

FIVE FIGURES OF THE FAITH

By FRANK MURPHY.

THE PRIEST.

St. Vincent de Paul.

It is the dawn of the seventeenth Century and it is Marseilles!

Picture, then, the quayside; the blue waters of the Mediterranean lapping at the steps and rocking gently the boats. There is bustle at the quay, for a ship is about to sail. A little ship, it is true, for it goes but a day's journey; but still, it is a ship, and it goes a-sailing, so there is bustle. A young Gascon steps down the cobbles, talking volubly with a chance friend, whom he has persuaded to accompany him to Narbonne, across the water.

The friend, it happens, is a priest. We see that from his black cassock. Rather worn it is, and, as the young Gascon thinks, in places a trifle shabby. Timid, too, of the sea he is, but so fair it is this day that he makes the journey.

Vincent, for that is the young priest's name, would soon have done with reverie as the shore receded into the haze. He would say his prayers and talk to the sailors and listen to the prattle of his Gascon companion. A calm crossing, and Narbonne should be made in good time.

But now a new interest arises—a ship coming up a-port. Too far distant at first to distinguish, but gradually to the eyes of the watchers it breaks into a trio of brigantine. Interest changes to anxiety, for they are of a foreign figure. And then, a sudden chill—Turkish pirates, and three to one. There are sharp orders, a running to and fro, feverish preparation for battle. The few weapons are handed out; there is hurried confession in the face of death. The ship is boarded. "Ruffians, worse than tigers," as Vincent tells us, swarm the deck. The crew put up a gallant fight. The captain kills one of the pirate chiefs, and is himself cut into "a hundred pieces." Others are killed, all the rest wounded, Vincent included. For them the slave market, and so, with wounds roughly bandaged, they are carried off to Barbary.

There they are sold. They are led through the streets of Tunis to the market-place. Merchants open the mouths and look at the teeth, prod the ribs, and make the captives walk, trot and run, carry loads and wrestle.

Vincent de Paul is sold. A succession of masters—one an old alchemist, for whom Vincent stokes furnaces; another a renegade from the Faith.

Finally, Vincent escapes in a skiff, carrying with him a memory of irons that not only cut into the flesh, but which leave a festering mark upon a man's soul.

Vincent finds himself again in France, in a poor lodging under the shadow of a Hospital. He visits the sick, ministering to their spiritual and bodily needs, and holding the dying in his arms. Obscurely he lives, yet his virtue cannot remain hidden. Hard by the hospital are the terraced gardens round the palace of the former Queen Margot, who strives to live down the scandals of her past. But she maintains a court, and into its brilliance Vincent is introduced as chaplain by her secretary. Here is all the fastidious splendour of costume. Vincent must have thought of the rags upon his poor. Here, too, the glitter of jewels---not a far contrast to the ulcers of the leg iron. Luxury for lap-dogs, perfume in plenty for poodles, and blue-birds in gilt cages! Could Vincent forget the lashing of backs and the stench of prisons? Strange company for St. Vincent de Paul, you might say. But it has its lessons. He makes a vow to devote his life to the poor, and we find him shortly with a few villagers for a flock.

But he is recalled. Again that contrast which marks his life. Not to the court once more, but to the mansion of Philip de Gondi, General of the Galleys. Vincent's work is to care, mainly, for the education of the young de Gondis. Madame de Gondi herself, renowned for her beauty, her elegance and her wit, who shines among the stars of the fashionable firmament, seeks for the spiritual direction of the saintly tutor.

But Vincent flees. He steals quietly to the town of Chatillon. A dreadful spot! No priest worthy of the name to minister to its people; filthy, unhealthy, its houses fallen into ruin, an asylum and lurking place for the robber and the footpad. Passion and outrage stalk the streets. To it Vincent and a companion give example of a regular life, according to the laws of God. The Sacraments are administered, the village church restored, the gospel preached, and in less than a year chaos gives way to order.

In his pastoral work at Chatillon, Vincent reflects upon what might be done further afield. We find him again with

the de Gondi, but with a purpose. To Madame de Gondi he tells his ambition. She agrees to assist him. Confraternities, associations, must be established, that assistance be given to the needy. Bodies and souls must be fed.

The confraternities are established, of women at first. Madame de Gondi and other women of wealth, wives of merchants and of soldiers, ladies of court and servant girls walk the sewers of Paris, kneel by the pallets of the sick poor, feed the hungry, scrub the floors. Silver plate is sold that the hungry might eat, and that running sores be stemmed. Carriages are abandoned that rough straw give way to a decent sick-bed. Confraternities of men are set up also; homes for the aged, where they may rest, and workshops for the young, where they may learn a trade. In underground cellars, in leaking attics, in dark alleys moves Vincent de Paul, and where he is not there are his confraternities—himself again. He finds his way into the hospitals. Disease rages; filthy, obstructed sewers propagate infection. No wonder men sicken. But where are they taken? We have a description.

“Tumbled-down, tottering beds, dirty bed clothes riddled with holes, sticky with spittle and slobber, harder than sailcloth from dirt and dust; broken pots that were never scoured; the timber infested with bugs; foul, cast-off dressings strewn in all directions, oozing out on the floor. The wounded, pregnant women, and those who had just been delivered, small-pox cases, and those afflicted with scurvy were all heaped together, close to the Mortuary chamber and dissecting-room, Beds intended to hold two contained six, piled together, attacked by fearful and various diseases, which they communicated to each other.”

In these ghastly scenes is Vincent, planning for his poor.

He thought much about the hospitals, but he had still another thought, a memory. He remembered that de Gondi was General of the Galleys, and so, in the deep, underground cellars, green-coated with slime, he visits his fellow-beings, chained in their living tombs. He washes their sores and brushes off the vermin. He sees the scars upon the heads of those who have tried to end their earthly misery by dashing out their poor brains against the stones. He sees the rats and the spiders running and crawling over these ghosts of human beings.

Vincent goes to de Gondi. Vincent is authorised to take what means he thinks fit to improve the lot of the unhappy convicts. He acquires a special home for them wherein he can not only look after them, but raise, educate and transform them. “No more lost souls in the next world,” he says, “or miserable ones in this.” At last, by Royal assent, he is given jurisdiction over the convicts not only of Paris, but of the whole kingdom. His convicts! He goes to the galleys.

