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Contributors and Correspondents

[For the Presbyterians.]

HISTORY OF THOMAS AQUINAS.

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I would call the attention of students to this brief sketch of the life of one who triumphed over many difficulties, common to the lot of all who desire to rise in the world and carve a name high up on the temple walls of Fame.

His close application to study may be an incentive to many who trust more to the spur of the moment than to the patient labor of hours for success.

His disposition, which gave rise to the nickname of *dumb ox*, may encourage the slow of speech, and show the loquacious that it is not always the ready spoken who excel in understanding, for "a fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards."

On the other hand his carelessness about the constitution God had given him ought to be a warning to all not to trifle with the laws of health, so necessary for those of sedentary habits.

Students are so apt to forget everything but the work before them in their struggle for the mastery, that even before garlands of victory encircle their brows, disease has sapped the foundations of their constitutions and treacherously gnaws at their vitals. Thus many a sun in the morning of life, marking out its trackless path in a cloudless sky, has never reached the zenith of its glory,—but like a meteor's blaze has plunged into darkness never to rise again.

The house of Aquino, founded by a prince of Lombardy,—or as others say,—descended from the kings of Sicily and Aragon, has existed for more than ten centuries past. Landolph—the father of Thomas, as Count of Aquino and Lord of Loreto and Belesastro—was the nephew of the Emperor Frederic I., and therefore, the cousin of Henry VI. of Germany.

Theodora, his mother, was the daughter of the Count of Theate, and, belonging to the family of Caraccioli, was a descendant of the Tancredi of Hauteville who conquered Apulia and Sicily.

Thomas was born in the year 1224, at Rocca Sica, the castle of the family, situated near the city of Aquino in Campania, on the dividing line between the States of the Church and the Neapolitan territory. When he was only five years of age his father took him to the Abbey of Mount Cassino, which was then one of the usual places where the children of the Italian nobles were educated, and there he soon gave indications of great talents, as well as of that seriousness and abstraction of mind which characterized him in after life.

He remained there until he was ten years of age, when the Abbot sent word to his father that he was so far proficient in his studies as to be able to enter the University of Naples.

Before he went there, however, he came home for a few months, where he was a general favourite; for his even temper, modest manner, and pleasant disposition won the hearts of all with whom he associated.

His conversational powers, at the same time, were quite inferior to the majority of those around him, so much so that he spoke but little, and when called upon to express an opinion, did so in as concise and pointed a manner as possible.

The most of his time at home was employed in study, or in serious and profitable exercises, and his most delightful recreation was in giving alms to the deserving poor. He oftentimes denied himself of his own food for this purpose, and sought by many ingenious contrivances to relieve their miserable condition in such a way that they would not be offended at the gift, nor discover the giver.

It was not long before his father found out his secret deeds of charity, and, with a philanthropy well worthy of imitation, gave him liberty to take from the household supplies whatever he saw was necessary for the wants of those around him.

This license so benevolently given, he made good use of during his short but happy stay at Rocca Sica, for "he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he," so that when he left there were many to invoke heaven's blessings on his head as a friend and benefactor of the poor.

As his visit was drawing to a close, fears began to trouble the mind of Theodora concerning her gifted son, and, actuated by a true mother's love, she trembled as she thought of his innocent character being exposed to all kinds of temptations at the University without the experience of three years or the counsel and advice of his father to guide him. How many fond mothers since her time have shared her fears in similar circumstances, and offered their prayers for the guidance and protection of loved ones no longer under their watchful care. She pleaded that his education be continued at home under a private tutor, where he would be safe from the cares of the world, and near those whose tender desires were for his highest good. Landolph, however, moulded of sterner stuff, having learned from observation and personal experience the great advantages accruing from mutual communion and even emulation in study, determined to send his youngest boy elsewhere.

To the University of Naples—which had been built by the Emperor Frederic II. in consequence of a quarrel with the city of Salerno in 1224—Thomas was accordingly sent, where a great number of students had gathered together because of an imperial

edict commanding them to come to this University, and forbidding their going to any other school of learning in Italy.

There,—as might have been expected,—with no religious influence cast around it, much licentiousness and immorality prevailed, causing Thomas oftentimes to sigh for the quiet retreats of Mount Cassino, so well suited to his studious habits and seclusive disposition.

