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THE LIFE  
OF  
THE ANGELIC DOCTOR  
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS,  
OF  
THE ORDER OF FRIAR PREACHERS;  
BY  
A FATHER OF THE SAME ORDER.

(*Pius Cavanaugh*)

*Augustinus Fratri sic loquitur :  
Thomas mihi par est in gloria,  
Virginali præstans munditia.*

—Office for Feast of St. Thomas.

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**Permissu Superiorum.**

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## APPROBATION.

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Nos infrascripti Revisores Ord. Præd. pro scriptis excudendis fidem facimus quod attente perlectum opusculum cujus titulus "The Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas, by a Dominican Father" compilatum, typis mandari posse censemus. In quorum fidem his propria manu subscripsimus, Benetiæ, die 16 Junii, 1881.

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We approve of the publication of the book entitled "The Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas, by a Dominican Father," published by D. & J. Sadlier & Co.

✚ JOHN CARDINAL McCLOSKEY,  
Archbishop of New York.

June, 1881.







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THE  
LIFE OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

(THE ANGELIC DOCTOR).

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE OF SAINT THOMAS.



HE little town of Aquino, near which St. Thomas was born, is situated at an equal distance from Rome and Naples. It is in the centre of a fertile plain, which the inhabitants call "Campagna felice," or the happy valley, and which is almost surrounded by bare and sterile mountains. In the thirteenth century, upon

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the most advanced spur of these mountains, there stood a castle called Rocca-Secca, whose ruins, overhanging the torrent of Melfi, which flows from the highest parts of the Apennines, still attest its ancient splendor.

The castle of Rocca-Secca belonged to the old and powerful family of the Counts of Aquino. In the middle of the twelfth century the head of this family was Count Thomas, Lieutenant-General of the army of the Emperor Frederick I of Germany, who had given him his sister Frances in marriage. From this union sprang Count Landolph, the father of St. Thomas. He married the Countess Theodora, of the illustrious family of the Carracioli. She was of royal blood, being descended from the Norman kings of Naples and Sicily.

Thus St. Thomas was allied by birth to some of the most noble families of Europe, being the second cousin of the Emperor Frederick II of Germany, and, as some authors say, nearly related to St. Louis, King of France.

Before his birth several signs predicted the greatness he was destined to acquire. One day when the Countess Theodora was at the castle of Rocca-Secca, a venerable old hermit called the Good, who lived with some companions upon a neighboring mountain, and who was venerated as a saint, went to her and said: "Rejoice! for you bear in your womb a child, who during his life will spread abroad such a splendor of holiness and learning, that this age will give birth to no one able to be compared with him: you will call him Thomas."

The pious Countess fell upon her knees at his feet, and imitating her who was the Mother of God, said: "I am not worthy of such a son, yet be it done unto me according to the holy will of God."

St. Thomas was born in the first quarter of the year 1225, a year before St. Francis of Assissi died, and St. Louis his relative ascended the throne of France. The providence of God appeared to keep special watch over his earliest years. One night lightning struck the tower in which the child slept, but spared him, while it killed his sister and the horses in the stable. His mother, who feared more for the boy than for his sister, ran to his bedside in haste, but found him and his nurse unhurt.

A shining light was often seen to en-

circle his head; but the early signs he showed of his wonderful character were the surest proofs of his future greatness. He seems to have been free from all the little faults of childhood, for instead of the fits of anger, and rapid changes from joy to grief, usual in children, he was always the same, cheerful, yet quiet and placid beyond his age.

While yet in arms, his mother, who was then at Naples, went one day to bathe in the sea, taking Thomas with her. His nurse, who carried him, waiting for the time to bathe, saw that he held a roll of paper in his little hand, and tried to take it from him to see what it was; but, contrary to his usual habits, he kept firm hold of it, and she was obliged to let him keep it. On their return she told the Countess, who

determined to see what it was he prized so much, and forced him to open his hand. It was a piece of paper on which was written the Ave Maria; a beautiful presage of the tender love for Mary St. Thomas always preserved in his heart.

When he was a little older it was noticed that he loved to be in the chapel, and also that he liked to be taken to the gates of the castle to see the pilgrims and poor people who came to beg for alms never refused by the rich in those ages of faith.

At the age of five the Court of Aquino determined to send him to be brought up in the celebrated Benedictine Monastery of Monte Cassino, among the noble youths who were educated there; so that while he learned all things



necessary for his future life in the world, he could at the same time advance in the love and fear of God.

This famous monastery was founded in the sixth century by St. Benedict himself, and after many hundred years of glory was then in the height of its renown. It is built on the summit of one of the mountains which surround the plains of Aquino, and is about six miles from the castle of Rocca-Secca. The family of our saint had always been among its constant protectors, and at the time when St. Thomas entered its venerable walls, his uncle, Landolph Senebald, was its Abbot, being the fifty-sixth from St. Benedict.

The Benedictine Fathers, justly famed for their system of Christian education, soon saw the remarkable character of

the little boy who was entrusted to them, and gave more than common care to him. He made quick progress in his studies, and also in the love of God, and, although so young, was often heard to advise his schoolmates to keep the rules of the college; but several times modesty forced him to stop in the middle of these discourses, for, as we are told, he saw among his audience the venerable white heads of the Fathers themselves, humbly listening to his words.

He had already begun to think much about God, not as other children of his age, who are satisfied with the simple answers usually given to their questions, but his mind had commenced to inquire more deeply into the *nature* of God, and more than once he went to one of

his learned and holy masters to ask, "What *is* God?" In after years this child, who so eagerly desired to learn what is God, was to write those wonderful articles on God, in his "Summa Theologia," or "the whole of theology."

When he had been at Monte Cassino five years, the Abbot advised his father to send him to one of the Catholic universities. The Count chose that of Naples, which was not far from Rocca-Secca. St. Thomas then left Monte Cassino for his father's castle of Loretto, to spend his vacation before going to Naples.

While there he again showed the same remarkable love and compassion for the poor, of which he had given so many signs when much younger. A grievous famine desolated Italy at that time, and day by day, a great number

of the starving poor went to beg at the castle gates. Thomas loved to give them alms with his own hands, and begged far more for them from his father and mother than they usually gave. And not content with doing this, he went secretly into the larders of the castle to get all he could lay his hands upon for them. He took so much, that at last the steward complained to the Count. So one day, as he was returning from one of these foraging expeditions, with his booty hid under the cloak it was the fashion to wear at that time, he was met by his father, who had been on the watch. He obstructed his passage, and asked him what he had got there. Thomas let the food drop, but, to the astonishment of both, a shower of roses fell at

their feet. Count Landolph, moved to tears by this beautiful miracle, warmly embraced his son, and from that time Thomas was free to take what he chose.

At the end of his holidays he set out for Naples, under the care of the same tutor who had the charge of him while at Monte Cassino.

“Naples is a paradise upon earth, but inhabited by demons,” is a common saying in which its beauty and its vice are expressed. The purity of the air, the mildness of the climate, its unrivalled site, being built on the shores of the most beautiful bay in the world, whose clear waters reflect the heaven’s blue, the fertility of the soil, all unite to make this city an earthly paradise. But on the other side, it seems always to have been noted for the immorality of the

people. How can one describe the corruption of morals at the time of which we write! The kingdom of which it was the capital, was in the possession of the Emperor Frederick II of Germany, who had repaid the kindness of Pope Innocent III to him when a youth, by revolting against his authority, and by attempting to deprive him of his Pontifical power.

The city of Bologna was one of the most powerful supporters of the Pope, and warmly opposed the Emperor. It possessed an university with over ten thousand students, gathered from all parts of Europe. To avenge himself upon it, Frederick founded a rival university at Naples, and to draw the students away from Bologna, and to attract both learned professors and good stu-

dents from all parts, he spared neither money nor privileges. But, as is always the case in great centres of learning where there is a number of youths, the state of morality became very sad, and although the university had only been founded twelve years when St. Thomas arrived, Naples had acquired the reputation of being one of the most licentious towns in Europe.

His tutor, who was a pious man, warned St. Thomas against the evil attractions of the cities, but the youth possessed powers within his soul sufficient to preserve him from all dangers. As is generally the case, his fellow-students tried to draw him into their own vicious habits; but seeing that these endeavors were useless, they soon left him to himself.

The principal means he used to preserve his purity of heart amid so many occasions of sin, and surrounded by such great dangers, was to practice great modesty of manner, to set a guard upon his eyes and to forbid himself to look upon anything which could in any way sow the seeds of unchaste desires in his heart or excite his imagination. He also fled all the gaities and idle amusements of those of his own age, and lived in as great retirement as possible. He was often in the churches and prayed much, but above all he trusted in the protection of Mary, Queen of virginal hearts, and placed himself under her care. These are simple means, within the reach of all; would that all Catholic youths followed his example!

It was not surprising that St. Thomas,



whose heart was so pure and so free from all earthly affection, should have advanced very quickly in his studies. He attended many classes, but there were two professors who in a more special manner exercised a great influence over him. These were Peter the Irishman, who lectured on dialectics and philosophy, and Peter Martin, Professor of rhetoric and humanities. He was very humble, and sought rather to hide his talents from his fellow-students, than to exhibit them, as is so natural to youth. But all his endeavors to shun applause could not hinder his acquiring a brilliant reputation, and it is said of him even at this time that he could repeat the lectures he heard more clearly and profoundly than his masters.

His charity again became noticed.

Although he was rich, and had much pocket money, he did not spend it in vain amusements like the other students, but gave it away in secret alms to the poor. And notwithstanding he sought to hide his good deeds, as he hid his mental talents, neither one nor the other could escape the observation of the world, and he soon came to be looked upon as a wonder of charity, youthful wisdom and modesty.





## CHAPTER II.

RECEIVES THE WHITE HABIT OF ST. DOMINIC.



T. THOMAS often went into the churches of Naples to pray; but above all he loved that of the Friar Preachers, who had gained his heart, and he was always asking his tutor to take him to their church, so that, little by little, he ceased to attend the others, and theirs became the only one to which he went.

His tutor, far from discouraging his visits to the Dominican Friars, on the contrary, thought it was one of the best

means he could take to advance in virtue, and if he suspected Thomas had any idea of entering their Order, he seems to have thought it impossible that his charge, the relative of some of the most powerful kings of the earth, should choose a state of life devoted to the strictest poverty. But he was mistaken, for at the age of eighteen, Thomas asked leave from the Fathers of St. Dominic's Monastery to receive the habit of their holy founder.

Here we may pause to form some idea of the Dominican Order at the time when St. Thomas came to crown all its glories with the lustre of his name. The Order of Friar Preachers, or Dominicans, had been founded only about thirty years, yet had spread into all parts of the world. After the death of St

Dominic, Blessed Jordan of Saxony, one of the greatest men the Order has produced, was raised to the office of Master-General, and after him followed St. Raymund of Pennafort. But these were not the only saints among the children of St. Dominic—they were to be found in all the countries of Europe. In Germany Blessed Albert of Cologne was spreading abroad the fame of his virtues and unrivalled learning; in Italy St. Peter of Verona gave his life for the faith, writing the word *Credo* with his own blood on the ground; Lombardy resounded with the apostolic voice of Blessed John of Vincenze; Blessed William and his companions shed their blood for the faith at Avignonette, in France; and Spain saw holy Dominican preachers leading a countless num-

ber of strayed souls back to God; St. Hyacinth, the Apostle of the North, and the miracle worker of the thirteenth century, accompanied by Ceslaus, preached the faith in Poland, Bohemia, Russia and Livonia, and even went as far as Sweden and Denmark in the north, and into Asia in the east. These were some of the glories of the Dominican Order, in the few years which has elapsed between the days of St. Dominic and the time when St. Thomas came to eclipse them all by his virtues and learning, and to show to the world the perfection of the Dominican character.

But let us return to the tutor of St. Thomas.

Amazed at the sudden step his charge had taken, so unexpected, he hastened to send the news to the Count Lan-

dolph, who at once ordered Thomas to put all such ideas aside, and at the same time threatened the Dominican Fathers with the anger of the Emperor if they should dare to receive him as a novice. He little knew the courage of men full of faith in the power of God, devoted to a life of poverty and to all the hardships which follow from it. They knew that if Thomas had a true vocation God would find him a way to carry it out, and took no notice of his father's threats.

They had little doubt, however, of his vocation ; his life, piety, and ardent love of God all proved it to them ; still miraculous signs were not wanting to make it sure to their minds, for as the holy youth was praying in their church one day several of the Friars saw his

face illumined, as if he was already in the possession of the blessed light of the glory of God. They could have no reason, therefore, to delay his receiving the habit, and publicly announced a day for the ceremony.

The news spread abroad, and when the time came their church was filled with a crowd of the most influential of the inhabitants of the town. It was in the month of August, in the year 1243, that St. Thomas received the white habit of St. Dominic from the hands of the Prior of Naples, Father Thomas Aqui, afterwards Patriarch of Jerusalem.

