

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE SOCIAL QUESTION.

The Rev. Dr. Barry read a paper at the Catholic Conference on June 30th, 1890, from which I take the following extracts as illustrative of the rising feeling on this subject in the Catholic Church. The Rev. Dr. Barry began by defining the proletariat as those who have only one possession—their labour. Those who have no land, and no stake in the land, no house, and no home except the few sticks of furniture they significantly call by the name, no right to employment, but at the most a right to poor relief; and who, until the last 20 years, had not even a right to be educated unless by the charity of their "betters." The class which, without figure of speech or flights of rhetoric, is homeless, landless, propertyless in our chief cities—that I call the proletariat. Of the proletariat he declared there were hundreds of thousands growing up outside the pale of all churches.

He continued: For it is frightfully evident that Christianity has not kept pace with the population; that it has lagged terribly behind; that, in plain words, we have in our midst a nation of heathens to whom the ideals, the practices, and the commandments of religion are things unknown—as little realised in the miles on miles of tenement-houses, and the factories which have produced them, as though Christ had never lived or never died. How could it be otherwise? The great mass of men and women have never had time for religion. You cannot expect them to work double-tides. With hard physical labour, from morning till night in the surroundings we know and see, how much mind and leisure is left for higher things on six days of the week? . . . We must look this matter in the face. I do not pretend to establish the proportion between different sections in which these things happen. Still less am I willing to lay the blame on those who are houseless, landless, and propertyless. What I say is that if the Government of a country allows millions of human beings to be thrown into such conditions of living and working as we have seen, these are the consequences that must be looked for. "A child," said the Anglican Bishop South, "has a right to be born, and not to be damned into the world." Here have been millions of children literally "damned into the world," neither their heads nor their hands trained to anything useful, their