No space here to tell of the horrors of the galley-slaves, or of Vincent's care for them. You must read it for yourself. The number of priests who wish to help Vincent in his work leads to the realisation of another of his dreams—the foundation of a community. A few at first, then numbers, until their small house is inadequate. The old leper hospital of St. Lazarus, which shelters lepers no longer, is offered them. In 1632 Vincent takes possession. Hence, his missionaries are known as Lazarists. Saint Lazare becomes famous overnight. Crowds flock to it. The centre of Vincent's work, it hums with activity. It holds assistance to the poor, counsel for the troubled, retreat for the weary, conferences for the clergy, and Christianity for the world. Twenty five houses of the new institute are founded in Vincent's lifetime. Additions are made to Saint Lazare, which, though plundered by the Revolution, remain, though turned by the whirligig of irony into convict cells.

His congregation of men set up, Vincent founds a congregation of women—the famous Daughters of Charity, they of the quaint cornette. The sick are soothed by kindly hands; into orphanages and schools the Daughters of Charity gather the little children. Much work done, but for Vincent not enough. What of children stifled at birth, thrown from the window, flung to the rats, or deformed into monstrosities, that they might earn a horrible livelihood for their torturers!

A foundling hospital then! It is established. But, how to get the children! If they are called foundlings, it is Vincent who does the finding. Slipping out by night from Saint Lazare into the dark streets of Paris, that figure, familiar to the lurking cut-throat and garrotter by the unusual, large cloak which it wears, makes its way along the narrow pavements and crooked alleys. Quarter after quarter he searches, picking up from the rubbish heap and the dunghill, from the gutter and the sewer the newborn, gasping its small breath in the fetid air. Back to Saint Lazare he goes, the folds of his great cloak wrapped warmly about him, back to the watchers who wait to take from his arms the struggling wisps of humanity and fan into life the faint flicker that remains.

Back to a few hours of sleep for the weary body of St. Vincent de Paul. Sleep he has need of, but it is little rest. He suffers torture in his limbs, racked by continuous activity. Age creeps on, hand in hand with suffering, but he works to the last. At his poor desk, on his knees in prayer, thumbing his worn breviary, this is his respite. And so, on the 27th of September 1660, sitting in his chair, a crucifix at his lips, quietly he dies.

Saint Lazare is his tomb. About it Paris, grief-stricken, mourns the loss of the Father of the Poor. It becomes a place of pilgrimage, where strong men come to pray. Yet by that odd irony, which we see again today, the resting place of him who has earned his rest by a life for the people, is shaken by the Revolution. Twice is Saint Lazare plundered by the mob; the blood of its priests spilt upon its stones. History repeats itself. They shout, "Liberty!" and rage against the Truth, which alone can make men free, they yell, "Equality!" and fetter those who have lived in the conviction that men are equal. They cry, "Fraternity!" and trample the confraternities of St. Vincent de Paul.

But their cries are but cries, and cries are lost in the wind.

A saint-endures, for sanctity is of God. Nothing else stands!

THE LAYMEN.

The Brothers Vrau.

If there is any romance in industry, much of it is in the story of the brothers Vrau. But, because you may not have heard of them, refreshing though their story is, here before you are a few bare facts. Their life is a romance—if romance means some wonderful tale, passing the experience of our matter-of-fact business probabilities—and as a romance I will give it.

Once upon a time, though not so very long ago, there lived two brothers and their names were Vrau. They were not brothers in blood, but brothers in law, and they worked and managed a textile factory of some eleven hundred employees at Lille, on the northern border of France. Their story is wonderful because, though they ran their business successfully and were taken up with the busy details of daily industrial life, they operated their workrooms, in their multitudinous activities, on strictly Christian lines, giving to the world a famous example of Catholic social principles in action. Especially did they demonstrate how wealth is to be used in regard to the poor.

Now, there are two very important principles taught definitely by the Catholic Church. The first, with which most of us are familiar, is that property is a right. But is it a right that has been so abused as to bring the world to the sorry plight we see to-day? The Church teaches another principle, equally definitely, and this is not so well known, or hardly understood or practised, and this principle balances, so to speak, and offsets the first. It is this—that a human being, because he is a human being, has a right to live in a Condition that will maintain his full humanity, and every man is bound to see to it that his fellowman is enabled to live in a state fitting the dignity which the Church demands for him.

And this principle, I say, is hardly recognised in our day.

If it were, the heathen practice of usury and other hideous tricks of finance would not have got a footing in our civilised communities, and we would not be seeking solutions and looking for corners around which to turn.

But to the story of the brothers Vrau. Philibert Vrau, the elder of the two, was the son of a thread manufacturer at Lille, and he was born in 1829. Camille Feron, who afterwards took the name of Vrau, was born two years later. Philibert's early life was a troubled one. Though a man of unusual gifts and full of wide, human interests, his mental and moral training had been deficient. His very sincerity, his desire for mental satisfaction, led him astray. He became a rationalist, followed unsound philosophy, experimented excitedly with spiritism. Yet he was not satisfied. Finally, at the age of twenty-five, he returned to the Faith, his appreciation of its truth awakened and given new life by his experience of error. He thought of the priesthood, but his father's advancing years necessitated his taking over the burden of the steadily-growing business.

The firm of Vrau had been manufacturing thread since 1816. It had a large number of workpeople, and when Philibert stepped into the factory his sense of justice, honesty and charity was applied. We who know the teaching of Leo XIII on labour conditions, and see many of his principles put, nowadays, into practice, are shocked at the economic conditions of those times; but little could be done then, save what alleviation kind-hearted employers could manage to give.

But Philibert, though he was but one of a few such men, was a man of great qualities, and now, moreover, he saw the splendour of the Faith in clear vision. He longed to bring its influence into the lives of the thousands teeming in those industrial towns of the North. Since the beginning of the century these towns, clustered about the coalmines, had made remarkable progress. But with the population crowding into the towns came the social problem. Long hours, small wages, child labour, horrible conditions of existence—all these met the eye of Philibert Vrau.

