

"Hello! Who goes there?" was the query of the sentry patrolling deck, musket in hand, as Manus, laying hold of a little skiff resting among the bulrushes, paddled himself out with his hands.

"A friend!" said Manus boldly.

"A friend! What in the plague's name brings a friend here at this hour of the night?" asked the sentinel, with the nasal twang of a Scripture-quoter, sadly at variance with his profane talk. "What do you want?"

"To sell my goods," said Manus.

"We don't want your goods, you lubber. What should we want with goods at this hour of the night? Avast! Come no nearer, or I shall fire."

"Hold you peace, soldier?" cried the weaver. The stuffs I sell are fit for all hours. They warm the blood, stir the heart, and make the cowardly man brave."

"What stuffs are they?" asked the sentinel, pausing in his walk.

"Brandy!" said Manus, in a whisper. "Brandy! The best in the wine stores from Bordeaux."

"Come aboard!" cried the weary and cold soldier. "Come aboard. There is the ladder. Take care. Don't lose a rung, or miss your footstep. Brandy!—It was an angel sent you. Take care. Your own life isn't worth much, but that liquor is precious beyond all telling. Come aboard. There now."

Manus climbed on deck, with his precious cargo securely strapped to his back. The sentinel patted the cask affectionately, as though it was some human thing for which he had a more than ordinary regard, and diligently assisted to unstrap it and place it on the deck.

The noise of the boat and the consequent conversation attracted the attention of some of the men below, who, coming on deck, were delighted to find what the visitant brought. News soon wrenched through the vessel; the cask was taken below, and was soon broached. No bargain was made with Manus; the idea of paying him anything for it was looked upon as good fun; and despite his protestations against its being opened until he was paid for it, the acceptable liquor was soon passing from hand to hand in profusion. The pleading for payment by Manus was the cause of uproarious laughter, it was so evidently absurd and hopeless, and joined with the high spirits produced by the drink, made the ship a scene of great festivity. After some time, however, it was noticeable that some of the more noisy and high-spirited began to grow quiet and drowsy; one after another fell back in their bunks against the sides of the ship in sodden sleep, until the only one remaining alert and watchful was the disappointed and cheated trader. Even he did not stir for a long time, but in his anger and impatience dashed every mug that was used in his despoilment on the floor, breaking them with as much imprecation and noise as possible—indeed with even more than a reasonable degree of anger would justify. But it did not make much matter, the sailors were insensible to his taunts and insults, and slept soundly on, their stertorous breathing bearing undoubted testimony to the strength of the liquors he vended.

Finding that there was but slight chance of their being roused from their repose by anything much short of a broadside, Manus started from his place, paced the upper deck, descended a short ladder to the next, and, opening the door of an inner cabin, presented himself before Maurice O'Connor!

The latter had been immersed in thought. In the midst of his reveries the door opened, dimly disclosing the face and form of the weaver. The dwarf bringing the light better before his face, some peculiarity therein caught the prisoner's remembrance.

"You? I think I know you. You're the weaver from Arras, are you not?"

"The same," said Manus.

"Who works in the nook in the castle wall?"

"Yes."

"I remember. What brings you here?"

"To free you, Maurice O'Connor."

A smile passed over the prisoner's face in spite of himself. There were many men on board, lusty and full of strength—he had heard the noise of their carousal and roys ering—ready to fight to the death to keep him prisoner, and the idea of the deformed and puny figure before him essaying to relieve him looked in the highest degree ridiculous and absurd.

"I fancy the days of fairy knight-errantry are over," he said rather sarcastically. "The days when good gent relieve imprisoned damsels and pining prisoners are not of our time."

"Maurice O'Connor," said the weaver, angrily, "I did not come here on my own motion to relieve you. I came because I was asked by wan that wouldn't like to see a hair of your head injured. If you wish to escape, the way is free for you; if you don't say the word, an' I won't trouble you, but—Miss Mordaunt will—"

"Who?" asked Maurice, perfectly assured from his visitor's earnest and angry manner that his words were true, and startled by the introduction of her name.

"Miss Mordaunt."

"She sent you?"

"Ay; there's ugly times in store for you an' she'd rather you were clear ov them. Sir Charles Coote has a hard hand when he likes—an' that's mostly always. The men are sound asleep above, an' they won't waken in time, I'm thinkin', to stop you."

Maurice saw the whole plot at the moment; there was no need for elaborate explanation, nor, indeed, now that he was certain of the weaver's mission, was there any inclination on his part for it.

"Haste is necessary if you would save your life," said the dwarf, sharply. "There'll be others here very soon that won't be glad to see you goin'. Let me loose these bonds."