This step produced different impressions upon those who knew of it. The Friars themselves could not sufficiently thank God for sending them a novice



from which they naturally expected great things; but the world thought different; some admired his courage and self-sacrifice, but they were few; others blamed him for taking so important a step without longer consideration, and others exclaimed loudly against the Friars, whom they accused of having enticed him to enter their Order from mere motives of avarice.

The news soon reached his mother, the Countess Theodora, who was at Rocca-Secca. It was a great blow to her, for although all the historians of St. Thomas praise her for her piety and purity of life, she does not seem to have arrived at that state of Christian perfection in which all mere earthly affections are dead, and the world and its honors despised. Could it be possible, she

thought to herself, that her dear son, from whom she hoped such great things, should have deserted her to bury himself and his talents in the living tomb of a Dominican monastery? Could it be possible that her son, a scion of one of the noblest families of Italy, should wish to spend his life as a begging Friar? She racked her mind to discover some means by which she could change his resolution and draw him back again into the bosom of his family, and at last determined to set out herself for Naples, to see if she could not show him the folly of the step he had taken.

But as soon as St. Thomas heard that his mother had left Rocca-Secca for Naples, judging it not prudent to expose himself to the danger of giving

way to his affection for his mother, he left Naples for Rome, with the leave of his superiors, by a road other than that which he knew she would take.

Arriving in Rome he went to the convent of Santa Sabina. But he had not long been in that celebrated house, whose very walls reminded him of the holy founder of the Friar Preachers, and of so many other saints who had dwelt there, when his mother, who had learnt his flight, arrived at the convent gates and demanded to see her son. But in vain; although she protested with all a mother's art that she did not in the least wish to shake his vocation, he would not see her, and begged the Prior to refuse her an interview. He had put his hand to the plow, and would not turn back. He had heard

the voice of his Saviour in the depths of his heart, whispering sweetly, "Follow me," and nothing could cause him to waver an instant in his vocation. The sweet words of Jesus have never gained a purer or a more beautiful soul than that of St. Thomas Aquinas, and few have passed through greater trials than he to carry out their vocation.

The Countess Theodora, seeing that she could not alter his mind, went to complain at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff, Innocent IV. But while she did this, the Fathers, knowing the issue would certainly be in their favor, judged it best to send him to Paris, where he would be free from his mother's importunities, and, at the same time, resume his studies at that famous university. Thus a fugitive and exile from his

native land for the love of God, musing in his heart upon those words of our Blessed Lord, so hard to those who understand them not, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." (Matt. c. 10, v. 37), he set out for Paris, accompanied by four of his Brothers in religion.

They chose the most unfrequented roads, avoided the towns, and had got as far as Aquapendente, in Tuscany, and were seated on the bank of a brook resting themselves, when they were suddenly surrounded by a troop of soldiers, who took Thomas prisoner. The Count of Aquino had two other sons who were older than St. Thomas, Landolph and Reginald, officers in the army of their relative, the Emperor of Germany. The Countess, their mother,

when she found that St. Thomas had escaped her a second time, sent word to his brothers to keep watch over all the roads leading into France. It was Reginald who now made him prisoner. He treated him with great rudeness, and even went as far as to try to tear his habit from his back, but Thomas resisted bravely and managed to keep it.

He was led in triumph to Rocca-Secca, where his mother met him, not with reproaches, as he expected, but in tears. Did she forgive him, or was it a mother's art to soften his resolution? We know not; but let us hope that this lady, who was so pious in all but this, was so overjoyed to see him once more that all was forgotten. Poor mother! neither thy tears, nor thy

marks of love, nor all the kindness thou canst pour upon him will change him in the least. He has given himself to God without a shadow of reserve, and he loves his poor white habit more than all the honors thou canst promise him in this world.

Her tenderness and all her arguments were useless; he was still of the same mind, and she soon saw that she could not overcome his determination, so ordered him to be imprisoned in one of the castle towers, and that no one, except his two sisters, Marietta and Theodora, should be allowed to visit him, hoping that they might persuade where she could not. But she was again mistaken, and the result was far from what she expected.

These two sisters were filled with the

spirit of the world, all their thoughts ran upon pleasures and vanities; they could not therefore understand how their brother could so demean himself as to become a Dominican Friar. So they set themselves, acting under the instruction of their mother, to try and incite in his mind some ideas more fitting, as they thought, to his state of life. He listened, calmly answered, and then, with great prudence and sweetness, began to attack them, and to attempt to lead them to God. His words were blessed by God, and he succeeded in changing their hearts, and brought them to despise mere worldly honors, and to seek all their joy and consolation at the foot of the Cross.

The Countess, pleased to see how Thomas seemed to take pleasure in




their society, little guessing the reason why, encouraged them to be always with him, hoping that the end of his sad obstinacy was near at hand.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE MIRACULOUS CORD.

HEN St. Thomas had been imprisoned several months, his brothers, Landolph and Reginald, returned to the castle, to see if they could put an end to this strange struggle. The Emperor Frederick was encamped at that time not far from Aquino. He was using every effort to force the election of a successor to Pope Celestine IV, hoping to obtain from the newly-elected Pontiff all the concessions he had in vain tried to

wrest from the late Popes. The two young Counts, who were in his army, took advantage of their neighborhood to their father's castle to pay a visit to their mother, determining at the same time, by fair or foul means, to force Thomas to give up his religious vocation.

They began by increasing the strictness of his confinement, and, like their mother, enlisted Marietta and Theodora on their side, who willingly undertook to visit Thomas, but, as we know, with quite another intention.

The Dominican Fathers had not forgotten their young novice, and knew all the temptations to which he was subjected. But, fearing the scandal which would be caused if his imprisonment were known, and feeling sure that he

would be firm, thought it not prudent to make a public appeal to the Pope in his favor. They contrived, however, doubtless by the help of the two young Countesses, to penetrate into the castle to encourage him by their counsels, and also sent him some books on philosophy, the sacred Scriptures, which he read entire, and the Book of Sentences of Peter Lombard, which he learnt by heart.

Landolph and Reginald again tried by arguments to shake his resolution, but with the same want of success as before. They then went so far as to strip him of his habit, to force the modest youth to put on the secular clothes which they left in his chamber. But a Dominican, Father John of St. Julien, paid him a secret visit, wearing two

habits, one of which he gave to St. Thomas.

Then, seeing that all they could say or do was of no avail, these two young men, who at that time seem to have kept little fear of God in their hearts, betook themselves to the wiles of the devil to force him to give way. They thought if they could draw him into sin, and rob his pure young soul of its chastity, that all would be gained. If they could once succeed in dragging him into the nets of the flesh, all would be easy. They found a poor young creature, who had lost woman's most precious ornament, but who was outwardly very beautiful, and shut her up alone with Thomas in his prison. The contest was short; he saw the poor creature enter, understood the meaning

of her detestable arts, felt the stimulus of the flesh arise in him—by permission of God to make his victory all the more glorious—raised his heart to God for a brief moment, then, snatching a burning brand out of the fire, chased the temptress from his presence. Then with the brand he made a cross upon the wall of his chamber, and falling upon his knees before it, poured out his soul to God, who had given him the victory, and renewed the vow of chastity he had made in the depths of his heart, when he had received the holy habit of religion.

But while he prayed a sweet ecstatic sleep fell upon him, like that of Adam in Paradise, and two angels came to him and girded his waist with a cord, saying: "We come to thee from God to

give thee the grace of everlasting virginity;" and from that time he never felt the slightest temptation against purity; a grace not accorded even to St. Paul, who thus complains: "There was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me." (2 Cor. c. 12, v. 7.)

When the angels girded the holy youth he felt the pain so keenly that he cried out aloud, and his guards entered to see what was the matter; but he said nothing, and kept this wonderful grace a secret until nearly the end of his life, when he revealed it to Father Reginald, his confessor.

We shall be pardoned if we give a short account of the subsequent history of this miraculous cord, and of the beautiful confraternity to which it gave rise.

St. Thomas wore it until the end of his life, and after his death it was given by Father John of Vercelli, who was then Master-General of the Order, to the Dominican Convent at Vercelli, in Piedmont, where it remained until the French revolution, when the convent was destroyed and it was taken to the Dominican Convent at Chieri, near Turin, where it still remains.

Many miracles were worked by it, and in the sixteenth century a custom arose to make cords like it, which were blessed by touching the original, and these also were the means of countless graces to those who, tempted by the domestic enemy, used them as a pious preservation against sin. But it was not until the year 1649 that a confraternity was canonically instituted. This



took place at Louvain, the ancient university town of Catholic Belgium. It was under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Thomas of Aquino, and called the "Confraternity of the Angelic Warfare." It was solemnly approved by Pope Innocent X, March 21st, 1651.

From Louvain, where numbers of the university students enrolled themselves in its chaste ranks, it spread into all parts of Europe, and flourished especially in the university towns; for what more beautiful model can Catholic students take, than him who passed unhurt through the same dangers to which they themselves were exposed, and at the same time shows them in himself the highest perfection to which the human mind can attain. Having

been propagated in Italy, Spain, France, and in many other lands, Pope Benedict XIII gave permission to the Dominican Fathers to establish it where they pleased. Many indulgences have been granted to those who wear the cord of St. Thomas, by several Popes.

But who can tell the numbers of glorious victories, who can count the souls snatched from the snares of the flesh by devotion to St. Thomas? Five centuries have passed since his virginal soul entered heaven, leaving the fragrance of his pure life upon the earth; and how many chaste souls are there not who have owed their salvation to his prayers and to the cord they wore in his honor? None but they who have the cure of souls can say, and the number will never be known until that hour

when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed. Kings and queens, the rich and the poor, the young, the innocent, and the penitent of all ages, since the days when St. Thomas lived like an angel upon earth, have gloried in wearing this beautiful cord of chastity, and the Confraternity is very flourishing in these our own days. No more beautiful work for those who have the care of youth,—priests, nuns, or school-teachers,—can be imagined than to encourage and propagate this devotion; and none more pleasing to God and the chaste Mother of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Let us now return to our narrative. Although Thomas was thus victorious over all the temptations to which he was subjected, his captivity seemed to

be no nearer its end than before; until at last, when a temporary peace was established between the Pope and the Emperor, the Dominican Fathers took the opportunity to complain both to the one and to the other. The Pope was much moved when he heard of the treatment to which St. Thomas had been subjected to force him to give up his vocation, and we are also told that Frederick was no less affected; at any rate, he thought it well to appear to be angry, and sent strict orders to the castle of Aquino that the holy youth should be freed at once, and be allowed to return to the religious Order he had chosen.

Landolph and Reginald were forced to obey, but they wished at least to save appearances, and to make it seem

as if St. Thomas had escaped against their will. The two sisters were commissioned to let the Dominicans know that it was possible for the young novice to escape. They gladly obeyed, and on the night arranged St. Thomas came out from his room, and was let down in a basket by his sisters into the arms of his beloved brothers in religion who waited below, and was quickly on his way to Naples. He had been in prison more than a year, and was now nineteen years of age. Soon after his happy return he made his vows with great joy of soul.

But his trials were not yet over, for his mother and brothers made another effort to wrest him from his beloved Order, and asked the Pope to annul his profession. Pope Innocent summoned

the brave young religious to give an account of his vocation in person. Thomas went to Rome in the beginning of the following year (1244), and, in the presence of the Papal Court, defended his vocation with such force and clearness, that no one could doubt that it was from God.

Yet the Pope, to please the family of the saint, offered him the Abbacy of Monte Cassino. This was an office of the highest importance, and it had been the dearest wish of his father and mother that he should be Abbot of that monastery, where he would be master of a large revenue and be in possession of great power. At the same time the Pope, seeing his unchangeable love for his own Order, and fearing that he could never be induced to leave it alto-

gether, proposed that he should remain a Dominican, wearing the beautiful white habit he loved so much, and for which he had undergone so many rude trials, yet be Abbot of Monte Cassino.

Thomas declined; what else could be expected? His humility shrank from so great an honor, and he could never consent to leave an Order he loved with all his heart, even in the way proposed to him; and, though it would put an end to all opposition on the part of his family, who had never objected to his being a religious, provided he kept up the credit of his family, so they reasoned, which he would do if he were the rich and powerful Abbot of Monte Cassino, the equal of princes, and the head of the venerable Benedictine Order; but not at least, so they thought, little

knowing the future, if he remained in an Order, newly founded, and with little of the things of this world to recommend it to the eyes of the rich. The Pope, seeing he could not change his will, confirmed his profession, and allowed him to remain an humble "Friar of Mary," as the Dominicans were commonly called at that time.

John the Teuton, Master-General of the Dominican Order, was in Rome at this time. He saw at once that so illustrious a novice should have the best advantages he could give him for continuing his studies, and determined to send him to Cologne to study under Blessed Albert, whose fame had spread throughout the whole of Europe, but who was to be eclipsed by the student now to be put under his care.



