

FATHER BURKE.

HIS PREACHING IN TUAM.

Presentation of an Address.

(From the Tuam News, July 18.)

The Spiritual Retreat of the clergy of the diocese of Tuam and Achonry closed on Saturday morning (July 12), at the Cathedral, with a solemn Te Deum, the assembled priests having previously received, at the hands of his Grace the Archbishop, the Holy Communion. On Sunday, the 13th, after the celebration of 12 o'clock Mass, the Very Rev. Thomas N. Burke, O. P., having knelt to receive blessing of his Grace, ascended the pulpit and preaching a magnificent sermon on the gospel of the day to the most numerous and fashionable congregation for a long time seen within the Cathedral walls. The clergy of the college, the town, and the country around were present, and in the transepts might be observed visitors from Galway, Athenry, Loughrea, Ballinrobe, Headford, Dunmore and many other towns of more than one county attracted by the fame of the great Dominican Preacher. Indeed, the south transept was thronged almost to inconvenience; many had to seek accommodation within the rails of the sanctuary, for, without, room could hardly be provided to seat even the number of ladies, who were not the least anxious to see and hear Father Burke.

To attempt to convey in a mere bare report any adequate idea of the eloquence of Father Tom Burke would be futile. One must be present: one must not only hear but see the preacher, as clothed in the picturesque robes of his Order, his fine figure drawn to its full height, his mobile features radiant with the light of truth, his voice full of the spirit of earnestness and the sense of power, he bursts into a torrent of oratory, charming at the same time that he convinces, but never sacrificing strength of argument to rhetorical ornamentation, and gracing with all gesture attractive at once by its appropriateness and its startling peculiarity.

THE SERMON.

In the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. The Gospel of the sixth Sunday after Pentecost. Mark viii., 1-9.

"At that time when there was a great multitude with Jesus, and had nothing to eat, calling his disciples together, He said to them: 'I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have been with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I shall send them away fasting to their homes, they will faint on the way; for some of them came from afar off.' And His disciples answered Him: 'From whence can anyone fill them here with bread in the wilderness?' And He asked them: 'How many loaves have ye?' Who said: Seven. And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, He broke and gave to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the people. And they had a few fishes; and He blessed them and commanded them to be set before the people. And they did eat and were filled; and they took up that which was left of the fragments—seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand; and He sent them away.'

Dear-beloved Brethren,—It is not without a deep meaning that our Holy Mother, the Church, puts such passages before us for contemplation, as those in the Gospel which I have just read for you. She has two objects in view. The first of which is to make all her children love the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts and all their souls, with all their mind and all their strength; the second is to teach all her children their wants, their necessities and their duty. For both the Gospel answers most admirably. God commands us from the beginning to love Him: 'Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.' And then I fairly ask with the blind man in the Gospel: 'Where art thou, O Lord, that I may love thee? And Jesus said to him, 'It is He who talketh with thee. I am He.' And the blind man said, 'I believe, Lord,' and falling down he adored Him. So does God command all to love Him—to love Him better than anything in the world—to love Him with an intense love—to love Him better than themselves—better than their passions—to love Him above and before all things in heaven or on earth. We say then, Where art thou, O Lord, that I may love thee? Art Thou away in Heaven, in that inaccessible height where Thou hast every sufficient happiness and glory? Ah, my brethren, when God invited us to love Him He did not propose to us a difficult task. He made it easy—very easy. He sent His own only Son, that Son equal to Himself, consubstantial with the Father, and clothed Him with the body of man, gave to him a human soul, and gave Him leave to bring all, by love, back to God. And thus the Son of God became the most lovable, the gentlest, the kindest, the tenderest, and the most loving of souls. He came to take away sin. Purity was not only around Him: it was in Him: it was radiant from Him. And coming thus to save, perhaps we might expect severity. We might expect that He would come with a scourge—with the holy indignation of justice on His lips and flashing from His eye. Not He came to make us love Him. Because fear alone would never save unless united with that glorious reverential feeling, which is the offspring of love to God. And so He took the gentlest heart, overflowing with the most loving—the most lovable love.

