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FATHER THOMAS BURKE, O.P.

BY THE REV. ROBERT EATON



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*A souvenir of Galway
from M. S. B. 1936*

FATHER THOMAS BURKE, O.P.¹

(1830—1883)

By REV. ROBERT EATON

NICHOLAS ANTHONY BURKE was born in the city of Galway on September 8, 1830, and was baptized on the 10th of the same month, the Feast of St. Nicholas of Tolentino, after whom he was called, the name Anthony being added because of his mother's devotion to that saint. His parents, Walter Burke and Margaret Mac-Donough, were poor in this world's goods, but rich in virtue, and devoted themselves to the training of their children. Walter Burke was a baker by trade, the "Master of the Rolls," as his son used to call him. An ill-natured critic once pronounced Father Burke's sermons to be "flowery." "No wonder I am *floury*," he replied, "was not my father a baker?"

As a child, Nicholas was delicate but full of spirit, and early showed that love of music and power of mimicry which later distinguished him. His fondness for playing pranks and practical jokes more than once got him into trouble, and he received in consequence many severe chastisements from his mother, who regarded such corrective acts as sacred, and always began them with prayer. "Direct, O Lord, our actions, and carry them on by Thy gracious assistance," she would gravely say, to the terror of her delinquent son.

¹ This biography is mainly based on—(1) *The Life of Father Burke*, by William J. Fitz-Patrick, F.S.A.; (2) *The Inner Life of Father Burke*, by a Dominican Friar of the English Province; (3) *Lectures and Sermons*, by Father Thomas Burke, O.P. (P.M. Haverty, New York.)

"When I saw my mother enter the room, make the sign of the Cross, and solemnly invoke the light of the Holy Ghost to direct her, I knew I could expect no mercy," said Father Burke; "I never got such a beating as that directed by the Holy Spirit, and I have never forgotten it." At times, by way of variety, the word "*direct*" was changed to "*prevent*." "But it never *did* prevent," adds Father Burke, "down the lash always came."

From his boyhood, Nicholas was wonderfully observant and entered heartily into his studies. He was early sent to school in Galway under Brother Paul O'Connor, of the Brotherhood of St. Patrick. His veneration for this holy man may be gathered from his own words: "Amongst the proudest recollections of my life is that I was monitor in Brother Paul's school, and that month by month I went to him to answer the inquiry, 'whether I had attended my monthly confession and communion,' and how he taught me that, next to the God that made me, I should love the old land of my birth."

Thence he was sent to a school kept by Dr. O'Toole, where, owing to his retentive memory and great diligence, he made rapid progress. Some considered that his love of joke and fund of wit were such as to preclude the possibility of a vocation; but a sound spirit of practical piety underlay his exuberant spirits. Though a wild boy, he knew where to draw the line, and it is not surprising that his more intimate companions were convinced he was destined for the priesthood. "Here now is Father Nicholas for you!" his grandmother had exclaimed at his baptism, and that he might eventually be a priest was his mother's constant prayer.

A severe attack of typhoid fever, at about the age of fourteen, was the crisis in his life. For days the issue was extremely doubtful, and, on recovering, Nicholas determined to devote his remaining years to the service of God alone. It is interesting to learn that the example of Daniel O'Connell had a share in developing his vocation. "He contributed largely to make a priest of me," Father Burke once said, "for amongst the

things that made a deep impression on me as a boy, was when I stood in the chapel of Galway to see the great O'Connell coming to eight o'clock Mass in the morning, kneeling amongst us, and receiving Holy Communion; to watch him absorbed in prayer before God; almost to read the grand thoughts that were passing through that pure mind; to see him renewing again before Heaven the vows that bound him to religion and country."

It is also probable that the Irish famine of 1847 helped to fix his mind and heart on the priesthood. The scenes he witnessed deeply impressed his imagination and filled him with serious thoughts. "I have seen," he tells us, "strong men lie down in the streets, and, with ashy lips, murmur a last cry for food, and faint away and die. I have seen the dead infant lying on the breast of the dead mother as she lay by the wayside. I have seen the living infant trying to draw from the breast of the mother who was dead sustenance for its infant life. O God, in Thy mercy, let me never again see such sights! If I were to live a thousand years, never could I banish them from my memory or shut them out from my eyes—no, nor their dire effects. The storm at length passed away, bearing on its wings millions of Irish victims and exiles, and leaving Ireland stunned by the greatness of her ruin. There seemed no hope for the nation. Ruined homesteads, abandoned villages, impoverished towns, workhouses filled to overflowing, prisons crowded with political prisoners, hospitals unable to hold the victims of cholera which came in the wake of war and famine; trade and commerce destroyed, industry paralysed, a population wasted by disease and privation, scarcely able to realize life after such awful contact with death, and crushed by separation from so many loved hearts."

This event and its consequences thus graphically described had, we feel sure, their part in sobering young Burke's mind and fixing his thoughts on the priesthood. From his boyhood he had been under Dominican influences, and the union of active with contemplative work in that Order attracted him forcibly.

The generous sacrifice of his pious parents he thus beautifully describes: "I think of the old woman in Galway who had no one but me, her only son; I think of the old man, bending down towards the grave, with the weight of years upon him; and I think of the poverty that might stare them in the face when their only boy was gone: and yet no tear was shed; no word of sorrow was uttered; but, with joy and pride, they gave up their only son to the God that made him."

Being accepted as a postulant of the Dominican Order, Nicholas started for Perugia in the winter of 1847, passing through Rome and Assisi on the way. He was kindly received by Father Massetti, then Novice-Master, and was clothed "in St. Dominic's white wool" on December 29, 1847, receiving in religion the name of Thomas, after St. Thomas Aquinas, the angelic doctor. Though often "penanced" for breaking the rule of silence and for whistling his favourite Irish airs, he passed admirably through the novitiate as his novice-master attests, "showing himself devout in practices of piety, attentive in choir and the services of the altar. He was ever lively and joyous, and kept his companions cheerful by his healthy conversation and pleasant stories."

During his two years at Perugia, he gained a thorough mastery of Italian. Shortly after his profession in January, 1849, he received minor Orders from Pope Leo XIII, then Bishop of Perugia, and went to the Convent of the Minerva at Rome to begin his studies. He now made his first acquaintance with the *Summa* of St. Thomas, a book that he loved and knew most intimately. "When reading the *Summa*," he said, "one's faith seems lost in vision, so clearly does every point stand out."

In Rome at this time he met Cardinal Wiseman, who was much struck by him. "That young man," he said, "has a wondrous power of inspiring love: he will be a great priest some day."

