

reason is because the one country—Turkey—was severed from the
STRENGTH AND FAITH AND UNITY

of the old Catholic Church, and had been cursed for the last 400 years with the despotism and degrading superstition of Mahomedanism, whilst the two little countries, in spite of their great trials, had sustained by a heroism and spirit of freedom with as pure a morality and enlightenment of virtue as ever followed in the wake of the Catholic Church. In India and Hindoostan, where the inhabitants were barbarous and superstitious, the loving mother was sacrificed on the funeral pyre, the deceased fathers and mothers sacrificed their infants on the River Ganges to appease a false deity. Why was all this? It was because idolatry and superstition still brooded over the land where the Garden of Eden once stood (over the land which once flowed with milk and honey for the chosen people of God), because they stoned the prophets and killed those that had been sent to them, because they had rejected the teachings of God, or were thought by God unworthy to receive the truths of the Catholic Faith. But in the still Greater India of the West, in North and South America, where, 400 years ago, the people were not less barbarous or the idolatrous rites less human than in the East, nations were rising up to the fullness and maturity of perfect manhood, a new world had been called into existence to redress the sins of the old. The march of progress goes steadily to the West; Liberty, with her flag unfurled upon the Andes, 'looks from her throne o'er half the world,' and saints and heroes and scholars have been formed in plenty through the beneficent influence of the grand old Catholic Church out of the descendants of those who, 400 years ago, offered up human victims to appease the wrath of their angry god.

Friends at Court.

BIOGRAPHICAL GLEANINGS FOR NEXT
WEEK'S CALENDAR.

(Written for the N.Z. TABLET.)

- MARCH 5, Sunday.—Third Sunday in Lent.
" 6, Monday.—St. Fridolinus.
" 7, Tuesday.—St. Thomas Aquinas.
" 8, Wednesday.—St. Cataldus, Bishop and Confessor.
" 9, Thursday.—St. Frances of Rome.
" 10, Friday.—The Five Wounds of Our Saviour.
" 11, Saturday.—St. John of God, Confessor.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS.

THE thirteenth century, which witnessed at its commencement the foundation of the Franciscan and Dominican Orders, was rich in saints, many of whom were on intimate terms of friendship with each other. Among these was the angelic doctor, St. Thomas, the friend of St. Bonaventure, and the frequent guest of the holy king, Louis of France.

Born at Aquin, in the kingdom of Naples, of a noble and distinguished family, the young Thomas exhibited from his tenderest years a sweetness and serenity of disposition which charmed the beholder and seemed to mark him out as a child of grace. At the age of five he was taken by his father to the abbey of Monte Cassino to be instructed by the Benedictine monks in religious and secular knowledge. He remained under their charge till the age of ten, and never had masters a pupil who gave better promise of future learning, or showed more favourable dispositions for the practice of virtue. On his return home his amiable character and other excellent qualities made him the favourite of everyone, but the poor were the chief object of his affections. To relieve their wants he robbed himself of all he had, and often even of his food; nor was he ever weary of interceding for them with his parents, and distributing their abundant alms among the needy at the gates.

Being sent to complete his studies at the University of Naples, Thomas found himself exposed to many dangers owing to the disorders consequent on the assemblage of a large body of unruly students. Deeply did he regret the secure sanctuary of Monte Cassino, but by extreme vigilance he succeeded in preserving his virtue unsullied, like Tobias in the midst of the wicked city of Nineveh. He guarded his eyes with extreme caution, shunning as far as possible the company of persons of the other sex and those of his own on whose virtue he could not depend. While others went to profane diversions he retired to some quiet church or to his chamber, where he devoted himself to prayer and study. He thus passed through his course of rhetoric and philosophy, being conspicuous among his fellow students for the admirable clearness with which he was able to expound the most difficult lessons of his professor.

Meanwhile Thomas began to experience within his heart a strong attraction to a religious life, a feeling which was greatly enhanced by the example and conversation of a holy religious of the Order of St. Dominic, whom he frequently visited. His father, being informed of his design, spared neither threats nor promises to deter him from it; but Thomas, recognising the call of God, presented himself at the Dominican Convent and was clothed with the religious habit, being then of the age of seventeen. As soon as his mother was informed of the step which he had taken, she set out for Naples in the hope of prevailing on him to change his resolution; whereupon the young novice implored his superiors to transfer him to some other house of the Order. They accordingly sent him away from Naples, but on his way to his destination he fell into the hands of his two brothers, both officers in the imperial army, who waylaid him and carried him off to his father's castle. His mother was overjoyed to see him, and in her husband's absence strove by the most moving arguments, accompanied with tears and

entreaties, to divert him from his pious purpose. Finding, however, that all her efforts were unavailing, she reproached him with angry words, and ordered him to be confined and closely guarded. His two sisters were the only ones that were permitted to approach him in the hope that their tender solicitations might overcome his constancy; but so far from this being the case, they themselves were so touched by his generous example and moved by his earnest discourses on the contempt of the world, that, leaving him unmolested, they gave themselves up to the fervent practice of piety.

