



FATHER JOHN SPRATT BELOVED OF DUBLIN'S POOR

*The following text was produced in a booklet for the centenary of Fr Spratt's death in 1971,
and is a summary of a Doctorate thesis on Fr Spratt.*

SACRED

to the memory of

THE VERY REVD JOHN SPRATT D.D.

who departed this life on the Eve of Pentecost 1871,
in the 75th year of his age, and the 51st of his ministry.

He was for many years Provincial of the Carmelite Order in Ireland.

It was by his exertions and under his superintendence that
the church of that Order was erected in Whitefriar St A.D. 1826.

He was the vigilant guardian of St Peter's Orphanage from its foundation.

And for upwards of forty years he was Honorary Secretary of the
Roomkeepers Society. He was one of the first to join FATHER MATTHEW
in the crusade against intemperance and with MONSIEUR YORE, continued
to be the champion of the holy warfare to the latest moments of his
earthly career. He was the zealous founder of St Joseph's Night Refuge
Cork St for the homeless poor. And the Asylum for the Catholic Female Blind
formerly at Portobello and now at Merrion was one of his happiest inspirations.
To him the schools in Whitefriar St, male and female, owe their origin and efficiency.

(Inscription on Fr Spratt's Grave)

INTRODUCTION

ON the 27th May, 1871, Fr. John Spratt died in the monastery at Whitefriar Street, aged 76 and in the forty-ninth year of his priesthood. The daily paper (*Freeman's Journal*) to which he had frequently contributed carried a touching and eloquent tribute—

“The mournful tidings of Father Spratt’s decease have reached before this the most distant corner of the land, and wherever they have been told, they have been received as the message of an almost national calamity. There is scarcely one amongst the clergy of this country whose name was more widely known, and not even one whose name was linked with nobler works for God, for country and for kind, than that of the benevolent Carmelite whose death we all deplore to-day. In this city where he was born and where he has been toiling for nearly half a century, that name has been familiar as a household word and many a poor family away in some dingy attic will sadly miss his presence and regard his death as a domestic calamity. He realised in its entirety the glorious popular idea of an Irish priest and was at all times the ‘all in all’ to the devoted people amongst whom his life was cast. For nearly forty years he never rested from his labours of love in the cause of temperance. For years upon years there was scarcely a Sunday that he was not present, as its life and soul, at a meeting held in Dublin or in some provincial town, in furtherance of the holy object. The cast-aways in lanes and by-ways – families starving in garrets, with fathers and mothers who had seen better days and shrank from the glare and degradation of beggary in the streets – children (the ever-present ‘waifs and strays’ of our large cities) with no one to care for them – poor servants out of a place, and whom he was almost always sure to provide for – these were the people who mostly claimed his care and on whom he spent it with ungrudging abundance. It was his intimate familiarity with misery like this that made him so earnest in every project that had the welfare and the assisting of the poor for its prominent purpose. Hence he was a member of the Roomkeepers’ Society, and for a quarter of a century one of its honorary secretaries. He was a member of every association formed at various and frequent periods for the relief of civic, national or foreign distress and was scarcely ever absent from a single one of their meetings. Nay more he advocated and urged the cause in ways that people little dreamt of; and hence it came – his philanthropy and benevolence coming to be so widely known of – that more money for charitable objects passed through the hands of Dr. Spratt than through those of any other individual in the country. He has left behind him a name that will be held in benediction; he has impressed his mark on several of the benevolent institutions of our city, and his death is a visitation that our poor will find it hard to realise till, practically and in fact, they come to feel that their benefactor is gone from amongst them.”

The following pages are an effort to appreciate and evaluate this encomium and it is fitting that we should pay this tribute to his memory this year which is the centenary of his death.

SUMMARY OF HIS LIFE

Two years prior to the insurrection of 1798 John Spratt was born in Cork Street, Dublin. On January 5th, 1796 he was baptised in the parish church of St. Catherine's, Meath Street. He was the son of James and Elizabeth Spratt née Bollard) and had a brother James who became an Augustinian friar. He attended school in Dolphin's Barn which lies in the vicinity of Cork Street, At the age of ten he received Confirmation in his parish church at the hands of Archbishop Troy in April 1806 Reared by respectable catholic parents he was introduced at an early age to the lives of the saints and martyrs and was deeply impressed by the Sacred Passion of Our Lord. He seldom joined the young people of the surrounding district in their games and amusements but was more attracted to private reading or to church services. He often read aloud sermons of Dr. Gahan at night, standing on a chair and was greeted with the title "Fr. Spratt" by his brothers and sisters.

From his early childhood he developed a great love for the poor and, encouraged by his mother, he never refused them any help he could give them. He generally gave the alms to the youngest for the Infant Jesus' sake. While still a youth he had occasion to exercise this charity in another sphere. He found a man under the influence of drink driving home a horse through the busy thoroughfare of Cork Street. The driver had fallen asleep and John, seeing the danger, led the animal into a nearby yard. He fed the horse and stood by till the man slept off the ill effects. On waking up the man noticed the strange surroundings and, remembering that he had received a large sum of money for sales made, instantly put his hand in his pocket to see if it was safe. Finding it there he understood what had taken place. Had he been allowed to continue his journey asleep he would almost certainly have been robbed. As a token of his gratitude John asked him to promise to give up intoxicating liquor, which he did. This man called frequently to see his young benefactor and never lost interest in him when he joined the Order.

The Carmelite monastery in Dublin was situated in Ash Street near the Coombe and close to Cork Street until 1806 when the friars were forced to move to French Street, which lay between Cuffe Street and York Street. John's mother attended the Ash Street friary and was a member of the Carmelite Confraternity. John served Mass there and became interested in the Order. One of the priests Fr. O'Farrell taught him Latin and Greek and when the youth applied later for admission to the Order Fr. O'Farrell, who was then Provincial, decided on the 20th August 1816 to send him and another aspirant Robert O'Neill to Spain to be received and educated in the Carmelite Province of Castille, as the Order had no houses of formation in Ireland at the time. They went to Liverpool where they embarked for Cadiz. Their voyage was a rough one and one passenger was washed overboard and drowned. From Cadiz they travelled to Cordova to the College of St. Albert which was to be their first home in Spain. At the time Spain was suffering from the effects of the French occupation (1808–1814). Church property had been confiscated in 1806 and many of the liberal atheistic principles of the Revolution were included in the Constitution of Cadiz 1812.

The two youths made a very favourable impression on the Spanish community but the Prior remarked that their progress in the Spanish language was rather slow. John Spratt was received into the Order on December 5th 1816 and at the end of his novitiate was professed

on December 31st 1817, as a member of the Irish Province. In accordance with the custom prevailing in the Spanish Provinces of the Order he took a vow to defend the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. He was ordained on February 26th, 1820 by Petrus Antonius de Trevilla, bishop of Cordova. He had completed two years study in philosophy and two more in theology. The Spanish Provincial wished to give him the benefit of a year's theology in the College of St. Albert at Seville but the troubled state of the country forced him to continue his studies at Cordova till March 1821 when he concluded them. The following month he went to Seville and before returning to Ireland paid a visit to Granada. He was highly esteemed by his Superiors in Spain and kept up correspondence with his Spanish Prior after his return to Dublin in 1822.

At the Provincial Chapter of 1823, a year after his return, Fr. Spratt was made Prior of the principal monastery of the Province, French Street, Dublin. There were some thirty priests in the Order in Ireland and they were serving the monasteries in Dublin, Kildare, Knocktopher (Co. Kilkenny), Kinsale (Co. Cork), Moate (Co. Westmeath), Leighlinbridge (Co. Carlow), Tohergar (Co. Roscommon) and Ballinasmale (Co. Mayo). The appointment of such a young man to one of the most important posts indicates that his talents were already recognisable.

In French Street he found two special outlets for his zeal. He established a school in Longford Street in 1822 and he took an active part in the conversion of Protestants. A Rev. Mr. Murphy who had conformed to the Protestant religion was received back into the Catholic Church through his good services. We may surmise that the following notice from a daily newspaper refers to his activities also: *"On last Saturday and Sunday a clergyman of French Street Chapel received seven Protestants into the bosom of the Catholic Church and the same respectable clergyman received within the last six months upwards of sixty, who from pure conviction renounced the 'Law Church' and embraced the Catholic faith."*

In 1825 an opportunity occurred which Fr. Spratt availed of immediately. He acquired the site of the thirteenth century Carmelite monastery in Whitefriar Street, Dublin, which had then become vacant. He was able to inform the public that the ceremony of blessing and laying the first stone of the new chapel would be performed by the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Murray, on Tuesday the 25th of October at 2p.m. The ceremony was followed by a concert of sacred music, the proceeds of which were added to the collection taken up during the ceremony to help towards the new building. Several priests and a large gathering of people attended. Two years later the church was built by George Papworth, a noted architect, and was consecrated by Dr. Murray on November 11th, 1827. Built of stone and covered with Roman cement it measured 200 feet long, 34 feet wide and cost £4,500. Due to Fr. Spratt's foresight the ancient statue of Our Lady of Dublin, which had been desecrated in Reformation times, now finds its resting place in the Carmelite church.

On May 8th, 1826 the new Provincial, Fr. Kinsella, reappointed Fr. Spratt Prior of Whitefriar Street and made him his principal councillor also. Though Emancipation did away with the major disabilities under which Catholics laboured there were certain clauses in the legislation which restricted members of Religious Orders particularly in the matter of charitable bequests. Fr. O'Connor, O.S.A., Fr. Leahy, O.P. and Fr. Spratt went to Carlow with a document which had been drawn up to protect the Orders and discussed the matter with the

Augustinian bishop Dr. Doyle on March 20th, 1829. It is very probably due to these efforts that the Bill lost most of its sting.

