



"AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM."

THE ONLY CATHOLIC PAPER PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH IN NORTH-WESTERN CANADA.

VOL. XI, No. 41.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 1896.

\$ 2.00 per Year.
Single Copies 5 cents.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY.

Exemplified by a Catholic Mill Owner.

Mr. Leon Harmel Carries Out the Principles of Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical on Labor.

"An object lesson in Christian Democracy" is the heading of an article in the Fortnightly Review which gives an interesting account of the way in which a French employer has solved the labor question on the recommendations contained in the Holy Father's famous Encyclical. The details of this notable achievement are thus set forth:

M. LEON HARMEL, THE APOSTLE OF THE WORKINGMAN.

The Catholic Democratic party in France has had a further advantage over the anti-Catholic Socialistic schools. It can point not only to principles, but to facts, not only to dreams for the future, but to accomplishments in the present, not only to what might be, but to what, at one spot at least, really is. While many men have talked and written and agitated, one man has devoted a lifetime to putting into practice at his own expense the principles which received the imprimatur of the Pope and the Labor Encyclical. This man is Leon Harmel, the owner and organizer of a certain wool-spinning factory at Val-des-Bois, near Rheims, which offers to the world an object lesson in Christian Democracy. After Comte Albert de Mun, his friend and fellow-worker, Harmel is the foremost Catholic layman of his country. He is a veritable nineteenth-century apostle of the workingman. It was he who organized the first French workingmen's pilgrimages to Rome, and who, though neither an orator by nature nor a politician by training, has spoken and lectured all over France, and far beyond her boundaries on the rights of the workingman and the duties of the capitalists, and above all on Christian faith as the sole basis of human progress and welfare.

His work has been approved by the Pope in the following terms: "I approve of all you have done in the past, all you are doing to-day, and all you intend to do."

HOW THE FACTORY AT VAL-DES-BOIS IS CONDUCTED.

To describe Val-des-Bois, and in any way to ignore, or even to slur over, the broad religious basis upon which the whole work is founded, would be to convey a totally false impression of the place. The whole establishment is as frankly and confessedly Catholic as any monastery, with the one important proviso that there is no compulsion in any form; and it is solely and entirely to their essentially Christian character that Harmel himself attributes the vast measure of social and economical success by which his various schemes have been crowned.

But before entering into details concerning some of the practical institutions that lend to Val-des-Bois its unique interests, it will be better to give some outlines of the general principles upon which Harmel has uniformly acted.

According to the Christian Democratic School the duties of an employer towards his work people are as clearly defined and as all-embracing as those of a constitutional monarch towards his subjects. Harmel starts with the assumption that all large conglomerations of workers for industrial purposes carry with them certain inherent dangers, both social and moral, against which it is the duty of the employer to guard. This can only be done through the reconstruction of the working family, consisting of both employer and employee, on a Christian basis. Whereas the whole modern industrial system of Europe and America is based on the avowed assumption of a fundamental antagonism between capital and labor, which it may or may not be possible to bridge over by human contrivances, Harmel urges their perfect identity of interests. Like Le Play, with whose ideals he has much in common, he aims at a general strengthening of family ties—even now stronger in France than they are with us—with an increase of parental authority; and, in return for services rendered, he is

prepared to entrust the employer with a far larger measure of moral authority than he enjoys at present. "To organize with wisdom and prudence, to govern with justice and charity" are the words in which he sums up the duties of the "patron."

THE WAGE QUESTION AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS—WORKMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS ON THE MODEL OF THE ANCIENT GUILDS.