Under his guidance the House of Vrau had become esteemed. He had improved the processes of manufacture; business was thriving. But with one thing he was not satisfied—the condition of his workpeople. And then help came to him in the person of his friend, Camille Feron. Camille had taken out his degree of literature at Douai, near Lille, and had gone to Paris to study medicine. After nine years he returned to his native town and began to practise. From the first he succeeded. His worth was recognised and promise of an honourable career lay ahead of him. He married Philibert's sister, and a new link was forged between the two friends a link, however, that suggested another one.

Philibert's ever-increasing business was becoming too much for him. He appealed to Camille to give up his practice and throw in his lot with the House of Vrau. It seemed a sacrifice to Camille but, characteristically, he agreed. He took part in the management of the firm. To the zeal and enterprise of Philibert he joined his own. In 1870 Philibert's father died, and Camille took his place as one of the principals. The Vrau brothers had begun.

Like Philibert, Camille had a strong sense of justice and charity, and, looking out upon the factory and its eleven hundred employees, and beyond it to the thousands in that industrial town, and seeing their miserable, sordid lot, he wondered what could be done to better their condition. He recognised that, even on the business side, mere subordinates can never give the degree of efficiency of which human nature is capable. Alert, interested employees remove a great obstacle to industrial efficiency. Moreover, the latent faculties and possibilities of every human being are given opportunity for development.

And Camille knew, as Leo XIII later put it to the French workers, that it was heathenism which attempted to solve the social problem “by depriving the weaker portion of humanity of its rights, by crushing its aspirations, by paralysing its intellectual and moral faculties, and by reducing it to a state of absolute impotence!” Moreover, as Leo added, “it was slavery.” Camille was determined to be Christian.

But the Vrau factory was set amid the swarming masses of a great town. Camille saw, and Philibert saw, that one thing was necessary as a first step organisation. Camille addressed employers and urged them to unite for the good of their workpeople. Philibert had, as far back as 1866, founded an organisation of men who realised the importance of religious principle from the social point of view. Other organisations sprang up. When, in 1885, Leo XIII expressed satisfaction at the work done and urged further progress, there was founded the Corporation of St. Nicholas. This was a federation of the textile factories. It looked to the moral and material welfare of the industry; it brought employer and employee together, and brought about a spirit of charity and community of interest. It led to a savings bank for the employees, paying 4 per cent on deposits. It originated a co-operative purchasing society, and also a society for mutual help and sick-pensions, maternity, invalid and old-age funds, and provision for funeral expenses. Further, the Society of St. Nicholas secured for married workers a sum proportionate to the term of their service in the factory. Philibert's foundations grew apace. He travelled about setting up committees, and after him flourished workers' clubs, local pilgrimages, works for newspapers, schools, colleges and boys' clubs; works for the defence of religion. He arranged a congress of these committees—a centre of Catholic Action—which studied all manner of Catholic life: faith and prayer, lectures, journalism, social and charitable works for the defence of religion.

Camille appealed to the employers of the district, urging them to form an organisation to study the relations between capital and labour. He issued a Declaration of the Northern Employers, which was a profession of faith and a programme stating the religious, social and economic principles on which industrial peace and harmony must rest. A meeting of the employers accepted the declaration, and a three days' course of spiritual exercises was held, at which the director insisted on the duties of a Christian employer towards his workpeople. Leo XIII approved wholeheartedly of the association, and urged the setting up of similar works.

The Catholic Congresses of the North in 1885-1886 suggested the formation of mixed and craft unions, each with its own purpose, but ultimately directed to the improvement of factory life. Retreats for workers were instituted, and in 1888 eight hundred men made the spiritual exercises. A league was formed for keeping up the work. As Camille said:

“The Church is our strength; we work in its shadow. We must give back Jesus Christ to the worker.”

As was done in the House of Vrau itself, a community of nuns was installed to look after the interests of the womenfolk, and their work was widely appreciated. There was a little chapel and the workers could attend daily Mass if they wished. The pious practices customary among Catholics were observed. Everything was done for morality and comfort. In short, the House of Vrau, a large and successful industry, was a model Catholic community.

With all this interest in the workingman, it was not forgotten that the employer himself must be attended to. So Camille established a school for higher industrial studies, attached to the University, where the future leaders of industry should be trained. Employers were to be fitted for leadership. Said Camille: “A young man, when he leaves this school, must be a trained man; a man who can speak, write, form sound judgments; one who knows all that his state requires him to know in science, in business, in the world of industry; a citizen, too, knowing his country in its history and resources; a man *who* has learned to love his fellow-men and is trained to serve them; an employer, skilled in the technical details of his industry, but not less in, the direction of men, through his intellectual and moral superiority. Above all, he must be a great Christian, knowing his religion, honouring it in his life, defending it by his activities, spreading it by his example in every virtue.”

In 1891 Camille was elected president of the Association of the Employers of the North. A noteworthy conference was one at which Camille dealt with the wage contract and just demands of the workers. He insisted on a living wage. Moreover, he insisted on other demands, which, in his factory, were satisfied by co-operative associations. This assistance he said, was not given as charity, but as a right. His ideas were opposed as being too radical. A split threatened. Finally, it was decided to lay the proposals before the Pope. His Holiness approved. And so the work went on.

But other works also the brothers Vrau accomplished, and they were many. Philibert was active in the promotion of Eucharistic Congresses. He fought for the defence of the Church in those very difficult days. He took control of newspapers, he established schools, he founded a University. He equipped clubs and hostels for the resident students. Camille attended to the medical faculty. This, perhaps, an outstanding achievement—all due to the faith, initiative and organising power behind the name of Vrau.

Everything Catholic interested them, which is to say, everything human. They never wearied of inspiring, advising and encouraging. Working always with the approval of their Bishop, wherever there was work to be done, there were the brothers Vrau.

We cannot cover here the vast field of their labours. This indication must suffice. But they worked to the end. In 1905 death came to Philibert, and two years later for the great soul of Camille,

“The layman,” says Cardinal Newman, “is the measure of the Church,” and if you want to know how the Church measures the brothers Vrau, learn one thing more about them: Already the canonical process for their beatification, a step towards canonisation, has been opened.

These men, *who* lived in our time, *who* went among the poor and the destitute; men who were captains of industry, keen and successful; strong men of ability, men taken up with the fussy details of factory life, spinning thread and selling it; men who earned wealth, but men who saw the many-splendoured thing that is the Catholic Church, and who followed her command and used their goods for the benefit of their less fortunate fellows!

