

FATHER BURKE

The Great Preacher once more in the Pulpit

HIS MOST BRILLIANT EFFORT.

He Describes Ireland as the Mary of Nations

The Darkness of the Penal Days—The Persecution and Expatriation of Priests and People—The Prophecy of the Sainted Martyr, St. Laurence O'Toole—The Resurrection of the People—Their Last Sorrows, and Their Future Joys.

The announcement that the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda was to celebrate High Mass, and that Father Burke was to preach after the Mass, brought together at the Cathedral, Marlborough-street, Dublin, on Sunday, 17th September, the greatest assemblage of people that has ever been seen within its walls. From as early as half-past nine people began to take their places in the church; by half-past eleven every entrance was blocked, and every portion of the church was packed with people, and even behind the altar and inside the sanctuary railings a dense mass of ladies and gentlemen had congregated, who gradually, towards the conclusion of Mass, pressed to the front at both sides. The pushing and struggling for places bordered on the indecorous, and the heat was most overpowering. The report of the magnificent sermon, which we give below, was taken under the greatest disadvantages both as to hearing and situation, and to that cause must be attributed any inaccuracies there may be in it. The High Mass was celebrated with the full beauty and gorgeousness of the ritual, the celebrant being His Eminence Cardinal Franchi, and Rev. Mr. O'Reilly as deacon and Rev. Mr. Donnelly as sub-deacon, while Rev. Mr. O'Neill was assistant priest, and Rev. Mr. M'Swigan master of ceremonies. His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Dublin sat enthroned on the epistle side of the altar, while in the sanctuary, in their robes, sat the Archbishops of Tuam and Cashel, and the Bishops of Ardagh, Waterford, Galway, Clonfert, and London (Toronto). The chapter of the diocese were also present as well as a great number of clergy.

After Mass the Very Rev. T. N. Burke, O.P., ascended the pulpit and preached from the Gospel of the day, Luke, vii. 11, 16—"At that time Jesus went into a city called Naim, and there went with Him His disciples and a great multitude. And when He came nigh to the city behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city were with her. And the Lord saw her; He had compassion on her, and said to her, Weep not; and He came near and touched the bier, and they that carried it stood still. And He said, Young man, I say to thee, arise; and he that was dead sat up and began to speak; and He delivered him unto his mother. And there came a fear on them all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is risen up amongst us, and God hath visited his people."