We must now turn our attention to England, which was soon to be the scene of Father Burke's labours. The English Dominican Province, now resuscitated,

became possessed, in October, 1850, of Woodchester Convent, near Stroud, with Father Augustine Proctor as prior and novice-master. "Unaccustomed as he had long been, owing to the disturbed state of the Province, to the life of regular observance, Father Proctor's ideas of the *régime* adapted to novices were strict in the extreme, in spite of the real kindness of his externally rugged nature. He himself was an admirable example to all, and kept the rule in all its bare austerity; but his strictness was certainly in excess of that of Santa Sabina in Rome, though the common opinion about it is much exaggerated and has perpetuated a totally wrong impression of this heroic and saintly man." With a view, therefore, to putting matters into a satisfactory state, the Master-General, Father Jandel, paid a visit of inspection to Woodchester in the August of 1851. "This is all very well," he said, as the result of what he found, "but you are not living according to the spirit of St. Dominic. I will send you a young man from Santa Sabina who is thoroughly competent to expound the Constitutions." This "young man" was Brother Thomas Burke, who was now appointed pro-novice-master of the English province.

In 1851, therefore, Brother Burke left Rome for England, "attired more like a smuggler than a friar." The money allowed him for his journey was insufficient, and he reached London penniless. While sitting at Paddington, cold and faint, thinking of Rome and the convent he had left there, a porter, to whom he explained his case, thrust a hunch of bread with a bit of herring under his nose, saying: "Here, poor devil, eat that!" At last he thought of one of the Fathers of the London Oratory, whom he knew slightly, and from whom he received means to finish his journey. The railway did not then, as it does now, go beyond Stonehouse, some miles from Woodchester, and a long walk still awaited him. When at length he reached the convent, the Prior had retired to rest, and the newcomer was taken for a robber. "Nay, I am Brother Thomas from Rome," he said. The door was then

opened, and he entered on his new sphere of work, October 4, 1851.

His position was certainly not one to be envied. A young and inexperienced man, sent by the General to mould the community in the ways of regular observance, he was naturally regarded with some suspicion by Father Proctor. Both, indeed, loved the rule, but each looked at it from a different point of view. Father Proctor aimed at exact observance according to the letter; Brother Burke, too, aimed at exact observance, but as interpreted by Father Jandel and the advocates of observance abroad. In a word, they did not understand each other.

The young novice-master felt this keenly, but persevered in his task, and met with some measure of success. Though strict with his novices, so that the weekly chapter of faults made them tremble, he was loved by them, and they keenly relished his exquisite daily exhortations. "He was quite at home with us," writes one of them, "and seemed to understand us so well, and we revered and loved him in the most genuine manner."

In 1852 Brother Burke was ordained sub-deacon and deacon at Oscott by Bishop Ullathorne, and shortly after went to Galway on a visit to his parents. The tonsure was not then worn in Ireland, and one day as he was standing deacon at High Mass, some one exclaimed, "What a shame to let that young man officiate, just after putting the fever off him!"

On returning to Woodchester, he seemed more accustomed to his work and brighter in his spirits. He now began to preach, but his early efforts gave no promise of the future orator. "He wrote out his sermons carefully, word for word, and took great pains in preparing them. He used to preach with his eyes shut, and showed great timidity. He would rehearse his discourse before others, and then ask them what to change, and with childlike docility took their advice."

On Holy Saturday, March 26, 1853, he was ordained priest by Dr. Burgess, Bishop of Clifton, and next day said his first Mass at Woodchester. He now took charge of the neighbouring mission of Nympsfield, where great

ignorance on religious subjects prevailed. With one farmer in particular he had many a talk, and just as he hoped that some impression was being made the farmer said, "Yea, friend, but be the Bible true?" Further discussion seemed hopeless.

In addition to this and his work with the novices, Father Burke was still studying theology under Dr. Pozzo, then regent of studies at Woodchester, with a view of taking his degree as "Lector," at the same time reading much general literature. It is said, indeed, that, though, except when going to class, his theology was rarely seen in his hand, he always knew the lesson, having diligently studied the *Summa* in Rome; and at his *Defensio in universa theologia* on August 3, 1854, he acquitted himself admirably.

Before the end of that year, 1854, Dr. Russell, then head of the Irish Dominicans, recalled Father Burke to Ireland, there to found a novitiate and house of studies. He had been only three years at Woodchester, but so deeply had he made his mark, that to this day his very form seems familiar, and time cannot obliterate his presence or his work.

The Irish novitiate had hitherto been at San Clemente, in Rome, but for many reasons it was advisable to have one in Ireland, and Tallaght, seven miles from Dublin, a place of great historical interest, was chosen for the purpose. Father Burke arrived there early in 1855, to begin a work similar to that which he had so ably accomplished at Woodchester. An admirable description of him at this period is given by Father Power, O.P., one of his novices: "I can never forget," he writes, "the impression his ascetic appearance made upon me as he entered the parlour to greet me and three other postulants for the Order. His tall, graceful, and attenuated figure, his stern, rigid face shaded by the cowl over his head, his hands folded under his scapular, and the deep, sonorous voice, all presented to my gaze the living image of a vigorous ascetic Dominican. On our way to the novitiate, he turned round to the thinnest lad in the group, and said, 'My boy, we must feed you!' In our recreations he was buoyant and enthusiastic, but no

one could be more severe if he saw the least deliberate neglect or violation of rule. Daily he addressed us in homilies on the spiritual life and the spirit of St. Dominic, each of them a masterpiece of touching eloquence."

The neighbourhood of Tallaght at this time was in a state of great spiritual destitution, and Father Burke, by his simple, earnest preaching, and above all by his example, infused fresh life into the place, and before long even daily communicants were to be seen, and a larger ciborium had to be purchased. He preached often, and all felt his power. He was surnamed "Savonarola," and soon began to attract wide attention. In September, 1859, he preached his first famous sermon, on Church Music.¹ It was said that an unknown mine had been discovered, and from that day to the end of his life he was ever fulfilling the ministry of preaching.

Of the next five years (1859-1864) there is nothing special to record. He preached frequently and gave many retreats, sometimes even twelve in a year; and in these was heard to especial advantage, for they were marked by an exquisite adaptation to the special needs of those whom he addressed. In 1863 he gave two successful missions in Sheffield and Manchester, and was made Prior of Tallaght. In 1864 the first stone of the new convent at Tallaght was laid, and Father Burke preached on the occasion; but before the end of the year he left for Rome, having been appointed Rector of San Clemente. He quite expected not to preach again for three years, but thought "he would get into the pulpit from time to time, when the church was closed, and bawl a bit, just for 'auld lang syne.'" In 1865, however, Cardinal, then Doctor, Manning, was summoned to England to the death-bed of Cardinal Wiseman, in the midst of his course of sermons in the Church of Sta. Maria del Popolo; and Father Burke undertook to complete the course. He also preached the Lenten conferences at Sta. Maria dei Monti and Sta. Maria degli Angeli, in the Corso. Father

¹ "Music in Catholic Worship": (*Sermons and Lectures*, p. 344).

Mulooly, O.P., was at this time busy with his excavations and discoveries at San Clemente. He and Father Burke were warm friends, and the subterranean church seemed to have an equal interest for them both: nothing, indeed, gave Father Burke greater pleasure than to show visitors over it. Towards the end of his stay in the eternal City, he was talked of for the post of Coadjutor Bishop of the Port of Spain. This was the first, but by no means the last, bishopric for which he was proposed, but to his great joy he escaped them all, and lived and died a simple friar. He could already plead ill-health as an excuse, for the painful disease, which at length killed him, had asserted itself.