The moral, religious and educational welfare of his workpeople fall as strictly within this sphere as their actual industrial labor. The "patron" has only fulfilled a portion of his duty when he has paid fair wages for work done, has provided sanitary workshops, has made provision against accidents, and abolished as far as may be, night labor. It is further his bounden duty to allow his people every reasonable facility for the fulfillment of their religious duties, to shield them from immoral influences, to disseminate wholesome and Christian literature among them, to provide them with well-built cottages, garden plots and the means of healthy recreation, to superintend the training of his apprentices, to actively encourage thrift, and, generally speaking, to come to the practical assistance of his workpeople in all cases of illness, accident or misfortune. Should neither Church nor Christian schools be situated within easy reach of his factory hands, the wealthy employer is bound to provide both the one and the other from his own resources. It is distinctly laid down that he has no right to beat down wages to the lowest market rate, for "the labor of man is not an object of barter, but a human act," and consequently is subject to moral laws. Amongst the means by which the "patron" may hope to beneficially influence his "hands," Harmel specially recommends workingmen's associations, which, as we shall see, play such an important role in the life of Val-des-Bois. But he adds the important proviso that they should be governed autonomously by the members themselves, "otherwise it would resolve itself into a patronage without initiative or action, and, as regards the workingmen themselves, without result." By degrees these associations will serve to build up a corporation somewhat on the model of the mediæval guilds, with combined economic and recreative objects, whose re-establishment in modern form it is the Utopian dream of Harmel to bring about.

GIRL WORKERS—A CONTRAST TO THE ENGLISH OPERATIVES—HEALTH AND MORALS SAFEGUARDED.

I must confess that what interested me most in the factory was the sight of the girl workers, of whom there are some 200 employed. It was almost impossible to realize that these neat, smooth-haired maidens, with placid, innocent faces, dressed in simple and convenient cotton skirts and blouses, and nearly all wearing, as their sole adornment, the much-coveted blue ribbon of the Child of Mary, belonged really to the same class as the factory girl, as we know her in the East-end of London, with her flashy clothes, her preposterous hat, her terrible fringe. The contrast was positively startling. At Val-des-Bois the girls work in quite separate sections from the men, the latter being engaged in the dyeing and spinning departments, while to the former is entrusted the charge of the winding machines. As all of these are of the most recent and improved patterns, they require comparatively few hands to serve them, and the work which demands nothing beyond attention and neat-handedness, is eminently suitable for female labor. Thus, although the French law admits children into factories at the age of thirteen, there were no signs of anaemia or physical lassitude among the workers, some of whom looked mere children. This, of course, is largely due to the hygienic conditions under which the work is carried on, and to the fact that Val-des-Bois is really situated in the open country, and that even from the factory windows pleasant glimpses of green foliage may be obtained.

But the very marked superiority of these girls is the result quite as much of their moral as of their physical conditions. Up to the age of seventeen every girl is compelled to devote one hour a day, deducted from her working hours, to self-improvement, her time being mostly spent in the manager's school

attached to the convent, while one hour a week is given to religious instruction. Inside the workshop their moral character and their general well-being are safeguarded by an organization for which M. Harmel undoubtedly deserves the greatest credit, and which obviates the most common objections to factory labor for young women. Though the girls work apart from the men, it is obvious that with endless lengths of whirling machinery, the work must be closely supervised by male engineers and male foremen.

How to protect the girls from the caprices, the possible tyranny, the familiarity, or, worse, of the men, some of whom are necessarily chosen more for their mechanical skill than for their moral character, was a problem which gave M. Harmel much anxious thought. His remedy is as simple as it is effective. The girls elect from among themselves a certain number of counsellors, three for each of the large sections. It is the duty of these counsellors, while attending to their own machines, to keep a friendly watch over the needs of their neighbors and to render them any little help that may be required. They are emphatically the servants and not the overseers of their companions. Each is possessed of a little metal token, and should any girl for any reason of health, or any valid reason whatsoever, wish to leave the factory during working hours, she applies not to the foreman but to the nearest counsellor, and once provided with the token she may pass out without hindrance. It can be seen at a glance what a protection such a system affords to young and innocent girls.

NOTES FROM LETHBRIDGE.

To the Editor of the NORTHWEST REVIEW.

Sir,—Can you allow some space to an old rambler, but, God bless us, not a wandering Jew. From the Pacific Ocean to Rat Portage, there is no other organ of St. Peter's Rock family, but your Review; it looks somewhat Jesuitical; but so much the better, the youth of the old rambler was guided by a Jesuit professor.