When he was close on forty years old, Fr. Spratt visited Rome for health reasons and on matters of business. His journey lay through Liverpool, London, Brussels, Cologne and Milan. He arrived in Rome on December 15th 1835. During his stay he was invited to preach in the principal church of the Jesuits on February 28th, 1836 and was conveyed there in the carriage of Cardinal Weld, who was Pope Gregory XVI's adviser on affairs in Ireland and England. He left Rome shortly after April 8th and visited Loreto, Paris and London on the return journey. He obtained the body of St. Valentine, a third century martyr, which was transferred from the cemetery of St. Hippolitus in Rome to Dublin later in the year. It was brought to Whitefriar Street on the morning of November 10th, 1836 and laid on a special elevation in the sanctuary during the High Mass at which Dr. Murray presided and Fr. Spratt preached.

The need of some personal representative of the General in England led to Fr. Spratt's appointment as Commissary General of England on April 27th, 1838 for six years. The General hoped that this would be the beginning of the restoration of the English Province. No doubt Fr. Spratt's work for the Dublin monastery and his dexterity in his dealings with clergy and laity influenced the General, Fr. Calamata, in his choice.

Since Emancipation in 1829 Daniel O'Connell, the political leader of the country, had turned his energies towards the repeal of the Union. This agitation stirred the whole country from 1835 and was marked by a series of Monster meetings from 1840 onwards. The British Government had been watching proceedings quietly but carefully. When O'Connell announced a monster meeting for Clontarf, near Dublin, on October 8th, 1843 the Government forbade it. O'Connell obeyed and called off the meeting. Nevertheless he was arrested that month and charged with forming a conspiracy to change the country's Constitution by unlawful means. He was tried in January 1844 and received a sentence of twelve months imprisonment. Fr. Spratt was in close touch with him and on his 70th birthday, August 6th, he arranged for two Masses and other religious exercises to mark the day.

In the same year a body of officials known as *The Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests in Ireland* was established by Act of Parliament. They were entrusted with the administration of charitable funds in Ireland. The Board consisted of three ex-officio members, all Protestant, five Catholics, appointed by the Government, and five Protestants. Dr. Murray agreed to act on the Board but Dr. McHale, Archbishop of Tuam and Daniel O'Connell did their best to render the Act void. They held that it was an obstacle to the liberty of the Catholic Church in Ireland; that it interfered with the rights of bishops and would deprive the Religious Orders of property. Fr. Spratt was particularly interested and opposed the Act. The Bill was not changed but it gave no offence to the opposition from the manner in which it was applied.

To fit these properly into the picture we should remember that he had his ordinary duties as a member of the Whitefriar Street community. He was available to give the pledge every day

and he held a Temperance Meeting in French Street every Sunday and visited the Night Refuge (founded in 1860) nightly. He rarely missed the monthly meeting of the Sick and Indigent Room-keepers' Society.

In the early months of 1847 Daniel O'Connell died. The whole country had supported him till the ominous division between the Young Irelanders and the O'Connellites took place in 1845. They disagreed as to whether recourse might be had to physical force to obtain the repeal of the Act of Union. The Young Irelanders favoured recourse while the others were strongly opposed to it. Feeling between both parties ran high and some of the O'Connellites suggested that the Liberator's death was hastened by the action of the Young Ireland Party. As his body was on its way back to Ireland from Genoa, Fr. Spratt addressed a public letter to the citizens of Dublin, urging them to avoid any political manifestations during the funeral.

He was highly respected by Lord Cloncurry who was a Protestant landlord in Co. Kildare. A friendship grew up between them from the charitable interests which both had. Fr. Spratt was the medium used by Cloncurry to give donations not only to Catholic but also to general charities. Indeed the author of the book *Cloncurry and his Times* states that "Fr. Spratt had more of Cloncurry's confidence from 1850 to 1853 than any Catholic prelate and many Protestant ones. His Temperance labours rank next to Fr. Mathew's and he may be regarded as his authorised representative and successor. His exertions in philanthropy were inferior to none of his clerical contemporaries."

An indication of his standing in Dublin may be had from his presence at the banquet given by the citizens of Dublin to the Lord Mayor on July 9th, 1850. He was invited to say the Grace. In 1851 he was chosen to preach the panegyric on the feast of the principal patron of the Archdiocese, St. Lawrence O'Toole, at which the Archbishop presided. From 1855 he is the member of the Province who seems to have most dealings with the General. The Provincial at this time, Fr. T. A. Bennett, was also a member of the staff of the Missionary College of All Hallows, Dublin. He was a very busy man and his correspondence with the General was very intermittent. The General wrote to Fr. Spratt in 1855 telling him to convoke the members of the Province for the Provincial Chapter. The latter went to the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Cullen and asked that the same Superiors and officials be renewed. This course was followed.

On June 19th, 1863 Pope Pius IX made Fr. Angelus Savii, General of the Order. Fr. Spratt pointed out to him in September that the time for the Irish Provincial Chapter had arrived. Fr. Bennett, the Provincial, had handed over the seals of his office to him on the third Sunday after Easter since he was First Definitor and Magister Senior. The General told Fr. Spratt to take charge of the Province in the interim. The latter suggested that Fr. Bennett be made eligible once again for the office of Provincial and cited a precedent for it. The Archbishop, he added, agreed with these proposals. In actual fact Fr. Spratt was appointed Provincial by the General in 1863.

The Irish Province throughout its long history had had very little contact with Rome. In the previous century the main links had been with the Order in Spain, France and Belgium. Fr. Spratt's predecessor, Fr. Bennett, had read a very fine course of theology in Belgium, at

Louvain, and had been appointed President of All Hallows College, Dublin. Fr. Spratt was anxious to send novices and students to Rome so that they could get the best training and education.

Fr. Savini raised the question of an English foundation. The previous January he had delayed writing to Bishop Grant as he wished to know what Fr. Spratt could do towards supplying priests for the project. He enquired if he had priests available for it. Fr. Spratt replied that it would be hard to send them as they needed all they had at the moment and added that there was a certain antipathy to Irish clergy among the clergy and layfolk in England. He was exerting himself to the utmost to get vocations and to pay a debt of £2,000 left by his predecessor. From 1863 to 1865 he sent nine young men to Rome to do their novitiate.

His three-year term of office was almost concluded on April 20th, 1866 but as first Definitior he held the seal of office until the appointment should be made known. He was reappointed with no definite term of office. He felt that the students were receiving a poor education in Rome and asked that they receive a course as good as the students of the Irish College especially in Dogmatic and Moral Theology.

It was obvious that Fr. Spratt was finding it difficult to combine his duties as Provincial with his almost superhuman activity outside his monastery. This is referred to by Archbishop Cullen in a letter to Rome: "Frequently in my correspondence with your Eminence I have spoken in praise of the Calced Carmelites of this city. Under Fr. Bennett's rule these fathers made very great progress. He introduced the observance of common life; the students were well educated; the fathers opened good schools for the middle class. The monastery and church of the Order were reconstructed and redecorated and much was done in instructing the people in sermons and hearing confessions. Some years ago the Fr. General thought fit to remove Fr. Bennett from his post and to substitute Fr. Spratt, the present Provincial, in his stead. This latter father is an excellent religious and highly esteemed here in Dublin. He does much for the cause of Temperance, maintains an orphanage and schools for the poor. He has founded a night refuge for all who cannot pay the rent. But despite all these good qualities, he has not been able to maintain the religious system introduced by Fr. Bennett. It may be that he is too occupied with external matters and that he does not attend sufficiently to the affairs of the monastery." But Fr. Spratt does seem to have found a solution for this problem in the closing years of his life.

EFFORTS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

SHORTLY after his return from Spain Fr. Spratt turned his attention to providing education for the children of the neighbourhood around French Street. Fr. Farrington says that he opened his first school in Longford Street in 1822. In 1824 he founded the Roman Catholic Free School in St. Peter's Parish. In 1825 he succeeded in having the rent reduced from £15 to £9 2s. 0d. but he spent a considerable sum of money on basic educational needs such as books and slates, etc. In 1827 the debt was roughly £100.

A Government Report gives a useful picture of this type of school. "*There are also day schools*

attached to many Roman Catholic Chapels, some for males and some for females. In these education is usually gratuitous, and the Master and Mistress remunerated by salaries of £15 £20 or £25 per annum. The funds proceed from voluntary contributions by the congregations . . . The attendance at these schools is in general numerous, the instruction administered is usually on the Lancastrian system; reading, writing and the sedulous teaching of the various catechisms, form the general course of education. The supply of miscellaneous reading is very limited; but we deem it right to observe that none of the immoral works complained of in so many of the ordinary Pay Schools have been found there. The Scriptures are not used in them."

A regular contribution to the schools came from a bequest of the deceased Archdeacon Carey of Dublin. It provided about £14 0s 0d. annually. Each year he had two annual charity sermons in Whitefriar Street Church. By 1832 close on 500 children of both sexes were being educated there "without religious or parochial distinction." Fr. Spratt utilised the National System of Education from 1834 onwards. While his expenses, under the heading of books of lessons, English grammars, copy-books, slate-pencils, holders, introduction to history, tablets, tablebooks, etc., were of the normal type he also provided a special breakfast at Christmas for the children which cost £1 10s 0d. Each pupil paid 1d. per week and the school had two or, at times, three teachers.

Wishing to provide for female education near his monastery he "signed the lease and took possession of the old Methodist Meeting House in Whitefriar Street which was in a dilapidated state and immediately commenced a collection in order to fit it up for a school for the female children of the neighbourhood." His collection together with the money on hands from Carey's Bequest came to £133 17s. 6d. for 1850. £20 was subscribed by his friend Lord Cloncurry, who later sent a note to Fr. Spratt thanking him for his "constant and untiring exertions in favour of our poor country, and of impartial and general education for her suffering people."

