

'Punishment as merited as it is severe has overtaken Don Giovanni Riva, a licensed priest of the archdiocese of Turin, who, at Milan Assizes, on Monday, was sentenced to sixteen years' imprisonment for habitual corruption of the inmates of the Consolata Convent Girls' Orphanage in Milan, of which institution he was father confessor.

The trial, which has lasted a long time, was heard with closed doors, but the facts have been supplied to the press by the legal reporters. The jury found Don Riva guilty in all cases, and denied that there were any extenuating circumstances. They acquitted another priest and the vice-directress, but sent the Mother Superior, Suora Maria Fumagalli, to prison for ten months for having striven to hush up the scandal by concealing the confessor's crimes.

Fumagalli's institute at Turin was under the sanction of Cardinal Richelmy, Archbishop of Turin, to whom she had bequeathed everything, but Cardinal Ferrari, Archbishop of Milan, had declined to authorise the house, partly because the nuns did not observe the rule of enclosure, and partly because of the dirty state of the building.

So much for the romance. Now for the reality.

It is difficult to write temperately of such a blackguardly perversion of notorious facts as 'Lloyd's Weekly' has given to its readers. The Fumagalli scandals have been before the world for over a year past; the whole working of the fraudulent business has been turned inside out; every journal in Italy and in England that has not been 'nid-nid-nodding' is aware of the facts of the case; and only a conscious perverser of truth could have been guilty of laying before the public the scandalous misrepresentations quoted above from 'Lloyd's'. Our readers have from time to time been kept abreast of the Fumagalli fraud, and those of alert attention and passable memory will readily recall the true position of affairs. We may, however, briefly recall the facts. 'Lloyd's' romance tells its readers (1) that the Fumagalli woman was a nun (it calls her 'Suora'—that is 'Sister'); (2) that she was the 'Superior' of a 'Convent Girls' Orphanage at Milan'; (3) that Fumagalli's institute at Turin was under the sanction of the Cardinal-Archbishop; (4) that the Cardinal-Archbishop of Milan did not 'authorise' the house, and for two reasons, one of which was that the 'nuns' did not 'observe the rule of enclosure'; and (5) that 'a licensed priest of the archdiocese of Turin' was 'father confessor' of the 'Suora' Fumagalli's 'Convent Girls' Orphanage at Milan' and was guilty of 'habitual corruption of the inmates'.

So runneth 'Lloyd's' envenomed romance. The reader is now asked to mark how plain a tale will put it down. (1) The Fumagalli woman was never a nun. She was simply an adventurer and impostor who—despite the repeated and public protests of the Cardinal-Archbishop, and his strong appeals to the local authority—decked herself out in nun's attire, in order the better to further her money-raising objects. (2) Her 'institutes' at Turin and Milan were not 'convents'; there were no 'nuns' in them; and the only females associated with the Fumagalli impostor were—of the Fumagalli brand, and fit partners with her in the scandals which the ecclesiastical authority had denounced long and earnestly before the criminal law was put into motion against the den which 'Lloyd's' turns into a convent. (3) Fumagalli's other 'institute' in Turin was not approved by the Cardinal-Archbishop, and the story of her generous bequest to him is all a myth. (4) It is true that the Cardinal-Archbishop of Milan did not 'authorise' the Fumagalli den in his cathedral city. But it is not true that he refused 'partly because the nuns did not observe the rule of enclosure'. He refused all along, and all along urged the civil authorities to take action, simply because he knew that the creature was an impostor and adventuress wholly unfitted to be entrusted with the care of children, and the alleged 'nuns'

were not nuns, but the dupes or accomplices of the criminal who is now expiating her deeds in gaol. (5) Every Catholic schoolchild knows that a priest who is merely 'licensed' in the archdiocese of Turin is not thereby empowered to be 'father confessor' to an institute in Milan, or even to hear any confession whatsoever in Milan. To do so he must receive 'faculties' from the Cardinal-Archbishop of Milan. But (a) no 'licensed priest of the archdiocese of Turin' had any connection whatever with the Fumagalli 'institute', or any part in the scandals that arose in connection therewith. (b) There was no 'father confessor' whatsoever in connection with that 'institute'; nor had any 'licensed' priest either of the archdiocese of Milan, or of Turin, or of any other diocese in Italy, any connection, either official or unofficial, with the place. (c) The scandals that arose—and they were of the gravest kind—were perpetrated, not by any 'father confessor', but by the Fumagalli impostor's male partners in the business. And it is to the credit of the Church that they were under her ban long before the criminal law was set in motion against them, and that no practising Catholic had any share in the concern.

Two or three other 'fairy tales from a far-off land' appear in the 'Lloyd's' cutting. They are of a piece with the Fumagalli tale, and all (or at least most of them) have already been exposed in our editorial or news columns.

## SOCIALISM

### II. DIFFICULTIES OF SOCIALISM: ORGANISATION; SUPPLYING WANTS; ASSIGNING EMPLOYMENTS; REMUNERATION; MOTIVE.

(Continued.)

#### TRADE UNIONS TO BE WELCOMED.

Further, let me repeat a phrase in it, as affecting our present circumstances in Great Britain: 'If Unionism is crushed, Socialism will thrive in its stead.' These words seem to me very wise, and a warning to those among us who with untimely timidity are hostile to Trade Unions. Thus in America Monsignor Spalding, the friend of the Unions, has sorrowfully to recognize the evil that Socialists enter into them, and seek to rule them, causing disorder, promising Utopias, and victimizing the workmen by deception. But this is no wonder, because America, as you know, is where the forces of organized capital have sought to break the Unions by vast free labor agencies, by blacklisting, by the use of armed mercenaries, by the misuse of the laws of conspiracy which the employers in combination can themselves evade. Moreover, in America the constitutional law of free contract has been so interpreted as to hamper alike the Factory Acts and Trade Unions; a sympathetic strike has been held to be illegal, and statutes have been declared unconstitutional if they forbade the discharge of a workman for belonging to a Trade Union; similarly laws forbidding the truck system or commanding weekly payment of wages have been set aside as 'unconstitutional. (1)' The cry, 'Down with Unionism!' awakens as its echo the cry, 'Up with Socialism!' The same thing happens in Germany. There the liberty of workmen's associations is limited and precarious; they lack co-operative rights; they require a license from the local authorities, are at the mercy of local officials, and are strictly bound to keep to specific questions of work and wages, else are liable to the penal law. And in Germany a vast proportion of the working classes are avowed Socialists, and form the great Social Democratic Party against which Count Buelow, the head of the Emperor's Government, urges all the other parties to join in alliance, as against public enemies.

And here in Great Britain the friendliness towards Trade Unions in the early seventies that I remember has given way to the old suspicion and dislike, and instead of welcoming these great organized bodies, of linking them up with the law and the State (so well done in New Zealand and Australia), or of using them as an invaluable ally in the campaign against unemployment, the hostility to them culminated in the Taff Vale

<sup>1</sup> See the small volume, *Our Benevolent Feudalism*, by the Socialist, W. J. Ghent New York, 1902.