The General was going himself to preside over the Twenty-third General Chapter of the Order at Cologne in the beginning of the year following (1245), and so set out without further delay, taking Thomas with him. They went on foot, carrying nothing with them but their Office books and habits, and thus, staff in hand, began a journey of over fifteen hundred miles. They left Rome in October, 1244, and took Paris on the way, the General having business which called him there, and arrived in Cologne in the beginning of the next year, 1245.

Cologne, even at the time when St. Thomas first saw it, was very ancient. It had been founded thirty-seven years before Christ, and had become one of the chief towns in Germany. A flour-

ishing university existed there, which ranked second to none except Paris. Its narrow streets, lined with quaint houses, were full of interest for a stranger; crowds of students of all nations, mixed with monks and pilgrims to the famous shrine of the three Kings of the East, made a sight well worth remembering. It possessed already a convent of the Dominican Order, in which was a flourishing school of philosophy and theology, presided over by Blessed Albert, and under so excellent a regent of studies, a great ardor for study, and at the same time for religious perfection and discipline, reigned among the novices when St. Thomas arrived amongst them.



## CHAPTER IV.

“THE DUMB SICILIAN OX.”



HE German Dominican students, among whom St. Thomas now found himself, were much impressed by his application to study, his silence and retirement ; but although, as we may suppose, they had heard of the reputation he had acquired at the university of Naples, and of the persecution he had so bravely undergone for sake of his vocation, they seemed, at the least, to have underrated his abilities, and soon nicknamed him “the

dumb Sicilian ox." But we must not condemn these students as wanting in charity and judgment, for among them were Blessed Ambrose of Sienna, who was as learned as he was holy, and the afterwards famous Thomas of Cantimpre, Cardinal of the Church, who was scarcely less distinguished in his time than St. Thomas. The ill opinion his fellow students had formed of his powers of mind was, in truth, his own work. He sought to hide his talents, and for a time succeeded, only, however, to cause them to shine more brilliantly in the future.

One of his fellow novices, thinking his silence came from slowness of wit, charitably offered to help him to prepare his lesson for the next day's class. St. Thomas gratefully and simply accepted

the help offered in charity, but the kind young novice, in trying to explain the question to him, unhappily lost himself, when St. Thomas came to his aid and explained the matter to his instructor, who was struck with astonishment at the wonderful clearness with which the "mute ox" unravelled the difficulty, and with the simplicity of a generous heart asked his pardon for having dared to teach one who should rather be his master than his pupil.

Some time after Blessed Albert asked his scholars to give him their ideas upon a very obscure passage in the "Book on the Divine Names," usually attributed to St. Denys, the Areopagite. The student, we know not his name, who had learnt the greatness of St. Thomas' mind, asked him to write his opinion

on the matter, which St. Thomas did at once. The paper fell into the hands of Blessed Albert, who saw the impress of a master mind, and ordered him to prepare to defend publicly several very knotty questions, which were commonly under debate at that time in the schools. Thomas did as he was told.

Had he been of a less mind, or not so firmly grounded in humility, how many excuses would he not have made? But no; he at once set about it, and on the morrow, full of modest strength, stood up, without fear, before all the professors and students of the Dominican Convent. He began by explaining his subject, with such surprising clearness, that all his hearers were amazed. Was this he whom they had called the "dumb ox" on account of

his slowness of mind? They could scarcely believe it.

Then the objectors put their favorite and most thorny difficulties. The master of studies began, to whom St. Thomas answered with no less clearness than he had shown in exposing his thesis. The objector said: "You seem to forget that you are not a master to decide, but a scholar to answer objections put him." "I do not see any other way to answer the difficulty," was his simple reply. All his opponents fell, one by one, before this new and mighty champion of truth; and Blessed Albert, full of joy, at last cried out, "We have called him the dumb ox, but he will bellow so loud that the sound of his voice will be heard throughout the whole world."

Soon after this the **Twenty-third Gen-**

eral Chapter of the Dominican Order was held in the convent of Cologne, and the Fathers, who were gathered together there, decided to send Blessed Albert and St. Thomas, now his favorite pupil, to Paris; the former to take the Doctor's degree at the university and to fill one of the professorial chairs which the Dominican Order possessed in that university; the other to continue his studies under Blessed Albert, and at the same time to receive all the advantages Paris offered him.

He was only about a year at Cologne, yet he found time to write his first work, a treatise on the morals of Aristotle, which, although not strictly original, being an abstract of the lessons of Blessed Albert, reveals to us all the excellencies of his future works.



The master and his pupil, bound together by a holy love, which was to cease only with death, left Cologne for Paris at the end of the same year in which they had come there (1245). Arriving in Paris, they went to the Dominican Convent of St. James, which had been founded twenty-seven years before by Blessed Manez and several companions, whom St. Dominic had sent there to establish the Order in the capital of France.

Blessed Albert began at once to teach in the Dominican schools, and his fame having preceded him drew a very large number of students to his lectures. St. Thomas continued his studies, "and like another Augustine," says an old author (Tritheme), "gave himself to the study of the holy scriptures night

and day." He also studied the works of the philosopher Aristotle, and the writings of the Fathers of the Church, especially of St. Austin, whom he always loved and followed, defending his opinions all through life.

But he did not let these serious studies dry up his religious spirit. The book of the Conference of Cassian, that beautiful work, so beloved by St. Dominic, was always upon the table in his cell, and in the simple and pious pages of this author, old, yet ever new, he refreshed his soul; and at the same time learned to imitate the austerities and virtues of the saints of the desert Cassian so forcibly describes. Day by day he became more pious and holy as he became more learned, and he was the acknowledged example of his con-

vent for modesty and wisdom, but above all for that precious quality which distinguished him through life, unchangeable sweetness to all around him.

While in Paris he became the friend of the great Franciscan, St. Bonaventure. This holy friendship lasted until death, and is one of the most beautiful traits of St. Thomas' life. One day he went to the Franciscan Convent to visit Father Bonaventure. He found him busy writing the life of St. Francis. "Let us leave a saint," he said, retiring unseen, "to write the life of a saint."

Upon another occasion it was St. Bonaventure who visited St. Thomas, and in the simplicity of his heart he said to the angelic Doctor, "From what book do you take all those beau-

tiful ideas which astonish the world so much?" "This is my only book," answered St. Thomas, pointing to a crucifix.





## CHAPTER V.

ST. THOMAS' LABORS AT COLOGNE.



**W**HEN he had been about two years at Paris he began to teach publicly, by order of his superiors, under the direction of Blessed Albert. But the Twenty-sixth General Chapter of the Dominican Order, held at Paris in the year 1248, having decided to establish houses of general studies of the Order in the other four principal university cities of Europe, Bologna in Italy, Cologne in Germany, Oxford in England and Montpellier in France,

they chose Blessed Albert and St. Thomas to teach in that of Cologne, the former in his capacity as Doctor, to fill the first chair, and St. Thomas to be the Master of studies. St. Thomas and Blessed Albert therefore left Paris for Cologne, making the journey as before, on foot.

At Cologne we are told that, in spite of the great fame of Blessed Albert, St. Thomas attracted great numbers to his lectures; in fact, he was beginning to eclipse his master. He wrote several philosophical treatises at this time.\* Among his works is found a letter he wrote to one of his friends, perhaps a novice, who had asked his advice how

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\* This life being chiefly intended for spiritual reading, it would be out of place to enter into a description of the marvelous works of St. Thomas, although it is not easy to separate the man and the saint from his writings. We shall also not attempt to give a complete list of all he wrote, which is easily found elsewhere.

to study. We think it will be useful to give it entire here :

“Because, my dearly beloved John,” he says, “thou hast asked me how it behoves thee to study so as to acquire a treasure of knowledge ; on this subject I give thee this advice, that thou dost not choose to plunge at once into the sea, but reach it by the little streams, for it is necessary to come at the more difficult questions by means of easier ones. This, therefore, is my advice and thy instruction : I bid you be slow to speak, and in going to the guest rooms ; embrace purity of conscience, cease not to pray, love to be often in thy cell if thou wishest to be admitted into the wine cellar (of the Lord). Be agreeable to all ; search not at all into the doings of others ; show thyself very familiar

with no one, for too great familiarity breeds contempt, and leads to the loss of much study.

“Do not mix up thyself with the sayings and deeds of secular persons. Above all, fly idle wanderings, nor cease to follow in the footsteps of good and holy men.

“Whatever of good thou hearest remember it, but care not much whence it comes. Be sure to understand what thou dost and hearest; make thyself certain about difficult points, and strive to lay up whatever thou canst in the storehouse of thy mind, like him who wishes to fill a vase. Run not after things above thee.

“Following this advice thou wilt, during thy life, put forth and produce leaves and fruit useful in the vineyard



of the Lord. If you follow these things you will obtain what you wish."

St. Thomas was ordained priest soon after he began to teach at Cologne. Little is said by historians about this beautiful event of his life, and nothing about his first Mass. They tell us, however, that he always prepared for his daily Mass with great fervor, passing several hours in the day and spending the greater part of the night in preparation for this holy function, sometimes kneeling as if annihilated before the Blessed Sacrament, sometimes raised in contemplation of the sublime mystery of the depth of the love of God for men. He never ascended the altar steps without tears; his face and eyes revealed the inward fire of love within his soul, and the people, who came in

crowds to hear his Mass, seemed also to catch somewhat of the ardor of the love of God which burned in his soul.

He had not long been ordained priest when he heard of sad misfortunes which had befallen his family. His brothers, Landolph and Reginald, seeing the obstinate and evil resistance of their master the Emperor of Germany to the Pope in its true light, had thought it necessary to abandon his cause, and, in fact, to take up arms in defence of the rights of the Holy See. The Emperor besieged and almost destroyed their castle of Rocca-Secca, in the year 1250, and reduced them to great straits. But their worldly loss was their souls' gain, for it led them to serve God more faithfully than before. It was also a blessing to their mother, the Countess

Theodora, who had so vainly opposed St. Thomas' religious vocation, for, taught in the school of sorrow, she became a model of Christian virtues, and died a holy death.

His sister Marianna entered the Benedictine Convent of St. Mary at Capua, where she became Abbess later on, and died as a saint. The other sister, Theodora, married the Count of Marsico and San Severino. She never forgot the good lessons of piety her brother had taught her when he was a prisoner in the tower of Rocca-Secca.

She divided her time between prayer, works of charity, management of her household, and the bringing up of her family, and was, in short, a beautiful example of the virtues of a truly Christian matron.



## CHAPTER VI.

HOW ST. THOMAS RECEIVED THE DOCTORATE.



HAVING taught at Cologne for four years, St. Thomas was sent once more to Paris, this time with the intention of receiving the doctorate. He left Cologne near the end of the year 1252, paying a visit on the way to Adelaide de Burgogne, wife of Henry III, Duke of Brabant. Arrived at Paris, he again taught in the Dominican schools, which soon became too small to hold the crowds which gathered there to hear him. He was

also consulted by theologians from all parts of Europe, although he was not then more than twenty-six years of age.

Yet we must not think that he was but a mere schoolman, wrapped in theories, and forgetful of the spiritual wants of the poor and ill-instructed. We are so accustomed to think of St. Thomas as a professor and theologian, that we are tempted to forget the apostolic side of his life. Still, although he did not go into distant lands to carry the glad tidings of faith to those in the darkness of infidelity, he was no less an apostle, and so loved to sow the seed of the holy Word of God, that he never lost a single occasion of preaching, and that too with great success.

In Paris he preached so often that one wonders how he found time to

study and to teach. Dominicans love to point to St. Thomas as the most perfect example after St. Dominic of the spirit of their Order; but if he had not been a preacher as well as a theologian, an essential glory of the Friar Preachers would have been wanting him, and being the most perfect example of Dominican knowledge and science, he would not have been crowned with the glory of the apostolate.

The bare skeletons alone have been preserved, but they are sufficient to show us what his sermons must have been in his mouth, for we find in them the luminous clearness of theological speculation joined to the simple practice of the Christian virtues. But above all, what strikes us most in reading them is the abundance of his Scriptural

knowledge, and the number of texts, all to the point, linked on one to another, forming an admirable illustration of his subject. And we are told that the well known holiness of his life, and no doubt the charm of sanctity which breathed in his features, so impressed the people that they heard him as one sent with an especial mission from God.

According to the rule of the Convent of St. James at Paris, a Bachelor of Theology, when he had taught publicly a full year, was presented by the Prior of the Community to the Chancellor of the University to receive the degree of Doctor. St. Thomas having shown that he was not unworthy of that honor, when the time came was presented by his superiors in the usual way. Yet, owing to some of the University pro-

fessors who were jealous of his success, but principally on account of a disagreement between the mendicant Orders and the University, it was refused him.

