

carrying lighted torches, and when they saw the strange new scene, the manger filled with hay, the ox and ass standing in their places, the Virgin and her Child, and heard their hymns or carols sung by St. Francis and his friars, we read that "they poured forth praise to God for his wondrous love to man."

Indeed, the effect upon the people was so wonderful, that we are told that St. Francis stood by the manger all night long, sighing for joy, and giving God thanks that by this means the hearts of the people had been touched. This is the first account of a *mystery* in Italy. In England, the mystery, miracle, and morality plays, arose much in the same way. The clergy wished to bring home to the people the great facts of Bible history, and the lives and legends of the saints. So, on great festivals, when the time came for the lessons, it was not *read* but *realised*—acted in the Church by the clergy, while the choir sang appropriate hymns and carols. When the crowd became too great, the plays were removed from the inside to the outside of the Church, and finally, when the people began to trample on the graves in the churchyards, platforms were erected in unconsecrated ground, and gradually the laity began to take part, and the plays became most popular, until the Reformation put a stop to them. The connection between the original service in the Church and the plays was kept up by the carols and hymns of the choristers, and as many of the plays have been found in MS., we have become possessed of the carols found in them. By the 15th century, carol singing at Christmas was widely spread all over England. Many of the carols which have come down to us from this time contain Latin words, and some are half Latin half English, speaking of the days when the Church service was still used in Latin, and when the wish began to have it in "a language understood of the people." One very curious carol of the 15th century has for the last line of each verse the first line of some well known Latin hymn—

"A babe is born, all of a Maid,
To bring salvation unto us,
No more are we to sing afraid,
Veni Creator, Spiritus," etc.

Many good carols come from Elizabethan era, one by Southwell, a Jesuit priest, imprisoned in the Tower.

The 18th century brought us very few carols, but during the 19th there has been a great revival of them, and many modern carols are very beautiful and spirited. Other countries, too, have their own, for wherever Christmas is kept at all, it is kept with singing.—"A. E. C." in *The Dawn of Day*.

A TIME OF OPPORTUNITY.

(From *St. Andrew's Cross*.)

These are times which are glorious for brave men, and terrible for cowards. They are distinctly the times of opportunity, and opportunity is all that the brave man wants. He does not want possession, he does not want condition, He does not want anything that keeps him still in his seat or standing where he is. What he wants is a gate open, an opportunity; for the joy of the brave man is not in having, but in winning. These are the times when the gates are open, when the bugle-call sounds, when the brave man feels his heart stir within him, and the coward looks to find the place where he can get under the baggage waggon.

What are the opportunities of the present time?

As we look on the world's face to-day, its distinguishing feature is the expression of discon-

tent. The poor, as never before, are discontented with their poverty. The rich, and God be thanked for this, are beginning to be discontented with their riches. The ignorant man is discontented with his ignorance, and the wise men of this day seem profoundly discontented with their wisdom. Men are discontented with the State, even with the Republic. Men are discontented with the Church. Men are discontented with society. And men are, more than ever, discontented with sin. More than ever before, they realize that the curse of poverty, and the curse of riches, the curse of ignorance, and the curse of knowledge, the shortcoming of the Church and the imperfection of the State, all go back, after all, to sin. Think of the literature of to-day; the newspaper literature, the periodical literature, the books that are published the meetings that are held, the addresses that are made—they all evidence the spirit of discontent, which means that men are waking up that eyes are opening, that hearts are warming, that fetters are dropping. Discontent is the feature of this present time.

And, arising out of this discontent, when a man's condition is well-nigh intolerable, when the burden is grievous upon him, he feels, as he did not feel in that former period of discontent, before our Lord came on earth, that discontent shall be unto uprising and betterment, and as he turns his eyes to his neighbor, his neighbor's eyes turn to him, and he reads in them the same story. And then comes from the heart the cry, "Thy cause in my cause, and thy cause is my cause." So men are drawn together in these days as never before. There is breathing out in men to-day, as never before the spirit of fraternity. It is shown in a thousand ways; foolish some of them; ephemeral, many of them, some holding on a little by the fringe of the garment of truth, some of them grasping it, indeed, and promising to become helps to the manifestation of the truth as to these conditions with which we are so discontented.