THE BISHOP.

Emmanuel Baron von Ketteler.

This is a brief sketch of William Emmanuel Baron von Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz, Germany, from 1850 to 1877, and illustrious as the pioneer of modern Christian social reform. His memory is cherished, half a century after his death, for a life spent in the interests of the workingman, so that the Catholics in Germany were stirred, into vigorous action on the social question, and, when, in 1870, the German centre was formed, the promotion of the Catholic programme was the central plank in its platform.

The modern Catholic social movement, which began about the middle of the last century, is not a new thing in the Catholic Church. It is but the manifestation of that divine power which the Church has of affecting profoundly and even of transforming the individual and society. It is as old as the Church itself. But different times are met by

different methods, and the rise of modern industry calls for special action to combat its evils. The response of the Church to the needs of the time is one of those exciting romances of which her history is full.

It began in Germany. There, as elsewhere, the ugly blight of industrial capitalism in its greed and narrow selfishness had spread over the lives of the people. Mere wage-slavery was the lot of the workingman. But there was bound to be an awakening, and it came.

But with the awakening came conflict. Agitators sprang up before the people, and theories were offered on every hand for the solution of the problem. The Communist manifesto was published, grim even in its grotesque history and philosophy. Everywhere the new theories were hotly debated, and into the thick of the conflict came von Ketteler.

It was in 1848, when the fight raged furiously, that Ketteler trumpeted a call that rose above the din and brought all men's eyes upon him. At this time, pastor of a country parish, life was already showing the path he was to tread. While yet a lawyer, which profession he followed before his priesthood, he had said that his deal in life was to be placed in a position in which he could work for the moral and social good of the people. And now a priest, his dream was being realised. When drought, famine and typhoid settled on the land it is impossible to estimate how much of his own and of his relatives' money Ketteler spent while the famine lasted. Wagons of corn, bread and potatoes arrived at regular intervals, and no one but the pastor knew who paid the bills!

And now, in 1848, the social and political tempest that raged and threatened even the foundations of society drew the good pastor from the seclusion of his parish and set him in the midst of the turmoil. He could not remain a spectator in such a struggle. He gave his services to the people, and was elected to the National Assembly at Frankfort. But, he said, "only religious motives induced me to take the step." Hardly had he taken his seat when the streets of the city were soaked in the blood of revolution. Two of the deputies were set upon and murdered. At the graveside Ketteler preached the funeral oration. He preached a sermon which cut to the marrow. On the same day he made his first speech in the Assembly. A new voice was heard in the land, and men stood and listened.

Two weeks later the first of the now famous Catholic Congresses met in Mainz, the mass meeting of which has become historic in the history of the Catholic Church and the history of Catholic social reform work. Ketteler spoke these words: "Allow me to suggest a task for the immediate future—the task of religion in regard to industrial conditions. The most difficult question, which no legislation, no form of government has been able to solve, is the social question. The difficulty, the vastness, the urgency of this question fills me with the greatest joy. It is not, indeed, the distress, the wretchedness of my brothers that affords me this joy, but the fact that it must now become evident which Church bears within it the power of divine truth. The world will see that to the Catholic Church is reserved the definite solution of the social question, for the State, with all its legislative machinery, has not the power to solve it. . . ."

And Ketteler brought the Congress to a dramatic close. At the end there was a banquet, and there were many toasts. Ketteler rose and called for cheers. They were cheers for the poor. "I do not ask you to empty a glass of wine to the health of the poor: I invite you to work with your heart and hand for the welfare of the poor, to stand by poverty with a helping hand." And the cheers, which thundered at that speech, started an echo that rang round the Catholic world and beyond it. And men hear it to this day.

On Ketteler's return to Frankfort he was invited to preach a series of sermons at the Cathedral of Mainz. He preached six momentous sermons on the "Great Social Questions of the Day." They caused a stir. They were discussed in the taverns. "To Ketteler belongs the undying honour," said a famous sociologist, "of having met the manifesto of the Communists with a programme of Christian sociology that stands unsurpassed to this day!"

Said Ketteler in his first sermon: "We cannot speak of our time, much less understand it, without coming back upon our social conditions. One may attach ever so much importance to political questions, but the real difficulty of our situation does not lie in them. Even with the best form of government we have not work, we have not clothing, we have not bread and shelter for our poor. Whilst the leaders and seducers of the people aim only at getting hold of the reins of government, the poor people themselves hope for a betterment of their material lot. The masses still believe in the promises of their leaders; believe that a new form of government will free them from their present misery. But when once they see that neither liberty of the press, not the right of association, not popular assemblies, nor clever turns of speech, nor popular sovereignty are able to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to comfort the sorrowful, to

nurse the sick, they will wreak vengeance on their seducers, and, in despair, stretch out their hands to other anchors of rescue.”

The sermons showed Ketteler to be master of his subject. They were the voice of a prophet. And to the prophet came honour. In March, 1850, Pope Pius IX appointed him Bishop of Mainz.

One can hardly imagine, much less write it down, the joy of the people at the news. Ketteler retired to prepare for his consecration by a good retreat. The people prepared to welcome him with all possible acclaim. He wished to enter his Cathedral quietly and without demonstration. But his modesty was denied. He was taken on board a steamer, with flags. It set off down the Rhine and the banks thronged with a joyous crowd. Bands played, salutes were fired and Protestant princes came out to welcome him. Mainz itself was dressed for a holiday. It gave glad welcome to this successor of St. Boniface, and in the *night* a torchlight parade to show its joy.

As we would expect, Bishop Ketteler set about his episcopal duties with characteristic thoroughness. It is not the purpose here to treat of his zeal for the purely spiritual welfare of his flock. That was his first care, and it was done well. But to his social programme he gave renewed energy.

We come now to the year 1869, and that year is the real birth of the Social Reform Movement. In that year there was a conference of Catholic Bishops at Fulda. To the conference Ketteler submitted a paper. It is interesting for us in our times of some sort of protective legislation for the workingman to learn what he suggested. He has a heading, which he calls “Legal Protection for the Workman.” Here are some of the points:

1. Prohibition of child labour in factories.
2. Limitation of working hours for lads employed in factories, in the interest of their corporal and intellectual welfare.
3. Separation of the sexes in the work shops.
4. Closing of unsanitary workshops.
5. Legal regulation of working days.
6. Sunday rest.
7. Obligation of caring for workmen, who, through no fault of their own, are temporarily or forever incapacitated for work
8. A law protecting and favouring cooperative associations of workmen.
9. Appointment by the State of factory inspectors.

