

There was ample room for two, and, urged by curiosity, I joined the old man in the doorway. He looked at me suspiciously, but, apparently relieved by my appearance, gave vent to a soft sigh and said—

"You are not one of them?"

"No," I replied, "nor do I know whom you mean."

"The Salvation Army," he replied, shortly, "under command of Pope Booth the Third. Surely you have heard of him?"

In a confused way I seemed to have some knowledge of the name, but, not fully recalling it, I was silent. Without waiting for a reply my companion went on—

"He is ruler of this land.

All nations will soon be under the hoofs of his followers, who joyfully give him blind obedience or profess to do so. Some, I fear, are pliant for their private ends. Three generations ago the Army was started to regenerate the people. It is now employed to keep them in captivity."

"How?" I asked.

"By the compact voting power of the Army. It votes to a man as its Head dictates. The Parliament and its offices, all places of importance and power, are filled by its followers. Prisons, places of refuge, schools, all municipal governments are in their hands."

"What of the army and navy?"

"Both are employed in fighting nations, who have been branded by the Pope as heretical."

"And the church—your church?"

"Shattered twenty years ago, now only existing here and there in fragments and in secret. So with all forms of faith but that originated by the Prophet Booth."

"The Prophet Booth?"

"Yes; so he is now called, although *he* laid no claim to the title. Stead, sixty years ago, declared him to be on a level with the Prophets, and pronounced his Army to be the greatest movement in the religious world since the time of the Apostles. So it was, perhaps, in the first

Booth's time, but those who came after him have grown like unto the old Popes of Rome. The lust of temporal power has laid hold of them."

"But how came it," I asked, "that the people allowed themselves to be thus enslaved?"

"The creed of the Salvationists swept over the land like a huge tidal wave," replied my companion; "it carried all things before it. The strong and weak were borne away on the foam-crested sea. No man, no body, no sect was prepared to resist the compact force that moved and thought as one man. Implicit, fanatical obedience to a Dictator is the secret of its irresistible power."

"And implicit obedience still exists?"

My companion opened his lips to reply, but was checked by a sudden influx of a motley crowd into the street. They poured into it from every avenue—men and women and children. The red jersey and the hideous sun-shade bonnets were everywhere. There was no beauty, save the beauty of a ragged variety among the people.

On the face of one and all was a set smile, the Army's sign of happiness, which my companion told me in a whisper Pope Booth the Third had commanded them to wear whenever they walked abroad.

Some of the men carried banners with legends inscribed thereon, such as

"The Devil is dead," "When the Pope speaks let no dog bark," "The World is under the heel of the Army," and so on.

At least four-fifths of the women had tambourines, and methought that the jingling they made would not have been unpleasant if one could have been far aloft—in a balloon, let us say. But, being in their immediate neighbourhood, the sound was far from musical.

A roar and a parting of the people, caused by a number of Marshals of the Army riding by on horseback. Behind them a host of men and women mingled, walking six abreast, shouting, laughing, singing.

Brass bands, with cheek-swollen men pouring out deafen-



Some of the men carried banners.