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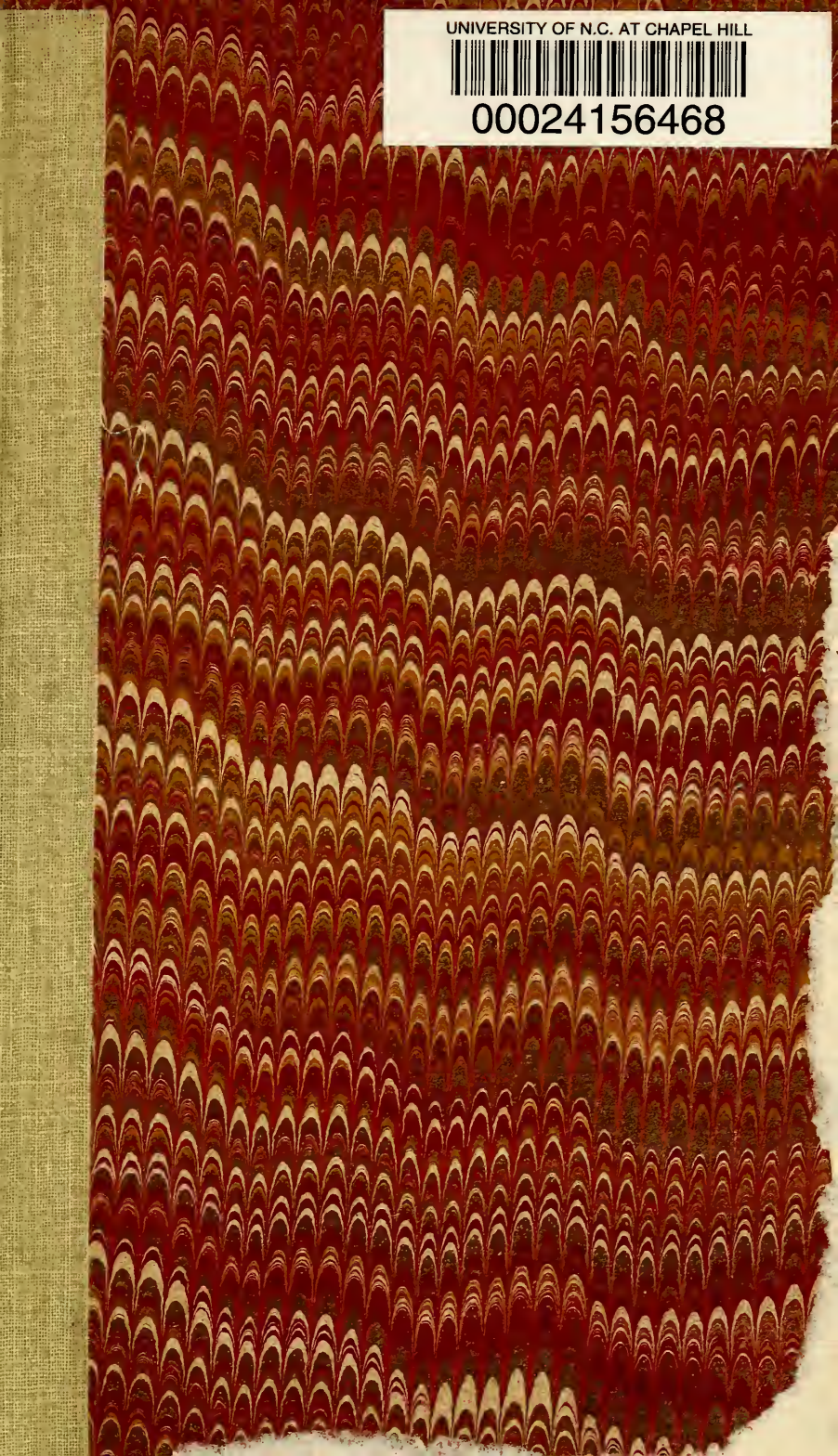
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W^m Nathan Matthews,

THE
LITURGICAL YEAR.

CHRISTMAS.

THE
LITURGICAL YEAR.

BY THE

VERY REV. DOM PROSPER GUÉRANGER,

ABBOT OF SOLESMES.

Translated from the French,

BY THE

REV. DOM LAURENCE SHEPHERD,

MONK OF THE ENGLISH-BENEDICTINE CONGREGATION.

CHRISTMAS.

VOL. I.

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CONTENTS.

CHRISTMAS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.— The History of Christmas,	1
CHAP. II. — The Mystery of Christmas,	7
CHAP. III. — Practice during Christmas,	17
CHAP. IV. — Morning and Night Prayers for Christmas,	34
CHAP. V. — On hearing Mass, during the Season of Christmas,	51
CHAP. VI. — On Holy Communion, during Christmas,	88
CHAP. VII. — On the Office of Vespers for Sundays and Feasts, during Christmas,	98
CHAP. VIII.— On the Office of Compline, during Christmas,	109.

CHRISTMAS DAY,	120
Afternoon of the Eve,	<i>ibid.</i>
First Vespers,	128
The Hour before Midnight Service,	135
Matins,	146
Midnight Mass,	184
Lauds,	194
The Second Mass, or Mass of the Aurora,	208
Early Morning, before Mass,	219
The Third Mass,	225
Second Vespers,	233

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P425
1871
1872
1873
1874
1875
1876
1877
1878
1879
1880
1881
1882
1883
1884
1885
1886
1887
1888
1889
1890
1891
1892
1893
1894
1895
1896
1897
1898
1899
1900

	PAGE
<i>December 26.</i> —SAINT STEPHEN, the First Martyr,	249
Mass,	254
Vespers,	260
<i>December 27.</i> —SAINT JOHN, Apostle and Evangelist,	278
Mass,	283
Vespers,	290
<i>December 28.</i> —THE HOLY INNOCENTS,	310
Mass,	314
Vespers,	321
<i>December 29.</i> —SAINT THOMAS, Archbishop of Canter- bury, and Martyr,	339
Mass,	351
Vespers,	358
<i>December 30.</i> —Sunday within the Octave of Christmas, or the Sixth Day within the Octave,	374
Mass,	375
Vespers,	381
<i>December 31.</i> —SAINT SYLVESTER, Pope and Confessor,	390
<i>January 1.</i> —THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD,	409
First Vespers,	414
Mass,	420
Second Vespers,	425
<i>January 2.</i> —The Octave of SAINT STEPHEN,	434
<i>January 3.</i> —The Octave of SAINT JOHN,	446
<i>January 4.</i> —The Octave of HOLY INNOCENTS,	461
<i>January 5.</i> —The Octave of SAINT THOMAS OF CAN- TERBURY,	473
<i>Same Day.</i> —The Vigil of the Epiphany, and Com- memoration of St. Telesphorus, Pope and Martyr,	484
Mass of the Vigil,	485
APPENDIX.—Adeste Fideles,	489

CHRISTMAS.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS.

WE apply the name of *Christmas* to the forty days, which begin with the *Nativity of our Lord*, December 25th, and end with the *Purification of the Blessed Virgin*, February 2nd. It is a period, which forms a distinct portion of the Liturgical Year, as distinct, by its own special spirit, from every other, as are Advent, Lent, Easter, or Pentecost. One same Mystery is celebrated and kept in view during the whole forty days. Neither the Feasts of the Saints, which so abound during this Season; nor the Time of Septuagesima, with its mournful Purple, which often begins before Christmastide is over;—seem able to distract our Holy Mother the Church, from the immense joy, of which she received the *good tidings* from the Angels,¹ on that glorious Night, for which the world had been longing four thousand years. The Faithful will remember, that the Liturgy commemorates this long expectation, by the four penitential weeks of Advent.

The custom of celebrating the Solemnity of our Saviour's Nativity by a feast or commemoration of

¹ St. Luke, ii. 10.

forty-days' duration, is founded on the holy Gospel itself; for it tells us, that the Blessed Virgin Mary, after spending forty days in the contemplation of the Divine Fruit of her glorious Maternity, went to the Temple, there to fulfil, in most perfect humility, the ceremonies which the Law demanded of the daughters of Israel, when they became Mothers.

The Feast of Mary's Purification is, therefore, part of that of Jesus' Birth; and the custom of keeping this holy and glorious period of forty-days as one continued Festival, has every appearance of being a very ancient one, at least in the Roman Church. And firstly, with regard to our Saviour's Birth on the 25th of December, we have St. John Chrysostom telling us, in his Homily for this Feast, that the Western Churches had, from the very commencement of Christianity, kept it on this day. He is not satisfied with merely mentioning the tradition; he undertakes to show, that it is well-founded, inasmuch as the Church of Rome had every means of knowing the true day of our Saviour's Birth, since the acts of the Enrolment, taken in Judea by command of Augustus, were kept in the public archives of Rome. The holy Doctor adduces a second argument, which he founds upon the Gospel of St. Luke, and he reasons thus: we know from the sacred Scriptures, that it must have been *in the fast of the seventh month*¹ that the Priest' Zachary had the vision in the Temple; after which Elizabeth, his wife, conceived St. John the Baptist: hence it follows, that the Blessed Virgin Mary, having, as the Evangelist St. Luke relates, received the Angel Gabriel's visit, and conceived the Saviour of the world *in the sixth*

¹ Lev. xxiii. 24 and following verses. The *seventh month* (or *Tisri*) corresponded to the end of our September and beginning of our October. *Tr.*

month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, that is to say, in March,—the Birth of Jesus must have taken place in the month of December.

But, it was not till the fourth century that the Churches of the East began to keep the Feast of our Saviour's Birth in the month of December. Up to that period, they had kept it, at one time, on the sixth of January, thus uniting it, under the generic term of *Epiphany*, with the *Manifestation* of our Saviour made to the Magi, and, in them, to the Gentiles; at another time, as Clement of Alexandria tells us, they kept it on the 25th of the month *Pachon*, (May 15,) or on the 25th of the month *Pharmuth*, (April 20). St. John Chrysostom, in the Homily we have just cited, which he gave in 386, tells us that the Roman custom of celebrating the Birth of our Saviour on the 25th December, had then only been observed ten years in the Church of Antioch. It is probable that this change had been introduced in obedience to the wishes of the Apostolic See, wishes which received additional weight by the edict of the Emperors Theodosius and Valentinian, which appeared towards the close of the fourth century, and decreed that the Nativity and Epiphany of our Lord should be made two distinct Festivals. The only Church, that has maintained the custom of celebrating the two mysteries on January 6th, is that of Armenia; owing, no doubt, to the circumstance of that country's not being under the authority of the Emperors; as, also, because it was withdrawn, at an early period, from the influence of Rome, by schism and heresy.

The Feast of our Lady's Purification, with which the forty days of Christmas close, is, in the Latin Church, of very great antiquity; so ancient, indeed, as to preclude the possibility of our fixing the date of its institution. According to the unanimous opinion of Liturgists, it is the most ancient of all the Feasts of

the Holy Mother of God ; and as her Purification is related in the Gospel itself, they rightly infer, that its anniversary was solemnised at the very commencement of Christianity. Of course, this is only to be understood of the Roman Church ; for, as regards the Oriental Church, we find that this Feast was not definitively fixed to the 2nd of February, until the reign of the Emperor Justinian, in the sixth century. It is true that the Eastern Christians had, previously to that time, a sort of commemoration of this Mystery ; but it was far from being a universal custom, and it was kept a few days after the Feast of our Lord's Nativity, and not on the day itself of Mary's going up to the Temple.

But, what is the characteristic of Christmas in the Latin Liturgy ? It is twofold : it is *joy*, which the whole Church feels at the coming of the divine Word in the Flesh ; and it is *admiration* of that glorious Virgin, who was made the Mother of God. There is scarcely a prayer, or a rite, in the Liturgy of this glad Season, which does not imply these two grand mysteries :—an Infant-God, and a Virgin-Mother.

For example, on all Sundays and Feasts, which are not *Doubles*, the Church, throughout these forty days, makes a commemoration of the *fruitful virginity*¹ of the Mother of God, by three special Prayers in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. On those same days, at Lauds and Vespers, she begs the *suffrage* of Mary, by proclaiming her quality of *Mother of God* and her *inviolable* purity,² which remained in her even after she had given birth to her Son. And again, the magnificent Anthem, *Alma Redemptoris*, composed by the Monk Herman

¹ *The Collect*, Deus qui salutis æternæ beatæ Mariæ Virginitate fecunda humano generi, &c.

² V. Post partum, Virgo, inviolata permansisti. R. Dei Genitrix, intercede pro nobis.

Contractus, continues, up to the very day of the Purification, to be the termination of each Canonical Hour. It is by such manifestations of her love and veneration, that the Church, honouring the Son in the Mother, testifies her holy joy during this season of the Liturgical Year, which we call *Christmas*.

Our readers are aware that, when Easter Sunday falls at its latest—that is, in April—the Ecclesiastical Calendar counts as many as six Sundays after the Epiphany. Christmastide, (that is, the forty days between Christmas Day and the Purification,) includes sometimes four out of these six Sundays; frequently only two; and sometimes, only one, as is the case when Easter comes so early, as to necessitate the keeping Septuagesima, and even Sexagesima, Sunday, in January. Still, nothing is changed, as we have already said, in the ritual observances of this joyous season, excepting only, that on those two Sundays—the fore-runners of Lent—the Vestments are purple, and the *Gloria in excelsis* is omitted.

Although our holy Mother the Church honours, with especial devotion, the Mystery of the Divine Infancy during the whole season of Christmas; yet, she is obliged to introduce, into the Liturgy of this same season, passages from the holy Gospels, which seem premature, inasmuch as they relate to the *active life* of Jesus. This is owing to there being less than six months allotted by the Calendar for the celebration of the entire work of our Redemption: in other words, Christmas and Easter are so near each other, (even when Easter is as late as it can be,) that Mysteries must of necessity be crowded into the interval; and this entails anticipation. And yet, the Liturgy never loses sight of the Divine Babe and his incomparable Mother, and never tires in their praises, during the whole period, from the

Nativity, to the day when Mary comes to the Temple to present her Jesus.

The Greeks, too, make frequent *commemorations* of the Maternity of Mary, in their Offices of this Season: but, they have a special veneration for the twelve days between Christmas Day and the Epiphany, which, in their Liturgy, are called the *Dodecameron*. During this time, they observe no days of Abstinence from flesh-meat; and the Emperors of the East had, out of respect for the great Mystery, decreed that no servile work should be done, and that the Courts of Law should be closed, until after the 6th of January.

From this outline of the History of the holy Season, we can understand what is the characteristic of this second portion of the Liturgical Year, which we call *Christmas*, and which has ever been a Season most dear to the christian world. What are the *Mysteries* embodied in its Liturgy, will be shown in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS.

EVERYTHING is Mystery in this holy Season. The Word of God, whose generation is *before the day-star*,¹ is born in time—a Child is God—a Virgin becomes a Mother, and remains a Virgin—things divine are commingled with those that are human—and the sublime, the ineffable, antithesis, expressed by the Beloved Disciple in those words of his Gospel: THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, is repeated in a thousand different ways in all the prayers of the Church;—and rightly, for it admirably embodies the whole of the great portent, which unites, in one Person, the nature of Man and the nature of God.

The splendour of this Mystery dazzles the understanding, but it inundates the heart with joy. It is the consummation of the designs of God in time. It is the endless subject of admiration and wonder to the Angels and Saints; nay, is the source and cause of their beatitude. Let us see, how the Church offers this Mystery to her children, veiled under the symbolism of her Liturgy.

The four weeks of our preparation are over—they were the image of the four thousand years, which preceded the great Coming—and we have reached the Twenty-fifth day of the Month of December, as a long-desired place of sweetest rest. But, why is it, that the celebration of our Saviour's Birth should be the perpetual privilege of this one fixed day; whilst the whole liturgical Cycle has, every year, to be changed

¹ Ps. cix. 3.

and remodelled, in order to yield that ever-varying day, which is to be the feast of his Resurrection—Easter Sunday?

The question is a very natural one, and we find it proposed and answered, even so far back as the fourth century; and that, too, by St. Augustine, in his celebrated *Epistle to Januaricus*. The holy Doctor offers this explanation: We solemnise the day of our Saviour's Birth, in order that we may honour that Birth, which was for our salvation; but the precise day of the week, on which He was born, is void of any mystical signification. *Sunday*, on the contrary, the day of our Lord's Resurrection, is the day marked, in the Creator's designs, to express a mystery, which was to be commemorated for all ages. St. Isidore of Seville, and the ancient Interpreter of Sacred Rites, (who, for a long time, was supposed to be the learned Alcuin,) have also adopted this explanation of the Bishop of Hippo; and our readers may see their words interpreted by Durandus, in his *Rational*.

These writers, then, observe, that as, according to a sacred tradition, the creation of man took place on a Friday, and our Saviour suffered death also on a Friday, for the redemption of man; that as, moreover, the Resurrection of our Lord was on the third day after his death, that is, on a Sunday, which is the day on which the Light was created, as we learn from the Book of Genesis—"the two Solemnities of Jesus' Passion and Resurrection," says St. Augustine, "do not only remind us of those divine facts; but they moreover represent and signify some other mysterious and holy thing."¹

And yet, we are not to suppose, that, because the Feast of Jesus' Birth is not fixed to any particular day of the week, there is no mystery expressed by its being always on the Twenty-fifth of December.

¹ *Epist. Ad Januarium.*

For, firstly, we may observe with the old Liturgists, that the Feast of Christmas is kept, by turns, on each of the Days of the week, that thus its holiness may cleanse and rid them of the curse, which Adam's sin had put upon them. But, secondly, the great mystery of the Twenty-fifth of December, being the Feast of our Saviour's Birth, has reference, not to the division of time marked out by God himself, and which is called the *Week*; but to the course of that great Luminary, which gives life to the world, because it gives it light and warmth. Jesus, our Saviour, *the Light of the World*,¹ was born when the night of idolatry and crime was the darkest; and the day of his Birth, the Twenty-fifth of December, is that on which the material Sun begins to gain his ascendancy over the reign of gloomy night, and show to the world his triumph of brightness.

In our "*Advent*," we showed, after the Holy Fathers, that the diminution of the physical light may be considered as emblematic of those dismal times, which preceded the Incarnation. We joined our prayers with those of the people of the Old Testament; and, with our holy Mother the Church, we cried out to the Divine *Orient, the Sun of Justice*, that he would deign to come, and deliver us from the twofold death of body and soul. God has heard our prayers; and it is on the Day of the Winter Solstice—which the Pagans of old made so much of by their fears and rejoicings—that he gives us both the increase of the natural light, and Him who is the Light of our souls.

St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Ambrose, St. Maximus of Turin, St. Leo, St. Bernard, and the principal Liturgists, dwell with complacency on this profound mystery, which the Creator of the universe has willed should mark both the natural and the supernatural

¹ St. John, viii. 12.

world. We shall find the Church, also, making continual allusion to it, during this season of *Christmas*, as she did in that of Advent.

“On this the Day which the Lord hath made,” says St. Gregory of Nyssa, “darkness decreases, light increases, and Night is driven back again. No, Brethren, it is not by chance, nor by any created will, that this natural change begins on the Day, when He shows Himself in the brightness of his coming, which is the *spiritual* Life of the world. It is Nature revealing, under this symbol, a secret to them whose eye is quick enough to see it; to them, I mean, who are able to appreciate this circumstance of our Saviour’s coming. Nature seems to me to say: Know, O Man! that under the things which I show thee, there lie Mysteries concealed. Hast thou not seen the Night, that had grown so long, suddenly checked? Learn hence, that the black night of Sin, which had got to its height by the accumulation of every guilty device, is this day stopped in its course. Yes, from this day forward, its duration shall be shortened, until at length there shall be naught but Light. Look, I pray thee, on the Sun; and see how his rays are stronger, and his position higher in the heavens: learn from that, how the other Light, the Light of the Gospel, is now shedding itself over the whole earth.”¹

“Let us, my Brethren, rejoice,” cries out St. Augustine:² “this Day is sacred, not because of the visible sun, but because of the Birth of Him, who is the invisible Creator of the sun. * * He chose this Day to be born on, as he chose the Mother he was to be born from, and he made both the Day and the Mother. The Day he chose, was that on which the light begins to increase, and it typifies the work of Christ, who renews our interior man, day by day

¹ Homily on the *Nativity*. ² Sermon on the *Nativity of our Lord*, iii.

“For the eternal Creator having willed to be born in time, his Birth Day would necessarily be in harmony with the rest of his creation.”

The same Holy Father, in another Sermon for the same Feast, gives us the interpretation of a mysterious expression of St. John Baptist, which admirably confirms the tradition of the Church. The great Precursor said on one occasion, when speaking of Christ: *He must increase, but I must decrease.*¹ These prophetic words signify, in their literal sense, that the *Baptist's* mission was at its close, because Jesus was entering upon *his*. But, they convey, as St. Augustine assures us, a second meaning: “John came into this world at the season of the year, when the length of the day decreases; Jesus was born in the season when the length of the day increases.”² Thus, there is mystery both in the rising of that glorious Star, the Baptist, at the summer-solstice; and in the rising of our Divine Sun in the dark season of winter.³

There have been men, who dared to scoff at Christianity as a *superstition*, because they discovered, that the ancient Pagans used to keep a Feast of the sun, on the winter Solstice! In their shallow erudition, they concluded, that a Religion could not be divinely instituted, which had certain rites or customs

¹ John, iii. 30.

² Sermon *In Natali Domini*, xi.