He returned to Ireland at the end of 1867, and the following year gave a large mission at Lincoln's Inn Fields in London. His confessional was crowded, and he described the severity of the strain by saying that it wore threadbare two pairs of Blarney cloth garments which he had just bought.

In May, 1869, the remains of Daniel O'Connell were removed to the crypt beneath the tower at Glasnevin, and Father Burke, now at the height of his fame, pronounced the oration on the occasion in the presence of some fifty thousand spectators. It occupied two hours in delivery, and is one of his finest efforts.¹ The moment it was over, without waiting to receive the thanks of all, he hurried to the hospital to attend a poor widow who wished to see him before she died. He walked the hospital wards, eagerly scanning each bed, and was about to enter another room, when he heard a feeble voice utter his name. She was so emaciated that he had failed to recognize her. "Father," she said, "I waited for you!" He gave her the last Sacraments, and she died in his arms.

The Vatican Council began in 1870, and the Bishop of Dromore selected Father Burke to accompany him as his theologian. While in Rome he preached in Sta. Maria del Popolo, and attracted large congregations. Again he was talked of to be Coadjutor Archbishop of

¹ See *Sermons and Lectures*, p. 34.

San Francisco. It is amusing to find that Father Burke attributed his escape from this dignity to his habit of mimicry. One evening, so the story goes, the Bishop of Dromore deprecated his exuberance of spirits as unworthy of the priestly dignity. "If it were not for this blemish," he said, "there is no distinction to which your talents would not entitle you." Father Burke replied, "I have often heard *you*, my lord, express regret that you had ever been made a bishop. If you had followed my example, and had a little more fun in you, that burthen would never have been laid upon you." The Bishop and his theologian returned to Ireland before the conclusion of the Council, after an absence of seven months. In June, 1870, Father Burke was appointed Sub-prior of St. Saviour's, Dublin, and preached a triduum to celebrate the dogma of the Pope's Infallibility.

The following year (1871) was a specially busy one for him: in the course of it he gave 21 retreats and preached 172 sermons. As each retreat lasted seven days and he preached four times each day, his aggregate amounts to 760 sermons for that one year. In this year, too, he was summoned to Ghent to attend a General Chapter of the Order for the revision of the Constitutions. He was soon to visit the convents of the Order in America, and preached a series of farewell sermons in Dublin, concluding with a visit to his aged parents in Galway, to receive from them what might prove to be a last blessing. His father, indeed, died before he returned.

Father Burke's visit to America constitutes the most busy and glorious period of his life, and the way he passed through it shows how deep was his grounding both in virtue and in learning. All the past seems but a preparation for it. He expected to be absent only a few weeks, but did not return to Ireland for nearly eighteen months. He purposely selected a vessel with a large number of steerage passengers, and, to their great joy, had free access to them and heard upwards of three hundred confessions on the voyage. He preached to them many times, and being asked to preach to the

saloon passengers, accepted only on condition that the steerage should be allowed to be present. Indeed, he spent the greater part of his time with them, cheering the emigrants and encouraging all to be true to the faith in their new home across the Atlantic.

On arriving in America, he worked for some weeks as "visitor" in the convents of Kentucky and Ohio. Though he shrank from all public notice, the country soon rang with the fame of his eloquence, and his name was on the lips of all. In March, 1872, he gave three lectures, and preached the Lenten discourses at the Church of St. Paul in New York. This large edifice was quite unable to hold the crowds that flocked to hear him; labourers going direct from their work, carrying their dinner-cans, merchants coming from business to hear him—in fact people of all classes, eagerly waiting until the doors were opened. Four or five hours before a sermon or lecture, every place was filled and the approaches besieged by crowds seeking for admittance. The calls upon him were incessant, and he satisfied all he could, while not neglecting the main object of his visit.¹ One morning two nuns sat in the parlour of St. Vincent Ferrer's, New York, waiting patiently until they could catch Father Burke as he passed out. At last he came, hurried and pressed, and could only say: "No, no, Sister, I cannot do it." They burst into tears and said: "Well, it is the will of God, but we are very poor." Father Burke at once replied, "There, that will do, Sister, I will try to manage it." And of course he *did*.

An amusing anecdote is told of a difficulty he had in giving one of his lectures in New York. There was a private door to the platform of the lecture hall, but Father Burke, forgetting this, tried to make his way

¹ In the volume of *Sermons and Lectures*, we have six sermons preached in the month of March, 1872, viz.: "The Catholic Church the Mother of Liberty" (March 3rd), "The Catholic Church, the Mother and Inspiration of Art" (March 10th), "Panegyric of St. Patrick" (March 17th), "The Christian Man, the Man of the Day" (March 22nd), "The Groupings of Calvary" (March 24th), "Christ on Calvary" (March 29th).

through the crowd at the main entrance. After being jostled about for some time, he got hemmed in between some pillars and a big Irishwoman. At length he said: "My good woman will you let me get past you?" "Don't bother me," was the reply; "are *you* better than any one else?" "Well," said Father Burke, "there won't be any lecture if I can't get in; I'm Father Burke." "*You*, Father Burke," she exclaimed disdainfully, giving him a thrust with her elbow, "go to the devil!"

The strain of overwork was beginning to tell upon him, and in the summer of 1872 an attack of hæmorrhage of the lungs necessitated a period of rest. For many weeks past, he had frequently preached three times in one day, and in churches some distance apart. "Tired is not the word," he had to confess in describing his state; "I can only compare my case to Ned Burke's dog during the famine: they had to support his back at the wall to enable him to bark." But his rest was a short one, and in September he addressed at Boston an audience of 40,000 people, the largest ever assembled in the New World. He also visited St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland, and many other towns. In New Orleans he gave four lectures and a most successful mission: so large were the congregations, that he had to address them in the open air from the steps of the Cathedral. Everywhere he was received with enthusiasm. The people of the New World appreciated him to the full, and he himself said he could never speak elsewhere as in America. "In Columbia I am a free man, and will speak my soul."

But his greatest achievement was yet to come. Mr. Froude had arrived in America to give the lectures embodied in his work: *The English in Ireland*. He had come, as he said, to appeal to an American jury for a verdict in justification of England's occupation of Ireland, and of her administration of the affairs of that country. Had he been successful or unopposed, the result would have been to sow dissension between Anglo- and Irish-Americans. Yet to refute him was no easy task, and there was nobody in the country equal

to it. Mr. Froude had a brilliant reputation: he was bold, plausible, and a consummate master of English style. Moreover he came with his lectures already composed, having had both leisure and resources for their preparation. Father Burke, who was asked to undertake the reply, had little time for preparation and only such books as were lent him, and was, moreover, sadly out of health. "I have no books here," he said, "and no time to get up the subject." A friend gave him the run of a well-stocked library, and for some days Father Burke devoted himself to this unexpected task, and then felt ready for the fray.