Thus it is in the Gospel of to-day. He led the people out into the desert. They flocked as to-day around Him, to hear Him. He spoke of the fame of divine love for them. He taught them about God. And they were so delighted that they remained three days and three nights without food. They were so charmed with the divine eloquence, and so won by the divine wisdom, that they never thought of eating or drinking—never felt hungry or thirsty—never thought that they had eaten or drank for three days. They were out in the desert place—four thousand of them—a surging multitude, far away from any village or house. There they were; and amongst them there was nothing that they might eat but seven small loaves, which a boy had in a basket. But God having fed their souls—"not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that falleth from the mouth of God"—He said to His disciples: "My soul grieveth with them, I will not send them home fasting, lest they faint by the way." Oh! the tender, gentle, loving, compassionate heart of our Lord! "I will not send them away, for my soul feels for them!" And He asks His disciples is there any bread amongst them? And they reply that there are only the seven loaves which the boy has in a basket. But taking those seven loaves, which would not of themselves be sufficient for seven little children. He lifted up his hands to heaven, and giving glory and praise to His Father, and inviting His Father to co-operate with Him, He distributed the bread amongst the multitude, and every man partook of the bread that was touched by the hands of the Virgin's Son, and the four thousand were fed by the seven small loaves. Oh! glory and praise and thanks for ever to Thee, great and good God!

But why may I ask did He say, "I have compassion upon them?" Why? Could He not have worked His miracle without saying this? What reason was there for speaking of the compassion which He felt for them? There was this. Christ wanted to let us know how tender, how gentle, how loving, how lovable was that heart of His which He had taken—how He sympathized with man

whose form He had adopted, a soul like to whose He had taken. How deeply He felt that sympathy of man for man, which is not in heaven, because there is no hunger there; there is no misery there; there is no thirst there; there is no pain there; all is happiness and joy unalloyed. Christ then says, "I have compassion for the multitude; I feel for them lest they should faint in the way;" just as when He raised Lazarus from the dead, He had the miracle in His mind long before. And when He came to the house where Lazarus lay dead, Mary came forth, and bursting into tears, fell at his feet, and cried aloud, "O Lord, if Thou hast been here, my brother had not died." And Jesus, casting his beautiful eyes upon the woman at His feet, shed tears; and the tears fell upon the loosened hair of Mary—the tears of a God upon the head of a poor woman! This, all this, was necessary that we might know Him—know His gentleness and His lovingness—and knowing Him that we ourselves might love Him, for it is impossible to make this contemplation of Him without loving.

Before leaving this part of the Gospel and its contemplation, I will ask you now to reflect on the fact that this is the gentle heart—the same gentle heart of Jesus which is tormented with agony every time any man amongst you commits a sin against purity—commits an impure act, uses an impure word—every time one of you blasphemes—every time one of you gets drunk—every time he is disrespectful and outrageously disobedient to his parents—every time he neglects the duty he is under of communicating at Easter—in fine, every time one commits a mortal sin. Every time, every time, he really, though mystically, puts a lance through the most gentle, loving, and adorable heart of Jesus, and draws forth the blood of that heart which bled for him on Calvary. Oh! ye thoughtless men! This is what you do each time for odious, execrable sin. Think that you cannot commit it without once again making a mockery of Jesus Christ! Does He merit such treatment at the hands of mortal man? He came down upon earth to teach us to love Him; and for this we have—He has afforded us—not only the argument of Faith—the divine argument—that He spared not Himself, but also the human argument—that if it were man only that had done all these things for us, it would be hard—would it not?—to refuse our love to Him. It was this that the Son of God came down to teach us to do; but He also came to teach us our wants, our necessities, and our duty; and this is the second object.