³ It is almost unnecessary to add, that this doctrine of the Holy Fathers, which is embodied in the Christmas Liturgy, is not in any degree falsified by the fact that there are some parts of God's earth, where Christmas falls in a Season the very opposite of Winter. Our Lord selected, for the *place* of his Birth, one which made it Winter, when he came upon earth; and by that selection, he stamped the Mystery, taught in the text, on the Season of darkness and cold. Our Brethren in Australia, for example, will have the Mystery without the Winter, when they are keeping Christmas; or, more correctly, their faith and the Holy Liturgy will unite them with us, both in the *Winter*, and the *Mystery*, of the great Birth in Bethlehem. [Translator's Note.]

originating in an analogy to certain phenomena of this world: in other words, these Writers denied what Revelation asserts, namely, that God only created this world for the sake of his Christ and his Church. The very facts, which these enemies of our holy Religion brought forward as objections to the true Faith, are, to us Catholics, additional proof of its being worthy of our most devoted love.

Thus, then, have we explained the fundamental Mystery of these Forty Days of Christmas, by having shown the grand secret hidden in the choice, made by God's eternal decree, that the Twenty-fifth Day of December should be the Birth-day of God upon this earth. Let us, now, respectfully study another mystery:—that which is involved in the *place*, where this Birth happened.

This place is Bethlehem. *Out of Bethlehem*, says the Prophet, *shall He come forth, that is to be the Ruler in Israel.*¹ The Jewish Priests are well aware of the prophecy, and, in a few days hence, will tell it to Herod.² But, why was this insignificant Town chosen, in preference to every other, to be the Birth-place of Jesus? Be attentive, Christians, to the mystery! The name of this City of David signifies *the House of Bread*: therefore did He, who is *the living Bread come down from heaven*,³ choose it for his first visible home. *Our Fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead*;⁴ but, lo! here is the Saviour of the world, come to give life to his creature Man, by means of his own divine Flesh, which *is meat indeed.*⁵ Up to this time, the Creator and the creature had been separated from each other;—henceforth they shall abide together in closest union. The Ark of the Covenant, containing the manna which fed but

¹ Mich. v. 2.

² St. Matt. ii. 5.

³ St. John, vi. 41.

⁴ St. John, vi. 49.

⁵ *Ibid.* 56.

the body, is now replaced by the Ark of a New Covenant, purer and more incorruptible than the other—the incomparable Virgin Mary, who gives us Jesus, *the Bread of Angels*, the nourishment which will give us a divine transformation; for, this Jesus himself has said: *He that eateth my flesh abideth in me, and I in him.*¹

It is for this *divine transformation* that the world was in expectation for four thousand years, and for which the Church prepared herself by the four weeks of *Advent*. It has come at last, and Jesus is about to enter within us, if we will but *receive him.*² He asks to be united to each one of us in particular, just as he is united, by his Incarnation, to the whole human race; and for this end, he wishes to become our *Bread*, our spiritual nourishment. His coming into the souls of men, at this mystic season, has no other aim than this union. He comes, *not to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him,*³ and that all *may have life, and may have it more abundantly.*⁴ This divine Lover of our souls will not be satisfied, therefore, until he have substituted himself in our place, so that we may live not we ourselves, but He in us; and in order that this mystery may be effected in a sweeter way, it is under the form of an Infant that this Beautiful Fruit of Bethlehem wishes first to enter into us, there to *grow*, afterwards, *in wisdom and age, before God and men.*⁵

And when, having thus visited us by his grace and nourished us in his love, he shall have changed us into himself, there shall be accomplished in us a still further mystery. Having become one in spirit and heart with Jesus—the Son of the heavenly

¹ St. John, vi. 57.

² *Ibid.* i. 12.

³ *Ibid.* iii. 17.

⁴ St. John, x. 10.

⁵ St. Luke, ii. 40, 52.

Father—we shall also become Sons of this same God our Father. The Beloved Disciple speaking of this our dignity, cries out: *Behold! what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us—that we should be called, and should be the Sons of God!*¹ We will not now stay to consider this immense happiness of the Christian soul, as we shall have a more fitting occasion, further on, to speak of it, and show by what means it is to be maintained and increased.

There is another subject, too, which we regret being obliged to notice only in a passing way. It is, that, from the Day itself of our Saviour's Birth even to the Day of our Lady's Purification, there is, in the Calendar, an extraordinary richness of Saints' Feasts, doing homage to the master-feast of Bethlehem, and clustering, in adoring love, round the Crib of the Infant-God. To say nothing of the four great Stars, which shine so brightly near our Divine Sun, and from whom they borrow all their own grand beauty—St. Stephen, St. John the Evangelist, the Holy Innocents, and our own St. Thomas of Canterbury:—what other portion of the Liturgical Year is there, that can show, within the same number of days, so brilliant a constellation? The Apostolic College contributes its two grand Luminaries, St. Peter and St. Paul: the first, in his Chair of Rome; the second, in the miracle of his Conversion. The Martyr-host sends us the splendid champions of Christ, Timothy, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, Vincent, and Sebastian. The radiant line of Roman Pontiffs lends us four of its glorious links, named, Sylvester, Telesphorus, Hyginus, and Marcellus. The sublime school of Holy Doctors offers us Hilary, John Chrysostom, and Ildephonsus; and in their company stands a fourth Bishop—the amiable Francis

¹ I. St. John, iii. 1.

of Sales. The Confessor-kingdom is represented by Paul the Hermit, Anthony the conqueror of Satan, Maurus the Apostle of the Cloister, Peter Nolasco the deliverer of Captives, and Raymond of Pennafort, the oracle of Canon Law and Guide of the consciences of men. The army of Defenders of the Church deutes the pious King Canute, who died in defence of our Holy Mother, and Charlemagne, who loved to sign himself "the humble champion of the Church." The choir of Holy Virgins gives us the sweet Agnes, the generous Emerentiana, the invincible Martina. And lastly, from the saintly ranks which stand below the Virgins—the Holy Widows—we have Paula, the enthusiastic lover of Jesus' Crib. Truly, our Christmastide is a glorious festive season! What magnificence in its Calendar! What a banquet for us in its Liturgy!

A word upon the Symbolism of the colours, used by the Church during this Season. *White* is her Christmas-Vestment; and she employs this colour at every Service, from Christmas Day to the Octave of the Epiphany. To honour her two Martyrs, Stephen and Thomas of Canterbury, she vests in *Red*; and to condole with Rachel wailing her murdered Innocents, she puts on *Purple*; but these are the only exceptions. On every other day of the twenty, she expresses, by her White Robes, the gladness to which the Angels invited the world, the beauty of our Divine Sun that has risen in Bethlehem, the spotless purity of the Virgin-Mother, and the clean-heartedness which they should have, who come to worship at the mystic Crib.

During the remaining twenty days, the Church vests in accordance with the Feast she keeps; she varies the colour so as to harmonise, either with the red Roses which wreath a Martyr, or with the white Everlastings which grace her Bishops and her Confessors, or again, with the spotless Lilies which crown

her Virgins. On the Sundays which come during this time—unless there occur a Feast of a *Double* class, requiring Red or White; or, unless Septuagesima has begun its three mournful weeks of preparation for Lent—the colour of the Vestments is *Green*. It is, say the interpreters of the Liturgy, to teach us, that, in the Birth of Jesus, who is the *flower of the fields*,¹ we first received the hope of salvation, and that, after the bleak winter of heathendom and the Synagogue, there opened the verdant spring-time of grace.

With this we must close our mystical interpretation of those rites which belong to *Christmas* in general. Our readers will have observed that there are many other sacred and symbolical usages, which we have not even alluded to; but, as the mysteries, to which they belong, are peculiar to certain Days, and are not, so to speak, *common* to this portion of the Liturgical Year; we intend to treat fully of them all, as we meet with them on their proper Feasts.

¹ Cant. i. 1.

CHAPTER III.

PRACTICE DURING CHRISTMAS.

THE time has now come for the faithful soul to reap the fruit of the efforts she made, (during the penitential weeks of Advent,) to prepare a dwelling-place for the Son of God, who desires to be born within her. The *Nuptials of the Lamb are come, and his Spouse hath prepared herself*.¹ Now, the Spouse is the Church; the Spouse is, also, every faithful soul. Our Lord gives his whole self to the whole flock, and to each sheep of the flock, with as much love as though he loved but that one. What garments shall we put on, to go and meet the Bridegroom? Where shall we find the pearls and jewels, wherewith to deck our soul for this happy meeting? Our holy Mother the Church will tell us all this in her Liturgy. Our best plan for spending Christmas, is, undoubtedly, to keep close to her, and do what she does; for she is most dear to God, and, being our Mother, we ought to obey all her injunctions.

But, before we speak of the mystic Coming of the Incarnate Word into our souls; before we tell the secrets of that sublime familiarity between the Creator and the Creature; let us, first, learn from the Church the duties, which human nature, and each of our souls, owe to the Divine Infant, whom the Heavens have at length given to us as the refreshing *Dew* we asked them to *rain down* upon our earth. During Advent, we united with the Saints of the Old Law, in praying for the coming of the

¹ Apoc. xix. 7.

Messias, our Redeemer ; now that he is come, let us consider what is the homage we must pay him.

The Church offers to the Infant-God, during this holy season, the tribute of her profound adoration, the enthusiasm of her exceeding joy, the return of her unbounded gratitude, and the fondness of her intense love. These four offerings, *adoration, joy, gratitude, and love*, must be also those of every Christian to his Jesus, his Emmanuel, the Babe of Bethlehem. The prayers of the Liturgy will express all four sentiments, in a way that no other Devotions could do. But, the better to appropriate to ourselves these admirable formulæ of the Church, let us understand thoroughly the nature of each of these four sentiments.

The first of our duties at our Saviour's Crib, is *Adoration*. Adoration is Religion's first act ; but, there is something in the Mystery of our Lord's Birth, which seems to make this duty doubly necessary. In heaven, the Angels veil their faces, and prostrate themselves before the throne of Jehovah ; the Four-and-Twenty Elders are for ever *casting their crowns before the throne*¹ of the Lamb ; what, then, shall we do—we who are sinners, and unworthy members of the Tribe of the Redeemer—now, that this same great God shows himself to us, humbled, for our sakes, and stript of all his glory ? now, that the duties of the creature to his Creator are fulfilled by the Creator himself ? now, that the eternal God bows down, not only before the Sovereign Majesty of the Godhead, but even before sinful man, his creature ?

Let us endeavour to make, by our profound adorations, some return to the God who thus humbles himself for us ; let us thus give him back some little of that, of which he has deprived himself out of love

¹ Apoc. iv. 10.

for us, and in obedience to the will of his Father. It is incumbent on us, to emulate, as far as possible, the sentiments of the Angels in heaven, and never to approach the Divine Infant, without bringing with us the incense of our soul's adoration, the protestation of our own extreme unworthiness, and, lastly, the homage of our whole being. All this is due to the infinite Majesty of the Babe of Bethlehem, who is the more worthy of every tribute we can pay him, because he has made himself thus little for our sakes. Unhappy we, if the apparent weakness of the Divine Child, or the familiarity wherewith he is ready to caress us, should make us negligent in this our first duty, or forget what He is, and what we are!

The example of his Blessed Mother will teach us to be thus humble. Mary was humble in the presence of her God, even before she became his Mother; but, once his Mother, she comported herself before Him who was her God and her Child, with greater humility than ever. We, too, poor sinners, sinners so long and so often, we must adore, with all the power of our soul, Him, who has come down so low: we must study to find out how to make him amends, by our self-humiliation, for this Crib, these swathing-bands, this eclipse of his glory. And yet, all our humiliations will never bring us so low, as that we shall be on a level with His lowliness. No; only God could reach the humiliations of God.

But our Mother, the Church, does not only offer to the Infant-God the tribute of her profound *adoration*. The mystery of the Emmanuel, that is, of *God with us*, is to her a source of singular *joy*. Look at her sublime Canticles for this holy Season, and you will find the two sentiments admirably blended—her deep reverence for her God, and her glad joy at his Birth. Joy! did not the very Angels come down and urge her to it? She therefore studies to imitate

the blithe Shepherds, who ran for joy to Bethlehem,¹ and the glad Magi, who were well-nigh out of themselves with delight, when, on quitting Jerusalem, the star again appeared and led them to the Cave *where the Child was*.² Joy at Christmas is a Christian instinct, which originated those many *Carols*, which, like so many other beautiful traditions of the ages of Faith, are unfortunately dying out amongst us ; but which Rome still encourages, gladly welcoming each year those rude musicians, the *Pifferari*, who come down from the Apennines, and make the streets of the Eternal City re-echo with their shrill melodies.

Come, then, faithful Children of the Church, let us take our share in her joy! This is not the season for sighing or for weeping. *For unto us a Child is born!*³ He, for whom we have been so long waiting is come ; and he is come to *dwell amongst us*.⁴ Great, indeed, and long was our suspense ; so much the more let us love our possessing him. The day will too soon come when this Child, *now born to us*, will be the *Man of Sorrows*,⁵ and then we will compassionate him ;—but, at present, we must rejoice and be glad at his coming, and sing round his Crib, with the Angels. Heaven sends us a present of its own joy : we need joy, and Forty Days are not too many for us to get it well into our hearts. The Scripture tells us, that *a secure mind is like a continual feast*,⁶ and a secure mind can only be where there is *peace* ; now, it is *Peace*, which these blessed days bring to the earth ; *Peace*, say the Angels, *to men of good will !*

Intimately and inseparably united with this exquisite mystic joy, is the sentiment of *gratitude*. *Gratitude* is indeed due to Him, who, neither de-

¹ St. Luke, ii. 16.

³ Is. ix. 6.

⁵ Is. liii. 3.

² St. Matth. ii. 10.

⁴ St. John, i. 14.

⁶ Prov. xv. 15.

tered by our unworthiness, nor restrained by the infinite respect which becomes his sovereign Majesty, digned to be born of his own creature, and have a stable for his birth-place. Oh! how vehemently must he not have desired to advance the work of our salvation, to remove everything which could make us afraid of approaching him, and to encourage us, by his own example, to return, by the path of humility, to the heaven we had strayed from by pride!

Gratefully, therefore, let us receive the precious gift—this Divine Babe, our Deliverer. He is the Only Begotten Son of the Father, that Father *who hath so loved the world, as to give his Only Son.*¹ He, the Son, unreservedly ratifies his Father's will, and comesto *offer himself because it is his own will.*² How, as the Apostle expresses it, *hath not the Father, with Him, given us all things?*³ O gift inestimable! How shall we be able to repay it by suitable gratitude, we who are so poor, as not to know how to appreciate it? God alone, and the Divine Infant in his Crib, know the value of the mystery of Bethlehem, which is given to us.

Shall our debt, then, never be paid? Not so: we can pay it by *love*, which though finite, gives itself without measure, and may grow for ever in intensity. For this reason, the Church, after she has offered her adorations, and hymns, and gratitude, to her Infant Saviour, gives him also her tenderest *Love*. She says to him: "*How beautiful art thou, my Beloved One, and how comely!*"⁴ How "sweet to me is thy rising, O Divine Sun of Justice! How my heart glows in the warmth of thy beams! Nay, dearest Jesus, the means thou usest for gaining me over to thyself, are irresistible—the feeble-

¹ St. John, iii. 16.

² Is. liii. 7.

³ Rom. viii. 32.

⁴ Cant. i. 15.

“ness and humility of a Child!” Thus do all her words end in *love*; and her *adoration*, *praise*, and *thanksgiving*, when she expresses them in her Canticles, get transformed into *love*.

Christians! let us imitate our Mother, and give our hearts to our Emmanuel. The Shepherds offer him their simple gifts, the Magi bring him their rich presents, and no one must appear before the Divine Infant, without something worthy his acceptance. Know, then, that nothing will please him, but that which he came to seek—our *love*. It was for this that he came down from heaven. Hard indeed is that heart which can say, *He shall not have my love!*

These, then, are the duties we owe to our Divine Master in this his first *Coming*, which, as St. Bernard says, is *in the flesh and in weakness*, and is for the salvation, not for the judgment, of the world.

As regards that other *Coming*, which is to be in majesty and power on the Last Day, we have meditated upon it during Advent. The fear of the *Wrath to come* should have roused our souls from their lethargy, and have prepared them, by humility of heart, to receive the visit of Jesus in that secret *Coming*, which he makes to the soul of man. It is the ineffable mystery of this *intermediate* Coming that we are now going to explain.

We have shown, elsewhere, how the time of *Advent* belongs to that period of the spiritual life, which is called, in Mystic Theology, *the Purgative Life*, and during which the soul cleanses herself from sin and the occasions of sin, by the fear of God’s judgments, and by combating against evil concupiscence. We are taking it for granted, that every faithful soul has journeyed through these rugged paths, and which must be gone through, before she could be admitted to the Feast, to which the Church invited all mankind, saying to them, on the Saturday

of the Second Week of Advent, those words of the Prophet Isaias : *Lo ! this is our God : we have waited for him ; and he will save us. We have patiently waited for him, and we shall rejoice and be joyful in his Salvation !*¹ As in the house of our heavenly Father there are many mansions,² so likewise, on the grand Solemnity of Christmas, when those words of Isaias are realised, the Church sees, amongst the countless throng who receive the Bread of Life, a great variety of sentiments and dispositions. Some were dead, and the graces, given during the holy Season of Advent, have restored them to life : others, whose spiritual life had long been healthy, have so spent their Advent, that its holy exercises have redoubled their love of their Lord, and their entrance into Bethlehem has been to them a renewal of their soul's life.

Now, every soul that has been admitted to Bethlehem, that is to say, into the *House of Bread*, and has been united with Him, who is the *Light of the World*—that soul no longer walks in darkness. The mystery of Christmas is one of Illumination ; and the grace it produces in the soul that corresponds with it, places her in the second *stage* of the Mystic Life, which is called the *Illuminative Life*. Henceforward, then, we need no longer weary ourselves watching for our Saviour's arrival ; he has come, he has shone upon us, and we are resolved to keep up the light, nay, to cherish its growth within us, in proportion as the Liturgical Year unfolds its successive seasons of mysteries and graces. God grant that we may reflect in our souls the Church's progressive development of this divine Light ; and be led by its brightness to that *Union*, which crowns both the year of the Church, and the faithful soul which has spent the year under the Church's guidance !

¹ Is. xxv.

² St. John xiv. 2.

But, in the mystery of Christmastide, this Light is given to us, so to speak, softened down; our weakness required that it should be so. It is, indeed, the Divine Word, the Wisdom of the Father, that we are invited to know and imitate; but this Word, this Wisdom, are shown us under the appearance of *a Child*. Let nothing keep us from approaching him. We might fear were he seated on a throne in his palace; but he is lying on a crib in a stable! Were it the time of his Fatigues, his Bloody Sweat, his Cross, his Burial, or even of his Glory and his Victory, we might say we had not courage enough:—but, what courage is needed to go near him in Bethlehem, where all is sweetness, and silence, and a simple Little Babe! *Come to him*, says the Psalmist, *and be enlightened!*¹

Where shall we find an interpreter of this twofold mystery, which is wrought at this holy season—the mystery of the Infancy of Jesus in the soul of man, and the mystery of the infancy of man's soul in his Jesus? None of the Holy Fathers has so admirably spoken upon it as St. Leo: let us listen to his grand words.

“ Although that Childhood, which the majesty of the Son of God did not disdain to assume, has developed, by growth of age, into the fulness of the perfect man, and, the triumph of his Passion and Resurrection having been achieved, all the humiliations he submitted to, for our sakes, are passed; nevertheless, the Feast we are now keeping brings back to us the sacred Birth of the Virgin Mary's Child, Jesus our Lord. So that, whilst adoring *his* Birth, we are, in truth, celebrating *our own* commencement of life; for the Generation of Christ, is the origin of the Christian people, and the Birth Day of him that is our Head, is the Birth Day

¹ Ps. xxxiii. 6.

“ of us that are his Body. It is true, that each
 “ Christian has his own rank, and the children of the
 “ Church are born each in their respective times ; yet
 “ the whole mass of the Faithful, once having been
 “ regenerated in the font of Baptism, are born, on
 “ this Day of Christmas, together with Christ ; just
 “ as they are crucified together with *him* in his
 “ Passion, and have risen together with *his* Resur-
 “ rection, and in *his* Ascension are placed at the
 “ right hand of the Father. For, every believer, no
 “ matter in what part of the world he may be living,
 “ is born again in Christ ; his birth according to
 “ nature is not taken into account ; he becomes a
 “ new man by his second birth ; neither is he any
 “ longer called of the family of his father in the flesh,
 “ but of the family of our Redeemer, who unto this
 “ was made a Son of Man, that we might become the
 “ Sons of God.”¹

Yes, this is the Mystery achieved in us by the holy Season of Christmas ! It is expressed in those words of the passage from St. John’s Gospel, which the Church has chosen for the third Mass of the great Feast: *As many as received Him, he gave them power to be made the Sons of God, to them that believe in his name ; who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*² So that, all they, who—having purified their souls, freed themselves from the slavery of *flesh* and *blood*, and renounced everything which is of *man* inasmuch as *man* means *sinner*—wish now to open their hearts to the Divine Word, that is, to the LIGHT which shineth in darkness, and which darkness did not comprehend,³ these, I say, are born with Jesus ; they are born of God ; they begin a new life, as did the Son of God himself, in this mystery of his Birth in Bethlehem.

¹ Sixth Sermon *On the Nativity of our Lord.* Ch. 2.

² St. John, i. 12.

