

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

By W. Z. Foster, Special Correspondent.

Toulouse, October 2.

After a long and tiresome ride of about 500 miles I arrived in Toulouse this morning. All is ready for the opening gun. The delegates are coming in rapidly and everything points to a successful convention. There is great enthusiasm among the delegates, and this afternoon a large party of them with a big red flag at their head marched through the main streets singing the International. Toulouse is a garrison town and there are a large number of troops stationed here. These scissor bills form about one in four of the men on the main streets, but as the procession passed through their ranks they offered no resistance. I am afraid it would have been much different if this officer had arrived in an American town under similar conditions.

This is the season when the French slaves having arrived at the requisite age for military service, must quit their ordinary vocations and enter upon a two years' career of professional murderers.

Guided by their knowledge of the lack of solidarity among the working class, the powers that be never permit the slaves to be stationed in their home district. They know that in case of serious rouble with the workers that brother would refuse to shoot brother, so they fill the posts in the cities with a bunch of country bumpkins and vice versa. This year there are some 800,000 of these slaves to leave their happy(?) homes, and their going is the signal for a frantic fanning of the dying embers of patriotism. Even the recently castigated French church takes a hand in the face and loads the parting sucker heroes with many elaborate so-called blessings. Knowing that one of these solemn Punch and Judy affairs was on, and having nothing else to do I blew into the old Cathedral of St. Sernin to see the priests licking the hand of the government that smote them. This was done in the usual dignified, solemn Catholic way and the ceremony passed off without a hitch. However, the fooling didn't greatly interest me, as it was much the same as that which for some years was pounded into me as a boy. I couldn't help but admire the church, though, and it one of the grandest I have ever seen. Built in the eleventh century, it is one of the oldest in Europe. Outwardly it don't make any great pretensions to amplitheatrical beauty, but the interior is grandly impressive. As I stood listening to the fine finging and gazing at the slavish scene before me I wondered whether the world would ever again see such solemn proceedings as those of the Catholic church. In spite of this significance, or perhaps rather, insignificance, these ceremonies in such surroundings as that one which I saw yesterday are impressive. After admiring the church for awhile and despising the worshippers(?) for the same period, I came out to get a general view of the church, and immediately I got an evidence of the new order of things. Stuck in a niche in the wall are some tombs of the Counts of Toulouse of the Roman era, and plastered beside one of these was a flaming red poster announcing the convention of the C. G. F. A very fit place for it I thought. After the Bourgeois revolution the revolutionists wrote "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" on all the old palaces of the superseded order and turned most of them in Paris, at least, into museums. The proletarian revolutionists will no doubt find very congenial settings for museums in these fine old cathedrals and they will serve to educate the people to the possibilities of unlimited cupidity acting upon almost unlimited ignorance. But I must close as it is time for the convention to open.