"Thanks," said Maurice. "These irons are locked. See, the key is hanging yonder—there. Carefully cut these cords—there. Free again! Thanks, my friend; and Miss Mordaunt is—"

Whatever he was about to say remained unsaid, or was changed into a startled exclamation, for at the moment the door opened, and

outside the little circle of illumination cast by the feeble light a form appeared—a woman's form; a form wet with travelling through reedy paths and moist tall bulrushes, dragged with wandering in miry ways; and as Manus, in the start occasioned by the opening of the door, turned the light of the lamp on the pale and frightened features of the unceremonious intruder, it disclosed the face of—
Carrie Mordaunt.

POPE LEO XIII. TO THE ITALIAN BISHOPS.

(Special Correspondent of the Pilot.)

In an Encyclical Letter of His Holiness Leo XIII. to the bishops clergy, and people of Italy, the Pope sadly depicts the present state of that country.

Beloved Brethren, Health and Apostolic Benediction:—From the height of this Apostolic See, where Divine Providence has placed Us to watch over the salvation of all nations, Our survey often rests upon Italy, in the bosom of which God, by a singular act of predilection, has placed the See of His Vicar, and from which, nevertheless, there come to Us at present multitudinous and deeply felt sorrows. It is not personal offences which sadden Us, nor the privations and the sacrifices which the actual condition of things imposes upon Us, nor is it the insults and the contempt which an insolent press has unbridled license to launch against Us every day. If it were only a question of Our own person, and not of the universal ruin, towards which We see Italy going forward, threatened in its faith, We would silently bear offences, glad even We to repeat daily what one of Our most illustrious predecessors said of himself: "If my captivity upon this earth did not aggravate the weight of daily burdens, I would willingly be silent regarding the contempt and mockery of which I am the object." (St. Gregory the Great: Letter to the Emperor Mauritius, Regist. 5.) But without speaking of the independence and dignity of the Holy See, it is a question of religion itself and of the salvation of a whole nation, and of such a nation that from the first days opened its heart to the Catholic faith, and preserves it ever since with a jealous care. That seems incredible, and yet it is true; We have come to this point in Italy for having to fear the loss of faith for this Italy of Ours. On several occasions We have given the alarm in order that note should be taken of the danger, and yet We do not believe that We have done enough.

In presence of the unceasing attacks, ever increasing in ferocity, We feel more powerfully the voice of duty which urges Us to speak again to you, Venerable Brothers, to your clergy and to the Italian people. As the enemy makes no truce, so it is not fitting that either We or you be silent and inactive, as by the Divine grace We were constituted guardians and defenders of the religion of the people confided to Our charge, the pastors and vigilant sentinels of the flock of Christ, for which We should be ready, if needed were, to sacrifice all, even Our life.

We will not say new things, for the facts, such as they have occurred, do not change; and of these We have had to speak on other occasions, according as the opportunities arose. But here We propose to recapitulate these facts, to group them as in one single picture, and to draw from them for the common instruction the consequences derived from them. These undisputed facts, which have happened in the full light of day; not islated, but connected amongst themselves in such a way that, in their totality, they reveal with evidence a whole system of which they are but the application and the development. The system is not new, but what is new is the audacity, the fury, the rapidity with which it is now applied. It is the plan of the sects which is now unfolded in Italy, especially in that which touches the Church and the Catholic religion; with the final and notorious aim of reducing it, if it were possible, to nothingness. Now it is superfluous to draw up the indictment of the sects which declare themselves Masonic; judgment has been passed upon them already; their aims, means, doctrines, actions, all is known with indisputable certainty.

Inflamed by the spirit of Satan, whose instrument they are, they are consumed, like their inspirer with a mortal and implacable hatred against Jesus Christ and His work, and they do their utmost to overthrow or enchain it. This war at present is waged in Italy more than elsewhere,—in Italy where the Catholic religion has laid the deepest roots, and especially in Rome, where is the centre of Catholic unity and the See of the universal Pastor and Master of the Church.

It is advantageous to trace the various phases of this war from its origin. It began with the destruction, under a political guise, of the civil pre-eminence of the Popes; but the fall of this, in the secret intentions of the real chiefs,—afterwards openly declared,—should serve to destroy, or at least to hold in servitude, the supreme spiritual power of the Roman Pontiffs. And in order that no doubt should remain upon the real scope they aimed at, immediately came the suppression of the religious orders, which greatly reduced the number of evangelical labourers for the sacred ministry and for the assistance of the faithful, as likewise for the propagation of the faith amongst infidels. Later they desired likewise that to clerics should be extended the obligation of military service, with the necessary consequence of grave and multitudinous obstacles placed to the recruiting and to the suitable formation of the secular clergy. They put their hands upon the ecclesiastical patrimony, confiscating absolutely part of it, and burdening part of it with the most enormous charges, in order to impoverish the clergy and the Church, and to deprive the latter of the means of which it had need in this world to live and to promote institutions and works in aid of its divine Apostolate. The sectaries themselves have openly declared: "To diminish the influence of the clergy and of the clerical associations, one sole efficacious means is to be employed; to despoil them of all their possessions and to reduce them to complete poverty."

On the other hand, the action of the State by itself is wholly directed to cancel the imprint of religion and Christianity from the