

and, drawing her away from the others, exclaimed: "Sister, come over here and tell me all you know of this poor woman. I must know everything. I am deeply interested in her."

"My dear Miss Sefton," answered the nun gently, a slight look of surprise crossing her serene face, "I shall be very glad to tell you all that I know. I am delighted to see so benevolent an interest taken in one of the poor souls here, many of whom never would be here were there a helping hand stretched out to them in the need and privation that lead them into the wretchedness of sin. This Rosa Corsini has been a very unhappy woman. Even yet one can see in her traces of great natural refinement and some education. Although she has served several terms here for theft or vagrancy, she seems always to have preserved a certain amount of self-respect that, joined to the grace of God, kept her from greater evils. She had a child—her 'singing-bird,' she called her—who was adopted by a wealthy gentleman of this city. After serving her first term of imprisonment she resolved to lead an honest life. Through a written 'character' given her by the superintendent she obtained an excellent situation as housemaid in a wealthy family, where she was treated with the greatest kindness till they discovered from the chance remark of a caller who had once visited this institution during Rosa's term of imprisonment and who remembered her face, that their invaluable housemaid was an convict. One hour after the discovery Rosa was again a homeless and hopeless woman. After that she lost all ambition. She worked when she had the chance, but she did not attempt to obtain another permanent, respectable situation. Once or twice charity saved her from starvation, often theft. She led a dreary, lonely life. She had neither friends nor relatives, and, as she said to me when she told me her story, 'when a woman is once spotted by the police there's no chance for her. Unable to work any longer, she was found on the street the other day in an apparently dying condition and brought here as a vagrant. Oh! my dear young lady, I hope there is room in heaven for these poor vagrants, since it is only a prison-cell we can give them on earth!'

The nun's bright eyes filled with tears and her voice was tremulous. After a pause, she continued: "Poor Rosa has been prepared for death and seems glad to have done with life, though she is constantly talking of her child. The doctor says she cannot last through the day. I think she would die happy if she could only have some news of her child."

Antonia had listened eagerly to the Sister's narrative, her face pale, her eyes full of tears. When it was ended she started from her chair and, earnestly pressing the nurse's hand, said: "Thank you, Sister, for all you have told me. In return let me tell you that Rosa shall die happy, for I am bringing her news of her child."

Sister Hildebrand had been giving the same details to Mr. Sefton. He, too, was strangely affected by the story. Antonia said, as he came forward, "Father, let us go to her at once."

They bade the two religious good-by; the superintendent again led the way, and in a few moments Antonia stood outside the grating—serving as door and window for the cell—that separated her from her mother. One glance showed her the bare floor, the one wooden stool, the tiny shelf on the wall containing a few bottles of medicine, the comfortable cot on which rested a woman's motionless form. One thin hand lay on the coarse coverlid; the face was prematurely aged, but suffering had sharpened and spiritualized the features; the closed eyelids were suggestive of peace.

Mr. Sefton, who as he noticed, or thought he noticed, a startling resemblance even yet between mother and daughter. For an instant Antonia's thoughts reverted to the dream-mother she had so long believed in; then her whole heart was submerged in passionate tenderness for the dying woman before her. The superintendent turned the key and opened the grating. Mr. Sefton turned to his daughter and said in a low voice: "There isn't room for more than one visitor in that cupboard, so I'll stroll up and down the corridor, 'Tonia."

Mother and daughter were alone. The noise of the opening door had disturbed the mutatto's slumber. She moved uneasily; then her eyes opened, and she murmured in a husky whisper, "Who said 'Tonia'?" Was I 'dreaming again?'

She caught sight of the beautiful, tall young lady bending over her bed. Her own dim eyes grew wistful as she looked into the eyes so full of love and pity. Antonia's warm hands clasped the thin, cold hands that were nervously playing with the coverlid. She forgot the discretion she had meant to exercise. She bent and kissed her mother's lips. "Mother," she whispered in a tremulous, low voice, "don't you see I am your 'Tonia'?"

