

LABOR IN SLAVERY AND FEUDAL TIMES.

By the Rev. Charles Stelzle.

In some respects, modern slavery has not been so extensive nor so horrible as that which existed in Greece and Rome, but the story is nevertheless one which stirs the blood. Colonial slavery is a blot upon many a modern nation's history. In twenty years during this period in America, 300,000 negroes were exported to the United States. From 1680 to 1786 it is estimated that 2,130,000 negroes were imported into all the British Colonies in America. Naturally great numbers of slaves died while in captivity before leaving Africa, and many more died during the ocean passage. Probably only one-half of those captured survived the various stages of their transportation to America. There was the greatest recklessness in their treatment, and the utmost indifference to their suffering.

Slavery has been abolished in most countries, but it still exists in the Mohammedan East, although usually only in households. While there is undoubtedly still some traffic in slaves, it is almost universally against the laws of the nations, and those who engage in it do so contrary to the edicts of congresses and parliaments which have been supported by practically all civilized peoples. In some countries a system of peonage is in vogue, which amounts to a practical slavery. But, on the whole, the system of slavery no longer affects the laborer to such a degree that the workingmen suffer very materially on account of it.

In discussing the question of the abolition of slavery, Mr. J. Osborne Ward says, in "Ancient Lowly:"

"We shall submit that the religion of Jesus, planted by a manual laborer and forming the basis of hope upon which stands the great labor movement of our time, . . . has been the power that openly struck the first well-organized blow at the system of masters and slaves, and boldly championed it as a principle; and in essence it has never since shrunk from its prodigious task toward realizing the much contested doctrine of human equality."

Following the system of slavery came that of feudalism. Men had passed through the hunting and fishing period. They began to settle on the land. They had learned how to till the soil. They did not own it, but the "land lords" gave them the use of the property on condition of tribute or service. The lord gave them protection from the common enemy. This system was developed principally from the fifth to the ninth century. There were many forms of feudalism, conditioned upon the situation prevailing in different countries and upon the character of the baron to whom the serfs gave tribute. The serf rarely paid any rent for the use of his bit of land. His service to the baron in time of war or in other ways was his ordinary tax. With the development of the professional military class and the growth of city life through the grouping together of the artisan and other classes, feudalism gradually disappeared. In 1660 England, through Parliament, abolished land tenures. Scotland followed in 1747. In France the revolution of 1789 brought the same result; in Germany and Austria it was the revolution of 1848-50 which accomplished its destruction. In Russia it was destroyed in 1861. Meanwhile, great changes had been wrought, so that when the system was finally abolished, little of the original condition remained.

During the period religious leaders who were raised up from among the people fought against the system. They testified to the value of the individual. They taught that before God all men were equal. Says Thorold Rogers, in "Six Centuries of Work and Wages:"

"Wyclif's poor priests had honey-combed the minds of the upland folk with what may be called religious socialism. The preachers told the people that 'it would be better for them to die with arms in their hands than to be thrust back, without an effort on their part, into the shameful slavery from which they had been delivered.'"

Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey has developed into a mighty good friend of organized labor. He was its bitterest enemy for years, but since he became the democratic candidate for governor of New Jersey he has seen a great light.

Nebraska money spent for insurance premiums should be spent with Nebraska insurance companies. It is high time to quit sending Nebraska money east to build up huge trusts there.

Theodore Roosevelt called Judge Anderson a



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