

The Roman Catholic Pastoral

IT is now thirty-five years since the Archbishops and Bishops of the Catholic Church in America published their last joint pastoral to the clergy and laity. Conditions of unrest throughout the nation are offered as reasons why it should appear at this time. Few will deny its timeliness or the wisdom of the following utterances.

"This is not a time for makeshifts. The facts are before us plainly and roughly. They cannot be set aside with mere expedients or formalities that smooth the surface of things but leave the virus beneath. Rightly or wrongly, the movements that are shaking the foundations of order come out of men's souls. They embody a demand for right. They may be stayed for a time or diverted, but if, in keeping with American principles, order is to rest on the willingness of the people and their free co-operation, their souls must be reached. . . ." "Justice obliges us to give every man his due, because he is a man. It prescribes respect for the rights of the individual, of society and the State."

Naturally the pastoral stresses the importance of religion as a remedy for present evils and unrest, but obviously this advice can only relate to persons—and alas, natural persons have ceased to be guiding entities in the world of today. Corporations which are said to have no bodies to be kicked or souls to be damned, have no souls to be saved either, and we do not know that Catholic directors of corporations, however punctiliously they may obey their spiritual guides in private affairs, carry Christian principles into their board meetings. Indeed we feel that a truly Christian man endeavoring to apply the Golden Rule would not only find himself *persona non grata* at a directors' meeting but would be eliminated at the next election. Kipling's dictum "The sins that ye do, by two and two, ye shall answer for one by one," has an application in this direction, which perhaps he never contemplated.

It is, of course, when we come to the part of the pastoral dealing with "capital and labor" that we find two injunctions and reflections that interest us most directly. We regret that we do not find in the treatment of this subject the same clearness of statement which characterizes the statements in regard to religion and morals. We should be inclined to doubt whether the subject is not beclouded by the metaphysical attitude which regards capital and labor (which are here mere abstractions) as having mutual obligations or indeed any obligation at all. The concept of obligations or rights can only attach to human beings. Capitalists and laborers have mutual obligations, as have all men when they come into relations with one another, but organized capital and organized labor have only those relations and obligations to each other that their owners have as men.

We cannot help feeling that the pastoral fails to recognize the real source of the unrest which it so justly deplors, because it regards capital and labor abstractly as the contestants. It does not recognize the existence of the third factor, which economists are obliged to invest with at least

equal importance—special privilege in the form of ownership of natural resources—for convenience, called land—but needing to be publicly categorized as land, mines, forests, water power rights and other State created property, access to and use of which are necessary to supply the fundamental needs of life. In general thinking these things are included in the term capital, because they are usually *capitalized*, just as houses and land are included in the term real estate, but it needs only rudimentary thinking to comprehend the difference between the house and the lot on which it is situated and it should be quite as easy to see that there is an equally wide distinction between a mine and the capital used in its operation and that even though capital may be paid for the mine, that fact does not make the mine capital. Indeed, it is not going too far to say that it is the inclusion of natural resources in the term capital that lies at the root of the bitter conflict between capitalists and laborers. Any attempt to harmonize the conflicting forces on the basis of a voluntary recognition of mutual interests must fail as it has always failed. The laborer feels sub-consciously that social adjustments have put in the hands of a limited group the power to rob or starve him, because they are able to keep him and his fellows from working directly upon the earth for their own support, and the only reason such action is not taken, is the fear of loss in the operation or ultimate physical revolt, which might lose the superior classes their privilege as it seems to have done in some sections of Europe.

No remonstrances can alter these conditions, however sustained by the authority of their authors, as long as the fundamental facts remain unchanged. It is regrettable that, in spite of the fact that for a number of years this truth has been pointed out by great men inside and outside the Catholic Church, it remains true that no impression has been made upon the collective mind of the Catholic episcopate. In this respect, it differs in no regard from the governing bodies of other Churches which continue to hold up to the members the ideals of a Christian life, in a world where the practice of such ideals would doom a man to a lifetime in jail or in an almshouse. Those who plead for such a change in the social order as would bring the Christ-life within the realm of possibility for the mass of mankind are viewed askance as troublers of the peace.

It is indeed a mystery of psychology that men whose own lives are often models of self-sacrifice should not play the role of Nathan and denounce those who "add house to house and field" to field, so that there is no place left for the poor to stand except what their earnings can pay for. Can they not see how the accumulation of enormous fortunes, due to appropriation of public values, makes it possible to insidiously corrupt all branches of public life, all methods of popular education? Can they not see how there have grown up in fifty years gigantic combinations, based at first, second or third hand on special privilege, which determine how we shall be housed, wherewith we shall be clothed, what we shall eat, read and think, until originality and individuality have become a burden or a crime. It is not indeed a wild surmise that before long the same meth-

ods will be applied to our churches and in the holy name of efficiency standards will be established and boycotting methods applied in the one region of thought where competition is yet permitted to operate with a measure of freedom.