He conducted himself, however, with the greatest propriety, and watched over his words and actions with the strictest vigilance and care. Only two of his teachers are recorded—Peter Martin, professor of rhetoric, and Peter of Hibernia, professor of philosophy; but these are sufficient to show us how privileged he was in being their pupil, for they were renowned men in their day for their learning and sagacity.

All this time the Order of the Dominicans was in a flourishing condition, both as regards its numbers and its influence. It had risen into notice about the beginning of this—the thirteenth century—by the teachings of Dominicus Guzman, a Spaniard of Calahorra, and a priest of Osma. He is one among those who have left their impress upon their own and succeeding times, and yet whose heads have been crowned with withered wreaths of poisoned Ivy, whose lives have caused great blot on the pages of history, and to whom the world owes no debt of gratitude, for he was the founder and advocate of that diabolical tribunal, the Inquisition.

The general characteristics of this Order are as follows:—

1st. It was a *preaching* Order. The great design of their preaching, together with the use of the confessional, military power, and inquisitorial cruelty, was to multiply their converts and bring the erring back to the fold.

2nd. It was a *mendicant* Order. True, at first they adopted the canons of Augustine, with some restrictions, but afterwards becoming monks and choosing those of the Franciscans, they enjoined upon their members life-long poverty and contempt for all worldly possessions.

3rd. It was a *literary* Order. Although it had considerable influence as a missionary body, yet its greatest power was in its academic chair.

Subsequently the order was called that of the Jacobins or Jacobites, because the University of Paris gave it the College of St. James, located at that place.

In England the Dominicans were called Black Friars, on account of the sombre habit they wore, and the place where they first congregated in London still retains that descriptive title.

By the time that Thomas Aquinas was sent to the University of Naples, the Dominicans had overspread Italy under the patronage of the Pope, Innocent IV., and their own peculiar missionary zeal, so that on his arrival there his curiosity was at once aroused to investigate their doctrines and discipline.

He had frequent and evidently secret interviews with John of St. Julian, one of their leading advocates, and also attended many of his public addresses, so that he at last determined to consecrate himself wholly to that Order. This resolution he communicated to the Dominican brethren, who, as might have been expected highly approved of the step he had taken, because it was and had always been their endeavour to attract to their ranks promising young men—who would advocate the rights of the Order, and seek to extend its powers and practices. One of his tutors, from wise motives, immediately sent word to the Count of Aquino, who spared neither threats nor promises to defeat his son's designs, but all to no purpose. When Theodora was informed of it she remembered her fears and prayers for his safety, and her anguish and sorrow of heart knew no bounds. She immediately went to Naples to dissuade him from joining the Order, but failed in even seeing her erring boy. He had heard of her coming, and begged his superiors to remove him to some quiet retreat, so that he might not be defeated in his plans nor disturbed in his meditations.

In accordance with his desire, they were on the alert, and were only too glad to prevent an interview which might deprive them of their youthful novice. They lost no time in removing him, first to Terracina, thence to Anagna, and then to their convent St. Sabina, in Rome, intending soon afterwards to take him to Paris so that he might be out of the reach of his relatives altogether.

From Naples the fond mother followed him to Rome, but arrived too late to see her wayward son, who was by this time on his way to Paris. These efforts of the Dominicans to prevent Thomas from seeing his mother so enraged her that—as her last resort—she despatched a messenger to her two sons, Landolph and Reynold, now commanders in the army of the Emperor in Tuscany, adjuring them to follow and intercept him if they valued the love and blessing of their mother.

They at once started in pursuit, burning with resentment against the kidnappers of their youngest brother, and surprised them near a small town called Aquapendente, in Etruria, south-east of Florence, as they were resting at a wayside spring after the heat and fatigue of their journey. What they did to the Dominicans who acted as the escort of Thomas is not known, but they immediately endeavoured to tear the hated woolen garment that characterized the Order from his back, as a thing too detestable to be worn. He resisted all their efforts, however, so that at last they had to convey him as he was to their home at Rocca Sica. On his arrival, his mother inquired the reasons that had led him to such strange and unfortunate conclusions, to which he replied that he was obeying a call from God.

This, nevertheless, was by no means satisfactory to her mind, for she argued that it could be no call which was directly

opposed to the wishes of his parents and dearest friends. But to all her arguments, entreaties, and tears, he continued to turn a deaf ear, determined to be a Dominican even though it severed by so doing every tie that bound him to loved ones on earth. Her patience at last gave way at what she deemed his stubbornness, and determined to effect her purpose, she ordered him to be confined to a room within the castle, where none were permitted to see him except his two sisters. Her sons in the meantime had returned to the army in Tuscany. At first his sisters entreated him with lavish kindness and sisterly affection to recant, and become again the light of their home and the darling of their hopes, but, waiving all other subjects, he reasoned with them about spiritual matters, till by degrees they began to lead better lives themselves, as we shall afterwards see.

