

A NIGHT IN LAUGHTON WOODS.

CHAPTER V.

SIR RALPH DENIES.

Standing before a table, at which sat a grave, reverend-looking man, was Lord Dacre's cousin, Sir Ralph de Fienes.

The room was large, but not lofty. The afternoon sun streamed in through the windows. In one of the deep embrasures a gentleman was seated apparently quite uninterested in the conversation De Fienes was holding with the Bishop of Winchester.

Sir Ralph was vehemently urging some proposition to which the Bishop did not seem willing to accede.

"I assure you my lord that I am next kin; a very little persuasion on your part would induce his Majesty to set aside this question of female succession. Or—here I have it," he continued, with a laugh—"I will marry the wench, and that will settle the matter."

"Softly, Sir Ralph de Fienes," said Gardiner. "I have no great love to this youth's father; yet, from all I hear of the son, I grieve that he has been so misguided as to plead 'guilty' in this matter. But for this acknowledgment of what our gracious liege holds unknighly conduct, I think he might have granted him grace. You as his near kinsman and reputed adviser—I hear he hath taken counsel with none else—should have counselled him better." He looked searchingly into Sir Ralph's shifting grey eyes.

"It had been worse than useless, my lord," replied De Fienes, in a subdued voice. "My unhappy cousin has ever been headstrong and rebellious—bent on following his own will"—he sighed deeply; "but what do you think of my proposal, my lord?"

"Simply nothing," replied Gardiner; "the King has resolved to sequester the estates and attain the family, so that your kind wish to give your young cousin a protector would scarcely meet with its fitting reward."

Sir Ralph looked uneasily round the chamber; he began to wonder how much the Bishop knew of the real fact of the midnight affray. Suddenly he became aware that the person who had remained seated at the window during his conference was now watching him covertly. He sat with his back to the window, so that his face was in deep shadow. "And now, fair sir," said the Bishop to De Fienes, "our say is said." He bowed courteously, and turned to some papers which had apparently occupied him before Sir Ralph's entrance.

De Fienes made a profound obeisance, and had nearly gained the door when, to his surprise, the unknown rose quietly and crossed over towards him.

"The evening air blows chilly; you will find it so on the water, Sir Ralph," he said, in a low distinct voice.

Before De Fienes could reply he had returned to his seat as noiselessly as he left it.

Sir Ralph walked downstairs in a dream; the mortification of Gardiner's repulse was almost obliterated by the mystery of this unknown stranger, who, from his significant words, evidently sought an interview with him.

"I will take his hint at all risks," he thought; "I am well armed."

Telling his attendants he should not require his horse, he walked hastily towards the river. As soon as he reached one of the stairs or "bridges," as they were then termed, he called a small boat that was waiting for a fare on the much-frequented "Silent Highway."

They had scarcely shot six lengths from the bank when Sir Ralph perceived a smaller boat glide past.

The cloaked figure who sat in the stern raised one finger, as if to beckon him onwards, and then took no more notice of him.

"Follow yonder small skiff quickly and surely," said De Fienes to the boatman, "and I will double your hire."

The first boat sped on so fast that the waterman had to pull lustily to keep it in sight. On, on they flew, amid brightly-gilded barges and gaily-painted wherries, from many of which proceeded strains of sweet music, while in the smaller boats the watermen, then a musical fraternity, kept time to their favourite chorus:—

Heave and how
Rumbelow!

On, on—past the ancient Abbey, standing in lonely grandeur—past the dismal swamp, at the farthest extremity of which, connecting it with Chelsea Fields, was even then standing Blondell's Bridge, afterwards known under a more guilty name (Bloody Bridge). On, on they flew till they reached the small village of Chelsea.

At some stairs a little beyond Chelsea Place the object of their pursuit staid its rapid course, and so fast had Ralph's boat followed it that before the cloaked figure had reached the top of the stairs De Fienes was by his side.

Still the stranger took no heed of him but walked on quickly, till he suddenly quitted the river side, and led the way through a lonely lane to a small house surrounded by poplar trees.

