

"Yes, I was analysing the reasons which had made me constitute you one of my maids of honor. I was thinking of a terrible night three years since when you saved my life; also, of your conduct at the time the king had decreed that you should marry that unfortunate Count, you very rashly contested the point at the time, but I was well satisfied with your conduct later. Tell me child, in case I should die, is there any request you would like granted. I do not know why, but I feel a passing sympathy for you at times, and so put it to account of the circumstances I have mentioned."

A strange feeling kept Florence for a moment silent; she was aroused by the queen demanding if she had heard what she had been saying to her.

"Yes, madam, but I was perplexed to know how to answer your Majesty. This is but a passing illness, let us hope, why should you think you will die?"

"I am mortal, am I not," said the queen; "I am mortal, am I not, and paper, from my secretaire."

With an expression of unfeigned wonder in her face, Florence assisted the queen to rise, though she still maintained a reclining position; she was about to write when, as if a sudden thought occurred to her, she paused, saying:

"There is a person acting as your maid; how very ugly she is; she has known better days, as the phrase goes, and I fancy she is attached to you; do you like Grace Wilnot? Tell me briefly, child, for I am very faint and must lie down again speedily."

"Yes, madam, I like Grace Wilnot very much," was the reply.

Then Mary grasped the pen, and paused for one moment as if to clothe her ideas in words; then the royal hand passed hurriedly over the paper. When she had finished writing, she again laid down, whilst she requested Florence to light her a taper, and bring her wax and a seal. She then folded the paper together in form of a letter, sealed it and wrote upon the cover.

"To be delivered to the king in case of my death."

"If I recover from this illness, you will return this letter to me unopened; if I die, you will deliver it to the king within a day of my decease. Be careful to do as I tell you, as you value what you may consider your own happiness."

A faint smile crossed the queen's face as she noticed the look of bewilderment on that of Florence, who replied not without emotion, that she hoped the day of her death might be long distant, and that she trusted to return it the queen in a few days.

"Remember, not a word is to be said in connection with that to any breathing being; put it carefully aside, child, and now leave me to myself. I do not want you again to-night."

Returned to her own room, Florence carefully locked the queen's letter in her cabinet, and lost in a maze of the wildest conjecture, for the paper certainly concerned herself. She was still sitting by the fire, abstracted and thoughtful, when Grace entered the room; the latter was at no loss to divine that something more than usual had occurred during her interview with the queen, but delicacy and respect kept her silent.

Coupled with the remarks the queen had previously made, Florence was at no loss to surmise that she had touched the heart of the queen, in so far as it was at all accessible, but never dreamed of the matter the papers really contained.

She had gone to rest at her usual hour, but had lain awake till after the palace clock had struck the hour of twelve, vainly trying to guess the purport of those hurriedly written lines.

When she at last fell asleep, all was silent as the grave, not the faintest sound was to be heard.

She awakened, startled by a noise; of that she was certain, for her heart beat and she started as one is apt to do whose sleep is not naturally disturbed.

(To be Continued.)

FATHER BURKE'S LECTURE

ON THE

"Attributes of Catholic Charity."

(From the New York Irish American.)

The following lecture on "The Attributes of Catholic Charity" was delivered by the Very Reverend Father Burke, on the 25th of April, in the Church of Our Lady of Grace, Hoboken, N. J., in aid of the Hospital of the Sisters of the Poor in that city:—

My Dear Friends,—We all read the Scriptures; but of the many who read them, how few there are who take the trouble of thinking profoundly on what they read. Any one single passage of the Scriptures represents, in a few words, a portion of the infinite wisdom of the Almighty God. Consequently, any one sentence of those inspired writings should furnish the Christian mind with sufficient matter for thought for many and many a long day. Now, we, Catholic priests, are obliged, every day of our lives, in our daily office, to recite a large portion of the divine and inspired Word of God, in the form of prayer. Never was there a greater mistake than that made by those who think that Catholics do not read the Scriptures. All the prayers that we, priests, have to say—seven times a day approaching the Almighty God—are all embodied in the words of the Holy Scriptures; and not only are we obliged to recite them as prayers, but we are also obliged to make them the subject of our daily and our constant thought. I purpose, therefore, in approaching this great subject of the Attributes of Christian Charity, to put before you a text of Scripture which many of you have, no doubt, read over and over again; viz.: the first verse of the Fourth Psalm, in which the psalmist says: "Blessed is the man that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor."