The issue must be briefly told. Public opinion was excited, and the result of the controversy watched with interest by all. In five lectures Father Burke ably and courteously refuted Froude, and vindicated Ireland's claim to the sympathy of all lovers of freedom. The lectures were delivered in the Academy of Music, New York, in the month of November, 1872, to audiences of five thousand people. And now the ovations with which Father Burke was everywhere received, reached the ears of the Vicar-General of the Dominicans, Father Sanvito,¹ and he, fearing for the humility of his subject, bade him return to Ireland. During his stay of eighteen months in America, besides performing his duty as "visitor," Father Burke had given four hundred lectures, exclusive of sermons, the proceeds of which amounted to nearly £80,000, and were devoted to relieve churches and convents from debt, and to endow charities and hospitals. He loved America and felt at home with its people. "If ever a voice," he said, "shall tell me to return into your midst, it will fall most welcome upon my ears. I recognize the greatness of a priest's mission in this land—to work with such men as surround me here. How joyfully would I lend myself and my labours to the building up in this land of a glorious future for Catholic Irishmen!"

¹ Father Jandel died in 1872, while Father Burke was in America. Father Burke held him in great veneration and undertook to preach at a *Requiem* sung for him at New Orleans, but was too ill to do so.

On the 7th March, 1873, Father Burke reached Ireland, and was received with enthusiasm. The people knew and valued his work on their behalf in America, and hailed him with gratitude. The town officials, clergy, and chief inhabitants of Queenstown went to receive him, and as he stepped ashore a tremendous cheer arose, which was followed by an address. Father Burke was quite overcome, and, having knelt to receive the blessing of Dr. Russell, O.P., rose to reply. "I suppose," he said, "I am expected to say something." Here his voice faltered and tears rolled down his cheeks. After a few moments of silence he resumed: "I can't say anything: don't ask me—for God's sake, don't ask me! I am in the presence of Him at whose altar I serve. I have reached the land I have been longing for. I can say no more." Thus closed his American career—a time of triumph indeed, but of hard, incessant work, and he returned much broken in health, to face ten more years of toil and pain.

We may pause here to take a closer view of Father Burke's inner life and character, which deserve a careful study. We are attempting a difficult task, for his inner life was so many-sided that few knew him fully, and "his deeper thoughts he gave to heaven."

The world may speak of Father Burke as a good theologian, an eloquent preacher, a brilliant conversationalist, a wonderful mimic; but those who knew him best and cherish his memory with affection, love to remember him as a saintly priest and a true religious. Herein lay the secret of his success and vast influence for good; by this he was protected from any harm arising from the praise which men so lavishly bestowed upon him: and this is the side of his character that has been much kept out of sight. He put before himself a high ideal of his vocation, and daily strove to live up to it. Never did he preach more beautifully than at clothings of novices or when treating of the religious life and state. "How careful must be the training of the Levites," he said, "whose feet are to tread in the sanctuary and whose hands are to touch the Lord. The priest must be the Church's champion and defender,

her true knight, her faithful and loving spouse. No man is so consecrated to his fellow-men as the priest, because he comes to them with a consecration from God. There is no man upon whom the people can rely as they can upon the priest; for, no matter what pestilence may hover in the midst of them, every man may fly, the priest alone, must not, dare not, cannot fly, because he is sold to God and to his neighbour. His life is a God-like life: his profession is an angelic profession."

"I never saw him," writes Bishop Brownlow, "out of his religious habit, and to me he was always the Dominican friar first of all. His wit, his varied information, his marvellous powers as a linguist, his exquisite taste and tact, his intense delight in music and poetry, all these seemed to me to be in him perfectly subordinated to his character as a priest and a monk." Speaking of Tallaght, which grew under his hand, Father Burke said: "What I have been quietly aiming at all along is to make this convent a *place of holiness and learning*, for prayer is the most necessary of all things for a priest." His whole life portrayed the truth of the saying, "We must practise before we preach." "All the preaching that ever yet was spoken," he said, "never convinced a single man, never converted a single soul, never made one Christian, unless the man who spoke was a living illustrator of the word." His exact observance of the strict rule of his Order was most marked and constant. No matter how fatigued he was always present at early matins, and lazy rising he considered the cause of half the tepidity in the world. He never omitted his morning meditation, and used to say that, if faithful to this, we should enjoy all other duties and pleasures twice as much. In a word, "we may take him as a model of what a religious ought to be—humble, obedient, patient, forbearing, kind, and a lover of his rule."

Perhaps the most striking of Father Burke's virtues was his deep humility, with its never-failing companion, simplicity. It was the virtue he loved most, and especially strove to instil into his novices. Knowing that it was exposed to great danger, he ever kept its necessity before his mind, sought eagerly for opportunities of

practising it, and indeed devoted his whole life to its attainment. He keenly realized that if he built on his fame and the passing praises of the hour, his spiritual fabric would crumble to ruin. Of his great sermons he spoke as "mere thunder and turf," and, though as a rule they were badly reported in the papers, he never troubled to revise or correct them. His humility it was that chiefly impressed those with whom he came in contact. "Though praised on all sides," writes one, "I never saw a more completely humble man. In no one could a contempt of this world and its honours have been more deeply rooted." He would read over his sermons to his novices and say, "Will that do?" On his way to the pulpit he would request a few "Hail Marys," that "he might not make a fool of himself." He had the greatest dislike of hearing his sermons praised. A nun once ventured to do so, and he gravely replied, "Are you not afraid to tell me that?" and to another who expressed pleasure at one of his discourses he said, "The devil told me that three times already." "Be as humble as a door-mat and as pliable as porridge," was his advice to one about to enter the religious state. His last act at night was to kneel at the Prior's knee to obtain his blessing. His religious brethren, who knew him best, testify to his complete self-abnegation, and say the one thing that could bring a cloud to his face was to single him out in any way for distinction.

Father Burke's obedience, too, was most remarkable. In one of his retreats he said, "The truly obedient religious can say at Judgement: 'Lord, the sins committed before profession, by it have been effaced, and since, acting under obedience, I am not responsible for my actions,' and Christ will close the book and say, 'Thou art right; for thee there is no judgement.'" His spirit of mortification is shown in part by his careful observance of the rule of his Order, though other instances are not wanting. Often he would preach for over an hour in Dublin, and then return to Tallaght without any refreshment, that he might observe the fast of the Order. He was very fond of smoking, and to smoke would have eased the agonizing pain he suffered towards

the end of his life; but for five years before his death he never allowed himself even this indulgence.