May it please your Eminences, my Lords and Brethren—When the Son of God, the eternal Word, was made Man, He took to Him a human heart, the most tender in its love that ever was in a human bosom, and that sacred heart of the Virgin's Son was never able to withstand the appeal of a woman's sorrow. From time to time a woman came before Him, sometimes in grief, as in this day's Gospel; sometimes in the deepest sorrow, lamenting not the child of her womb, but lamenting her own immortal soul's disgrace, as the Magdalen came weeping to His feet; sometimes, again, without even that salutary power of those womanly tears, but only robed in the shame and confusion of the exposure of her sin, as when the woman was brought to Him in the Temple or again in the recklessness of ignorance, as when the Samaritan woman came to Him at Jacob's Well. The love of the Lord God was always the same in compassion for a woman's shame for a woman's grief. To the Magdalen He said, "Go in peace," and she arose as pure as an archangel. What wonder then, that when we find Him in to-day's Gospel meeting with that sad funeral procession in which the widow followed her only child, borne to the grave, her heart broken, the glory and hope of her life gone, nothing left to her but to sink down into the grave, what wonder that, seeing her tears, the heart within Him was moved, and the fountains of the great depth of His mercy were opened, moved and shaken for pity for her. He hastened his steps, and, laying His hand on her shoulder, He said, "Oh, woman, weep no more; spare Me those tears," and then, turning to the dead, He said, "Arise, I say unto you; arise, I say, who am your God," and the dead man arose. Ask me, why, if He was so gentle and so loving, why did He not spare that widowed heart the anguish the hope gradually fading into despair, the anguish of those sad and long hours of watching, whilst she sat by the bed of the dying man, hoping yet fearing until her worst fears were realised, and her heart was broken within her when he gave up "his last sigh"? Why? Oh, my brethren, I know not how to explain this mystery in any other way than by simply saying He allowed her grief to touch the lowest depths of sorrow in order that her joy might be greater when He brought back her child from the very gates of hell and the jaws of death. Whilst reading this Gospel to-day, the thoughts that arise out of it lead us to the great festival which the Holy Catholic Church is commemorating. She is celebrating to-day the Seven Dolours of the Virgin Mother of God. And even here we find an explanation in the Gospel of the feelings of Almighty God. Ah, dearly beloved, from the moment every woman's heart could have sorrow that sorrow was but a type of the sorrow of the Virgin Mother. I behold Hagar, and I hear her cry in the wilderness when her only child was dying; it is a type of Mary. I hear the loud lament of the mother of Tobias; "Oh! my son, the light of my eyes, thou art gone." It seems to me but an echo that went before of the cry of the woman on Calvary. I behold the mother of the Maccabees seven times slain in each of her great and noble sons. It is but a type of Mary, and but a faint type of that immense sorrow contemplated by the Church of God to-day, when she repeats to the Virgin the language addressed to her by the inspired one of old, "To whom shall I compare thee or liken thee, O Virgin daughter of Sion; for great as the sea is thy destruction and sorrow, and who shall heal thee?" And now, my beloved brethren, I ask you to consider her sad sorrow. It began with the first dawn of reason in the Virgin's soul; it lasted until the day when in the glory of her assumption her sorrow was changed into joy eternal. I ask you to consider the sorrow of the Virgin Mother to which the Church directs her attention to-day. First of all, the fountains and spring of the sorrow; and secondly, what those sorrows were; and thirdly, we shall apply them to ourselves individually and to our country, especially in relation to the glorious festival, and the grand occasion that has brought us around the altar of God in the presence of our archbishops and bishops. First of all, I say that the Church of God salutes the Virgin Mother by the title of Queen of Martyrs; and justly, for if all the sufferings of all

