

A Martyred Lay-Brother.

For the Carmelite Review.

"Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it."
— *Malaspina.*

ON the Feast of the Annunciation, A.D. 1643, another lay-brother of our Order was consigned to the gallows. His name was Brother Peter of the Mother of God. I send a short account of his life. The sketch may interest your readers.

His death occurred in Dublin, of which he was a native. In 1643, He was first a servant to the Calced Carmelite missionaries. After a time, in consequence of his goodness, he became a lay-brother. The attempt made by the Catholic army to gain possession of Dublin, being unsuccessful, the fury of the bigoted inhabitants of the city burst forth in revenge and retaliation against the Catholic inhabitants thereof. The members of the Religious Orders, always objects of the hatred of the heretics, were now especially sought for, on suspicion of being concerned in the insurrection. Several were put in prison and others were put to death. During these events the Carmelites were driven from their convent, which was changed into a theatre. Many left the city, others remained to give what help they could to the Catholics. Brother Peter remained. He escaped his pursuers till March, when he was taken and cast into prison with many others. Here, owing to the tortures he underwent, he became ill. The Catholics were very anxious for his release, but this only accelerated his death. The heretics, thinking him to be some one of importance, adjudged him guilty of the awful crime of being a monk, and one who should be consequently exterminated. Brother Peter was condemned to be hanged and word was sent to him to that effect. He was to be executed on the 25th of March. The good monk, who was sick at the time, received the news with great joy, and congratulating the Mother of God on the great dignity to which he was to be raised on her feast, asked her intercession, and raising himself from his bed said, "From the cross, and not from the bed, I must go to heaven."

But presently he was overwhelmed and convulsed with the fear of death, as if the Almighty, who is the strength of the weak, withdrew His arm for an instant, thus to show his servant how indispensable is His

help to weak mortals in the hour of trial. Brother Peter, prostrate in the agony of his soul before God, confessed his utter helplessness, and implored the divine assistance. He did not pray in vain. His fellow captives besought him to return to bed, thinking the heretics might abandon his execution, at least for a time. Their advice was made use of by God for the perfecting of His work. The Almighty now poured an abundance of fortifying grace into the soul of His servant, and gave new and marvellous speech to his tongue. "Why, my friends, do you counsel me such a thing? Encourage me rather, weak and cowardly man as I am; urge me to the combat and pray to God for me that He may bring me forth victorious from the prison of this rebellious flesh. I must die for Jesus Christ; I must die now lest perhaps the delaying of death should imperil the victory. He will give the victory; He will anoint the soldier, and I, in the feebleness of my heart, will confess to His name, to whom victory is due." Having thus addressed them, they recited together the Rosary and Litany.

He now possessed tranquillity of soul, made frequent acts of virtue and made a voluntary oblation of his life to God. With cheerful countenance he met the band of satellites that came to conduct him to the scaffold. He was too weak to walk, and leaned on their arms for support to the place of execution. A Protestant minister accompanied him and interrupted him in prayers by telling him to invoke Christ, and not the Blessed Virgin, who, he said, hears not prayers. He besought him to abjure Popish superstitions, and thus open to himself a way of glory. "I have been reared in the Roman Catholic faith," he said, "which is the only true faith; in it I am resolved to die; cease your silly talk about the Mother of God. I agree with all Catholics and will ever differ from you and yours." The minister spun out a number of texts of scripture, after the usual fashion of heretics, only to be interrupted by Brother Peter, who told him he did not know what he was saying, but he believed he was counselling heresy.

The remaining portion of this martyr's life is so interesting, that I will leave it till your next issue, as I do not like to curtail it, as I should do, having taken up too much of your valuable space already.

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