Here we must pause a little to give some account of the rise of this unhappy disagreement which lasted so long and was so productive of so many evils. During Lent of the year 1250, or according to some authors 1253, four students were attacked during the night by the watchmen of the city. After resisting some time one of them was killed and the others wounded, cruelly treated, and taken to prison. It was the old tale of town and gown. The University authorities protested, and the students were set at liberty. But the matter did not end here; they demanded satisfaction, and not being able



to obtain it, ceased to teach. The professors, however, of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders, not having part in the quarrel, continued their lectures as usual, as they had done on a similar occasion once before. The University at last obtained satisfaction, and the city watchmen having been punished, they made a new law, that for the future none should receive the degree of Doctor of Theology unless he swore to observe all the rules of the University, especially one newly made, that in case of disputes between themselves and the city all public lectures should cease until the matter was arranged. The Dominicans and Franciscans refused to promise to observe this new law. The disagreement between them and the University lasted a long time,

and was referred to the Holy See. At last Pope Alexander IV, by a Brief, ordered the University to give the title of Doctor to St. Thomas, but was not obeyed.

It is hard in these, our own times, when the glory of centuries has fallen upon the twin mendicant Orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis, to realize how they could have been attacked so fiercely as they were. In the University of Paris there was a celebrated Doctor, William of St. Amour, who, seeing his audiences dwindle away, owing to the superior talents of St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure, was filled with envy, and to avenge himself wrote a book, not against them personally, but attacking the very foundations of the Orders to which they belonged. This infamous

work was called "The Perils of the Last Times." He took those words of St. Paul, "In the last days shall come on dangerous times; men shall be lovers of themselves," etc. (2 Tim. Cap. 3), and applied them to the Franciscans and Dominicans. According to him, they were the source of innumerable evils to the Church and society, and guilty of all the sins and public calamities of the times, which, he said, were all to be traced to their false doctrines, and they were, according to him, the first of the false prophets, precursors of anti-Christ, and much more in the same strain.

If this absurd work had been written in calmer times, it would have at once met with the contempt and indifference it merited, but William of St. Amour

had seized the right moment and it caused great excitement ; and, although the voice of the whole French Episcopate spoke against it, there were many who read it and believed all it contained.

St. Louis of France, who was probably a Tertiary of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders, grieved to see them thus maligned, sent two ambassadors to the Pope to lay the matter before him, while the Dominicans also sent some of their theologians to defend themselves. The authorities of the University, who secretly upheld William of St. Amour, also sent representatives to defend a still more scandalous work, called the "Eternal Gospel," which, under favor of defending the Mendicant Orders, contained doctrines contrary to religion

and piety. This they did, not from any love of the Religious Orders, but from pure deceit, hoping thus to obtain their condemnation while appearing to defend them. William of St. Amour was among the number chosen by the University.

Alexander IV was then at Agnani. The envoys of the King of France and the Dominican Friars arrived first. The Pope put the book written by William of St. Amour into the hands of four Cardinals to examine, but while they did so he ordered Blessed Humbert de Romanis, General of the Dominicans, to cause the work to be examined by theologians of the Order, and especially desired that St. Thomas should be sent for into Italy to aid them. The Franciscans sent St. Bonaventure to repre-

sent their interests, and to them was soon added Blessed Albert, who came from Cologne to aid in the good work. Each gave his opinion in writing, but it was principally upon St. Thomas that the hopes of all rested.

When all was ready, the Pope fixed a day to hear the defence of the Franciscans and Dominicans, and when the time came St. Thomas rose up before all the learned theologians, who had been gathered together, and pleaded the cause of the mendicant Orders so ably that he gained the day, and, at the same time, the everlasting gratitude of all the Religious Orders of the Church; for his defence, now to be found printed among his works, will be to the end of time the surest apology and explanation of the religious life. The work of

William of St. Amour was solemnly condemned by the Pope in the Cathedral of Agnani, October 5th, 1256. This was before the deputation of the Paris University arrived. When they appeared on the scene and found their journey useless they protested against the judgment, but afterwards gave in, with the exception of William of St. Amour, who refused to submit. He retired into an obscure village, where he nursed his resentment, and several years afterwards again tried to obtain the condemnation of the two Orders he hated so much, but, it is unnecessary to say, failed in his attempt.

St. Thomas was recalled by his superiors to Paris at the end of the year 1256. He went by sea from Italy to France. During the first part of the

voyage the weather was fine, but soon changed; a fearful tempest arose, and hope died in the breasts of all but his. He prayed, like another St. Paul; the lives of the passengers were granted to his prayers, so that the vessel continued on its course in perfect safety.

At Paris his superiors wished him to take his Doctor's degree without further delay, but again encountered great opposition from the University, and it was not until the Pope had sent as many as eleven Bulls in his favor that the authorities consented.

When the time came St. Thomas' humility became alarmed; he thought he was not worthy of this dignity, and said that there were several other Dominicans who deserved it more than he, and it was only from the purest



obedience that he consented, although he was sad at heart.

The night before the ceremony he was praying, and began to say the Psalm, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in, even unto my soul" (Ps. 68th); and as he prayed he fell asleep, and behold a Brother of his Order, aged in years, was sent to him from heaven, who said to him: "Why do you thus pray to God in tears"? The saint answered: "Because the burden of the Doctorate, for which my knowledge is not sufficient, is laid upon me, and also because I do not know which text to choose for my discourse," alluding to the oration he would have to make before receiving his degree. Then the old man said: "Behold, thou art heard; take the burden of the Doctorate upon

thee, for God is with thee." For thy text I propose no other than this: "Thou waterest the hills from thy upper rooms; the earth shall be filled with the fruits of thy works." (Ps. 103. 13.) After he had said this St. Thomas awoke, and gave thanks to God who had so quickly heard his prayers.

On the morrow (October 23d, 1257), in the presence of all the professors of the University, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas, with that rivalry of holy humility which the truest and best representatives of both Orders of Franciscans and Dominicans have ever shown towards each other, since the times of St. Dominic and St. Francis, disputed the last place, and St. Thomas, being the youngest, gave way, and was created Doctor first.

From this time until his death was the most fruitful period of his whole life. He taught in the Dominican schools of France and Italy, and wrote his immortal works, the "Summa contra Gentiles," and the "Summa Theologiæ," as well as many others scarcely less remarkable. The "Summa contra Gentiles" was written at the request of St. Raymund of Pennafort, the great Dominican preacher and converter of the Jews in Spain. He wrote to ask St. Thomas to help him in his labors, by writing a treatise against the Jewish errors. The holy Doctor answered by the "Summa contra Gentiles," or the "Whole of Theology against the Gentiles." Its success was immense, and it was soon translated into Greek, Hebrew and Syriac, in order more surely to

reach those against whose errors it was written.

After this wonderful work he wrote another, scarcely less remarkable, on the Epistles of St. Paul, and was favored by a vision of that great Apostle, who wished to show his approval of all he had written.

But this vision was but a mere foretaste of what was to come, for after the visit of the glorious Apostle, he was destined to receive another from the King of the Apostles Himself. It happened in this wise: The real presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist is a doctrine of the Church; no one can deny or doubt it without making shipwreck of his faith. But at the time when St. Thomas lived there were many opinions

on the *way* in which our divine Lord is there present. The Parisian Doctors were full of this important question, and after many useless disputes determined to refer the matter to St. Thomas, for he had more than once shown how much more clearly than others he seized the point of a difficulty, and how much more satisfactorily he unraveled it.

The opinion of all the Doctors having been put into his hands, Thomas retired with them into solitude, and there, raised to a high state of contemplation, prayed for light according to his want. Then he wrote what the Holy Spirit, working in his soul, had deigned to reveal to him. Still he did not wish to give the fruits of his labors and prayers to the schools before he had consulted Him of whom he wrote, and whose help he had asked.

He went into the church, and placing what he had written upon the altar, as if for his Divine Master's approval, he prayed thus before the crucifix: "O Lord Jesus Christ, who art really present in this wonderful Sacrament, I humbly beg Thee if what I have written of Thee be true that Thou wilt say so; but if I have written anything which is not conformable to the faith, or contrary to this holy mystery, be pleased to hinder its being published."

Some of the Fathers who had followed him saw our Blessed Lord appear to him, standing in the air above the writing he had laid upon the altar, who said to him: "Thou hast written ably of the Sacrament of My body, and hast truly determined the difficulty proposed to thee, in as far as it can be understood

by man on earth, and be defined by human wisdom."

Then St. Thomas was wrapt in spirit, and in sight of the Fathers was miraculously raised from the ground, as if drawn towards heaven by the fervor of his love for God. The old writer tells us that one of the Fathers who was present afterwards related this to him.

St. Thomas was the friend and confidential adviser of St. Louis, King of France, who made him one of his private Council for State affairs; and it is more than a mere fancy to assert that it was exactly at the time when he called St. Thomas to his aid that the saint-King obtained the greatest temporal glory, and gave the most lasting benefits to France.

The genius of St. Thomas was mani-

fold; nothing lay beyond the reach of his gigantic mind. He possessed in a remarkable degree, as is evident to all who study his works, the qualities necessary for a ruler of the earth; broad principles, based upon eternal truths, were the foundations of all his decisions upon State affairs.

An interesting anecdote is told of him at this time: He was one day at table with St. Louis, but thinking of a problem which occupied his mind, quite forgot the royal presence he was in. Suddenly he struck the table violently and cried out: "It was defined against the Manicheans." His superior, who was present, called him to himself, and reminded him of the respect due to kings. St. Thomas asked pardon, which St. Louis readily granted, and at the



same time told one of his secretaries to write down the argument at once, for he said the thoughts of profound minds should be immediately put upon paper, lest they should perish or lose any of their first force and clearness.

He was also engaged about this time with his Brother in religion, the celebrated Father Vincent of Beauvais, in arranging the magnificent library, for which St. Louis became famous.





## CHAPTER VII.

ST. THOMAS IS CALLED TO ROME.

**I**N the year 1260 he was called from Paris to Rome by Urban IV. This Pope, who had succeeded Alexander IV, wishing to put an end to the unhappy schism of the East, summoned the now famous Dominican Doctor to his side to consult him, and to make use of his learning and abilities. Arrived in Rome, the Dominican-General at once gave him a theological chair, and he continued to teach and preach as before. Yet he

found time to carry out the wish of the Pope, and wrote a book against the errors of the Greeks.

It far surpassed the expectations of the Pope, who sent it to Michael Paleologus, Eighth Emperor of Constantinople.

By wish of Urban IV he extended his teaching to Viterbo, Orvieto, Perugia, and other Italian towns, always with the same remarkable success as at Cologne, Paris and Rome. But, as before, he accompanied his theological lectures by evangelical preaching, and there were not wanting miracles to confirm his doctrines. One day, as he was leaving the church in which he had been preaching, a woman, who was troubled with a bloody flux, remembering her in the gospel who was cured by

the virtue of the Saint of Saints, and as full of confidence in the mercy of God as she, went and touched his habit, and, like her, was cured.

But a more remarkable cure than that of the body was to show forth the holiness and, at the same time, the zeal and learning of St. Thomas. He was invited by the Dominican, Cardinal Richard Hannibaldo di Hannibaldi, to visit him in his country villa of Molara. There he found two Jewish Rabbis, who were as well known in Rome for their riches as for their attachment to the religion in which they had been educated.

St. Thomas could not long be in their society without trying to convert them, and was soon engaged in an animated controversy. His were no mean

opponents; they pleaded their cause with eloquence, learning and earnestness. But all they could say was met by clear proofs, put before them in the purest spirit of Christian charity. The debate ended, apparently with no result, they appeared to be so unshakeably wedded to their opinions that all he could say produced no effect upon their hearts. They however promised to return to the villa on the day following.

Then the saint betook himself to prayer. It was Christmas eve, and he spent the whole night in contemplating the new born babe of Bethlehem, and prayed Him, who came into this world for no other purpose than to save sinners, not to let these souls perish. His prayer was heard, for on the following day they returned with tears in their

eyes, no longer to dispute, but to ask holy Baptism from him who had opened their minds to the truth.

In the year 1263 the Dominican Order held its Fortieth General Chapter in London. St. Thomas went as Definitor for the Roman Province, and we are told exercised a great influence on the Fathers gathered together there from all parts of the world, especially in animating them to fervor, and to a great love for their rule and loyalty to the Dominican Order.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### ORIGIN OF THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI.



**S**T. THOMAS was called by Pope Urban to Orvieto. While there he took the opportunity of proposing to the Pope a special feast in honor of the Blessed Sacrament. But we must go a little out of our way to show some of the causes which led to the institution of this incomparable feast.

The adorable Sacrament of the altar has always been the centre of the Church's system of devotion. How

could it be otherwise? What other devotion can for an instant be compared to the devotion towards the King of Kings, who so lovingly and patiently dwells in our tabernacles?

Accustomed as we are at the present day to the beautiful processions and Benedictions of the Blessed Sacrament, we can hardly realize how our ancestors could have done without them. They were firmer in faith than we.

In the first ages of the Church, we read that the faithful communicated daily. But faith grew cold, and Communion came to be less frequent. Yet there never was a time when the daily Mass was neglected by those who claimed to be looked upon as pious Christians. The sacrifice of the Mass, and the ever-abiding presence of Jesus



in the tabernacle, were all our pious ancestors desired. But when the thirteenth century came, there arose a great wish, almost on all sides, to honor the mystery of mysteries, the miracle of love, in some more especial way.