those who ever suffered, were piled together, they would not equal the sorrow of the Mother of God. She only could say in the language of the prophet, "Come all ye that weep and shed bitter tears, that have ever tasted sorrow, and shed bitter tears, oh come and see if there be sorrow like to my sorrow," as she stood looking upon the dead body of her Divine Son. And why was her sorrow greater than all other sorrow? It was because it was a sorrow that was created in Heaven, or, at least, such as the Almighty God with such a capacity and such a power of love as the Blessed Virgin Mother. She received not only the purity of the immaculate conception, but she received human nature in its most perfect, most pure, most beautiful form, and therefore, she received a heart most capable of love. All the love that was in her, all the love of which she was capable was centred upon her only and Divine Son. She loved Him with more than a mother's love, for the ordinary mother divides her affection at least between her only child and the father by whom it was begotten. But the Virgin gave her Son, the fruit of the miraculous conception, of the miraculous Nativity, there was no being upon this earth to divide the heart of Mary from Jesus; and, therefore, her whole heart went to Him, and every feeling of her mind, every thought of her soul, every affection and throbbing of her heart, every pulse of her veins, all tended to the one object, and that was her only Son. Wherever there is love, there is a corresponding capacity for sorrow; the magic of love, whether it be human or Divine, is to elevate us out of ourselves for that which we love. Well did one of the saints say—"The heart is far more where it loveth than where it liveth." Have you, any of you, ever felt the passion of Divine or human love; have you any of you, ever felt the strength of an intense affection? Have you not felt, in that hour, that moment, that you would be ready to give your very life for the object of your thought, that you lived far more for him than yourself, that your greatest joy would be to make the greatest sacrifice for him. That is the nobility of every woman's love, that is the great nobility of Divine love. Imagine therefore all the love that could beat in the mother's soul and heart for her only child, imagine that love intensified through all the agony and force of passion that ever throbbled in the most passionate heart, imagine that love when it has reached the boundary of mere human affection, then launched forth into the realms of Divine love, for He was not only her Child but her God, and Mary loved Him as her God with a love more perfect than that of the angels, and Mary loved Him as her Son with a woman's love, more strong and intense than that of all the mothers that ever knew joy and sorrow on this earth. How He who was the object of her love became the cause of her sorrow, and her sorrow was proportioned to that love. As it emptied her heart of every thought and affection, it filled it with the love of her Divine Lord. Far more easy would the agony of the body be than the agony of soul; for there is a sorrow of the soul, a sorrow of the heart, and of the affection, even as our Divine Lord permitted a greater agony to come upon Him, when in Gethsemane He contemplated His passion, than ever whilst He was undergoing it on the following day; so also we may conclude that Mary's sorrow was far greater than if she bore on her own immaculate person all the blows, and the strokes, and the ignominies of her Son. For her sorrow began early and lasted long. She saw it originating in the first days of her holy maternity, when feasting her eyes upon the dazzling beauty of her Divine Son, clasping Him to her bosom, and folding Him in her arms in the first spring and ecstasy of a young mother's love, when the aged Simeon appeared before her and said to her—"O woman, this Child whom thou lovest is set up for a sign that shall be contradicted, and I tell thee that thy own soul the sword of sorrow shall pierce." This, her Child, to be the source of her