

question of heredity,' he said, 'which for so long had acted as almost a paralysing factor where efforts for social elevation by means of child-saving was concerned, it was now held by students that the acquired characteristics of the parents were not transmitted to the children. All that the children received was a predisposition. That was all. And if they could get the children at their earliest age and bring them into touch with all that was good and noble the probability was that they would win those children away from sin, overcome any vicious tendencies which had been imparted to them, and give them a new inheritance and greater opportunities in life.'

*

That is only another way of saying that after making the fullest allowance for the influence both of heredity and environment there is an element in every one of us that cannot be expressed or explained in terms of any mere mechanical theory. As Wordsworth has it:

'Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, Who is our home.'

The great fact of conscience, with its persistence and its pervasiveness, witnesses to the same truth. Even in the case of apparently hardened criminals, where both heredity and environment have operated against it, the better nature will make itself heard. The dialogue between the two murderers in Shakespeare's *King Richard III.*—who, though 'their eyes drop mill-stones, when fools' eyes drop tears,' have yet 'some certain dregs of conscience' within them—is true to the life.

'First Murderer.—So when he opens his purse to give us our reward, thy conscience flies out.

'Second Murderer.—Let it go. There's few or none will entertain it.

'First Murderer.—How if it come to thee again?

'Second Murderer.—I'll not meddle with it. It is a dangerous thing. It makes a man a coward. A man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; he cannot swear, but it checks him. 'Tis a blushing, shamefaced spirit that mutinies in a man's bosom. It fills one full of obstacles; it made me once restore a purse of gold that I found; it begs any man that keeps it; it is turned out of all towns and cities for a dangerous thing.

'First Murderer.—Zounds, it is even now at my elbow.'

These are facts and phenomena which the materialists' theory has never been able to explain.

*

Mr. Davies declared himself in favor of a large measure of religious instruction in the schools, and incidentally gave unstinted praise to the action and attitude of the Catholic Church regarding education. We quote the concluding portion of his remarks on the subject:—'With regard to religious instruction, he believed that three-quarters of the child's education, up to seven years of age, should be religious. Therefore, he believed religious instruction should be imparted by the schools. Up to seven years of age the spiritual faculties of the child could best be ministered to, and if they sought social betterment they were overlooking their opportunities in this respect. He had always admired the business-like and scientific way in which the Church of Rome dealt with the question of educating the child. Realising the importance of the subject, that Church had engaged certain learned men to study the training of children and all that pertained thereto. Those men had taken thirteen years to do their work, but they had done it well, and had produced a great book dealing with their subject, which was regarded as an authority.'

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THE CHURCH AND LABOR

ACTION OF CATHOLICS IN MANY LANDS

In the course of an address delivered at a meeting of the Young Men's Society in St. John's Hall, Wigan, on January 9, Mr. Augustine Watts, M.A., dealing with the question of what the Catholic Church had done for labor in modern times, said:—The Catholic press in Germany is of excellent ability. It has in the last fifty years advanced by leaps and bounds. The Catholic clergy have been among its most brilliant, well-informed, and judicious contributors. In Germany there are no end of Catholic Workmen's Associations, Catholic savings and credit banks, Catholic associations of factory girls, and Catholic associations of capitalists and working men mixed. They have a vast agricultural league with a newspaper, co-operative stores, banks of their own, and every weapon which sagacity and devotion can devise for the protection of common interests. In Austria the doctrines of Ketteler were soon taken up and spread by the Catholic newspaper *Das Vaterland* and other agencies. The reorganisation on a Christian basis of the industrial system is the aim laid down in a Catholic Congress at Vienna. Of this first Austrian Congress Prince von Lechtenstein and Count Egbert Belcredi were moving spirits. But Austrian Catholic endeavors owe most to Baron von Volgesang, a thorough convert to our Faith. Volgesang by an investigation into labor conditions revealed cruel truths and drove the Austrian Diet forward on the path of social reform. Industrial laws passed in 1883 were the first great victory of Austria's Catholic reformers. In 1885 they secured a limitation of the work of women and children, and reduced the general working day to eleven hours. Count Kuetstein, another Austrian, pleaded in 1890 at Liège for an international regulation of wages, and the length of the working day. The Jesuits and Dominicans in Austria have labored hard in the same sense.

In Switzerland the part taken by the Catholics in the labor movement has been unsurpassed. From 1868 Cardinal Mermillod, then Bishop of Hebron, strove, and strove for twenty years after, to bring home to statesmen and capitalists the urgency of healing the wounds and ailments of the toiling poor. But

Switzerland's Great Catholic Champion

of the working man is Gaspard Decurtins, in whom the most unflinching purpose is joined to rare economic culture and elevation of mind. 'Hunger,' he said, 'is neither Catholic nor Protestant.' Decurtins's influence on legislation has been enormous. He has the support of his countrymen, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. He has been praised by Pope and Cardinals, and social workers everywhere. In 1887 the Swiss Bishops unanimously called upon the clergy to help in founding labor associations. Aided by Decurtins, the Swiss Catholics founded the University of Fribourg, Father Weiss, a Dominican, being appointed to the chair of political economy. Weiss is one of the most earnest of the pioneers who are working towards a solution of the labor question.

The more numerous and venturesome of the French Catholic Labor Party follow Comte de Mun, one of the finest speakers in the French Chamber or the world. He and his comrade-in-arms, de la Tour du Pin Chambly, founded, after the war in 1870, the famous Catholic Workmen's Clubs, and the Catholic Association, out of which has sprung a group of Catholic economists, as sound on facts and figures as on the principles of the Catholic Faith. Old soldier as he is, de Mun has kindled soldierly fire, and courage, in the hearts of the Catholic workmen of France. In 1878 he said: 'Speculation invades everything; conflict without truce has replaced healthy emulation; pauperism spreads like a leprosy. And this is in the interests of Liberalism! the liberty of the Revolution, in other words, the liberty of force, the liberty which eats away the life of the social organism.' 'The guild system,' in his opinion, 'can alone restore industrial peace.' The law of March 21, 1884, by which Trade Councils were instituted in France, was the work of Comte de Mun and his partisans. He brought up Bills to protect working men and children, but chiefly to safeguard the adult workman. The French Father G. de Pascal advocates a fixed minimum family wage, a wage, namely, sufficient not only for the individual himself but for his home as well. Catholic opinion in France is divided between free guilds, composed of workmen Catholic or neutral in religious matters, and statutory guilds comprising all wage earners of a trade, Catholic and red revolutionary atheist alike. Comte de Mun and his followers favor statutory and compulsory all embracing guilds. Yet Léon Harmel, a great Catholic capitalist, devoted to his workpeople as they are to him, writes: 'We will not on any account accept compulsory guilds.'

In Belgium

Catholic reformers are practical and take less account of theories than is taken elsewhere. The Belgian Catholic Party has been in power for 26 or 27 years. Opposed to Socialism, it has flung aside the Liberal principle of *laissez faire*, and the iniquity of sacrificing the laborer on the unblest altar of supply and demand. The Belgian Catholics have in their Democratic League a most powerful labor

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