What is told in the Gospel of to-day is not merely an historical fact. That miraculous multiplication of bread certainly came to pass. It was accomplished. The people were fed. There was an end of it. Oh! but there was more than the bare fact. The miracle had a hidden, a sacred meaning. It meant that God had come down to earth to feed His people till the end of time; that He came to give them food; that He came to break bread for them, to enable them to make their way home without fainting under the weight of sorrow or temptation. What is that bread, then, that He came to break, not to 4,000, but to the whole human race? What bread has the Son of God come to break, and to say to His disciples about which, "Break this bread to them, lest they faint by the way?" You and I have a right to it at their hands. That bread is the bread which He took into His hands on the day of the Last Supper. On the evening of that memorable day our Lord took plain, unleavened bread—bread such as one might ordinarily use—real, true bread, and wanting to show you how dearly He loved you, He said: "Take this bread; amen; I say to you; he that eateth this bread shall have life in him forever;" and He commanded them to communicate, and said, "This is my body," the body which was to be broken upon Calvary; and that moment the bread became the Living Body of Jesus Christ in the hands of our Lord, and His disciples partook of it. All of Divinity, all of Power, all of Greatness, was there concealed under the form of a little common bread. It was not alone His own human self that was there;—that was there, indeed—He was man there—the Virgin's true child—that human soul, so capable of sorrow, even unto death—all man was there, but all God was there also—all honor, all strength, all that was to wipe away the sins of the world; Divinity, Power, Greatness, Grace—everything that moment lies under the appearance of a morsel of white bread, truly changed in substance into the Body and Blood of the Lord.—Christ then said to His disciples: "You have heard My words; go you now, and what you have seen Me do, do you also for all the world: go unto all the nations; the people are fainting on the way; they are fainting, they are dropping down into hell; go out and teach, and when you have baptized them, then remember this, your other power: Amen, Amen, I say unto you, unless they eat of this Bread they shall not have life in them."

This is the Bread, this is the banquet which is offered to us in the Eucharist every day. Oh, Sacred Bread! Oh, Sacred Banquet! in which all that was done in the Incarnation, and all that He suffered in His Passion, all is renewed; for where our Lord Jesus Christ is, when hidden in the recess of the tabernacle, as He was hidden during His life on earth for thirty years, there is God. Adorable Bread! Adorable Body! Mystic Separation! For as the Body and the Blood of our Lord were divided on Calvary, so are they divided on our altars. There, under His feet, lay the pool of His Heart's Blood;—there, under His hands and feet, lay the pools of Blood which had dropped from those wounds, and apart, lay another pool of Blood sprinkled from His thorn-crowned head. That blood, instinct with an immortal life, and that mystic separation are renewed again on the Calvary of the Tabernacle. And the burial takes place in the soul. The heart of the Christian is the tomb; "for know you not," as St. Paul says, "that your bodies are the hidden temples of the Living God?" Everything is as real as it was in the Garden of Gethsemani.

And why did our Lord and Saviour do all this for us? Because He loved us, and He knew that we could not live without it. God could not help doing what He did. Oh, the marvellous greatness of that act!—when we consider that every Catholic priest has that power, and exercises that power, of bringing a God down from heaven every day upon our altars! At that supreme moment, every angel rushes down with Him, who would leave the society of angels and of saints, and all the joys and beauties and glory of heaven, to be shut up in a prison—in a tabernacle, small, close, confined, where He is so frequently contemplated—nay, so often treated with the last indignity, and the horrors of Gethsemani renewed to Him by an unworthy communicant!