Following His almost invariable rule, God chose a poor and weak woman, nearly unknown and destitute of influence, to be the means of obtaining the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi, the crown and perfection of all Christian feasts. Let us trace the history of her life.

Upon an eminence, to the east of the beautiful city of Liege, in Belgium, may still be seen the remains of a convent of Sisters, hospitallers who followed the rule of St. Augustin. In the year 1197 two little orphans were given

into the charge of these pious Sisters. The eldest, Agnes, died soon after; the other, Julienne, who was five years old, was she who was chosen by God to obtain the institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi. She was born in the year 1192, at the little hamlet of Retinne, in the neighborhood of Liege. Her parents were rich, but died when she was five years old. Her guardians placed her and her sister Agnes in the Convent of Monte Cornillon, according to the custom of the times, to be educated. The good sisters had charge of the lepers, who were so numerous at that time, and fearing that the little orphans might catch the infection, sent them to the convent farm to be out of danger.

There, Mother Sapience took them under her especial care, and at once

formed a strong affection for the poor little girls deprived of their father and mother. Julienne grew up in holiness and wisdom. She excelled in Latin, and we may judge of her progress by the fact that she soon learnt the psalter by heart, and read the works of St. Austin, St. Bernard, and the holy Scriptures in Latin.

When fourteen years old she entered the convent. Her dear, constant friend, Mother Sapience, was Prioress at the time. It would be quite beyond our present intention to speak of Julienne's austerities and remarkable virtues; a word will suffice; she was truly a holy Nun, who lived for God alone. Yet, we may say, in passing, that she was already remarkable for her devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament.

In the year 1212, six years after her entrance into religion, the city of Liege was taken by Henry, Count of Brabant, who cruelly pillaged it, the Prince-Bishop having fled. Horrible sacrileges were ruthlessly committed by the soldiers; they forced the doors of the tabernacle of the cathedral open, and threw the consecrated hosts upon the ground, making off with the sacred vessels. This horrible profanation must have been known to Julienne, and have strengthened the desire already implanted by God in her heart to obtain the institution of a special feast in honor of the Blessed Sacrament thus so fearfully profaned.

Four years before (1208), when she was sixteen years of age, she saw a very remarkable vision, which ever after was

before her eyes. While she prayed one day, she saw a moon before her, shining brightly, but obscured by a dark line upon the disc. She paid little or no attention to it at first, but when it haunted her continually, she grew afraid that it was some cunning temptation of the evil one to ensnare her. Alarmed, she determined to declare the whole matter to her superiors.

She went first of all to the Prioress, Mother Sapience, who, distrusting her own opinions, consulted some holy and prudent Sisters. Some of them declared it dangerous; none of them thought it supernatural, and all advised Julienne to treat it as a mere imagination or dream. Schooled in holy obedience, she tried to rid herself of what she was afraid was a delusion, and meekly bore all the sus-

pitions which fell upon her, being regarded as a silly visionary. This continued for two years, but the vision remained ever the same. Then she prayed God to take it away from her. At last, as she lay asleep one night, all her doubts vanished; for God revealed to her the meaning of her vision. The moon represented the Church militant, and the dark line signified that her glory was obscured by the want of an especial feast in honor of the most holy Sacrament, and that it was His will that it should now be instituted and observed by the whole Church. It was to atone for all the sacrileges committed against this holy mystery.

Julienne was seized with unutterable joy when this was made known to her; but her joy was soon changed into sor-

row, for God revealed to her that she was chosen to make known His will to the whole world. She resisted for a long time. But at last she confided her secret to a pious recluse, Blessed Eve, who lived in a little cell attached to the beautiful church of St. Martin-on-the-hill in Liege, and for whom she had formed a holy friendship. "Tell me," she said to her, "tell me what you think." Eve at first spoke not, but at last acknowledged that she thought the vision was from God.

In the year 1222 Mother Sapience died, and Julienne was elected her successor, as Prioress of Monte Cornillon. Soon after this she told her secret to another holy virgin, Blessed Isabel of Huy. She sought for some one to help her to carry out the divine command;

she was sure it was from God, but her great self-distrust and humility kept her back from carrying out so important a work. At first she received no encouragement; but one day Isabel having made a visit to Blessed Eve, entered St. Martin's church, and as she knelt, praying, saw a vision. The very heavens were opened to her sight, and she saw countless numbers of saints, falling on their knees before the eternal God, praying Him to grant a special feast in honor of the holy Eucharist; and from that time she warmly supported Blessed Julienne.

Among the canons of Liege was one John of Lausanne, distinguished for his learning and holiness. Blessed Julienne determined to confide her secret to him. He believed her at once, and consulted



some of the most learned theologians of the city. These were James Pantaleon, Archdeacon of St. Lambert, afterwards Pope Urban IV; Hugh of St. Cher, Provincial of the Dominicans, afterwards a Cardinal; Guy de Laon, Bishop of Cambrai, and three Doctors of the Dominican Order, Giles, John and Gerard.

After a long and searching examination into the whole case, they came to the conclusion that the institution of the feast of the Blessed Sacrament would be eminently useful in promoting love and veneration for this holy mystery.

Strengthened thus by the opinion of these holy and learned men, Julienne next looked about for some one to write an office for the new feast, and chose

a priest, John of Monte Cornillon, to whom she had already told her vision. He set to work, and searched the holy Scriptures, and the works of the Fathers of the Church, for all the most beautiful quotations applicable to the Blessed Sacrament. This office was in use in the church of St. Martin-on-the-hill at Liege, when the more beautiful one written by St. Thomas supplanted it. It existed up to the year 1613, but is now lost.

All seemed to be going well, but there came a dreary time of trial, which lasted until the death of Julienne, and she who had been chosen by God to lead to the institution of the dearest of feasts, was to die with her mission seemingly unfulfilled. All the clergy of Liege, who were remarkable for their

holiness, believed in her vision ; but the greater part were against her, and although the Dominican, Hugh of St. Cher, preached the devotion from the pulpit with eloquence and force, the opposition was too strong. Then in the year 1233, Godfrey, Prior of Monte Cornillon, who had ever been her most constant friend, died, and was succeeded by a very unworthy priest called Roger, who pursued Julienne with his hatred until her death.

He was a simoniacal priest, and was reproached by Julienne for it. He succeeded in driving her, and all the Sisters who supported her from the convent. She sought shelter with Blessed Eve, in her humble cell at St. Martin's church. The Bishop of Liege, Robert de Sorote, restored her to her

convent about three months after, and in the year 1246, when she was now fifty-four years of age, he ordered the feast to be kept in the churches of his Diocese, and sent copies of the office to all the priests. The good Bishop died in the same year, before his pious wish could be carried out.

The greater part of the clergy of the Diocese looked upon the new feast with suspicion, and as the Bishop died, it was only observed in St. Martin's at Liege, which has thus the honor of being the cradle of this beautiful devotion. This feast was first celebrated in St. Martin's in the year 1247, with great magnificence.

But more troubles came for Julienne. The new Bishop, Henry of Guelders, was very unfit for his office, and after

several years of grievous misrule, was deposed by the Council of Lyons. He was no sooner in possession of his See, than Roger, Julianne's implacable enemy, knowing well that the Bishop would not support her, again excited the popular mind against her, and at last she thought it prudent to flee from her convent.

She took refuge in the Convent of Robertmont, and after changing her home several times, died at Fosses, a small town near Namur. "My sister," she said, a few days before her death, to Ermentrude, one of her nuns, who had accompanied her into exile, "let us go to the church that I may take a last farewell of my dear Lord." This was on the feast of Easter; she lived several days after, and died, April 5th, 1258, at

the age of sixty-six. After long and dreary years of trial, brightened now and then by partial success, she died, and went to see Him, face to face, whom she had loved so much under the sacramental veils on earth. She died without obtaining that to which nearly her whole life had been devoted, but her triumph, or rather the triumph of her mission, was at hand.

Jacques Pantaleon, formerly Archdeacon of Liege, successively Papal Legate, Bishop of Verdun, and Patriarch of Jerusalem, was raised to the Papal chair in the year 1261, and took the name of Urban IV.

We now come to the part St. Thomas took in this beautiful chain of events, trusting that we have, ere now, been pardoned for this long digression.

After the death of Blessed Julienne, her friend Blessed Eve ceased not to carry on her work, and, wonderful to relate, the soldier-like Bishop of Liege, Henry of Guelders, listened to her prayers, and even wrote to the Pope to transmit to him her petition to institute the feast of Corpus Christi.

St. Thomas, who was at Orvieto with the Pope, made the same request; whether before or after the Bishop's letter arrived, and whether in consequence of it, or, as is probable, to carry out a long meditated plan of his own, does not appear. Urban at once agreed, and extended the feast, which had been instituted for the Diocese of Liege, by Bishop Robert of Sorote eighteen years before, and confirmed and renewed six years afterwards by Hugh of St. Cher,

Cardinal Legate of the Holy See, to the universal Church.

The Sovereign Pontiff ordered St. Thomas to write an office for the new feast, and sent a copy of it, with a letter written by his own hand, to Blessed Eve, the poor and humble hermit of St. Martin's hill.

None of the offices in the Breviary are more beautiful than that of Corpus Christi, and when an office was required for the rite of solemn benediction, nothing more fitting could be thought of than the devotional "*O Salutaris*" and the majestic "*Tantum Ergo*," which are a part of the office of Corpus Christi.

Thus when the altars in our churches are gaily decorated with flowers, and lit with the light of waxen tapers, and the



tabernacle is opened, and Jesus Himself is taken out to bless His faithful people, it is in the words of St. Thomas that we sing to Him.

Oh holy saint, thy words will last until the end of time, when we shall see Him as He is, and sing another song not granted to us upon earth. O thou God-chosen poet, pray for us that our hearts may become as pure and holy as thine, for it is the pure and chaste who alone can sing to Him as He would have us sing.





## CHAPTER IX.

### SKETCH OF ST. THOMAS'S CHARACTER.



**E** will now attempt to sketch the character of St. Thomas, and to describe his virtues. But at the outset, we must acknowledge that it is almost impossible to put on paper any adequate description of this wonderful man. He was of so elevated a perfection, that any attempt to analyze the excellencies of his moral and intellectual gifts must necessarily fall far short of the truth.

But we cannot be wrong if we say

that the source and secret of his holiness and mental culture was his immaculate purity. He who is faultless in all but chastity cannot, nevertheless, be pleasing to God, and although he may do great things, and merit the applause of the world, in the sight of God he is but as a whited sepulchre. This is as a trite truth; but who can say to what heights of excellence and worth, he who is pure and chaste can rise?

St. Thomas lived all his life a perfect virgin. We have already narrated the glorious victory he obtained over an insidious temptation against his chastity, when he was a youth. Yet, although angels from heaven assured him that he should remain in a state of virginity all his life, he in no way neglected to pray

that God would preserve, by His grace, this holy virtue in his soul, and never slackened his efforts to prevent the evil one gaining an entrance into his soul by means of his senses; and when he lay on his death bed, and made a general confession of his whole life, he was as pure and innocent as a child of five years old.

The author of his life, Father William de Tocco, thus sums up his character: "He was most humble about his reputation, most pure in body and mind, devout in prayer, prudent in council, placid in conversation, full of charity, of a very retentive memory, raised as if above his senses, and full of contempt for all earthly things."

Following this old writer, we will try to give as perfect an account of each of

his virtues and characteristics, as is possible in the short space at our command.

In the simplicity of his soul he said one day, "I give thanks to God that I have never had a single notion of vain glory on account of my knowledge, when in the professorial chair, or of no scholastic action which could draw my soul from its humility. And, if I have had the beginnings of a notion of pride, I have at once put it down by force of my reason." He was so conscious that he received all his knowledge from God, that he could not let a proud thought remain in his mind a single moment. His profound humility showed itself in his conversation, for although he was almost always occupied in study and prayer, yet he found time to attend to

the wants of others. He could at once descend to the level of his companions and showed himself very simple, agreeable and affable. To visitors, and to those who went to consult him, he was patient, full of charming sweetness, and, without in the least showing any signs of fatigue, listened to their little troubles, and after giving them prudent counsel and a few strong, fatherly words of advice, fearing to waste much time over mere unholy things, would send them away, full of comfort and joy. But never was he heard to say a useless word. No hard or uncharitable words ever fell from his lips; he was ever gracious and pleasant in his dealings with others. He had a great horror of sin, and although full of mercy for sinners, desired always that they should

be turned from their evil course of life at whatever cost, and when he saw that they were so hardened that kindness and mercy could not touch their heart, he always counselled severe punishment. He was so innocent himself that he could with difficulty be brought to believe in the guilt of others; but when he felt sure of it, he left no means untried to draw them from their sins.