It need hardly be said that to our Blessed Lady and the Rosary he had a special devotion. Three "Hail Marys" formed the immediate preparation for his sermons, and never did he preach more touchingly than on Mary's dignity and prerogatives. There was a ring in his voice, a pathos in his tone, when he spoke of "the holy Mother of God," which made all feel that she was indeed his mother and he her devoted client. We cannot refrain from quoting the beautiful climax to one of his sermons on the Immaculate Conception:¹ "O Mother mine; O Mother of the Church of God; O Mother of all nations; O Mother who kept the faith in Ireland, that through temptation and suffering never lost her love for thee—I hail thee! As thou art in heaven to-night, clothed with the sun of Divine justice, with the moon reflecting all earthly virtues beneath thy feet, upon thy head a crown of twelve stars, God's brightest gift, I hail thee, O Mother!" And speaking of the Rosary, he said, "I could sleep without the least fear on the crater of Vesuvius, if I had our Lady's rosary in my hands." His beads were never from his side by day; he wore them round his neck at night, and it was a common saying among his novices, "There goes Father Burke with his stick and his rosary!" His last words before he died were, "Help of Christians, pray for us!"

To the crucifix also he had a tender devotion. There was at Tallaght a very beautiful Spanish crucifix. Father Burke, shortly before his death, showed it to a friend, saying, "When my pain is very bad I crawl down here and stand before it, and look at it, and say to myself, 'What are my sufferings compared with His?'" It was from this source and from his great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, before which he would remain for hours in prayer, that he drew his wonderful patience under suffering. Often at recreation with his novices, while narrating some amusing

¹ See *Sermons and Lectures*, p. 285.

story, he was seized with violent pain, and from the expression of his face one would imagine a sword were piercing his body; yet no word of complaint was heard and when he recovered a little he would say, "Oh, thanks be to Thee, my God!" and then make some quaint remark that made every one laugh.

No truer portrait, however, of Father Burke can be given than he himself has furnished in speaking of Cardinal Cullen. "Amidst all the high duties and praises that surrounded him, the man of God still remained the gentle, meek, humble ecclesiastic. Learning in him, vast though it was, awoke no spirit of intellectual pride; honours aroused no complacency or ambition; injuries stirred up no anger or revenge. Devoted still to constant prayer, fasting, and mortifying his senses, he not only retained the purity of his soul, the simplicity and truthfulness of his spirit, the manliness and honesty of his character; but continued to grow daily in the love of God, in death to self, in humility, gentleness, and meekness. Labour and toil he cheerfully accepted; honours and dignities he as carefully put away from him."

Father Burke had a great love for children and seemed perfectly at home with them. Often he was found amusing them and sharing their play: "I am always happy," he said, "when I am with a little child." The poor, too, had a great attraction for him, and he considered the soundest piety was to be found amongst them. In accepting invitations to preach he always gave preference to the poorer parishes, and has been known to preach for a poor mountain-parish when a neighbouring prelate vainly wished for him in his cathedral. He dearly loved holy poverty, and said his mission was for the poor.

As a director of souls he was somewhat strict, but his confessional was always crowded. He had a special influence over men, and decided vocations with an insight well-nigh prophetic. He was at once *en rapport* with his penitents. He buoyed them up with his own buoyancy of heart, turned their thoughts away from themselves, filled the diffident with confidence, introduced thoughts of heaven and aspirations after God in

so genial and natural a way that virtue became attractive to those who had before shrunk from it, and religion seemed full of cheerfulness and joy when spoken of by one who was himself so cheery and joyous.

It was, however, by his retreats that he specially drew souls to God and left lasting impressions for good. The object of a retreat is thus beautifully stated by him: "You have come here to hear what you are, what your destinies are, what are the designs of the God who made you, and by what means you are to fulfil the grand purpose for which you have been created. You have come to resolve, with the blessing of God, to rise in thought, in hope, in desire, in aye, and in the very practice of life, to all that God intends you to be."

We are indebted to Bishop Brownlow for this account of one of Father Burke's retreats:—"My recollections of Father Burke," he writes, "date from October, 1864, when he gave a retreat of ten days to the students of the English College, Rome. I have got the notes of that retreat now. It was admirable in arrangement, solid in its matter, clear and precise in its theology—every point resting on a definition of St. Thomas—full of happy and telling quotations from Holy Scripture, with every now and then a burst of tender piety or an appeal to every noble and generous sentiment in the young clerics whom he was addressing. Sometimes, if he saw us looking drowsy in the afternoons, he would cheer us up, and rivet our attention by some anecdote or graphic sketch of incidents that might happen to us in our future priestly life. Some thought his ideal of the life of a priest too highly pitched, but it was what he had set before himself, and he could hold up no lower model to those whom he directed." Indeed, the only thing he really valued was a beautiful soul, and by no process are souls so truly or so quickly adorned with virtue as by a retreat. Here, then, was his opportunity, and he used it to the full.

By letters Father Burke exercised but little influence, for he was a bad correspondent, never wrote long letters, and seldom wrote any. We could wish he had written more, and it is strange that a man of such

power and zeal for souls should have thus neglected a means of doing good which holy men and women have at all times abundantly employed.

In stature Father Burke was tall and slim. His thick, black hair surmounted a dark, sun-stained face, with features eloquent of strength and power:

“ Lines of thought upon his cheek
Did deep design and counsel speak.
His look composed and steady eye
Bespoke a matchless constancy.”

He possessed a joyous, pure, and noble spirit, simple, unaffected, and sincere. In manner he was winning, frank, and genial, with a flow of pleasant conversation that was wise and witty by turns. The more he was known the better was he loved. He was always cheerful, and could not endure melancholy faces. “There is no law,” he said, “that the pious should be dull. We can be Sankeymonious without being Moody.” Nothing could put him out of temper, and his indescribable *bonhomie* enabled him to parry thrusts most good-naturedly and effectively. Once on a journey he had as fellow-passengers a Methodist minister and his wife. The former began laboriously to prove that St. Patrick was a Protestant. Father Burke heard him out patiently, and then said: “Well, well, to think I never heard of that before! But tell me, was St. Patrick ever known to travel with his wife?” His method of conveying rebukes, too, was sweetened by his kindness of heart. He once met a man in a train who frequently produced a bottle from his pocket and drank freely from it. It was clear he would shortly become a disagreeable companion, and so the next time the bottle appeared, Father Burke said: “Your mother must have died very early, sir.” The man looked at him with astonishment, and he continued, “for it is plain you were brought up by the bottle.” Every one in the carriage laughed heartily, and the bottle was seen no more. At the end of the journey the man thanked Father Burke, saying he had never before reached his destination sober.

Father Burke's fund of anecdotes, his repartees, and power of mimicry were remarkable, but in all there was nothing that could offend against charity, and in an instant he could be serious and turn his attention to important work. He knew well that “all things have their season”; that “there is a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance” (Eccl. iii. 4). But his thoughts seemed all absorbed by love for his fellow-creatures; and these outbursts of mirth were only one means employed for this end.

His mother had a place all to herself in his heart. “My mother, the old convent in Galway, and the first dawnings of my vocation,” he said, “are built up in my soul together: the first ‘my mother,’ the most intimate and endearing of all.” On his return from America, he said: “I am going to Galway to see the best of mothers.” We have seen how carefully she trained him as a child, how gladly she gave him to God; and when he was at the height of his fame she daily said her Rosary that he might not be injured by success, but ever retain his humility. “Never mind them, Nicholas, my son,” she would exclaim, as laudatory passages about him were read to her from the paper, “they would say the same of any blackguard that came round.”