Upon the return of his brothers from the army Thomas was subjected to fresh and more violent assaults. Having shut him up in a solitary tower, they loaded him with insults and reproaches, tore the habit from his back, and on quitting him uttered the most dreadful threats regarding his future treatment. This not succeeding, the devil inspired them with a new artifice to divert him from his vocation—namely, by introducing secretly into his cell a beautiful young woman to tempt him to sin. In this extreme peril Thomas earnestly invoked the assistance of God, and, snatching a burning brand from the hearth, drove her from the chamber. Then, falling into a deep slumber, he was visited by two angels, who girded his loins so tightly with a cord that they awoke him from his sleep, and from that time he was delivered during the rest of his life from all temptations of the flesh. Soon afterwards he effected his escape by the help of his sisters, being let down in a basket from the window of his tower.

Having rejoined his brethren in Naples the young novice was admitted to his profession, and was afterwards sent to complete his studies at Paris, where he acquired a great reputation for learning. His progress in piety, humility, and every virtue, was equally remarkable. A considerable portion of his time was devoted to prayer, and he was often heard to say that he had learnt more before his crucifix and at the foot of the altar than from all his books.

The remainder of the short life of St. Thomas, for he died at the early age of forty-seven, was devoted to the teaching and to the composition of the exhaustive works on Theology and Philosophy which have become the admiration of all succeeding ages. Many were the conversions from heresy effected by his learned writings, in which we behold the most profound knowledge and solid reasoning combined with the most touching piety.

The Holy Eucharist was the subject of his most tender affections, and to him was committed by the Pope the charge of preparing an office of the Blessed Sacrament for the newly-instituted feast of *Corpus Christi*. The *O Salutaris* and *Tantum Ergo* which are sung at Benediction are the work of St. Thomas, being taken from the beautiful hymns composed by him for the office of the above-named feast. His tender piety and zeal for the divine glory were rewarded by God with many signal favours.

Being summoned by the Pope to attend the Second Council of Lyons in quality of Theologian, the holy saint was overtaken on the road with an attack of fever, and expired in the most fervent sentiments of piety on March 7, A.D. 1274.

THE IRISH COLONY IN ARGENTINA.

IN the Argentine Republic there is a prosperous Irish colony. The South American Irishmen are noted for their devotion to the Church and are model citizens. The following tribute (says the *Catholic Citizen*) was paid to them recently by Father Martin, Passionist priest, who laboured two years amongst them and established a house of his order in Buenos Ayres. The Irish population has grown considerably since Father Martin was in the Argentine.

'I laboured more than two years among the Irish community of the River Plate. I gave them missions in the city and province of Buenos Ayres and in the camps of Santa Fe. I established for them in Buenos Ayres a Passionist foundation, to which I gave the name with which you are so familiar, Holy Cross. Therefore I had every means of knowing them well. They numbered in my time not much less than a half of our numbers in Belfast. We are seventy thousand. They were nearly thirty thousand. I am proud and happy to tell you that, taken without selection, they would compare favourably with any other thirty thousand Irish men and women in any country in the world, not excepting Ireland itself. Their faith and devotion are as deep and sincere as in the old land. God has signally blessed them. Their prosperity is such that many of them could come home and buy out their former landlords. Yet prosperity has not made them proud. But they have one other quality, one other virtue which has sustained their faith, devotion and charity, and laid the foundation for their prosperity. They are sober. In this particular I must say—and I say it with shame and sorrow—they are far ahead of the men of Belfast. There is not one drunken Irishman in Argentine for every 50 in this great self-satisfied city. Let one even go further, and add that in the whole thirty thousand Irish of the River Plate I do not remember having seen half a dozen drunkards during my two years among them.'

MR. P. LUNDON, Phoenix Chambers, Wanganui, is still busy putting people on the soil. He has also hotels in town and country For Sale and To Lease Write to him.—*.

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