Being of high lineage, he always preserved the grace of noble manners, and united the easy courtesy of a man of the world to the dignity and reserve of a cloistered religious. Two things alone he loved here below: the Order of St. Dominic, to which he belonged, and the poor. He never ceased to pray God to give him the grace to die in the holy state of religion, and dreaded to be

forced to accept any ecclesiastical dignity which could separate him from his Brothers, the children of St. Dominic. His love for the poor showed itself every day of his life. He even took the habit off his back to give to them, when he could not otherwise succor them, and nearly all his sermons were intended for them.

He studied to acquire the perfection of monastic virtues, but especially showed a great spirit of obedience.

When at the Convent of Bologna, a lay Brother, having occasion to go into the town, to buy some necessaries for the wants of the community, went to the Prior to ask him to appoint him a companion. The Prior told him to take the first religious he met, which happened to be St. Thomas, who was



walking at the time in the cloisters. The lay brother, who did not know who he was, went up to him and said: "Good Father, the Prior wishes you to go with me into the town." St. Thomas bent his head in assent, and followed him at once. But as they went through the streets, St. Thomas, who could not walk as fast as his companion, lagged behind, and was often scolded for it by the Brother, but each time humbly excused himself. Some of the citizens, who knew the holy Doctor, full of admiration for such humility, which could induce so great a man to follow a lay Brother, told him who his companion was. The poor Brother, full of confusion, at once begged his pardon. But St. Thomas answered: "All religion is perfected by obedience, by which man

is subjected to his fellow man for the love of God, as God obeyed man for the love of man."

His spirit of religious poverty was no less striking. He chose the poorest and meanest clothes he could find, and we are told that he wrote his magnificent work, the "*Summa contra Gentiles*," on scraps of waste paper, picked up here and there.

He was very humble, and perfectly indifferent to his own fame. When in Paris, a young student presented himself, among others, to take the degree of licentiate in theology. The Chancellor of the University, according to custom, presided over the examination. St. Thomas and several Dominicans were present. The aspirant to honors boldly defended a thesis directly opposed

to St. Thomas's teaching. The saint listened without showing any signs of impatience. But when the examination was over, as he was returning with his fellow Dominicans to their convent, one of them said: "Master, we have been grossly insulted in your person, for the licentiate ought not to speak against your opinions, and you ought not to be thus insulted in presence of all the Doctors of Paris." St. Thomas answered: "My children, I thought it best to spare the young master in his first public attempt, and not to cover him with confusion in front of all the Doctors. As for my teaching, I do not dread any opposition, for I have always, praised be God, built it upon the authority of the saints, and sound reasons; nevertheless, if it appears well to my Brothers,

I can make up to-morrow for what I have done to-day."

The next day, when all were assembled in the Bishop's palace, St. Thomas and his disciples among the rest, the candidate again defended the same thesis. The angelic Doctor then said to him, with great calmness and sweetness: "Master, your opinion cannot be defended without detriment to the truth; for it goes directly against the teaching of such and such a Council of the Church. You must therefore speak differently, if you do not wish to be at discord with the teaching of the Council."

The young theologian modified his language, but without retracting his false opinion. St. Thomas took him up again, cited the words of the Council,

and finally forced him to acknowledge that he was in error. Happily the young man was not quite destitute of humility, and when he saw that he was really in the wrong, humbly asked St. Thomas to instruct him what he ought to hold as truth regarding the matter. Then the holy Doctor said to him, "Now you speak as you ought to do," and showed him in a few words what he should have defended, so that all who were present were much edified by his moderation and patience towards this young doctor.

A beautiful anecdote, told us by one of his early biographers, illustrating his humility, may be fittingly introduced here.

One day he went from Paris to see the famous abbey of St. Denys, the

burial place of the Kings of France, to venerate the relics of many saints preserved there. He was accompanied by several of his pupils, and as they returned to Paris they rested a little while on the road side. One of the students, after looking at the city, which lay like a panorama before them, turned to the Doctor, and, with a touch of national pride, said to him: "See Master, how beautiful is the city of Paris. Would you like to be the lord of this city?" for he thought, says the old writer, to hear something from the mouth of St. Thomas which would edify them. The saint answered: "I would rather have the homilies of St. Chrysostom on the gospel of St. Matthew. For if this city were mine, on account of the care required to govern it, I should be hin-

dered from contemplating the divine mysteries, and thus deprived of all my consolation." The old author, after narrating other anecdotes of the same character, thus concludes: "O happy Doctor, despiser of the world! O lover of heaven! who carried out in deeds what he taught in words, who thus despised earthly things, as if he had already received a gaze of the possession of the heaven which he was hoping for."

One of the most remarkable characteristics of this truly great man, which we cannot omit, was his perfect command over his senses. Although he was by nature delicate and sensitive, he obtained so strong a command over his body, by the force of his intellect, that he was able to undergo several medical

operations without as much as even feeling the pain. Thus when he was at Paris it became necessary that he should be bled, according to the custom of those times. He put himself into a state of contemplation, and felt nothing whatever of the operation. Another time the physician prescribed that his leg should be cauterized. He said to his companions: "When he who is to operate on my leg comes, please tell me." He then arranged himself upon his bed, stretched out his leg and prepared himself, but became so absorbed in contemplation that when the operation took place he never knew it.

One day as he was in his cell dictating, as was his wont, to a copyist, he held the candle in his hand to give the Brother a better light. According to



tradition, he was then engaged upon the beautiful and profound treatise on the Holy Trinity, in the first part of his "Summa," and lost in admiration of this sublime mystery, he let the candle burn down to its end in his hand, without as much as even feeling the slightest pain.

It is said that he was so perfectly master of the faculties of his intellect, as well as of his senses, that he dictated to as many as four secretaries, on widely different subjects at the same time, without losing in the least the thread of his reasoning, which was yet very profound, and one of his biographers says that he even continued to dictate when he was fast asleep.

His memory was very retentive, so that what he once read he never forgot. He was always occupied, either praying,

reading, writing or dictating, so that he was never idle a moment, and to this we may attribute the immense works he has left behind him.

He spoke little, unless it was necessary for some good end. But when he did speak, it was always to the point.

Many of his wise sayings have been preserved us almost by chance. We choose a few of them, sufficient to show how valuable his conversation must have been. "The poverty of an impatient religious," he said, "is a useless expense." "The prayerless soul advances in nothing." "A religious without prayer is like a soldier who fights without arms." "A religious should never go out alone, according to the advice of St. Austin, for a religious alone is like a solitary demon." "I

cannot understand," he once said, "how any one who knows he is in a state of mortal sin, can laugh or be merry." "I cannot conceive how a religious can think of anything else but God." "Idleness is the hook with which the devil fishes, with which all bait is taking."

He was asked one day how one can tell if a religious is truly perfect and spiritual minded. He answered: "He who is always speaking of foolish things, who fears to be despised, who is tired of life, whatever marvels he may work, I do not look upon him as a perfect man, for all he does is a virtue without foundation, and he who can not suffer is ready to fall." His sister asked him one day how she could save her soul; he answered, "By wishing to do so." Another time she asked him what was the most

desirable thing in his life; he answered, "To die well;" and when he was asked how a man can easiest become learned, he said, "By reading one book only."

St. Thomas was of a very noble and handsome figure. His very appearance made men glad. He was sufficiently stout, his complexion was pale, but clear, "like the color of new wheat," said one of the witnesses for his canonization. His head was very large, massive, but well formed; his forehead well defined and slightly bald. The general character of his appearance, if we may trust a portrait said to be authentic, was very calm, sweet, but majestic; his eyes clear and placid, full of meditation, his nose long and straight, his mouth very firm. Altogether the beauty of his soul found fitting expression in his outward

lineaments. It would be impossible to give any just idea of the influence his principal work, the "Summa Theologica" has exerted upon the Church and world. Volumes could be filled with its praises. Every Pope down to our beloved Pontiff, Leo XIII, has praised its doctrine in terms such as no theologian, except perhaps St. Austin, has ever been privileged to receive.

We will cite only a few: when the ambassadors of Naples went to Pope John XXII to demand his canonization, the Pope received them in full consistory, and said: "He (St. Thomas) has enlightened the Church more than all the other theologians. One learns more from his books in a single year than in a whole life-time from the doctrine of others.

When it was objected (falsely, however,) to his canonization that he had worked no miracles, the same Pope said: "He has worked as many miracles as he has written articles," alluding to the form in which his "Summa" is written.

Innocent V thus spoke: "The doctrine of this Doctor, beyond all others, has fitness of words, manner of expression, and truth of opinions; so that he who holds it will never swerve from the path of truth; and, on the contrary, he who attacks it must always be suspected."

Urban V, writing to the Academy of Toulouse, says: "We command you to follow the doctrine of St. Thomas as the Catholic doctrine, and study to embrace it with all your power."

We will conclude these testimonials of the Popes, selected from many others

equally forcible, with an extract from a recent letter of his holiness Pope Leo XIII: "It is of the highest importance," says our beloved Pontiff, whose attachment to the doctrine of St. Thomas is well known, "especially in these times, that the clergy should be deeply imbued with sound and solid doctrine. This result will certainly be obtained, if, as we have learned to our great joy, the doctrine of St. Thomas flourish in your schools."

The Catholic universities, the Religious Orders, without exception, and all learned theologians and Catholic philosophers have praised the doctrine of St. Thomas. The Eastern Church has also given its meed of praise to the angelic Doctor. Cardinal Besarion, one of the most illustrious ornaments of the Greek

Catholic Church, said "that St. Thomas was the most learned of the saints and the most saintly of the learned."

In the Council of Trent a table was placed in the middle of the hall in which the Fathers met; upon it was the holy Scriptures, the Decrees of the Popes, and the "Summa" of St. Thomas. This honor was repeated in the recent Council of the Vatican.

The voice of heresy has also lent its unwilling testimony to the excellence of the doctrine of St. Thomas. "Take away Thomas," was the shamefaced boast of the apostate Bucer, "and I will dissolve the Church;" and the foul-mouthed Luther, not being able to answer arguments drawn from the works of the angelic Doctor, honored him with a torrent of abuse.



What more can we add to these remarkable testimonies from all sides; we can only say, like Lacordaire, that "God alone can praise him in the eternal council of Saints."





## CHAPTER X.

### ST. THOMAS AND THE MIRACULOUS VISIONS.



**A**FTER the death of Urban IV, Guy Fulcodi, Cardinal-Bishop of Sabina, was elected Pope, and crowned February 22d, 1263, taking the name of Clement IV.

The new Pope formed the same high opinion as his predecessors, of the talents and holiness of St. Thomas.

He tried to persuade him to accept ecclesiastical honors, and, despite his refusal, issued a Bull, nominating him Archbishop of Naples, but St. Thomas

was so grieved, and prayed so earnestly to be freed from this honor, that Clement at last annulled the Bull.

After teaching at Bologna, and once more at Paris, he was sent by the General Chapter of the Order, held at Florence in the year 1272, to Naples. During this Chapter the Fathers received petitions from nearly all the university towns of Europe; Paris, Bologna, and Naples, asking to have the benefit of his teaching once more. But the King of Naples, Charles I, of Anjou, prevailed.

The entry of the holy Doctor into that city was a kind of triumph. He was met on entering by an immense crowd which accompanied him to the doors of his convent, where nearly thirty years before he had received the Dominican habit.

Soon after this the Cardinal Legate of the Holy See to the Court of Naples, wishing to have a conference with him, went to the convent, accompanied by the Bishop of Capua, formerly a pupil of St. Thomas. The saint was at once told of their visit, and left his cell to go and see them. But on the way, absorbed by a profound argument, he forgot all about his illustrious visitors who, walking about in the cloisters awaiting him, saw him pass them by without as much as a reverence. Called to himself he humbly begged pardon. The Cardinal Legate retired after he had consulted him on some theological difficulties, not knowing whether the learning or the humility of this holy man, which had thrown the blame upon the weakness of his intellect, merited the greatest admiration.

At Naples he taught publicly, and continued writing his "Summa." All his life he had been favored with remarkable ecstasies, but now they became almost continual; he seemed at times as if separated from the body.

One night Father Reginald, his companion and secretary, who slept in the cell next to St. Thomas, heard him talking in a loud tone as if engaged in an animated conversation. After a few moments St. Thomas called him: "Light the lamp," he said, "and get the manuscript which I have begun to write on Isaias." And then he dictated to the astonished Father. When he had ended, Father Reginald threw himself at his master's feet and begged him to say with whom he had been conversing before he had called him into his cell.

“It little befits you to know,” said Thomas; “return to bed, for there are yet several hours of rest.” “In the name of our friendship,” answered Father Reginald, “in the name of God, give me this little proof of friendship.” This appeal, made in the name of God, went to St. Thomas’s heart; he could not resist any longer, and confessed that God had sent the holy Apostles Peter and Paul to instruct him what he should write; “*but in the name of God,*” he added, with holy prudence, “I command you not to breathe a word of this to any one during my lifetime.”