Now, if you reflect, my dear friends, you will find that, at first sight, it seems strange to speak of that man as "blessed" that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor; there seems to be so little mystery about them; they meet us at every corner; put their wants and their necessities before us; they force the sight of their misery upon our eyes—and the most fastidious and the most unwilling are obliged to look upon their sorrows, and to hear the voice of their complaint and their sufferings. What mystery is there, then, in the needy and the poor?

What mystery can there be? And yet, in the needy, and the poor, and the stricken, there is so profound a mystery that the Almighty God declared that few men understand it; and "blessed is he that is able to fathom its depths." What is this mystery? What is this subject,—the one which I have come to explain to you? A deep and mysterious subject,—one that presents to us far more of the wisdom of the designs of God than might appear at first. What is the mystery which is hidden in the needy and the poor, and in which we will be pronounced "blessed" if we can only understand it thoroughly, and, like true men, act upon that understanding? Let me congratulate you, first, that, whether you understand this mystery or not, your presence here to-night attests that you wish to act upon it; that you are the instincts of Christian charity, that the needy and the poor, and the stricken ones of God have only to put forth their claims to you, at the pure hands of these spouses of our Lord, and you are ready, in the compassion and the tenderness of heart which is the inheritance of the children of Christ, to fill their hands, that your blessings may find their way to the needy and the poor.

And yet, although so prompt in answering the call of charity, perhaps it will interest you, or instruct you, that I should invite your consideration to this mystery. What is it? In order to comprehend it, let us reflect. The Apostle, St. Paul, writing to his recently converted Christians, lays down this great rule for them: "That, for the Christian man, there are three virtues which form the very life and essence of his Christianity; and these are, not the virtues of prudence, nor of justice, nor of high-mindedness, nor of nobleness, nor of fortitude; no; but they are the supernatural virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love." "Now, there remain to you, brethren," he says, "Faith, Hope, and Charity;—these three; but the greatest of these is Charity." "The life of the Christian, therefore, must be the life of a believer—a 'man of Faith.' It must be a hopeful life—an anticipative life—a life that looks beyond the mere horizon of the present time into the far-stretching eternity that goes beyond it,—a life of Hope; but, most of all, it must be a life of Divine love. These are the three elements of the Christian man. Now-a-days it is the fashion to pervert these three virtues. The man of faith is no longer the simple believer. Faith means a bowing-down of the intellect to things that we cannot understand, because they are mysteries of God. But the idea of religion, now-a-days, is to reason and not believe. The Apostle, if he were writing to the men of this nineteenth century, would be obliged to say: 'Brethren, now there remain to you argument and reason;' but not faith; for faith means, in the words of the same Apostle, the humbling unto full humiliation, of intelligence before the mystery which was hidden for ages with Christ in God. 'Faith,' says St. Paul, 'is the acknowledgment of things that appear not.' The Catholic Church, now-a-days, is called the enslaver of the intelligence—the incubus upon the mind of man. And why? Because she asks him to believe. Mind—men of intelligence who listen to me,—because she asks him to believe; because she says to him, 'My son, I cannot explain this to you; it is a mystery.' God! and there is no faith where there is no mystery. Where there is the clear vision, the comprehensive conviction of the intelligence, arising from argumentation and reason, there is no sacrifice of the intellect—there is no faith.

