whole State may be said to repose upon a servile basis, and is a Servile State. . . . We call the Servile State that arrangement in which so considerable a number of families and individuals are constrained by positive law to labor for the advantage of other families and individuals as to stamp the whole community with the mark of such labor." In ancient times we are told that the slaves were driven by the whip and the dagger, and that enforced labor was sanctioned by positive laws. Modern slaves are not legally recognised as such, nor are they scourged by their masters. But they are compelled to slavery by the prevailing economic conditions, and they are scourged by dread of starvation in some cases, and by the dangerous conditions amid which they must labor if they will live in others. In a time when huge war profits are being made how little heed is taken of the needs of any but skilled workmen! The cost of food has increased by fifty per cent., but there is no corresponding increase in the workman's wages. The sovereign has lost fifty per cent. of its purchasing power, but who takes this into account when dealing with the laborers? And because there is no consideration of these circumstances the unrest daily becomes more acute. At the root of the social problem, as at the root of the war, is the same want of Christian charity which makes it possible to have amongst us at this age of the world the existence of such conditions. The following extracts from a report of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations is ominous reading:—

"The rich, comprising two per cent. of the people, own sixty per cent. of the wealth."

"The middle class, comprising 33 per cent. of the people, own thirty-five per cent. of the wealth."

"The poor, comprising sixty-five per cent. of the people, own FIVE per cent. of the wealth."

The same is proportionately true of England. And of such countries Bishop Huntington declared: "A society that has all its property at the top and all its discontent at the bottom will tumble over into ruin." According to an American expert Persia, Egypt, Babylon, and Rome all collapsed after the wealth had accumulated in the hands of the few. It is small wonder considering all these indications that serious thinkers believe that when the great war is over many countries will have to face a social upheaval in comparison with which even the war may become insignificant. And the worst of it is that no warning is of any avail. As long as men deliberately set Mammon before God Christian charity will never have a chance to make all things right in the world: the *Auri sacra fames* will continue to turn men into wolves until the day comes when the Master demands the life of the last of the fools.

How the Empire is Governed

When we remember that the cables sent out to us are controlled by the British Government, and that, as a consequence, they represent the principles and intelligence of our rulers, we necessarily think furiously. Are we now governed by a gang of men who not only have not the courage to tell the truth but who openly admit that they must have a controlled press which shall publish not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, but only what

suits the Government? From what we know of the press campaign and of the methods which Mr. Asquith in the name of honor and truth condemned we must conclude that such indeed is the Lloyd George Government. It is a sad state of things when we must recognise that the Northcliffe "corner," which controls not only the press but also the politicians, is so unreliable and so prone to lies about Ireland and about Catholics that we cannot attach the slightest importance to what we now read as news. Mr. Chesterton says we are governed by Guy Fawkes, and his words are worth reproducing here. This is how he analyses present day Governments in England:—"A curious confused attempt to combine the immunity and even anonymity of private life with the fame and applause of public life; a touchy self-importance which screams like a cockatoo when criticised; a sheer mental breakdown in the presence of any general principle; and ignorance of history; and ignorance of humanity; a congested combination of the two stupidities of thinking everybody like oneself and thinking oneself better than everybody; and finally a complete failure of moral courage and an inability to face the music. These are Business Governments; and there will be a great many more of them. But of all the examples of such futility the most striking of all and most symbolic has been the last feature of the Northcliffe press. They and other journalists have actually begun to make the solidarity of the Irish bishops in the Irish unity an excuse for the old nonsense of No-Popery. They have actually begun to burn poor old Guy Fawkes in effigy; simply because they want some guy on which to get rid of their irritation at having made a very bad blunder; the blunder about conscription for Ireland. . . . The main mark of this sort of thing is weakness, both moral and mental; the moral weakness of making a mistake and blaming somebody else for it; and the mental weakness of an ignorant and idiotic choice in the matter of the party to be blamed. Nothing is more certain or more self-evident than that the Irish people were against conscription before there was even any question of the Irish priests. The commonsense way of stating the case is not to say that the bishops are leading everybody, or leading anybody, in the matter; it is to say that everybody has moved in the same direction in this matter, even the bishops. It is a plain question of dates, facts; chronology and concrete history. Nobody moved more early or more eagerly in the matter than the anticlericals. The clerical element moved if anything rather late; and its only effect on the movement would be to moderate it. It moved hardly so much because it was national as because it could not be expected to be violently anti-national. *If the Roman Catholic bishops in Ireland had really blessed conscription it would have been exactly as if the whole bench of Anglican bishops in the House of Lords had risen and pronounced a public benediction on Germany, the day after the invasion of Belgium.*"

In his usual brilliant way Mr. Chesterton puts the whole truth of the matter in a nutshell. He knows, as every honest Englishman knows, that Ireland stands exactly in the same relation to England as Belgium does to Germany at the present day; and he is not afraid to tell the truth about it. If any confirmation were needed to assure Catholics that the bishops are right the inane criticism of our own press would be enough. Mr. Chesterton's words not only throw light on the wonderful ways of them that govern, but they also get at the root of the ignorance and bigotry and savagery from which the present No-Popery movement springs. No-Popery is rampant everywhere—although such a good judge as "Civis" has paid us the compliment of attributing it to the *Tablet* in New Zealand. But there is no need to worry. The opposition of the gang is the surest sign that Catholics have at present a healthy sense of their duty.

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