Hoping to find a good market for the lacework done in the schools he sent a deputation to the Lord Lieutenant with a pattern. The latter passed it onto Lady Clarendon his wife. She gave an order on May 30th, 1851 for two flounces (each five and a half yards long). Fr. Spratt thanked her for her order and for her good example in extending employment among the female poor. In fact she visited the schools on July 9th, 1851, possibly to see the pattern and the work. On November 20th Fr. Spratt took six of the children with him to the Vice-Regal Lodge where "Her Excellency was graciously pleased to receive them in the drawing-room, and having expressed herself much pleased with the textile and the manner in which the lace had been worked, she said she would wear those flounces at the first drawing-room at the Castle." She spoke very kindly and familiarly to the children and Fr. Spratt thanked her for the kind reception given them. He said that he had about 600 children at the school and there was no religious distinction. She sent a remittance of £25.

The schools were destined primarily for the moral education of youth. The children were carefully instructed in christian doctrine and prepared for the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation. On Christmas Day 1851 Fr. Spratt gave their first Holy Communion to 250 children in Whitefriar Street. In the Industrial Exhibition of 1853 lacework by the children of the Industrial School was on view. The school roll had about 1,800

names; the average daily attendance being 1,000, 140 of whom belonged to the school of industry.

June 1855, was a memorable month for the school. On the occasion of the annual examination the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Carlisle, visited the Female National School. He was received by Fr. Spratt, by the members of the community and other notables. He attended the examination and was pleased with the standard of answering displayed by the pupils.

Nor was the recreational aspect of the school neglected. An instance of this may be seen when Dr. Anderdon, a famous preacher and indefatigable worker on behalf of the Catholic University, gave a soirée to the children of Whitefriar Street schools in January 1859 at which Fr. Spratt and many others were present.

Six years later Dr. Anderdon was invited by his uncle Dr. Manning of Westminster to serve the needs of the Irish in his archdiocese. On that occasion an *Address* was presented to him by the school children.

Besides tending to the needs of his own school Fr. Spratt helped others also. He undertook to dispose of tickets for the annual dinner of the Friends of the Teresian Free School, Glasnevin in 1832. He also supplied advice and information to pupils wishing to attend the boarding and day school at Mount St. Joseph, Clondalkin and was often present at their prize-day.

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

In his book on the Catholic University, Fr. Fergal McGrath refers to the foundation of a committee in January 1850 for a twofold purpose, to enlist public sympathy and to raise funds for the University. He attributes this to the appeal made by the Synod of Tuam in 1849. But it was Fr. Spratt who took the first practical steps. On January 30th, 1850 he addressed a letter to the hierarchy stating that a businessman, Mr. Devereux, had promised £200 towards a catholic university for Ireland. Dr. McHale, Archbishop of Tuam, wrote to Fr. Spratt early in February permitting him to use his name as Trustee for the University funds. In his letter he says:

“Your plan is admirable; leaving the regulation of the University in its plan and details to the hierarchy, to whom such institutions should be confided. You kindly and generously anticipated their wishes in coming forward to lighten their labours, by collecting funds and discharging the other onerous duties connected with the success of this great national undertaking.”

As Dr. Cullen of Armagh was absent Dr. McHale, said he would vouch for the latter's acceptance of the trusteeship. Fr. Spratt was the first to set up a Committee to raise funds for it though the Committee was radically changed later.

CATHOLIC YOUNG MEN'S SOCIETY

The parent Society was founded in Limerick on May 19th 1849 by Fr. O'Brien, later known as Dean O'Brien. Its original title was *Young Men's Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary* and its purpose was defined as that "of fostering, by mutual union and co-operation, and by priestly guidance, the spiritual, intellectual, social and physical welfare of its members." The fundamental rules were monthly Confession and Holy Communion, no party politics and the acceptance of the chaplain's power of veto. Its purpose was to "put down sin and falsehood and to extend virtue, intelligence, order and brotherly love and love of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church." The spiritual director of each branch was to be appointed by the bishop and the director's consent was necessary to sanction any new rule. Provision was also made for public lectures, debating societies, evening classes and a library and reading room.

Once the Society had been founded it was bound to have a centre in Dublin before long. This happened on June 12, 1854:

"The first public meeting of 'The Young Men's Society' was held at the Music Hall last evening. This society, thus auspiciously inaugurated, is founded on the model of those already established in Limerick and other cities, and which are working with unexampled success. The meeting was one of the largest and most enthusiastic which has been held in this city for a considerable time, and the perfect unanimity which prevailed was a happy omen of the future prosperity of this most useful institution. It is scarcely necessary for me to say that it has our best wishes, and that we feel assured that the Catholics of Dublin will give it that cordial and universal support which it so well deserves.

"The people of Dublin are deeply indebted to the distinguished ecclesiastic and true Christian philanthropist, the Very Rev. Dr. Spratt, for this as well as for the many other admirable projects of piety, charity and utility, which have engaged his energies for so many years past, and which have been productive of so much benefit to our fellow-citizens."

At the meeting Fr. Spratt was motioned to the chair. In his Address he delineated the objects of the Society - mutual improvement, brotherly love and devotedness to the faith. The Society had a very happy adolescence as far as public lectures were concerned. These occurred roughly once a fortnight and were given by good speakers on interesting subjects. Fr. Spratt frequently attended them. Membership rose to 900. They had a library and they had a special annual retreat. When Pius IX was saddened at the loss of his territories an Address of sympathy was drawn up by Fr. Spratt in their name and sent to him.

In 1835 the *Catholic Society of Ireland* was established by the hierarchy for the gratuitous distribution of religious books and thereby to promote Catholicism at home and abroad. Fr. Spratt's name appears among the trustees and he was a member of the management committee.

When Daniel O'Connell was imprisoned in 1844 the representatives of the various Christian Doctrine Confraternities in Dublin met in the large rooms in French Street (the old monastery and church of the Carmelites) on June 9th, 1844 to decide on the best means of

testifying their sympathy and respect to him. Fr. Spratt was requested to take the chair and a Committee was appointed to draw up an *Address* to O'Connell.

HIS WRITINGS

Considering the extremely active life led by Fr. Spratt it is surprising that he found time for the apostolate of the pen. Few, if any, of his publications merit reprinting except perhaps his *Manual of Devotion* which has never been surpassed by similar publications in the Irish Carmelite Province.

His first publication was a sermon on *Love of God and our neighbour* in 1825. The proceeds from this were devoted to his schools in Great Longford Street. Unfortunately we have no copy of this sermon. Six years later he published a booklet *Parents' Guide* and sent a copy to Dr. Doyle, bishop of Carlow. The latter praised the work and offered a few helpful criticisms.

We are fortunate in having several Scrapbooks compiled by Fr. Spratt. Most of them consist of pictures or cuttings from newspapers about current events. He also had an interest in Irish antiquities and copied notes about early monastic foundations, about some of the older Carmelite monasteries, about Christchurch Cathedral, St. Mary's Abbey and letters of Popes to the Irish princes. They also include very nice thoughts such as the following:

“A man of kindness to his beast is kind,
But brutal actions show a brutal mind;
Remember, He who made thee, made the brute;
Who gave thee speech and reason, formed him mute.
He can't complain, but God's all-seeing eye
Beholds thy cruelty; He hears his cry.
He was desigued thy servant, not thy drudge;
And know that his Creator is thy judge.”

What an absurd as well as barbarous act, to cut off a dog's tail! You might just as well cut off his tongue. In fact, a dog talks far less with his tongue than with his tail. With his tail a dog expresses not only gratitude, but hope, entreaty, complaisance, affection, love, obedience, wrath, shame, defiance, fear and frolic. It is clear then, that in depriving a dog of his tail, you deprive him of an organ of speech.”

His best work, *The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, demonstrated from the Diary of an Irish Farmer*, came in 1850. It was intended as a clear exposition and solid defence of the Eucharist expressed in simple language. A second polemical work appeared later *The Holy Bible alone is not the Rule of Faith, with two articles showing that by works a man is justified and not by faith only*. It is unobtainable now but at least we have a contemporary review which concludes:

“The following tract will, it is hoped, in a clear, plain and solid manner, answer this important interrogatory. Whilst affording to humble catholics the grounds of their faith and the foundation of their hope, may it tend to dispel the darkness of error from the minds of those who, whilst they talk

of the law and the prophets, set up a law of their own at utter variance not only with the law and the prophets but even with the Lord of both - Jesus Christ Himself, who has established His Church upon a rock against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

“The labours of the very reverend and esteemed author of this admirable tract are too well known to the citizens of Dublin, to need observation or panegyric from us. We perceive that the profits of this publication are to be devoted to the support of that excellent institution which he founded, and which he watches over with more than parental care - the Literary and Industrial Schools, Whitefriar Street.”

During the famine years he published a thirty-two page pamphlet on Intemperance. To-day it makes very sombre and grim reading and conjures up a sordid picture of the evils attendant on drink. He also wrote an *Eulogium on the Blessed Virgin*, a book on devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, a number of sermons, including his sermon at the dedication of the Carmelite Church in Moate in 1868. He composed a small manual of preparation for celebrating Mass, which gave a preparation, thanksgiving and a number of the more commonly used blessings. His *Carmelite Manual* which saw at least five editions was a credit to him and may still be used with profit. Consisting of more than five hundred pages it has prayers, devotions and novenas for all the important feasts and for the needs of the faithful in all periods of their lives in addition to providing a great deal of useful information concerning religious matters.

LABOURS ON BEHALF OF CHARITY

WHEN Fr. Spratt died on May 27th, 1871, the Secretary of the Sick and Indigent Roomkeepers' Society summoned an extraordinary meeting of the Society on the following day to pay their last tribute to the Secretary who for almost “forty years gave them the great value of his support and confidence.” In 1833 he had been chosen to fill that position in the Society which was non-denominational.

He drew up their Annual Report, acted as chairman at a very big number of their monthly meetings, secured the preacher for the annual sermon, and was the medium through which many donations came to the Society. His contribution is nicely summed up in the Annual Report for 1871:

“It is full time that we should pay our need of homage and respect to the memory of our late valued and venerated honorary Secretary, the Very Rev. Dr. Spratt, who for upwards of 40 years stood by the left hand of the Lord Mayor at the annual meetings of the Society, and read our Annual Report. What friend of our charity, or any charity, can forget his kind, benevolent and cheering countenance, his philanthropy, his unbounded exertions in the cause of charity, his reclamation of the drunkard and the fallen. It would be impossible in a sketch of a Yearly Report like this, to do justice to the memory of this great and good man, whose loss we all deplore, and whose connection with this Society has been of such important value to its best interests. We can only say, the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven, and that he is now enjoying the reward of his many good acts, while carrying out the sacred mission of his calling here amongst us.