The fundamental atheist is he who concedes that God made the world to be monopolized by the few to the exclusion of the rest. All religions calling themselves Christian have had the other concept. The Bible is full of the idea that land must not be treated as property like other things, but only in rare instances have the Churches fed such teachings to their flocks. Their action in this respect is often defended on the ground that they have no divine inspiration in economic matters, but surely there is as much Biblical warrant for promulgating these doctrines as many of the things that they do teach, and it is in line with the observation of human nature.

The motive of the issuance of the pastoral was of course to pour oil on the seething sea of social unrest. We wish that it may have such effect because calm thinking rather than revolutionary action is what the world most needs, but there is grave reason to fear that the age-long oppression of the poor will not incline them to philosophy, and the restraining influence of religion has not proven in the past a reliable barrier when the red tide begins to run.

A CATHOLIC.

Evils of Land Speculation

EVIL results of this speculation in land are becoming apparent. In the corn belt most sales during the past six months have involved the immediate payment of only a small per cent. of the purchase price at the time of sale, the remainder of the cash payment to be made on March 1, 1920, at which time the buyer is to receive possession of the farm. In a large number of cases the farm subsequently is sold several times. As a result no one knows who will be the owner March 1, and tenants are unable to make contracts for next year. Consequently, many tenants will be unsettled and uncertain in their plans for the coming year. On the other hand, if the farm is now occupied by the former owner, he can make no plans for the farm and is inclined to neglect improvements and preparation of the fields for next year's crops. The man who already owns his farm and who takes advantage of the advance of land prices to sell, often appears to have made a handsome profit. However, if he intends to continue farming in the same locality he is likely to find that he must pay as much or more than he received to obtain another farm of the same quality.

In a number of cases farmers have been forced to pay from \$10,000 to \$15,000 to rebuy the same farm which they had previously sold at an apparently large profit. The farm owner may sometimes improve his position by selling at the present high prices and rebuying in another State where prices of farms have not increased in the same proportion for farms of equal quality. However, this involves migration with the resulting separation from friends, relatives and established associations.

Farm Journal.

News From Many States

ARKANSAS. Mr. O. S. Rieff, of Russellville, will make a fight in the next primary election for the nomination of State Auditor, and will stand on a platform which he thus announces:

"I am going to make my race upon a platform of Tax Reform, on the basis of the Single Tax.

It must be largely a campaign of education. The people generally know little about the Single Tax proposition and what they do know is, perhaps, of a prejudicial nature.

But the tax-burdened masses of this State are in such a frenzy of discontent and rebellion against the injustice and iniquity under the present method that if the Single Tax is properly presented they will, I believe, approve and adopt it."

A pamphlet of nearly one hundred pages, in convenient pocket form, neatly printed and filled with arguments drawn from the facts of industrial life, is Mr. Rieff's unusual but striking method of announcing his fight for the office of Auditor of the State. This pamphlet leaves nothing to be desired for boldness and clarity. We hail Mr. Rieff's candidacy as another symptom of the passing of the movement from propaganda to politics, where this great issue belongs.

CALIFORNIA. The work of getting out petitions in California is well under way and is being superintended by George A. Briggs, former member of the Fels Fund Commission and now chairman of the finance committee of the Great Adventure League. Friend Briggs has a big job on his hands but Briggs is a big man—not only in a physical way, but as an executive. He has nearly a hundred paid circulators, besides a number of volunteer workers throughout the State.

Owing to the shortage of houses and profiteering in general a growing interest in the Single Tax Amendment is being manifested, especially by organized labor. It was the purpose of organized labor to initiate a constitutional amendment providing for a graduated land tax, but it is known now that this will not be done, and labor leaders are showing friendliness toward the Single Tax Amendment to be voted on at the November election. Wm. L. Ross of the Great Adventure League, with headquarters at Los Angeles, and Roy R. Waterbury, of the California Single Tax League with headquarters at San Francisco, have recently addressed labor unions in Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego and other cities, and have been invited by P. H. McCarthy, president of the Building Trades Council, and former mayor of San Francisco, to address their State convention to be held at Bakersfield this month. Mr. McCarthy is desirous of having the merits of the Single Tax explained to organized labor. He and other labor leaders are awaking to the fact that something fundamental must be done, and realize that no benefit is derived from an increase in wages when prices go up in proportion or even at a greater rate.

The Central Labor Union, of San Diego, endorsed the