The result of Fulda was immediate. There was appointed in each diocese a commission to enquire into the condition of the working classes. A joint report was to be drawn up and presented to the Bishops at the next conference. And the fact that the Catholic clergy of Germany have taken such a prominent part in social reform during the last forty years, and that there are so many able political economists among them, is due to the splendid initiative of the Bishop of Mainz at that historic conference at Fulda.

The whole burden of Ketteler’s teaching was that the remedy for our social ill is with the Catholic Church. That truth is more apparent today. He sounded that note insistently. But he did more. He gave from pulpit, from platform and in the press the principles which should govern men if their community is to prosper. He showed that in Christianity alone the workingman has hope. He showed that the Church had raised the worker from a state of despised slavery, in which she found him, to a dignity which is fast slipping from him, away from her care. She offers him the solicitude and organisation which she gave to the guilds of the Middle Ages. And the revival of the guild idea, shaped to modern conditions, taught Ketteler, is the solution for the future. And this, remember, he said before our modern trade unions, which are something like the Church’s idea, but which fall far short. She offers the worker security. “Whoever works for another,” said Ketteler, “and is forced to do so all his life, has a moral right to demand security for a permanent livelihood. Why should the toiler alone have to go to his work, day after day, haunted by the thought: ‘I do not know whether to-morrow I shall still have the wages on which my existence and the existence of my wife and children depend.’ The wealthy capitalist finds protection a hundredfold in his capital, but the workingman must have no protection. Hence, the fierce abuse so persistently heaped on the trade guilds. I am far from pretending,”

added Ketteler, "that the guild system had no weak points. Abuse crept in, but the system itself rested on a right principle, which should have been retained. The future of unionism belongs to Christianity. The ancient Christian corporations have been dissolved and a new building is to replace them. But this is only a wretched hut, built, on sand."

Bishop Ketteler turned his attention to Socialism and Communism, and showed the falsity of doctrines merely material. He looked upon Socialism as an experiment, a logical outcrop from Liberalism, which makes the State supreme, marriage a civil contract and material gain the end of man. "If Liberalism were true," he said, "I would be a Socialist. But it is not true." And the experiment must fail.

"Christ proclaimed those very doctrines," said the Bishop, "which men, who have turned their backs upon Him and derided Him, are now passing off as their own invention; but He not only preached them He practised them in His life and showed us the way to make them part and parcel of our lives." And how Catholics of Germany and surrounding countries put Christian teaching into practice shows us that Ketteler's words were not thin air. Men have built in an incredible way upon the foundations which he laid. The fifty-eight great Catholic organisations in Germany devoted to social study are astonishing, even though the political power of the present moment has scattered much of it for the time being.

Thus there were Kolping societies, technical or vocational schools with a priest as spiritual father to them. There were 1770 societies, 280 of which had houses, providing 17,000 beds for lodgers and travellers. To the latter were given supper, bed and breakfast gratis. There were 600 libraries, 300 reading-rooms, choral, musical and dramatic sections. The Kolping instructors were workmen who took a practical and personal interest in each pupil. During the long unemployment crisis the Kolping societies were active in providing recreation, education and training for unemployed members. Employment exchanges were set up and recognised by the Government.

Again, there was the Catholic Labour League. Its members were workers of all ages, and it had a political character. One of its features was the secretariat for giving legal and other information to workers on pensions, insurance, compensation, and hundreds of other matters related to social legislation. There were four federations, one of which, the Cologne, numbered 200,000 members.

The Peasants' Union had to do with the land, and was an instrument of protection against the passing of rural property to the banks and money lenders. This Catholic work was so successful that Bismarck tried to suppress it. It protected the farmers, it promoted cooperative societies, it ran a paper, it gave free legal advice, it arranged credit, buying and selling, insurance and had an arbitration court to save costly litigation.

And, not least, was the People's League. In 1924 it had close on 600,000 members. It had a social programme, a central bureau, at which were employed thirty-five men, nine of whom were scientific and literary collaborators, some being ecclesiastics and doctors in theology, others laymen and doctors in political economy. There was a printing house with a press, and a library of 70,000 books on social science and apologetics. There were lectures on practical sociology, special courses for artisans, workmen, businessmen, agriculturalists, schoolmasters, etc. And, in the German centre, "the Catholics of Germany possessed," as Goyau remarks, "thanks to Ketteler, a social doctrine and a social platform." This party it was that took the lead in social legislation, until its disappearance under the present regime.

This is how it worked. In 1877 the Centre came forward with a Labour Protection Bill. It was the first Bill of the kind ever placed on the table of the Reichstag, and in scope it was identical with Ketteler's programme. The debate showed how far advanced was Ketteler and the programme he advocated. The Bill was objected to as being "a chapter from some medieval chronicle." The Secretary of State wanted to know where, in a rational factory law, a place could be found for rest on Sunday, and Bismarck, the Chancellor, thought that all this business about the workingman's health and factory inspectors would not solve anything, but would only hinder Germany in the race for the world's markets.

And the comic press of Germany made the Bill a matter for satire.

The Bill was not passed then, but the Centre was determined. Not for nothing had it learned from Ketteler, and fifteen years later, after change upon change of government, Ketteler's ideas received the sanction of law.

Like work has been done in France, Belgium, Switzerland and also in England. A notable work is the Malines

Union, which is called “The International Union for Social Studies,” and which includes in its members the most distinguished Catholic scholars in the social and economic sphere. It issues a code of social principles which summarises and brings *up* to date the conclusions and recommendations of the best Catholic authorities in contemporary social problems.

All these things are achievement, and for them the world, Catholic and non-Catholic, should hold Bishop Ketteler’s name in benediction.

Yet men are asking for guidance. They confess that they are lost. They are faced with the bitter truth that they are no longer able to follow the path of their own choosing. They are crying for a way out, and it is becoming more and more evident that the way out is the way back.