A look of glad surprise crossed the mutatto's face. "It is such a beautiful dream," she gasped.

Antonia's strong arm encircled her mother's wasted frame, her fingers smoothed the gray hair with a soft, caressing touch, as she answered, "It is not a dream."

"Then this is heaven," murmured the feeble voice. "I have dreamed so often, so often, that I had her again—my little singing-bird whom I gave away. Sometimes she comes and pulls my dress and calls 'mummy,' just as when she was a little toddling child, and sometimes she takes my hand and we walk away off along a great, dusty road; but I never get tired, for she

smiles into my face with her sweet eyes and sings all the time like a little canary bird."

"Shall she sing to you now, mother?"

There is only a faint, incredulous smile for answer. Antonia holds her mother's hand in a closer clasp, and, standing erect, begins to sing a quaint old hymn to the Virgin of Sorrows, each stanza of which ends with the refrain, "Virgin, full sorrowful, pray thou for us!"

At first the tones are very sweet and low, then the exquisite voice rings out in more powerful melody. The mother listens as one in a trance. Never in a fashionable drawing-room, before the most cultured and appreciative audience, did Antonia sing so well. The pathos, the sweetness of her notes, surprise even her father, who is pacing the corridor outside. Al along the tier of cells the calico curtains are drawn back from the gratings and eager faces peer into the corridor. Antonia does not know into how many wretched hearts her tones are sinking as her wonderful voice breathes the last invocation, "Pray thou for us!" She feels only that she is voicing the plaintive heart-cries of the dying woman, whose eyes are streaming with tears while she listens.

Suddenly she raises herself in bed and looks intently at Antonia. "Tonia," she whispers, "you are not a little girl any longer. How beautiful you have grown! Your voice is like an angel's!"

"No, mother, only like your little singing-bird."

Rosa smiles faintly. Her breathing grows more difficult. Finally she gasps, "Tonia, if this isn't a dream, may I—'the voice is very humble—may I kiss you?"

Antonia kneels at the side of the cot and raises her face as she puts her arms about her mother. The dying woman, gathering all her remaining strength together, bends her head and kisses her daughter on brow and cheek and lips. Then she sinks back exhausted. Once or twice she struggles to speak, but no word leaves her lips, only a gasp ever fainter and feebler. A convulsive movement goes through her frame. In moment Antonia realizes that the end has come. But on the dead face there is a smile of infinite peace and content.

GRAND PRAISE.

A Protestant on the Recent Labor Encyclical—History in a Nut-Shell—A Magnificent Tribute to the Catholic Church.

We have not read for a long time so eloquent a tribute to the Catholic Church as we find in a letter published in the *Dublin National Press* on the recent encyclical of the Pope, from the pen of John Ferguson, of Glasgow, Scotland, a patriot Protestant Irishman, well known for twenty years past for his devotion and services to the Irish National cause. Mr. Ferguson describes the encyclical as "one of the most important messages delivered to mankind since Christ said, 'A new commandment give I unto you,'" and he goes on to write as follows:

Does not the heart of that *insula sacrorum et doctorum* ("island of saints and scholars," meaning Ireland) that upheld the silver lamp of Christian civilization in the ancient days, till the nations dwelling in darkness kindled their torches at its blaze, burn within it, when, clear as a trumpet's war-note, Rome speaks to the human race upon the steps to THREE HUNDRED MILLIONS—a fourth of the world's population—the glorious words of their "Holy Father, by Divine Providence, Pope Leo XIII., on the condition of labor," come with authority which commands the highest respect. To Protestants like myself they come as the words of a grand old man—as echoes of the Mount of Olives, endorsing the economies of our highest scientists. Ireland, while humiliated by degrading strife, can lift her face from the mad struggle to contemplate, with an elevating pride, that it is the great Church to the communion of which she has so faithfully clung that at this hour the triumph song of her voice like the triumph song of heaven for brotherhood of humanity. Whilst I claim to be just as staunch a Protestant as any, I cannot lose sight of the first fifteen centuries of our era, during which Rome marshaled the forces of civilization and directed them, on the whole, well. It was no easy task to destroy the fighting and plundering instincts of the fierce nations of nomads who broke up the Roman Empire; no easy task to create habits of industry in tribes as unused to such as the Red Indians of our day, and who possessed what the Red Indians do not, the might to take. No selfish pleasure to go, as the missionary did, alone into Scythia, Numidia, Gaul or Scandinavia to teach doctrines that were an abomination to these countries of blood and slaughter; yet the Catholic priest confronted Attila, standing alone in the presence with as bold a *non passimus* as to-day he confronts a Bismarck.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WON MAGNA CHARTA, of which England is so proud. It was Rome that in feudal times curbed the lawless might of kings and barons, when earthly power failed to shield innocence from irresponsible strength; innocence that was hurled, then, "the curse of Rome" was a crown and though the criminal wore a crown he was hurled into dust. Rome covered Europe with halls of learning; Rome turned savages into Christian nations; Rome gave lessons in democracy, for she admitted serfs to her