At our next Annual Meeting we trust to have our Board Room ornamented with an appropriate oil painting of our venerated departed honorary Secretary and thus even on canvas perpetuate the memory of his many virtues."

COUNTY AND CITY OF DUBLIN CHOLERA ORPHAN SOCIETY

Fr. Farrington says that in 1832 Frs. Spratt and O'Rourke carried straw on their backs to make beds for the poor and they carried the dead to the carts to have them sent for burial. The second name on the list of guardians is Rev. John Spratt and the name Michael Spratt, Cork Street, appears on it also. In all probability they were brothers.

ST. PETER'S ORPHAN SOCIETY

By 1835 Fr. Spratt was the most important member of this Society, which had its classrooms at 9 Peter's Row, very near Whitefriar Street. It catered for about thirty orphans who were under his immediate superintendance. Part of its funds came from an annual charity sermon in Whitefriar Street. In 1835 the morning sermon was preached by Fr. P. Dowling, O.S.A., at 2 p.m., and the evening sermon by Fr. Spratt at 7 p.m. In the, eighteen years since its foundation it had cared for 121 orphans all under four years of age, without distinction of religion or parish. All had been given medical attention, food and clothing and, when they were of a fit age, they were placed in the school run by a master and mistress under the supervision of Fr. Spratt. Many of the orphans had been apprenticed to trades and had been provided for. The main sources for funds were regular collectors, Charity sermons and donations.

Fr. Spratt made frequent appeals for the orphans. One of these was printed on New Year's day, 1862, under the title *Christmas Charity*.

In the enjoyment of the happy season of Christmas 'Remember the Orphan'. There are many calls, but the Redeemer has declared 'Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me. Happy the man who gives alms to Jesus. Remember then, at this happy time those little ones of Christ, who have no longer the protection of a parent or the comforts of a home. With a closer and fonder embrace your own loved children cling to you, and fondly seek for increased endearments. Ah, in the midst of this hallowed enjoyment, let the sweet consciousness of having shared with the orphan, give at once an increase of happiness to your firesides, and bring with it the blessing of the 'Father of the Orphan' on yourself and family. Surely no charity can be more acceptable to the Divine Child Himself as a celebration of His Nativity than the relief of the poor children of misfortune. 'Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.' Benevolent reader, as Guardian of fifty poor Orphans, supported in St. Peter's Orphanage, 51 Aungier Street. December 1861.

John Spratt, D.D.

ST. ANDREW'S ORPHAN SOCIETY

In addition to directing many charitable organisations he interested himself in and helped many others. Both Fr. Tobin, a Carmelite of Whitefriar Street, and he were spiritual guardians to St. Andrew's Orphan Society. He attended some of the meetings of the Mendicity Association in 1835. He was pleased to preach on behalf of other orphan Societies and aided the St. John the Baptist and St. Bridget Orphan Societies as well as the Widows' House and Female Day School in Clarendon Street.

THE NIGHT REFUGE

The year 1860 saw a very important and necessary contribution by Fr. Spratt to the poor, homeless women in Dublin. He founded St. Joseph's Night Refuge at 9 Brickfield Lane for them. His opening Appeal was sincere and to the point:

"I have for a long period, with feelings of sorrow and commiseration, looked upon the pitiable condition of the homeless poor of this city – those utterly destitute creatures who are under the dire necessity of spending the night on the streets, crouching and shivering in an archway or the passages of houses - outcasts, as it were to humanity, forlorn and deserted by all.

"There are hundreds of these homeless creatures in Dublin and I am able to state from the personal experience of a gentleman of this city, whose duties require that he should be out every night, up to three a.m., that hundreds of poor children, male and female, are even the most bitter nights without any shelter, save that which a doorway or dismal hall of some old house affords. But this is not the worst of it – destitute young women repeatedly call at the police stations and ask permission to sit at the fire until morning; this request is on all occasions refused, and the poor creatures are turned out – for what? Because there was no charge against them. Can we wonder that many of these, unable to bear up against cold and hunger, succumb and lose their virtue. I have also been informed that many poor creatures sleep in the hall of one of the daily morning papers every night; and trifling as is the shelter it affords, they could not have it only that the gate is open all night for the workmen to pass in and out.

"Our streets are crowded with unfortunate females, very many of whom have abandoned themselves to sin through sheer poverty and want of a night-shelter.

"It is true that there are cheap lodgings at 4d. per week. Cheap lodgings indeed, where male and female, youth and age, sin and innocence, the married and the unmarried, lie side by side, and morning sends forth the inmates to spread a fouler contagion of vice around the city, to prey upon the honest, to corrupt the young, increasing the cost of jails or reformatories, or workhouses and of hospitals. These facts are plain to all thinking men, but to the clergyman they are made apparent every hour.

"We have taken the Tenter House in Cork Street, lately used as an Auxiliary Workhouse of the South Dublin Union, and a building better adapted for the purposes of a Night Asylum could not be selected. The house contains four rooms, each 200 feet long; to this there is attached a very large piece of ground, and the whole is surrounded by a wall, with entrance-gate and lodge.

“I well know that the amount of misery in this city is so great that it cannot be expected that it all could be grappled with; but still it appears to me that some of its most appalling results would be prevented by the institution of a night refuge for homeless children and women, wherein the warmth of a fire and the comfort of a clean bed of straw would be afforded to all poor females and children who would present themselves before a certain hour at night, with a ticket from a clergyman or respectable householder and where night-prayers would be a preliminary to their retirement to rest; their departure in the morning not only preceded by morning prayer, but if funds would allow, some refreshment – a portion of bread with milk, cocoa or soup –be also afforded. Oh! how much good would thus be effected! how much evil prevented! how many sinners reclaimed! The simple recital of what is thus proposed to be done, speaks with a full and convincing eloquence of the value of such an Asylum and saves any necessity of fuller explanation for the present.”

“It may be considered unreasonable of me, where so many charities are supported, so many claims generously responded to, to expect that an additional burden should be undertaken. But can we ever do too much in the cause of Him who has shed the last drop of His sacred blood for our salvation. Is the statement I have made true or false? If true, can any work be more acceptable to that divine Redeemer, than rescuing the souls and bodies of his suffering poor from eternal ruin?”

“In the name of suffering humanity I make this appeal and solicit the sympathy and liberality of a generous public on behalf of this charitable institution.”

The local curate, Fr. John O’Hanlon, gave the following encouragement.

*“Ss. Michael’s and John’s Church,
Jan. 11th, 1861.*

My dear Dr. Spratt,

As I had not the good fortune to find you at home when I lately called at Whitefriar St., will you please accept the enclosed small contribution of £‘ towards your truly noble and charitable enterprise, the Night Refuge for the Homeless Poor. In my opinion, it ranks foremost among the many charitable institutions of Dublin. From a previous knowledge of the position and conveniences of the Tenter House, when it formed an auxiliary Workhouse of the South Dublin Union, no better selection could have been made for the object you have in view.

The Poor Law Amendment Bill, which was taking shape in the Parliamentary debates early in 1862, had an obnoxious clause II which intended to tax all religious, charitable and educational establishments in the country. Dr. Spratt wrote to the Chief Secretary on the subject of the Night Refuge. He “concisely and clearly submitted to Sir Robert (Peel) the consequences to this institution of clause II and concluded with the entreaty that the Chief Secretary would withdraw this proposition to make all charitable institutions rateable for Poor Law purposes. The appeal received a kind hearing.

He visited this institution nightly. The details of the week ending on the 23rd November, 1865, are interesting and typical:

Servants 361; Children 83; Plain workers 44; Laundresses 13; Cooks 31; Shirtmakers 17; Travellers 20; Bootbinders 12; Capmakers 21; Factory Girls 39; Dressmakers 21; Petit dealers 22; Children's maids 67; Total 751. The admissions for the first week of May, 1866 were 746. That might be taken as a fair average for the rest of the year.

When the fatal attack came on May 27th, 1871, he was writing certificates for two women to whom he had administered the pledge. He sank into the arms of a gentleman who was transacting business connected with the Night Refuge. But he had provided for it by handing it over to the Sisters of Mercy who still continue the good work.

HOUSE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

He wanted a separate home for female patients. This led to a dispute with Fr. Bernard Kirby who was in charge of the Richmond Female Penitentiary. Finally Fr. Spratt was persuaded to utilize the home already existing in Donnybrook. We may mention *en passant* that Fr Spratt was one of the patrons of the Harffield Mental Home, Drumcondra, in 1844 and later.

THE FAMINE PERIOD

In 1841 more than two-thirds of the Irish people depended on agriculture for their livelihood. The remaining third, which depended on industry and manufacture, were in a more precarious position. The farms were very small. Only 7% of the holdings were over thirty acres, 4500 were under five. In Connacht the holdings under five acres were as high as 6400. County Mayo was the second most thickly populated county in the country.

The survival of this vast, impoverished population of eight and a half million depended on the potato crop. Blight hit in 1845. There was universal failure in 1846. People everywhere were seized by panic to get away from Ireland. From 1845–1847 the population dropped by two millions – one million emigrated and the other million perished.

The Government had tried and failed to relieve the situation. Various Charitable Societies were formed to enlist subscriptions for the starving poor. The Central Committee had collected £71,958 and though not operating in 1847, had never been dissolved. The Committee of the Society of Friends which during 1845 and 1846 had collected the extraordinary sum of £200,000, had given up saying "*We are saddened by the conviction that with very few exceptions, no permanent good has been done. We feel the condition of our country is not improved - that her prospects are even worse, because her people have lost hope.*"

Fr. Spratt's pen was first lifted to object to the method of applying relief to the poor of Dublin. He addressed himself to the Lord Mayor. By a new regulation of the Finance Committee large numbers of the starving poor had to wait a week or ten days before having their case approved and thus obtain outdoor relief. As the poor were already forbidden to beg on the streets the position was intolerable.