Hope, now-a-days, has changed its aspect altogether. Men put their hopes in anything rather than in Christ. It was only a few days ago I was speaking to a very intellectual man. He was an Unitarian—a man of deep learning and profound research. Speaking with him of the future, he said to me: "Oh, Father, my future is the embodiment of the human race; the grandeur of the 'coming man'—the perfect development, by every scientific attainment, by every grand quality that can ennoble him, of the man who is to be formed out of the civilization and the progress and the scientific attainments of this nineteenth century." That was his language; and I answered him and said: "My dear sir, my hope is to see Christ, the Son of God, shining forth in all my fellow-men here, that He may shine in them for ever hereafter. I have no other hope." The charity of to-day has changed its aspect. It has become a mere human virtue. It is compassionate; I grant you; but not with the compassion that our Lord demands from His people. It is benevolent, I am willing to grant you. We live in an age of benevolence. I bow down before that human virtue; and I am glad to behold it. I was proud of my fellow-men, seeing the readiness and generosity with which, for instance, they came to the relief of the great burned city on the shores of the Northern Lake. I am proud when I come here to hear New York and Jersey City and Hoboken called "cities of charities." It is the grandest title that they could have. But when I come to analyze that charity—when I come to look at that charity through the microscope that the Son of God has put in my hands, viz.:—the light of divine faith,—I find all the divine traits disappear; and it remains only a human virtue; relieving the poor, yet not recognizing the virtue that reposes in them; alleviating their sufferings, touching them with the hand of kindness, or of benevolence; but not with the reverential, loving hand of faith and of sacrifice.

On the other hand, standing, loudly protesting against this spirit of our age, which admits the bad, and spoils the good; which lets in sin, and then tries to disrobe it of its sacramental mantle the medium of virtue that remains—protesting against all this, stands the great Catholic Church, and says:—"Children of men, children of God, Faith, Hope, Charity, must be the life of you; but your Faith, and your Hope must be the foundation of your Charity; for the greatest of these virtues is Charity."

And why? What is Faith? Faith is an act of human intelligence; looking up for the light that cometh from on high—from the bosom of God, from the Eternal Wisdom of God. Recognizing God in that light, Faith catches a gleam of Him and rejoices in its knowledge. Hope is an act of the will striving after God, clinging to His promises, and trying by realizing the conditions, to realize the glory which is the burden of that promise to come. Charity, alone, succeeds in laying hold of God. The God whom faith catches a gleam of,—the God whom hope strains after,—charity seizes and makes its own. And, therefore, "the greatest of these is charity." When the veil shall fall from the face of God, and when we shall behold Him in Heaven, even as He is and as he sees us, there shall be no more faith. It shall be absorbed in vision. When that which we strain after, and hope for to day shall be given us, there shall be no more hope. It shall be lost in fruition. But, the charity that seizes upon God to-day, shall hold for all eternity. Charity, alone, shall remain, the very life of the elect of God. And therefore, "the greatest of these is charity."

Are there amongst you, this evening, any who are not Catholics? If there be, you may imagine that because I come before you in the garb of a Dominican friar of the thirteenth century,—with seven hundred years not only of the traditions of holiness, but even of historic responsibility on my shoulders, in virtue of the habit that I wear,—you may imagine that I come amongst you, perhaps, with a corded heart and embittered spirit for those without the pale of my holy, great, loving mother, the Church of God—for which, some day, God grant it may be my privilege to die. But no! If there be one, or more than one here to-night, who is not a Catholic, I tell you that I love in him every virtue that you possess. I tell him "I hope for you that you will draw near to the light, recognize it, and enter into the glorious halls illuminated by the Lamb of God—the Jerusalem of God upon earth, which needs not the sun nor the moon, for the Lamb is the lamb thereof." And most assuredly I love him. But I

