

A DAUGHTER OF ST. DOMINIC

ON Monday evening, December the 30th, 1929, Mrs. Sheppey-Greene (*née* Schuster) died in Charing Cross Hospital. The tragedy of a richly endowed mind and soul cut off in mid-life after a few hours' illness came with bewildering fitness almost as we were remembering 'Rachel weeping for her children, who were no more.'

The friars of St. Dominic were grieved that this sister of the Third Order was taken when, as they thought, her life of varied usefulness was just opening into flower. Yet they could not withhold the further thought—and it was an end to grief—that He Whom their sister had served was accounting her life not an opening flower but a ripened fruit.

Those who knew Rose Schuster best could not picture her as choosing, even for an hour, a low rather than a high way to God. I have heard her reply to the question, how did she come by her deep knowledge of the Bible, by saying that she had a governess who insisted on the word of God being committed to memory. But it was evident that the girl whose faithful memory was learning God's word had a still more faithful heart that was learning from God's word how best to do God's will.

Some two years after her mother became a Catholic she followed her mother into the Church. But indeed she never followed anyone but Him Who is the way, and the truth and the life. The only life her robust mind could seek was the gift of truth. A lie, or even a compromise, was for her a disloyalty unworthy of life.

Once within the large freedom of the truth she burned with an apostle's zeal to share her riches with others; and with as many as possible. The members of the Catholic Prisoners' Aid Society are wondering

Blackfriars

how they can sum up her services to their work and their finances. Her old home in Norfolk Square became almost a hostel for souls that modern social reformers would not classify under complimentary headings. For this active member of the Prisoners' Aid Committee leisure was but an opportunity for the more unselfish and costly forms of social work.

The large group of Catholic Evidence women and men who filled the Rosary Church, Marylebone Road, at the Requiem Mass was an acknowledgment of all that the Evidence Guild owed to her almost unique powers. From the first moment of her joining the Guild she was given a foremost place in its counsels and its work. Nature and grace had endowed her with almost everything needed for the perfect mouthpiece of the 'good tidings.' Her tall, commanding figure, her faultless and clear pronounciation, her marvellous memory stored with the words of Holy Writ, her power of rigid reasoning, her undisturbable patience, her sincerity, her love of the audience, her undeniable love of God made her a finished herald of the truth. Even those who professionally or religiously resisted her when she was lecturing, have asked kindly after her, as if they missed her from her wonted platform in the Park.

But the sons of St. Dominic mourn this true daughter of St. Dominic with an even more domestic grief. They cannot—nor, indeed, should they—forget the part she took in the apostolic work of organising the lectures on the *Summa* of St. Thomas. Probably the first to hear the scheme of these lectures broached were the mother and daughter who are now united in the same grave.

To broach a scheme of lectures which aimed at offering to modern intelligence the intellectual riches of St. Thomas was to win their effective enthusiasm—and mother and daughter were agreed in

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suspecting an enthusiasm which was not effective. For some eight years Rose Schuster—and after marriage Mrs. Sheppey-Greene—acted as the efficient Secretary of these lectures. Only her withdrawal from London parted her and her work. No one but the lecturer could know how much he owed to her sisterly sympathy, wise advice and unfailing help. Yet even he knows only in part; and can return halting thanks only in part.

But deep within his soul is something of greater worth than mere thanks. Amidst the most cherished gifts of God will be the challenging memory of this daughter of St. Dominic who in a few short years of Catholic life lived as St. Dominic lived and died as he died—lived by ever speaking to men of God or to God of men—died almost by her own hand or by her own folly of unselfish work in the white harvest-field of souls.

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