

write and ask upon what evidence such a heading had been framed. We made up our mind rather to wait and see. And we had not long to wait for a complete exposure of the headline-man. A cable dated London, June 13, came along and told us that *the three men killed were Catholics and that it was thought they were killed for attacks on the police.* Here it is:

"London, June 13.

A mystery surrounds the execution of three civilians. Armed parties in motor cars dragged the men from their beds and shot them near their homes, and then carried the bodies to lonely fields outside the city. The victims were Catholics, and it is believed that their deaths were reprisals for recent attacks on the police.—A. and N.Z. cable."

To what an abyss of rottenness Colonial journalism has sunk when such blackguardism should be possible! Is that worthy of the traditions of a press that has some conceit of itself, even if it is scoffed at as hypocritical from the Golden Horn to Cape Finisterre? Whatever it is, the fact remains that it is for us a valuable indication of the sort of dealing we may expect at the hands of our daylies. Nothing more useful happened since Mr. Robinson caught the forger, "Civis" red-handed.

FIFTEENTH-CENTURY VILLAGERS

(By WALTER DWIGHT, S.J., in America.)

Catholic social students can always read with great profit books which give a faithful picture of the life led by the villagers and burghers of Europe during the Middle Ages. Whatever will bring vividly before us again the true character of the medieval craft guilds, for example, and whatever will make us realise better the large share that the Catholic Faith had in the daily life, say, of the men and women who dwelt in the towns and villages of fifteenth-century England should be eagerly welcomed by Catholic social students of to-day. It is chiefly by the study of such books as Cardinal Gasquet's *Parish Life in Medieval England* and his *Evolution of the Reformation*, Father Husslein's *Democratic Industry*, H. F. Westlake's *The Parish Guilds of Medieval England*, Lugo Brentano's *History and Development of Guilds*, and the second volume of Janssen's *History of the German People* that our sociologists can get an adequate idea of what an immense economic and social disaster was the religious upheaval caused by Martin Luther and his imitators. For the heresiarchs of the sixteenth century not only rent asunder the seamless robe of Christian unity, which many well-meaning non-Catholics of to-day are trying the wrong way to make whole again, but the first Protestants by plundering the Church, robbing the poor, and ruining the guild system, completely disorganised the social and economic life of Europe, made way for the royal despots of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, created in countries like England the rapacious "new nobility" and prepared the way for the "poor laws," which made indigence a crime, and substituted for the Church's motherly care of Christ's poor the State's heartless "relief system."

Two New Books.

Two valuable additions to the above list of books are Edwin Benson's *Life in a Medieval City and Old Village Life* by the Rev. P. F. Ditchfield, M.A., two non-Catholic authors who write, as a rule, with remarkable sympathy and understanding about the customs, usages, and manner of life which prevailed in England long before the name of Protestant was ever heard of. To give his readers an idea of how the medieval burghers lived, Mr. Benson offers them an excellent study of the city of York as it was in the fifteenth century. He first describes the city's advantageous geographical and military position at the junction of the Ouse and the Foss, making it the natural centre of the North of England, and the halfway house between London and Edinburgh, shows how great was York's ecclesiastical importance, for the city has been since 735 the see of an archbishop, who is the metropolitan of the North. It was graced by the massive and beautiful Minster of St. Peter, 500 feet long, with a central tower

200 feet high, and its magnificent choir with the marvellous east window: the completed edifice, though parts of it were built at different times, possessing a "felicitous unity of general design, and a perfectly wonderful diversity of sectional design." Then there was the Minster's counterpart, the Benedictine Abbey of St. Mary, but little inferior in magnificence to the Cathedral. The Dominicans, the Carmelites, the Augustinians, and the Franciscans early had their Friaries in York, the Benedictine nuns had the Priory of St. Clement, there were more than 50 parish churches and chapels, and in addition the hospitals which the Sisters managed, besides the numerous convents full of nuns.

Mr. Benson's little book gives a vivid picture of how universally the Catholic Faith pervaded the lives of medieval York's citizens. He writes:

"The Church came into the people's life daily. The citizen could not walk away from his home without seeing a church, and meeting a priest or a friar. He attended the Church services and fulfilled his religious duties. Baptism, marriage, death, illness, public rejoicing, soldiering, dramatic entertainments, the language of daily life—all these bore the stamp of the Church. The very days of relief from work were holy days, feast days in the Church's calendar. Taking part in the public processions on Corpus Christi Day, a great annual holiday, was a religious exercise; at the same time this day was devoted especially to entertainment. Wills of the century show that the citizens lived as religiously as formerly."

All the city's educational work was done by the Church. Boys were taught at such institutions as St. Leonard's Grammar School, the girls at the convents, and at St. Peter's School those were educated who were to be scholars and men of influence. The poor, of course, were well taken care of by the monasteries and hospitals. We know that in the Middle Ages pauperism was unknown. Within the limits of a Christian parish, in those days, no one had to go without food and lodging. It is computed that "Of all the Church property in England, one-third was devoted to the care of the accidental poor."

The Guilds.

Mr. Benson's pages on York's business life and the character of the guilds are particularly informing. Nearly all the workmen of the city were freemen and belonged to trade guilds which were governed by strict laws. The author writes:—

"Thus, rules were laid down as to the terms of admission of men to the practice of a trade; the government of the guild and the meetings of the members and ruling committees; the moral standard of the members in their work and trafficking; the payments of masters to workers; the prices of goods to be sold to the public or other trades; the rates of fines and the amount of confiscations inflicted on those who broke the rules of their guild; the terms on which strangers, English and foreign, were to be allowed to pursue their trade in the city; whether Sunday trading was to be permitted or not; the duties of the searchers; everything incident to the share of the guild in the city's production of pageant plays. . . . There was a social side to the guilds. This appeared in the public processions and the performances of plays, the morality and mystery plays of medieval England. There was also a strong religious side to the guilds. The processions and plays were fundamentally religious. The Church's festivals were recognised as holidays. Much money was given and bequeathed for the foundation of chantries, which with their priests have their place also in the educational life of the city.

English Village Life.

Though Mr. Ditchfield's book treats of "Old Village Life" in England from the earliest times down to the end of the Great War, it is the chapters dealing with the Middle Ages and the Reformation period that the Catholic sociologist will find most valuable. In this striking passage, for example, the author describes the village guilds of the fifteenth century:—

"Although the trade guilds were founded to promote the welfare of the particular trades, such as the City Companies of London, they were deeply religious. They had their patron saint; the members met together for worship and supported a chaplain; they practised true charity, helping their brethren in distress, honoring their