

Northwest Review

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SATURDAY, AUG. 20, 1904.

Calendar for Next Week.

AUGUST.

- 21—Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost. St. Joachim, Father of the Blessed Virgin. Solemnity of the Assumption.
- 22—Monday—Octave of the Assumption.
- 23—Tuesday—Vigil. St. Philip Beniti, Confessor.
- 24—Wednesday—St. Bartholomew, Apostle.
- 25—Thursday—St. Louis, King of France.
- 26—Friday—Votive Office of the Passion.
- 27—Saturday—St. Joseph Calasancius, Confessor.

WHAT THE MONKS ACHIEVED

At the present time when our secular press, taking its cue from European anti-Catholic journals, is attempting to belittle the social work of the religious orders in order to palliate the cowardly persecution of these benefactors of humanity, we deem it opportune to place before our readers the impartial testimony of one who can have no motive but the love of truth in bearing witness in incontrovertible facts. Henry Mayers Hyndman is an ardent socialist and, what is less common, a man of varied learning and wide experience. He is no half-educated, self-made demagogue, but a graduate of Cambridge. On leaving Trinity College in that great University he first studied law, and later on was a special correspondent to the Pall Mall Gazette during the war between Prussia and Austria in 1866. Some twenty-three years ago he began publishing a series of socialistic works, among which are: England for All, The Social Reconstruction of England, Socialism and Slavery, Will Socialism Benefit the English People? The most learned of his works is the Historic Basis of Socialism in England, published in 1883. Therein occurs a passage which might almost be styled the classical defence of religious orders, a defence all the more remarkable in that it proceeds not from an honest Protestant like Maitland or Ranke, but from an unbeliever, a freethinker, a socialist leader, one of the champions of the Social Democratic Federation. It will be seen that Mr. Hyndman, in the fulness of his knowledge and the sincerity of his purpose, is indignant at the travesty of history palmed off on the Protestant world.

At pages 14 and 15 of "The Historic Basis of Socialism in England," he writes: "The relations of the Church, the monasteries and the clergy to the people were most important from every point of view. There is nothing more noteworthy in the history of the human mind than the manner in which this essential portion of English society in the middle ages has been handled by our ordinary economists, chroniclers and revisionists. Even sober and, in the main, tolerably conscientious writers, seems to lose their heads or become afraid to tell the truth on this matter. Just as the modern capitalist can see nothing but anarchy and oppression in the connection between the people and the feudal noble, so the authors who represent the middle

class economy of our time, the Protestant divines, whose creed is, the devil take the hindmost here and hereafter fail to discover anything but luxury, debauchery, and hypocrisy in the Catholic Church of the fifteenth century. It is high time that, without any prejudice in favor of that Church, the nonsense which has been foisted on to the public by men interested in suppressing the facts, should be exposed. It is not true that the Church of our ancestors was the organized fraud which it suits fanatics to represent it. . . It is not true that the great revenues of the celibate clergy and the celibate recluses were squandered, as a rule, in riotous living. As a mere question of religion, Catholicism was as good as any creed which has ever found acceptance among men. Abuses, doubtless, there were, and most of them were bitterly attacked by members of the Church themselves; but the Church, as all know, was the one body in which equality of conditions was the rule from the start. There, at least, the man of ability, who, outside her pale, was forced to bow down before some Norman baron, whose ruffianly ancestor had formed part of William's gang of marauders, could rise to a position in which this rough, unlettered, swashbuckler grovelled before him. Sixtus V. was picked up out of the gutter; our Englishman, Nicholas Breakspear, Adrian IV., was a poor laborer's son; and these are but two instances out of thousands of distinguished ecclesiastics of humble birth."

From page 16 to 19 of the same work Mr. Hyndman points out that the Church not only spent half her revenue on the poor, but did still more. "The books of the conventual establishments also show that a large portion of the income derived from their lands was spent by the monks in entertaining strangers, in relieving beggars, in attending the sick, and in other good works. Granting that other good works. Granting that large sums were wasted on the useless ceremonies of masses and candles, that some of the monasteries had a well managed refectory, and an admirable cellar of wine and beer, it is certain, nevertheless, that the abbots and priors were the best landlords in England, and that so long as the Church held its lands and its power, permanent pauperism was unknown. The general employment, which, as landlords resident among the people, they afforded, the improvements of the farms and of their own buildings which they carried out, the excellent work in road-making which they did—a task specially necessary in those times—in addition to their action as public alms-givers, teachers, doctors, and nurses, show what useful people many of these much abused monks and nuns really were. The monkish ignorance of which we hear so much, the 'drones' who slept away their lives in comfort and ease at the cost of other men's labor, were no more ignorant and superstitious than a Church of England parson, or a Wesleyan preacher and were less dependent on the labor of their fellows than Baptist orators or radical capitalists of today."

When, in the foregoing passage, Mr. Hyndman indulges in his little fling at "useless ceremonies of masses," he overlooks the sequence, as between cause and effect, between that lavish expenditure and charity to the poor. It is passing strange that, with his analytic mind, he never asked himself how it has invariably come to pass in the history of the world that those who spend most on the worship of God are always the most practical lovers of their neighbor. The New Testament, which makes charity to brother man the test of love of God would have answered that question. But a freethinking socialist cannot be expected to follow the laws of logic in all things, and these very blemishes in his testimony enhance its value.

Finally, according to Mr. Hyndman again, what was the effect of the suppression of the monasteries, begun under Henry VIII. and consummated under Elizabeth? "The poor," he writes at page 32, "who had ever obtained ready relief from the Church; the wayfarers, who could always find food and shelter

in the religious houses; the children of the people; who repaired to the convent for guidance and teaching, were deprived at one fell swoop of alms, shelter, and school. This great and powerful estate, which naturally sided with the people against the monarch and the aristocracy, now became a means of oppression in the hands of the aristocracy and the middle class. Rack-renting and usury were henceforth sanctioned instead of being denounced, and the Protestant Reformation became a direct cause of the increasing misery of the mass of Englishmen."

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Vespers, with an occasional sermon, 7.45 p.m.

Catechism in the Church, 3 p.m.

N.B.—Sermon in French on first Sunday in the month, 9 a.m. Meeting of the children of Mary 2nd and 4th Sunday in the month, 4 p.m.

WEEK DAYS—Masses at 7 and 7.30 a.m. On first Friday in the month, Mass at 8 a.m. Benediction at 7.30 p.m.

N.B.—Confessions are heard on Saturdays from 3 to 10 p.m., and every day in the morning before Mass.

C. M. B. A.

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Meets in No. 1 Trades Hall, Fould's Block, corner Main and Market Sts., every 1st and 3rd Wednesday in each month, at 8 o'clock, p.m.

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