sorrow! This, her joy, to be banished from the society of it, from the holding of it, for the nourishing of Him forever. Yes, Mary laid up all these words in her heart. Mary took the word, the bitter word, from the prophet of His agony and her sorrow, and from that hour every unfolding grace of the child was but a wound in her heart. As she folded Him upon her bosom she knew that she was only nourishing Him in order she might offer Him to scorn and ignominy. She leaned His young head upon her heart, and God listened to the throbbing of that faithful heart, but well she knew that she was only rearing Him for strokes and scourging, for sorrow and for shame. And it was her first great sorrow that banished all human joy out of her life the words of Simon revealed her more clearly the mystery which she knew before from the prophet who described Him—that her child was to be the Redeemer of the world, and that her love and her God was also to be a Man of Sorrow, needy, torn from head to foot, despised of men, a worm and not a man, from whom all His beauty was to depart so that men should know him no more. This was her first sorrow. Then came the sorrow after His birth, the flight into Egypt, where the young mother had to take her child hurriedly in the night time, forced to provide Him with food and clothing and face that long journey. Then after returning to Jerusalem, her third great sorrow, at that moment when by His own Divine dispensation, not by any fault of hers, she sought Him; and the people of Jerusalem beheld that a woman a heart-broken woman, whose cry filled the air, with tears upon her face and grief depicted upon her countenance. But greater sorrow remained to her when she saw her Son dragged to crucifixion. Her heart faintly away within her. Was this her own child? Was this her only beloved Jesus? Was this the light of her eyes, the joy of her life? She came; He bade her go that the cup of her sorrows might be filled, and when she came near enough to speak to Him and almost to touch Him with her hands, rude hands pushed her away, and the mother had not the consolation that was reserved for Veronica, to wipe away one drop of blood, one tear from His eyelids. Then she was not permitted to touch Him with her hands. Yet she was faithful to Him with all her sorrow, and her next great agony was to see Him slowly expiring before her eyes. Three hours did the Virgin stand by. Oh, fathers and mothers, realize, if you can; oh, tender, loving hearts, picture to yourself that anguish! The Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mother, stood for three long hours and watched her only child dying upon the cross. Every moment added to her agony. She saw the head fall under the rude strokes of the executioner; she marked the faint and fainter beating of the afflicted and broken heart; she watched the pallor of death coming slowly; but oh! so surely, over the eyes of her Divine Child; she heard the voice grow fainter and fainter, until at length, in the most muffled of agony she heard him say, "I die of thirst." And she now saw them take a rod and on it put a sponge steeped in vinegar, and press it against his lips. She saw the sweat of death pour in great drops from the thorny crown rolling down His head. For three hours she watched this; she, His mother; she, whose only Child He was. He died before her eyes; but her sorrows were not over. She must stand there when the rude soldier comes with his long sharp lance, and with all his rude force and energy drove it through the side of the dead man, and the great cross reeled. He dragged back the lance again from the heart of Jesus, and upon the very head of His mother, who stood underneath, there poured forth water and blood. She must remain there, till the sacred body is taken down from the cross; and all she loves is once more laid upon her bosom. Oh! then, with what a broken heart, yet with a careful hand, she plucked that crown of thorns from His sacred brow. Perhaps in all that desolation the comfort of tears was vouchsafed to her, and as Mary the Magdalen washed His