³ *Ibid.* 5.

How beautiful are these first beginnings of the Christian Life ! How great is the glory of Bethlehem, that is, of our holy Mother the Church, the true *House of Bread* ! for, in her midst, there is produced, during these days of Christmas, and everywhere throughout the world, a countless number of *sons of God*. Oh ! the unceasing vitality of our mysteries ! As the *Lamb, who was slain from the beginning of the world*,¹ sacrifices himself, without ceasing, ever since his real sacrifice ; so also, once born of the Holy Virgin his Mother, he makes it a part of his glory to be ceaselessly born in the souls of men. We are not, therefore, to think, for a moment, that the dignity of Mary's divine Maternity is lessened, or that *our* souls enjoy the same grand honour which was granted to her : far from that, "let us," as Venerable Bede says, "raise our voice from amid the crowd, as did the woman in the Gospel, and say to our Saviour, with the Catholic Church, of which that woman was the type : *Blessed is the Womb that bore thee, and the Breasts that gave thee suck !*"² Mary's prerogative is indeed incommunicable, and it makes her the Mother of God, and the Mother of men. But, we must also remember the answer made by our Saviour to the woman, who spoke those words : *Yea rather, said Jesus, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it ;*³ "hereby declaring," continues Venerable Bede, "that not only is She blessed, who merited to conceive in the flesh the Word of God, but they, also, who endeavour to conceive this same Word spiritually, by the hearing of faith, and to give him birth and nourish him, by *keeping* and doing what is good, either in their own or their neighbour's heart. For the Mother of God herself was *Blessed* in that she was made, for a time, the

¹ Apoc. xiii. 8.

² Commentary on St. Luke, Bk. 4, Ch. 49.

³ St. Luke, xi. 28.

“minister to the wants of the Incarnate Word ; but
 “much *more Blessed* was she, in that she was and
 “ever will be the *keeper* and doer of the love due to
 “that same her Son.”

Is it not this same truth which our Lord teaches us on that other occasion, where he says: *Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother?*¹ And why was the Angel sent to Mary in preference to all the rest of the daughters of Israel, but because she had already conceived the Divine Word in her heart, by the vehemence of her undivided love, the greatness of her profound humility, and the incomparable merit of her virginity? Why, again, is this *Blessed among women* holy above all creatures, but because, having once conceived and brought forth the Son of God, she continues for ever his *Mother*, by her fidelity in doing the will of the heavenly Father, by her love for the uncreated light of the Divine Word, and by her union as Spouse with the Spirit of sanctification?

But, no member of the human race is excluded from the honour of imitating Mary, though at an humble distance, in this her spiritual Maternity: for, by that real Birth which she gave him in Bethlehem, which we are now celebrating, and which initiated the world into the mysteries of God, this ever Blessed Mother of Jesus has shown us how we may bear the resemblance of her own grand prerogative. We ought to have *prepared the way of the Lord*² during the weeks of Advent; and if so, our hearts have conceived him: therefore, now, our good works must bring him forth, that thus our heavenly Father, seeing not us ourselves, but his own Son, Jesus, now living within us, may say of each of us, in his mercy, what he heretofore said, in very truth, of the Incar-

¹ St. Matth. xii. 50.

² St. Matth. iii. 3; Is. xl. 3.

nate Word: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*¹

Let us give ear to the words of the Seraphic Saint Bonaventure, who, in one of his sermons for Christmas Day, thus explains the mystery of the birth of Jesus in the soul of man. "This happy birth happens, when the soul, prepared by long thought and reflection, passes at length to action; when the flesh being made subject to the spirit, good works are produced in due time: then do interior peace and joy return to the soul. In this birth, there is neither travail, nor pain, nor fear; everything is admiration, and delight, and glory. If then, O devout soul! thou art desirous for this birth, imagine thyself to be like Mary. *Mary* signifies *bitterness*; bitterly bewail thy sins: it signifies *illuminatrix*; be thou illumined by thy virtues: and lastly, it signifies *Mistress*; learn how to be mistress and controller of thy evil passions. Then will Christ be born of thee, and oh! with what happiness to thyself! For, it is then that the soul tastes and sees how sweet is her Lord Jesus. She experiences this sweetness, when, in holy meditation, she nourishes this Divine Infant; when she covers him with her tears; when she clothes him with her holy longings; when she presses him to her heart in the embrace of holy tenderness; when, in a word, she cherishes him in the warmth of her glowing love. O happy Crib of Bethlehem! in thee I find the King of glory: but happier still than thou, the pious soul which holds within itself Him, whom thou couldst hold but corporally!"

Now, that we may pass on from this spiritual conception to the birth of our Lord Jesus; in other words, that we may pass from *Advent* to *Christmas*,

¹ St. Matth. iii. 17.

we must unceasingly keep the eyes of our soul on Him, who wishes to be born within us, and in whom the world is born to a new life. Our study and ambition should be, how best to become like Jesus, by imitating him; for, though the imitation must needs be imperfect, yet we know from the Apostle, that our heavenly Father himself gives this as the sign of the elect—their being made like to the *image of his Son*.¹

Let us, therefore, hearken to the invitation of the Angels, and *go over to Bethlehem*.² We know what *sign* will be given to us of our Jesus—a *Child wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a crib*.³ So that, you, O Christians! must become *children*; you must not disdain to be tied in the *bands* of a spiritual childhood; you must come down from your proud spirit, and meet your Saviour who has come down from heaven, and, with him, hide yourselves in the humility of the *crib*. Thus will you begin, with him, a new life. Thus will the *Light, that goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day*,⁴ illumine your *path* the whole remaining length of your journey. Thus the sight of God which leaves room for faith, and which you receive at Bethlehem, will merit for you the face-to-face vision on Thabor, and prepare you for the blissful UNION, which is not merely *Light*, but the *plentitude* and *repose* of Love.

So far, we have been speaking only of the living members of the Church, whether they began the life of grace during the holy Season of Advent, or were already living in the grace of the Holy Ghost when the ecclesiastical Year commenced, and spent their Advent in preparing to be born with Jesus to a new year of higher perfection. But, how shall we overlook those of our Brethren, who are dead in sin; and so dead, that neither the Coming of their Emmanuel,

¹ Rom. viii. 29.

² St. Luke, ii. 15.

³ St. Luke, ii. 12.

⁴ Prov. iv. 18.

nor the example of the Christians throughout the universal Church earnestly preparing for that coming, could rouse them? No, we cannot forget them: we love them, and come to tell them, (for even now, they may yield to grace, and live,)—that *there hath appeared the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour*.¹ If this volume of ours should perchance fall into the hands of any of those, who have not yielded to the solicitations of grace, which press them to be converted to the sweet Babe of Bethlehem, their Lord and their God; and who, instead of spending the weeks of Advent in preparing to receive Him at Christmas, lived them out, as they began them, in indifference and in sin:—we shall, perhaps, be helping them to a knowledge of the grievousness of their state, by reminding them of the ancient discipline of the Church, which obliged all the Faithful, *under pain of being considered as no longer Catholics*, to receive Holy Communion on Christmas Day, as well as on Easter and Whit Sundays. We find a formal decree of this obligation given in the fifteenth Canon of the Council of Agatha, (Agde,) held in 506. We would, also, ask these poor sinners to reflect on the joy the Church feels, at seeing, throughout the whole world, the immense number of her children, who still, in spite of the general decay of piety, keep the Feast of the Birth of the Divine Lamb, by the sacramental participation of his Body and Blood.

Sinners! take courage; this Feast of Christmas is one of grace and mercy, on which all, both just and sinners, meet in the fellowship of the same glad Mystery. The heavenly Father has resolved to honour the Birth-day of his Son, by granting pardon to all, save to those who obstinately refuse it. Oh! how worthy is the Coming of our dear Emmanuel to be honoured by this divine amnesty!

¹ Tit. iii. 4.

Nor is it we that give this invitation ; it is the Church herself. Yes, it is she, that with divine authority, invites you to begin the work of your New Life, on this Day, whereon the Son of God begins the career of his human life. That we may the more worthily convey to you this her invitation, we will borrow the words of a great and saintly Bishop of the Middle-Ages—the pious Rabanus Maurus—who, in a Homily on the Nativity of our Lord, encourages sinners to come and take their place, side by side with the just, in the stable of Bethlehem, where even the ox and the ass recognise their Master in the Babe who lies there.

“ I beseech you, dearly beloved Brethren, that you
 “ receive with fervent hearts the words our Lord
 “ speaks to you, through me, on this most sweet Feast,
 “ on which even infidels and sinners are touched with
 “ compunction ; on which the wicked man is moved
 “ to mercy, the contrite heart hopes for pardon, the
 “ exile despairs not of returning to his country, and
 “ the sick man longs for his cure ; on which is born
 “ the Lamb who taketh away the sins of the world,
 “ that is, Christ, our Saviour. On such a Birth Day,
 “ he that has a good conscience, rejoices more than
 “ usual ; and he whose conscience is guilty, fears with
 “ a more useful fear. * * Yes, it is a sweet Feast,
 “ bringing true sweetness and forgiveness to all true
 “ penitents. My little Children, I promise you with-
 “ out hesitation—that every one, who, on this Day,
 “ shall repent from his heart, and return not to the
 “ vomit of his sins, shall obtain all whatsoever he shall
 “ ask ; let him only ask with a firm faith, and not re-
 “ turn to sinful pleasures.

“ On this Day, is taken away the sins of the entire
 “ world—why needs the sinner despair ? * * On
 “ this Day of our Lord’s Birth, let us, dearest Brethren,
 “ offer our promises to this Jesus, and keep them, as
 “ it is written : *Vow ye, and pay to the Lord your*

“*God*.¹ Let us make our promises with confidence
 “and love; *He* will enable us to keep them * *
 “And when I speak of promises, I would not have
 “any one think that I mean the promise of fleeting
 “and earthly goods. No—I mean, that each of us
 “should offer what our Saviour redeemed, namely,
 “our soul. ‘But how,’ some one will say, ‘how shall
 “‘we offer our souls to Him, to whom they already
 “‘belong?’ I answer—by leading holy lives, by chaste
 “thoughts, by fruitful works, by turning away from
 “evil, by following that which is good, by loving God,
 “by loving our neighbour, by showing mercy, (for we
 “ourselves were in need of it, before we were re-
 “deemed,) by forgiving them that sin against us, (for
 “we ourselves were once in sin,) by trampling on
 “pride, since it was by pride that our first Parent
 “was deceived and fell.”²

It is thus our affectionate Mother the Church invites sinners to the Feast of the Divine Lamb; nor is she satisfied until her *House be filled*.³ The grace of a *New Birth*, given her by the Sun of Justice, fills this Spouse of Jesus with joy. A new year has begun for her, and, like all that have preceded it, it is to be rich in flower and fruit. She renews her youth as that of an eagle. She is about to unfold another Cycle, or Year, of her mysteries, and to pour forth upon her faithful children the graces, of which God has made the Cycle to be the instrument. In this season of Christmas, we have the first-fruits of these graces offered to us; they are the knowledge and the love of our Infant-God: let us accept them with attentive hearts, that so we may merit to *advance*, with our Jesus, *in wisdom, and age, and grace, before God and men*.⁴ The Christmas Mystery is the gate of all the others of the rest of the year; but it is

¹ Ps. lxxv. 12.

² Fourth Homily *On the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

³ St. Luke, xiv. 23.

⁴ *Ibid.* ii. 52.

a gate which we may all enter, for, though most heavenly, yet it touches earth ; since, as St. Augustine beautifully remarks, in one of his sermons for Christmas :¹ “ We cannot as yet contemplate the splendour “ of Him, who was *begotten* of the Father, *before the “ Day Star* ;² let us, then, visit Him, who was born of “ the Virgin, in the night-hour. We cannot under- “ stand how *his Name continueth before the sun* ;³ “ let us, then, confess that he hath set *his tabernacle “ in Her* that is purer than *the sun*.⁴ We cannot as “ yet see the Only Begotten Son dwelling in the “ Father’s Bosom ; let us, then, think on the *Bride- “ groom that cometh out of his bride chamber*.⁵ We “ are not yet ready for the banquet of our heavenly “ Father ; let us, then, keep to *the Crib* of Jesus our “ *Master*.”⁶

¹ Eleventh Sermon *On the Nativity of our Lord*.

² Ps. cix. 3.

⁴ Ps. xviii. 6.

⁶ Is. i. 3.

³ *Ibid.* lxxi. 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER IV.

MORNING AND NIGHT PRAYERS

FOR CHRISTMAS.

DURING Christmas, the Christian, on waking in the morning, should unite himself with the Church, who, in her Office of Matins for Christmas Day, thus invites the faithful to come and adore the Messiah :

Christus natus est nobis ; Christ is born unto us ;
venite, adoremus ! come, let us adore him !

He should profoundly adore this dear King, who has rendered himself so accessible to his creatures ; and in this disposition of loving reverence, he should perform the first acts of religion, both interior and exterior, wherewith he begins the day. The time for Morning Prayer being come, he may use the following method, which is formed upon the very prayers of the Church :—

MORNING PRAYERS.

First, praise and adoration of the Most Holy Trinity :—

Ÿ. Benedicamus Patrem
et Filium, cum Sancto Spi-
ritu :

℞. Laudamus et super-
exaltemus eum in sæcula.

Ÿ. Gloria Patri et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto ;

℞. Sicut erat in principio,
et nunc et semper, et in sæ-
cula sæculorum. Amen.

Ÿ. Let us bless the Father,
and the Son, and the Holy
Ghost.

℞. Let us praise him and
extol him above all, for ever.

Ÿ. Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son, and to the
Holy Ghost.

℞. As it was in the begin-
ing, is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

Then, praise to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ :

℣. We adore thee, O Christ,
and we bless thee.

℞. Because by thy Cross
thou hast redeemed the world.

℣. Adoramus te, Christe,
et benedicimus tibi.

℞. Quia per Crucem tuam
redemisti mundum.

Thirdly, invocation of the Holy Ghost :—

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill
the hearts of thy faithful, and
enkindle within them the fire
of thy love.

Veni, Sancte Spiritus, re-
ple tuorum corda fidelium,
et tui amoris in eis ignem
accende.

After these fundamental acts of Religion, you will recite the Lord's Prayer, asking of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant that *his holy Name may be glorified* on earth, now that he has blessed it by sending it his Son, over whose Crib the Angels sang : *Glory be to God in the highest!* This divine Messiah is come to establish *the Kingdom of God* on earth : he is come to *do the will* of his Father, and to teach us to do it here *on earth, as it is done in heaven*. Let us reverently share in these divine intentions. Let us, also, ask, with all instance, that we may be granted to partake of that heavenly *Bread*, which is now born to us in Bethlehem :

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father, who art in
heaven, *hallowed be thy name :*
thy kingdom come : thy will be
done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily
bread ; and forgive us our
trespasses, as we forgive them
that trespass against us : and
lead us not into temptation :
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Pater noster, qui es in
coelis, sanctificetur nomen
tuum : adveniat regnum tu-
um : fiat voluntas tua sicut
in coelo, et in terra. Panem
nostrum quotidianum da no-
bis hodie : et dimitte nobis
debita nostra, sicut et nos
dimittimus debitoribus nos-
tris : et ne nos inducas in
tentationem : sed libera nos
a malo. Amen.

Then address our Blessed Lady, using the words of the Angelical Salutation. It is now that she is *Blessed among all women* : her virginal womb has

yielded the divine *Fruit*, of which the world was in expectation : every creature should proclaim her to be the *Mother* of God.

THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION.

Ave Maria, gratia plena :
Dominus tecum : benedicta
tu in mulieribus, et bene-
dictus fructus ventris tui,
Jesus.

Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nos-
træ. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace ;
the Lord is with thee ; *blessed*
art thou among women, and
blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.

Holy Mary, *Mother of God*,
pray for us sinners, now and
at the hour of our death.
Amen.

After this, recite the Symbol of Faith ; and as you pronounce the words, *Born of the Virgin Mary*, dwell on them with a special attention, adoring the Saviour, who has deigned to come down from heaven, and be born in a stable.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

Credo in Deum Patrem
omnipotentem, creatorem
cœli et terræ. Et in Jesum
Christum Filium ejus uni-
cum, Dominum nostrum :
qui conceptus est de Spiritu
Sancto, natus ex Maria Vir-
gine, passus sub Pontio Pi-
lato, crucifixus, mortuus, et
sepultus : descendit ad in-
feros, tertia die resurrexit a
mortuis : ascendit ad cœlos,
sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris
omnipotentis : inde venturus
est judicare vivos et mortuos.

Credo in Spiritum Sanc-
tum, sanctam Ecclesiam Ca-
tholicam, Sanctorum com-
munionem, remissionem
peccatorum, carnis resurrec-
tionem, vitam æternam.
Amen.

I believe in God the Father
Almighty, Creator of heaven
and earth. And in Jesus
Christ, his only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the
Holy Ghost, *born of the Virgin*
Mary ; suffered under Pon-
tius Pilate, was crucified, dead,
and buried ; he descended into
hell, the third day he arose
again from the dead ; he as-
cended into heaven, sitteth at
the right hand of God the
Father Almighty ; from thence
he shall come to judge the
living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost :
the Holy Catholic Church ;
the communion of Saints, the
forgiveness of sins, the resur-
rection of the body, and life
everlasting. Amen.

After having thus made the Profession of your Faith, excite within yourself sentiments of penance and compunction, by the remembrance of the sins you have committed, and of lively gratitude of the Lamb of God, who is come that he may wash away our sins by his Blood, and give us to partake of his divinity. For this end, make use of the following words of the Church, as the fittest way of celebrating these ineffable mysteries, the remembrance of which will keep up within your hearts a sorrow for having offended so merciful a God.

ANTIPHONS FOR CHRISTMAS.

ANT. O admirable Interchange! The Creator of mankind, assuming a living Body, deigned to be born of a Virgin; and, becoming Man without man's aid, bestowed on us his Divinity.

ANT. When thou wast born ineffably of the Virgin, the Scriptures were fulfilled. As dew upon Gedeon's fleece, thou camest down to save mankind. O Lord our God! we praise thee.

ANT. Lo! Mary hath brought forth a Saviour unto us, whom John seeing exclaimed: Behold the Lamb of God! Behold him that taketh away the sins of the world. Alleluia.

ANT. O admirabile commercium! Creator generis humani, animatum corpus sumens, de Virgine nasci dignatus est; et procedens homo sine semine, largitus est nobis suam deitatem.

ANT. Quando natus es ineffabiliter ex Virgine, tunc impletæ sunt Scripturæ: sicut pluvia in vellus descendisti, ut salvum faceres genus humanum: te laudamus, Deus noster.

ANT. Ecce Maria genuit nobis Salvatorem, quem Joannes videns exclamavit dicens: Ecce Agnus Dei; ecce qui tollit peccata mundi. Alleluia.

Here make an humble confession of your sins, reciting the general formula made use of by the Church.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS.

I confess to Almighty God,
to blessed Mary ever Virgin,
to blessed Michael the Arch-

Confiteor Deo Omnipotenti,
beatae Mariæ semper Virgini,
beato Michaeli

Archangelo, beato Joanni Baptistæ, sanctis Apostolis Petro et Paulo, et omnibus sanctis, quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo, et opere : mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Ideo precor beatam Mariam semper Virginem, beatum Michaellem Archangelum, beatum Joannem Baptistam, sanctos Apostolos Petrum et Paulum, et omnes sanctos, orare pro me ad Dominum Deum nostrum.

Misereatur nostri omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis nostris, perducatur nos ad vitam æternam. Amen.

Indulgentiam, absolutio- nem, et remissionem peccatorum nostrorum tribuat nobis omnipotens et misericors Dominus. Amen.

This is the proper time for making your Meditation, as no doubt you practise this holy exercise. During Christmas, our Meditation should turn principally upon the Birth of Jesus Christ in our souls. At this period of the Liturgical Year, we must return to the very basis of our spiritual life, and yield, with childlike docility, to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. The object of our contemplation, as well as the source of our confidence, is Jesus, the Incarnate Word, swathed in the bands of infancy, laid in his Crib, presented in the Temple, and fleeing into Egypt. His love for us has induced him to subject himself to these weaknesses of childhood, in order that even *we* may imitate our God! St. Luke tells us, that his Blessed Mother *kept* all these mysteries in her heart, and *pondered* them :¹ let us follow her

angel, to blessed John Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed : through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech the blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, to pray to our Lord God for me.

May Almighty God have mercy on us, and, our sins being forgiven, bring us to life everlasting. Amen.

May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution, and remission of our sins. Amen.

¹ St. Luke, i. 19 and 51.

sweet example, and feed our souls with the heavenly Manna. Let the rays of this hidden but penetrating Light illumine us. If we would follow Jesus to Thabor, let us begin to follow him in the way he now shows us—of a Child's simplicity and humility. The higher the architect wishes to carry up the building, the deeper does he sink the foundations. Jesus humbles himself so profoundly, because the work he has undertaken is to go up even to the highest heavens. As his members, we must go with him; we must bear him company, now in his humble Crib, and, later, on his Cross, if we would be associated with him, when the day of his triumph comes, and he is seated at the right hand of his Father.

The next part of your Morning Prayer must be to ask of God, by the following prayers, grace to avoid every kind of sin during the day you are just beginning. Say, then, with the Church, whose prayers must always be preferred to all others :

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto thee.

V. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

LET US PRAY.