The Dominicans enjoying the favour of the Pope, complained to him of the conduct of the family in thus forcibly taking away one of their converts, but nothing was done to restore the captive to liberty, or enable him openly to profess that form of religion he had espoused. He passed the weary hours of his confinement in contemplation and prayer, until his sisters, moved with compassion and better feelings, perhaps, than any that had hitherto concerned their vain and worldly minds, brought him a Bible, Aristotle's Logic, and a digest of Theology, called the "Master of the Sentences," written by Peter of Lombardy.

He then commenced a commentary on Aristotle's "Book of Fallacies," but was soon interrupted by the return of his two brothers from the Tuscan army, who were greatly concerned about their brother, and who found the whole family plunged in the deepest distress on his account.

They immediately took the matter into their own hands, and accustomed to deal out mercy with the sword, they determined to force their seemingly self-willed brother to recant. For this purpose they removed him to an apartment in the tower of the castle where he could be more completely in their power, and tore his Dominican habit into pieces before his eyes as they bitterly reproached him for his ingratitude. Finding that this method, together with their dreadful threats, had not produced the desired effect, they resorted to another, which shows how little affection, to say nothing of fraternal regard they had for him. They brought one of the most insinuating and beautiful prostitutes to be found in that part of the country, and left her with him to ruin his character for ever. No one knows how great the struggle must have been to gain near his good resolutions might have failed him in the hour of his need, but suddenly recollecting himself, he became enraged at her presence, and snatching a burning stick from the hearth, drove her out of the apartment, beating her unmercifully as she fled.

After his deliverance he thanked God with a heart overflowing with gratitude for His preserving care; and so much was his mind impressed by this act of special providence, that the following night he shouted while he dreamed of angels being around him, thus causing the keeper to rush in to ascertain his troubles. Joseph in Potiphar's house, and Thomas in his father's castle, are noble examples to show how the grace of God can triumph over the most sensual desires of man, and though the one left his outer cloak behind him as he fled, and the other had his habit torn to pieces before his eyes, yet in both cases they came out from their terrible temptations with their characters as unscathed as that of the babe still unborn.

Thomas endured his imprisonment for about two years without a murmuring complaint, or an effort to escape from his persecutors. At the end of that time, when a remonstrance came from the Pope and the Emperor, the greater part of his family began to relent, and felt that their cause was lost. Under this impression his mother—although she had been at first the chief agent in his imprisonment—finding that all her endeavors were of no avail, not only listened to the remonstrance, but seems to have connived for a plan for his escape, which his sisters had invented.

In this way she, no doubt, preferred to make the concession, rather than openly giving him up to the Dominicans, for that would wear the appearance of being defeated by them, after her long resistance. Her sons, however, still continued to persecute him with the same animosity that had characterized them from the beginning, and would as soon have seen him in his shroud as in that hateful garb worn by that Order.

The monks informed by some means of the proposed plan of escape, came to the castle in disguise on the night specified, and waited till the appointed time beneath the window of the tower through which their young disciple intended to make his escape. When the hour approached, his sisters lowered him in a basket—or, as others state he lowered himself—and, on reaching the ground he bade adieu to his home and loved ones, was received with open arms by the monks, and carried in triumph to Naples. This took place in the year 1244 when he was only about eighteen years of age. Next year he made an open confession of his faith, consecrating himself and all he possessed to his God, and looked upon that day as the happiest of his life.

After Thomas had left his home, and by his consecration had raised an insurmountable barrier to his return, the family still deplored his conduct, and anxious to win him back, renewed their petition to the Pope, who, desirous of dealing impartially between both parties, summoned them to appear before him at Rome for examination. This inquisition left matters where he found them, and as Thomas was still determined to be a Dominican, they left off troubling him, so that he was allowed from

that time forward to pursue his studies in peace.

Although removed from his home he was not forgotten. His words proved like barbed arrows, and his actions as evidences of right and truth.

The inmates of Rocca Sica no longer malignant and persecuted, they became sincere and penitent.