"In making this appeal to your Lordship, as father of our city, I wish to remind those whose unwise regulations are depriving the poor of bread, that though the scourge of starvation is limited

to the poor yet the dreadful scourge of fever and pestilence often visit the rich and are as sure and unerring agents in the work of death. Let them remember they are at their doors. Let those dread them who have refused timely aid to the poor! Whilst I applaud those who are busily engaged in providing fever sheds for the sick and salaries for the medical attendants, I implore them to take such measures as may prevent, to a great extent their necessity, by a timely distribution of wholesome food to their starving fellow creatures, who were created by the same omnipotent God, and are as much entitled to live as themselves."

He also took great exception to the type of bread supplied to the poor. He sent some samples of the bread and a letter to the newspaper *The Evening Packet* on July 29th, 1847.

"Sir,

I beg leave to direct your attention to the enclosed sample of poisonous stuff, distributed for rations to the poor, at the relief depots of our city, and made by the cook appointed under the relief commissioners. Do not be surprised to learn that fever is spreading, when such food is given to the destitute poor of our city."

GENERAL RELIEF COMMITTEE

Fr. Farrington, in his *Life of Dr. Spratt*, says that he was the Secretary of the Royal Exchange Committee which was formed to help the starving poor. The Committee collected £5,484 13s. 2d. between May 3rd and September 1st, 1849.

Some of the letters read at the meetings of the General Relief Committee show the zealous charity of the clergy. Fr. Curran, P.P., of Athenry, appealed for help for the parish of Newcastle. His curate, who had officiated there, died of the cholera in June 1849. To illustrate the extreme distress in the West, Fr. Spratt related that Fr. Noon, P.P. of Killiscobi, had come to Dublin the previous week to sell two silver watches and a service of plate which his parishioners had presented to him in more prosperous times to bring them some measure of relief. He told Fr. Spratt that several priests had sold their clothes to provide food for their parishioners. In all they published 12 Addresses and Circular Letters – one to England, one to America, one to R.C. Clergy, one to Protestant Clergy and some to the general public.

Donations for the Committee came mainly from Dublin, Wexford, Drogheda, Derry, Kildare town and Rathangan.

He was also a member of the Mansion House Committee who worked hard to relieve poverty especially during the 1860's and he also made collections to help the French after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870.

ASYLUM FOR THE BLIND

The care of the blind was an object of concern for him. The Molyneux Asylum had been founded for them since 1815 but was unable to cater for catholics. At Fr. Spratt's suggestion St. Mary's Catholic Asylum for the Industrious Blind took shape in August 1856. The inauguration took place in 1858 and the Irish Sisters of Charity took charge of it in

Dominick Street. Dr. Yore and Dr. Spratt were the founders and they placed it under the patronage of the Archbishop. On October 20th, 1859 it was transferred to Portobello House and on November 21st the Sisters took up residence there. Later it move to its present location in Merrion Road. Though Fr. Spratt seems to have had no connection with the Blind Male Institute at Glasnevin he was instrumental in getting them a donation of £100 in February 1868.

The first annual meeting of the patrons of the asylum was held at Portobello on April 10th, 1861. The Report stated that 102 blind females were supported and carefully instructed in moral and religious duties and history, geography, arithmetic, etc., and music (vocal and instrumental). They were also trained in several branches of industry - knitting, netting, plain and fancy, basket-making, mat-making, etc. The Committee were anxious to introduce brush-making. Suitable Catholic literature was to be provided in embossed characters.

Fr. Spratt was present and was appointed Vice-President of the Committee of Management for the ensuing year. He was also present at the meeting in the Rotunda on the following day at which Dr. Cullen presided and read an *Address*. The Bishops of Adelaide, Bombay and Lissalde and a large number of clergy were present. A small blind girl presented an *Address* and the Report was read by the Secretary.

An examination of the pupils was held on December 7th, 1862 and their work was exhibited to the patrons. At this assembly tribute was paid to Fr. Spratt's activities to obtain Portobello for the Asylum.

"A few short years have passed since Dr. Spratt at his own individual risk, became the tenant of the Grand Canal Company for the Portobello Hotel, with a view to converting it into an asylum for female industrious blind."

THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT

THE first indications of an Irish Temperance movement were seen in Cork and Dublin in the late 1820's. A Protestant clergyman, Rev. Nicholas Dunscombe, a Unitarian, Richard Dowden and a Quaker, William Martin, had been making attempts of various kinds to diminish the evils of intemperance in Cork. A Capuchin friar, Fr. Theobald Mathew, who had done much for the poor of Cork in the previous twenty years, was one of he Board of Governors on the Cork Workhouse Committee. William Martin approached him saying that he and he alone could put the Temperance Movement on its feet. Fr. Mathew saw very clearly the havoc caused by drink among all classes, but especially among the poor. Early in April, 1838 he called a meeting. He explained that frequent entreaties by men who differed from him in religion, but who were known and respected for their worth and charity, had led him to proclaim the Temperance Crusade. He himself was the first to sign the book for those taking the pledge to abstain from alcoholic drink. In three months 25,000 had taken the pledge and it spread rapidly throughout the country chiefly through his exertions.

TEMPERANCE IN DUBLIN

On February 2nd, 1840, the members of the Irish Total Abstinence Association met at their hall in French Street. Some two thousand people were present at an *Address* read by Thomas Mason of the Society of Friends to Very Rev. Dr. Spratt. The committee heartily welcomed Fr. Spratt's advocacy of their efforts and hoped that many priests would follow his example in promoting its ideals. In reply Fr. Spratt said that he had been "led" to the sacred work by the example of that priest who may be called the Apostle of Temperance and by the loud and unanimous voice of millions crying out in the sincerity of their hearts: "We wish to have our morals reformed – we desire to free Ireland from the stigma upon her fair name – we seek under God to have ourselves and our children in some measure restored to the beauteous image of the eternal."

Such a movement was bound to draw comment from many quarters. It deplored the crime of drunkenness and the misery which normally followed it. To some the movement seemed exaggerated and one which would have drastic effects on the economy of the country – on publicans and grocers especially, but also on "the distiller, brewer, merchant, maltster, cooper, retailer, farmer and landlord! with all their clerks, labourers, porters and dependants and lastly, the revenue, which in the last quarter alone (ending 5th January, 1840) has been £800,000 deficient." (*Freeman's Journal*, 6th March, 1840).

A large temperance meeting was held at Donnybrook on June 21st, 1840. The detail and order of these meetings are interesting. At 5 p.m., Fr. Spratt, Counsellor Mackey, Mr. Battersby and others arrived, followed by the band of the 88th regiment. A number of tents were erected for the guests, some five to seven hundred in number. They had tea and coffee supplied by Mr. Shields, of Kevin's Port. Whilst they were "enjoying the luxury of the simple 'feast of reason' and 'genuine flow of soul', the band in the adjoining field was contributing to the harmony of the scene by playing a number of delightful airs." About 7 p.m., the tents were cleared and the meeting began. Fr Spratt took the chair. There were then about 5,000 present. In his address he praised them for their order, decorum and regularity. He referred to the place on which they stood "on the very spot which has been for ages the scene of so much drunkenness, riot and debauchery." He detailed the advantages of teetotalism, with reference to the spiritual, moral and social habits of the people, who were now light-hearted, stronger and better men and much better Christians. Mere temperance had been tried and found ineffectual. It could not prevent drunkenness. Total abstinence was the easiest and best. This was also Fr. Mathew's experience. Fr. Spratt reckoned there were two million teetotallers in the country. He exhorted them to continue with the moral regeneration of their country and become a sober, peaceful, united and happy people. "How glorious," he says, "to find all Irishmen thus united in promoting the happiness of themselves, their families and their country."

The Catholic Directory gives a list of its Temperance Societies in the archdiocese of Dublin for 1840.

Church Street	175,000
Arran Quay	22,000
Lower Exchange Street	20,000
French Street	8,000

(This was Fr. Spratt's Society).

Francis Street	2,500
Kingstown	4,000

Arran Quay and Exchange Street had branches also in the country. In 1841 Arran Quay had increased to 25,000; Lower Exchange Street to 24,000; French Street to 10,000; Denmark Street had 5,000; Kingstown to 8,000; James' Street had 4,000; The Augustinians (John's Lane) began and had 500; Westland Row had 4,000 and Fr. Spratt had a Juvenile Total Abstinence Society in Whitefriar Street with 500 members.

"St. Patrick's Day 1841 was a very colourful and memorable occasion for the movement in Dublin. Before nine o'clock the streets were full of men and boys dressed with bands and sashes and carrying long white rods tipped with ribbons, and in many cases with gold shamrocks, harps, crowns etc.; all going to the committee rooms of their societies. The different societies marched with bands playing to the general rendezvous in Phoenix Park where they began to move at 12. The procession was nearly three miles long. A rough estimate of the number was given as 20,000. The following order was preserved:

"The Port of Dublin Total Abstinence Society preceded by James Haughton Esq., President, and the members of the committee in an open chaise and four, and followed by another chaise filled with Highland pipers playing. About '00 sailors marched in this body, with the Union Jack flying before them, and their good-humoured and manly appearance excited much interest among the crowd. The society also carried two banners - the first contained a representation of a drunkard sitting before his empty glass, with pale haggard and sottish features, and a most wretched and revolting appearance, while on the other was the figure of a teetotaller dining from a well-supplied board, and showing a fat ruddy 'phiz' in which health and contentment were happily displayed. Distinguishing colours, white rosettes but no sashes or bands.

"St. Nicholas of Myra's Total Abstinence Society preceded by Rev. Dr. Flanagan, President, and Rev. Mr. O'Farrell in a chaise drawn by four grays and followed by another chaise with the committee. 6,000 members in the society. Good attendance here: Colours: Crimson scarfs and white flowerets.