Almighty Lord and God, who has brought us to the beginning of this day, let thy powerful grace so conduct us through it, that we may not fall into any sin, but that all our thoughts, words, and actions may be regulated according to the rules of thy heavenly justice, and tend to the observance of thy holy law. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OREMUS.

Domine, Deus omnipotens, qui ad principium hujus diei nos pervenire fecisti, tua nos hodie salva virtute, ut in hac die ad nullum declinemus peccatum, sed semper ad tuam justitiam faciendam nostra procedant eloquia, dirigantur cogitationes et opera. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Then, beg the divine assistance for the actions of the day, that you may do them well ; and say thrice :

Ÿ. Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.

℞. Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.

Ÿ. Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.

℞. Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.

Ÿ. Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.

℞. Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.

Ÿ. Incline unto my aid, O God.

℞. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Ÿ. Incline unto my aid, O God.

℞. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Ÿ. Incline unto my aid, O God.

℞. O Lord, make haste to help me.

OREMUS.

LET US PRAY.

Dirigere et sanctificare, regere et gubernare dignare, Domine Deus, Rex cœli et terræ, hodie corda et corpora nostra, sensus, sermones et actus nostros in lege tua, et in operibus mandatorum tuorum, ut hic et in æternum, te auxiliante, salvi et liberi esse mereamur, Salvator mundi. Qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Lord God, and King of heaven and earth, vouchsafe this day to rule and sanctify, to direct and govern our souls and bodies, our senses, words, and actions in conformity to thy law, and strict obedience to thy commands ; that by the help of thy grace, O Saviour of the world ! we may be fenced and freed from all evils. Who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.

After this, uniting yourself with the Church,—who celebrates with holy enthusiasm the rising of the Sun of Justice, by whose Light she does the works which render her agreeable to this her divine Spouse,—say together with her :

Ÿ. Verbum caro factum est. Alleluia !

℞. Et habitavit in nobis. Alleluia !

Ÿ. The Word was made Flesh. Alleluia !

℞. And dwelt among us. Alleluia !

LET US PRAY.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that, as we are enlightened by the new light of thy Word made Flesh, we may show in our actions the effects of that faith that shineth in our minds. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OREMUS.

Da nobis, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, ut qui nova incarnati Verbi tui luce perfundimur; hoc in nostro resplendeat opere quod per fidem fulget in mente. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

During the day, you will do well to use the instructions and prayers which you will find in this volume, for each day of the Season, both for the Proper of the Time, and the Proper of the Saints. In the Evening, you may use the following Prayers.

NIGHT PRAYERS.

After having made the sign of the Cross, begin by adoring and praising the Son of God made Flesh, and dwelling amongst us his creatures, for our salvation. For this end, you may recite the following stanzas of one of the Hymns sung by the Church during Christmas.

HYMN.

O Jesu! Redeemer of mankind! born before the light was made, and born of the Eternal Father, equal to Him in infinite glory;

O thou the Light and brightness of the Father! O thou the everlasting hope of all men! hear the prayers offered thee by thy servants throughout the world.

Be mindful, O Creator of all things! that heretofore thou didst assume a Body like unto ours, and wast born from the sacred womb of a Virgin.

Jesu, Redemptor omnium,
Quem lucis ante originem
Parem paternæ gloriæ
Pater supremus edidit;

Tu lumen et splendor Patris,
Tu spes perennis omnium;
Intende quas fundunt preces,
Tui per orbem servuli.

Memento, rerum conditor,
Nostri quod olim corporis
Sacrata ab alvo Virginis
Nascendo formam sumpseris.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria
 Qui natus es de Virgine,
 Cum Patre et almo Spiritu
 In sempiterna sæcula.
 Amen.

Glory be to thee, O Jesus,
 who wast born of the Virgin !
 and to the Father and the Holy
 Ghost, for everlasting ages.
 Amen.

After this Hymn, say the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, and the *Apostles' Creed*, as in the Morning.

Then, make the Examination of Conscience, going over in your mind all the faults you have committed during the day ; think, how unworthy sin makes us of the caresses and the company of the Divine Babe ; and conclude, by making a firm resolution to avoid sin for the future, to do penance for it, and to avoid the occasions which would again lead you into it.

The Examination of Conscience concluded, recite the *Confiteor* (or *I confess*) with heartfelt contrition, and then give expression to your sorrow by the following Act, which we have taken from the Venerable Cardinal Bellarmine's Catechism :—

ACT OF CONTRITION.

O my God, I am exceedingly grieved for having offended thee, and with my whole heart I repent for the sins I have committed : I hate and abhor them above every other evil, not only because, by so sinning I have lost Heaven and deserve Hell, but still more because I have offended thee, O infinite Goodness, who art worthy to be loved above all things. I most firmly resolve, by the assistance of thy grace, never more to offend thee for the time to come, and to avoid those occasions which might lead me into sin.

You may then add the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, to the recitation of which Pope Benedict 14 has granted an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines for each time.

ACT OF FAITH.

O my God, I firmly believe whatsoever the holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church requires me to believe : I believe it, because thou hast revealed it to her, thou who art the very Truth.

ACT OF HOPE.

O my God, knowing thy almighty power, and thy infinite goodness and mercy, I hope in thee that, by the merits of the Passion and Death of our Saviour Jesus Christ, thou wilt grant me eternal life, which thou hast promised to all such as shall do the works of a good Christian ; and these I resolve to do, with the help of thy grace.

ACT OF CHARITY.

O my God, I love thee with my whole heart and above all things, because thou art the sovereign Good : I would rather lose all things than offend thee. For thy love also, I love and desire to love my neighbour as myself.

Then say to our blessed Lady, in honour of the ineffable dignity of her Maternity, the following Anthem :—

ANTHEM TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Sweet Mother of our Redeemer, Gate whereby we enter heaven, and Star of the sea ! help us, we fall ; yet do we long to rise. Nature looked upon thee with admiration, when thou didst give birth to thy divine Creator, thyself remaining, before and after it, a pure Virgin. Gabriel spoke his *Hail* to thee ; we sinners crave thy pity.

Ÿ. After child-birth, thou didst remain most pure, O Virgin !

R̄. O Mother of God, make intercession for us.

Alma Redemptoris mater
quæ pervia cœli,
Porta manes, et stella maris,
succurre cadenti,
Surgere qui curat populo : tu
quæ genuisti,
Natura mirante, tuum sanc-
tum Genitorem,
Virgo prius ac posterius, Ga-
brielis ab ore,
Sumens illud Ave, peccato-
rum miserere.

Ÿ. Post partum, Virgo,
inviolata permansisti.

R̄. Dei Genitrix, inter-
cede pro nobis.

LET US PRAY.

O God, who by the fruitful Virginity of the Blessed Mary, hast given to mankind the rewards of eternal salvation ; grant, we beseech thee, that

OREMUS.

Deus, qui salutis æternæ, beatæ Mariæ virginitate fecunda, humano generi præmia præstitisti : tribue, quæsumus, ut ipsam pro nobis

intercedere sentiamus, per quam meruimus auctorem vitæ suscipere Dominum nostrum, Jesum Christum, Filium tuum. Amen. we may experience Her intercession, by whom we received the Author of Life, our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son. Amen.

You would do well to add the Litany of our Lady. An indulgence of three hundred days, for each time it is recited, has been granted by the Church.

THE LITANY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Kyrie, eleison.	Lord, have mercy on us.
Christe, eleison.	Christ, have mercy on us.
Kyrie, eleison.	Lord, have mercy on us.
Christe, audi nos.	Christ, hear us.
Christe, exaudi nos.	Christ, graciously hear us.
Pater de cœlis, Deus, miserere nobis.	God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
Fili, Redemptor mundi, Deus, miserere nobis.	God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
Spiritus Sancte, Deus, miserere nobis.	God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus, miserere nobis.	Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis.	Holy Mary, pray for us.
Sancta Dei Genitrix, ora, etc.	Holy Mother of God, pray, etc.
Sancta Virgo virginum, Mater Christi, Mater divinæ gratiæ, Mater purissima, Mater castissima, Mater inviolata, Mater intemerata, Mater amabilis, Mater admirabilis, Mater Creatoris, Mater Salvatoris, Virgo prudentissima, Virgo veneranda, Virgo prædicanda, Virgo potens, Virgo clemens, Virgo fidelis, Speculum justitiæ,	Holy Virgin of virgins, Mother of Christ, Mother of divine grace, Mother most pure, Mother most chaste, Mother inviolate, Mother undefiled, Mother most amiable, Mother most admirable, Mother of our Creator, Mother of our Redeemer, Virgin most prudent, Virgin most venerable, Virgin most renowned, Virgin most powerful, Virgin most merciful, Virgin most faithful, Mirror of justice,

Seat of wisdom,
 Cause of our joy,
 Spiritual vessel,
 Vessel of honour,
 Vessel of singular devotion,
 Mystical Rose,
 Tower of David,
 Tower of ivory,
 House of gold,
 Ark of the covenant,
 Gate of heaven,
 Morning Star,
 Health of the weak,
 Refuge of sinners,
 Comforter of the afflicted,
 Help of Christians,
 Queen of Angels,
 Queen of Patriarchs,
 Queen of Prophets,
 Queen of Apostles,
 Queen of Martyrs,
 Queen of Confessors,
 Queen of Virgins,
 Queen of all Saints,
 Queen conceived without original sin.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

Ÿ. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

℞. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Sedes sapientiæ,
 Causa nostræ lætitiæ,
 Vas spirituale,
 Vas honorabile,
 Vas insigne devotionis,
 Rosa mystica,
 Turris Davidica,
 Turris eburnea,
 Domus aurea,
 Fœderis arca,
 Janua cœli,
 Stella matutina,
 Salus infirmorum,
 Refugium peccatorum,
 Consolatrix afflictorum,
 Auxilium Christianorum,
 Regina Angelorum,
 Regina Patriarcharum,
 Regina Prophetarum,
 Regina Apostolorum,
 Regina Martyrum,
 Regina Confessorum,
 Regina Virginum,
 Regina Sanctorum omnium,
 Regina sine labe concepta.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, parce nobis, Domine.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, exaudi nos, Domine.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Christe, audi nos.

Christe, exaudi nos.

Ÿ. Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix.

℞. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

LET US PRAY.

OREMUS.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that we thy servants

Concede nos famulos tuos, quæsumus, Domine Deus,

perpetua mentis et corporis
sanitate gaudere: et gloriosa
beatæ Mariæ semper Vir-
ginis intercessione, a præ-
senti liberari tristitia, et
æterna perfrui lætitia. Per
Christum Dominum nos-
trum. Amen.

may enjoy constant health of
body and mind, and by the
glorious intercession of Bles-
sed Mary, ever a Virgin, be
delivered from all present
affliction, and come to that joy
which is eternal. Through
Christ our Lord. Amen.

Here invoke the Holy Angels, whose protection is, indeed, always so much needed by us, but never so much as during the hours of night. Say with the Church:—

Sancti Angeli, custodes
nostri, defendite nos in
prælio, ut non pereamus in
tremendo iudicio.

Ÿ. Angelis suis Deus man-
davit de te.

R. Ut custodiant te in
omnibus viis tuis.

OREMUS.

Deus, qui ineffabili provi-
dentia sanctos Angelos tuos
ad nostram custodiam mit-
tere dignaris: largire suppli-
cibus tuis, et eorum semper
protectione defendi, et æter-
na societate gaudere. Per
Christum Dominum nos-
trum. Amen.

Holy Angels, our loving
Guardians, defend us in the
hour of battle, that we may
not be lost at the dreadful
judgment.

Ÿ. God hath given his
Angels charge of thee.

R. That they may guard
thee in all thy ways.

LET US PRAY.

O God, who in thy wonder-
ful providence hast been
pleased to appoint thy holy
Angels for our guardians;
mercifully hear our prayers,
and grant we may rest se-
cure under their protection,
and enjoy their fellowship in
heaven for ever. Through
Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then beg the assistance of the Saints by the following antiphon and prayer of the Church:—

ANT. Sancti Dei omnes,
intercedere dignemini pro
nostra omniumque salute.

Ÿ. Lætamini in Domino
et exsultate, iusti.

ANT. All ye Saints of God,
vouchsafe to intercede for us
and for all men, that we may
be saved.

Ÿ. Rejoice in the Lord, ye
just, and be glad.

R. And glory, all ye right
of heart.

R. Et gloriamini omnes
recti corde.

LET US PRAY.

Protect, O Lord, thy people ;
and because we have confi-
dence in the intercession of
blessed Peter and Paul and
thy other Apostles, ever de-
fend and preserve us.

May all thy Saints ever help
us, we beseech thee, O Lord !
and grant, that, whilst we
honour their merits, we may
experience their intercession.
Grant thy holy peace unto
these our days, and drive all
iniquity from thy Church.
Direct and prosper unto salva-
tion every step, and action,
and desire, of us and of all
thy servants. Repay our bene-
factors with everlasting bless-
ings ; and grant eternal rest
to all the faithful departed.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

OREMUS.

Protege, Domine, popu-
lum tuum, et Apostolorum
tuorum Petri et Pauli et
aliorum Apostolorum patro-
cinio confidentem, perpetua
defensione conserva.

Omnes Sancti tui, quæsu-
mus, Domine, nos ubique
adjuvent : ut dum eorum
merita recolimus, patroci-
nia sentiamus : et pacem
tuam nostris concede tem-
poribus, et ab Ecclesia tua
cunctam repelle nequitiam :
iter, actus, et voluntates
nostras, et omnium famu-
lorum tuorum, in salutis
tuæ prosperitate dispone :
benefactoribus nostris sem-
piterna bona retribue : et
omnibus fidelibus defunctis
requiem æternam concede.
Per Christum Dominum
nostrum. Amen.

And here you may add a special mention of the
Saints to whom you bear a particular devotion, either
as your Patrons or otherwise ; as also of those whose
feast is kept in the Church that day, or at least who
have been commemorated in the Divine Office.

This done, remember the necessities of the Church
Suffering, and beg of God that he will give to the
souls in Purgatory a place of refreshment, light, and
peace. For this intention recite the usual prayers.

PSALM 129.

From the depths I have
cried to thee, O Lord ; Lord,
hear my voice.

De profundis clamavi ad
te, Domine : Domine, exaudi
vocem meam.

Fiant aures tuæ intendentes : in vocem deprecationis meæ.

Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine : Domine, quis sustinebit ?

Quia apud te propitiatio est : et propter legem tuam sustinui te, Domine.

Sustinuit anima mea in verbo ejus : speravit anima mea in Domino.

Acustodiamatutinausque ad noctem : speret Israel in Domino.

Quia apud Dominum misericordia : et copiosa apud eum redemptio.

Et ipse redimet Israel ; ex omnibus iniquitatibus ejus.

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine.

Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Ÿ. A porta inferi.

R. Erue, Domine, animas eorum.

Ÿ. Requiescant in pace.

R. Amen.

Ÿ. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If thou wilt observe iniquities, O Lord, Lord, who shall endure it ?

For with thee there is merciful forgiveness ; and by reason of thy law I have waited for thee, O Lord.

My soul hath relied on his word ; my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

From the morning watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy, and with him plentiful redemption.

And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Eternal rest give to them, O Lord.

And let perpetual light shine upon them.

Ÿ. From the gate of hell.

R. Deliver their souls, O Lord.

Ÿ. May they rest in peace.

R. Amen.

Ÿ. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto thee.

OREMUS.

Fidelium Deus omnium Conditor et Redemptor, animabus famulorum famularumque tuarum, remissionem cunctorem tribue peccatorum : ut indulgentiam, quam semper optaverunt, piis supplicationibus consequantur. Qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

LET US PRAY.

O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, give to the souls of thy servants departed the remission of their sins : that through the help of pious supplications, they may obtain the pardon they have always desired. Who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.

Here make a special memento of such of the Faithful departed as have a particular claim upon your charity; after which, ask of God to give you his assistance, whereby you may pass the night free from danger. Say then, still keeping to the words of the Church :

ANT. Save us, O Lord, whilst awake, and watch us as we sleep; that we may watch with Christ, and rest in peace.

Ÿ. Vouchsafe, O Lord, this night.

℞. To keep us without sin.

Ÿ. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

℞. Have mercy on us.

Ÿ. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us.

℞. As we have hoped in thee.

Ÿ. O Lord, hear my prayer.

℞. And let my cry come unto thee.

ANT. Salva nos, Domine, vigilantes, custodi nos dormientes: ut vigilemus cum Christo, et requiescamus in pace.

Ÿ. Dignare, Domine, nocte ista.

℞. Sine peccato nos custodire.

Ÿ. Miserere nostri, Domine.

℞. Miserere nostri.

Ÿ. Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos.

℞. Quemadmodum speravimus in te.

Ÿ. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

℞. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

LET US PRAY.

Visit, we beseech thee, O Lord, this house and family, and drive from it all snares of the enemy: let thy holy Angels dwell herein, who may keep us in peace, and may thy blessing be always upon us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God world without end. Amen.

OREMUS.

Visita, quæsumus, Domine, habitationem istam, et omnes insidias inimici ab ea longe repelle: Angeli tui sancti habitent in ea, qui nos in pace custodiant, et benedictio tua sit super nos semper. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

And that you may end the day in the same sentiments wherewith you began it, devoutly pay your homage to the divine Mystery of the Incarnation, by reciting the following prayer :

Ÿ. Notum fecit Dominus, alleluia !

℞. Salutare suum, alleluia !

Ÿ. The Lord hath made known, alleluia !

℞. His Salvation, alleluia !

OREMUS.

Deus, qui sacratissimam noctem veri luminis fecisti illustratione clarescere ; da, quæsumus, ut cujus lucis mysteria in terra cognovimus, ejus quoque gaudiis in cœlo perfruamur. Qui tecum vivit et regnat in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

LET US PRAY.

O God ! who hast enlightened the most sacred of Nights by the brightness of Him, who is the true Light ; grant, we beseech thee, that we who have known the mysteries of this Light on earth, may likewise come to the enjoyment of it in heaven. Who liveth and reigneth with thee for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

ON HEARING MASS, DURING THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS.

SUCH is the number and importance of the Feasts kept during this Holy Season, that even those of the Faithful, who have not the habit of hearing Mass daily at other times, look upon it as a sort of duty to do so now : and rightly ; for, the Lamb, who is offered up in this Divine Sacrifice, is He, whom they have been asking of the Eternal Father with so much earnestness during Advent, in those words of the Prophet Isaias : *Send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the Ruler of the Earth.*¹

This tender Lamb is come ; *the Child is born unto us,*² and even now is on the Altar of his Sacrifice. St. Paul tells us, that this Jesus, on his first entrance into the world, said to his Father : *Sacrifice and oblation thou willedst not ; but a Body thou hast fitted unto me.—Then said I ; Behold I come :—to do thy will, O God.*³ It is true, that the Sacrifice of the Cross, of which that of the Mass is the continuation, was the Sacrifice of Christ at the end of his Three-and-Thirty Years ; still, during these days of Christmas, when we have so much to learn from the mystery of the Sacred Infancy, we shall be in strict accordance with the spirit of the Church, if, whilst assisting at Mass, we keep before our minds, not only the bleeding Victim of Calvary, but likewise the sweet Lamb of Bethlehem. Moreover, does not our Jesus offer himself, for us, to his Father, from his Crib as well as from his Cross ? Thus, we read in

¹ Is. xvi. 1.

² *Ibid.* ix. 6.

³ Heb. x. 5.

the *Acts of the Saints*, that as often as this our Redeemer wished to requite the faith and love of his servants, by manifesting to them his real Presence in the sacred Host, he appeared to them in the form of a lovely Babe.

The Liturgical Iconography of the Greeks represents the mystery of the Eucharist under the symbol of a Babe reposing on a Paten. So, too, in many of our Latin Missals, up to the end of the 16th century, we find an illumination or engraving, as the case may be, representing a Priest vested in a Chasuble, standing at the Altar, and holding in his hands the Body of our Saviour, under the form of a Child.

Let the Faithful, therefore, enter the House of God in the dispositions, wherewith the Shepherds and the Magi were animated, when they went to Bethlehem, the *House of Bread*. They, too, must *come with haste*;¹ from the mid-night of this world, to that *Light which shineth in darkness*.² They must come to the Altar as to the Crib of Jesus, and in the joy of this Mystery, they must offer their whole heart to the New-Born Babe. Then, uniting themselves with Mary and the Church, they must offer the Lamb of God to the heavenly Father, and themselves together with him—and all this, with the humility and simplicity of Little Children.

We will now endeavour to embody these sentiments in our explanation of the Mysteries of the Holy Mass, and initiate the Faithful into these divine secrets; not, indeed, by indiscreetly presuming to translate the sacred formulæ, but by suggesting such Acts, as will enable those who hear Mass, to enter into the ceremonies and sentiments of the Church and the Priest.

During a considerable portion of this Season, the Mass is celebrated in commemoration of the great

¹ St. Luke, ii. 16.

² St. John, i. 5.

Mysteries, which were accomplished at this period of the Liturgical Year; and the Prayers used by the Church, on these great Feasts, will be found on the respective days. During the remaining forty days, the Holy Sacrifice is either *of the Saints* or *of the Sundays*, which come during this time, and on which there does not occur a *Double Feast*. The Sundays of Septuagesima and Sexagesima sometimes fall during Christmastide; and when this happens, they cannot be put out by any Feast, save those of the Patron of the Place, or of the Titular or Dedication of the Church.

In all the Masses of the Sundays, as also on those Feasts which are called *simples* and *semi-doubles*, the Priest makes a commemoration of our Blessed Lady as *Mother of God*, and this by three Prayers, which we give in their proper places. With regard to the *colours* of the Vestments, used during this holy Season, we have explained them in a previous chapter.