The old Voyageur fancies he has an item, a little one, which still may be of some interest to your readers. Indeed the incident is very insignificant for a paper like your Review, but it is a straw which shows the way a pleasant Chinook wind would blow from Rat Portage to the Rockies, if old Phoebus was left alone to do his work.

We must own, Mr. Editor, that the old wanderer is a little bit superstitious. While he believes in the genuine,—not the bogus crafty Masonic,—Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, he has a superstitious fear of fish-mongers, alias news-mongers, who are said to come from his his majesty's dominion to fish in troubled waters and make a living by it, a mean one at that rate. Your Winnipeg Tribune, a Whig, the Calgary and Edmonton chameleonic Herald, Whig and Tory according to the rays of the shining sun, a Regina fly sheet, the name of which I have forgotten, and sundry others of the same ilk, are the ghosts he dreads. When you think you have them, they vanish away in smoke. The other day they would have had drops of blood on your Winnipeg streets, and from thence all over the Northwest, were it not for the timely drops of rain which drenched the would-be warriors into drowsed chickens and kept away the curiosity crowds of idlers. I tell you, Mr. Editor, these ghosts of news-mongers fishing only in troubled waters, are dangerous phantoms. If they were not, men of all races, of all tongues and of all creeds would live peacefully and would soon repeat: how sweet it is to live like brothers.

Please come with me to Lethbridge and you will see an instance of the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. This thriving city of good coal miners, is the tower of Babel in the Northwest,—I mean for the variety of races, languages and creeds, but thanks to the gentlemen at the head of the companies, the brotherhood, the Christian one, is in the ascendancy, in spite of the bigotry of too many of the city fathers, with too honorable exceptions.

On Easter Sunday the old rambler heard a brass band, it was a surprise for the Catholic Church; he went out to hear and see strange faces. They are

not Irish nor French, nor Italian nor English, nor Scotch. They have beautiful badges. They belong to the society of St. John the Baptist. But surely they are not French Canadians. Who are they? Slavonians, Hungarians, and something else. The old wanderer goes towards the church. Who are these gentlemen going into the church with their musical instruments? They are Irish and English, Catholic and Protestant. He followed them into the church. What a gem of a Church! The priest in charge must be an artist of a refined taste. What a rich altar with its gold flowers and candelabra! What a chaste sparkling of lilies! The old wanderer wished he was a poet. The whole church is an Eden of blooming flowers, a wonder for one who comes in from the bleak desert outside. The music is worthy of the rich and flowery temple. It is real, sweet, melodious harmony, not a mere musical noise. It is true music by true artists; they are few but the quality is there. The ladies of the convent, five gentlemen and a Belgian priest, who must be a genuine Flemish musician with a fine voice, composed the choir. An old priest said Mass. He will not feel offended if the old wanderer found him an ombre which gave relief to the TABLEAU. The church was overcrowded. They could not be all Catholics. When the people went out the old rambler listened to their talk, English, French, Italian, German, Hungarian, and he does not know what else. He found out why there were many English, especially Anglicans. On the previous Sunday the minister bidding farewell to his congregation, and thanking those who had been kind to him, told his hearers that in his troubles and bereavement, the friends who had shown him the most sympathy had been the Roman Catholics. This explains why the best part of the pastorless flock came to the Catholic church for Easter. The old rambler rejoiced at it. He then told how in 'ould' Ireland, but outside of the North, there were once a priest and a parson who were great friends. The Anglican bishop was expected and the parson felt bad that he had no congregation to show to His Lordship. "Do not trouble yourself about it, I will lend you part of my congregation for the occasion." The priest the previous Sunday asked those who could read to come to early Mass, and, as the minister was kind to the poor and never interfered with their faith, he wished those who could read to go to the 11 o'clock service in the Anglican church, to go with their prayer-books, behave well, read their own prayers, listen to the Protestant bishop's sermon, but not to believe what he would say; they would thus give a good show to the parson who deserved it. They readily did so. Yours truly

OLD RAMBLER.

P. S.—In my roving expeditions I found out that the Mounted Police are a great protection. You can ramble safe all over the Northwest, but I was not aware they promoted also the refinements of civilization in this far away country. Messrs. Callaghan and Davis are of the N. W. M. P., while Messrs. Penton and Bashby belong to the blue blood of Lethbridge, and are Protestants and very obliging gentlemen. O. R.