priesthood, and Norman nobles, who would not eat with Saxon gentlemen, were obliged to confess their sins to Saxon peasant priests. Rome ignored the hereditary principle. The Pope-King was elected. Rome assumed all men to have equal rights to natural opportunities—a Saxon blacksmith's son was elected in the darkest of the ages Sovereign Pontiff.

And Rome gave more martyrs to the stake, more patriots to nationhood, more lives to sanctify, more self-sacrifice to philanthropy and more intellect to philosophy than all other churches. I am far too Protestant to agree with her doctrine of "private judgment," though, indeed, that private expression of ignorant opinion which so often is called private judgment we would be better without, but, as a student of history, I am bound to observe the wondrous power of adaptation this great Church organization has to the needs of different races and ages, and to rejoice that it has to-day unfurled a flag which will float in the van of the nations, and behind which millions as Protestant as myself and as unlikely to ever belong to the visible Church of Rome will be proud to march.

"YOUR WALLS AND YOUR CEILINGS," said St. Jerome, "are glittering with silver and gold, but Christ is dying at your gate." Leo XIII. declares this should not and must not longer be. Never did the Catholic Church enter upon a bigger conflict with human selfishness, and never was victory more certain. Commercialism, with all its forces of cupidity, legal and literary, pride and respectability, tolerated the doctrines of Mill and Herbert Spencer, just as the Southern planters used to tolerate as a philosophic abstraction the doctrine of the emancipation of the slaves. When the labor movement began lately to display activity commercialism became abusive and quoted religious objections. "Contracts must be observed when made," "The poor must obey their masters," "The Christian Churches allowed themselves too much to back up."

THE MANCHESTER POSTULATES. These are chiefly: "It is our duty to buy all things, including labor, at the cheapest rate we can, and to sell in the dearest market." "The prosperity of the country depends upon our having an abundant supply of cheap labor to enable us to compete successfully with foreign nations." When asked if this meant that it was necessary we should have, say, five hundred hands outside the factory furnace or dockyard gate, starving for work, in order to keep down the wages within, and if, when a young fellow with no wife offered to make 15s per week to do what a man with a family had to be paid 20s for, it was a commercial duty to take on the one and discharge the other, the answer was: "Most certainly; it follows from the laws of competition." So on went this devil-take-the-hind-most practice—this survival of all the most cunning and most greedy—till a consensus of moral and intellectual teachers declared that the very foundation of our social structure—human vitality—is deteriorating.

UNOFFICIAL PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL. Like Ruskin, have pointed out the dull and ugly lives which the dull and ugly conditions of life, produced by cupidity and competition, have created. They demand that labor shall have light and sweetness and beauty, that it may become healthy, cultivated and refined. Unofficial preachers of the Gospel, like Thoreau Rogers, point out how, notwithstanding that the inspiration of the Almighty has given the people of these islands, during the last century, productive forces—iron-jointed, steel-sheathed, fire-breathing—"equal in power to sixty millions of men," yet millions of our workers, not men only, do not share in the prosperity, but are in a worse condition as to housing, food and clothing than the lowest class was at the end of the fourteenth century. Unofficial preachers of the gospel like John Morley (an atheist, men call him, though possibly Christ would have called him one of those "not far from the kingdom of God") point with horror to the fact that one-half the entire population of the richest country in the world—England—that passes the age of sixty, or has been degraded by being paupers.