The eldest sister lived as a nun, and died Abbess of the monastery of St. Mary's, at Capua, whilst the other, Theodora, married the Count of Marsico, and lived and died a pious and sincere woman, as did their mother also. Some time after the two brothers became converts of the faith and left the army, but through some cause or other, the Emperor burnt the family seat at Aquino in 1260 and put the youngest Reynolds to death. The rest of the family saved themselves by a voluntary banishment, but were restored in 1268 to their former possessions and favor with the Emperor.

(To be Continued.)

NOTES FROM EDINBURGH.

A brief sketch of a few of the "grandest sights" on the continent, though portrayed in the *colour de Ross* scores of times by many from Russell or Bayard Taylor, to the ordinary newspaper penny-a-liner, may be of some interest to some of your out-of-the-way readers. Since tastes differ so widely, what shall be selected amid so much that is deeply interesting to everyone,—young or old?

The matchless scenery of the Swiss or Italian lakes, the world familiar Alps, or the artistic beauties of the architecture, sculpture, or painting! or again, the not less attractive matters relating to social life, politics, religion, etc., in each country! Italy alone would fill a never-to-be-read volume. Our party entered it by Genoa tunnel, seven hours and a half in stark darkness. There are a few lights at intervals in the tunnel, which shot pass like meteors, only rendering the darkness more hideous. An inventive *voyageur* strikes up a light, thus making the time appear not half so long or the place so well and dismal. The approach to the entrance, especially on the French side, abounds in startling grand and varied scenery. The long train hurls swiftly, threading its way amid rugged snow-capped peaks that pierce the clouds, near deep ravines, abysmal gorges, or across "yawning caverns." At times villages appear almost vertically below or above the train. In the first case, winter; in second, spring reigned just then. Perhaps a dozen shorter ones are passed before reaching the tunnel, the grandest success of modern engineering. One's sensations of wonder and delight, for many miles in the Alps region, are simply indescribable, only surpassed by the passage back over them.

Tunis is the first place of any size in Italy; it is a fine city, and has many objects of interest,—churches, castles, palaces, galleries, etc. Some of the last have over 600 pictures, mostly by the old masters. Some of their works are touchingly expressive, e.g., *Mary Magdalene*, by Rubens; *The Seven Sorrows of Mary*, by Giovanni; *The Holy Family*, by Vandyck; *The Entombment of Christ*, by Ferrari, etc. One is riveted to the spot in tearful ecstasy, as these speak as no orator can, to his eye, imagination, and heart, as well as to the aesthetic faculty. The "thoughts that breathe and words that burn" may fade and vanish, but the impressions of these and other great paintings (at Rome and Florence) are stereotyped in the innermost archives of the soul, never to be obliterated. The Alpine scenery overwhelms the spectator with wonder—these products of genius with *ecstasy*-spell-bound. A few days can be profitably spent seeing Genoa, with its harbor, fine bay, churches, immense house-like cemetery, built around a square of several acres, narrow streets, some only about six feet, and yet the houses very high; Columbus, and other monuments.

Pisa can be seen easily, as its leaning tower, ornate cathedral, baptistry, with its three-note echo, are quite close together. Here is seen a weird class of begging monks, draped in black, mask of the same color on their heads and faces, devil-like in their appearance generally, frightening children and ladies as they hold out their money-box, making signs without speaking, but glaring fiendishly all the while. By the way, a touch may again be given of the swarms of censurers, scold, flabby, lazy-looking priests and monks seen everywhere as well as in Italy. In another sense one can sing, with Colenso, "Nightly I pitch my tent a day's march nearer Rome." It would be like presenting a hungry man without the real pabulum to merely name the countless ancient and modern wonders of this second Babylon without describing them, which in the briefest manner fills a 400 page guide book. Any of the following objects would occupy the longest letter. The Catacombs, or cities of the dead, with its 2,000,000 tenants; the enormous marble baths of Titus, Caracalla, and Diocletian; the labyrinthine palace of the Caesars; the vast and diverse objects collected and being still dug out of the remains of Imperial Rome; the 400 churches, basilicas, forums, etc. Among these the Sistine of the Vatican, where on the ceiling is M. Angelo's masterpiece, *The Last Judgment*. Another contains his best execution in statuary,

Moses a breathing statue, a work, superb, celestial, worthy of the cloverest of the 680 gods of pagan Rome. Another has the *Holy Steps*, believed by the dupes, who still go upon their knees, kissing each step and mumbling a form of prayer, to be the steps up which Christ went to Pilate's bar. This is the place where Luther, when ascending, stopped, exclaiming *The Just shall live by Faith*, and broke off abruptly. A picture of Mary, etc., inside a glass case, rewards the faithful at the top. Then there are the Vatican aqueducts, Mamertine prison, St. Paul's own lined house, pantheon, the numerous picture galleries, all intensely attractive or curious.