It is a hard medicine to swallow, and men are slow to take it. So they waste time in futile talk. But their councils, their conferences, their conversation and their leagues have to *realise sooner or later* and the sooner they realise it the better—that Christ’s coming was no idle advent. Christ’s words are not platitude. The Church is no museum of past things. There is a living Voice, speaking with authority, and the world will have to listen. The situation must be faced. It has to be realised.

There is no other way.

THE POPE

Leo XIII.

On the seventh of February, 1878, Pope Pius IX. died in the Vatican, and the whole world paused in its affairs and turned to watch Rome. “For now,” men said, “something is going to happen.” Storm had gathered over the See of Peter. In the darkness of the night the remains of the late Pontiff were carried to their resting place outside the walls of the city. The enemies of the Church saw in the secret, midnight procession a symbol. They shouted after the few, sad carriages and pelted them with stones. “Here,” they cried, “is an end of the Popes. The Cardinals cannot be allowed to elect another. The Government will take possession of the Vatican. . . . The lamp has flickered into darkness; it shall never be relit.” And, indeed, if you know the history of the closing years of the gentle Pius IX, darkness had settled on the waters. The Bark of Peter seemed hidden in the storm.

Our grandfathers remember the time.

Europe seethed with revolution. Italy herself was tossed with passionate political conflict. Religious and anti-clerical hatred gathered forces against the Papacy. The Papal States, territory which the Popes had governed over a thousand years, from the days of Pepin and Charlemagne, were invaded and the Pope driven into the garden of the Vatican. Hardly a Pontiff so gentle as Pius IX; hardly a Pontiff who withstood such storms. And, in the midst of it, he died.

And now it was thought that something unusual would take place. The Quirinal, wherein the last four Popes had been elected, was in the hands of the ‘Revolution’. It was expected that it would now seize the Vatican itself. But the usual thing occurred. Another successor to St. Peter sat in the ancient Chair. He took the name of Leo XIII. and, if men looked for a symbol, well, here was one: the motto of the new Pontiff was “Lumen in Coelo”—light in the heavens. On his ancient family escutcheon there shone a bright, solitary star. And that star, in our dark days of political and economic ill, is the one guiding light.

Pope Leo XIII., whose family name was Pecci, was born on the 2nd of March, 1810, at the small town of Carpineto, an eagle’s nest of a place, pitched high above the Valley of Latium, between two gigantic rocks. His parents were of the nobility, and if there be any who still read the books of Lord Lytton they may be interested to learn—as may be the lovers of Wagner that the young Joachim Pecci was a descendant, through his mother, of the celebrated Cola di Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes. Significant this for Rienzi is called the friend of the people.

Bred on that lofty mountain-crest, he would have about him through life, we would expect, ever the air of the hills man lean, straight, broad of shoulder, bright and piercing of eye. There, in the hill country he acquired that alert vigour which characterised him not only mentally, but bodily, so that the intimates of his household said of him, even in his late years, “The Pope always runs.”

His early education was in the hands of the Jesuits. His career was brilliant. From the first, a keen relish for classic

literature distinguished him, likewise a happy gift of composition. He wrote prose and verse, carrying off the first honours in Latin and Greek, and shaping that style which was afterwards to earn for him the reputation of being one of the first Latinists of the time. Yet he was not one-sided. His masters saw to that. His intellect was developed, as well as his imagination. To his honours in the classics he added first prizes for physics, chemistry and mathematics. And even greater success followed him into philosophy and theology.

Nor was his life all study. His disposition was lively. He sharpened His pen at epigrams and charades. He spent his holidays in his native hills, hunting and fowling.

The time arrived when the young student entered upon his studies for the priesthood. He entered an academy for ecclesiastics who were destined for a diplomatic or administrative career under the Pontifical Government. In the year 1837 he was ordained priest.

The brilliant career of the young Monsignor had set him apart as a promising administrator, and almost immediately he was appointed Governor of Benevento. Here he gave an example of practical government. His province was but 46 miles in extent, but it was important enough for Talleyrand to have desired it, and to have been installed there as prince by Napoleon during the Emperor's temporary possession of the States of the Pope.

After the withdrawal of the French, government was well-nigh impossible. Secret societies, smugglers and brigands abounded, terrorising the countryside, taxing the towns, blackmailing the rich, plundering widely. Face to face with these well-organised bands of desperate men came Monsignor Pecci.

He succeeded. His pontifical troops made a sudden and concerted attack upon the strongholds of the outlaws, and the people were overjoyed to see one morning the most dreaded chief of all led in chains through the streets.

Strict justice was done. Brigandage and smuggling disappeared, agriculture flourished, taxation was lessened, roads were built, order and security restored. The third year of the young prelate's rule saw a transformed State.

So successful was he at Benevento that he was transferred to Perugia. There he was equally successful. And shortly, at the age of thirty-three, he was appointed Papal Nuncio at the Court of Brussels.

His stay at Brussels must be passed over quickly. Sufficient to say that he was appreciated as a statesman and as a churchman. But one incident stands out with peculiar interest to English-speaking people—the visit of the future Pope to England. Leo I., the King of the Belgians, a shrewd judge of men, estimated the Archbishop highly and made of him a close friend and adviser. It is interesting, too, to learn that that fascinating figure, the Baron Stockmar, who managed so adroitly the back-stage movements of royalty, also prized Archbishop Pecci. We may be sure that the King's niece, Victoria of England, was frequently discussed. Eventually, warmly recommended by the King, the Nuncio visited England and was received there by the Queen and her Consort with a special welcome, due to the friend of her uncle, Leopold. In England, the Archbishop stayed a month. Next he returned to Rome, whither he was recalled; thence to be sent once more to Perugia; this time as its Bishop.

Here was another field of work—the care of the pastor, rather than the official duties of the diplomat. And at Perugia he spent thirty years. It was a long time, but it was not the secluded labour that you may imagine. It was an eventful, anxious rule; a swift moving drama of tragedy. For Pius IX had succeeded Gregory XVI, and through the troubled reign of Pius there was Perugia and its Bishop set in the path of the invader. The freebooters of Garibaldi swept down from the north, taking Perugia in their sweep; committing all manner of massacre, sacrilege and outrage; and this but one of the cares on the shoulders of the Bishop. Perugia was a storm centre, and his hands were full. Nevertheless, he found opportunity between the struggles to give his attention to that social study which afterwards, as Pope, distinguished him. He founded savings banks for the people, stores for their grain against the lean times, night schools for artisans, and reinstated those Monti di Pietà, in glorious imitations of which are familiar to Australian people.