"The Very Rev. Theobald Mathew's Society preceded by twelve mounted marshals with a carriage and four, containing V. Rev. J.J.F. Murphy, O.S.F.C., Vice-President; the Rev. Fr. Smith P.P. Sandyford and Messrs. Brennan and Langan. They had a fine band of 36, drawn in a large caravan and ornamented with laurel boughs given for the occasion by Mr. Gosson of Dorset Street. Immediately behind the band was a chaise, with Brady, the blind harper, dressed in the costume of the ancient Irish bards and playing on the national instrument. The Society which is only recently formed numbers nearly 6,000 and there was a good attendance. Their branches were present also. They wore white sashes with gold fringes and roselets.

"St. James' Total Abstinence Society preceded by Dr. Mooney, V.G., in a chaise and four. It had a band. Their colours were red and white and they wore sashes and flowerets.

"St. Paul's Total Abstinence Society preceded by a coach with six horses containing V. Rev. Dr.

Yore, V.G. President, and committee. They had a fine band dressed in blue uniform with crimson linings, which travelled in a coach and six ornamented with a profusion of laurel boughs. This Society had about 40,000 members and was the largest in the procession. Their branches were also present and all wore crimson sashes and flowers.

“The National Temperance Society of Stafford Street attended wearing white knots and flowers, but without sashes.

“The Metropolitan Total Abstinence Society preceded by mounted marshals – a chariot with six postillions and outriders, all in handsome sky-blue livery and gold lace, containing the Rev. A. O’Connell, President, and Thomas Reynolds, V.P., the latter gentleman dressed in a rich blue sash, with large gold tassels and fringes. This Society (20,000) attended in great force and had the finest appearance in the procession. They had three bands and their colours were blue sashes and ribbons with white roselets.

“The Irish Total Abstinence Society preceded by marshals on horseback. Very Rev. Dr. Spratt, President and Mr. J. Reilly Vice-President were in the first chariot drawn by six horses with postillions and outriders in white livery with a profusion of gold lace. Its membership was about 16,000. They had a very fine appearance as they wore white scarfs with pink flowers and knots.

“The National Total Abstinence Society of Denmark Street, preceded by a coach and four with mounted marshals. Its President was Rev. Mr. Dunphy. A very expressive and appropriate emblem was carried in this society - a long pole surmounted by a loaf of bread, decorated with ribands, beneath which was a reversed broken whiskey bottle, with a naggin and glass also suspended from a cross-stick still lower down. It contained the moral of the whole temperance movement and was noted frequently during the day.

“The Westland Row Total Abstinence Society with their President Dean Meyler. They wore crimson with white ribands and flowerets. A party of mounted police brought up the rear and assisted materially in keeping order throughout the day.

“The route taken was: Along Parkgate Street, over Kingsbridge, Military Road, James’ St., Thomas St., Meath Street, Coombe, up Francis Street, Cornmarket, High Street, Castle Street, Cork Hill, Parliament Street, over Essex Bridge, Capel Street, Bolton Street, Dorset Street, Upper Gardiner Street, Round Mountjoy Square, Gardiner Street, Bolton Street, Sackville Street, Carlisle Bridge, D’Olier Street, Westland Row, Merrion Street, Merrion Square, Fitzwilliam Square, Leeson Street, Stephen’s Green, Grafton Street, College Street, and Dame Street.

“We did not hear of the slightest accident during the day to mar the general harmony.” reported the Freeman’s Journal. In 1843 a Society known as the Dublin Catholic Institution was founded with the object of establishing a Lending Library of religious and moral books and the provision of a Reading Room to be supplied with newspapers and periodicals. Its purpose was to provide this particular service for teetotallers. Fr. Spratt attended several Temperance meetings each week. He spoke at many of them. He gave the pledge at practically all of them - at times to 1,500 or 2,000 people. He also encouraged and attended their soirées or “parties.”

Fr. Mathew became involved in financial difficulties due to the fact that he gave away the medals and literature without charge. This, in time, involved him in debt up to £7,000. In a letter to Fr. Fitzgerald, P.P., Castletownderlew in 1845, Fr. Mathew gives some interesting points about his debts: "In the very first year of the great temperance movement, I incurred the greater part of the debts that oppressed me, but I had an almost certainty of being able to liquidate them by the aid of a rich relative. In this hope I pursued my career, but a sudden death frustrated the benevolent intention of my friend, and I was left to my own private resources. By the sacrifice of family I paid off the medal manufacturers, my only creditors; but I was crushed and crippled and unable to proceed. My circumstances became known to my friends, in England, and with their aid, and some partial help from Ireland a sum of over £7,000 has been raised, and my debts are liquidated" When this became known people were anxious to come to his aid. Daniel O'Connell set the ball rolling at a meeting in Dublin on October 29th, 1844. Fr. Spratt lent his influence to the project and sent considerable financial help to the Capuchin.

Dr. Spratt was the first to extend the movement to the North. In November, 1845 he initiated it in Dundalk. In August 1846 the following invitation was sent to him.

"We, the magistrates, bankers, merchants and manufacturers, with the Total Abstinence Association of Belfast, unitedly join in respectfully inviting you to pay a visit to the town of Belfast, at the first convenient opportunity, in order to extend the cause of true temperance. Having heard of your devoted and zealous exertions in Dublin and elsewhere, we now solicit your cooperation and advice on the subject. Our town is rapidly increasing in population, manufacture and wealth, but we are grieved to state, that its moral character is on the decline, and that, having 600 public-houses, with new ones licensed every quarter, our drinking customs are on the increase, while the intelligent and respectable have, too generally, manifested much apathy on this subject, the young, the reckless and depraved of all ages, have, in the midst of scarcity and want, been converting the bounties and blessings of Providence into a snare and into a curse. Public opinion is now prepared to make a great advance. An imperative necessity for an immediate and well-sustained effort to suppress our drinking practices has latterly been felt. Under these circumstances we cordially unite and welcome your presence amongst us."

Signed by 120 gentlemen of the town of Belfast of different denominations. The city was predominantly Presbyterian.

Fr. Spratt replied on August 18th saying that he was very glad to receive the invitation and would comply with their request on the first opportunity. He travelled to Belfast on September 12th, and on the 13th and 14th he addressed large meetings at Wellington Place and enrolled about 5,000. He found Protestants and Presbyterians most co-operative. He advised the teetotallers to build a Temperance Hall, establish a Temperance Reading-room and a Mechanics' Institute. Thus not only would temperate habits be secured but they would be able to improve their minds and morals. He paid two visits and the result was 11,500 took the pledge. He also visited Lurgan later.

The *Belfast Herald* made the following comment:

“To whatever it may be attributed whether to the efforts of the Town mission, Dr. Spratt’s recent temperance visits, the comparative stagnation of trade, which leaves people without any surplus funds, or to a combination of all three, true it is that latterly, if the daily business done at the police court could be a criterion, the morals of the population of this town have undergone a striking change for the better. But a short time since, it would have been a rare thing, indeed, to have seen the police offices on the morning of Monday without crowds of “Custody cases,” the majority of whom had been found drunk in the streets. It was not unusual for the business of that day to occupy the magistrates until 3 or 4 p.m. This aspect of affairs is remarkably altered. Yesterday, for example, the number of all the offences did not exceed twelve and the worthy mayor (who is himself extensively engaged in the spirit business) was released from his duties in the court by 12.30.”

This paper was the organ of the Presbyterian church in Belfast. It comments that the change is due not to the Town Mission, nor to stagnation in trade as these are “always with us” - at least periodically. It attributed it to Dr. Spratt.

ST. JOSEPH’S JUVENILE TOTAL ABSTINENCE SOCIETY.

The statistics for the Catholic Temperance Societies in Dublin for 1841 list the above society, which had its premises in Whitefriar Street, with a membership of five hundred. Its officials were Masters S. Ryan and William Norton; James McGee was Treasurer and Dr. Spratt was President. In 1843 they had a splendid band. By 1845 it had 1,000 members, which had grown to 2,000 by 1848.

We have very little information as to their activities. Obviously they had the same purpose and ideal as the other Total Abstinence Society founded by Fr. Spratt. On January 15th, 1844 the Juvenile Society had an interesting meeting, Ball and tea-party in the large rooms, Lower Abbey Street. Dr. Spratt attended the meeting which was a large one and he addressed them and was followed by Mr. Haughton and Mr. Tommins.

SUNDAY LICENSING LAWS

As early as 1846 efforts were being made to prohibit the sale of drink on Sundays. Dr Spratt continued his efforts in this matter for more than twenty years. The appeals of the teetotallers seem to have been in vain as no law was passed about Sunday closing before his death. We may conclude this chapter with the following idealistic poem written by J. McCorry and read by James Haughton, J.P., at the Temperance Hall, Cuffe Lane, before a large assembly on 15th September, 1866. The poem was so well appreciated that the author was persuaded to print and sell the copies to aid St. Joseph’s Night Refuge.

FATHER SPRATT AND IRISH POLITICS

IN the Ireland of the nineteenth century, political and religious questions were very closely related. Agitation for Catholic Emancipation united the whole country as nothing in her previous history had done. It was very much in the air when Fr. Spratt returned from his studies in Spain and he took an active interest in it. He was a member of the Catholic Association founded by O'Connell. Collections were taken up for O'Connell at Whitefriar Street Church just as at all the other churches. These funds were to help the cause of Emancipation and later the movement for the Repeal of the Act of Union to which O'Connell set his mind once he had secured Emancipation in 1829.