Then he turned round and beckoned to Ralph; they passed through a wicket and entered the house together.

The room into which they came was small and meanly furnished; but Ralph had no time to indulge much observation on it, for as the stranger removed his muffler De Fienes started back with an exclamation of surprise.

"Sir Thomas Wriothely, or rather, I should say, my Lord Chancellor," and he bowed profoundly; "I had not seen your face till now."

"No, my good friend; I purposely avoided you at my Lord of Winchester's for several reasons; one being that I was not sure, from our previous acquaintance, whether you would care to follow me here."

He looked at Ralph so meaningly that the latter stared round him, as if he expected some of the Chancellor's myrmidons to start upon him from the oak panels.

Wriothely laughed.

"Fear nothing, my good friend; I brought you here to bargain with you, not to take you to the rack. Your heart is, I see, set on this fair lordship—a laudable craving, in the gratification of which I am willing to aid you, on conditions. I was thinking of you only this morning. Some new facts have reached me respecting the affray in Laughton Woods, which you can probably explain. But to business first," he added; "I feel sure I shall find you reasonable, Sir Ralph—a very different person from your headstrong cousin."

The livid scowl that overcast De Fienes' face at the beginning of Wriothely's speech cleared away as he heard the concluding words; he was aware that the Chancellor, besides his covert threat about his recent crime, had him in his power from his knowledge of some awkward circumstances in his earlier life; still Sir Thomas's rapacity was so well known that he doubted not to be able to buy his silence.

"I am anxious to hear your proposals," he said. Wriothely kept his eye steadily fixed upon him; not a change of Ralph's countenance escaped him. He felt his power keenly, and enjoyed tormenting his victim.

"We will prevent or annul this forfeiture," said De Fienes, "on condition that the half of the moneys and revenues of the said estates are mine for life."

"Wed Joan!" exclaimed De Fienes, in mixed fear and indignation, gladly seizing at any objection to Wriothely's proposal; "it must be by force then. She has some unaccountable prejudice against me."

"Tut, tut, man! To think of you, with your experience, studying the liking of a wench of some fifteen years old. A woman never knows her own mind. The best of them are only a kind of domestic animal, with whom, if you spare the whip, you may rue their claws. No, no; marry the girl, and then who shall dare chatter about the female right of succession?"

"But, my dear Sir Thomas, consider; are you not very exacting in demanding half the revenues? Consider how deeply indebted I am; and when my creditors hear that I have achieved this lordship, they will be clamorous for payment, and I shall be like a beggar in fine clothes. Say a fourth part to commence with, and trust to my gratitude, when cleared of these embarrassments, to increase the sum."

But Wriothely stopped him with a fierce oath. "One word of protest, my fair seeming sir, and by the Lord, I find you a snug lodging with your cousin in the Tower! You know I never break my word."

Sir Ralph's spirit flamed under these insulting threats; but he was too wise to remonstrate, and he passively signed a paper which Wriothely presently drew up in the terms he had suggested, reserving to himself the hope of an after-vengeance for the compulsion under which he acted.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SENTENCE.

Next morning, when Joan entered her brother's prison-chamber, she drew back in mingled annoyance and surprise.

Lord Dacre was not alone. Sir Ralph de Fienes stood beside him, his face full of deep commiseration.

But her brother looked so sad and dejected that she forgot Ralph's presence; she threw her arms round Dacre's neck, and kissed him fondly.

"Good news!" she said, and she checked herself. De Fienes understood her hesitation; he moved towards the door.

"My cousin Joan mistrusts me," the wonderful feeling in his voice moved Dacre. "No, Ralph; stay, I pray you, and hear her news. Something in this gloomy old fortress and especially the evil doom that befalls each inhabitant of the Beauchamp Tower, makes a coward of our Joan. Come, dear one, let me hear your news."

His looks were so winning that Joan could not refuse. But the eager expression of her cousin's eyes made her suspect him still.