And here at Perugia came the honour of the Cardinalate.

Meanwhile, Pius IX, from the throne of Peter, saw, one by one, the States of the Church invaded and annexed. In 1860 he was left but one small province and the ancient Papal city of Rome. In 1870 that, too, was taken. The Papal Palace of the Quirinal was appropriated; the Vatican alone left as a precarious refuge for the helpless Pontiff. There he retreated and made protest, and, protesting, he died.

Almost immediately the Conclave was held. The Cardinal Bishop of Perugia was given the Fisherman's Ring. Leo

XIII commenced his reign.

It was a troubled world that Leo looked out upon. The spirit of revolution was in the air. The working classes, fretting under inhuman and slave conditions of the new industrial era, were restless. It is no wonder. The authority of governments was either set at naught or seemed inept. The ancient framework of Christianity, as men saw it, was decayed and tottering.

Leo lost no time. He set about writing his first Encyclical—his letter to the world. It is significant, thoughtful and to the point. He diagnoses the world's sickness, and everyone, be he Catholic or Protestant, has here something to think about if he is interested in preserving Christianity in Europe.

“From the very beginning of Our Pontificate we have before our eyes the sad spectacle of the evils which assail mankind from every side. There is a widespread subversion of the cardinal truths, on which the very foundations of human society repose. There is a wicked disposition of men's minds, which is impatient of all lawful power. There is a perpetual ferment of dissension, begetting internal strife, cruel and bloody wars. There is a contempt of the laws of morality and justice; an insatiable yearning for the transitory goods of earth, carried to the insane pitch of causing many unhappy persons to lay violent hands on themselves. There is an inconsiderate administration, a squandering, an upsetting of the public property and revenues, and there is the brazen impudence of men, who, when they deceive their fellows most, make them believe that they are the promoters of patriotism, of liberty, of right of every kind. There is, in fine, a pestilential virus, which creeps into the vital organs and members of human society, which allows them no rest, and which forebodes for the social order new revolutions ending in calamitous results!”

Good words these, which apply even more so to our own day.

And what is the cause? Simply this. The Pope continues: “Men have despised and rejected the holy and august authority of the Church, which, in the name of God, is placed over the human race and is the avenger and protector of all legitimate authority.”

That is not Papal platitude. It is the assertion of the truth that the history of civilisation is the history of the Church; a truth to which even the Rationalist and the Protestant give testimony. But, at least, everybody, whatever he or she may think of the Catholic Church, cannot but admit that it does represent an immense moral force. Therefore, what the Pope has to say is worthy of attention. If he claims a remedy, it is worth knowing the prescription.

Yet it is an astonishing thing that men who have eyes to see, men who are sincerely interested in the condition of the people, do not take the trouble to find out what suggestion the Church offers—that Church which knows mankind so well and has achieved such giant things for humanity throughout its long life. Yet of all men the Pope is most expert; of all men he ought to know. For, remember, he is the inheritor of the experience of two thousand years. For two thousand years a Pope has sat upon the Throne of Peter, looking out upon the world. He holds the helm which has steered our civilisation through its long, stormy history. And, surely, since he has brought mankind, as even Protestants testify, from the dark lands of paganism, through stress and shoal, to the better society that we know, surely his experience is of value.

Surely his logs, surely his charts are worth inspection.

Especially if they can be had for the negligible sum of twopence.

Now, if I may digress, to give point to what I write, let me put up as an illustration, Benedict XV., the Pope of the war years. He appealed for peace and was ignored. He addressed a Letter to the heads of the belligerent peoples. In that Letter he laid down bases for a just and lasting peace. Again he was ignored. Then, in the course of time, when the treaty of peace was drawn up by the nations, he was not only ignored another time, but was actually debarred from the proceedings. With the exception of the League of Nations, which was an attempt at arbitration, not one of the Pope's Christian principles was incorporated. So followed the unrest and distrust, of post-war years to our own day. Now we see men, forced to learn by their own bitter experience, suggesting the principles which the Pope of twenty years ago suggested as solutions of the difficulty—the condonation of war debts, the reduction of armaments, and others. Of the Pope's practical insistence on the abolition of compulsory military service we hear hardly a word. For they have no authority to effect these things. So they build their guns again and bolster up their artificial frontiers, and are afraid.

Now, in regard to Leo XIII, he is not less helpful upon social problems, and they are not less acute.

Particularly, Pope Leo XIII is the Pope of the workingman. His most famous Encyclical is on the “Condition of

Labour.” That Letter has become known, among those who have made an adequate study of social writings, as the Magna Charta of the workingman. It is the workingman’s text-book, and he should carry it in his pocket. He should have it by heart. Yet in the perplexities, industrial and economic, of the day, while the thoughtful workman and social reformer screws his courage to the reading of newspaper leaders and all manner of bewildering handbooks, and still more bewildering pamphlets, the little Letter of Leo, with its penetrating intelligence and welcome lucidity, is hardly read. And men say, with incredible ignorance: What does the Church offer the workingman?

At the time when Leo XIII wrote his famous Letter upon the “Condition of Labour” in 1891, many things, accepted now as ideal, were regarded as revolutionary. The new economic conditions had divided society into two classes. “The first,” to quote the present Holy Father, commenting on Leo’s Letter, “small in numbers, enjoyed practically all the comforts, so plentifully supplied by modern invention; the second class, comprising the immense multitude of workingmen, was made up of those who, oppressed by dire poverty, struggled in vain to escape from the straits which encompassed them.

“This state of things,” continues Pope Pius, “was quite satisfactory to the wealthy! On the other hand, the working classes, victims of these harsh conditions, submitted to them with extreme reluctance!”

At last, Leo XIII, “urged,” as he said, “by the responsibility of the Apostolic Office,” startled the Christian world with the Voice of Christ.

And his Letter, as the Protestant, W. T. Stead, remarks, “for many a long day will serve as a text for the social reformer.”