Hand in hand with love of home and parents went his love for his country. He was proud of Ireland, and knew her history and sorrows intimately: “The master passion of my heart, after the love I have for God and my religion, is my love for Ireland,” and among his finest lectures are those descriptive of her national music and poetry.¹ At the end of his famous panegyric of St. Patrick, after telling how Ireland had clung bravely to the faith through ages of bitter persecution,

¹ “The History of Ireland as told in her ruins”; “The Supernatural Life, the absorbing life of the Irish people”; “The National Music of Ireland”; “The Exiles of Erin”; “The Irish People in relation to Catholicity”—these, with the lectures in refutation of Froude, are given in the volume of *Sermons and Lectures*.

he thus speaks: "This glorious testimony to God and to His Christ is thine, O holy and venerable land of my birth and of my love! O glory of earth and heaven, to-day thy great Apostle looks down upon thee from his high seat of bliss, and his heart rejoices; to-day the angels of God rejoice over thee, for the light of sanctity which still beams upon thee; to-day thy troops of virgin and martyr saints speak thy praises in the high courts of heaven. And I, O mother, far away from thy green bosom, hail thee from afar—as the prophet of old beholding the fair plains of the promised land—and proclaim this day that there is no land so fair, no spot on earth to be compared to thee, no island rising out of the wave so beautiful as thou; that neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars of heaven, shine down upon anything so lovely as thee, O Erin!"¹

Before treating of Father Burke as a preacher, some minor points may be briefly noticed. By nature he was highly gifted. He had a very retentive memory, and was able to recite the entire Psalter by heart, rarely using his Breviary for the offices *de communi* or of the dead. He possessed also a great gift for languages. Dominican Fathers of the Minerva at Rome tell how he would recount the "Arabian Nights" in felicitous Latin to them during recreation. "I puzzled them with two Italian versions of 'the House that Jack built,'" he once said. He was intensely musical, and had a resonant, sympathetic, mellow voice, which he managed so well that not a word was lost in the largest building. For years he sang the Passion on Good Friday most beautifully, and said it would not seem like Good Friday unless he did so. He had also a turn for poetry, though he wrote but little, confining himself mainly to translating the Church's hymns.² He was a man of wide reading, and his strong memory enabled

¹ Delivered in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, March 17, 1872 (*Sermons and Lectures*, p. 33).

² None of these have been printed, and, beyond the volume of *Sermons and Lectures* and the sermon on St. Ignatius, his only published work is his grateful preface to Père Monsabré's *True and False Devotion* (Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son). These two great preachers met at Ghent and became close friends.

him to use fully the stores of information thus acquired. His favourite secular writers were Dickens and Shakespeare. He seemed to know the latter's best plays by heart, and would delight his brethren in religion by not merely repeating but acting them. In preparing his sermons his chief helps were the works of St. Thomas, Father Segneri, and Cardinal Newman, for the last of whom he had a great love and reverence, though they never met. He was also very fond of the works of Father Faber. "What a charm there is," he said, "in everything Father Faber writes!"

In treating of Father Burke as a preacher, we must rely on the testimony of others, for it was never our privilege to hear him. His preaching was the full flow of an apostolic soul, having *persuasiveness* as its chief feature. One felt gradually drawn to adopt the preacher's views, as the only ones compatible with truth and good sense. He went straight to a fixed end, and all the road was a track of light. No one could excel him in his power of winning the assent of the conscience and convincing the judgement. Except for his early efforts, he never used a manuscript in preparing a sermon, nor spent many minutes in considering how he would treat his subject. Given a few leading thoughts, all else seemed clear. His immediate preparation was to go to confession, when possible, "simply," as he said, "to keep himself straight"; and so numerous were his discourses and so great the calls upon his time that often he preached with hardly a moment's preparation. "On what would you wish me to preach?" he once said, just before ascending the pulpit. "On perseverance," was the reply, and at once he complied with the request. He preferred the altar-steps to the pulpit, as giving him more freedom. In speaking, he never seemed in a hurry, nor imagined that his audience could be so. Gracefully he rolled forth his sentences, then paused, and leisurely resumed his discourse, which needed this composure to do justice to its nobility of conception and expression. His hearers seemed to *feel* the refreshing power of the stream of thought that rose to his lips from the deep reservoirs.

of his heart and mind. He touched nothing that he did not adorn. "I listened to his words," writes Miss Rosa Mulholland, "as to a new revelation of beauty and holiness. Colour and vividness were given to half-hidden truths; dusty old facts were clothed with extraordinary splendour; the meanings and purposes of religion took a rich roundness of contour and filled the mind; while the selfish motives and teachings of the world withered into obscurity and ignominy. People came away with Christ's kingdom shining in their hearts, and feeling as if a rare and beautiful picture had been studied, or a rich and original poem had been read, of which the theme was old and familiar, but the imagery, the colour, the music and vigour were new." His tone of reverence in speaking of sacred things, the compassion with which he yearned to help the needy, the fond entreaty with which he strove to win back the erring, the authority with which he pronounced and explained the Church's doctrines, all were remarkable. Every gesture was dramatic, and not only the tongue and lips spoke, but the eyes and limbs also, so that one said, "If I were deaf, I would still go to his sermons." His beautiful voice was a great aid, while its charm gained a unique quality from the musical brogue of his mother-tongue.

Cardinal Manning, who said that Father Burke had the grandest talent a man can possess, namely, that of "popularizing theology," has left this testimony to his preaching. Writing after Father Burke's death, he says: "And now we shall no more hear that eloquent voice—eloquent, because so simple, for in all he spoke for God. He remembered God and forgot himself. It was the eloquence not of study or self-manifestation, but of a great soul filled with God and speaking for God. The whole man spoke, and yet in the pathos and beauty and light of what he spoke we never remembered the speaker. He concealed himself, as it were, and therefore moved and swayed the hearts of those who heard him."

But to resume our narrative. The last ten years of Father Burke's life were years of unremitting toil,

of constant pain, of frequent preaching, but were marked by no striking incident. In 1873, after his return from America, he preached often in Dublin and in Cork, also at the dedication of Armagh Cathedral, and at the opening of St. Dominic's, Newcastle-on-Tyne. It was proposed to make him Coadjutor Archbishop of Trinidad, but again he escaped the dignity. Though suffering acutely from an aggravated form of hernia, he worked unceasingly; his list of engagements showed one at least for every day, fully ten months in advance.