"I have seen the Lady Latimer," she said; "she tells me the King is to reach London this afternoon, and she promises to gain me speech of his Highness to-morrow at Whitehall at eleven of the clock. Oh, Dacre, he must grant me grace! I will not quit his knees till he has signed your pardon."

"Eleven," said Dacre, thoughtfully; "my sister, at an hour after noon I am to be led to Tyburn."

"To Tyburn!" cried Joan, starting up wildly. "No—no—no! a noble may not die the death of a malefactor."

Her brother looked at Ralph for confirmation; he could not bear to see Joan's agonised face.

"It is too true my gentle cousin," said the traitor with well-assumed sorrow. "Our Sovereign refuses any commutation of the sentence."

Joan stood speechless. Suddenly the stony fixed look left her eyes, they beamed almost fiercely on her treacherous cousin.

"What cruel haste!" she cried. "And it was you, Ralph, who told me to delay three days ere I sought the King."

Dacre started with an exclamation of surprise, and gazed strangely at De Fienes. Sir Ralph began a faint denial. "Joan has mistaken me," he said; but she raised her hand to implore silence. She had meant to lay it on his arm, but a feeling of disgust as to some noxious animal withheld her. She turned from him abruptly.

"There is yet time; at least a Dacre shall not die unworthily."

There was a sudden silence. Ralph lingered a few moments, and then departed, without attempting to say farewell to either brother or sister. Almost before the door closed upon him, Joan threw her arms round her brother, and kissed him.

"They shall not take you," she murmured; "they shall take my life first."

But Lord Dacre was overwhelmed with the discovery of Ralph's treachery. Those few words, coupled with De Fienes' change of countenance and manner, removed a film from his cousin's eyes. He fondly stroked Joan's golden ringlets, and pressed his lips on the forehead that rested on his shoulder.

"Joan, my darling sister," he said, "you are a child in age, but you have a woman's heart. I do not say I have hope in the success of your mediation with the King; but even you must admit that there is a doubt, and I will not leave your fate, so far as I can provide for its safety, in doubt. In these papers" (he placed a packet in her hand as he spoke) "you will find full instructions. The only change I make is that wherever you find Ralph de Fienes suggested as a guide or counsellor, choose instead the Lady Latimer; she will prove a truer friend."

Joan locked up amid her blinding tears; her brother's forbearance towards the traitor seemed more than human.

She had at first thought his provision for the future unnecessary, and was inclined to smile incredulously; but as he proceeded, his sad calm looks and tones struck a death-chill to her sanguine hopes.

She sat down quietly when she had taken the packet from Dacre and read to him out of her breviary.

When the hour of parting came, who can tell the agony that wrung those two fond loving hearts? and yet so strong and brave were they that when her brother released Joan from the almost convulsive embrace in which he held her they smiled cheerfully at each other as she disappeared through the gloomy doorway.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KING.

Lady Latimer, so soon to be known as Katherine Parr, the sixth Queen of the Royal Bluebeard who then filled the throne of England, was at this time in attendance on her dying husband.

She could not accompany Joan to the presence-chamber herself, and she placed her under the care of her sister, the Lady Herbert. Then, kissing Joan lovingly, bade her God-speed on her pious errand.

Joan waited for some time in an ante-chamber; her heart throbed wildly when the solemn-looking usher whispered to her guide, and, slowly preceding the two ladies, led the way to the Royal presence.

Joan moved on in a dream, unconscious of the interest and admiration her youth and extreme beauty excited in that gay throng of courtiers.

Her eye rested on no one. She saw nothing, knew nothing, till she felt herself kneeling, and heard a coarse voice exclaim:—

"By my fay, 'tis a goodly wench! How now, sweetheart? What boon have you to crave? You shall have a husband for the asking."

her silence, and Joan's self-possession returned. She looked up steadily.

"I ask my brother's life, your Highness."

"And who in the foul fiend's name is her brother? Ha!" said the King to Wriothely, who just then entered.

"It is an ill-advised suit." The Chancellor frowned darkly on Joan.

"She asks the life of that confessed traitor and malefactor, Thomas de Fienes, formerly called Lord Dacre of Hurstmonceux."

