



ST ALPHONSUS AND THE LABORER,

IN the course of my work as a missionary, I have been brought in contact with many thousands of all classes of the community. Among them all, none have interested and encouraged me more than the laborers, who earn their living by their own hard labor. — I have often admired the beautiful examples of Christian virtue and character I have found among them ; their heroic patience and contentment with their lot ; the innocence and purity of their lives ; their noble self-denial and the sagacity of mind with which they look above this world and aspire to perfect themselves in the love of God.

This has led me to wish to do something for them. St Alphonsus in his popular instructions on the commandments and the sacraments, gives many a counsel which may contribute what little I could to lay solid foundation in some, and to increase in others what has been already well begun.

A good laborer has reason to be satisfied with his condition in life. « Why was I not born rich ? » says the poor man who has to work hard for a living. » There are the rich, with little or nothing to do, amusing themselves all day, and enjoying all the good things of life, while poor I must drudge the whole blessed day, from early morning till late at night, for a living and a scant one at that. I wish the Almighty had placed me in some better condition of life than the one I am in. — My friend, you who talk in that way, you do not think what you are saying. Instead of complaining of the good God, if your eyes could only be opened to see things as they really are, your heart would leap for joy, and your tongue would praise Him that you have not been made rich, or anything, but just what you are. For the truth is, your condition of life is one of the very best in which God could place you, and it is a great privilege for you to be in it rather than in any other.

Let us look into it, and see how this is. I dare say you remember that among almost the first words of the little catechism,