REPEAL

Fr. Spratt promoted the Repeal movement also. The Temperance meetings which he held were conducted in an orderly fashion and occasionally combined the two ideas for as instance in 1843 when the *Mail* noted:

“Father Spratt has triumphed over the prudence of the Government and the good sense of Father Mathew. Whilst we write, the streets are crowded to the most inconvenient excess with processions of teetotallers, headed by bands of music, and distinguished into officers and rank and file, by badges and decorations. Along the whole line of march the public footpaths are obstructed by mobs of idle gazers - and the progress of drays, cars and carriages - the means of dispatching business - is wholly intercepted. The police have busy work to preserve order. The whole movement was so irregular and broken, that we are not prepared to state, in our present publication, the numbers paraded on the occasion; but we hope to be able to do so on Wednesday. One distinguishable characteristic was observable throughout the procession - almost every society had a banner of a Harp without a Crown, indicative of the accordance of the brethren, in the cry for repeal and symbolically pointing to the separation of the countries.”

In June 1844, the inhabitants of Castle Ward held a meeting at the Royal Exchange “to address Ireland’s Liberator and his fellow martyrs and adopt resolutions expressive of their determination to persevere in obtaining their right of self-legislation.” Amongst those who signed it were Andrew O’Connell, P.P., SS. Michael and John’s, and most of the community at White-friar Street with Fr. John Spratt’s name at the head. It should be noted that Daniel O’Connell was in prison at this time. On the day of his liberation, 6th September, 1844, Fr. Spratt received from him a beautifully ornamented page with the insignia of the order of the Liberators. This page is preserved in the Whitefriar Street museum.

EFFORTS TOWARDS UNITY

On the death of O’Connell the division between the more progressive and militant Young Ireland Party and the O’Connellites became very marked and bitter. Cloncurry hoped that Fr. Spratt might be able to effect “a reconciliation of the jarring elements of our patriotism.” “My feeble efforts,” he said, “shall not be wanting to point out the rocks on which our unhappy country has been wrecked – but I hope for much from the aid of yourself and the many good men who listen to you.”

The State trials following the abortive rising of 1848 were conducted in a very unjust manner. The jury-packing was the subject of a very bitter complaint. Fr. Spratt formed a committee to object in as strong a manner as possible to this travesty of justice. A Memorial was signed by almost 400 priests, 40 prelates, deans, archdeacons, and other dignitaries, and the chief corporations of Ireland, a host of Catholic and protestant gentlemen and by upwards of 70,000 people against the practice of packing exclusive and partisan juries.

He was successful in his agitation, to this extent, that no one was put to death. But the majority of the leaders were sentenced to transportation. This led to collections to relieve their wives and families. By May 1848 a fund had begun to assist John Mitchel's wife. Cloncurry contributed £100 per Dr. Spratt, who was a member of the fund committee.

About April 1849 Dr. Spratt threw his energies into the organisation of a national committee to fuse Young Ireland and Old Ireland into one. He was instrumental in forming the Irish Alliance for that purpose in the November of that year. A cursory glance at the *Freeman's Journal*, December 1849 suffices to show how untiring he was in his efforts to promote this political union. He emerges as the negotiator who might easily have succeeded if both sides (but particularly John O'Connell, the Liberator's son) had been willing to compromise. Though his efforts came to naught, his labours were highly esteemed by the parties and especially by all who had the interests of the people at heart as the following letter shows:

"Very Rev. Dear Sir,

Most sorry am I that your wise and benevolent exertions to bring about unanimity amongst the contending factions who so deeply injure the cause of their country at this crisis of her fate have been unsuccessful; may they open their eyes to the irreparable mischief they are labouring to accomplish. You have the good wishes and thorough respect of all good men, and in particular of An English Peer and Reformer."

Dec. 18, 1849.

William Smith O'Brien had taken a very active part in the 1848 rebellion and was captured and imprisoned and transported. He was a man who was highly respected. A public meeting of the citizens of Dublin was called in July 1850. The clergy present were Frs. Spratt and Thaddeus O'Malley. The purpose of the meeting was to honour O'Brien and to protest against the cruel treatment being meted out to him. Fr. Spratt was called to the chair at the end of the meeting. It was without avail as O'Brien was transported. The committee continued to work for his return. In April 1852 a Memorial to the Lord Lieutenant was drawn up with an imposing list of signatures but it was of no avail at the time. Smith O'Brien received a pardon in 1854 and died in Wales in 1864.

O'CONNELL MONUMENT

When Daniel O'Connell died in Genoa in 1847 he bequeathed his soul to God, his heart to Rome and his body to Ireland. This wish was fulfilled when his body was brought back to Ireland and buried in Glasnevin Cemetery. A meeting was called on October 9, 1862. Dr. Spratt was invited to act as chairman. A committee was formed to arrange for the

construction of a suitable memorial to him in the city. Again Fr. Spratt was asked to become chairman. Weekly meetings were held to promote the gathering of funds for the project. He attended many of them. Their first idea was to erect a statue to O'Connell. But Dr. McHale objected saying that it should be something more elaborate and in keeping with the Liberator's great achievements. At a meeting on December 13, 1867 which Fr. Spratt attended, the design submitted by Mr. Foley was approved. This is the monument at the entrance to O'Connell Street which was damaged a few years ago.

THE FENIANS

The Fenians were founded in Dublin in 1858. As they believed that Ireland would never achieve her independence except by physical force they prepared by secret organisation to set a revolution in motion. This was attempted in 1867. The effort was not successful and most of the leaders were imprisoned. Some were condemned to death. On May 14th the citizens of Dublin met to try to prevent the executions. The Lord Mayor, Peter Paul McSwiney, presided. Dr. Spratt was present and read the following letter from Cardinal Cullen.

"My dear Dr. Spratt,

I have learned with much pleasure that you intend to take part in the meeting to be held to-day to invoke Her Majesty's clemency in favour of the Fenians now under sentence of death. This is not the first time you have proved by your activity that the Catholic priest is in his fitting place whenever a work of mercy is to be done.

"The object which the meeting proposes to itself is among the noblest that stirs the hearts of Christian men, and I need hardly say that your exertions command my warmest sympathy. I have not failed to warn our people against the Fenian movement. I cautioned them against incurring the censures of the Church and I pointed out to them the dangers to which they would be exposed if they put themselves at the mercy of spies and informers by engaging in revolutionary movements.

"It is to be regretted that advice given in a most charitable spirit was not attended to: however it would give me the deepest pain if even one of these unhappy men should be subjected to the extreme severity of the law and hence I am prepared to support any petition you may adopt, begging on her Majesty to exercise in their favour her high prerogative of mercy. Undoubtedly nothing will contribute so effectively as an act of royal clemency to restore good feeling among the people, especially if it be followed by redress of grievances under which our country suffers."

On May 24th preparations were begun in the morning for the execution of one of them, Thomas Francis Burke. A deputation to the Lord Lieutenant accompanied by Fr. Spratt and Canon Pope got very little hope of a reprieve. Dr. Cullen then appealed and this was more effective in saving Burke's life.

The disestablishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland was enacted in 1869, forty years after Emancipation. Fr. Spratt suggested that a fitting welcome should be prepared for the Lord Lieutenant, Earl Spencer, and his wife on their arrival at Kingstown, as he had promoted religious freedom for the Irish Catholics. His suggestion was welcomed by a certain portion of Irish Catholics and was opposed by another section who represented the Fenian

Party who voiced their feelings in no uncertain manner.

In September 1869, Fr. Spratt joined the movement to have all the Fenian leaders released. Some had been liberated and had come back to Ireland and had taken part in agitation demanding the release of the others. Dr. Spratt struck a different note, for which he was lauded by some and criticised by others. At a meeting convened in the Temperance Hall, Cuffe Street, Dublin, in September 1869 he took the chair and addressed the members on the need to appeal to the clemency of the crown rather than indulge in provocative language.

This advice was acted upon and a *Memorial* was sent to the Queen and one to Gladstone, the Prime Minister, on September 20th, 1869:

*“May it please your Majesty,
Some years have elapsed since a considerable number of our countrymen were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for unlawful offences and crimes against your Majesty’s crown and dignity.*

Your Majesty’s clemency having been already extended to many of these individuals, we now respectfully approach our honoured and beloved Sovereign with our humble prayer that she may be graciously pleased to extend the like boon to all those who are yet unhappily suffering the penalty of crimes which do not admit of any justification, but which we trust your Majesty and your Majesty’s Government may consider have been in some measure atoned for by the sufferings they have already endured.

We believe that the exercise of clemency towards those men - whom erroneous patriotic feelings led astray - will be considered by a large proportion of your loyal Irish subjects a wise act of statesmanship, and tend to increase those feelings of affection and devotion to your person which are entertained by your Irish subjects.

Be pleased, gracious Sovereign, in the exercise of your royal clemency, to release these men from their confinement. Send them home rejoicing to their families, who will, we trust, offer up to heaven grateful prayers for your long-continued health and happiness - for which blessings upon you none of your subjects will continue to pray more sincerely than the people of Ireland who are devoted to your Majesty.

Some of the men in whose behalf we appeal are, we are informed, in delicate health; so that your generous consideration of their case will be a double act of clemency - giving them their freedom, and also, the means of, perhaps, regaining their health which they have lost. Being men of education and refinement, many of them must suffer severely both in mind and body. But let mercy temper judgment, and the great majority of your subjects will feel grateful to their Queen, and all mankind will applaud your magnanimity in the nobleness of the act. To punish - even severely at times - may be consistent with justice, but the wise exercise of mercy is the most glorious act of sovereign power.

On behalf of the Irish Total Abstinence Society we beg leave to subscribe ourselves your Majesty’s loyal and faithful subjects.

John Spratt, D.D.

President of the Irish Total Abstinence Society.
James Haughton, J.P.
Irish Total Abstinence Society.

He sent one also to Gladstone. In his reply to the Memorial Gladstone refused to say what the Government would do but he was very emphatic in his testimony to the good tone of the petitions. In the autumn of 1870 Gladstone tried to persuade the Cabinet to release them and they finally agreed at the end of the year.

CONCLUSION

DR. SPRATT lived in a period of transition which saw the removal of the relics of the penal days, the emancipation of the Catholic church and the disestablishment of the State Church. Though conditions were troubled in Spain round the 1820's he was fortunate to have done his studies there. Besides giving him a reasonable knowledge of Spanish and Italian his years in Spain gave him a breadth of view which he would hardly have attained had he remained in Ireland.