THAT MIGHTY CHURCH, adapting itself to the needs of the aged, opposes itself to the social wrong. Art, social science, politics, economics, physiology and poetry have rung out the tocsin of humanity, and religion responds to their call. That mighty Church, adapting itself to the needs of the age, opposes itself to the social wrong. Its organization, upon which the sun never ceases to shine, will enforce the demands of Pope Leo XIII. in every language, and the arc of the powerful of all the Christian Churches are now given to changes which kings, priests and merchants had opposed as immoral. A priest of the devoutest piety, most commanding of intellect, and, above all, perhaps, the Sovereign Pontiff, has declared

"SOME REMEDY MUST BE FOUND, and found quickly, for the wretchedness and misery of the poor. Workmen have been given over, isolated and defenceless, to the callousness of

employers and the greediness of unscrupulous competition. It is inhuman to treat men as chattels to make money by. The workers must be paid sufficient to sustain life in an upright and creditable way. They must not be taxed with work beyond their age and sex. For employers to exercise prestige upon the indigent and the destitute in order to make profits out of their need is condemned by all laws, human and divine. The wage-earner creates the wealth of the State and should be specially protected by it, as he is indispensable. The workers have a property which must be protected by the State; they must have Sundays and holidays for spiritual and mental improvement. Their minds and bodies must not be worn out by excessive labor."

COMMERCIALISM DEMANDS THE FULFILLMENT OF CONTRACTS.

A railway manager with whom I expostulated during the great railway strike, upon working his men twelve to fifteen hours, always met me with "Let them give up the job if they don't like it." "But," I replied, "they are compelled by starvation to take the job." His reply was, "I buy labor at the market-price." The Pope says nobly: "Nevertheless, there is a dictate of nature more imperious and more ancient than any bargain between man and man. The wages must be enough to support the worker in reasonable and frugal comfort—if, through necessity or fear of worse evil, the worker accepts harder conditions because a contractor will give him no better, he is the victim of force and injustice"; and of course it follows there is no contract binding in morals.

The Holy Father enunciates the doctrine that the State should sustain the hours of labor fixed upon by the different trades as suitable to their localities and circumstances. In short, the Pope endorses the most radical of all the demands now being made by labor over the whole world. Practical John Morley fears, as also does Mr. Gladstone, to give State authority to the eight-hour bill for miners, though they both think the eight-hour day long enough. Leo XIII. sees in the State the means whereby the workers can be protected from the moral and physical injury of callous competition and cupidity.

AND NOW THIS MOMENTOUS ENCYCLICAL is being read from every altar of the Latin Church. It is, at the same time, being studied by the leaders in every land. Unlike a manifesto from a great political leader, no noisy demonstration will follow its issue. Not with the waving of banners and the music of bands, but with the still, small voice of conscience, will it conquer. Rome and science are in perfect accord on this great question. Mill and Spencer, no friends of the Churches, laid down the principles that Professor Marshall, of Cambridge, carries to the point where he and Leo XIII. meet in harmony. Actuated chiefly by religious motives and having in view the spiritual welfare of men, the great and scholarly Pontiff finds himself blessing and enforcing doctrines which the great political economist has reached by studying the material welfare of the nation.

The Catholic world has reason to be proud of its position. Manning in England, Gibbons in America, Leo in Rome; princes of the Church, and, better still, "soldiers of humanity." As a Protestant, I hope to see some of our great religious teachers enter into a noble competition with Rome upon the lines of this encyclical in the Master's work. There can be little doubt, however, that Ireland will respond to this Gospel trumpet the Pope has sounded to the world.

And when the nation's onward march to better days to be.

The Irish flag shall float among the banners of the free!

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