feet with the tears of her misery, perhaps Mary the Mother also was permitted to weep over Him. Finally, He was buried in a grave that chafed upon it for Him—another man's tomb, and he was put up in the tomb. These are the sorrows which the Church commemorates to-day. But dearly beloved, we may ourselves, why did the Almighty God, who loves us so dearly, and who certainly would spare us from the last sorrow of His suffering Son? The Gospel does not tell us in any express language of the relations of Jesus and His Mother, but the few things that are mentioned in the Holy Gospel are full of tenderness. It is evident that He loved her with a love surpassing that which child ever bore to his mother. Mark how careful He is about her. She has only to express the slightest wish to Him in Cana in Galilee, and He hastened the time of His jubilee mission. Then when upon the cross, amongst the last words that came from His quivering and agonizing lips was the appeal to "John." "John! He seems to say, "thou art the best beloved of all those with Me. I loved thee best." "Let thy head rest upon My heart at the last supper, and I gave thee My own body and blood. John, behold thy Mother; take back this woman; take this Mother of Mine, and if you love Me love Mary." And John opened his arms, and took the precious treasure to his bosom. But why, we may ask, if He was so tender of her, so careful about her, so anxious to consult her every wish—oh! why did He allow her to be so heart-broken? why did he not spare her the anguish, as in the case of the widow of Naim? The answer is He made her search the lowest depth of sorrow in order that He might fill her soul with the greatest joy. Since Adam fell and committed sin, in the eternal designs of God joy has been the offspring of sorrow. You must not expect joy unless you have first tasted the bitterness of sorrow. One follows the other. One cannot be appreciated without the other, and as Mary was destined for the very highest joy in Heaven, therefore she was saturated with the deepest and greatest sorrow on earth. And this is the lesson we should all learn from this day's Gospel. Blame not the law. Be not rash in your judgment, if the hand of God is sometimes heavy upon you. If you, if sickness of body or affliction of the mind come upon you, oh remember that the highest and most glorious in Heaven tasted of those sorrows in the largest measure on earth. So it is written, and so it must be. If we wish to be consoled to-morrow we must endure anguish to-day. The other reason for which the Almighty God permitted the Virgin Mother to taste of those sorrows was in order that she might leave unto all generations unto the end of time a living and standing record of faith and love. If she had not loved her God as she loved Him, that sorrow would assuredly have killed before her time; but what sustained the Virgin Mother was faith and love. Well she knew on that sad and terrible Friday morning beneath the darkening heavens, amidst the reeling and quaking hill, and amidst the roaring of the thunder and the flashing of lightning—well she knew, too, when on that Saturday morning she stood in holy and silent sorrow beside the tomb of her Son, that the time was brief between then and the glorious Easter morning which was to see her grief changed into joy—that glorious Easter morning when, after a sleepless night of watchful sorrow, the Virgin Mother again beheld her Son, and was once more clasped in the glorified arms of Jesus Christ, her God. The Gospel tells us that His first appearance was to the Magdalen, but the Gospel only gives us a record of what the life of Christ which was public and before the world, and therefore, for the consolation of all penitents, it is recorded that amidst all His friends and disciples the Son of God first appeared, after His resurrection, to the Magdalen; but remember that besides the public life, there was a hidden life—the domestic life, the interior life of that Trinity upon earth—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—of which the Gospel says nothing. Why? Because there are certain subjects too holy to be mentioned—because some of the greatest and holiest things of which we know the existence, are but little alluded to in the inspired Word. For instance, how little we read in the Scriptures of a word at all, of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the great Trinity of the universe. We only take up our knowledge of God from His dealings with His creatures; but of that distinct and essential life, that internal life, that life of the blessedness of God, compared with which all the accidental joys and delights of this world are nothing—of that life of eternity the Scriptures say nothing. And so of that Trinity on earth—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—of that life at Nazareth, of those eighteen years, from the day she brought Him down from Jerusalem, until the day He left her doors to go out and preach His public mission—the ecstasies, the holiness, and the delights of those eighteen years have been hidden. No Evangelist speaks of it; it is too holy and too high. So the Apostle, when he came down from the third Heaven, came down with sealed lips, saying, "I have heard words that it is not given to man to utter." Moses, when he came down radiant from the Mount on which he had stayed forty days, beholding God and speaking with Him, said not a word of the things he had heard or seen. So, my dearly beloved brethren, we may conclude with the fathers and saints of the Catholic Church that the very instant the Son of God burst the bonds of death, and came forth radiant and glorious from the tomb, He first of all flashed into the presence of His holy Mother, folded her in His glorified arms, and consoled her with His presence. And she knew that Good Friday and Holy Saturday only went before Easter, and that only sustained her, because it was written of love—"Give me love," said the inspired one; "it is as strong as death—it is as powerful as hell; no power in heaven or earth is greater than love." That love was in Mary's heart, and sustained her where another mother would have fallen broken and slain by the weight of such great woes. Now, my beloved brethren, what do all these things teach us? They teach us this—first, that sorrow and suffering are necessary; more than that, they are caused by the Son of God. One of the old writers has said—"It is better to go to the house of sorrow than to the house of joy." But our Divine Lord went further when he said—"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;" and elsewhere it is said—"The Lord himself shall wipe away every tear." Oh! my beloved brethren, the sorrow that is then to be changed into joy—the sorrow that is thus to be consoled, the tears that are to be wiped away by the Divine hand, must be the suffering and sorrow animated by faith and accompanied by the love of God. I say to the youngest and brightest amongst you, if your path lies towards heaven, most assuredly in that pathway of life you will have to stoop down and take up the cross, and take it up with faith, for it is only such sorrow and such tribulation that will one day deserve to be changed into joy. And now, having reflected upon the Gospel and the festival of the day, and brought out a few of those many thoughts which Simeon of old spoke to the Virgin, let us apply all those in some degree to the occasion for which we are assembled. We are come together to-day to greet one of the highest and greatest of the personages in the Catholic Church. He stands in the highest rank of the Catholic Hierarchy—a Cardinal of the Holy Church. He has the highest and most responsible office in the Church—that of Prefect of the great and mighty office of the Propaganda, which controls all the missionary operations of the Church of God. He comes to us directly from the side, and from the right hand of the Vicar of Jesus Christ—the holy, the immortal, the martyred Pope Pius IX.; and he comes here to Ireland to inaugurate and consecrate a collegiate church of the great Metropolitan Seminary which our own good and faithful father and