Another remarkable circumstance shows us visibly the character of St. Thomas, his union of holiness and speculative doctrine. As he was spending the night in prayer, in the church of

St. Dominic at Naples, he suddenly saw before him the soul of Father Romain, a Dominican professor who had succeeded him at Paris. He had died there, but as yet the news of his death had not had time to reach Naples. He said he had spent six days in purgatory, but was now enjoying the happiness of heaven. Here was a grand opportunity for St. Thomas to solve several questions which were at that time occupying his mind; here was a soul who was privileged to contemplate the source itself of all truth. Let us see what were the questions uppermost in the mind of the holy Doctor. The first was what all pious souls would most probably ask in a similar position: "Am I in a state of grace?" and, he added, "Is my labor pleasing in the sight of

God?" Continual study of abstract questions had not dried up the spiritual fountains of his soul, and with all his superhuman learning, his first thought was for his own salvation. The answer was what all would wish to hear, but which is seldom known on this side of the grave.

The second question reveals to us the Christian Doctor. He asked if knowledge acquired on this earth is preserved in heaven. To this, as well as to the third question, about the *way* in which blessed souls see God, the answer was much less explicit, for the Father, like St. Paul, did not attempt to raise the veil which enwraps these obscure points of speculative theology. But he told St. Thomas, without being asked, that the end of his life was near at hand.



The saint was much encouraged by these visions, but yet was anxious lest any error should have crept into his "Summa," and increased his austerities and lengthened his prayers, to beg the light of heaven upon his last work.

God in his love and mercy deigned to assure him of this also. The sacristan of the convent church of St. Dominic at Naples, having noticed that St. Thomas was accustomed to go down to the church during the night when he thought all were asleep, determined to watch him. He saw him go down one night, and having followed him, heard him pouring out his fears to God before the crucifix in the chapel of St. Nicholas. Suddenly the saint was wrapt in ecstasy and was raised up several feet from the ground, his eyes fixed upon the crucifix.

Some Fathers, who were praying in the church, ran quickly to see this wonderful sight, and heard the following words fall from the mouth of the crucifix, which appeared as if alive: "Thomas, thou hast written well about me; what reward wilt thou accept?" "No other than thyself, Lord," was the sublime answer of the holy saint. These words are the epitome of his whole life, the secret of his marvellous success, and the expression of the holy violence which robbed heaven of its mysteries. "Such secrets have been revealed to me," he once said in loving confidence to one of the Fathers, "that what I have written and taught seems to be as nothing in comparison."

On Passion Sunday, 1273, St. Thomas had a remarkable ecstasy.

He celebrated the holy mysteries in the Dominican church at Naples, and fell into an ecstasy so profound that it became necessary to use violence to bring him round again. Several officers from the Court of the King of Naples, and the Fathers who were present besought him afterwards to tell them what had passed at that time, but in vain. A few days afterwards he told one of the Fathers, in strict confidence, that the wonderful mysteries which had been revealed to him at that time had left him in a state of stupefaction, "The tongue of man," he said, "is not able to express the wonderful things of God."

He went to pay a visit to his sister the Countess Theodora, at her castle of San Severino, near Naples. This visit he knew would be his last. While there

he was seized with an ecstasy, so long, that his sister said to Father Reginald, who was with him, "What is the matter with my brother?" The Father answered: "I have often seen him wrapt in spirit, when engaged in contemplating some truth, but never in all his life have I seen him like this."

From this time he ceased to write and to teach. He knew that the end of his life was near, and prepared himself for his passage from this world to the heavenly kingdom, by constant prayer and sweet communings with God.





## CHAPTER XI.

SUBLIME DEATH OF ST. THOMAS.



REGORY X, having ascended the Pontifical throne, at once summoned the bishops and the leading theologians of the whole Church to a general Council, to be held in Lyons, May 1st, 1274. His object was to put an end to the lamentable Greek schism; also to take means for lessening the vices and errors prevalent among Christians; to consider the sad state of the Holy land, and to attempt to regain the holy sepulchre.

Among the theologians called to the Council was St. Thomas, who received a special brief, commanding him to take with him the treatise he had written against the Greek schism by command of Urban IV. He set off at once, although his infirmities were great, and it was the middle of winter. He was accompanied by his constant companion, Father Reginald, who was privileged to be the confidant of the last moments of this great saint. "He was obliged," says the old historian, "to feed him, for his abstraction was now almost continual, so frequently did he fall into ecstasies."

During the first part of their journey, as they were descending from Terracina by the Borgo-Nuovo road full of the sublime thoughts which occupied his

mind, he struck his head against a felled tree which lay athwart the road. The blow was so violent that he fell on the ground, and for a few minutes seemed as if dead. Father Reginald and his companions hurried to the spot, and having raised him, asked him if he was wounded. "Not much," he said. Then the Father, wishing to distract his mind from the pain he was in, said: "Master, you are going to the Council. It will be a great boon for the Council, for our Order, and the Kingdom of Naples." St. Thomas answered calmly: "May God grant me the grace to see this great good." Father Reginald continued: "You will become a Cardinal like Brother Bonaventure, and both of you will be of great use to the Orders of which you are members." But at

once St. Thomas replied; "There is no state which can be more useful to my Order than that in which I now am." "But," insisted the Father, "I do not say this for your sake, but for the general good." St. Thomas interrupted him: "Be sure," he said quickly, "I shall never change my state of life."

Not far from Naples, on the road upon which they traveled, was the castle of Maenza, the residence of his niece, Francesca of Aquino, recently married to Count Annibal de Ceccano. St. Thomas paid her a visit, and while there became much worse, so that he lost all appetite. His companions, several Dominicans of the neighborhood, a doctor from Piperno, and the Cistercian Abbot of Fossa-Nuova, all lavished the greatest care upon him.



It was Lent. The doctor begged him to say if there was any particular kind of food he could relish. "I have several times," he said, "eaten a kind of fish in France called herring; but," he added, "here it is very dear." This fish, now so common, had been but recently introduced into Italy, and was looked upon as a royal dish. Father Reginald was much troubled that he could not procure some herrings for him, when, by what all looked upon as a miracle, a large quantity of them was found in the basket of a fish vender who came from Terracina as if by chance.

The delighted Father ran to the bedside of the saint and said to him: "God has granted your wish, you have what you asked for, we have found the fish you desired." St. Thomas said; "From

whence have they come? Who has brought them?" The Father answered: "God has sent them." But St. Thomas, fearing he had committed a fault against mortification, and remembering the example of the holy King, said: "It is better that I should trust myself to the divine Providence than that I should eat these fishes which have been granted me by the divine Master, but which I have too eagerly desired." - And he could not be prevailed upon to eat them.

He only remained four or five days at the castle of Maenza, but during that time was able to celebrate the holy sacrifice of the Mass once or twice. He was surrounded by all the attentions which affection and veneration could afford him, but he wished to continue

his journey. One morning, when he felt a little stronger, he left for Rome mounted on a mule, and accompanied by several Dominicans, the Abbot of Fossa-Nuova and some Cistercians. But he soon saw that he could not go much further, and begged hospitality from the Abbot. "If the Lord wishes to visit me," he said, "it is better that I should be found in a religious house than in the house of seculars." So after about seven miles of slow traveling he arrived at the monastery of Fossa-Nuova. It was the 10th of February, 1274. On entering this monastery, which has become famous on his account, he leant a while against one of the doorposts and said, in the words of the royal psalmist, "This is my rest for ever and ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen

it." (Psalm 131, v. 14). He repeated the same words in the cloister, after he had made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament in the church.

The Abbot gave up his apartments to him, and his companions received the same loving hospitality, for which the sons of St. Bernard are always distinguished. The monks seemed not to be able to do sufficient to satisfy their veneration for him. They would not let the servants of the monastery serve him, and ran into the forests to cut wood for the fire in his room, and carried it on their own shoulders, thinking themselves happy to pay him this mark of love. The holy Doctor, seeing one of them entering his room carrying a fagot, raised himself in bed and said, "Whence comes this honor to me, that

such holy men should carry wood for my fire; whence comes it that the servants of God should make themselves the servants of a man like me, and carry a burden so far, which must be very painful to them?"

But their charity was amply rewarded for his patience in his sufferings, his modesty and fervent spirit of prayer were powerful lessons for men who were tending towards perfection.

The report of his illness having spread abroad, great numbers of religious from the neighboring monasteries, including many Dominicans from Naples and Rome, and several of the nobility of the kingdom hurried to Fossa-Nuova to take a farewell of him they venerated and loved so much. Among them was his niece, the Countess of Ceccano, but

who could not be admitted into the monastery on account of her sex.

The Cistercian Fathers, wishing to have the last words of his teaching, begged him to explain to them the *Canticle of Canticles*. "Give me the spirit of St. Bernard, and I will do what you wish," was his answer, but they insisted so strongly that he could resist no longer. So, seated in his bed, and surrounded by these holy men, the angelic Doctor gave his beautiful explanation of this difficult book of holy Scripture.

His weariness increasing, he made a confession of his whole life to Father Reginald, then asked for the bread of angels, the holy Eucharist he loved so much, and which he had defended and explained in his writings. When the

Abbot, who carried the Blessed Sacrament, came into his room he rose and threw himself prostrate on the ground, the fervor of his love giving strength to his body. Then when the Abbot asked him, according to custom, if he truly believed that he was about to receive the body of Christ, true Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, who died for us upon the cross, he answered: "If it were possible to have a knowledge more certain than that of faith in the truth of the doctrine of the holy Sacrament, I answer, by virtue of that knowledge, that I believe and know for certain this Sacrament to be true God and man, the very Son of God the Father and of the Virgin Mary; and thus I believe with my heart, and confess with my mouth, all which the priest

has just asked me touching the Blessed Sacrament."

When the Abbot had given him the Holy of Holies he cried out aloud, "I receive Thee, the price of the redemption of my soul, for whom I have studied, watched, preached and taught. I have never said anything wilfully contrary to Thee, nor am I obstinate in my own opinions; but if I have spoken wrongly of this Sacrament, I leave all to the correction of the holy Roman Church, in whose communion I now pass from this life."

After he had made his thanksgiving, during which, according to one of his biographers, he recited his beautiful hymn "*Adore te Devote,*" now said by all priests after Mass, he requested to be put on his bed once more.



Early the following morning he asked to receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and a few moments after the rising of the sun, surrounded by many Dominican Fathers, the Abbot, and all the Community of Fossa-Nuova, and four or five Franciscans, in all about a hundred, he gently fell asleep, to awake in the full light of the presence of God. This was on the 7th of March, 1274. He was forty-nine years of age.

His death was revealed to many holy persons, among whom was his beloved master Blessed Albert. This holy old man, now more than eighty years of age, crowned with the glory of white hairs, was seated in the refectory at Cologne with the Community when suddenly tears began to fall from his eyes. The Prior, who observed it, asked

him why he wept. "It is sad news I am about to tell you," he answered; "Thomas of Aquino, my son in Jesus Christ, the light of the whole Church, is dead. God has revealed it to me." The Prior carefully took note of the date, and afterwards found that it was the same day on which St. Thomas had died.

Some time after the death of the saint, a holy Dominican, Father Albert of Brescia, who followed the teaching of St. Thomas in all things, being himself a Lector, or Professor of theology, as he was fervently praying to God, the Blessed Virgin and the great St. Austin, saw in spirit St. Austin, clad in episcopal vestments, and St. Thomas by his side, wearing a golden crown blazing with jewels, and bearing two charms,

one of gold the other of silver, round his neck, and on his heart a magnificent precious stone, which emitted a brilliant light. His cappa, or cloak, was embroidered with lustrous pearls, and his habit white as the driven snow.

St. Austin spoke to the Father, and said: "I have come to reveal to thee the brightness and glory of Brother Thomas who is with me; for he is my son, having in all things followed my teaching and the doctrine of the Apostles. He has illumined the Church of God by his knowledge, which is symbolized by the precious stones with which he is covered, especially by that upon his breast, which represents the uprightness of intention in all the works he has written in defense of the faith. These diamonds are also the symbols of

the books he has written. He is my equal in glory, but he surpasses me by the aureola of chastity."

These latter words are embodied in the ninth responsary of his Office. "*Augustinus Fratri sic loquitur: Thomas mihi par est in gloria, virginali præstans munditia.*"

His niece, the Countess Francesca of Maenza, went to the monastery to take a last view of her beloved uncle, and not being allowed to go into the cloister, begged that his body might at least be carried to the doors of the monastery. A beautiful legend, preserved by one of his principal historians, says that the mule on which he had ridden from Maenza to Fossa-Nuova, then cast itself upon his coffin and died.

His funeral took place, in the presence

of a great crowd of people, with great solemnity. The Franciscan Bishop of Terracina and Piperno officiated, and a number of Cistercians, Franciscans and Dominicans assisted at the solemn Offices.

While the service was going on, the sub-Prior of Fossa-Nuova, who was very old and blind, caused himself to be carried to the church, so that he might kiss the feet of the saint with the other monks, when suddenly, seized with a firm confidence in the merits of St. Thomas, he bent down and placed his eyes upon those of the body, invoking his aid, and immediately he received his sight.