In July, 1875, he wrote during a short rest in Galway: "I have been ailing much since January, but manage to preach the Lent in Dublin, though always in pain, and staying in bed almost every day till evening. After Easter I gave a retreat in Cork, preaching three sermons a day, and that finished me. I came down to Galway in April, and after a month of great suffering, finding myself no better, went to Dublin, and was attended by the three first physicians of the city. They found me suffering from internal ulceration and inflammation of the mucous membrane, but had hopes of my recovery. Long and perfect rest, with proper food and medicine, will, they say, bring me through the present crisis. I feel myself that, with God's help, I shall recover." But his progress was slight, if any, and in January, 1876, he wrote from Tallaght: "I am, they tell me, getting better: I don't feel it, but suppose it is all right. The life here suits me: quiet, silence, Gregorian chant *ad libitum*, and reading. Of course prayer comes in under each head. I preach here on festivals to a delightful congregation of rustics. It does not injure me a bit." His superiors, alarmed at his state, urged him to pay a short visit to Rome. He accordingly went, but though he revived somewhat on the way, was for some weeks unable to see the many friends who called upon him. "Father Mulooly," he said, "is trying to keep me alive, but in three months I shall be under the sod." He soon returned to Ireland, and his answer to an invitation to preach shows how little his health had improved. "If I am able, I will preach for your poor children,

but I must be much stronger than I am now. I am afraid to undertake anything, as it is a day up and a day down with me at present." His doctor said to him: "Three years will be the extent of your life. Do all the good you can in that time." His respites from pain were few. Once he said: "I have been three days without pain. I don't know myself or feel right without it. I think I must pray for a little." At Christmas of this year (1876) he preached a course of sermons in Dublin, and the degree of Doctor of Divinity was sent to him from Rome. In 1877, in spite of continued bad health, he preached often in Dublin, also at Kircubbin, Belfast, Achonry, Glasgow, Cork, Clonliffe, Drogheda, and Kilbeggan, besides giving some retreats. He also preached at the consecration of Dr. McCabe as Assistant-Bishop of Dublin. "I was in such agony the whole time," he said, "that I could have thrown myself from the pulpit. I felt as though I stood upon a bucket, and that the Angel of Death was about to kick it aside"; and then he added, in his happiest vein: "That reminds me of a tiny preacher who always stood on something of the kind to enable his flock to see him. He was giving his text, 'In a little time you shall see Me, and in a little time you shall not see Me,' when lo! the bottom fell out, and the preacher was lost to sight."

Dr. Moriarty, Bishop of Kerry, and a great friend of Father Burke, died in the November of this year, and Father Burke preached his funeral oration at Killarney, and finished the year's work by delivering the Advent sermons in St. Saviour's, Dublin.

Again, in 1878, he was busy preaching in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Newry, Youghal, Bray, Fermoy, Drogheda, Kingscourt, and Waterford, besides two discourses on Pope Pius the Ninth, who died that year. There was prospect of his being raised to the episcopate of Galway, and priests and people alike were anxious to have him as their bishop, but he begged off, saying: "If, as a friar, I am not able to discharge my duties, how much more unfit would I be to perform those of a bishop?"

In 1879, he seemed for a time to take a fresh lease

of life, but was suddenly stricken down by his disease, and for three months confined to his room. To a friend who visited him, he said: "I do not remember to have spent a happier time." An operation was performed and showed him to be suffering from a long sinuous ulcer. A rest at Kingstown gave him strength for a journey to Galway, to assist his aged mother on her deathbed. But his pain continued with great severity. "Are you suffering now?" one asked him. "Yes, indeed," was the reply, "it is my constant companion." Still he wished to die in harness, and went to Cork to give a retreat. He gave many retreats about this time, but did not preach so often in public.

In July, 1880, Father Burke preached his famous sermon, "St. Ignatius and the Jesuits," at Farm Street, London. "With great pleasure I will preach," he wrote in answering the invitation, "to do so will gratify an unsatisfied desire of my heart." The Jesuit Fathers declared that this sermon threw fresh light on the history and work of their founder, and wisely urged its publication.¹

So busy had Father Burke been in helping others, that the church at Tallaght had been neglected. But, in 1882, the General of the Dominicans ordered him to replace "the old outhouse and barn" by a proper building, and he at once took steps in this direction. In March of this year he wrote: "I am up to my eyes in business connected with the new church and in great and constant pain, so that I have to spend more than half my time in bed." Somehow but little advance was made, and in May he again wrote: "Very badly does it progress; I fear that, sick as I am, I must go to America again." However, on October the 1st, the corner-stone of the new church was laid, and Father Burke preached on the occasion. Though suffering "in every nerve and fibre except his eyebrows," as he

¹ *St. Ignatius and the Jesuits*, a Sermon preached in the Church of the Jesuit Fathers, Farm Street, London, on the 31st of July, 1880, by Father Thomas Burke, O.P. (London, Burns and Oates).

said, he preached at the enthronement of Cardinal McCabe, also a panegyric on St. Paul of the Cross, and sermons at Dundrum, Lanark, Glasgow, Swords, Salford, and Liverpool.

We now come to the last year of his life (1883). He was again Prior of Tallaght, and in February was to have preached in Dublin on behalf of its new church, but was too ill to do so. In April, after preaching and lecturing in Liverpool, he went for a short time to Rome, but returned to Tallaght in May.

The new Dominican church at Haverstock Hill, London, was to be opened on May 31st, and Father Burke had promised to preach on the occasion. He determined to do so, though warned it might cost him his life. "I will go even if I die on the way," he said: "my Fathers in England will know then that I had at least the will to help them." Five times during the week of the opening did he occupy the pulpit, rising from his bed each time to do so. His life seemed to hang by a thread. "I have felt ill for years," he said, "but never as I do now. I don't think I shall get over this. Well, perhaps it is natural that as I began my priestly life in England, I should also end it there." To one of the Fathers who pointed out the great number of panes in one of the windows, he replied: "I tell you there are not nearly as many panes in that window as in my poor body." On the Sunday in the octave of the opening he preached twice, in the morning on the conversion of sinners, in the evening on the Blessed Sacrament. "Say a 'Hail Mary' that I may succeed," he said to one of the Fathers, "I have not a word prepared." And after the sermon, he added: "I felt quite proud that I could put two sentences together without breaking down. It is just as if a red-hot knife were twisting about in my side." Yet never had he preached more beautifully. "I fear you are very ill," a friend said to him. "I am always ill," he replied, "but like a sick cat, I can still mew."

Indeed his disease was among the most agonizing known to medical men. "I do not know," his doctor said, "how he can endure it. But when you tell me

that he goes about preaching, I am more than astonished—it is a miracle."

"Yet all the time I was with him," writes Father Proctor, O.P., "I never heard him complain once. When seized with the pains, his features became pinched, and his whole frame convulsed, but the only word that escaped his lips was the ejaculation, 'My Jesus, mercy.' He was much disturbed because I would not let him say his office. One day he appealed to the doctor and asked to be allowed to say it: and he prevailed, the doctor allowing him 'to say a little at a time.' When the doctor had gone, the patient laughed at me in triumph and said: 'Ah, you old Saxon, you thought you would get your own way as your countrymen have done for so many centuries, but I *did* you. Give me my breviary, please, and don't argue against me again in that sneaky way.' He was too ill to joke much, but when for a moment free from pain, would tell me a comic story. One day he sat up in bed and began to sing, and then said: 'Well, that is a sign I am better; I was never so quiet in my life as I have been during these days. See if I don't give a *séance* in honour of my nurse before I leave for Ireland, positively the last appearance of Father Burke.'"