When we consider this, we are compelled to ask ourselves, why has He done all this? It is more than we would do for another; for which of us would seek insults, and suffer injuries, and shut himself up in a dungeon for his friend? Yet God has done infinitely more. And why? Because He could not help Himself, because He is God, and being God, He must love as God—infinity. The greatest proof of this infinite love of God is, that He came down from heaven to earth to save you,—that He disguised Himself, because if He had not done so the sight of Him would kill you, for only a beautiful soul and body can see God and live—one being only—one blessed being alone has been accorded that privilege, and that one is the Blessed Virgin. She is body and soul in Heaven with her dear Child of Bethlehem and Nazareth, and whom she saw on Calvary, unable to help Him. The sight of God would destroy us; therefore it is that He shrouds Himself and He takes the form of bread, in order to teach us that as bread is necessary for the support of our mortal life, so His Body is necessary for the support of our spiritual and supernatural life.

Jesus Christ could not then help Himself. "Oh," said He to His Apostles, "what shall become of them?" Why this? "They will faint, and death will come upon them in the way. But I will feed them." And how? He then looked upon them with the eyes of God, not with the eyes of man. He saw all races of man before Him. He saw you, He saw me, as we are here to-day; we were amongst that countless multitude that passed before the eyes of God in the desert; and it was to us He said, "I will pity on them. Give me bread, that I may bless it; that I may send them home." What is that home? The Kingdom of Heaven. What is life? The way home. But in order to reach that home we must eat from His hand that precious bread. He alone who eats can reach home, and the man who is indifferent and the man who folds his arms and says, "I will not eat; I will look for other food;" that man faints on the way, and the first demon that meets him—be it the demon of drunkenness, or be it the demon of pride—whatever demon of iniquity meets him—flings him flat to the ground with a touch. "Ye, it is the blessed and holy Bread of the Lord. Without Me you can do nothing. Unless you eat of My flesh and drink of My blood, you shall not have life in you. He is in Me and I am in him who eats. We will stand together, live together. I am God, and the strongest of all."

Now, answer me, or rather let each one answer himself and God this question. Is there a man here who has not been at his Easter duty? Is there a man here indifferent to the God who has done so much for him? Is there a man here who prefers the life of a drunkard, the life of a spendthrift, the life of a fornicator, to the life which God has ordered him to live, which God wishes him to live, and which he knows himself is the only fit, proper, and happy one for him. If there be, let him just reflect for a moment—let him think of the goodness, the gentleness, the love of God—let him act like a man, and go and give up his sins and insane follies. If there be one here who is guilty, all I can say to him is—Do you believe in death? Do you believe that that awful hour shall come for me and for you? Do you believe that the time shall come when the trumpet of the Angel shall call forth that dreaded summons: "Arise, you dead, and come to judgment." You do. Do you believe that then you must go to heaven for eternity, or to hell with the damned for ever? You do. Do you believe that unless you go to Communion, at least at the time prescribed, you shall not have life in you, and that of those who frequent that Communion Christ Himself said: "I will raise them up on the last day?" And so enabling us to obtain forgiveness, and by forgiveness to make satisfaction, and so to test our love for God—enabling us to conquer our weak fallen nature, this Communion enables us to conquer; in life not only shielding us, but "raising us up on the last day." For what enabled the Blessed Virgin to endure her great, unapproachable sorrows? "Oh!" says the Prophet, "to what shall I liken thee, for great as the ocean is thy sorrow." She ought to have died; she ought to have sunk under her sorrows. She stood at the foot of the Cross. She bled as no mother ever loved; who knew her child as no mother ever knew her offspring; who lived in His smiles, and knew Him from His cradle to His grave; who knew Him to be her God at the same time that He was her child. And she was able to look up at Him as He hung suspended on the Cross. She heard the nails driven into His tender hands and feet (she was not able to see Him then, for the burly figures of the soldiers who knelt upon His body as they nailed Him, hid Him from her view); she heard their blasphemy as they proceeded with their cruel, horrid work; she saw Him slowly, slowly raised upon the Cross before the jeering multitude; she saw Him stretched out on the Cross in the fullness of His agony—the sweat of death upon His face—His eyes on Mary. She stood all this; she did not die. Oh, mothers! oh, Christians! how did she bear it? It was because she had Him still. It was only when He went up to heaven that her heart broke, and she followed Him!