LIBERAL CATHOLICS.

A Polite Phrase, but of Sinister Import.

Fidelity to Principle the Test of True Worth.

From the Providence Visitor.

Every now and then we hear one or another of our brethren lauded by outsiders as a "liberal, broad-minded man." This estimate is vulgarly supposed to touch the very highest round in the ladder of compliment. A sort of patent of respectability, it is sweet to the ear of the foolish recipient, but the judicious man is not puffed up by it. Too much of sinister import lies behind this polite phrase. When an outsider commends a Catholic as liberal and broad-minded, he does so because he recognizes in him a certain fraternity of view and practice, a certain aberration from strict Catholic standard. A liberal Catholic is a sorry spectacle.

Wise only in his own conceit, and hung-ering after the approbation of his non-Catholic fellows, he makes concessions to their ignorance and prejudices which he has no right to make. Of course, after the example of the Apostle of the Gentiles, we Catholics ought to make ourselves all things to all men, but never at the expense of principle. Instead of honoring the teachings of faith by an unquestioning submission interiorly and exteriorly, by a manly performance of the duties it imposes; instead of standing up for the religion of his fathers through good report and evil, he bows down before the Moloch of human respect—he prefers to carp, criticize, minimize. He concedes a point here, he yields another there, he blushingly apologizes for yet another; he lets it be understood that on others he has views of his own. He thinks Mother Church ought to be less meddlesome and more conciliatory. He resents the Pope's pronouncement about membership in certain societies. He, as an American, cannot approve of the Church's attitude on the question of education. He sets the social advantages of secular instruction above the spiritual advantages that accrue from a religious education. He wants Mother Church to sit quietly by the tomb of Saint Peter, telling her beads and never ruffling the susceptibilities of the world, though the devil reign in the market-place, though indifference spread like a blight, and though the children who ought to be brought up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" are weaned from her love and obedience.

The doctrines of the Church are not the arbitrary inventions of the Popes and Councils. The Church has a God-given message to proclaim to men. She is charged to rule, to teach, to condemn. Her duty, the reason of her being, is to make known to men the things they must believe and the things they must do in order to gain eternal life. She is the guardian of the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nation. She is charged and assisted to preserve in its pristine integrity the deposit delivered to the saints, not abating a single jot or tittle thereof, no matter how the Gentiles rage or what foolishness the nations may devise. If the world scoffs at her claims, so much the worse for the world. Faithful to her office she will still, unmoved by enemies without and faint-hearted brethren within, reprove the world of sin and of justice and of judgment, still proclaim the rights of God and the duty of man. And again, viewed intrinsically, this faith of ours which Mother Church preaches to us, is not a thing to be ashamed of. It satisfies both the head and the heart of man. It is so simple, so perfect in every detail, that it compels the homage even of its foemen. It alone gives a satisfactory answer to those questions of life and destiny which, till answered, will not down. It is a faith before which the greatest intellects in history have humbled themselves. It is this old faith of ours which has civilized the world, which upholds the rights of man, which has inspired those masterpieces of architecture and painting that are the glory of the past and the despair of the present. It was this faith, beautiful and beneficent, which was for many weary years the only solace and relief of our fathers, and which, with the remembrance of their steadfast, hearty attachment to it, is their richest legacy to their issue.

Utterly irrational in theory, the liberal Catholic is lax in practice. He leaves the sacraments to the devout female sex. His interest in the affairs of his own parish is limited to fault-finding. He thinks too many demands are made upon the generosity of the laity; he wants to know where the money all goes to, and he opines that church affairs ought to be managed more after the manner in vogue by our separated brethren. His liberalism rarely takes on the practical form of dollars and cents.

The duty of Catholics is to stick to the teachings of Mother Church without minimizing them in the least detail, to familiarize themselves according to their opportunities with the grounds of their faith and its claims to the acceptance of all men, to be loyal in word and deed to their ecclesiastical superiors, never making their real or alleged shortcomings an excuse for disloyalty; to remember that

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