On the Sundays, if the Mass, at which the Faithful assist, be the Parochial, or, as it is often called, the Public Mass, two solemn rites precede it, which are full of instruction and blessing—the *Asperges*, or sprinkling of the Holy Water, and the Procession.

During the *Asperges*, let them unite with the intentions of the Church in this venerable rite, and pray for that purity of heart, which will fit them for admission into that Stable of Bethlehem, wherein the Word Incarnate first appeared to his creatures.

ANTIPHON OF THE ASPERGES.

Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, O Lord, and I shall be cleansed; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.

Ps. Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy.

Asperges me, Domine, hyssopo, et mundabor; lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor.

Ps. Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.

Ÿ. Gloria Patri, &c.

ANT. Asperges me, &c.

Ÿ. Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam.

R. Et salutare tuum da nobis.

Ÿ. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

Ÿ. Dominus vobiscum.

R. Et cum spiritu tuo.

Ÿ. Glory, &c.

ANT. Sprinkle me, &c.

Ÿ. Show us, O Lord, thy mercy.

R. And grant us the Saviour, whom we expect from thee.

Ÿ. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto thee.

Ÿ. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

OREMUS.

LET US PRAY.

Exaudi nos, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus : et mittere digneris sanctum Angelum tuum de cœlis, qui custodiat, foveat, protegat, visitet atque defendat omnes habitantes in hoc habitaculo. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

R. Amen.

Graciously hear us, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God : and vouchsafe to send thy holy Angel from heaven, who may keep, cherish, protect, visit, and defend all who are assembled in this place. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The Procession, which immediately precedes the Mass, should remind us of the Shepherds and Magi going to Bethlehem, and how, after a holy impatience to reach the holy spot, they arrived, and found *Mary, and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger.*

But see, Christians, the Sacrifice begins ! The Priest is at the foot of the altar ; God is attentive, the Angels are in adoration, the whole Church is united with the Priest, whose priesthood and action are those of the great High Priest, Jesus Christ. Let us make the sign of the cross with him.

THE ORDINARY OF THE MASS.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

I unite myself, O my God, with thy Church, who comes to seek consolation in Jesus Christ thy Son, who is the true Altar.

Like her, I beseech thee to defend me against the malice of the enemies of my salvation.

It is in thee that I have put my hope; yet do I feel sad and troubled at being in the midst of the snares which are set for me.

Send me, then, him who is *light* and *truth*; it is he will open to us the way to thy holy mount, to thy heavenly tabernacle.

He is the Mediator, and the living Altar; I will draw nigh to him, and be filled with joy.

When he shall have come, I will sing in my gladness, Be not sad, O my soul! why wouldst thou be troubled?

Hope in his coming; he who is thy *Saviour* and thy *God*, will soon be with thee.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

I am to go to the altar of God, and feel the presence of him who consoles me!

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

Ÿ. Introibo ad altare Dei.

R. Ad Deum qui lætificat juventutem meam.

Judica me, Deus, et discerne causam meam de gente non sancta: ab homine iniquo et doloso erue me.

Quia tu es, Deus, fortitudo mea: quare me repulistis? et quare tristis incedo, dum affligit me inimicus?

Emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam: ipsa me deduxerunt et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum, et in tabernacula tua.

Et introibo ad altare Dei: ad Deum qui lætificat juventutem meam.

Confitebor tibi in cithara Deus, Deus meus: quare tristis es anima mea? et quare conturbas me?

Spera in Deo, quoniam adhuc confitebor illi: salutare vultus mei, et Deus meus.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Ÿ. Introibo ad altare Dei.

R. Ad Deum qui lætificat juventutem meam.

Ÿ. Adjutorium nostrum
in nomine Domini.

R. Qui fecit cœlum et
terram.

This my hope comes not
from any merits of my own,
but from the all-powerful help
of my Creator.

The thought of his being about to appear before his God, excites, in the soul of the Priest, a lively sentiment of compunction. He cannot go further in the holy Sacrifice without confessing, and publicly, that he is a sinner, and deserves not the grace he is about to receive. Listen, with respect, to this confession of God's Minister, and earnestly ask our Lord to show mercy to him ; for the Priest is your Father ; he is answerable for your salvation, for which he every day risks his own. When he has finished, unite with the Servers, or the Sacred Ministers, in this prayer :

Misereatur tui omnipo-
tens Deus, et dimissis pec-
catis tuis, perducatur te ad
vitam æternam.

May Almighty God have
mercy on thee, and, forgiving
thy sins, bring thee to ever-
lasting life.

The Priest having answered *Amen*, make your confession, saying with a contrite spirit :

Confiteor Deo omnipo-
tenti, beatæ Mariæ semper
Virgini, beato Michaeli
Archangelo, beato Joanni
Baptistæ, sanctis Apostolis
Petro et Paulo, omnibus
Sanctis, et tibi, Pater : quia
peccavi nimis, cogitatione,
verbo, et opere : mea culpa,
mea culpa, mea maxima
culpa. Ideo precor beatam
Mariam semper Virginem,
beatum Michaelem Arch-
angelum, beatum Joannem
Baptistam, sanctos Aposto-
los Petrum et Paulum, om-
nes Sanctos, et te, Pater,
orare pro me ad Dominum
Deum nostrum.

I confess to Almighty God,
to blessed Mary ever Virgin,
to blessed Michael the Arch-
angel, to blessed John Baptist,
to the holy Apostles Peter and
Paul, to all the saints, and to
thee, Father, that I have sinned
exceedingly in thought, word,
and deed, through my fault,
through my fault, through my
most grievous fault. There-
fore I beseech the blessed
Mary ever Virgin, blessed
Michael the Archangel, blessed
John Baptist, the holy Apost-
les Peter and Paul, and all the
saints, and thee, Father, to
pray to our Lord God for me.

Receive with gratitude the paternal wish of the Priest, who says to you :

May Almighty God be merciful to you, and, forgiving your sins, bring you to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution, and remission of our sins.

R. Amen.

Invoke the divine assistance, that you may approach to Jesus Christ.

Ÿ. O God, it needs but one look of thine to give us life.

R. And thy people shall rejoice in thee.

Ÿ. Show us, O Lord, thy mercy.

R. And give us the Saviour whom thou hast prepared for us.

Ÿ. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto thee.

Misereatur vestri omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis vestris, perducatur vos ad vitam æternam.

R. Amen.

Indulgentiam, absolutio-
nem, et remissionem pec-
catorum nostrorum, tribuat
nobis omnipotens et miseri-
cors Dominus.

R. Amen.

Ÿ. Deus, tu conversus vi-
vificabis nos.

R. Et plebs tua lætabitur
in te.

Ÿ. Ostende nobis, Domi-
ne, misericordiam tuam.

R. Et Salutare tuum da
nobis.

Ÿ. Domine, exaudi ora-
tionem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te
veniat.

The Priest here leaves you to ascend to the altar ; but first he salutes you :

Ÿ. The Lord be with you.

Ÿ. Dominus vobiscum.

Answer him with reverence :

R. And with thy spirit.

R. Et cum spiritu tuo.

LET US PRAY.

OREMUS.

He ascends the steps, and comes to the Holy of Holies. Ask, both for him and yourself, the deliverance from sin :

Aufer a nobis quæsumus, Domine, iniquitates nostras; ut ad Sancta sanctorum puris mereamur mentibus introire. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Take from our hearts, O Lord, all those sins, which make us unworthy of thy visit; we ask this of thee by thy divine Son, our Lord.

When the Priest kisses the altar, out of reverence for the relics of the Martyrs which are there, say :

Oramus te, Domine, per merita sanctorum tuorum quorum reliquiæ hic sunt, et omnium Sanctorum : ut indulgere digneris omnia peccata mea. Amen.

Generous soldiers of Jesus Christ, who have mingled your own blood with his, intercede for us that our sins may be forgiven : that so we may, like you, approach unto God.

If it be a High Mass at which you are assisting, the Priest incenses the Altar in a most solemn manner; and this white cloud, which you see ascending from every part of the Altar, signifies the prayer of the Church, who addresses herself to Jesus Christ; and which this Divine Mediator then causes to ascend, united with his own, to the throne of the majesty of his Father.

The Priest then says the Introit. It is a solemn opening-anthem, in which the Church, at the very commencement of the Holy Sacrifice, gives expression to the sentiments which fill her heart.

It is followed by nine exclamations, which are even more earnest, for they ask for mercy. In addressing them to God, the Church unites herself with the nine choirs of Angels, who are standing round the altar of Heaven, one and the same as this before which you are kneeling.

To the Father, who has sent us his Son :

Kyrie eleison.

Kyrie eleison.

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy on us !

Lord, have mercy on us !

Lord, have mercy on us !

To the Son, who has come down to us :

Christ, have mercy on us !	Christe eleison.
Christ, have mercy on us !	Christe eleison.
Christ, have mercy on us !	Christe eleison.

*To the Holy Ghost, whose operation has accomplished
the mystery :*

Lord, have mercy on us !	Kyrie eleison.
Lord, have mercy on us !	Kyrie eleison.
Lord, have mercy on us !	Kyrie eleison.

Then, mingling his voice with that of the heavenly host, the Priest intones the sublime Canticle of Bethlehem, which announces *glory to God, and peace to men*. Instructed by the revelations of God, the Church continues, in her own words, the Hymn of the Angels. She celebrates, with rapture, *the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world*. She offers to this Lamb, in return for the humiliations of the Stable and the Crib, the homage of her fervent praise, declaring that *He alone is Holy, He alone is Lord, He alone Most-High*. Enter, Christians, into these sentiments of profound adoration, of confidence, and of tender love, towards the Divine Lamb.

THE ANGELIC HYMN.

GLORY BE TO GOD ON HIGH,
AND ON EARTH PEACE TO MEN
OF GOOD WILL.

We praise thee : we bless
thee : we adore thee : we
glorify thee : we give thee
thanks for thy great glory.

O Lord God, Heavenly
King, God the Father Al-
mighty.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the
only begotten Son.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO,
ET IN TERRA PAX HOMINI-
BUS BONÆ VOLUNTATIS.

Laudamus te : benedi-
mus te : adoramus te : glori-
ficamus te : gratias agimus
tibi propter magnam gloriam
tuam.

Domine Deus Rex cœles-
tis, Deus Pater omnipotens.

Domine, Fili unigenite,
Jesu Christe.

Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,
Filius Patris.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nos-
tram.

Qui sedes ad dexteram
Patris, miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
tu solus Dominus, tu solus
Altissimus, Jesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spiritu, in glo-
ria Dei Patris. Amen.

O Lord God, *Lamb of God*,
Son of the Father.

Who takest away the sins
of the world, have mercy on us.

Who takest away the sins of
the world, receive our humble
prayer.

Who sittest at the right
hand of the Father, have
mercy on us.

For thou alone art holy,
thou alone art Lord, thou
alone, O Jesus Christ, together
with the Holy Ghost, art most
high, in the glory of God the
Father. Amen.

The Priest turns towards the people, and again salutes them, as it were to make sure of their pious attention to the sublime act, for which all this is but the preparation. The words of this greeting are especially beautiful during the season of Christmas: *The Lord be with you!* Isaias had foretold that it would indeed be verified, and the Angel confirms the prophecy to St. Joseph, when he thus says to him: *He shall be called Emmanuel*, that is, *God with us*.¹

Then follows the *Collect* or *Prayer*, in which the Church formally expresses to the divine Majesty the special intentions she has in the Mass which is being celebrated. You may unite in this prayer, by reciting with the Priest the Collects which you will find in their proper places: but on no account omit to join with the server of the Mass in answering *Amen*.

Then follows the *Epistle*, which is, generally, a portion of one or other of the Epistles of the Apostles, or a passage from some Book of the Old Testament. Whilst it is being read, thank Him, who, not satisfied with having, *at sundry times, spoken to us by the*

¹ St. Matth. i. 23.

*Prophets, has deigned, in these days, to speak to us by his Son.*¹

The *Gradual* is an intermediate formula of Prayer between the Epistle and Gospel. It again brings to our attention the sentiments which were expressed in the Introit. Read it with devotion, so as to get more and more into the spirit of the Christmas Mystery.

The song of praise, the *Alleluia*, is next heard. Let us, whilst it is being sung, unite with the holy Angels, who, at the Birth of the Divine Lamb, made our earth echo with their heavenly chants.

One of the princes of this heavenly host, said, speaking to the shepherds: *Behold I evangelise to you (that is, I bring you good tidings of) a great joy—for this day is born unto you a Saviour, in Bethlehem, the City of David.*² Afterwards, came the Apostles, and they *evangelised* this same joy to the whole world; and the Book, which contains the words which gave joy to mankind, is called *the Gospel—Evangelium*. A passage from this divine Book is now going to be read to the assembly of the Faithful; we shall hear the very words of Him, who became a Little Child, in order to be thus able to speak to us.

If it be a High Mass, the Deacon prepares to fulfil his noble office, that of announcing the *Good Tidings* of salvation. He prays God to cleanse his heart and lips. Then kneeling, he asks the Priest's blessing; and having received it, he at once goes to the place where he is to sing the Gospel.

As a preparation for hearing it worthily, you may thus pray, together with the Priest and Deacon:

Alas! these ears of mine Munda cor meum, ac labia
are but too often defiled with mea, omnipotens Deus, qui

¹ Heb. i. 1, 2.

² St. Luke, ii. 10, 11.

labia Isaiaë Prophetæ calculo mundasti ignito : ita me tua grata miseratione dignare mundare, ut sanctum Evangelium tuum digne valeam nuntiare. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Dominus sit in corde meo, et in labiis meis : ut digne et competenter annuntiem Evangelium suum : In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

the world's vain words ; cleanse them, O Lord, that so I may hear the words of eternal life, and treasure them in my heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Grant to thy ministers thy grace, that they may faithfully explain thy law ; that so all, both pastors and flock, may be united to thee for ever. Amen.

You will stand during the Gospel, as though you were waiting the orders of your Lord ; and at the commencement, make the sign of the Cross on your forehead, lips, and breast ; and then listen to every word of the Priest or Deacon. Let your heart be ready and obedient. *Whilst my Beloved was speaking*, says the Spouse in the Canticle, *my soul melted within me*.¹ If you have not such love as this, have at least the humble submission of Samuel, and say : *Speak, Lord ! thy servant heareth*.²

After the Gospel, if the Priest say the Symbol of Faith, the *Credo*, you will say it with him. Faith is that gift of God, without which we cannot please him. It is Faith that makes us see *the Light which shineth in darkness*, and which *the darkness* of unbelief *did not comprehend*. It is Faith that shows us Him we are to love. It is Faith, too, that makes us become *little children again* ; for, such we must be, if we would have access to the Crib of Him, whom Clement of Alexandria so beautifully calls *the King of Infants*. Let us, then, say with the Catholic Church, our Mother :

¹ Cant. v. 6.

² I. Kings, iii. 10.

THE NICENE CREED.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. And born of the Father before all ages; God of God, light of light; true God of true God. Begotten, not made; consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven. *And became incarnate by the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary; AND WAS MADE MAN.* He was crucified also for us, under Pontius Pilate, suffered, and was buried. And the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And he is to come again with glory, to judge the living and the dead; of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son. Who together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified; who spoke by the Prophets. And one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I expect the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem cœli et terræ, visibilibus omnium et invisibilibus.

Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum. Et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula, Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero. Genitum non factum, consubstantialem, Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem, descendit de cœlis. *Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto, ex Maria Virgine; ET HOMO FACTUS EST.* Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus, et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas. Et ascendit in cœlum; sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos; cujus regni non erit finis.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur, et conglorificatur; qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam sanctam Catholicam et Apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum Baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen.

The Priest and the people should, by this time, have their hearts ready: it is time to prepare the offering itself. And here we come to the second part of the Holy Mass, which is called the *Oblation*, and which immediately follows that, which was called the *Mass of Catechumens*, on account of its being formerly the only part, at which the candidates for Baptism had a right to be present,

See, then, dear Christians! bread and wine are about to be offered to God, as being the noblest of inanimate creatures, since they are made for the nourishment of man; and even that is only a poor material image of what they are destined to become in our Christian Sacrifice. Their substance will soon give place to God himself, and of themselves nothing will remain but the appearances. Happy creatures, thus to yield up their own being, that God may take its place! We, too, are to undergo a like transformation, when, as the Apostle expresses it, *that which to us is mortal, shall put on immortality*.¹ Until that happy change shall be realised, let us offer ourselves to God, as often as we see the bread and wine presented to him in the Holy Sacrifice; and let us glorify Him, who, by assuming our human nature, has made us *partakers of the divine nature*.²

The Priest again turns to the people with the usual salutation, as though he would warn them to redouble their attention. Let us read the Offertory with him, and when he offers the Host to God, let us unite with him in saying:

Suscipe, sancte Pater,
omnipotens æterne Deus,
hanc immaculatam hostiam,
quam ego indignus famulus
tuus offero tibi Deo meo
vivo et vero, pro innumera-

All that we have, O Lord,
comes from thee, and belongs
to thee; it is just, therefore,
that we return it unto thee.
But, how wonderful art thou
in the inventions of thy im-

¹ I. Cor. xv. 53.

² II. St. Pet. i. 4.

mense love! This bread which we are offering to thee, is to give place, in a few moments, to the sacred Body of Jesus. We beseech thee, receive, together with this oblation, our hearts which long to live by thee, and to cease to live their own life of self.

bilibus peccatis et offensionibus et negligentis meis, et pro omnibus circumstantibus, sed et pro omnibus fidelibus christianis vivis atque defunctis; ut mihi et illis proficiat ad salutem in vitam æternam. Amen.

When the Priest puts the wine into the chalice, and then mingles with it a drop of water, let your thoughts turn to the divine mystery of the Incarnation, which is manifested to the world by the Birth of our Emmanuel; and say:

O Lord Jesus, who art *the true Vine*, and whose Blood, like a generous wine, has been poured forth under the pressure of the Cross! thou hast deigned to unite thy divine nature to our weak humanity, which is signified by this drop of water. O come and make us partakers of thy divinity, by showing thyself to us in thy sweet and wondrous visit.

Deus qui humanæ substantiæ dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti, et mirabilius reformasti: da nobis per hujus aquæ et vini mysterium, ejus divinitatis esse consortes, qui humanitatis nostræ fieri dignatus est particeps, Jesus Christus Filius tuus Dominus noster: qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

The Priest then offers the mixture of wine and water, beseeching God graciously to accept this oblation, the figure of which is so soon to be changed into the reality, of which it is now but the figure. Meanwhile, say, in union with the Priest:

Graciously accept these gifts, O sovereign Creator of all things. Let them be fitted for the divine transformation, which will make them, from

Offerimus tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris, tuam deprecantes clementiam: ut in conspectu divinæ Majestatis tuæ, pro nostra et totius

mundi salute, cum odore being mere offerings of created
suavitatis ascendat, Amen. things, the instrument of the
world's salvation.

After having thus held up the sacred gifts towards heaven, the Priest bows down: let us, also, humble ourselves, and say :

In spiritu humilitatis, et Though daring, as we do, to
in animo contrito suscipiamur a te, Domine : et sic fiat approach thy altar, O Lord,
sacrificium nostrum in con- we cannot forget that we are
spectu tuo hodie, ut placeat sinners. Have mercy on us,
tibi, Domine Deus. and delay not to send us thy
Son, who is our saving Host.

Let us next invoke the Holy Ghost, whose operation is about to produce on the altar the presence of the Son of God, as it did in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the divine mystery of the Incarnation :

Veni, Sanctificator om- Come, O Divine Spirit,
nipotens æterne Deus, et make fruitful the offering
benedic hoc sacrificium tuo which is upon the altar, and
sancto nomini præparatum. produce in our hearts Him
whom they desire.

If it be a High Mass, the Priest, before proceeding any further with the Sacrifice, takes the thurible a second time. He first incenses the bread and wine which have been just offered, and then the altar itself; hereby inviting the faithful to make their prayer, which is signified by the incense, more and more fervent, the nearer the solemn moment approaches. St. John tells us, that the incense, which burns on the Altar in heaven, is made of *the Prayers of the Saints*. During Christmastide, therefore, we may look on the fragrant cloud, which covers our Altar here on earth, as an emblem of the prayers said by the Shepherds round the Crib, and of the adorations paid by the Magi to the Infant-God. Let

us imitate them ; for, this same Jesus is soon to be on our Altar.

But the thought of his own unworthiness becomes more intense than ever in the heart of the Priest. The public confession, which he made at the foot of the altar, is not enough ; he would now, at the altar itself, express to the people, in the language of a solemn rite, how far he knows himself to be from that spotless sanctity, wherewith he should approach to God. He washes his *hands*. Our hands signify our *works* ; and the Priest, though by his priesthood he bear the office of Jesus Christ, is, by his works, but man. Seeing your Father thus humble himself, do you also make an act of humility, and say with him these verses of

PSALM 25.

I, too, would wash my hands, O Lord, and become like unto those who are innocent, that so I may be worthy to come near thy altar, and hear thy sacred Canticles, and then go and proclaim to the world the wonders of thy goodness. I love the beauty of thy House, which thou art about to make the dwelling-place of thy glory. Leave me not, O God, in the midst of them that are enemies both to thee and me. Thy mercy having separated me from them, I entered on the path of innocence, and was restored to thy grace ; but have pity on my weakness still ; redeem me yet more, thou who hast so mercifully brought me back to the right path. In the midst of these thy faithful people, I give thee thanks. Glory be to

Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas : et circumdabo altare tuum, Domine.