"Hold, my Lord Chancellor," said Henry, quickly. "We will have no calling of names.—Ha!"

He was already well disposed to listen to any request urged by so fair and fresh a petitioner, and his irritable suspicious temper took umbrage at Wriothely's interference.

"Sir Thomas never befriends the petticoats," he said, glancing round. "Heed not your beast," he continued to Joan, with one of his profane oaths.

"But tell me, chuck, in what strait thy brother lies, for it seems me not to have heard much of this matter?"

Joan told her brother's sad story briefly, and when at the end she again implored mercy with flushed cheeks, clasped hands, and eyes beaming with the painful brilliance of excitement, Henry was obviously much moved.

"By St. Mary, there has been foul play here! Had I heard thy story sooner, fair mistress, thy brother's death warrant had never been signed. That dog of a cousin painted thy brother in darker colours than the fiend ever wore, and I had promised him the earldom. Ha!"

He laughed a short fierce laugh, and looked sharply round the group of courtiers. "Where is he? Ha! So the bird is flown. Make out a warrant, and that speedily," he said, with a terribly significant glance at Wriothely, "to attach that black-hearted dog who was here but now of high treason in misleading our clemency, and bring Lord Dacre to our presence. Ha."

There was a deep silence; no one stirred to obey the King.

Henry turned furiously to Wriothely, livid with passion, the imprecations he could not find breath to utter foaming over his lips.

Joan became pale with fear, as she scarcely knew what, although the King's passion was sufficient to unnerve anyone.

Amid the silence, Wriothely advanced and knelt before the King.

"Pardon, pardon, gracious liege!"

"Pardon for whom?" said Henry with blasphemous oath.

"Pardon, your Highness, for the Lieutenant of the Tower; he read the hour wrongly. Alas! the unhappy gentleman, my Lord Dacre, is even now hanged at Tyburn!"

"Now, by the Lord that made me," said Henry, rising and stamping furiously, "ye shall rue this morning's work among ye! Are you sure of it?"

"Alas, too true!" said the hypocritical Chancellor. "I had the sad tidings before this maiden entered the presence—"

"Ha!" interrupted the King, turning suddenly to look at Joan.

She had risen to her feet, and now stood white and rigid as a statue.

Henry took her compassionately by the hand, but she seemed quite unconscious of his Royal sympathy, her widely-opened eyes fixed on vacancy; and when the King let go her cold fingers, they sank suddenly and leaden-like to her side.

"Poor wench," said Henry, "the blow has stunned her."

He signed to Lady Herbert to approach. She spoke to her, caressed her, but Joan seemed utterly heedless of outward things.

"Poor heart!" said the King. "Lady Herbert, you had best lead her home, and send for Dr. Butts. If any leechcraft will bring her through her grief, his will; and by St. Mary, this matter shall be seen to. Ha!"

Lady Herbert obeyed the King's orders. The kind physician exerted his utmost care and skill, but Joan remained for hours in the same fearful state; her large eyes dilated and fixed, strainingly on some unseen, but apparently terrible, spectacle.

Dr. Butts bethought himself of the serving-man, Stephen.

The weeping old man could scarcely believe the pale bewildered maiden to be his own bright-eyed mistress. He knelt at her feet, and strove, almost like a faithful dog, to attract her notice; but in vain.

At length he placed before her eyes a token she had given to her brother in childhood—a crucifix which he had worn suspended round his neck by a silken string, and which old Stephen had removed thence when he prepared his master's murdered body for burial.

Joan gazed at it at first dreamily; suddenly she put out her hand and grasped it; then burst into passionate tears.

"She will live now," said the benevolent physician; "let her weep as long as she wills."

Spite of King Henry's compassion for Joan, he took no steps to reverse the attainder of the unfortunate family of De Fienes.

On examining the packet given to her by her brother, Joan found that he confided her to the care of La Mere Rosalie, a saintly lady of her family—the abbess of a convent near Paris. Lord Dacre told his sister that this lady had sent to their mother an assurance of her willingness to receive Joan in the event of requiring protection.

