

attention to the foundation of co-operative societies, popular libraries, labor bureaus, workmen's gardens, and the like all over the country. (3) *Le Sillon* (the furrow), the well-known and highly original association founded in 1894 by M. Marc Sangnier, which has become a focus of social, popular, and democratic action. The members proclaim and propagate, with great enthusiasm, the two-fold idea that democracy is the type of social organisation which tends to the highest development of conscience and of civic responsibility in the individual, and that this organisation needs Christianity for its realisation. In this, as in the last mentioned association, the cell of the organism consists in the 'study circle.' (4) *Action Liberale*, led by M. Piou, is a political party which has also a social side, and which is meeting with very great success. It writes, it lectures, and it organises. It comprises more than 200,000 adherents, and in the Chamber elected in 1906 there were 77 deputies belonging to this association. (5) Lastly, there is *L'Action Populaire*, the united effort of a number of distinguished Catholic publicists and sociologists to encourage and promote all healthy forms of associations among all classes of workers. It has published an important collection of brochures and tracts which forms a perfect reference library for those who wish to study social Catholicism, and an invaluable source of information for those who wish to become active workers in the movement.

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Belgium is one of the most Catholic, as it is one of the most prosperous and progressive countries in the world; and its advanced legislation is now fairly well known. We give a brief list, compiled a few years ago by Father Van Der Heyden, of the work done in the interests of the laboring classes by the Catholic party since they assumed the reins of power. According to this, the Catholic party 'exempted all working men's homes from taxation, so that 52 per cent. of Belgian homes pay no personal taxes whatsoever. It passed a Bill pensioning aged workers, and at the present writing—one year after the passage of the said Bill—177,000 old men and women enjoy the benefit of this pension. It reduced to one-fifth of a cent per mile the railroad fares of working men going to or coming from their work, whilst any other citizen pays one cent per mile in third class coaches, and almost three cents per mile in first class. It cut down by one-half, where working men are the interested parties, the legal expenses attendant upon the sale or transfer of property. It empowered the State to make loans at an interest of 2½ per cent., with every facility for payment of capital and interest, to help working men in securing their own homes. Eighteen thousand working men have in this way become proprietors of their own homes in the last thirteen years, and the Government has 9,000,000 dol. standing out now on these homes—an immense sum, considering the size of the country. It must be added that if the Government loans at 2½ per cent., where a working man wishes to buy or build a home for himself, it pays him 3 per cent. for the money he leaves with it at the postal savings bank.' We have only to add that, in relation to what is known more particularly as the social problem, Catholic reformers in Belgium have devoted themselves chiefly to the advocacy and application of the principle of co-operation in industries hitherto carried on by individual capital. A society of the 'Aumoniers du Travail' (labor chaplains) has been founded by the priests under the Abbé Pottier for the specific object of studying social problems in their practical aspect, and of sharing as far as possible the actual conditions of existence amongst the working classes. The Abbé Mellaerts has devoted himself to the task of organising the Belgian peasants and, adapting the principles of co-operation to their lot, has founded co-operative creameries, co-operative productive societies, co-operative supply associations, village banks, etc. Co-operative societies, societies of Catholic employers, societies of Catholic workmen, Catholic associations, are to be found in every town and in every village; and these have all been linked up into one vast and powerful labor federation under the title of the 'Belgian Democratic League.'

Work of this order—the same in spirit and in kind, if not always so impressive in extent—is being done in other Continental countries. In England and America, too, the leaven is working; and on every hand Catholic priests, press, and laymen, are making determined efforts to cultivate and develop the 'social sense.' A constant and characteristic feature is the guiding influence and fostering interest of the Church in the whole social movement—emphasising, as she has always done, the fact that the social question is to be solved not so much by economic, as by moral and religious forces. The Church, like her Divine Founder, 'has compassion on the multitude.' She loves her working man; and to-day, as ever, shows herself as the good Samaritan to wounded humanity. She does not, as Mr. Chesterton aptly says, 'assert that she has got better people than are to be found elsewhere, but that such as they are she has got them.' 'I do not say,' he continues, 'that freethinkers are bound to be scoundrels; I say they are not bound to be anything. I do not say that the Catholic lamb of mercy is more white, or woolly, or energetic, than many evolutionist lambs. I say it is in the ark. And I say that the evolutionist lambs are being drowned visibly before my eyes. I am looking ahead, I am thinking how all this chaotic morality will turn out. I know what is safe. If the Church exists ten million years hence, amid alien costumes, and incredible architecture, I know that it will still put the oppression of the poor among the four sins crying to heaven for vengeance.'

Notes

Greetings

Best wishes to our readers for the choicest blessings of Christmastide, and for fullest measure of happiness and prosperity in the coming year.

Anglicans and the Sacramental Wine Question

Further evidence is to hand to show that if at any time there should be any trouble in regard to the importation of fermented wine for sacramental purposes Anglicans will join hands with Catholics in unyielding opposition to such an invasion of Christian rights. We have already quoted the Acting-Primate's declaration on the subject; and, in addition, the following notice was read at St. Peter's Anglican Church, Willis street, Wellington, the other Sunday:—'The Rev. R. B. Hammond, who is a priest of the Church of England, is reported to have said that before long "the Churches will not use alcohol for sacramental purposes (as indeed my own Church does not now)." In view of the disquiet which has been caused by these words, I am glad to be able to state that the Bishop of Christchurch, Acting-Primate of the Church of New Zealand, has forwarded to the Press Association an explicit denial of the truth of these words, so far as they can be said to refer to the Church of England. I might here say that the Church follows our Lord's command, and uses, and orders the use of, ordinary fermented wine at the Holy Communion. Without the use of such wine the Holy Communion could not be celebrated, as our Lord gave it to us, and according to the rites of the Anglican Church, to use unfermented wine in opposition to our Lord's command would be presumption and a mockery.'

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

Very Rev. Dean Smyth, S.M., who had been on a visit to Dunedin, left for the north on Thursday of last week.

Rev. Father Liston, Rector of Holy Cross College, Mosgiel, preached an impressive discourse on the 'Dignity of the Priesthood' at St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday evening.

Miss Minnie Paton, L.A.B., A.T.C.L., who has been appointed music teacher at the Wanganui College, is a pupil of St. Dominic's College, Dunedin. This young lady received her entire musical education from