ask you, my friends, have you faith? Have you simple belief—the bowing down of the intelligence to the admission of a mystery into your minds,—acknowledging its truth,—whilst you cannot explain it to your reason? Have you faith, my beloved?—the faith that humbles a man—the faith that makes a man intellectually as a little child, sitting down at the awful feet of the Saviour, speaking to that child, through His Church? If you have not this Faith, but if you go groping for an argument here or an argument there, trying to build upon a human foundation the supernatural structure of Divine belief—trying to build up a structure and temple of mysteries upon reason, and reason alone—then, if you have no Faith, but only this, I ask you how can you have Hope,—seeing that Almighty God stands before you and says: "Without Faith it is impossible to please me; without Faith you must be destroyed; for I have said it, and my word cannot fail,—he that believes not shall be condemned." And if you have not Faith and Hope,—the foundation,—how can you have the superstructure of Divine charity? How can we believe God unless we know Him? How can we love Him unless in proportion as we know Him? "Oh, God," exclaimed the great St. Augustine, "let me know Thee, and know Thee well, that I may love Thee and love Thee well!"

Now, these being the three virtues that belong to the Christian character let us see how far the mystery which is in the needy and the poor, enters into these considerations of Faith, Hope, and Love. Certain it is that the charity which the Almighty God commands us to have,—that is to say, the love which He commands us to have for Himself,—is united to the other commandment of the love that the Christian man must have for his neighbor. Certain also, it is, that the poorer, the more prostrate, the more helpless that neighbor is, the stronger becomes his claim upon our love. Thidly: it is equally certain from the Scriptures that the charity must not be a mere sentiment of benevolence, a mere feeling of compassion, but it must be the strong, the powerful hand extended to benefit, to console, and to uplift the stricken, the powerless, and the poor. "For," says St. John, "let us not love in word, or in tradition; but in deed and in truth." And he adds: "If any man among you have the substance of this world, and his brother, needy and poor, and helpless, come to him, and you say to him, Oh, be clothed, be fed,—and you give him not of those things that all, how is the charity of God in you?" Therefore, your charity must be a practical and an earnest charity. Such being the precept of God with respect to the needy and the poor, let us see how far faith and hope become the substratum of that charity which must move us towards the sick and poor. What does faith tell us about these poor? If we follow the example of the world, building up great prisons, paying physicians, paying those whom it deems worth while to pay for attending the poor, the sick and the sorrowful—if we consult the world, building up its workhouses, immersing the poor there as if poverty was a crime—separating the husband from the wife and the mother from her children—we see no trace here of Divine faith. And why? Because Divine faith must always respect its object. Faith is the virtue by which we catch a gleam of God. Do we catch a gleam of Him in His poor? If so, they enter into the arrangement of Divine poverty. Now, I assert, that the poor of God, the afflicted, the heart-broken, the sick, the sorrowful,—represent our Lord Jesus Christ upon this earth. Christ, our Lord, declared that He would remain upon the earth and never leave it. "Behold," He said, "I am with you all days unto the consummation of the world."—Now, in three ways Christ fulfilled that commission. First of all, He fulfilled it in remaining with His Church—the abiding spirit of truth and holiness,—to enable that Church to be, until the end of time, the infallible messenger of Divine truth; that is to say, the light of the world—the unceasing and laborious sanctifier of mankind. "You are the light of the world," says Christ; "you are the salt of the earth. You are not only to illumine, but you are to heal and to purify. In order that you may do this I will remain with you all days." Therefore, is He always present in the Church. Secondly, He is present in the adorable sacrament of the altar, and in the tabernacles of the Church—really and truly—as really and truly as He is upon the right hand of His Father. Therefore, He said, "I will remain."—And He indicated how He was to remain when, taking bread and wine, He transubstantiated them into His body and blood, saying, over the bread, "This is My Body," and over the wine, "This is My Blood." But in both these ways Christ, our Lord, remains invisibly upon the earth. No man sees Him. We know that He is present in the Church; and, therefore, when the Church of God speaks, we bow down and say, "I believe," because I believe and I know that the voice that speaks to me re-echoes the voice of My God, the God of Truth. When Christ, our Lord, is put upon that altar, and lifted up in the hands of the priest—lifted up in holy benediction, we bow down and adore the present God, saying: "I see Thee not on Thy altar, O Lord, but I know that behind that sacramental veil Thou art present, for Thou hast said: Lo, I am here! This is my Body. This is my Blood!"

