

Fortunately there is a third class, and a large one, composed of those who through no fault of their own do not take much interest in social reform, persons who have never directed their attention to the actual condition of "the masses" and therefore do not realize the very great importance of a thorough investigation of the whole question. It is for their benefit that I attempt to show that the condition of the labouring classes is unjust. What is the meaning of the word unjust? I find it defined in a dictionary as meaning "contrary to the standard of right established by the divine law." (Worcester give as a meaning for "just"—"conformed to the law of God"). I know that this definition will not be accepted by those who do not believe in a divine law, but I do not care, for the readers of ROUGE ET NOIR, as supporters of a distinctly Christian University are presumably believers in that standard.

Every believer in a Universal Father is bound to admit, I suppose, that He has given to every child born into the world at least a right to live, and that the means by which one ought to live is his labour. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."—(Gen. iii. 19.) "Six days shalt thou labour." To appropriate the result of others, toil will not do, for "Thou shalt not steal;" "Woe unto him that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work."—(Jer. xxii. 13.) Even before the coming of Christ the right of every man to the right of his labour was clearly shewn. It became clearer afterwards when by taking of our manhood unto God He so highly exalted it, when by the extended Incarnation men were gathered into a society destined to be universal, and the idea of "one family" was proclaimed, in which "all ye are brethren," "members one of another." We may now claim more than a bare subsistence. We are entitled to our share in the general good. But the condition upon which this right may be claimed remains as clear as ever. "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits."—(II. Tim. ii. 6.) "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."—(Eph. iv. 28.) "Work with your own hands as we commanded you, that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." (I. Thess. iv. 11 and 12.) "This we commanded you that if any would not work neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread."—II. Thess. iii. 10—12.) There is the standard of right established by the divine law. According to this is the condition of our wage-earners just? Do all who work get their fair share of what they produce? Surely not.

For there are many who cannot get even a bare subsistence. Do you ask for an instance? It was only the

other day that we read in the newspapers of two young women in London who attempted to commit suicide by leaping into the river, rather than face the alternative of starvation or disgrace. They had at least more courage than those who choose the life of sin. In the same great city, in spite of the aversion that there is to the workhouse, one in every twelve dies there each year; some, I suppose because they will not work, but not by any means all. The Bishop of Salisbury tells a sad story of a dying man in a hospital who was in great distress: "The real suffering was the result of his poverty, not of his disease, but the thought of the workhouse as the next home for his wife and children. Think how depressing such cases must be! How almost impossible it was to expect those who were weighed down by them that they should think of anything but the mere wants of the body, the next meal, the next pay-day, the next rent-day. Think of the difficulty, which ought not to exist in a Christian community, of a man's life." Listen now to the Rev. W. E. Moll, M. A., S. Mary's, Soho. After giving some examples of unjust wages he says: "Think of it, Christian men and women, and remember what can be earned any night in the street within sight of the miserable homes in which these white slaves live, suffer and die. Aye! die, as year by year I have seen them die rather than sin." So you see that some of the labouring classes are denied the necessities of life. Is that just?

We have seen that by the Divine law a man has a right to the result of his labours. Does he get it? Very far from it. The statement is attributed to Mr. Gladstone that the portion of wealth in England which has been added during the last fifty years equals all previous acquisitions since the Conquest. Certain it is that it increased in 83 years from £1,800,000,000 to £8,720,000,000. How much of that did the producers get? Take a specimen year. In 1883 the working-classes (4,629,000 families) had £447,000,000, or £96 12s. to the family, while all the others—gentry, middle-class and tradespeople (2,046,000 families)—had £818,000,000, or £400 to the family. Two-thirds of the people, and those the main producers, had one-third of the national income. Perhaps some details will bring out the iniquity more clearly. Mr. Moll says: "I know a boot-maker who makes fishing-boots for which he gets 5s. 3d. a pair. These boots are sold for £3 3s. A woman makes one dozen pinafores for 8d., and they sell for 7s. 9d. A shirt is made for 3½d., and sells for 1s. 6¾d. * * * Think of the match-box makers. A girl must make 1,296 boxes before she can make one shilling!" He asks: "Can that sort of distribution be justified at the bar of conscience or at the bar of that God who has denounced His woe on him who 'defraudeth the huzling of his wages?'"

It is no better on this side of the Atlantic. The average employer of 1,000 workmen in the year 1880 got upwards of \$314.00, while each mechanic got \$335. (This is from the Census Report, where the employers supply