He was glad to get back to Tallaght in June, for he loved Ireland and wished to die there. The new church was not progressing, and he felt this keenly. "Not a farthing is coming in," he writes; "as I feel a little better, I intend to make some effort to get money for the building." But only once was he able to leave his bed after arriving home. A touching appeal to preach on behalf of 5,000 starving children of Donegal had been made to him, and he longed to comply, but was so weak and racked with pain, that he felt the task an impossible one. Three times the pen fell from his hand as he was about to decline; he bethought himself of the starving little ones of the poor of Jesus Christ, while a voice kept saying to him, "What is one life compared to that of five thousand?"

Accordingly he undertook the sermon. Brother Joseph, his constant companion, went with him from

Tallaght to Dublin, and feared he would die on the way. On arriving at St. Francis Xavier's, Gardiner Street, Father Burke said to the porter: "This will be my last sermon. Let me into this room and be sure you send no one to me." His state of agony was manifest to all as he mounted the steps of the pulpit. He took for his text the multiplication of the loaves and fishes; as he began to speak, a thrill passed through all present, and the fascination of his tongue was felt once more. "One short week," he said, "then Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday pass by, on Thursday the graves open and these little ones must perish, unless aid be given."

"Who that was present," writes Judge O'Hagan, "can forget that closing scene, when, with bent and broken form and faltering footstep, Father Burke ascended the pulpit to plead the cause of the starving children? Never in the brightest days of his career were his words more tender and impressive. But every feature told of the approaching end. He had gathered together what remains of life and fire were left within him, to do this last act of charity and pity."

On the way home the carriage had to be stopped three times owing to the severity of his pain. He kept on ejaculating. "Jesus, have mercy on me!" Then he said, "Say the Rosary, and I will answer as well as I can."

Fresh physicians were called in, but to no avail, and death could not now be far distant. For Father Burke it had no terrors. "Thank God," he said, "I have lost all physical fear of death. I feel the weight of my sins and infirmities more than ever, and have, if possible, a greater fear of the judgement of God, but all dread of death itself has gone. Oh, won't the exchange be beautiful, won't it be lovely when the end comes!" Some time before he had said: "The fervent soul is rejoiced at the approach of death. She fears God, but loves Him still more. We should always live in the presence of death: we should frequently offer our lives to God in expiation for our sins, accepting death in spirit as to its time, place, and

manner. As good religious, our life should be a daily death. Oh, may we die a death of perfect conformity to our vows! May we die in Thee, O Jesus, and in Thee, perfectly poor, being stripped of all things; chaste, by the pain and mortification of every member of Thy sacred Body; and above all may we die a death of obedience like Thee, who wast 'obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.'"

For some days, Father Burke lingered on in great agony. "On Sunday, July 1st, the morning before his death, he received for the last time the sacraments of the Holy Church. It was most touching to hear the aspirations of love and faith, which he uttered as the ciborium was uncovered. In accents that betokened his lively faith, he would every moment say, 'O my Lord and my God!' 'O my dear Lord!' And then turning to the Father Sub-Prior and his devoted children, who knelt around the bedside of their dying Father, he asked, in words of deep humility, their pardon, as well as that of all the members of the Order, and of all whom he might have offended. "During the day, a faint hope comforted us that the danger might pass away, but as the shades of evening began to fall, we learned that the end was fast drawing near. His agony increased with every stroke of the clock, his expressions of faith, hope, and charity growing stronger in proportion as his heart grew weak. About three o'clock in the morning of Monday, July 2nd, rapid knocks sounded on the doors of our cells, and a brother entering exclaimed—'To the Prior's cell!' All was over; our Father had gone to join the angelic choir. The consciousness of his eternal happiness calmed our sorrow. Yet the scene was penetratingly sad, for there lay the remains of one whom we loved as a father."

Such, in the beautiful words of a Dominican Father, was the death of Father Burke on Monday, July 2, 1883, in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

For two days the body lay in state and was visited by thousands. The funeral, though honoured by a great concourse of bishops, priests, and laity, was

conducted with the simplicity that Father Burke loved so much. The completion of the church at Tallaght was rightly deemed the most fitting monument to his memory, and among the first subscribers were the children of Donegal, for whom, when starving, Father Burke had so nobly pleaded.

May the life and virtues of this holy son of St. Dominic, his humility, his spirit of penance, his zeal for souls, be reproduced in the priests of all lands! May the lessons he so eloquently and so constantly taught be manifest in the lives of all children of the Church; and may this brief sketch have its humble share in making him better known and more truly loved!

LIVES OF SAINTS

TWOPENCE EACH

- B 265 St. Aloysius.** By Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J.
 „ **289 St. Andrew the Apostle.** By Cecil Kerr.
 „ **10 St. Thomas Aquinas.**
 „ **246 St. Anthony of Padua.** By Rev. D. Devas, O.F.M.
 „ **17 St. Benedict.** By Abbot Snow, O.S.B.
 „ **36 St. Catherine of Siena.**
 „ **253 St. Cecilia. Virgin and Martyr.** By Rev. S. A. Parker, O.S.B.
 „ **39 St. Charles Borromeo.** By M. S. B. Malins.
 „ **209 St. Clare.** By Mrs. R. Balfour.
 „ **51 St. Dominic.**
 „ **264 St. Dunstan.** By Rev. J. M. Routledge.
 „ **61 St. Elizabeth of Hungary.** By Mrs. John Dillon.
 „ **69 St. Francis of Assisi.** By Rev. F. Oswald, O.S.F.C.
 „ **247 St. Francis de Sales.**
 „ **71 St. Francis Xavier.**
 „ **74 St. George.** By Rev. J. W. Reeks.
 „ **220 St. Gerard Majella.** By F. M. Capes.
 „ **78 St. Gregory the Great.** By Rev. A. J. Saxton.
 „ **82 St. Helen.** By M. E. James.
 „ **91 St. Ignatius Loyola.** By Rev. F. Goldie, S.J.
 „ **48 St. Jean B. M. Vianney (Curé of Ars).** By Lady Herbert.
 „ **239 St. John Berchmans.** By Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J.
 „ **208 St. John Eudes.** By Rev. Allan Ross.
 „ **93 St. Joan of Arc.** By J. B. Milburn.
 „ **112 St. Margaret Mary.**
 „ **252 St. Mary Magdalen Postel.**
 „ **210 St. Monica.**
 „ **136 St. Patrick.** By Mgr. Arthur Ryan.
 „ **33 St. Peter Canisius, S.J.** By Rev. T. Crompton, S.J.
 „ **138 St. Philip Benizi.** By Lady Amabel Kerr.
 „ **139 St. Philip Neri.** By Rev. Allan Ross.
 „ **291 St. Sebastian.** By Very Rev. Father Procter, O.P.
 „ **266 St. Stanislaus Kostka.** By Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J.
 „ **267 Saints of the Mass.**
 „ **155 St. Teresa.**
 „ **204 St. Teresa of Lisieux ("The Little Flower").** By Rev. Allan Ross.