

Leo succeeded to the Papal Chair, the Kulturkampf was at its height. He proposed a mutual understanding between Church and State, and gave practical directions to the Centrum by which it forced the repeal of every odious enactment, restored to the Prussian Hierarchy its liberty and authority and sent the Iron Chancellor to Canossa. Later the Pope was asked to arbitrate between Germany and Spain in the Caroline Islands dispute, the Emperor and Chancellor thereby emphasizing before the world their respect for the moral power of the Papacy. Leo carried out the same policy in Belgium, protesting against the abolition of the Nunciature, proposed by a Liberal Cabinet, and repelling sectarian attacks on Christian education, while at the same time exhorting the Bishops to avoid undue friction with the State. The profound respect of Belgium for the Holy See at the present day is sufficient proof of his success. Appeals were also made to the Emperors of Russia and Japan, with like results. In France too, the Pope's influence was used to reconcile all parties to the Republican form of government. Unfortunately the Catholics of that country did not rally to his counsels, thus giving the anti-religious element a chance to grasp the reins of power, with the result that at this moment we are witnessing a religious persecution which is a disgrace to Twentieth Century civilization.

The late Pope's interest in the working classes has been shown time and again. In fact, since the day when he and the German Emperor ratified the Labour Congress of Berlin, Leo has taken a most active part in the search for a clear solution of that great and delicate question of modern times—the rights and obligations of Capital and Labor. The celebrated Encyclical "On the condition of the working classes" appeared in 1891, after consultation with two eminent authorities, Cardinals Manning and Gibbons. It denounces in scathing terms abuses of Capitalism while at the same time condemning Socialism. To quote M. de Vogüé "The Holy Father (in this letter) has not indeed solved the social problem, but he has stated it more precisely than was ever done before, by tracing it to those hidden sources from which the woes of humanity spring, and he has fearlessly chosen his part with the weak and feeble, appealing to ethical—nay to Christian ideas, with no less