Joan's tears flowed fast, as she read these tokens of her idolised brother's tender care for her. She could hardly now to old Stephen's account of his young lord's noble and Christian behaviour—as he was led through the streets between the sheriffs to Tyburn, while the women bewailed loudly the untimely fate of one so young and full of promise, and the men looked on with downcast, grief-stricken faces.

At the end of her brother's letter, Joan found this request:—

"Do not, my beloved sister, in this terrible grief, take up a hasty purpose and adopt the religious life; remember that you are now the only worthy descendant of De Fienes. I have a foreboding that your children will one day be lords of Hurstmonceux."

And so it proved. Queen Elizabeth reversed the attainder, and Joan's eldest son became Lord Dacre, and restored Hurstmonceux to its ancient splendour.

Some years after the death of Lord Dacre, in a skirmish in the Low Countries; among a heap of dead German mercenaries, an English knight recognized the body of Ralph de Fienes.

THE END.

"CHRIST CONQUERS, CHRIST REIGNS."

A CONQUEROR OF MEN TESTIFIES TO THE DIVINE SUPERIORITY OF THE CARPENTER'S SON.—NAPOLEON'S HOMAGE TO CHRIST.—LACORDAIRE'S ELOQUENT COMMENTARY.

Our esteemed contemporary, the London Weekly Register, in copying the following extracts, suggests to its brethren of the Catholic press that they may be profitably republished throughout the world. The passages are not unfamiliar to Catholics of ordinary reading, but as there are daily springing up new circles of persons interested either by inheritance or acquisition, in the Catholic cause, they will be new to them. To all of us they are at all times instructive and delightful.

One of Napoleon's generals was one day discussing in his presence the divinity of our Lord. Na-

poleon remarked, "I know men, General, and I can tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, the conquerors and the gods of other religions. The resemblance does not exist; the distance between Christianity and any other religion whatever is infinite."

"Any one who has a true knowledge of things and experience of men will cut short the question as I do. Who, amongst us, General, looking at the worship of different nations, is not able to say to the different authors of those religions: 'No, you are neither gods, nor the agents of the Deity; no, you have no mission from heaven. You are formed of the same slime as other mortals; your own lives are so entirely one with all the passions, and all the vices, which are inseparable from humanity, that it has been necessary to defy them with you; your temples and your priests themselves proclaim your origin.' Abominations, fables, and rotten wood: are these religions and gods which can be compared with Christianity?"

"I say no."

"In Lycurgus, Numa, Confucius, and Mahomet I see law-givers, but nothing which reveals the Deity. They did not themselves raise their pretensions so high. They surpassed others in their times, as I have done in mine. There is nothing about them which announces Divine beings; on the contrary, I see much likeness between them and myself. I can testify to common resemblances, weaknesses, and errors, which bring them near to me, and to human nature."

"It is not so with Christ. Everything in Him amazes me; His mind is beyond me, and His will confounds me. There is no possible term of comparison between Him and anything of this world. He is a Being apart. His birth, His life, His death, the profundity of His doctrine, which reaches the height of difficulty, and which is yet its most admirable solution, the singularity of this mysterious Being, His empire, His course across ages and kingdoms—all is a prodigy, a mystery too deep, too sacred, and which plunges me into reveries from which I can find no escape; a mystery which is here, under my eyes, which I cannot deny, and neither can I explain."

"Here I see nothing of a man."

"You speak of Cesar and of Alexander, of their conquests, and of the enthusiasm which they were able to awaken in the hearts of their soldiers, and thus draw them with them on their adventurous expeditions; but this only shows us the price of the soldier's affection, the ascendancy of the genius of victory, the natural effect of military discipline, and the result of able command. But how many years did the empire of Cesar endure? How long was the enthusiasm of the soldiers of Alexander maintained? Their prestige lasted a day, an hour, the time of their command, and followed the chances of war. If victory had deserted them, do you doubt whether the enthusiasm would not immediately have failed? I ask you, yes or no? Did the military influence of Cesar and Alexander end with their life? Was it prolonged beyond the tomb?"