But, in a third way, Christ our Lord, remains upon earth—visibly, and no longer invisible. And in that third way he remains in the persons of the poor, the sick, and the afflicted. He identifies Himself with them. Not only during the thirty-three years of His mortal life, when he was poor with the poor, when He was sorrowful, and afflicted with the sorrowful, when He bore the burden of their poverty and the burden of our sins on His own shoulders,—not only was His place found amongst the poor,—He who said "the birds of the air have their nests, the beasts of the field and the foxes have their holes,—but the Son of Man hath no place whereon to lay his head." Not only was he poor from the day that He was born in a stable, until the day when, dying naked upon the Cross, for pure charity, He got a place in another man's grave,—but He also vouchsafed to identify Himself with His poor until the end of time, saying: "Do you wish to find Me? Do you wish to touch Me with your hands? Do you wish to speak to Me words of consolation and of love? Oh, Christian man, go seek the poor and the naked, the sick, the hungry, and the famishing! Seek the sick and the afflicted and the heart-broken—and in them you will find Me; for, Amen, I say unto you, whatsoever you do unto them that you do unto Me!" Thus does Christ, our Lord, identify Himself with the poor and the Church. He remains in the world in His Church, commanding that we shall obey her—for He is God. In His sacramental presence we may adore Him: He is God. In His poor,—in the afflicted, naked, hungry, famishing, that we may bend down and lift Him up: He is God still! A most beautiful example of how the saints were able to realize this do we find recorded in the life of one of the beautiful saints of our Dominican Order—a man who wore this habit. He was a Spanish friar. His name was Alvarez of Cordova. He was noted amongst his brothers for the wonderful earnestness and cheerfulness with which he always sought the poor and the afflicted, to succor and console them. Well, it happened upon a day that this man of God, absorbed in God and in prayer, went forth from his convent to preach to the people, and, as he journeyed along the high-road, he saw, stretched helplessly by the roadside, a man covered with a hideous leprosy,—neither from head to foot—hideous to behold;—and this man turned to him his languid eyes, and, with faint voice appealed to him for mercy and succor. The sun, in all its noon-day fervor, was beating down fiercely upon that wounded and stricken man's head. He was unable to move. Every man that saw him fled from him. The moment the saint saw him he went