So if you are with Him here on earth, He will be with you. He will sweeten all the bitterness of your life. He will smooth all its difficulties. That which is bitter to-day will be sweet to-morrow. He will bestow upon you the patrimony of life. And when on your lips is death and when that strong, terrible and inevitable agony of dissolution shall arrive, He will announce to you peace; He will bring to you fortitude, and strength, and courage; He, the great God of justice, will announce to you then comforting things: He will come and enter into your hearts, breathe with your last breath, and He will whisper to you—"We were together in life; why should we be separated in death? and I am He whom you will meet in judgment." Oh! my brethren, do not fling away from yourselves these blessings, the only happiness here or hereafter: do not stand hungry, and fainting from hunger, when the banquet is spread before you, and you are pressing invited to partake of it. You may live for a good while, but you will die at last; as you live so shall you die. United with God in life, you shall not dread falling into His hands at the hour of death. May the blessing of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, descend upon you and dwell in your hearts for ever. Amen.

Benediction of the most Holy Sacrament, his Grace officiating, with Rev. Fathers Heany and Kilkenny as Deacon and Sub-deacon, and the Very Rev. U. J. Bourke, as Master of Ceremonies, concluded the solemnities.

THE CONFEDERATION OF KILKENNY.

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE POPE'S NUNCIO.

Readers of Irish history are familiar with the name of Riteucini, the Papal Nuncio, who played so remarkable and important a part in the period lying between the years 1645 and 1649. Of his character, his policy, and his acts, much has said in every work relating to the events of that time. In modern treatises on the subject it may be noticed that references more or less copious are made to a narrative of his labors in Ireland written by the Nuncio himself. On that authentic source of information the Rev. C. P. Meehan has drawn largely in his excellent "History of the Confederation of Kilkenny"—the fullest and most reliable narrative of those events hitherto published in the English language. But the issue of a translation of the "Nunziatura" has long been desired by men who wished to see all the available materials of Irish history collected and popularized in this country, for the better information of all inquirers into the past life of the Irish nation, and for the use of future writers who may arise gifted with the great powers requisite for giving full and effective treatment to that tale of complicated troubles and chequered fortunes. One of those who entertained that desire in reference to this peculiar work was the lamented Thomas Davis; and we believe that to his suggestion, carried into effect by a friend who was very dear to him, we owe the volume which is now before us. Thus, even at this distance of time from his death, we find ourselves indebted for a new acquisition to Irish literature that large-hearted and sagacious patriot, whose too early loss Ireland has never ceased to mourn.—It was to no incompetent hand he suggested the performance of the work; the translation has been admirably accomplished; its style is clear, easy and graceful, and possesses almost the softness and brightness of the Italian.

The work consists mainly of a large number of letters written by the Nuncio to Rome during his stay in Ireland, and of a report on the condition of the country, addressed by him, after his return from Ireland, to the Holy Father, Pope Innocent the Tenth, by whom he had been sent on the embassy. These documents, in every page, are vividly inter-

esting. They bring before us in a remarkably realistic manner the chief actors in the scenes described, and throw much light on the complicated issues, the confused councils, the ever-varying combinations, and the extraordinary events of the period. The strength and the weakness of the national movement, the causes of the early successes and the ultimate failure of the great war for "God and the King," are rendered clearly apparent. In those documents will be found abundant corroboration of the verdict always passed by native writers on the course of that gallant struggle for Catholic and national interests—that the faint degree of regard for both entertained by the Anglo-Irish Catholics, and their peculiar susceptibility to merely selfish considerations, proved the ruin of Ireland. The English blood of these men told in its own way in that time of trial. That profound disinclination to sacrifice material possessions for spiritual considerations or political principles which marked the conduct of all classes of Englishmen at the period of the Reformation, and indeed throughout the whole course of their history, existed, only in a somewhat modified form, in the breast of those Anglo-Irishmen.—They took up arms, indeed, for their faith, when it was laid under grievous persecution, and placed in peril of absolute extirpation; but a little concession was enough to cool their ardor and gather them into a party distinct from and unfriendly to the more resolute, chivalrous, and devoted native Irish. This tendency of the English nature, and also the deep-seated antagonism of that race to the Irish, under every variety of circumstances, was well understood even at Rome in those days; and we find in the paper of secret instructions given to the Nuncio before he left Italy for Ireland, a paragraph which supplies a very clear evidence of the fact.—After having advised him as to the interviews which he was to have with the Queen of England, then staying at the French Court, the writer says:—