From the world famed Naples you go to Pompeii. In addition to the fine bay and other lovely scenery, Naples is the most lively place on this side yet seen; the stir and crowd on the streets surpassing London or Glasgow, and rivaling Broadway, New York. Population, 600,000. In a museum here are articles of every kind in use 2000 years ago—collected in vast quantities. In Pompeii itself you walk around with a unique feeling as you see streets, houses, ruins of chariot wheels in the stone pavement, temples, market stalls, in a word, *everything* as it stood the day it was sealed up, nearly twenty centuries ago!

Having garnered souvenirs, as elsewhere, our party start, hence the ascent of Vesuvius. This is a pretty exciting trip, quite as much so as crossing over the Alps. The tourist can ride on donkeys from here five miles to the base; and then a mile or more up the slope; then walk or be carried on a sort of stretcher by the natives. The upper part of the mountain is covered with loose lava, like peas, which slip from under your feet like coarse sand, only "more so." It is very steep, so that the path goes see-saw like a worm fence. Guides will also pull you along, giving you a rope to hold in the hand.

As you ascend, the view behind, toward the bay, Naples, etc., is simply sublime. The lava pebbles begin to feel quite warm under foot. After several hours hard tugging, pulling, resting, and lastly, trembling, as you look furtively behind, the cone or crater is reached. The sulphurous fumes of smoke when the wind blows towards you, almost suffocate. You look down into the seething, hissing caldron, fitly considered by one of the old Pagans as one of the entrances to the infernal regions. Like many other places it soon gets "too hot" for one. You start down; this is the most adventurous part of all. You take a beeline, unless where a precipice deflects your way. One steps about ten feet each pace, then the lava slides ten more, so that twenty feet is gained each stride. When several persons follow each other, the lava rushes down like a stream bearing you headlong with it, if you choose to let yourself go. Once at the bottom the general conclusion is, "well that will do me for my life, I'll not want to go up again anyhow." I must bid adieu for the present to Florence, Venice, and the lakes.

EDINBURGH.

Rev. Dr. Wallace has astonished and shocked the Christian public by giving up his professorial chair and pulpit, and becoming editor of the *Scotsman*. This paper has ever sneered at everything evangelical or religious. The *New York Herald* is modest compared with it. It is said \$2000 a year was too clear a "call" to be discarded. The same thing is not unknown in Canada. A hitherto unknown Prof. Smith of Free Ch. College, Aberdeen, is getting a sort of cheap John notoriety *a la McLeod* et al by broaching heretical views, against the Pentateuch. The Assembly Commission which will meet to-morrow here, is expected to deal with him. There are many unsound in their views (ministers) defending him.

Edinburgh, Aug. 8th, 1876.

Thoughts on the Future State and Character.

God has given a revelation to us, in which He is made known as the Supreme Being; no God beside Him, and His character as being righteous. Heaven, the more immediate locality of his abode, and the permanent home of his loyal creatures, as being a place of righteousness. He made His creatures upright after His own image. Though unrighteousness—sin—a part of his creatures, fallen angels and man, lost this righteousness, the fallen angels are reserved by the righteous governor in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Of his free grace He has made provision for restoring righteousness to all of the other part (man), who will accept of it as his gift. He sent His only son to re-establish righteousness by living, acting righteously, and by making atonement for the unrighteousness of man by suffering its penalty in His own person, and by begetting a long-lingering and assimilation to His righteousness by His spirit shed forth through Him. There is a time allotted (the present) for accepting this righteousness. Death removes man from the scene where this righteousness is attainable, so far as the present revelation makes known—and there is no intention of another and a better. After death comes the winding up scene of the present revelation—the judgment, when those who have accepted of the righteousness of the Lord, our righteousness, shall be declared to have a justified life. Those who have not accepted of the righteousness provided, but have been developing in rebellion and unrighteousness, shall be swept from God's loyal universe, to a place of confinement and punishment. Now we do not think that confinement and punishment will change the character of earthly sinners. God, but rather intensify and perpetuate it. Surely now is the accepted time, and the time for securing foundation for the hope which makes not ashamed. Warwick, May 10th, 1876.