over to him and knelt down by his side, and he kissed the sores of the leprosy man. Then taking off the outer portion of our habit—this black cloak—he laid it upon the ground, and he tenderly took the poor man and folded him in the cloak, lifted him in his arms, and returned to his convent. He entered the convent. He brought the leper to his own cell, and laid him on his own little conventual bed. And, having laid him there, he went off to find some refreshment for him, and such means as he could for consoling him. He returned with some food and drink in his hands laid them aside, went over to the bed and there found the sick man. He unfolded the cloak that he beholds: The man's head wears a crown of thorns; on his hands and his feet are the mark of nails, and forth from the wounded side streams the fresh blood! He is dead; but the marks of the Saviour are upon him; and then the saint knew that the man whom he had lifted up from the roadside was Christ, His God and His Saviour! And so with the eyes of faith, do we recognize Christ in His poor. What follows from this? It follows, my friends, that the man who thus sees his God in the poor, who looks upon them with the eyes of faith, who recognizes in them something sacramental, the touch of which will sanctify them with tenderness and with reverence; that he will consult their feelings—that he will seek to console the heart while he revives the body, and while he puts meat and drink before the sick man or the poor man he will not put away from his heart the source of his comfort. He will not separate him from the wife of his bosom or the children of his love. He will not relieve him with a voice unkindly of compassion; bending down, as it were, to relieve the poor. No, but he will relieve him in the truth of his soul, as recognizing in that man one who is identified in the divinity of love, and of tenderness, with his Lord and Master. This explains to you the fact that when the high-minded, the highly-educated, the noblest and best of the children of the Catholic Church—the young lady with all the prospect of the world glittering before her; with fortune and its enjoyments around her—with the beauty of nature and of grace beaming from her pure countenance,—when the young lady, enamored of Heaven, and of the things of Heaven, and disgusted with the world, comes to the foot of the sanctuary, and there kneeling, seeks a place in the Church's holy places, and an humble share in her ministrations, the Church takes her—one of these—her holiest, her best, her purest, and she considers that she has conferred the highest honor upon the best of her children, when she clothes them with the sacred habit of religion, and tells them to go and take their place in the hospital, or in the poor-house or in the infirmary, or in the orphanage, and sit down, and minister to the poor; not as relieving them, but as humbly serving them; not as compassionating them, but as approaching them with an almost infinite reverence, as if they were approaching Christ himself. Thus, do we see how the Catholic attribute of charity springs from Heaven. All tenderness of heart, all benevolence, all compassion may be there; as no doubt it is, in these hearts in these convents, who, in order that they might love Christ and His poor all the more tenderly, all the more strongly, vowed to the Saviour at His altar, that no love should enter into their bosoms, no emotions of affection should ever thrill their hearts, except love for Him; for Him, wherever they found Him; and they have found Him in His poor, and in His sick. All the tenderest emotions of human benevolence, of human compassion, of human gentleness may be there. All that makes the good Protestant lady, the good infidel lady, if you will, so compassionate to the poor,—yet whilst the worldling, and those without the Church bend down to an act of condescension in their charity, these spouses of the Son of God look up to the poor, and in their obedience seek to serve them; for their compassion, their benevolence, their divinely tender hearts are influenced by the divine faith which recognizes the Son of God in the persons of the poor and the needy, the stricken, and the afflicted.

This is the Catholic idea of Charity in its associations. What follows, from this? It follows, that when I, or the like of me, who equally with these holy women, have given our lives, and our souls, and our bodies to the service of the Son of God, and of His Church, when we come before our Catholic brethren to speak to them on this great question of Catholic Charity, do we not come as preaching, praying, beseeching, begging. Oh, no! But we come with a strong voice of authority, as commanding you, "If you would see my Father's brightness, behold—behold the poor! The same sacrifice was offered for them, that was offered for you, and at your peril, surround them with all the ministrations of charity and of mercy."

And how does hope enter into these considerations? Ah, my friends, what do you hope for at all? What are your hopes? I ask the Christian man, the benevolent brother,—I don't care what religion you are of: Brother, tell me your hope; because, hope from its very nature goes out into the future; hope is a realizing by anticipation, of that which will one day come and be in our possession. What are your hopes? Every man has his hopes. No man lives without them. Every man hopes to attain to some position in this world, or to gain a certain happiness. One man hopes to make money and become a rich man. Another man aspires to certain dignities, hopes for them, and labors incessantly until he attains them. Another man centers his hopes in certain passions, and immerses himself in the anticipations of sensual delights.—But I don't care what your hopes are; this I ask you: are your hopes circumscribed by this world, or do they go beyond the tomb? Is all effort to cease till the sad hour comes that will find each and every one of you stretched helpless on his bed of death, and the awful angel, bearing the summons of God, cries out, "Come forth, O soul, and come with me to the judgment seat of Christ!" Is all hope to perish then? No; no! but all hope remains then. No; this life is as nothing compared with that endless eternity that awaits us beyond the grave; and there, there—all our hopes are; and the hope of the Christian man is that when that hour comes that shall find his soul trembling before its impending doom, awaiting the sentence,—that that sentence will not be, "Depart from me, accursed!" but that it will be, "Come, my friend, my blessed one, come and enjoy the happiness and the delight which was prepared for thee!" for this is our hope. Accursed is the man who has it not. Miserable is the wretch that has it not! What would this life be—even if it were a life of ten thousand years, replete with every pleasure—every enjoyment—unmixed by the slightest evil of sickness, or of sorrow, or of anticipation, if we knew that at the end of that ten thousand years, the eternity beyond, that should never know an end, was to be for us an eternity of sorrow and of despair! We should be, of all men, the most miserable; for," says the Apostle, "if in this life only we have hope even in Christ, we are of all men, the most miserable!" "But," he adds, "Christ is risen from the dead; and our hope is to rise with Him," translated from glory unto glory, until we behold His face, unshrouded and unveiled, and be happy for ever in the contemplation of God. This is our hope; yours and mine. But, remember, and our hope is built upon the fidelity with which He meets His word, and His engagements, that no man can expect the reward, nor can build up his hope on a solid foundation, unless he enters into the designs of God, and complies with the conditions that God has attached to His promises of glory. What are these conditions? Think how largely the poor and the afflicted enter into them! "Come," the Redeemer and Judge will say, "Come unto me, ye

