



THE LATE FATHER MURPHY

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When I first met Father Murphy, at St. Dunstan's, in '89 he was a lad of about sixteen, in delicate health but showing unusual mental alertness. The following year he went to Rome where, after completing the course in Languages, he made two years Philosophy and, thereafter entered upon the Course of Theology which extends over four years. The hope that the climate of Italy would benefit his health was not realized and he went North for vacations and even spent some of the terms at the University of Innsbruck. Though ill-health tracked him everywhere he enjoyed some oblivion of its presence amid the happy life of the Rhineland and the Tyrol, as well as in the stimulating contact of such men as Hurter and Noldin of the University. And such was the clearness and directness of his intellect that, though he could not, at any time, endure the fag of protracted study, he nevertheless went to the heart of every question of sufficient importance to elicit attention; so that, when he returned to St. Dunstan's in 1900, a life of great usefulness lay before him, if only the native air would work its expected magic.

In all Father Murphy spent six years at St. Dunstan's, the rest of the time being given to Parish work both here and in the Western States, where he was for a period Chancellor for the Diocese of Portland, Ore. When, as years went by, and there was no longer ground for hope that physical strength would be granted him I have heard him apply to himself the words, from the gravestone of an infant, which so arrested Silvio Pellico, "naque, piansi, mori"; he was born, he wailed, he died. So little did what he was able to do seem to him in proportion to his desire.

Father Murphy was essentially a University man. if a University be, as Newman understood it, a galaxy of brilliant minds that scatter wide and lavishly the

germs of fruitful thought. What he wrote was marked by originality and independence of thought. His last published writing, a disquisition, in the Ecclesiastical Review, on the question of when the human soul is infused into the body, was an interesting and clarifying contribution to a discussion on which one might have thought the last word had already been said. He did not specialize in his studies but radiated in every direction of interest; "quidquid homines arant, etc." He had a really splendid grasp of Scholastic Philosophy and Theology, was a linguist of note, speaking and writing especially Latin, Italian and German with great freedom and having established compeniouships with the great writers in each tongue, while his knowledge of English Literature was extensive and intimate. With these, a very wide knowledge of Universal History. It often happens that such an amount of positive acquisition congests into pedantry: with Father Murphy it was but a convenience for the function of thought and the free play of imagination. He enjoyed conversation with men of every condition and could always meet them on the level of their own mentality. But he was most himself when canvassing the deeper spiritual problems which have engaged thinkers from the beginning of our race. Here his conversation was truly illuminating, and flowed freely as from a deep well fed by all streams of human thought and kept sweet by the *Litterae Humaniores* of all nations. In spite of this richness of vein, however, one was still most arrested by the penetrating quality of his mind, manifested both by his analysis of those baffling problems up to the point of mystery and by his recognition of the invalidity of human reason beyond it. There he lifted up the shield of Faith. May he rest in peace.

T. Campbell.