

his insight. The intelligence of the Church was concerned with critical problems, its enthusiasm seemed to have little more to offer than middle-class platitudes and temperance pledges and thus the workers, not irreligious in themselves, slipped away from the Church.

Today the Church of Scotland is the church of the middle-class and a depopulated countryside, rather than of the nation. Scotland as a whole no longer cares for disputes concerning Divine Pre-motion or the Word of God. In the face of the greatest crisis in her history the Kirk no longer speaks with authority. Yet she does represent something great, and we can only pray that He whom she acclaims as her Lord and Master will lead her through the Valley of the shadow of Death to that peace, to that Unity for which He prayed.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.

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## SCOTTISH INDUSTRIALISM AND THE CATHOLIC

SOME fifty years ago at an investigation into Glasgow housing sponsored by a committee of the Church of Scotland, Bruce Glaiser, secretary of the Glasgow branch of the Socialist League, invited to explain why Irish immigrants did not rise so easily as native labourers to be craftsmen, replied: "I do not believe that it is vice that is against the Irishmen, but rather virtue. The improvidence of the Irish springs rather from virtues; while the success of Scotchmen is on account of their canny disposition and desire to make money . . . I think that, as a whole, as social beings they are quite equal to the Scotch; I do not think the ambition to take a position side by side with Scotchmen is a very high one."

Whether the Catholic has revolted instinctively or not against the bleakness of Scottish industrialism in the past century, the fact remains that he has not made his presence effectively felt among the forces that attempt to control and guide it. For this, the circumstances that have conditioned his existence in Scotland are largely responsible.

With a ratio of one in eight, proportionately he has impinged much more strongly on Scottish, than on English, industrial life. "Catholic" and "Irish" are synonymous terms in Scotland to this day—the writer has even heard natives of the Catholic Highlands referred to by Lowland Scots as "Hieland Irish"—and, apart from the few thousands of the indigenous race north-east and west of the Highland Line who have never lost the Faith, all Catholics in Scotland are of Irish stock. From the last quarter of the eighteenth

century these immigrants, driven by poverty at home, came first in their hundreds, then thousands and, after the Famine, in their tens of thousands, to the factories, workshops and mines of the industrial central belt of the Scottish Lowlands. It has been calculated that the total number of Irish by birth and descent in Scotland over the period 1821-1861 was roughly: 1821: 55,000; 1831: 130,000; 1841: 200,000; 1851: 345,000; 1861: 440,000. As the vast majority of the immigrants were from Ulster, there was a fair sprinkling of Protestants, but not nearly so many as one might at first think when it is recollected that the goad of poverty, which drove the Catholic to forsake his country, seldom pricked his comfortably-placed Protestant neighbour; and when the Protestant Ulster tenant turned his thoughts to emigration he had usually the means to seek a new life beyond the seas far from the industrial hells of Great Britain.

After the 'sixties, immigration rapidly and progressively decreased. In the 'seventies the Irish entered Scotland at an average annual rate of about 3,000, in the 'eighties at 1,500 a year, and in the 'nineties the rate scaled from a maximum of 1,500 to a minimum of 500. For many years now Irish immigration has been insignificant.

A life of toil awaited the Irish peasants in the country of their adoption. A life of toil had also been theirs in their native land. But the difference lay in this: in Scotland they were paid for their labour. In Ireland their only contact with money had been on the passage from the market where they had sold their pig to the rack-renting land agent's office across the street. The heavy industries welcomed their strong arms and muscular frames inexplicably nurtured on potatoes and buttermilk. And of all Scotland's workers they laboured hardest and were lowest paid. They entered chemical works at 15s. a week, and ten years in the vitriol and salt-cake departments turned them into feeble old men. They toiled as navvies on the railways and after the tracks were laid continued to maintain the permanent way exposed to the vagaries of the Scottish climate. In the mines and iron and steel works they laboured, and on the docks as stevedores, in machine-shops and factories, in the numerous little foundries and workshops that existed, in the days before amalgamation and concentration, for the production of household articles and small goods generally, in distilleries at the heavy work of handling the grain, as masons' labourers in the vast building activity of the late nineteenth century, as carters, coachmen and stablemen in an age of horse transport, in municipal gas-works, in brickworks and in potteries. Their women folk worked in the textile mills, and in the bleaching and dyeing works, where

only girls of sturdy country stock could stand up to the conditions of work. In the pottery, glass, tobacco and clay-pipe factories of the Scottish industrial towns the children of the immigrants added by their labour to the income of the family.

That income was normally meagre. Forming the bulk of the unskilled labour in industry, the Irish immigrant earned the lowest wages of all. Over the half century from 1850 to 1900 the adult male labourer's weekly earnings varied between 12s. and 22s. The weekly income of the average Irish family in Scotland in that period, therefore, probably scaled between 25s. and 35s. Hence the difficulty of rising to the status of craftsman. Long before the immigrants' children were of an age to begin their apprenticeship they had been put to strip tobacco leaf, wait on glass blowers and fill a score of other blind-alley occupations that brought in, while they lasted, a few additional, and necessary, shillings. After the Act of 1872 had made elementary education in Scotland compulsory, the bulk of the "half-timers" for the factories were recruited from the children of Irish immigrants. At eighteen, when the apprentice was pocketing his second year's nominal wages, the Irish boy could be earning a man's wages at navvying.