This miracle made a great impression upon the people, but not nearly so much as the sermon of Father Reginald, who

was now able to tell the wonderful events of the saint's life, which up till then he had been prevented from doing by the express wish of St. Thomas. He gave a history of his life, and solemnly affirmed that he had never lost his baptismal innocence. "I am," he said, "the witness of the whole life of the Doctor, whom I have always found as pure as a child of five years of age." It will be remembered that this Father had been his companion and confessor for many years, and that he had heard the confession of his whole life as he lay upon his death-bed.

After the ceremony, Father Reginald retired to a lonely convent, to weep for the loss of "that light of science," as says an old author, "that flower of purity, that torch of doctrine, that

model of holiness, that source of sweetness and suavity" which the world had lost. But before leaving Fossa-Nuova, he solemnly protested that he only left the virginal body of his beloved master until he could make arrangements to have it transported to some convent of his own Order.





## CHAPTER XII.

### CANONIZATION OF ST. THOMAS.



HE miracles which took place at St. Thomas's funeral were but the first of a long list at his tomb. The deaf and dumb, the blind, lepers, paralytic and possessed, all obtained a cure by virtue of his intercession with God. Few saints have worked so many miracles after death as he. These remarkable events caused the Cistercians of Fossa-Nuova great uneasiness lest they should have to give up his body. The family of the saint



was very powerful in the neighborhood, and they feared that they would claim the body of their holy kinsman. They also remembered that Father Reginald had solemnly protested that he only left the relics of his Master, and Brother in religion, until the Dominicans could claim them.

These causes led to the first translation of the body of St. Thomas. James of Florence, the Abbot, accompanied by two religious, secretly carried the coffin to the chapel of St. Stephen, at the entrance to the cloister, in order to make it more secure. But St. Thomas appeared to him in the night and bade him restore it to its first tomb, so that they who went to pray there should not be deceived. The relics were therefore publicly restored in the presence of the

community. A fragrant perfume was observed by all present. This was but seven weeks after his death.

The miracles continued in great numbers after this translation, especially in favor of holy purity. They were not only worked at Fossa-Nuova, but many miraculous answers to prayers were obtained by him in all parts of Italy.

A third translation took place seven years after, and a fourth seven years later still. Each time the body was found perfectly incorrupt, and a delicious perfume exhaled from the holy remains. The right hand was cut off and given to his sister, the Countess Theodora of San Severino, who enclosed it in a magnificent reliquary, which she placed in the chapel of her castle. It

was afterwards given to the Dominican Convent at Salerno, and was gifted by God with the same miraculous power as his body.

The Fathers of the Order of St. Dominic had never lost hope of recovering the body of their great saint, or of obtaining his solemn canonization. Divine Providence seemed to favor them, for during the short space of thirty years two Dominicans were raised to the Pontifical dignity, Innocent V, elected January 21st, 1276, and Benedict XI, in 1303. These two Popes authoritatively favored the canonization as much as lay in their power, but were yet unable to bring the matter to a favorable issue, owing to the short reign of the first, and the very many important affairs for the good of the Church

which claimed all the time and attention of the latter.

The Cistercians were very much alarmed when Innocent V was elected, and separated the head from the body, in the hope of keeping it at least; and at the accession of Benedict XI reduced the body into a small compass, in order the better to hide it if necessary.

In the year 1318, forty-four years after his death, the process of his solemn canonization was commenced. The Order of St. Dominic, the Kings of Naples and Sicily, the so-called Emperor of Constantinople, many princes and nobles and the University of Naples sent a deputation, consisting of two Dominican Fathers, William of Tocco and Robert of Benevento, to Avignon, in France, where the Pope, John XXII,

held his court to demand his canonization. He received them favorably, and among other things said: "We believe that Brother Thomas is now glorious in heaven, for his life was holy, and his doctrine no other than miraculous."

Three days afterwards he nominated three Cardinals to begin the process of his canonization, and three commissioners to examine into the details of his life, and to test the truth of his miracles. They were Umberto, Bishop of Naples, Angelo, Bishop of Viterbo, and Pandulpho Savello, Apostolic Notary. All the customary forms having been observed, and numerous miracles clearly proved, three Dominican Cardinals, Nicolas de Freauville, Nicolas Aubertin of Prato, Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, and William de Godieu, com-

monly called the Cardinal of Bayonne, formerly a pupil of St. Thomas at Paris, asked that the canonization should now take place without further delay. The Pope acceded to their request, and on the 18th of July, 1323, solemnly canonized St. Thomas.

The evening before, the Pope went to the Dominican Convent at Avignon and pronounced a panegyric of the saint; King Robert of Sicily, who was related to St. Thomas, the Archbishops of Capua and Arles, and the English Bishops of London and Winchester, also spoke with great effect upon their hearers. The day following, July 18th, the Pope celebrated the first Mass in honor of the newly-canonized saint in the cathedral of Avignon, in presence of the King and Queen of Naples,

the whole Pontifical Court, and many princes and persons of rank. The Pope again preached on the life and virtues of the saint, and it was upon this occasion that he said, that in order to canonize a holy Doctor of this kind it was quite unnecessary to have evidence of miracles, for he said: "St. Thomas has worked as many miracles as he has written articles." The next day he sent a Bull to all the Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops of the Church announcing the glad event.

But, although the canonization of their great saint filled the Dominican Fathers with joy, it was not unmixed with sadness, for they were still deprived of his relics, and never ceased to claim them as their right. The Cistercians of Fossa-Nuova knowing this, and seeing

that they would hardly be able to retain them much longer, caused them to be carried to the castle of the Count of Fondi to be more securely preserved there. This nobleman was at war with another nobleman of the neighborhood, the Count of Piperno, and the Fathers feared he might take the relics from them to give them to the King of Sicily, who much desired them. While they were under the care of the Count of Fondi, the King of Naples sent an ambassador to beg him to give him the body of the saint. He refused, and returned it to the Abbot of Fossa-Nuova, but some time after again obtained the relics, and at last secretly gave them to the Dominicans in the month of February, 1361.

The Cistercians complained at once to



the Pope, Urban VI, a Benedictine, and at first with success. The Dominican General, Elias Raymondi, sought an audience of the Pope to beg him to confirm to them, by his authority, the possession of the body of their saint and Brother in religion, to which, indeed, they had the first right. The Pope received him ungraciously, having been prepossessed against his claim by the Cistercian agents at the Pontifical Court. "You come like a thief," he said to the General; "you have stolen the body of St. Thomas;" it being generally supposed that this was the case. Father Elias threw himself at the Pope's feet—"Holy Father," he said, "he is our Brother and our flesh." (Gen. c. 37, v. 27.) This beautiful and simple answer changed the Pope's heart: he asked

where the General wished to place the relics, to which Father Elias answered that he only desired to follow the wishes of his Holiness. Then Urban praised the Order of St. Dominic, and said: "I do not fear heresies, nor their offspring, while this Order exists."

— An illness with which he was attacked prevented him from formally restoring the relics until the feast of Corpus Christi.

He held his Court at that time at Viterbo. The General again sought an audience from him, and pleaded his cause with much eloquence. He gave two reasons why the body should be restored to his Order. First, that the saint wrote the Office of *Corpus Christi*, and secondly, that he had always been distinguished by his very ardent devo-

tion towards the Blessed Sacrament. "Therefore," he said, "I beseech your Holiness to give some boon to our saint to repay him for all he has done for the Church." Then Urban said: "What do you wish me to give him?" The General answered: "Most Holy Father, grant that he may dwell with his own Brothers, the Dominicans, and they will honor him much." The Pope answered quickly, "Is not my Order of St. Benedict able to honor this saint, and is not your Order almost as nothing? It therefore appears better to me that he should dwell among our monks." Then the Master-General said: "Most Holy Father, it is very true that the Order of St. Benedict is very powerful, and that my Order, compared to it, is as nothing. But at the same time that

the Order of St. Benedict is very powerful, it has saints almost without number, and should therefore be occupied in honoring them; on the contrary, our Order which you love especially, as you have often said with your own lips, has as yet only two saints as well as St. Thomas, and if you will grant us his relics we will honor him very much with the other two."

Then the Pope agreed, and restored the body of St. Dominic's greatest son to St. Dominic's children. A distinguished priest of the Papal Court, William of Lorvat, was entrusted with the delicate commission of receiving the head of St. Thomas from the Cistercians. It was at once given up to him at Piperno in a silver-gilt reliquary, and the body was put into his hands by the

Dominicans at Fondi. He at once took the precious relics to Monte Fiasconi, where they were temporarily placed in the Papal chapel, and on the feast of St. Dominic, August 4th, 1368, ninety-four years after the death of St. Thomas, were solemnly restored by a Benedictine Pope to the General of the Dominicans, who had begged for them so pertinaciously.

The Pope made the stipulation, however, that the holy relics should be translated to Toulouse, where the Dominicans were to found a house of studies. The right arm of the saint was to be given to Paris, where he had so often taught; one of his hands, which had been given to the Countess Theodora, and afterwards preserved in the Dominican Convent at Salerno,

was alone left to Italy, the land of his birth.

The translation of the relics from Italy to France took place almost privately. They were accompanied by a little guard of monks alone. Many miracles were worked on the way, especially at Prouille, Avignonette and Villefranche. Arrived at Toulouse, they were temporarily deposited in a small chapel, dedicated to St. Roche, outside the walls of the town, until proper arrangements could be made for the solemn entry.

The reception into the town was magnificent. More than 150,000 people went out to meet the procession, headed by Louis, Duke of Anjou, brother of Charles V, King of France, the Archbishop of Toulouse and Narbonne, the

Bishops of Lavaur, Aire and Beziers, several abbots, many clergy, both secular and regular, and all the confraternities of the town. The standards of France, Anjou, of the Pope, the Counts of Aquino and the town of Toulouse floated round the reliquary of the saint. The relics were taken to the Church of the Friar Preachers, and a panegyric was preached by the Archbishop of Narbonne; but the most magnificent testimony to the holiness of the saint was the many miracles which took place anew by his intercession. This translation took place January 28th, 1369.

The solemn reception of the arm of the saint into Paris was no less magnificent. It was publicly received by the King in person at the church of St. Genevieve, and was then carried in pro-

cession to the Dominican Convent of St. Jacques, where it was deposited in a chapel especially prepared at the King's expense. Three panegyrics were preached simultaneously in honor of the saint. A secular priest preached in the church, a Franciscan in the cloister, and a Carmelite in the open street.

Large relics of St. Thomas have at several times been given to the city of Naples and to Spain. A new and very magnificent shrine was built for his body in the church at Toulouse in the year 1628, and on the feast of the Holy Trinity in the same year the holy relics were solemnly carried round the town, which was decorated for the occasion, and then placed in the new shrine, which was very richly ornamented, and so designed that four priests could say



Mass at it at the same time. This shrine was destroyed during the calamitous times of the French Revolution of 1790. Dispersed by a decree of the Republic, the Dominican Fathers were obliged to leave the convent. Two alone remained, and they, seeing that they would not longer be able to preserve the holy relics, took them to the church of St. Saturnine, and put them under the care of the schismatical Bishop, hoping at least to secure their safety. Three years afterwards, February 27th, 1794, the relics were placed in the crypt of the church. They were restored to the Church in 1807, and in 1825 the head of the saint was encased in a bust, which is carried in procession every Whit-Sunday. The body was placed in a reliquary of gilded wood

and deposited in the chapel of the Holy Ghost.

There the holy relics remained until September 1878, when they were translated to a more magnificent shrine in the presence of the Archbishops of Toulouse and Auch, the Bishops of Montauban, Carcassonne and Montpellier, the Vicar-General of the Dominican Order, many Dominicans, Religious of other Orders, secular priests, and a goodly number of the faithful.

On the shrine was placed a wreath of flowers, which bore the words "*Caro nostra et frater noster est.*" (He is our Brother and our flesh, Genesis 37, v. 27), with which, as we have narrated, Brother Elias Raymondi claimed the body from Pope Urban V. The children of St. Dominic and Brothers of St. Thomas

have not yet given up hope of recovering what they have so unwillingly lost.

St. Thomas was solemnly declared Doctor of the Universal Church by St. Pius V in the year 1567. The holy Pontiff ordered that in future his feast should be kept like that of the four great Doctors of the Latin Church, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Jerome and St. Gregory. The present Pope, Leo XIII, has shown unmistakable signs of his warm and almost unexampled attachment to the teaching of St. Thomas. On St. Dominic's day, 1879, he issued a very remarkable letter, recommending the study of the works of the Angelic Doctor, and on the same feast of the year following he acceded to the request of a great number of Bishops that St. Thomas should be de-

clared patron of all Catholic universities, colleges and seminaries. It may thus be doubted whether the greatest Thomist Popes have exceeded him in his devotion to the most learned son of St. Dominic.







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