We use the word "involvement" very much to-day. The underlying idea was something which Fr. Spratt practised throughout his life. He was a man with a keen awareness of the needs of his own city and with a courage necessary to undertake great works and heavy responsibilities. Deeply concerned for the country as a whole he sought to alleviate the particular disabilities under which the majority of Irishmen laboured in his campaign against intemperance, his relief work during the Famine and his efforts to promote Irish manufacture.

Just a year or two after ordination he acquired the pre-Reformation site of the monastery in Dublin and set about building the church (which still occupies the site). This showed considerable foresight and industry for a very young priest, especially when it came to raising the £4,500 needed to clear the debt. In this district he also undertook the care of St. Peter's Orphanage and established various schools which he had to support either totally or in part. One of the schools is still functioning. Though he did not open either of the two Dublin Carmelite secondary schools which were in existence during his provincialate he developed them at a time when such schools were very badly needed. But the school attached to the Kildare monastery opened on September 29, 1864 under his direction.

In the social sphere he undoubtedly made his greatest contribution. It embraced many types of suffering – poverty, disease, the orphan, the fallen girl, the blind, the famine victim, the poverty-stricken roomkeeper. In remembering his temperance labours it must be borne in mind that he was working against a practice that was deep-rooted in the people at the time. The initial success from 1840–1847 was extraordinary. In later years it was not so remarkable and the threads of his movement were re-gathered by the Jesuit Total Abstinence Movement at the close of the century. In his speeches and writings on the subject of Temperance he was, at times, unfair to his adversaries, a little intolerant, tending to brush all opposition aside but while the movement was highly-lauded and well-supported it was always liable to suffer from the sneers of the opposition. The number of meetings which he attended and at which he

spoke was extraordinarily high. He was too sanguine in his hopes of defeating publicans in his efforts to have "Sunday closing" introduced. Governments depend too much on the excise duties on spirits to sanction notable diminutions in the revenue. The numbers who joined the movement were very great but many took the pledge from both Fr. Mathew and Fr. Spratt and possibly on repeated occasions. Still there is no room for doubting that his labours bore great fruit especially in Dublin.

His political outlook and his sense of patriotism have to be seen in the context of his times. He was a firm supporter of O'Connell. His Temperance meetings helped the Repeal Movement indirectly by the training in orderliness given to the crowds who attended them. While he did not agree with the risings of 1848 or 1867 he showed a very practical sympathy in seeking the release of the prisoners, in decrying the jury-packing, and in establishing funds to relieve the dependants of the political prisoners. He also tried to act as peace-maker between rival political parties in the country and succeeded in uniting two rival boards of Irish manufacture. It would be wrong to say that he had the modern Irish patriotic ideas which became common only in the first quarter of the present century. There were contradictory notes in his outlook. In 1869 as he pleaded for the Fenian prisoners he was willing to cast in his lot "with Great Britain in all future time." At other times he pleaded for independence. While allowing for the eulogistic note always manifest in funeral notices the following gives a good idea of his efforts:

"It was not alone for his attributes as a priest and as a philanthropist, that Fr. Spratt was held in such popular esteem. Few more patriotic Irishmen have ever lived, and never one that loved his country more. Whilst the great Tribune lived, Fr. Spratt was never absent from his side. In the struggle for Emancipation, in the Trades' Union, in the Precursor Society, in the Repeal Association, O'Connell might always calculate on the patriotic Carmelite and be sure that he did not reckon without his host. In every movement having for its object a legitimate revival of the struggle for national independence, Fr. Spratt was always amongst the first to encourage, and the last to desert it. Always honest and outspoken – never faltering in the profession of his faith or his politics, he never said one unkindly word of those who differed from him in the one or the other, and the staunchest of his private friends might be found amongst those who knelt at a different altar, and stood on a different platform."

He did succeed in producing a corpus of writing which no other Irish Carmelite before him had equalled. It was mainly in the line of meeting the particular and urgent needs of his time – to instruct the people on points of faith disputed by non-catholics or on devotional matters or on the subject of Temperance. As a preacher he would be prolix to present day congregations – his sermons, generally about one hour's duration, were based on Scripture and, in keeping with the moral attitudes of his time, somewhat stern.

As Provincial he showed certain anomalies. At first he did not seem particularly anxious to have the post. But later he was quite eager to retain it. Judging in retrospect he would probably have done better to concentrate his activities almost completely on his social work and leave the governing to the Province to some other member.

He did succeed in increasing the number of vocations to the Province. In 1854 (nine years

before he became Provincial) the Province had 16 priests. In 1863 (the year he became Provincial) it had increased to 19. By 1870 (the year before he died) the Province numbered thirty-two. While Cardinal Cullen says he did not give the students such an adequate training as Fr. Bennett, his predecessor, one must bear in mind that the novitiate and complete course of studies were done in Italy, which was probably suffering acutely from the movement for its unification at this time.

To his contemporaries he was an outstanding man. A book entitled *Our Exemplars*, published in 1860 by an English woman and a non-catholic, picked Fr. Mathew and Fr. Spratt as the 19th century representatives in Ireland.

His death, due to heart failure, was sudden. On May 27th, 1871, as we have seen, he died in the act of giving the Temperance pledge to two women. He sank into the arms of a gentleman who had come to transact business with him concerning the Night Refuge. These two acts might be said to be a fitting conclusion to a life spent in serving the poor.

The Cardinal presided at his funeral at which more than two hundred clergy were present. There was a big attendance of prominent laymen also. The funeral began at 1.20 p.m. in the following order:

An open carriage occupied by Mr. James Haughton (a presbyterian) and Mr. John Handcock, agent to Lord Lurgan;
The United Temperance Band;
The Society of St. Paul (Holy Family);
The Banner of the Carmelite Order, with Confraternities of Religious Bodies, wearing capes with white ribbons;
The children of Fr. Spratt's Schools, Whitefriar Street;
A number of the children of St. Peter's Orphanage;
Hearse drawn by six horses;
Temperance Band of the Fr. Spratt's Society;
Long array of carriages (Lord Mayor's, etc.).

The procession moved through York Street, Stephen's Green West, Cuffe Street Lower, Cross and Upper Kevin Streets, Deane Street, Coombe, Meath Street, Thomas Street, Castle Street, Cork Hill and Dame Street, College Green, Westmoreland Street, Sackville Street, North Frederick Street, Dorset Street, Phibsborough to Glasnevin. Ships flew their flags at half-mast. On May 28th a very touching scene took place in the Protestant Church of St. Bride.

"The Rev. W. G. Carroll, after an exposition of the subject of the day, said he had to notice a sad and sorrowful event which had just occurred in the midst of them, the sudden death of the universally respected Dr. Spratt, Vice-Provincial of the Carmelite Order in Ireland, and Priest of the neighbouring chapel in Whitefriar Street, which derives its name, he supposed, from the Catholic establishment, the religious Order to which Dr. Spratt belonged, and of which he certainly was so bright an ornament. In my long acquaintance and tolerably intimate intercourse with him, I always had the feeling that he was a genuine and genial representative of the

benevolence and charity and traditions of his Carmelite fraternity. For many years, as you all know, it was my privilege to have been associated often with Dr. Spratt in many works of charity, morality and Christian sympathy, in trying famines and dreadful pestilences; and, if we met with an occasional rude jibe, we met with many a 'God bless you both,' from the poor and destitute who well divined our errand. In the wretched religious distractions, etc., which divide and harass our country it is unusual thus to allude to a brother of a different sect, and there are signs and tendencies abroad, which seem to indicate that this practical system of mutual anathema is passing away, and all who prefer truth to sectarian jealousy and country to party strife, will join in the work and unite in the effort that this narrow and rancorous exclusiveness may be absorbed into the higher law of mutual respect and cordial toleration; and indeed there was scarcely any other citizen amongst us whose life and character more suitably and cogently suggest these thoughts than he of whom I am speaking. He was foremost in every charitable work in this city; he presented in his own person a combination of characteristic specialities such as few other men possess, and he has left a great gap and blank in the network and organisation of the charities of Dublin. On almost all speculative points I differed from Dr. Spratt, but as surely as I believe in a God I believe that his religion is as saving a religion as mine; and if God gives me the grace to lead at all as good and as Christian a life as he led any friend who survives me may thank God for the help that He gave a sinful man like me, as I now thank God for the help that He gave to this Carmelite friar, enabling him so long to be a shining light amongst us, the great apostle of temperance, and the constant minister of charity and compassion and mercy."

On June 25th, 1871 a public meeting of the citizens of Dublin was held in Whitefriar Street to raise a memorial to Dr. Spratt. The Lord Mayor presided and many leading citizens, Protestant and Catholic, attended. There was a full representation from the traders of the city. The meeting resolved to raise funds for St. Peter's Orphanage and continue his work for the orphans and also to erect a monument to himself. This was done at his grave in Glasnevin which lies very close to O'Connell's. The monument is a large Celtic cross. At its base there are three panels symbolising the three great spheres of his life's work – Whitefriar Street Church, the Night Refuge and the Temperance movement.

We may conclude with this short poem and hope that the sentiments expressed by his friend were realized.

Lines most respectfully addressed to the Very Rev. Dr. Spratt.

*And thou Hibernia! raise thy tuneful choir,
Let all his virtues all thy warmth inspire.
To each fond chord a sacred fire impart,
As pure, as noble as his kindred heart.
Oh breathe for him a warm and ardent prayer,
That all his hours may heavenly transports share.
And round his form may ministering angels vie,
To deck their favourite for a milder sky;
While through the path of life's eventful way
The lamp of honour and religion's ray,
Shall light his footsteps to that distant shore,*

*Where guardian spirits lean with rapture o'er.
The circling halo which by heavenly power,
Awaits the coming of that joyful hour.
When borne by seraphs on their wings of flame,
Celestial records mark his hallowed name.*

~~~~~

*Peter O'Dwyer, O.Carm.,  
Whitefriar Street,  
1971*