"He must be on his guard against many English Catholics at the Court, whose zeal for the faith is not ardent enough to bear with pleasure of the victories gained in its cause by the Irish; on account of the natural and undying hatred which exists between the two nations; the English always desiring to keep the Irish under their yoke, on account of their being useful in carrying out the decrees and strengthening the authority of the Government." These words were written, as we have said, previous to the departure of the Nuncio from Italy. Here is what he said of the two parties, in the very first page of his Report to Pope Innocent, after three years of observing and experience among them:—

"The Catholics of Ireland have, from time immemorial, been divided into two adverse factions. One under the name of the Old Irish, although dispersed over all the four provinces of the kingdom, are yet more numerous in that of Ulster. The other faction may be called the New English, who came over with the Protestant heresy. The discord between those factions may be attributed to the following causes; the old party averse to heresy are also averse to the dominion of England, and refused to accept the ecclesiastical property offered to them when the King of England apostatised from the Church. The modern Irish, on the contrary, enriched with the monastic possessions, and bound to the King no less by obligation than interest, desire nothing better than the increase of the royal prerogative, acknowledge no laws save that of that Kingdom, are completely English in their prejudices, and, in consequence of their connexion with the heretics, less jealous of the difference of religion."

Later on in the same report, he says:—

"I have done no other good but delayed in some degree for three years the miserable peace, and increased the desire for Divine worship but if your Eminence will allow me to speak only, I believe I have done much to unveil the real inclinations of the English party who rule here, so that for the future people may not be so ready to celebrate their purity and their sincerity towards his Holiness and the Court of Rome. In truth, they have neither reverence nor affection for the Church of Rome, and hold almost the same opinions as Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth."

Again, in a letter to Father Joseph Arcamoni, the Nuncio, having set forth the reasons which induced him to declare a sentence of excommunication against the pro-English party in the Confederation, says:—

"Perhaps it is well that the factions and the Anglo-Irish of this kingdom have shown their perverse inclinations at the present time, as the Holy See may take into consideration whether any further aid given to them by it may not serve to increase of heresy and the overthrow of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and on the other hand, whether it would not be advisable to bestow it on the other party, the old Irish, who never in the memory of anyone have deserted the Catholic faith, or come to any terms with the heretics."

Similar testimonials appear in various parts of the work, from the whole tenor of which, and from all other evidences of the actual facts of the case, it is clear that the Anglo-Irish party at this period, as at other times in our history, were the weakness and the ruin of Ireland. There is a well-known saying, invented by one of themselves, that they became "more Irish than the Irish themselves," but the saying is not a true one; they became only half Irishmen, and never took up the native feeling of thorough and hearty enmity to English domination in Ireland. The quarrels of some of the most eminent among them with the English Government had usually no larger motive than their own aggrandisement; and many of the worst scandals charged upon Ireland and the Irish people, in ancient and modern times, have been entirely their work.