"Imagine a man making conquests with a faithful army, devoted to his memory—after his death! Imagine a phantom, who has soldiers without pay, without hopes for this world, and who inspires them to submit to all kinds of privations. Turenne was still warm when his army broke up before Montecuculi; and as to myself—my armies forgot me whilst I still lived, as the Carthaginian army forgot Hannibal. Such is the power of us great men! A battle lost casts us down and carries away our friends. How many a Judas have I seen around me!"

"In short, and this is my last argument, there is not a God in heaven, if any man could conceive and execute with full success the gigantic design of seizing upon the supreme worship by usurping the name of God. Jesus is the only one who has dared to do this. He is the only one who has said clearly, affirmed imperturbably, Himself of Himself, I am God; which is quite different from the affirmation, I am a god. History mentions no other individual who qualified himself with the title of God, in the absolute sense. How, then, should a Jew to whose existence there is more testimony than to that of any of His contemporaries, He alone, the son of a carpenter, give Himself out as God Himself, for the Self-existent Being, for the Creator of all beings? He claims every kind of adoration, He builds His worship with His own hands, not with stones, but with men. And how was it that by a prodigy surpassing all prodigies, He willed the love of men—that which it is most difficult in the world to obtain—and immediately succeeded? From this I conclude His Divinity. Alexander, Cesar, Hannibal, all failed. They conquered the world, but they were not able to obtain a friend. I am perhaps the only person of the present time who has any love for Hannibal, Cesar, or Alexander. It is true we love our children; but how many children are ungrateful! Do your children love you, General? You love them, but you are not sure of a return."

"Christ speaks, and from that time generations are His by ties more strict, more intimate than those of blood; by a union more sacred, more imperative than any other could be. All those who sincerely believe in Him feel that superior love, of which time, the great destroyer, can neither exhaust the strength nor limit the duration. I, Napoleon, admire this the more that I have so often thought of it; and it proves to me absolutely the Divinity of Christ."

I have inspired multitudes to die for me. God forbid that I should from any comparison between the enthusiasms of my soldiers and Christian charity; they are as different as their causes. And then my presence was required; the electricity of my look, my voice, a word from me, then the sacred fire was kindled in all hearts. I certainly possess the secret of that magic power which carries away other people's minds; yet I could never communicate it to others. Not one of my generals ever received it from me, or guessed at it; neither have I the power to eternalize my name and my love in the heart."

"Now that I am at St. Helena—now that I am alone, nailed to this rock, who fights and conquers empires for me? What courtiers have I in my misfortune? Does any one think of me? Does any one in Europe move for me? Who has remained faithful? Where are my friends? Yes, you, two or three whose fidelity immortalizes you, share my exile." Here the voice of the Emperor assumed a peculiar tone of melancholy irony and deep sadness. "Yes, our existence has shone with all the brilliancy of the diadem of sovereignty, and yours, General, reflected this splendor as the dome of Les Invalides reflects the rays of the sun. But reverses have come. By degrees the golden hues are effaced, the floods of misfortune and the outrages to which I am every day subjected carry away the last tints. Only the lead remains, General, and soon I shall be dust."

"Such is the destiny of great men; of Cesar and of Alexander. We are forgotten, and the name of a conqueror like that of an emperor is only the subject of a college theme. Our exploits come under the ferule of a pedant, who either praises or insults us. A few moments and this will be my fate; what will happen to myself? Assassinated by the English oligarchy, I die prematurely, and my body will be returned to the earth to become pasture for worms. This is the destiny, now very near, of the great Napoleon. What a gulf between my misery and the eternal reign of Christ, preached, praised, loved, adored, living in the whole universe. Is this to die? Is it not rather to live? Such is the death of Christ—such the death of God."

