

HUMOURS OF FATHER BURKE'S BOYHOOD.

FROM time immemorial the Sons of Erin's Isle have won for themselves an enviable place amongst the orators of the world. On the public platform, swaying the multitudes, inspiring them with lofty thoughts, and impelling them on to nobler deeds; and still oftener in the pulpit, fulfilling Christ's commands to His chosen few, has their eloquence earned deserved acclaim.

But if oratory is a distinguishing feature of Irish genius, not less so is wit. The two are generally found side by side in the Celt, and the prestige of the Irish as "a nation of orators" is largely due to that incomparably, fascinating humor which sparkles through their every thought, enlivening, brightening and beautifying. And among those great Irishmen whose reputation for eloquence and wit, is destined to live in the book of time, one of the greatest is Father Tom Burke.

So much might be written about the famous Dominican that the limits of this essay forbid my attempting to give an adequate sketch of his life and labors. Accordingly I have taken for my subject that portion which appeals most strongly to the youthful reader.

Father Burke was the only son of a good, Irish Catholic family of Galway. His parents were a pious, kind-hearted couple, and his father followed the business of baker. Father Tom's own witty way of expressing this was: "though my father's blood is red and not blue, he is, nevertheless, one of the best *bread* men in Galway."

In his youthful days, Nicholas, (Father Burke's Christian name) was very fond of playing all manners of tricks, and often on this account, brought upon himself forcible admonitions from his ever-watchful mother. Though inclined to be lively and full of mischief-making, those who knew him in his early days, assure us that his life was as pure and as free from all defilement as the sparkling waters of the rill, that leaps and bounds from the rugged mountain side.

A schoolmate says of him: "Though he got the name of