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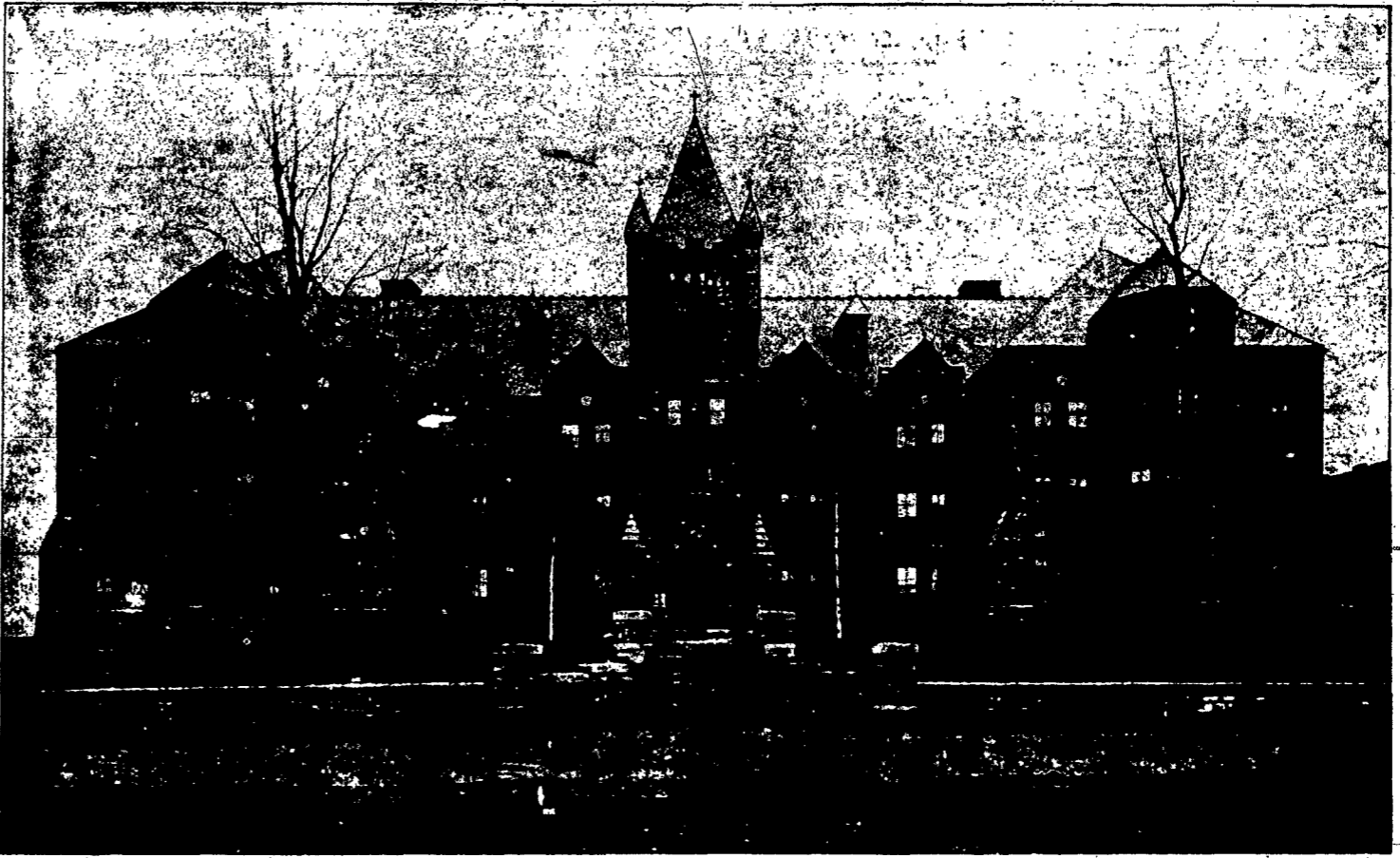
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Centuries**

Old Message of Peace to
Labor

The Church has the same message for all: great and humble, high and low, rich and poor. She has been from the beginning and will be to the end in an especial sense, and pre-eminently the Church of the poor. Within her sanctuaries the crowning evidence of the divine mission of her Founder continues to be as visibly and peculiarly her own as when St. John was in prison. "The poor have the gospel preached to them." She can never cease to be the Church of Christ, the Father of the poor.

She does not preach to them the gospel of discontent, of class hatred, or class antagonism. The gospel of the demagogue is not hers. She has, as Pope Leo of sainted memory so well said, no mission to eliminate sorrow, pain or suffering from the world; her mission is to transmute them. She cannot for rich or poor rid life of its burdens, but she can teach men how their burdens may be made light, and be borne in patience. She encourages or indulges no vain delusion or idle dreams mainly calculated to make men dissatisfied with their lot in life. She knows that nothing this world holds, nor all it contains, could satisfy one human heart, that its allurements and possessions are in the main,

"* * * Dead Sea fruits which the eye But turn to ashes on the lips."
Hence her unceasing effort to direct men's visions heavenward, hence her constant cry to mankind: "Sursum Corda."

Yet, the Catholic Church has done more than all other forces combined for the amelioration of the condition of the toiling masses of men. It was by the dissolving force of the great truths which she taught, touching the dignity and rights of man, and which she enforced before her altars and in the administration of her sacraments, that slavery, "the leprosy of ancient civilization," its inheritance from paganism, deeply rooted as it was in society as she found it, was wiped from the face of Europe. "No one," writes M. Guizot, "doubts that she struggled obstinately against the great vices of the social state, for examples against slavery."

Catholic ideals of charity, Catholic doctrine inoculated the laws and customs inherited from Pagan times, and gradually but inevitably by their restless force wrought the enfranchisement of the laborer. If we wish to know what Catholic ideals of charity have done for the masses of men, we must know the condition in which Christianity found the world. Listen to the words of Balmes, one of the greatest philosophers of modern times:

"When Christianity appeared society presented a dark picture, covered with fine appearances, but infected to the heart with a mortal malady; it presented an image of the most repugnant corruption, veiled by a brilliant garb of ostentation and opulence. Morality was without reality, manners without modesty, the passions without restraint, laws without authority, and religion without God. Ideals were at the mercy of prejudice, or religious fanaticism and philosophical subtleties. Man was a profound mystery to himself; he did not know how to estimate his own dignity, for he reduced it to the level of the brutes; and when he attempted to estimate its importance, he did not know how to confine it within the

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limits marked out by reason and nature; and it is well worthy of observation that while a great part of the human race groaned in the most object servitude, heroes, and even the most abominable, monsters were elevated to the ranks of gods."

To social reformers of our day, and earnest and sincere men are not wanting among them, I would say, be not deceived. The ideals which wrought man's emancipation from the thralldom and degradation which paganism had imposed upon him, are as necessary to the preservation of his dignity as they were to its successful assertion in the first instance.

The doctrine of the Incarnation, the great fundamental mystery of the Christian religion carries in it and with it the only unassailable charter of the rational liberty, dignity and rights of man. The Magna Charta of the human race was proclaimed in Nazareth.

All that men have since done, all the real advance that has been made in (Continued on Page Thirteen.)

C. W. Greer

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