The peroration of the first of Lacordaire's "Con-

quences" on Jesus Christ referring to this was as follows:

"Our age commenced by a man who outstripped all his contemporaries, and whom we, who have followed, have not equalled. A conqueror, a soldier, a founder of empire, his name and his ideas are still everywhere present. After having unconsciously accomplished the work of God he disappeared, that work being done, and waned like a setting sun in the deep waters of the ocean. There upon a barren rock he loved to recall the events of his own life; and from himself going back to others who had lived before him and to whom he had a right to compare himself, he could not fail to perceive a form greater than his own upon that illustrious stage whereon he took his place. He often contemplated it: misfortune opens the soul to illuminations which in prosperity are unseen. That form constantly rose before him—he was compelled to judge it."

"One evening in the course of that long exile which expiated past faults and lighted up the road to the future, the fallen conqueror asked one of the few companions of his captivity if he could tell him what Jesus Christ really was. The soldier begged to be excused; he had been too busy during his sojourn in the world to think about the question. Thereupon," added Lacordaire, speaking from the pulpit of Notre Dame, "he [Napoleon] opening the Gospel, not with his hands, but from a heart filled by it, compared Jesus Christ with himself and all the great characters of history; developed the different characteristics which distinguished Jesus Christ from all mankind, and after uttering a torrent of eloquence which no Father of the Church would have disclaimed, ended with these words, 'In fine, I know men, and I say that Jesus Christ was not a man.' What that burst of eloquence was the above extract has shown. Lacordaire has clearly proved that he was justified in uttering this paenegyric; 'These words of Napoleon,' added Lacordaire, 'sum up all I would say to you on the inner life of Jesus Christ, and express the conclusion which sooner or later every man arrives at who reads the Gospel with just attention. And' said the great preacher, immediately before descending that day from the pulpit of Notre Dame—"The day will come when the youngest among you will say from the experience of life, when life is drawing to its close, 'I, too, know men, and I say that Jesus Christ was not a man.' And the day also will come when, upon the tomb of her great Captain, France will grave these words, and they will shine with more immortal lustre than the sun of the Pyramids and Austerlitz."

ENGLISH CIVILIZATION.

The Inspector of Factories in England furnishes most startling, horrible revelations concerning the brutalized condition of Englishmen in the manufacturing districts. While England is boasting of its civilization, the report of the Inspector shows that a portion of its population has been reduced to the lowest stage of barbarism by the lust of gain, and by worse vices which mock the weak, powerless religion which the English Government substituted for the teachings of the Church of God. The pious Protestant Earl of Shaftsbury is constrained to confirm the humiliating official record of the benighted degradation of the lower classes in the Black Country. The facts are admitted to be unnatural and monstrous. The women are compelled by worthless, dissipated, drunken fathers and husbands, who riot off their wages, to perform the hardest work in the mines and iron works. "The women," says the report of the Inspector, "take the place of fathers, as well as of husbands, while the men are idle and drunken. Hundreds work making large nails and spikes, work far sicker for men than women; the colliers' and puddlers' wives toll and slave for any price any crafty knave of a master would offer; these people (the women) do not stand out for tommy and beer so long as they can get something to satisfy their half starving families while the ought to be bread-winner is luxuriating in some public house at his ease, or training his whiffet for some future running, on beefsteaks and the best of good fare. While the mother toils and slaves, the children are left uncared for, to wander shoeless and in rags till they are old enough to blow the bellows, to be kicked and cuffed, hear filthy, indecent and blasphemous language, and are then sent into the shop, amid men degraded by drink and gambling, in time to follow the same course."

The interposition of the Government is invoked to change this disgraceful state of society—to lift the mothers of the rising generation in England above, or rather, up to the level of the most corrupt form of paganism. But the Government itself will effect little or nothing. There is need of the authority of that Church which England expelled by fire and sword from its shores, but which alone gave to woman a sacred dignity and sacred rights, and raised her from the fallen condition into which a man made religion has again allowed her to fall. There is need of the divinely constituted protector who exalted womanhood and lifted her to her true, proper station by the homage and reverence that that protector decreed to the Lady of the Christian world, the Blessed Mother of God. When England again becomes Our Lady's dower,