Ut audiam vocem laudis : et enarrem universa mirabilia tua.

Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuæ, et locum habitationis gloriæ tuæ.

Ne perdas cum impiis, Deus, animam meam, et cum viris sanguinum vitam meam.

In quorum manibus iniquitates sunt : dextera eorum repleta est muneribus.

Ego autem in innocentia mea ingressus sum : redime me, et miserere mei.

Pes meus stetit in directo : in ecclesiis benedicam te, Domine.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et

nunc, et semper, et in sæcula
sæculorum. Amen.

the Father and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost; as it
was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world with-
out end. Amen.

The Priest, taking encouragement from the act of humility he has just made, returns to the middle of the altar, and bows down full of respectful awe, begging of God to receive graciously the Sacrifice which is about to be offered to him, and expresses the intentions for which it is offered. Let us do the same.

Suscipe, sancta Trinitas, hanc oblationem, quam tibi offerimus ob memoriam Passionis, Resurrectionis, et Ascensionis Jesu Christi Domini nostri: et in honore beatæ Mariæ semper Virginis, et beati Joannis Baptistæ, et sanctorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et istorum, et omnium Sanctorum: ut illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis autem ad salutem: et illi pro nobis intercedere dignentur in cœlis, quorum memoriam agimus in terris. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

O Holy Trinity, graciously accept the Sacrifice we have begun. We offer it in remembrance of the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. Permit thy Church to join with this intention that of honouring the ever glorious Virgin Mary, the Blessed Baptist John, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, the Martyrs whose relics lie here under our altar awaiting their resurrection, and the Saints whose memory we this day celebrate. Increase the glory they are enjoying, and receive the prayers they address to thee for us.

The Priest again turns to the people; it is for the last time before the sacred Mysteries are accomplished. He feels anxious to excite the fervour of the people. Neither does the thought of his own unworthiness leave him; and before entering the cloud with the Lord, he seeks support in the prayers of his brethren who are present. He says to them:

Brethren, pray that my Sacrifice, which is yours also, may be acceptable to God, our Almighty Father.

Orate, fratres : ut meum ac vestrum sacrificium acceptabile fiat apud Deum Patrem omnipotentem.

With this request he turns again to the altar, and you will see his face no more, until our Lord himself shall have come down from heaven upon that same altar. Assure the Priest that he has your prayers, and say to him :

May our Lord accept this Sacrifice at thy hands, to the praise and glory of his name, and for our benefit and that of his holy Church throughout the world.

Suscipiat Dominus sacrificium de manibus tuis, ad laudem et gloriam nominis sui, ad utilitatem quoque nostram totiusque Ecclesiæ suæ sanctæ.

Here the Priest recites the prayers called *the Secrets*, in which he presents the petition of the whole Church for God's acceptance of the Sacrifice, and then immediately begins to fulfil that great duty of religion, *Thanksgiving*. So far he has adored God, and has sued for mercy ; he has still to give thanks for the blessings bestowed on us by the bounty of our heavenly Father, and expressly for that chiefest of all his gifts—the Messiah. We are on the point of receiving a new visit of this Son of God ; the Priest, in the name of the Church, is about to give expression to the gratitude of all mankind. In order to excite the faithful to that intensity of gratitude which is due to God for all his gifts, he interrupts his own and their silent prayer by terminating it aloud, saying :

For ever and ever !

Per omnia sæcula sæculorum !

In the same feeling, answer your *Amen* ! Then he continues :

℣. The Lord be with you.

℞. And with thy spirit.

℣. Lift up your hearts !

℣. Dominus vobiscum.

℞. Et cum spiritu tuo.

℣. Sursum corda !

Let your response be sincere :

R. Habemus ad Domi-
num.

R. We have them fixed on
God.

And when he adds :

Ÿ. Gratias agamus Do-
mino Deo nostro.

Ÿ. Let us give thanks to
the Lord our God.

Answer him with all the earnestness of your soul :

R. Dignum et justum est.

R. It is meet and just.

Then the Priest :

PREFACE :¹

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere : Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus ; quia per incarnati Verbi mysterium, nova mentis nostræ oculis lux tuæ claritatis infulsit : ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur : et ideo cum Angelis et Archangelis, cum Thronis et Dominationibus, cumque omni militia cœlestis exercitus, hymnum gloriæ tuæ canimus, sine fine dicentes.

It is truly meet and just, right and available to salvation, that we should always and in all places give thanks to thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God ; for that, by the mystery of the Incarnate Word, a new ray of thy glory has appeared to the eyes of our soul : so that, while we behold God visibly, we may be carried by him to the love of things invisible : and therefore, with the Angels and Archangels, with the Thrones and Dominations, and with all the heavenly host, we sing a hymn to thy glory, saying unceasingly :

¹ *This Preface is said on Christmas Day, and during its Octave ; on the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus ; and on the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. The Prefaces for the Epiphany, of the Blessed Trinity, and of the Apostles, will be given in their proper places.—The following is the Common Preface, which is said as often as there is not a proper one assigned.*

PREFACE.

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere :

It is truly meet and just, right and available to salvation, that we should always and in all places

Here unite with the Priest, who, on his part, unites himself with the blessed Spirits, in giving thanks to God for the unspeakable Gift: bow down and say:

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts!

Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed be the Saviour whom we were expecting, and who is coming to us in the name of the Lord who sends him.

Hosanna be to him in the highest!

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus sabaoth!

Pleni sunt cœli et terræ gloria tua.

Hosanna in excelsis!

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Hosanna in excelsis!

After these words commences the *Canon*, that mysterious prayer, in the midst of which heaven bows down to earth, and God descends unto us. The voice of the Priest is no longer heard; yea, even at the altar, all is silence. It was thus, says the Book of Wisdom, *in the quiet of silence, and while the night was in the midst of her course, that the Almighty Word came down from his royal throne.*¹ Let us await him in a like silence, and respectfully fix our eyes on what the Priest does in the holy place.

give thanks to thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God: through Christ our Lord; by whom the Angels praise thy majesty, the Dominations adore it, the powers tremble before it; the heavens and the heavenly Virtues, and the blessed Seraphim, with common jubilee, glorify it. Together with whom, we beseech thee that we may be admitted to join our humble voices, saying:

Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus, per Christum Dominum nostrum; per quem majestatem tuam laudant Angeli, adorant Dominationes, tremunt Potestates, Cœli, cœlorumque Virtutes, ac beata Seraphim, socia exultatione concelebrant. Cum quibus et nostras voces, ut admitti jubeas deprecamur, supplicii confessione dicentes.

¹ Wisd. xviii. 14, 15.

THE CANON OF THE MASS.

In this mysterious colloquy with the great God of heaven and earth, the first prayer of the sacrificing Priest is for the Catholic Church, his and our Mother.

Te igitur, clementissime Pater, per Jesum Christum Filium tuum Dominum nostrum supplices rogamus ac petimus, uti accepta habeas, et benedicas hæc dona, hæc munera, hæc sancta sacrificia illibata, in primis quæ tibi offerimus pro Ecclesia tua sancta Catholica: quam pacificare, custodire, adunare, et regere digneris toto orbe terrarum, una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N. et Antistite nostro N., et omnibus orthodoxis, atque catholicæ et apostolicæ fidei cultoribus.

O God, who manifestest thyself unto us: by means of the mysteries which thou hast entrusted to thy holy Church, our Mother; we beseech thee, by the merits of this sacrifice, that thou wouldst remove all those hindrances which oppose her during her pilgrimage in this world. Give her peace and unity. Do thou thyself guide our Holy Father the Pope, thy Vicar on earth. Direct thou our Bishop, who is our sacred link of unity; and watch over all the orthodox children of the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church.

Here pray, together with the Priest, for those whose interests should be dearest to you.

Memento, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N., et omnium circumstantium, quorum tibi fides cognita est, et nota devotio: pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis, pro se, suisque omnibus, pro redemptione animarum suarum, pro spe salutis et incolumitatis suæ; tibi que reddunt vota sua æterno Deo, vivo et vero.

Permit me, O God, to intercede with thee in more earnest prayer for those, for whom thou knowest that I have a special obligation to pray: * * * Pour down thy blessings upon them. Let them partake of the fruits of this divine Sacrifice, which is offered unto thee in the name of all mankind. Visit them by thy grace, pardon them theirsins, grant them the blessings of this present life and of that which is eternal.

Here let us commemorate the Saints: they are that portion of the Body of Jesus Christ, which is called the *Church Triumphant*.

But the offering of this Sacrifice, O my God, does not unite us with those only of our brethren who are still in this transient life of trial: it brings us closer to those also, who are already in possession of heaven. Therefore it is, that we wish to honour by it the memory of the glorious and ever Virgin Mary, of whom Jesus is born to us; of the Apostles, Confessors, Virgins, and of all the Saints; that so they may assist us, by their powerful intercession, to become worthy to see Jesus in Bethlehem, and to contemplate thee, as they now do, in the mansion of thy glory.

Communicantes, et memoriam venerantes, in primis gloriosæ semper Virginis Mariæ, Genitricis Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi: sed et beatorum Apostolorum ac Martyrum tuorum, Petri et Pauli, Andreae, Jacobi, Joannis, Thomæ, Jacobi, Philippi, Bartholomæi, Matthæi, Simonis, et Thaddæi: Lini, Cleti, Clementis, Xysti, Cornelii, Cypriani, Laurentii, Chrysogoni, Joannis et Pauli, Cosmæ et Damiani, et omnium sanctorum tuorum, quorum meritis precibusque concedas, ut in omnibus protectionis tuæ muniamur auxilio. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

The Priest, who, up to this time, had been praying with his hands extended, now joins them, and holds them over the bread and wine, as the High Priest of the Old Law did over the figurative victim: he thus expresses his intention of bringing these gifts more closely under the notice of the Divine Majesty, and of marking them as the material offering whereby we profess our *dependence*, and which is, in a few instants, to yield its place to the living Host, upon whom all our iniquities are to be laid.

Vouchsafe, O God, to accept this offering which this thy assembled family presents to thee as the homage of its most happy servitude. In return, give us peace, save us from

Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostræ, sed et cunctæ familiæ tuæ, quæsumus Domine, ut placatus accipias: diesque nostros in tua pace disponas, atque ab

æterna damnatione nos eripi, et in electorum tuorum jubeas grege numerari. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Quam oblationem tu Deus in omnibus quæsumus, benedictam, adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris; ut nobis Corpus et Sanguis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

thy wrath, and number us among thy elect, through Him who is coming to us, thy Son our Saviour.

Yea, Lord, this is the moment when this bread is to become his sacred Body, which is our food; and this wine is to be changed into his Blood, which is our drink. Ah! delay no longer, but send to us this divine Son our Saviour!

And here the Priest ceases to act as man; he now becomes more than a mere minister of the Church. His word becomes that of Jesus Christ, with all its power and efficacy. Prostrate yourself in profound adoration; for the Emmanuel, the *God with us*, is coming down from heaven.

Qui pridie quam pateretur, accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas: et elevatis oculis in cœlum, ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens, benedixit, fregit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite, et manducate ex hoc omnes. HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM.

What, O God of heaven and earth, my Jesus, the long expected Messiah, what else can I do at this solemn moment but adore thee, in silence, as my sovereign Master, and open my whole heart to thee, as to its dearest King! Come, then, Lord Jesus, come!

The Divine Lamb, the Son of Mary, is now lying on our Altar! Glory and love be to him for ever! But he is come, that he may be immolated. When Isaias, in prophetic vision, contemplated this *Child that is born unto us*, he saw, that even then *his government was upon his shoulder*,¹ and this was the Cross. Hence, the Priest, who is the minister of the will of the Most High, immediately pronounces over

¹ Is. ix. 6.

the Chalice those sacred words, which will produce the great mystical immolation, by the separation of the Victim's Body and Blood. The substances of bread and wine have ceased to exist: the species alone are left, veiling, as it were, the Body and Blood, lest fear should keep us from a mystery, which God gives us in order to give us confidence. Let us associate ourselves to the Angels, who tremblingly look upon this deepest wonder.

O Precious Blood! thou price of my salvation! I adore thee! Wash away my sins, and give me a purity above the whiteness of snow. Lamb ever slain, yet ever living, thou comest to take away the sins of the world! Come also and reign in me by thy power and by thy love.

Simili modo postquam cœnatum est, accipiens et hunc præclarum Calicem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas: item tibi gratias agens, benedixit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes. HIC EST ENIM CALIX SANGUINIS MEI, NOVI ET ÆTERNI TESTAMENTI: MYSTERIUM FIDEI: QUI PRO VOBIS ET PRO MULTIS EFFUNDETUR IN REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM. Hæc quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis.

The Priest is now face to face with God. He again raises his hands towards heaven, and tells our heavenly Father, that the oblation, now on the altar, is no longer an earthly offering, but the Body and Blood, the whole Person, of his divine Son.

Father of infinite holiness, the Host so long expected is here before thee! Behold this thy eternal Son, who suffered a bitter passion, rose again with glory from the grave, and ascended triumphantly into heaven. He is thy Son; but he is also our Host—Host pure and spotless

Unde et memores, Domine, nos servi tui, sed et plebs tua sancta, ejusdem Christi Filii tui Domini nostri tam beatæ Passionis, nec non et ab inferis Resurrectionis, sed et in cœlos gloriosæ Ascensionis: offerimus præclaræ majestati tuæ de tuis donis ac datis Hos-

tiam puram, Hostiam sanctam, Hostiam immaculatam: Panem sanctum vitæ æternæ, et Calicem salutis perpetuæ.

Supra quæ propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris: et accepta habere, sicuti accepta habere dignatus es munera pueri tui justii Abel, et sacrificium Patriarchæ nostri Abrahæ, et quod tibi obtulit summus Sacerdos tuus Melchisedech, sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam.

—our Meat and Drink of everlasting life.

Heretofore thou didst accept the sacrifice of the innocent lambs offered to thee by Abel; and the sacrifice which Abraham made thee of his son Isaac, who, though immolated, yet lived; and, lastly, the sacrifice, which Melchisedech presented thee, of bread and wine. Receive our Sacrifice, which is above all those others. It is the Lamb, of whom all others could be but figures: it is the undying Victim: it is the Body of thy Son, who is the Bread of Life, and his Blood, which, whilst a Drink of immortality for us, is a tribute adequate to thy glory.

The Priest bows down to the altar, and kisses it as the throne of love on which is seated the Saviour of men. Do you look at it with love, as the Crib, whereon is laid, veiled in the eucharistic elements, that Jesus who has said: *I am the Bread of life.*

Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens Deus: jube hæc perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime Altare tuum, in conspectu divinæ Majestatis tuæ: ut quotquot ex hac altaris participatione, sacrosanctum Filii tui Corpus et Sanguinem sumpserimus, omni benedictione cœlesti et gratia repleamur. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

But, O God of infinite power, these sacred gifts are not only on this altar here below; they are also on that sublime Altar of heaven, which is before the throne of thy divine Majesty. These two altars are but one and the same, on which is accomplished the great mystery of thy glory and our salvation. Vouchsafe to make us partakers of the Body and Blood of the august Victim, from whom flow every grace and blessing.

Nor is the moment less favourable for making supplication for the Church Suffering. Let us, therefore, ask the divine Liberator, who has come down amongst us, that he mercifully visit, by a ray of his consoling light, the dark abode of Purgatory, and permit his Blood to flow, as a stream of mercy's dew, from this our altar, and refresh the panting captives there. Let us pray expressly for those amongst them, who have a claim on our suffrages.

Dear Jesus! let the happiness of this thy visit extend to every portion of thy Church. Thy face gladdens the elect in the holy City; even our mortal eyes can see beneath the veil of our delighted faith; ah! hide not thyself from those brethren of ours, who are imprisoned in the place of expiation. Be thou refreshment to them in their flames, light in their darkness, and peace in their agonies of torment.

Memento etiam, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N. qui nos præcesserunt cum signo fidei, et dormiunt in somno pacis. Ipsis Domine, et omnibus in Christo quiescentibus, locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis, ut indulgeas, deprecamur. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

This duty of charity fulfilled, let us pray for ourselves, sinners, alas! and who profit so little by the visit, which our Saviour pays us. Let us, together with the Priest, strike our breast, saying:

Alas! we are poor sinners, O God of all sanctity! yet do we hope that thy infinite mercy will grant us to share in thy kingdom, not, indeed, by reason of our works, which deserve little more than punishment, but because of the merits of this Sacrifice, which we are offering to thee. Remember, too, the merits of thy holy Apostles, of thy holy Martyrs, of thy holy Virgins,

Nobis quoque peccatoribus famulis tuis, de multitudine miserationum tuarum sperantibus, partem aliquam et societatem donare digneris cum tuis sanctis Apostolis et Martyribus: cum Joanne, Stephano Mathia, Barnaba, Ignatio Alexandro, Marcellino, Petro, Felicitate, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucia, Agnete, Cæcilia, Anastasia, et omni-

bus Sanctis tuis ; intra quorum nos consortium, non æstimator meriti, sed veniæ, quæsumus, largitor admitte. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Per quem hæc omnia, Domine, semper bona creas, sanctificas, vivificas, benedicis, et præstas nobis : per ipsum, et cum ipso et in ipso, est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus Sancti, omnis honor et gloria.

and of all thy Saints. Grant us, by their intercession, grace in this world, and glory eternal in the next : which we ask of thee, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son. It is by him thou bestowest upon us thy blessings of life and sanctification ; and by him also, with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, may honour and glory be to thee !

Whilst saying these last few words, the Priest has taken up the sacred Host, which was on the altar ; he has held it over the chalice, thus re-uniting the Body and Blood of the divine Victim, in order to show that He is now immortal. Then raising up both Chalice and Host, he offers to God the most noble and perfect homage which the divine Majesty could receive.

This solemn and mysterious rite ends the Canon. The silence of the Mysteries is broken. The Priest concludes his long prayers, by saying aloud, and so giving the faithful the opportunity of expressing their desire that his supplications be granted :

Per omnia sæcula sæculorum.

For ever and ever.

Answer him with faith, and in a sentiment of union with your holy Mother the Church :

Amen.

Amen ! I believe the mystery which has just been accomplished. I unite myself to the offering which has been made, and to the petitions of the Church.

It is time to recite the prayer, which our Saviour himself has taught us. Let it ascend up to heaven

together with the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. How could it be otherwise than heard, when he himself who made it for us, is in our very hands now whilst we say it? As this prayer belongs in common to all God's children, the Priest recites it aloud, and begins by inviting us all to join in it.

LET US PRAY.

Having been taught by a saving precept, and following the form given us by a divine instruction, we thus presume to speak ;

OREMUS.

Præceptis salutaribus moniti, et divina institutione formati, audemus dicere :

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ; thy kingdom come ; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. *Give us this day our daily Bread* ; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us ; and lead us not into temptation.

Pater noster, qui es in caelis : Sanctificetur nomen tuum : Adveniat regnum tuum : Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in caelo, et in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie : Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.

Let us answer, with deep feeling of our misery :

But deliver us from evil.

Sed libera nos a malo.

The Priest falls once more into the silence of the holy Mysteries. His first word is an affectionate *Amen* to your last petition—*deliver us from evil*—on which he forms his own next prayer : and could he pray for anything more needed ? *Evil* surrounds us everywhere, and the Lamb on our altar has been sent to expiate it and deliver us from it.

How many, O Lord, are the evils which beset us ! Evils *past*, which are the wounds left on the soul by our sins, and strengthen her wicked

Libera nos, quæsumus Domine, ab omnibus malis, præteritis, præsentibus et futuris : et intercedente beata et gloriosa semper Vir-

gine Dei Genitrice Maria, cum beatis Apostolis tuis Petro et Paulo, atque Andrea, et omnibus Sanctis, da propitius pacem in diebus nostris: ut ope misericordiæ tuæ adjuti, et a peccato simus semper liberi, et ab omni perturbatione securi. Per eundem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus.

propensities. Evils *present*, that is, the sins now at this very time upon our soul; the weakness of this poor soul; and the temptations which molest her. There are, also, *future* evils, that is, the chastisement which our sins deserve from the hand of thy justice. In presence of this Host of our Salvation, we beseech thee, O Lord, to deliver us from all these evils, and to accept in our favour the intercession of Mary the Mother of Jesus, of thy holy Apostles Peter and Paul and Andrew. Liberate us, break our chains, give us peace: through Jesus Christ, thy Son, who with thee liveth and reigneth God.

The Priest is anxious to announce the Peace, which he has asked and obtained; he therefore finishes his prayer aloud, saying:

Per omnia sæcula sæculorum.

R. Amen.

World without end.

R. Amen.

Then he says:

Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum.

May the Peace of our Lord be ever with you.

To this paternal wish reply:

R. Et cum spiritu tuo.

R. And with thy spirit.

The Mystery is drawing to a close: God is about to be united with man, and man with God, by means of Communion. But first, an imposing and sublime rite takes place at the altar. So far the Priest has announced the Death of Jesus; it is time to proclaim his Resurrection. To this end, he reverently breaks

the sacred Host, and having divided it into three parts, he puts one into the Chalice, thus reuniting the Body and Blood of the immortal Victim. Do you adore, and say :

Glory be to thee, O Saviour of the world, who didst, in thy Passion, permit thy precious Blood to be separated from thy sacred Body, afterwards uniting them again together by thy divine power.