blessed of my Father! This is not the first time that you have seen me. I was hungry, and you gave me to eat! I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink! I was naked, and you clothed me! I was sick, and you visited me, and consoled me!" And then, the just shall exclaim: "Lord! when did we ever behold Thee, oh, powerful and terrible Son of God! when did we behold Thee naked, or hungry, or sick?" And He, answering, will call the poor,—the poor to whom we minister to-day; the poor whom we console to-day; whose drooping heads we lift up to-day.—He will call them, and say: "Do you know these?" And they will cry out: "Oh, yes; these are the poor whom we saw hungry, and we fed them, whom we saw naked, and we clothed them; whom we saw sick, and we consoled and visited them. These are the poor that we were so familiar with, and that we employed, Thy spouses, O Christ, to minister unto, and to console!" Then He will answer, and say: "I swear to you that, as I am God, as often as you have done it to the least of these, ye have done it unto Me!" But if, on the other hand, we come before Him, glorying in the strength of our faith; magniloquent in our professions of Christianity—splendid in our assumption of the highest principles, correct in many of the leading traits of the Christian character—but with hands empty of the works of mercy; if we are only obliged to say with truth: "Lord, I claim heaven; but I never clothed the naked; I never fed the hungry; I never lifted up the drooping head of the sick and the afflicted." Christ, our Lord, will answer and say: "Depart from me! I do not know ye; I do not recognize ye. I was hungry, and we would not feed me, in my hunger; I was naked, and you would not clothe me in my nakedness; I was thirsty and sick, and you would not relieve me, nor console me in my sickness." And the unjust will answer: "Lord, we never saw Thee hungry, or naked, or sick." And then, once more, will He call the poor, and say: "Behold these; to these did you refuse your mercy, your pity; and I swear to you that, as I am God, in the day that you refused to comfort, and to succor, and to console them, you refused to do it unto me. Therefore, there is no Heaven for you." The golden key that opens the gate of Heaven is the key of mercy; therefore, He will say, "As often as you are merciful to Me, I have said: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall inherit mercy."

