

"Brother, are you alive? I am Father Juan Fernandez, come to hear your confession, that you may save your soul."

At times no one answered. Again a moan would disclose the neighbourhood of a body that still suffered the rigours of life, of a soul that still might be sent to heaven. Thereupon the Jesuit would drag himself to the place, and repeat his fearful questioning. A second moan answered, and on the spot he removed, under cover of the darkness, the corpses which lay over the wounded man, and placing his ear down to the dying lips, heard the sins, and gave the absolution which opened the gates of heaven.

Thus he went over—from end to end—all that part of the fosse, hearing the confessions of forty two days soldiers. When he had finished his task at once sublime and dreadful—he climbed with great effort to the edge of the fosse before the dawn was yet breaking, and, blood stained, covered with mire, lifeless, with scarce strength to lift up the crucifix which he wore, he returned to the camp.

The advanced guards of the intrenchments received him with such shouts of joy and enthusiasm as to reach the ears of the Duke of Parma, who was at that moment mounting his horse to direct the change of the batteries which were to protect the second assault. He came forward in person to welcome Father Juan Fernandez, and alighted from his white pacer, as he descried him in the midst of a group of officers and soldiers who were bearing him forward as a victor. Alexander Farnese in his own hand wearied with the fight took that other hand wearied with blessing, and raised it reverentially to his lips. Then he brought him to his own horse, and said:

"Mount, Father Juan Fernandez, and go at once to my tent; there you will find provision made for you."

And turning to the new captain Mirabal, who had pressed forward into the throng with the others, he added:

"Do you hold the stirrup for him, Alvar de Mirabal, and confess that this time it was a greater deed to give an absolution than to scale a bastion!"—*Messenger of the Sacred Heart.*

THE END.

THE MODERN BABYLON.

CARDINAL MANNING ON LONDON DEPRAVITY.

On Sunday morning, at the Oratory, Brompton, his Eminence the Cardinal-Archbishop preached, and made an appeal on behalf of the Sisters of St. Pelagia's Home for Destitute Women and Girls, Church row, Limehouse. At the conclusion of an eloquent discourse, in which he dwelt on the perpetual nearness to us, though unseen, of our Divine Lord, as to the Apostles in those forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension, and His perpetual co-operation with us in all we did, his Eminence said, "I have to ask your alms, and I ask them very earnestly. I am not going merely to talk about charity, I am going to talk about the responsibility we all have. Responsible, indeed, we are. It is a universal truth of the faith that we are bound to labour for the salvation of souls to the uttermost of our opportunities and power. This obligation lies in a special manner upon the Catholics of London. You are a little flock—some 200,000 out of 4,000,000 that are out of the unity of the faith and the unity of the fold of Jesus Christ. Is it possible that you should have the inheritance of the inestimable gift of God and not be proportionately found to labour that others shall share it? Of the 4,000,000 of London—for I am speaking of the continuity of our streets, I am not speaking of the suburbs and districts—of the 4,000,000 of London not one-half will this day or on any day in the whole year set a foot in any place of Divine worship or where they can hear the simplest teachings of morality, not revealed only, but of nature. And what is the result of this? God only knows. Thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands are living in a living death, sunk in the very depths of mortal sin. It is not, however, my duty now to go into the whole subject, but only to speak on one point. We have had labouring in this diocese for the last forty years that most noble work of the Good Shepherd, limited by its poverty and the impossibility of extending its working. Some years ago I endeavoured to plant in the East of London another convent of the Good Shepherd, but circumstances, on which I need not dwell, defeated that purpose. Nevertheless, the thought and the

desire were never forgotten, and we have at this moment, I thank God to day, three small beginnings which may grow to an indefinite extent. We have a work in the West of London in Drayton Gardens. We have another in the centre of London in Green Court, on the very border I may say of the West, and we have a third in the extreme East of London, and in the thick of the poorest and most imperilled population that I know. Last year I promised that there should be three sermons and three collections, one for each of these works. To-day your alms are asked for the work in the extreme East of London; and that because the West of London is the home of the wealth of London. I hope that hereafter that wealth may be moved by Christian motives, and that the extreme West and the centre may be abundantly supplied, but to-day I am asking for the extreme East, which is not only the most profoundly sunk, but it is also the poorest, the most populous, and the most destitute part of London. As for the West, I do not wish to-day to say more than this—its condition is frightful. The luxury of the West of London has produced a rankness and audacity of vice, hardly veiled, or open and barefaced, such as was found hardly in Rome of old, or in any city that I know of in the civilized world. But I will say no more on this point. I will now come to the East. First of all, then, what can we expect of poor young girls who are brought up in homes not worthy of the name—that is, in dwellings not fit for human habitations? On this I will say no more. Secondly, that homeless, miserable, degrading state drives them into the streets. The condition of the streets of the East-end no imagination can conceive, except those who have looked upon it—and few of you have ever seen it. These streets are full of every kind of temptation—active temptation and tempters who ply the trade. Moreover, all along those streets there are places of drink flaring, all night with the gaslight. And this is a known fact. So long as a woman retains the light of her intellect, the clearness of her conscience, and the strength of her will, she has the power to save herself; but the moment the intellect is darkened and the conscience blunted and the will is weak, God only knows when she may fall. Now, I have for years—I will say openly and boldly—been "a fool for Christ's sake" in the matter of intoxicating drink, and so I hope to die—for of this I am most firmly convinced: that it is the most active, the most powerful, and the most successful of all the enemies of souls; for it is not one sin, but all sin. Once destroy the image of God in man or woman, and there is no crime, no vice, that that person will not commit. And I will openly and boldly say that when I look upon the fastidious self-indulgence and selfish apathy of those who, lifted into a higher sphere of life, and possessed of wealth and happy homes, never speak a word or reach out a finger to help those who are labouring in this most painful and most burdensome work—and who even sometimes, by sneers and ridicule and satire, weaken the courage of those who are labouring in it—well, I will not judge them, I leave them to that just Judge Who shed His Precious Blood. Further than this, these poor children, leaving their homes, are wandering at night in the streets in an age when parental authority is almost dead—when not even the rich can control their sons and daughters, and simply impossible for the poor living in such homes, or rather such hovels, as they inhabit. The liberty with which children—young girls of twelve years of age—traverse the streets at night is the prelude of every possible degradation. Aye, and more than this, when in your charity you have found domestic service for the poor child, even then she is not safe. In a word, in the east of London we have not only all the dangers of a dense population which always corrupts itself, but we have all the dangers of a seaport. I may say that the shore of the Thames is the landing-place of the shipping of all nations, and the crowds of foreign seamen make London-Thames like Liverpool. I might go on but I need not. I have said enough. Think for one moment of the wreck and ruin that is being accomplished. One of the greatest mysteries of this world is the waste of nature. We are told that three-fourths of the seed which is planted in the ground comes to nothing; that only one-fourth springs up and ripens. The sun shines and the rain falls, but the light and the rain fall on the sand, or on the barren rock, or on the hungry sea, and bring forth nothing. Look, then, upon the millions of souls in London. Every one of these souls was made in the image of God and redeemed in the Precious Blood. I was going to say one half have been born again of water and the Holy Ghost, but I fear that would be too high an estimate. One-half have never been baptised