Poverty, therefore, a native indifference to material comfort and the philosophy of "getting on", and the difficulty of effecting an entrance in competition with the sons of Scots tradesmen, were the factors that kept a check on the supply of Irish skilled operatives. The rigid rules of entry and prolonged apprenticeship that made the craftsman the aristocrat of labour in the Age of Steel, however, will have little *raison d'être* in the Age of Plastics that is succeeding it. Mass production needs no craftsmen.

In the forty years that covered the last two decades of the nineteenth and the first two of the twentieth century the immigrant workmen in Scotland were closely bound together by the struggle for Home Rule. At a time when their own industrial unions were striving to make their position secure, they were more interested in the political well-being of their own race than in the economic prosperity of their adopted one. Even in the mining industry, where grading according to skill did not enter and where the immigrants were numerically very strong, they failed to make their voice heard and left the leadership to such Scotsmen as Alexander Macdonald, Keir Hardie and Bob Smillie. But now the United Irish League is a faint memory and the Catholic in Scotland is at least two generations removed from his Irish ancestors. What is his position in Scottish industry to-day, therefore?

Materially, it is not bright. Our generation is witnessing the ebb of the wave that carried the industrial revolution through the north

of England up to the Highland Line. The mineral wealth on which the heavy industries of the Clyde Valley are based is fast disappearing. In 1910 the Lanarkshire coalfields produced 24,000,000 tons. The output for 1939 was 13,000,000 tons. In the same time the number of miners dropped from 80,000 to 40,000. A generation hence the annual output, it is calculated, will be 6,000,000 tons. Optimists look to Fifeshire to mitigate the loss, but it is rather too much to hope for the resurrection of prosperity in the west on coal from east Scotland. The Age of Plastics thrives best apparently near centres of population and finance. The question of proximity to raw materials does not arise. Hence Scotland knows almost nothing of the electrical, radio, rubber, aluminium, newer chemical, artificial silk and canning industries. The absorption of Scottish by English banks is one indication of the growing centralisation of financial control of industry in London and other large English towns. And the absorption of Scottish M.P.'s by Westminster is another indication that the country can expect little help from Parliament.

Morally, the position of the average Catholic to-day in Scottish industry is peculiar. He is either apathetic about social conditions, or keeps purposely aloof, or, on the other hand, is an active member of the Labour or I.L.P. Party, or—final degradation—as a Stalinist or Trotskyite attempts to square his espousal of one form or other of Communism with the practice of Catholicism. All adult working-class education is Marxist and materialistic in content, and on our side little positive has been done to counteract it. The few but disciplined and zealous members of the Communist Party are exercising in the industrial unions an influence out of all proportion to their numbers and the indifference of Catholics is making their task easier than it might be.

Indications are not wanting, however, to fortify the hope that the Catholic in Scottish industrial life may become a force of considerable importance. A generation ago a beginning was made by Catholics to preserve their faith and spread their social principles *while at work* by the formation of transport, railway and postal workers' guilds, by means of which Catholic trade unionists could discuss with one another common problems, especially the impact of industrial life on their faith. With the guilds as models, a beginning was made some five years ago to establish a common forum for men in the light and heavy industries. Meeting first as representative of some thirty trade unions, the movement, under the title of the "Catholic Workers' Guild", began the task of forming groups, four to ten men, in factories and workshops. These hand-picked groups, it is hoped, will produce the men who can be trained

to become leaders in their trade unions. The main aims of the Guild are: a hundred per cent. trade unionism, education on Catholic sociological lines and the application of papal teaching to industrial problems. It is interested in Jocist methods: see, judge and act. Much of the business of these groups, meeting under local spiritual chaplains, is concerned with day-to-day conditions in industry.

The progress of the Guild, devised as it is on such a selective basis, is necessarily, and of set purpose, slow. Limited, meantime, to Glasgow, it numbers now ten groups. Much of its work is concerned with the provision of evening classes in the winter session, week-end schools, lectures, book clubs, the setting up of study groups and the extensive sale of Catholic literature dealing with the problems of industrialism.

In Edinburgh the formation of a central information department was begun in 1942 with the establishment of the Catholic Research Bureau. Much assistance may justifiably be expected from this bureau for Catholic groups in social work.

Small and youthful though it is, the Catholic Workers' Guild has already stirred interest among those whose business it is to note the advent of rivals: the Labour Party, which cannot afford to neglect the potential voting power of the Scottish Catholic; the Communists, who recognise in it their antithesis; and the Masons, ever present, ever active, in every stratum of Scottish society.

For the first time in Scottish industry a serious effort is being made to rouse the supine Catholic and show him what his possibilities for good are in the labour world as a member of a Catholic body organised in his interests. The Catholic Workers' Guild may not achieve the objects for which it was founded. The measure of its success will be proportionate to the support it receives from the main body of Catholic workers. But at least it is a brave effort to give half-a-million Catholics ultimately a voice in the shaping of industrial things to come.

JAMES E. HANDLEY.

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## THE PLACE OF THE CROFTER.

THE romantic gloss that adheres to the crofter, his homestead and way of life, has given ample target for the shafts of the critics. They point out, with some justice, the poverty and hardship frequently entailed and the ambition of many crofters to send their sons to the cities. With less justice, probably none, they claim greater efficiency for larger units of cultivation. These critics are essentially children of the Industrial Age, as ever overlooking the