Who, therefore, amongst you, believing in these things, does not recognize that there is no faith that does not recognize Christ in His poor, and so succor them with veneration; who does not see that His hope is built upon the relations which are established between Him and the poor of God. Thus, out of this faith and out of this hope springs the charity with which we must relieve them. Now mark how beautifully all this is organized in the Catholic Church! There is a curious expression in the Scriptures. It is found in the Canticles of Solomon, where the spouse of the King—that is to say, the Church of God,—amongst other things, says: "My Lord and my King, has organized—has ordered—clarity in me." "Ordered—in my charity." Thus it is not the mere temporary flush of enthusiasm—that it is not the mere passing feeling of benevolence, touched by the sight of their misery, that influences the Catholic Church; but it is these premises and these principles of the Christian faith, recognizing who and what we are, and our Christian hope, building up all the conditions of its future glory upon this foundation. Therefore, it is that in the Catholic Church, alone, is found the grand, organized charity of this world. No where, without her pale, do you find charity organized. You may find a fair and beautiful ebullition of pity, here and there, as when a rich man dies and leaves, half-a-million of dollars to found a hospital. But it is an exceptional thing, my dear friends; and as when some grand lady, magnificent of heart and mind—like, for instance, Florence Nightingale—devotes herself to the poor; goes into the hospitals and the infirmaries for the wounded. It is an exceptional case, I answer. If you travel out of the bounds of that fair and beautiful compassion that runs in so many hearts, and if you go one step further into the cold atmosphere of political or State charity, there is not one vestige of true charity there; it becomes political economy. The State believes it is more economical to pick up the poor from the streets and lanes, to take them from their sick beds, transferring them into poor-houses and hospitals, and whilst there, overwhelming them with the miserable pity that patronizes, making its gifts a curse and not a blessing; by breaking the heart whilst it relieves the body. Such is "State charity." I remember once, in the city of Dublin, I got a sick call. It was to attend a poor woman. I went, and found, in a back lane in the city, a room on a garret. I climbed up to the place. There I found, without exaggeration, four bare walls, and a woman seventy-five years of age, covered with a few squalid rags, and lying on the bare floor: not as much as a little straw had she under her head. I asked for a cup to give her a drink of water. There was no such thing to be had, and there was no one there to give it. I had to go out and beg amongst the neighbors, until I got the loan of a cup-full of cold water. I put it to her dying lips. I had to kneel down upon that bare floor to hear that dying woman's confession. The hand of death was upon her. What was her story? She was the mother of six children, a lady, educated in a lady-like manner; a lady beginning her career of life in affluence and in comfort. The six children grew up. Some married; some emigrated. But the weak and aged mother was abandoned. And now, she was literally dying, not only of the fever that was upon her, but—of starvation! As I knelt there on the floor, and as I lifted her aged, grey-haired head upon my hands, I said to her, "Let me, for God's sake, have you taken to the work-house hospital; at least you will have a bed to lie upon!" She turned and looked at me. Two great tears came from her dying eyes, as she said: "Oh, that I should have lived to hear a Catholic priest talk to me about a poor-house!" I felt that I had almost broken this already broken heart. On my knees I begged her pardon. "No," she said, "let me die in peace." And there, whilst I knelt at her side, her afflicted and chastened spirit passed away to God: but the taint of the "charity of the State" was not upon her.

Now, passing from this cold and wicked atmosphere of political economy into the purer and more genial air of benevolence, charity and tenderness,—we enter into the halls, even outside the Church,—we enter into the souls of the Catholic Church.—There, amongst the varied beauties—amongst the "consecrated daughters of lovefulness" whom Christ has engaged as the spouses of His Church—we find the golden garment of an organized charity. We find the highest, the best, and the purest, devoted to its service and to its cause. We find every form of misery which the hand of God, or the malice of man, or their own errors, can attach to the poor,—we find every form of misery provided for. The child of misfortune wanders through the streets of the city, wasting her young health, polluting the very air that she breathes—a living sin! The sight of her is death!—the thought of her is sin!—the touch of her hand is pollution unutterable! No man can look upon her face and live! In a moment of divine compassion, the benighted and the wicked heart is moved to turn to God. With the tears of the penitent upon her young and sinful face, she turns to the portals of the Church; and there, at the very threshold of the sanctuary of the God of virginity,—of continence,—she finds the very ideal of purity,—the highest, the grandest, the noblest of the Church's children. The woman who has never known the pollution of a wicked thought—the woman whose virgin bosom has never been crossed by the shadow of a thought of sin,—the woman breathing purity,

(Concluded on 6th Page.)