

and cruelty; for when the pope commands, the priest, as his loyal soldier, must be ready to obey. But many a time, after the place has been captured by dint of strategy and secrecy, the poor soldier is left, badly wounded and completely disabled, on the battle-field. He has paid dearly for his victory; and the conquered citadel has received an injury from which it may never recover. But the crafty priest has gained his point: he has succeeded in persuading his lady penitent that there was no impropriety, that it was even necessary for them to have a parley on things that made her blush a few moments before. She is so well convinced that she would swear that there is nothing wrong in confession. Truly this is a fulfilment of the words:

"Abyssus abyssum invocat."

Have the Romish theologians Gury, Scavani, Liguori, etc., ever been honest enough, in their works on confession, to say that the Most Holy God could never command or require woman to degrade and pollute herself and the priest in pouring in the ear of a frail and sinful mortal, words unfit even for an angel? No; they were very careful not to say so; for from that very moment, their shameless lies would have been exposed; the stupendous but weak structure of auricular confession would fall to the ground with sad havoc and ruin to its upholders. Men and women would open their eyes, and see its weakness and fallacy. "If God," they might say, "can forgive our most grievous sins, against modesty, he can and will certainly do the same with those of less gravity; therefore there is no necessity or occasion for us to confess to a priest."

But those shrewd casuists know too well that by such frank confession, they would soon lose their hold on