beloved uncle has raised up. It is an occasion of great joy to this high honour conferred upon the land; both on account of the rank of the personage who came amongst us, on account of the eminent, equal rank of the great Archbishop of Dublin, who welcomes him, and on account of the surroundings of the venerable prelates of our Holy Church, and the Archbishop who I believe, came to-day lay claim to the glorious title that has been the pride of all the crowned heads of the sanctuary of God. The other archbishops and bishops also, who surround his Eminence, render this occasion one of joy. It is more than that; it is a joyful occasion, because of the consideration and esteem which it reveals in the heart of the Sovereign Pontiff for Ireland, and for Ireland's Church and people. "Why, therefore," you may ask—"why on an occasion of so much joy should you take up for your discourse a theme of so much sorrow?" I answer, because the festival of to-day, in which the Church contemplates Mary Mother of God in her affliction, with her broken heart and her eyes flooded with the excess of her sorrow, reminds me both of the sorrow and the joy that followed in the history of my native land. Yes, to-day we have great joy because we have had our sorrow. Ireland is the Mary of the Nations. She is the Mary of the Nations because of the purity of her faith, that never was sullied, and because of the strength of her love, that never for an instant flagged in its ardour and devotion. Ireland is the Mary of Nations, and she has had her seven dolours. She has had her Simeon. In the year 1180 the sainted Archbishop of Dublin, Laurence O'Toole lay on his deathbed, and the dying saint spoke to God in the language of the Church—for in the Latin tongue he said, "O Lord God, Thou assuredly wilt not desert me; for I have always trusted in Thee; and then he burst into the Irish language, which only his own priests and campanians could understand, and exclaimed, "Ah, my people oh, my foolish people, what will now become of you? who shall heal you?" And then he prophesied the ages of darkness and sorrow that were coming upon his people. He died with tears in his eyes for Ireland—tears to be wiped away when his soul passed the golden portals of Heaven, and to be changed into joy as he looked down for many centuries from His high throne, and witnessed the steadfast faith and heroic endurance of the priesthood and people of his country. Then Ireland experienced the sorrow of the flight into Egypt, in those years of suffering, when persecution and sorrow came upon her, and when year after she beheld the highest, the noblest, and the holiest of her children fleeing from her bosom to foreign lands—obliged, in fact, to flee to the ends of the earth, leaving her a desolate mother. Recollect, my brethren, the simple fact that in the year 1654 three bishops and three hundred priests were put to death in Ireland for the faith. All the other bishops of the land and one thousand of her priests were driven into exile, while her shrines were desecrated and her altars overthrown. What was this but a flight like the flight into Egypt? The best, the noblest, and the most heroic of her sons went out from her, but they wrote her name in glory on the pages of many a nation's history, and proclaimed her heroism on many a well-fought field, mostly in the cause of right, of justice, and of God. But the mother that bore them had not the consolation of getting them into her bosom. Oh! my dearly beloved, did not Ireland meet with that colour of the Virgin when she met her Divine Son in the Way of sorrow in Jerusalem. We live in times of peace—in times of joy; but, my Lord Archbishop Cashel, in the year 1884, the people of Dublin went out to meet a predecessor of your own—they went out with streaming eyes and broken hearts to see the Archbishop of Cashel, Dermot O'Huicely, dragged through the streets of the city to be tortured in Stephen's-green, with a fineness and ingenuity surpassing even those of the Turks, which are now horrifying Europe. Did not faithful Ireland see her Lord crucified when her altars were pulled down and her cathedral shrines were demolished, and when a strange, a repulsive, a foreign, and false worship was forced into her holy places? Was it not in those days that she reached the summit of her Calvary—when education was proscribed when laws enforcing ignorance were imposed upon her, when everything high and holy was driven out of the land, and when of the thousands of her faithful ministers, scarcely one remained, and when to look in the face of God and bow before the crucifix was worth a man's liberty, or even his life. For nearly three hundred years, priests and bishops and laymen alike had to bear the yoke and bow down, and what has saved them? What has kept Ireland so pure as she is to-day? What has made her as a nation so distinguished among all races on God's earth amongst the most faithful? What has kept Ireland so faithful and so loving? Ireland never lost her faith—never failed in her love. And why? For the simplest of all reasons: God, in His divine mercy, when preparing such trials for nations as well as for men, has established a simple and effectual safeguard before nations as well as before men, and that safeguard is that He has made His Church a living and visible body, and He has given to the Church a head who is His own Vicar, and a centre. The centre of the Catholic Church is Rome. The Bishop of Rome is the head of the Catholic Church. The hands that were at the helm of the Irish Church during those three hundred years of persecution—now those of some great Archbishop of Dublin imprisoned for the faith; now those of a great Archbishop of Cashel, dragged through the streets to be burned to death; now the hands of other illustrious men—all those hands that guided the helm kept the bow of the vessel invariably turned to Rome. Hence it is that our day of joy is come, and our Good Friday is passed. The darkness of the gloomy Easter Saturday is gone. The clouds of persecution have been dissipated, and in our day the sun of our Easter has risen upon us. We now behold the light of that glorious sun in whose rays churches, cathedrals, and colleges are springing up. The fervid genius of Ireland is about to assert itself again throughout the whole world, and the crown of her ancient glory and splendour is about once more to be set on her head, as in the day when she was declared to be the light of the world. Yes, Ireland's ancient honour and glory is coming back, and she is about to reap the well earned reward of her well tried faith and love. And now, dearly beloved, to-day we celebrate the returning glories of Ireland, when she turns to the envoy of Pius with the same love and the same welcome with which she turned to greet the envoy of Pope Celestine when Patrick arrived from Rome and unfolded the banner of the Cross. Let us now therefore rejoice, and let us above all be faithful to our traditions and to the inheritance that our great immortal fathers handed down to us. Let us resolve on this day to illustrate our Catholic faith by our Catholic virtues, in order that our native land may be worthy the esteem and the love of the Vicar of Christ and worthy of the blessings of God; and that our souls may be worthy to be received into that Kingdom where we shall have the vision of Mary's glories.