Hæc commixtio et consecratio Corporis et Sanguinis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, fiat accipientibus nobis in vitam æternam. Amen.

Offer now your prayer to the ever living Lamb, whom St. John saw on the Altar of Heaven *standing, though slain* : say to this your Lord and King :

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, give us *Peace*.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Peace is the grand object of our Saviour's coming into the world: he is the *Prince of Peace*. The divine Sacrament of the Eucharist ought therefore to be the Mystery of Peace, and the bond of Catholic Unity; for, as the Apostle says, *all we who partake of one Bread, are all one Bread and one Body*.¹ It is on this account that the Priest, now that he is on the point of receiving, in Communion, the Sacred Host, prays that fraternal Peace may be preserved in the Church, and more especially in this portion of it, which is assembled round the altar. Pray with him and for the same blessing :

Lord Jesus Christ, who saidst to thy Apostles, "my

Domine Jesu Christe, qui dixisti Apostolis tuis: Pa-

¹ I. Cor. x. 17.

cem relinquo vobis, pacem meam do vobis : ne respicias peccata mea, sed fidem Ecclesiæ tuæ : eamque secundum voluntatem tuam pacificare, et coadunare digneris. Qui vivis et regnas Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you :” regard not my sins, but the faith of thy Church, and grant her that peace and unity which is according to thy will. Who livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

If it be a High Mass, the Priest here gives the kiss of peace to the Deacon, who gives it to the Sub-Deacon, and he to the Choir. During this ceremony, you should excite within yourself feelings of Christian charity, and pardon your enemies, if you have any. Then continue to pray with the Priest :

Domine Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi, qui ex voluntate Patris, cooperante Spiritu Sancto, per mortem tuam mundum vivificasti : libera me per hoc sacrosanctum Corpus, et Sanguinem tuum, ab omnibus iniquitatibus meis, et universis malis, et fac me tuis semper inhærere mandatis, et a te nunquam separari permittas. Qui cum eodem Deo Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who, according to the will of thy Father, through the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, hast by thy death given life to the world ; deliver me by this thy most sacred Body and Blood from all my iniquities, and from all evils ; and make me always adhere to thy commandments, and never suffer me to be separated from thee, who with the same God the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

If you are going to Communion at this Mass, say the following Prayer ; otherwise, prepare yourself to make a Spiritual Communion :

Perceptio Corporis tui Domine Jesu Christe, quod ego indignus sumere præsumo, non mihi proveniat in iudicium et condemnationem : sed pro tua pietate prosit mihi ad tutamentum

Let not the participation of thy Body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I, though unworthy, presume to receive, turn to my judgment and condemnation ; but through thy mercy may it be a safeguard

and remedy both to my soul and body. Who with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

mentis et corporis, et ad medelam percipiendam. Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

When the Priest takes the Host into his hands, in order to his receiving it in Communion, say :

Come, my dear Jesus, come ! Panem cœlestem accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo.

When he strikes his breast, confessing his unworthiness, say thrice with him these words, and in the same disposition as the Centurion of the Gospel, who first used them :

Lord, I am not worthy thou shouldst enter under my roof ; say it only with one word of thine, and my soul will be healed. Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum : sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.

Whilst the Priest receives the sacred Host, if you also are to communicate, adore profoundly your God, who is ready to take up his abode within you, and again say to him with the spouse : *Come, Lord Jesus, come !*

But should you not be going to receive sacramentally, make a Spiritual Communion. Adore Jesus Christ who thus visits your soul by his grace, and say to him :

I give thee, O Jesus, this heart of mine, that thou mayest dwell in it, and do with me what thou wilt. Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi, custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam. Amen.

Then the Priest takes the Chalice, in thanksgiving, and says :

What return shall I make to the Lord for all he hath pro omnibus, quæ retribuit

mihi? Calicem salutaris accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo. Laudans invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis meis salvus ero.

given to me? I will take the Chalice of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord. Praising I will call upon the Lord, and I shall be saved from mine enemies.

But if you are to make a Sacramental Communion, you should, at this moment of the Priest's receiving the precious Blood, again adore the God who is coming to you, and keep to your canticle: *Come, Lord Jesus, come!*

If, on the contrary, you are going to communicate only spiritually, again adore your divine Master, and say to him:

Sanguis Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam. Amen.

I unite myself to thee, my beloved Jesus! do thou unite thyself to me! and never let us be separated.

It is here that you must approach to the altar, if you are going to Communion. The dispositions suitable for Holy Communion during this season of Advent, are given in the next Chapter, *page 88*.

The Communion being finished, and whilst the Priest is purifying the Chalice the first time, say:

Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine, pura mente capiamus: et de munere temporali fiat nobis remedium sempiternum.

Thou hast visited me, O God, in these days of my pilgrimage; give me grace to treasure up the fruits of this visit for my future eternity.

Whilst the Priest is purifying the Chalice the second time, say:

Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsi, et Sanguis quem potavi, adhæreat visceribus meis: et præsta ut in me non remaneat scelerum macula, quem pura et sancta refecerunt Sacra-

Be thou for ever blessed, O my Saviour, for having admitted me to the sacred mystery of thy Body and Blood. May my heart and senses preserve, by thy grace, the purity which thou hast imparted to

them ; and I thus be rendered less unworthy of thy divine visit. *menta. Qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.*

The Priest having read the Antiphon called the *Communion*, which is the first part of his Thanksgiving for the favour just received from God, whereby he has renewed his divine presence among us—turns to the people with the usual salutation ; after which he recites the Prayers, called the *Postcommunion*, which are the completion of the Thanksgiving. You will join him here also, thanking God for the unspeakable gift he has just lavished on you, and asking him, with most earnest entreaty, that he will permit you to continue, for ever, in the company of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

These Prayers having been recited, the Priest again turns to the people, and full of joy for the immense favour he and they have been receiving, he says :

The Lord be with you.

Dominus vobiscum.

Answer him :

And with thy spirit.
Go, the Mass is finished.
R. Thanks be to God.

Et cum spiritu tuo.
Ite, Missa est.
R. *Deo gratias.*

The Priest makes a last Prayer, before giving you his blessing : pray with him :

Eternal thanks be to thee, O adorable Trinity, for the mercy thou hast showed to me, in permitting me to assist at this divine Sacrifice. Pardon me the negligence and coldness wherewith I have received so great a favour, and deign to confirm the Blessing, which thy Minister is about to give me in thy Name.

Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas, obsequium servitutis meæ, quod oculis tuæ majestatis indignus obtuli, tibi sit acceptabile, mihi que, et omnibus, pro quibus illud obtuli, sit, te miserante, propitiabile. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

The Priest raises his hand, and thus blesses you :

Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus, Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus. May the Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless you !

R. Amen.

R. Amen.

He then concludes the Mass, by reading the first fourteen verses of the Gospel according to St. John, which tell us of the eternity of the Word, and of the mercy which led him to take upon himself our *flesh*, and to *dwell among us*. Pray that you may be of the number of those, who, now that he has come *unto his own*, receive him, and are made *the sons of God*.

Initium sancti Evangelii secundum Joannem.

The beginning of the Holy Gospel according to John.

Cap. 1.

Ch. 1.

In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt ; et sine ipso factum est nihil. Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat, et vita erat lux hominum : et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebræ eam non comprehenderunt. Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Joannes. Hic venit in testimonium, ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine, ut omnes crederent per illum. Non erat ille lux, sed ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine. Erat lux vera, quæ illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum. In mundo erat, et mundus per ipsum factus est, et mundus eum non cognovit. In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt. Quotquot autem receperunt eum,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men ; and the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but was to give testimony of the light. That was the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received

him not. But *as many as received him, to them he gave power to be made the sons of God*; to them that believe in his name, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, and dwelt among us; and we saw his glory, as it were the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

R̄. Thanks be to God.

dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri, his, qui credunt in nomine ejus: qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo nati sunt. ET VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST, et habitavit in nobis: et vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi Unigeniti a Patre, plenum gratiæ et veritatis.

R̄. Deo gratias.

CHAPTER VI.

ON HOLY COMMUNION DURING CHRISTMAS.

DURING Advent, Holy Communion prepared the soul for the visible Coming of her heavenly Spouse. He graciously granted her that sublime favour, as a foretaste of that happy Night, in which he would show himself to her as the Divine Babe, whose ineffable loveliness would ravish Angels, Shepherds, and Kings. She enjoyed something of that exquisite delight, which Mary felt, when she had within her chaste womb the God, who was her Child, though as yet concealed from her sight.

But, now that Christmas is come; now, that a little *Child is born unto us*, cradled in the *House of Bread*, which is Bethlehem; now, that the Angels have invited the Shepherds, and the Star the Magi, to come and see Him and adore Him;—the Holy Communion must take us on further in the knowledge of our Incarnate Word, *illumine* us with brighter Light, and produce within us a more ardent longing to possess this Jesus, whose love and loveliness gleam so magnificently through the humility of these swathing-bands and manger.

It is no longer the invisible Jesus, preparing, by silence and stillness, for the laborious mission of his conquest of souls:—it is the Deliverer of mankind who has begun *to run the way*;¹ it is the Sun of Justice darting his first rays on our earth; it is our God, asking us to give Him, a weak Babe, room in our hearts; it is our Creator, *who loveth souls*,² striving to win our love.

¹ Ps. xviii. 6.

² Wisd. xi. 27.

Then, let us go to him, that we may know him ; let us know him, that we may love him ; let us love him, that we may grow like him. What he demands of us by this Christmas mystery, is, that we become, like him, *little children*, for, there is now no other means of our possessing him, no other way of going to the Father. Therefore, *come to him*, ye faithful ones, *and be enlightened!*¹ We have ventured to draw up these Acts, thinking that they might assist you in your preparation for the visit you are going to make to the Babe of Bethlehem. May you derive profit from them, and pray for him who gives you them.

BEFORE COMMUNION.

ACT OF FAITH.

Thou art about to descend into my breast, O eternal God ! and yet, there is nothing to betoken the approach of thy sovereign Majesty ! As on the sacred night of thy Birth, thy entrance into Bethlehem was in humility and in silence ; so also now, there is nothing to tell men that thou art about to visit me. A Little Child, veiled under the appearance of an humble host, is coming to me, and, in a few moments, I shall hold within me Him who created all things, the Judge of the living and the dead ! Oh ! how I love to bow down my reason before this wonderful Mystery ! How I love, too, to contemplate these incomprehensible abasements of my God, to which he has humbled himself in order that he might exalt me ! No—Reason could never have taught me all this ! How could Reason tell me what the infinite love of God for his creatures can do, when she cannot even make me see my own nothingness and sinfulness, into which, thou, dear Jesus, art now coming ? O Infant-God ! I believe in thy love, and thy love is omnipotent. I come to thee with a simple Faith, as the Shepherds went to Bethlehem when the Angel spoke these words to them : *There is born unto you, in the City of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord : and this shall be a sign unto you :—you shall find the Infant*

¹ Ps. xxxiii. 6.

*wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a crib:*¹ they went without delay, and found thee, and believed. I would do in like manner, O my Saviour! The sacramental veils which cover thee, are to me, what thy infancy, thy swathing-bands, thy crib, were to them: and I believe thee to be here really present. Accept this homage of my firm Faith, and receive me as one of those humble Shepherds, whose simple-heartedness merited for them the first place at the feast of Bethlehem.

ACT OF HUMILITY.

But, sweet Saviour! these Shepherds of Bethlehem had another offering besides the simplicity of their Faith, which made them pleasing to thee:—it was, the humility of their hearts. Thou lovest the humble, O my God! and therefore thou didst prefer these humble men to all the rest of mankind, giving them the grand honour of being the first Worshipers at thy Crib. The humility of Mary drew thee from heaven into her chaste womb; and the humility of these fortunate herdsmen made thee call them to be the first to form, with Mary, Joseph, and the Angels, thy court in this humble Stable, which thy adorable presence has converted into a very paradise. In this thou givest an important lesson to me, who am to be favoured as they were, nay, who am about to receive thee within myself. Spare me not, my beloved Jesus; bring down the haughtiness of my spirit; destroy the conceited ambitions of my heart; cast me down at the foot of thy Crib, and suffer me not to rise again, until I have become one of those *little Children*, whom thou so lovest, that thou thyself wouldst be one; so the better to come down even so low as to me. It is as a Weak Babe that thou comest to me, O Infinite God! What can I do, but be confounded, and sink into my deep nothingness, I who have never known the humility and simplicity of a child! In thy divine humility, thou wouldst not be born in any other place than a Stable and a Crib; my heart, then, will satisfy thee, dear Jesus! and Bethlehem itself, compared with me, had not a poverty so worthy of that Majesty, which loves to descend to what is lowest, and of that Light which glories in shining where the darkness is thickest.

ACT OF CONTRITION.

And yet, O God of holiness! the Stable and the Crib, though most unworthy of thy Majesty, had nothing in them

¹ St. Luke, ii. 11, 12.

which could give thee displeasure. No place, no object, in thy whole creation, could be worthy to serve thee as throne or palace ; but since thou wouldst have a birth-place on this earth, the happy spot, on which thy choice would fall, would become, however contemptible in itself, a sanctuary worthy of thee, because thy greatness and divinity would consecrate and enrich it. There is but one place unworthy of thee, which thou couldst never choose :—the heart of a sinner. Oh ! that is the Stable, that is the Crib, which would indeed dishonour thee. Ah ! my dear Jesus ! there are certain consequences, there are certain wounds scarce yet closed, left in me by past sins, which force me to remember, that I was once a dwelling, wherein thou couldst not enter, until thy merciful grace had removed from me the abominations of my sins. Miserable state ! how I now grieve over it and detest it ! Now that I see thee become, for my sake, the humble and lovely Babe of Bethlehem, how hateful those sins of mine, which needed such a remedy ! and how immense that love of thine, which could deign to give it me ! There surely can be no more sin, dearest Lord ! Give me thy grace to destroy it within me, and root it up to its last fibre. I do not forget those words of thine : *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God* :¹ this is the moment for me to come near thy Crib, and do far more than *see* thee ;—cleanse, then, my heart, and let neither sin nor attachment to sin ever enter there again.

ACT OF LOVE.

Such is the prayer of my contrite heart—wilt thou, my Infant-God, reject it ? The Church, my Mother, has led me to Bethlehem ; there I see thee in thy Crib leaning forward towards me, and looking on me with sweetness, and bidding me rejoice, for that thou hast pardoned me, O God of infinite mercy ! and forgotten my sins. A contrite heart which sues for mercy, is not all thou askest of me, nor all that I wish to offer thee :—accept, then, my love. Is not this mystery of thy divine Childhood, a mystery of Love ? Thou comest to me, because thou lovest me ; but thou comest to me as a little Infant, because thou wishest me to love thee in return, and have confidence in thee. I do indeed desire to love thee, sweet Saviour !—but, where shall I find a love worthy of being a return for thine, which is so generous, so immense, and

¹ St. Matth. v. 8.

what I can least understand, so tender? for, it is the love of an Infant-God, who treats me, a sinner, as a much-loved Brother. Yet I must say it, my sweetest Jesus! for thy Crib and thy Swathing-bands, the magnificent trophies of thy unmatched love, encourage me to say it:—*I love thee!* I come to thee, that I may love thee better. I no longer wish to flee from thee: thou desirest to be united to me by love, nor will I cease to sigh after thee, until I have received thee into my heart, and am made one with thee, according to thy word: *He that eateth my Flesh, abideth in me, and I in him.*¹ O my Jesus! inflame my heart and make it like that of the Shepherds, when they came near to the Stable where thou wast born; like that of the Magi, when the Star stood over Bethlehem, *the House of Bread*, and showed them that their journeying was at an end; like that of the venerable Simeon, when he saw *the Christ of the Lord* in Mary's arms, and all the promises fulfilled, which he had received from the Holy Ghost. I offer thee the love of these and all thy Saints, of thy Holy Angels, and of thy Blessed Mother herself: let it supply the poverty of my own love, and deign, I beseech thee, to enrich me, by this thy visit, with the gold of divine charity.

ACT OF DESIRE.

I love thee, O Divine Babe! therefore do I desire thee, and beseech thee to come to me. I must needs desire thee, for thou art, as thy Scripture tells me, *The Desire of the everlasting hills.*² And art thou not Light and Life? Oh! come, then, Divine Sun of Justice, enlighten my darkness, and give life to my soul, which faints without thee. The Nations of the earth awaited thee, as their Deliverer. The Church, thy Spouse, languished with longings for thy visit. Abraham, and all the Patriarchs, desired to see thy day. Joseph, the Spouse of Mary, is filled with joy at the approach of that blissful hour, when his eyes shall see the Son of the Eternal God. The Shepherds are impatient to behold thee: *let us go over to Bethlehem*, they say, *and let us see this Word which is come to pass, which the Lord hath shewed to us.* The Magi no sooner see the Star, than they set out to seek thee, *the Star of Jacob.*³ The aged Simeon is filled with the Holy Ghost, and hastens to the Temple to see *the Saviour whom the Lord had prepared.*

¹ St. John, vi. 57.

² Gen. xlix. 26.

³ Num. xxiv. 17.

Anna, the Prophetess, is impelled by a holy enthusiasm, though weighed down with years, to come and see Him, who is *the Consolation of Israel*. All creation is excited: the very Angels leave heaven to come to see thee in thy Crib and thy Swaddling-clothes, and seeing thee, to adore. Shall I alone be indifferent? Let it not be, my dearest Lord! but, rather, let my heart long for thee, if not with a like ardour, at least with all its affection. I beseech thee, therefore, come into my soul! I offer thee all the prayers and inflamed desires of all thy Saints; and with theirs, my own, poor and weak as they are. Yea, come to me; enter into my house; let my heart meet thee; nay—let it be united with thee.

O Mary! Virgin-Mother of the Messias! help me, by thy prayers, to love him as thou didst, that is, with my whole strength: and lead me to Bethlehem, of which thou art Queen.—Ye holy Angels! suffer me to stand, in your glorious choir, near the Crib of our God; fit me, by your heavenly influence, to share in your adorations, and, under the shadow of your sacred wings, to hide the tatters of my spiritual poverty.—All ye Saints of God! by the delights you found in the mystery of Bethlehem, help me, and be near me, now that the great God, who filled you with light and love, is about to come into the poor dark dwelling of my heart! Amen.

In order to make your Preparation complete, follow, with a lively faith and attention, all the mysteries of the Mass at which you are to receive Communion; using, for this purpose, the method we have given in the preceding Chapter. For your Thanksgiving after Communion, you may sometimes recite the following *Acts*.

AFTER COMMUNION.

ACT OF ADORATION.

Thou hast, then, come down even unto me, O my Sovereign Lord! and art reposing in my heart, as in a Crib, which thou hast vouchsafed to choose for thyself, O Infant-God! My heart is now become like a new Bethlehem, O Bread of Angels! I most devoutly adore thee, thee the great God thus humbling thyself to such an abyss of lowliness. To the hymn of the Angels, *Glory be to God in the highest*; I must

needs add, *Glory be to thee*, my God, *in this depth* of my misery and weakness, whither thou hast so mercifully come ! Oh ! who will teach me, my sweetest Infant-Guest ! who will teach me how to give thee a worthy welcome of homage ? Mary, thy most pure and Blessed Mother, having given thee birth, and placed thee in the Crib, prostrated herself before thee as thy humble handmaid, and adored thee. Never had this guilty earth witnessed a homage so sublime as this : and thou didst deign to accept it, as the noblest thou hadst ever received. Permit me to imitate this thy beloved Mother, and adore thee as she did, O thou my Sovereign Lord ! I humbly beseech thee to accept her homage to supply for the unworthiness of mine ; for, she is my Mother, and thou hast willed that all her riches and merits should belong to her children.—I offer thee, likewise, the adorations of that *Just Man*, the chaste Spouse of Mary, the admirable Joseph, who had been admitted into the divine secret of Nazareth, and is now made a witness of the touching mystery of Bethlehem. Oh ! that I might share in the devoted respect and love of this glorious Saint, so grand because so simple, and so favoured above all mortals in that he was chosen to protect thy Infancy !—I also adore thee in company with the Angels, the Shepherds, and the Magi ; with Simeon, and Anna, and all the Church of heaven and earth, which contemplates, in glad amazement, the sublime miracle of this abasement of thy divine Majesty.

ACT OF THANKSGIVING.

But it is not enough, O Divine Babe ! that I adore thee ; I must thank thee. What an honour this thou hast conferred upon me ! What happiness this thou hast brought me ! I, a sinner, am become, by thy sweet condescension, a living Bethlehem, possessing in itself Thee, the Bread of Life. Thy sovereign Majesty has come down even to me, and has chosen my heart for thy throne, or rather, for thy Crib. The holy Angels adore thee, and praise thee ; but thou art granting to me an intimacy which these Blessed Spirits have not—thou art reposing on my heart. The Shepherds are admitted into the Stable to look at thee ; they gaze upon thee with simple and loving admiration ; but thou dost not permit them to caress thee. The Magi offer thee their royal gifts ; but, as the prophecy said of them,¹ they kiss but the ground whereon thy Crib is placed. Happy, then, the aged

¹ Ps. lxxi.

Simeon, who is permitted to take thee into his arms ; but oh ! how happier I ! who have received into myself, and now hold within me, Thee, my Jesus, the Bread of Life ! Blessed be thou for ever, O my God ! for that thou hast treated, with such incomprehensible familiarity, this the poorest of all thy servants ! I thank thee, and glorify thee, as did the Shepherds, who went so eagerly to Bethlehem, *and returned glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen ;* and with such glowing words did they praise thee, *that all that heard, wondered at those things that were told them by the Shepherds.*¹ So, too, will I open my lips, and, borrowing the words of a Son of Bethlehem, David, thy ancestor, I will say : *All ye that fear God, come and hear, and I will tell you what great things he hath done to my soul.*²

ACT OF LOVE.