Of those two parties the Confederate Generals Owen Roe O'Neil and Thomas Preston were representative men. The Celtic chieftain stood up bravely from first to last for "faith and fatherland," the Anglo-Irishman, though for a time in arms on the same side, dreaded lest it might become entirely successful, hampered the operation of his more competent military rival, thereby contributing to the failure of the struggle, and ultimately turned his sword against the cause he had undertaken to maintain. The character of O'Neil, though at first not fully or fairly appreciated by the Nuncio, won subsequently his highest regard, and it stands out brilliantly in his reports. The two generals as every reader of Irish history knows, were directed by the council of the Confederation to co-operate in an attack on Dublin, and it is also known how the attempt ended.—The following passage from the Nuncio's Report shows that the danger of uniting the Anglo-Irishman with the native chief in that enterprise was early appreciated by some members of the Assembly:—

"To the generals were assigned two different roads by which they were to meet together in the neighborhood of Dublin, and each was to recover by himself the places in the possession of the Protestants. Hence, O'Neil, beginning in the Queen's County, took Maryborough, and all the places round up to the village or country of Leixlip. But Preston, passing by Gorey, having boasted to me that he would take Carlow in a few hours, quite unexpectedly and without consulting the council, signed a truce and left that behind him. Everyone who heard of this act complained loudly, inasmuch as it was clear enough indication that he was playing double and was in accord with the adversary; so when his actions were minutely observed after he had thrown out continual sneers against O'Neil, and had made an open declaration that he would not fight against the Marquis (Ormonde), it became sufficiently clear what were the designs he entertained. These two chiefs, so different in their aims, so opposite in their management of affairs, were still more different in their nature. The O'Neil, a

man of few words, cautious and phlegmatic in his operations, a great adept in concealing his feelings; the other very subject to fits of anger, in which he was so rash and outpoken that he often had to retract with apologies what he said—so hasty in his wild enterprise, that he was sometimes called inconsiderate. And if O'Neil was held to be the initiator of Fabius, so may Preston be compared to Marcellus. Already the council saw the effects of having sent this second general, on the enterprise, and regretted too late of their resolution; they met, therefore, one night in the deepest secrecy, and debated whether, in a case of such decided delinquency of duty, it did not appear necessary to imprison Preston. The votes were divided.

So without going more deeply into a matter, in many respects so momentous, the council dissolved. But there were not wanting many who prophesied with sighs that a slaughter of the Confederates was more probable than the taking of Dublin."

In a letter dated August 29th, 1647, and addressed to Cardinal Panzirollo, the Nuncio says that he has at last discovered the precise designs of Preston if his army had been victorious. "He intended to wrest from the hands of O'Neil and the Ulster people all the places in Leinster and Connaught recovered last year by that General, and under pretext of enforcing obedience, weaken him to such an extent that he should no longer be a cause of fear to him. To this all Muskerry's movements tended, and to this also the difficulties thrown in O'Neil's way by the Connaught Commissioners, who hoped by doing out the provisions in small quantities to fetter him and prevent his moving." This sort of "foul play" is shown to have been largely practised throughout the whole course of the war, and it had very much to do with the failure of the Confederate cause. To it is to be attributed the successful progress made by the English commanders in various parts of the country at times when the utmost resistance to them might have been offered. O'Neil's great victory, the glorious battle of Benburb, is joyfully described by the Nuncio, who gives free expression to the high hopes which it excited in his heart. In one place he says:—

"O'Neil, at the head of his army, which consisted of 5,000 infantry and eight troops of horse, advanced to meet the Scotch at the Castle of Benburb, upon the borders of the county of Armagh. The enemy, far more powerful than he, had resolved to make a descent upon Leinster, and to open a way thither by force. There were nine regiments of infantry and fifteen companies of horse under the command of Robert Monroe, a Scotchman, who boasted that he would not only fall upon but conquer the then disunited Catholics. O'Neil delivered a grave exhortation to his soldiers and the whole army, after receiving the Sacrament, rushed to battle, in which, after a doubtful conflict of five hours' duration, they obtained a complete victory. The Scotch retreated, but being followed and surprised in the mountain passes were killed to the number of 5,000. Monroe fled in disguise; sixty officers remained prisoners, and, besides, O'Neil seized all the baggage, six field pieces, forty ensigns, and the principal standard of the cavalry, and, what was of more importance than all the rest, the enemy were so weakened that never during my time were they able to raise their heads in that province. I should expatiate upon the thanksgivings returned for the aid and benedictions of your Holiness, were it not that at the time a full account of the victory was written, and that at this day the visible proofs of our success are to be seen in the Roman Basilicas."