The vast congregation slowly separated at the conclusion of the sermon, many a devout member asking the blessing of Father Burke, an utter descending from the pulpit, he proceeded towards the vestry.—From the Dublin Freeman.

FOUNDATION OF A BENEDICTINE MONASTERY AND COLLEGE IN THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND.

On Wednesday, September 13th, an assemblage of distinguished gentlemen, both clerical and lay, took place at Fort Augustus to witness the laying of the foundation stone of the new monastery, college, and hospitalium. Fort Augustus, our readers will remember, formed one of a chain of forts (Fort William and Fort George being the other two) which were built with the object of aving the Highlands after the first Jacobite rising. The date of its foundation was 1720. Its position, on a beautiful meadow, at the western extremity of Loch Ness, was, as Dr. Johnson says, "well chosen for pleasure if not for strength." Its defences were a wall, not very high or very strong, with four bastions, a moat a court-yard, and a wide glacis. It was never of much use to the Government, except that it afforded quarters to his Grace the Duke of Cumberland when he was committing his "Bulgarian Atrocities" in the Highlands. In 1867 it was purchased by the late Lord Lovat from the Government, and has now been presented by the present Lord Lovat to the Benedictine Order of Monks. This order, once very powerful in Scotland; was expelled at the Reformation, and has not re-entered it until now. The Scottish line of Benedictine monks was kept up even in exile, though now there is but one remaining to connect the past and future Scottish Benedictines. The old fort buildings are now being converted into a monastery, college, and hospitalium. The cloisters will run all round the building inside the court. The monastery is to occupy the east side of the square. It will contain cells for twenty or thirty divinity students, two large lecture rooms, a calculator's library, capable of containing about 12,000 volumes, and a large refectory, measuring 60 by 24 feet. On the northern side will be the college, which will contain dormitories, &c., for 80 students, and also a large study, class rooms, playrooms, corridors, parlours for private scholars, and will have a wide play-ground attached. On the west side will be the hospitalium for guests and clergy in retirement. The architect gives the estimated cost of the present alterations at £15,000 and probably double that sum will be required before the whole is completed.

In the day's doings, first and foremost was the celebration of the Mass in the temporary chapel fitted up within the Fort. It was celebrated by the Right Rev. Abbot Burchall, president of the English Benedictines, assisted by two of the secular clergy, the Rev. Mr. Grant and the Rev. Mr. Dawson, nephew of the last prior of the old Scotch Monastery at Ratisbon. It may be interesting to note that the vestment and splendid silver cruets and stand used on the occasion are about 300 years old, and are precious relics of the old Monastery at Ratisbon. After the Mass followed the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. At the termination of this service, the clergy formed a procession, headed by one of their number bearing a crucifix, and marched followed by a large number of onlookers, to the south-east corner of the square, where the foundation stone of the monastery was to be laid by Lord Lovat. Here the stone was blessed. This done the procession reformed, and proceeded to the north of the building, where the foundation of the college was laid by the Marquis of Ripon.