And as this discontent breeds the spirit of fraternity in earnest men, there grows up the tendency to organization. Organization is a long word. Organization has been a very much abused word. Organization means of course, just this: that men shall stand shoulder to shoulder, and our neighbor here shall stand with us, and together in our strength we shall do that which none of us can do alone.

These are three of the conditions which confront us. Now, what are the opportunities they afford us to work for the welfare of the men about us? What can we do?

The sole object of the Brotherhood is the spread of the Kingdom of Christ, the setting up of the standard of Christ. A standard is something that we rally round. A standard is something that we judge things by. And as we bring this poverty, these riches, this ignorance, this wisdom, the Church, the State, society and sin, alongside of the standard of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, shall not we be discontented? Cannot we go to any man and say, "You are discontented, and I am discontented. Let us brotherhood together. My discontent is that my poverty is not in accordance with the will of the King. The poverty which is in accordance with the will of the King I am content with, but the poverty which comes from unfairness, unrighteousness, false dealing, oppression—that poverty you and I are discontented with, and we are brothers in our discontent." And so on, through all these things, we can be brothers with the discontented, because we are bound, as soldiers of Christ and as trying things by His standard, to be discontented with everything which is truly and essentially grievous and intolerable, and has brought this discontent on all these different classes of people.

As members of a Brotherhood we need to go on the basis of sympathy with righteous discon-

tent; to recognize this, that in the soul of every man, however it may be obscured, there is a knowledge of sin and there is an upreach for righteousness. He has somewhere or other, however obscured it may be, the inkling, the reminiscence, that he is indeed a child of God. Let us work on that, then, going to him as a fellow man, as a brother in discontent, and purifying, by example and by the purity of our discontent, his discontent, so that it may not work mischief and destruction, but emancipation and purification, and the coming of the Kingdom of God.

As we dwell with men in this sympathy, we are satisfying that longing for fraternity, that turning of one man to another in the brotherhood of the sons of God; and in satisfying his longing for brotherhood we may point out to them that other relation, which, as yet, may not be seen by them, the relation of sonship, of Fatherhood, that all are indeed the sons of God.

As we go with men from fellowship to fraternity we may then take them one step further to organization. We may bring them into the Church of the living God, and say, "We bring you within hearing of the message of peace and good will among men, to the entrance of the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. The message is that of Jesus Christ our King, and the Church is His Kingdom." He may reply, "I do not hear the message of peace nor see the kingdom of righteousness in the Church." Then the crowning opportunity in this present day is to show forth peace and righteousness. The Kingdom of God cannot be shown forth except in the lives of the citizens. If we be true followers of Jesus Christ, intent upon good citizenship in His Kingdom, intent upon loyalty to Him, our lives with their discontent with all that is false and mean and poor, with their love for all that is high, helpful, gentle and of good repute, will exemplify the Kingdom of God, will make His Church acceptable and her walls shall be filled with those who desire peace and righteousness.

Here is the opportunity, it all comes down to this, that old opportunity of every Christian man, to witness to Christ and to His Kingdom. And the blessedness of the present time is that there never was a time before when men were so willing to see such lives, so willing to hear such testimony. It shall be upon us if this opportunity escape us. Even now as we work and pray together, the morrow of a day which shall be better than the past, if we will make it so, draws on:

"Morning and bugle call,
And a fresh wind blowing free;
Ride out, ride out, with mingled shout,
Ye knights of the day to be!
For the red glow rises in the east,
And the red blood in the heart;
Light for the earth, light for the world,
Full light for field and mart!
With sword and palm, with spear and balm,
Ride into the regal morn;
From the shades of wrong a wide and strong
New day of the Lord is born."

JAMES L. HOUGHTLING.

Overdue Subscriptions.

We regret very much to be obliged again to call attention to this matter. A very large number of those *in arrears* have paid no heed to former notices of similar character, and the amount due us in small sums is so great as to seriously impede our work. Will not every subscriber oblige us by examining label on paper and by remitting amount due *with renewal* order, and if possible one new name? In the latter case renewal will be given for one dollar