Now, here is some of the Encyclical: “It has come to pass,” says the Pope at the outset, “that workingmen have been given over, isolated and defenceless, to the callousness of employers and the greed of unrestrained competition. The evil has been increased by rapacious usury, which, though more than once condemned by the Church, is, nevertheless, under a different form, but with the same guilt, still practised by avaricious and grasping men. And to this must be added the custom of working by contract, and the concentration of so many branches of trade in the hands of a few individuals so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the masses of the poor a yoke little better than slavery itself.”

That is not beating about the bush.

Then the Pope discusses the suggested remedy of the Socialists, *who* offer to solve the problem by transferring private property to the State. “But,” says Leo, “the proposals are so clearly futile, for all practical purposes, that, if they were carried out, the workingman would be the first to suffer. Moreover, they are emphatically unjust.” Pope Leo defends private ownership, which may seem to some a paradox, since the Socialists are correct in saying that in private ownership is set that iniquitous power *which* deprives the workingman of a decent, comfortable livelihood. But the Pope rightly points out that the iniquity of private ownership lies not in the use, but in the abuse, of it; an abuse which the Church has consistently condemned, but which has sprung up and got its stranglehold on society only since society has shaken off her authority.

But the right use of property, the Pope says, is the workingman’s protection. It is the natural right of man. It gives security to the individual, to the family, to the State.

Leo goes on to stress that capital and labour are mutually indispensable, but that the Church is necessary to preserve harmony by reminding each class of its duties to the other, especially the duty of justice. Thus, she teaches the workman “to carry out honestly and well all equitable arrangements freely made; never to injure capital . . . never to employ violence . . . never to engage in disorder.” On the other hand, he says: “The rich must religiously refrain from cutting down the workingman’s earnings, either by fraud, or force, or usurious dealing, and with the more reason because the poor man is weak and unprotected!”

And many things the Pope treats—the family, as the original and important unit of society; the State, its rights, its duties and its limitations; its obligations towards the worker; the definite obligation of using surplus wealth for the benefit of one’s fellows; the evils of excessive taxation; workmen’s associations or trade unions; strikes, their causes and effects.

In condemning competition, free and unrestrained, the thing falsely echoed among men as the soul of trade, he touches the spot.

And he suggests that in the guild idea, blessed by the Church, lies the remedy.

And he shows how through history, as Cobbett, the Protestant, says, the Church “provided, and provided amply, for all the wants of the poor and the distressed!”

But the most important part of the Letter is that upon the just wage and hours of work. “The first concern of all,” it runs, “is to save the poor workers from the cruelty of grasping speculators, who use human beings as mere instruments for making money. It is neither justice or humanity so to grind men down with excessive labour as to stupify their minds and wear out their bodies.” Pope Leo makes suggestions for hours, proportionate to the kind of work engaged in; lays down rules for the employment of women and children, and stresses the need for proper rest and recreation.

Then, as to wages, this is very important today.

We are told,” says the Pope, “that wages are fixed by free consent, and, therefore, the employer, when he pays what was agreed upon, has done his part and is not called upon for anything further. The only way, it is said, in which injustice could happen would be if the master refused to pay the whole of the wages, or the workman would not complete the work undertaken.

“But this mode of reasoning is by no means convincing . . . for there are important considerations which it leaves out of view altogether. To labour is to exert oneself for the sake of procuring what is necessary for the purposes of life, and, most of all, for self -preservation.... Therefore, a man’s labour has two notes or characters. First of all, it is personal, for the exertion of individual power belongs to the individual who puts it forth, employing this power for that personal profit for which it is given.

“Secondly, a man’s labour is necessary, for without the results of labour a man cannot live. Now, if we were to consider labour merely so far as it is personal, doubtless it would be within the workman’s right to accept any rate of wages whatever, for, in the same way as he is free to work or not, so he is free to accept a small remuneration or even none at all. But this,” says the Pope firmly, “is a mere abstract supposition; the labour of the workingman is not only a personal attribute, but it is necessary, and this makes all the difference. The preservation of life is the bounden duty of each and all, and to fail therein is a crime. It follows that each one has a right to procure what is required in order to live, and, the poor can procure it in no other way than by work and wages.

“Let it be granted then,” continues Leo, “that, as a rule, workman and employer should make free agreements, and, in particular, should freely agree as to wages. Nevertheless, there is a dictate more imperious and more ancient than any bargain between man and man—that the remuneration must be enough to support the wage-earner in reasonable and frugal comfort.” That, I might add, includes sufficiency for a wife and family. “Now,” says the Pope, “if, through necessity or fear of a worse evil, the workman accepts conditions because an employer or contractor will give him no better, he is the victim of force and injustice.”

And, though conditions are better now than when those words were written, there is still urgent need for them to be made a basis of legislation.

And so the Letter runs on. “If a workman’s wages be sufficient to enable him to maintain himself, his wife and his children in reasonable comfort, he will not find it difficult, if he is a sensible man, to study economy, and he will not fail to put by a little property.” The consequence of this, the Pope maintains, is that property will become more equitably divided, the gulf between vast wealth and deep poverty will be filled, and a true patriotic spirit will dwell in a community to whom their fatherland is something more than a name.

The assistance of the Church, says the final paragraph, will never be wanting, and for its pastors there is a careful word that each will throw himself into the conflict with “all the energy of his mind and all the strength of his endurance”; by every means to “strive for the good of the people.”

All this that men “be persuaded that the primary thing needful is to return to real Christianity, in the absence of which all the plans and devices of the wisest will be of little avail.”

Truly, poor humanity, particularly oppressed humanity, has no greater friend than the ceaseless watcher in the watch-tower of the world. The Pope’s day is long. He rises early. The Sacrifice of the Mass begins his working day, and there is no harder worker than he. Till the close of the day he is busy with affairs of heaven and earth, with his Ambassadors, his secretaries, his Bishops and his people from every small corner of the world. And at night, when the busy day is done and the Papal household retires to rest, when the windows of the Vatican are darkened, one by one,

the light shines in the private study of the Pope, where he watches and prays, thinks and writes for the welfare of the world.

We have his Letters, his Encyclicals, the fruits of his labour. Just as St. Peter before him sent his epistles, or Letters, from that very same city, exhorting and blessing the flock under his care, so his successor still writes, still exhorts, still blesses. And the burden of his writing is ever the same:

“There is no other name under heaven given to men, wherewith we must be saved, save the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Neither is there salvation in any other.”