After the brethren and clergy had sung *Quam dulciter Tabernacula tua Domine*. The procession moved on to the Hospitalium, singing the *Ave Maria Stella*, where another stone was laid conjointly by Mr. Maxwell Scott, of Abbotsford (the representative of Dryburgh) and Mr. Monteith of Carstairs. The ceremony was witnessed by most of the principal Catholic families in the North of Scotland, as well as several from considerable distances. Besides these, almost all the Catholics of all ranks of society in the neighborhood of Fort Augustus were present. Lord Lovat and party arrived at the Fort or Monastery on Tuesday evening, and, along with the Very Rev. Father Jerome Vaughan, completed the arrangements for the opening ceremony. Among those who had assembled within the Fort at noon were Lord and Lady Lovat; the Marquis of Ripon; Colonel Henry Fraser, of Lovat; Miss Weld Blundell, of Ince Blundell Hall, Lancashire; Lady Herbert of Lea; Mr. Maxwell Scott, and Mrs. Maxwell Scott, of Abbotsford (the former a son of Walter Scott); Hon. Edward Arundel; Lady Ann Spiers, Mr. Hanson, London; Mr. Corballis, Knock rubble; Mr. Middleton, of Muir-toun; Mr. Macdonald, Inverness; Mr. Monteith, of Carstairs; Captain Chisholm, Glassburn; Mr. Francis Lynch, C.E., London; Captain Macdonald, Bennevis; Mrs. Macdonald and Miss Hisey; Mr. and Mrs. Rufford, Fort Augustus; General Travers, &c. The clergy present who took part in the proceedings were—Very Rev. President Burchall, O.S.B., Abbot of Westminster; Rev. Jerome Vaughan, O.S.B., Fort Augustus; Rev. G. Fazakerly, O.S.B., Leeds; Very Rev. Canon J. O'Reilly, O.S.B., Belmont, Hereford; Rev. John Vaughan, Salford; Rev. D. Mackenzie, Beany; Rev. Wm. Dawson, Inverness; Rev. C. Grant, Eskdale; Rev. A. Bisset, Stratherrick; Rev. O. Macdonald, Fort Augustus; Very Rev. Fr. Vaughan, of Kinoull; Rev. F. G. Macdonald, Fort William; Rev. F. Donnelly, Glasgow.

About four o'clock a large company sat down to a banquet in the governor's house. Dr. Burchall being chairman, supported by Lord Lovat and the Marquis Ripon; the Very Rev. Father Vaughan, being in vice chair. After the repast had been done justice to.

The Chairman rose to propose the "Health of his Holiness the Pope." In the midst of the trials which assailed the Church he stood firm, just, and invincible. The Pope was naturally gentle, but firm as a rock where duty demanded him to be so. His health, too, was such as to give joy to all his faithful children (applause). The Chairman then proposed the "Health of the Queen."

The Chairman then rose to propose a health which he was sure would be received with heartiness by every Benedictine—the "Health of Lord Lovat" (cheers). He had hoped that the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Bute, and Sir Robert Gordon, an honored student of the old Scotch College of Ratisbon, would have been present there that day. These noblemen were, however, unable to be present, and sent letters of apology and congratulation. The idea of restoring the Benedictine Order in Scotland was first originated by the noble Marquis of Bute. The name of the Marquis, dear to every Catholic, would always be specially so to the sons of St. Benedict. He had generously offered them two different sites and a donation of £5,000. And further more to perpetuate the old Scotch line of monks, he was at this present moment educating two Benedictine students. The sites offered were not altogether suitable, but the Marquis had not withdrawn the £5,000. Sir Robert Gordon, of Lettford, and a little later Mr. Monteith, of Carstairs, came forward and kindly offered sites, but there were certain difficulties which kept matters in suspense. Whilst these negotiations were going on Lord Lovat kindly offered the site of Fort Augustus. He might say almost in the words of Cæsar, *veni vidi, vici*—he came, he saw, and he was pleased. He had a consultation with Lord Lovat, with the result that his Lordship agreed to give the Fort and sixteen acres in perpetuity, and a farm of 100 acres rent free for twenty years. From his heart he thanked Lord Lovat and the Marquis for their offer, and especially for the kindly spirit in which it was made. In this case gratitude was not a keen sense of favors to come, but a keen sense of favors conferred. He hoped Lord Lovat