In another account of the battle the Nuncio writes:—

"The first preparations on the part of the Catholics deserve notice. The whole army confessed, and Owen O'Neil with the other Generals piously partook of the Holy Sacrament; the testimonials of their confession were given by the hands of O'Neil to one of the generals of the Observations deputed by the Nuncio to the spiritual care of the army, who, after a short exhortation, pronounced the apostolic benediction, and, instantly calling on the name of his Holiness, they rushed to the conflict."

"The Scotch cannon opened the battle; but after many rounds, only one Catholic soldier was killed. Hand-to-hand they fought for four hours, with such valor that it was impossible to know which side had the advantage, although the Catholics, besides being fewer in number, had the disadvantage of the sun and wind in their faces; this last, however, as if by a miracle, began to fall soon after the commencement of the battle. At length the general, perceiving that the Scotch were about to retire, and assuring his troops that retreat must be fatal to the enemy, gave the order to charge, promising them certain victory. 'I,' he exclaimed, 'aided by God and the good augury of the benediction which we have just received, will go before you all; and let the man who refuses to follow me remember that here he deserted his leader.' At these words a universal cheer rose from the army, and the colonels all dismounting, in order to cut off their return, the whole army rushed forward with incredible ferocity.

"The Catholic horse broke the opposing squadron, and having come to pikes and swords, the Puritans began to give way, disordered and confounded, so that at last they were dispersed or remained dead upon the field; even every common soldier upon our side being satiated with blood and plunder.—Those killed on the field have been counted to the number of 3,343."

It is impossible, he says, to know how many were killed in fight, but as the slaughter—by which he evidently means the pursuit—continued for two days after the battle, he thinks it certain that not one of the infantry escaped. Sir Phelim O'Neil, he says, when asked for a list of his prisoners, "swore that his regiment had not one, as he had ordered his men to kill them all without distinction." On this latter point we think it most likely the Nuncio was misled. Sir Phelim could certainly allege in defence of such order, if he ever gave it, that "no quarter" was the common rule of the English in their Irish wars; but such was not at all the spirit in which the Confederate Catholics fought their battles. A testimony to this fact occurs in the recently published "History of the Wars in Ireland," in which the writer, who had been a participator in these events, states that the opposing commanders in this very battle—Owen O'Neil and Robert Munroe—put a stop to all practices of murder on both sides, "gave fair quarters like soldiers, and halted those inhuman acts before done."

The celebration of the victory in the city of Limerick, on which occasion the thirty-two captured ensigns and the great cavalry standard were borne in procession, was assuredly to Irish eyes an inspiring sight. We read that "the trophies were brought in procession from the Church of St. Francis, where they had been deposited, preceded by all the militia of Limerick, armed with muskets; next came the ensign, borne by the nobles of the city. The Nuncio followed with the Archbishop of Cashel and the Bishops of Limerick, Clonfert, and Ardferd, and after them came the Supreme Council, with the prelates and magistratos in their robes of states. The people were collected in the streets and at the windows, and as soon as the trophy arrived at the Cathedral, the Te Deum was sung from the music of the Nuncio, who, after the customary prayers, gave a solemn benediction."

Limerick was fortunate in witnessing such another scene soon after, when ten more English standards, taken by the Irish at their capture of Bunratty, were similarly displayed through the streets of the city. These are more than once mentioned by the Nuncio. Writing to Cardinal Pamphili, he says: "The taking of Bunratty is of no small consideration to Munster and the city of Limerick. Ten standards have been taken from the English, and