Yea, in very truth, thou hast loved me, O my divine Guest ! for thou hast laden me with the gifts of thy love. How shall I not return thee love for love, and love thee with all this heart of mine, wherein thou dwellest ? Be thou loved, then, my infinitely amiable Jesus of Bethlehem ! It was to win our love, that thou didst lay aside all thy greatness, and, as thy Apostle expresses it,³ *empty* thyself of all thy majesty, assuming the form of a servant, nay, of a weak Babe. Verily, to approach thee now with fear and trembling seems out of season ; and such loveliness as this should not be approached, but with confident tenderest love. O thou that art to be my dread Judge ! thou art now here, resting on my heart ; thou art, thou wishest to be, in my power ; and, according to thine own saying, thou art mine, and I am thine. Jesus ! most amiable Jesus ! remain with me for ever. Here take up thy abode ; here grow before God and men ; here reign as my Lord, and King, and God. To supply for the deficiency of my own love, I offer thee the love wherewith Mary, thy most holy Mother, pressed thee to her sacred Heart, during these the first days of thy life on earth ; the love wherewith Joseph, the chaste Spouse of Mary, and thy foster-father, so diligently procured thee all thou didst need ; the love wherewith the Shepherds of Bethlehem gazed on thee, *the Saviour, that was born for them,* and knew thee by *this sign* that thou wast an *Infant—lying—swathed—in a manger ;*⁴ the love

¹ St. Luke, ii. 16, 20, 18.² Ps. lxxv. 16.³ Phil. ii. 7.⁴ St. Luke, ii. 11, 12.

wherewith the adoring Magi opened their treasures before thee, and forgot all the fatigues of a long journey, entranced with the sight of thee ; the love wherewith the venerable Simeon took thee up in his arms, and felt that he must needs die, now that he had *seen Jesus* ; the love, in fine, of the Holy Angels, who, as thy Apostle tells us,¹ adored thee when born in Bethlehem, and found their heaven in looking on that immortal beauty, made visible, in thy Infant Face, even to the eyes of sinful men. Accept, O my divine Treasure ! my sweetest Jesus ! accept my love, as thou didst all these, and abide in me for ever.

ACT OF OBLATION.

But, it is not enough that I love thee, O Divine Infant ! —thou commandest me to give myself to thee. I was far off, and yet thou camest to me, that thou mightest make me thine own possession ; and that I might never more leave thee, thou hast taken up thy dwelling within my heart, making it thy *Bethlehem*, O Bread of Life ! Thou wishest that I should become a little child, after thine example ; that I should leave, here at thy Crib, all my pride and disobedience ; that my worldly wisdom should yield, at the sight of thy Crib, to the spirit of Faith ; that the false light, which has hitherto been my guide, should be dispelled by the brightness which comes from the mystery of thy Divine Body swathed in the bands of infancy. O Jesus ! *thou King of Infants*, as one of the Fathers has called thee, I give myself to thee, that thou mayest teach me to become a little child. Accept the promise I make thee, of perfect docility to all thy teachings ; grant that it may be constant and always prompted by love. I detest everything, in my past life, which has been, either in thought or affection, contrary to thy spirit. Henceforth, I will be all thine, for thou hast drawn me, by these sacred Mysteries, into holy nearness to thyself. I will imitate the Magi, who, having adored thee, *went back another way into their country*. May this holy *in-fancy*, which I have begun after thine example, be to me the beginning of a new life, with nothing of my old one in it. Simeon having received thee into his arms, wished to live no more for this earth ; and shall I be satisfied with it, I who possess thee here within me ? No—henceforth, my life is to be the serving thee ;

¹ Heb. i. 6.

that so I may deserve to be united with thee, for ever, in heaven.

Mary, Mother of my Jesus ! pray for me, that this gracious visit of thy divine Son may produce in me abundant fruits of virtue.—Ye Holy Angels of God ! who adore him now dwelling within me, be solicitous for the holiness and purity of my soul and body.—All ye saints of God ! pray for me, that I may ever be faithful to Him, whom ye loved on earth, and now love eternally in heaven. Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE OFFICE OF VESPERS FOR SUNDAYS AND FEASTS ;

DURING CHRISTMAS.

THE Office of *Vespers*, or *Even-Song*, during the whole year, consists, firstly, of five Psalms and Antiphons, which vary, more or less, every day. As the main object of our Book is the convenience of the Faithful, we only give the *Vespers* of the Sundays and the principal Feasts. With regard to the Sundays, therefore, during Christmas, which are neither Feasts, nor within the Octave of a Feast, we give them here in full, reserving only that, which is peculiar to each, for the *Proper*. If it be a Feast, the Office must be sought for on its own day.

After the *Pater* and *Ave* have been said in secret, the Church commences this Hour with her favourite supplication :

Ÿ. Deus in adiutorium
meum intende.

R. Domine, ad adjuvan-
dum me festina.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et
Spiritui Sancto :

Sicut erat in principio et
nunc et semper, et in sæcula
sæculorum. Amen. Alleluia.

ANT. Dixit Dominus.

Ÿ. Incline unto my aid, O
God.

R. O Lord, make haste to
help me.

Glory be to the Father, and
to the Son, and to the Holy
Ghost.

As it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.
Alleluia.

ANT. The Lord said.

The first Psalm is a prophecy of the glory of the Messias. This Child, who is now born to us in humility and poverty, is to be seated on the right hand of

the eternal Father. Now, that we are celebrating his temporal Birth, it is most just that we should often sing the Psalm which speaks of his eternal Generation, as God, and of the future glory which awaits him, as Man.

PSALM 109.

The Lord said to my Lord, *his Son* : Sit thou at my right hand, and reign with me.

Until, on the day of thy last coming, I make thy enemies thy footstool.

O Christ! the Lord thy Father will send forth the sceptre of thy power out of Sion : from thence rule thou in the midst of thy enemies.

With thee is the principality in the day of thy strength, in the brightness of the saints : For the Father hath said to thee : From the womb before the day-star I begot thee.

The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent : he hath said, speaking of thee, the God-Man : Thou art a Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech.

Therefore, O Father, the Lord thy Son is at thy right hand : he hath broken kings in the day of his wrath.

He shall also judge among nations : in that terrible coming, he shall fill the ruins of the world : he shall crush the heads in the land of many.

He cometh now in humility ; he shall drink, in the way, of the torrent of sufferings : therefore, shall he lift up the head.

ANT. The Lord said to my

Dixit Dominus Domino meo : * Sede a dextris meis.

Donec ponam inimicos tuos : * scabellum pedum tuorum.

Virgam virtutis tuæ emit- tet Dominus ex Sion : * dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.

Tecum principium in die virtutis tuæ in splendoribus sanctorum : * ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

Juravit Dominus, et non pœnitebit eum : * Tu es Sacerdos in æternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.

Dominus a dextris tuis : * confregit in die iræ suæ reges.

Judicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas : * conquasabit capita in terra multorum.

De torrente in via bibet : * propterea exaltabit caput.

ANT. Dixit Dominus Do-

mino meo, sede a dextris Lord, sit thou at my right
meis. hand.

ANT. Fidelia.

ANT. Faithful.

The following Psalm commemorates the mercies of God to his people—the promised Covenant—the Redemption—his fidelity to his promises.

PSALM 110.

Confitebor tibi, Domine,
in toto corde meo : * in concilio
justorum et congregatione.

Magna opera Domini : *
exquisita in omnes voluntates
ejus.

Confessio et magnificentia
opus ejus : * et justitia ejus
manet in sæculum sæculi.

Memoriam fecit mirabilium
suorum, misericors et miserator
Dominus : * escam dedit
timentibus se.

Memor erit in sæculum
testamenti sui : * virtutem
operum suorum annuntiabit
populo suo.

Ut det illis hæreditatem
Gentium : * opera manuum
ejus veritas et judicium.

Fidelia omnia mandata
ejus, confirmata in sæculum
sæculi : * facta in veritate et
æquitate.

Redemptionem misit populo
suo : * mandavit in æternum
testamentum suum.

Sanctum et terribile no-

I will praise thee, O Lord,
with my whole heart : in the
counsel of the just, and in the
congregation.

Great are the works of the
Lord : sought out according
to all his wills.

His work is praise and mag-
nificence : and his justice con-
tinueth for ever and ever.

He hath made a remem-
brance of his wonderful works,
being a merciful and gracious
Lord : *and being the bread of
life*, he hath given food to
them that fear him.

He will be mindful for ever
of his covenant *with men* : he
is come and will shew forth to
his people the power of his
works.

That he may give them, *his
Church*, the inheritance of the
Gentiles : the works of his
hand are truth and judgment.

All his commandments are
faithful, confirmed for ever
and ever : made in truth and
equity.

He hath sent Redemption
to his people ; he hath, *thereby*,
commanded his covenant for
ever.

Holy and terrible is his

name : the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

A good understanding to all that do it : his praise continueth for ever and ever.

ANT. Faithful are all his commandments ; confirmed for ever and ever.

ANT. In his commandments.

The next Psalm sings the happiness of the just man, and his hopes on the day of Jesus' Birth. It is applicable also to the sinner, who shall be confounded because he profited nothing by that great Mystery of humility and love.

PSALM 111.

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord : he shall delight exceedingly in his commandments.

His seed shall be mighty upon earth : the generation of the righteous shall be blessed.

Glory and wealth shall be in his house : and his justice remaineth for ever and ever.

To the righteous a light is risen up in darkness : he is merciful, and compassionate, and just : *he is born and dwells amongst us.*

Acceptable is the man that showeth mercy and lendeth ; he shall order his words with judgment : because he shall not be moved for ever.

The just shall be in everlasting remembrance : he shall not fear the evil hearing.

His heart is ready to hope in the Lord ; his heart is

men ejus : * initium sapientiæ timor Domini.

Intellectus bonus omnibus facientibus eum : * laudatio ejus manet in sæculum sæculi.

ANT. Fidelia omnia mandata ejus ; confirmata in sæculum sæculi.

ANT. In mandatis.

Beatus vir, qui timet Dominum : * in mandatis ejus volet nimis.

Potens in terra erit semen ejus : * generatio rectorum benedicetur.

Gloria, et divitiæ in domo ejus : * et justitia ejus manet in sæculum sæculi.

Exortum est in tenebris lumen rectis : * misericors, et miserator, et justus.

Jucundus homo, qui miseretur et commodat, disponet sermones suos in judicio : * quia in æternum non commovebitur.

In memoria æterna erit justus : * ab auditione mala non timebit.

Paratum cor ejus sperare in Domino, confirmatum est

cor ejus : * non commovebitur donec despiciat inimicos suos.

Dispersit, dedit pauperibus, justitia ejus manet in sæculum sæculi : * cornu ejus exaltabitur in gloria.

Peccator videbit, et irasceatur, dentibus suis fremet et tabescet : * desiderium peccatorum peribit.

ANT. In mandatis ejus cupit nimis.

ANT. Sit nomen Domini.

The Psalm *Laudate pueri*, is a Canticle of praise to the Lord, who, from his high heaven, has taken pity on the fallen human race, and raised it up again by the Incarnation.

PSALM 112.

Laudate, pueri, Dominum : * laudate nomen Domini.

Sit nomen Domini benedictum : * ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum.

A solis ortu usque ad occasum : * laudabile nomen Domini.

Excelsus super omnes Gentes Dominus : * et super cœlos gloria ejus.

Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster qui in altis habitat : * et humilia respicit in cœlo et in terra ?

Suscitans a terra inopem : * et de stercore erigens pauperem.

strengthened : he shall not be moved until he look over his enemies.

He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor ; his justice remaineth for ever and ever : his horn shall be exalted in glory.

The wicked shall see, and shall be angry ; he shall gnash with his teeth, and pine away : the desire of the wicked shall perish.

ANT. In his commandments he delighteth exceedingly.

ANT. May the name of the Lord.

Praise the Lord, ye children : praise ye the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord : from henceforth now and for ever.

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord is worthy of praise.

The Lord is high above all nations : and his glory above the heavens.

Who is as the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high : and looketh down on the low things in heaven and in earth, *nay who cometh down amidst us ?*

Raising up the needy from the earth : and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill.

That he may place him with princes : with the princes of his people.

Who maketh a barren woman to dwell in a house, the joyful mother of children.

ANT. May the name of the Lord be for ever blessed.

ANT. We that live.

Ut collocet eum cum principibus : * cum principibus populi sui.

Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo : * matrem filiorum lætantem.

ANT. Sit nomen Domini benedictum in sæcula.

ANT. Nos qui vivimus.

The fifth Psalm, *In exitu*, recounts the prodigies witnessed under the ancient Covenant: they were *figures*, whose realities begin their accomplishment in the Birth of Jesus ; for, he comes that he may deliver *Israel* from Egypt, emancipate the *Gentiles* from their idolatry, and pour out a *blessing* on every man who will consent to fear and love the Lord.

PSALM 113.

When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a barbarous people.

Judea was made his sanctuary, Israel his dominion.

The sea saw and fled ; Jordan was turned back.

The mountains skipped like rams : and the hills like the lambs of the flock.

What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou didst flee : and thou, O Jordan, that thou wast turned back ?

Ye mountains that ye skipped like rams : and ye hills like lambs of the flock ?

At the presence of the Lord the earth was moved, at the presence of the God of Jacob.

Who turned the rock into pools of water, and the stony hills into fountain of waters.

In exitu Israel de Ægypto : * domus Jacob de populo barbaro.

Facta est Judæa sanctificatio ejus : * Israel potestas ejus.

Mare vidit, et fugit : * Jordanis conversus est retrorsum.

Montes exsultaverunt ut arietes : * et colles sicut agni ovium.

Quid est tibi, mare, quod fugisti : * et tu, Jordanis, quia conversus es retrorsum ?

Montes exsultastis sicut arietes : * et colles sicut agni ovium ?

A facie Domini mota est terra : a facie Dei Jacob.

Qui convertit petram in stagna aquarum : * et rupem in fontes aquarum.

Non nobis, Domine, non nobis : * sed nomini tuo da gloriam.

Super misericordia tua, et veritate tua : * nequando dicant Gentes : Ubi est Deus eorum.

Deus autem noster in cœlo : * omnia quæcumque voluit, fecit.

Simulacra Gentium argentum et aurum : * opera manuum hominum.

Os habent, et non loquentur : * oculos habent, et non videbunt.

Aures habent, et non audient : * nares habent, et non odorabunt.

Manus habent, et non palpabunt, pedes habent, et non ambulabunt : * non clamabunt in gutture suo.

Similes illis fiant qui faciunt ea : * et omnes qui confidunt in eis.

Domus Israel speravit in Domino : * adjutor eorum, et protector eorum est.

Domus Aaron speravit in Domino : * adjutor eorum, et protector eorum est.

Qui timent Dominum, speraverunt in Domino : * adjutor eorum, et protector eorum est.

Dominus memor fuit nostri : * et benedixit nobis.

Benedixit domui Israel : * benedixit domui Aaron.

Benedixit omnibus qui timent Dominum : * pusillis cum majoribus.

Adjiciat Dominus super vos : * super vos, et super filios vestros.

Not to us, O Lord, not to us : but to thy name give glory.

For thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake : lest the Gentiles should say : Where is their God ?

But our God is in heaven : he hath done all things whatsoever he would.

The idols of the Gentiles are silver and gold : the works of the hands of men.

They have mouths, and speak not : they have eyes, and see not.

They have ears, and hear not : they have noses, and smell not.

They have hands, and feel not : they have feet, and walk not : neither shall they cry out through their throat.

Let them that make them become like unto them : and all such as trust in them.

The house of Israel hath hoped in the Lord : he is their helper and their protector.

The house of Aaron hath hoped in the Lord : he is their helper and their protector.

They that feared the Lord have hoped in the Lord : he is their helper and their protector.

The Lord hath been mindful of us, and hath blessed us.

He hath blessed the house of Israel : he hath blessed the house of Aaron.

He hath blessed all that fear the Lord, both little and great.

May the Lord add blessings upon you : upon you, and upon your children.

Blessed be you of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

The heaven of heaven is the
Lord's : but the earth he has
given to the children of men.

The dead shall 'not praise
thee, O Lord : nor any of them
that go down to hell.

But we that live bless the
Lord : from this time now and
for ever.

ANT. We that live bless the
Lord.

Benedicti vos a Domino :
* qui fecit cœlum et terram.

Cœlum cœli Domino : *
terram autem dedit filiis
hominum.

Non mortui laudabunt te,
Domine : * neque omnes
qui descendunt in infernum.

Sed nos qui vivimus, be-
nedicimus Domino : * ex
hoc nunc et usque in sæcu-
lum.

ANT. Nos qui vivimus,
benedicimus Domino.

After these five Psalms, a short Lesson from the
holy Scriptures is then read. It is called *Capitulum*,
because it is always very short. That for the several
Feasts, is given on the respective Days. The follow-
ing is said on the Sundays called *After the Epi-
phany*, as often as the Vespers are *of the Sunday*.

C A P I T U L U M .

II. *Cor. i.*

Blessed be the God and
Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, the Father of mercies,
and the God of all consolation,
who comforteth us in all our
tribulations.

R̄. Thanks be to God.

Benedictus Deus et Pater
Domini nostri Jesu Christi,
Pater misericordiarum et
Deus totius consolationis,
qui consolatur nos in omni
tribulatione nostra.

R̄. Deo gratias.

Then follows the Hymn. We give the one of the
Sunday's Office. It was composed by St. Gregory
the Great, and celebrates Creation. It praises the
Light, which God drew out of nothing, on this the
first Day, and which is the beautiful image of our
Divine Infant, the *Light of the world*, the *Orient*
that has visited them who sat in the shadow of
death.

HYMN.*

Lucis Creator optime,
 Lucem dierum proferens ;
 Primordiis lucis novæ,
 Mundi parans originem.

Qui mane junctum vesperi
 Diem vocari præcipis,
 Illabitur tetrum chaos,
 Audi preces cum fletibus.

Ne mens gravata crimine,
 Vitæ sit exul munere,
 Dum nil perenne cogitat,
 Seseque culpis illigat.

Cœleste pulset intimum,
 Vitale tollat præmium :
 Vitemus omne noxium,
 Purgemus omne pessimum.

Præsta, Pater piissime,
 Patrique compar Unice,
 Cum Spiritu Paraclito
 Regnans per omne sæculum.
 Amen.

O infinitely good Creator of the Light ! by thee was produced the Light of day, providing thus the world's beginning with the beginning of the new-made Light.

Thou biddest us call the time from morn till eve, *Day*; this *day* is over ; dark Night comes on—oh ! hear our tearful prayers.

Let not our soul, weighed down by crime, mis-spend thy gift of life, and, forgetting what is eternal, be earth-tied by her sins.

Oh ! may we strive to enter our heavenly home, and bear away the prize of life : may we shun what would injure us, and cleanse our soul from her defilements.

Most merciful Father ! and thou, his Only Begotten Son, co-equal with him, reigning for ever with the Holy Paraclete ! grant this our prayer.
 Amen.

* According to the Monastic Rite, it is as follows :—

B. breve. Quam magnificata sunt, * Opera tua Domine. Quam. *V.* Omnia in sapientia fecisti. * Opera. Gloria Patri, &c. Quam.

Lucis Creator optime,
 Lucem dierum proferens ;
 Primordiis lucis novæ,
 Mundi parans originem.

Qui mane junctum vesperi
 Diem vocari præcipis,
 Tetrum chaos illabitur,
 Audi preces cum fletibus.

Ne mens gravata crimine,
 Vitæ sit exul munere,
 Dum nil perenne cogitat,
 Seseque culpis illigat.

Cœlorum pulset intimum,
 Vitale tollat præmium :
 Vitemus omne noxium,
 Purgemus omne pessimum.

Præsta, Pater piissime,
 Patrique compar Unice,
 Cum Spiritu Paraclito
 Regnans per omne sæculum.
 Amen.

The *Versicle* which follows the Hymn, and which we here give, is that of the Sunday: those for the Feasts are given in their proper places.

Ÿ. May my prayer, O Lord,
ascend,
R. Like incense in thy sight.

Ÿ. Dirigatur, Domine,
oratio mea,
R. Sicut incensum in con-
spectu tuo.

Then is said the *Magnificat* Antiphon, which is to be found in the Proper for the different Days. After this, the Church sings the Canticle of Mary, the *Magnificat*, in which are celebrated the Divine Maternity and all its consequent blessings. This exquisite Canticle is an essential part of the Vespers, throughout the year; but how sweetly appropriate is it to the season of Christmas, during which, the Church is overflowing with joy at the Birth of Jesus! She turns to the Mother, and proclaims her *Blessed*. *Blessed*, indeed; for, *the power of the Most High overshadowed her*; the Holy Ghost gave unto her, for the salvation of the world, the Blessed Fruit of her Womb.¹

OUR LADY'S CANTICLE.

(St. Luke, i.)

My soul doth magnify the
Lord;
And my spirit hath rejoiced
in God my Saviour.

Because he hath regarded
the humility of his handmaid:
for, behold, from henceforth
all generations shall call me
Blessed.

Because he that is mighty
hath done great things to me:
and holy is his name.

And his mercy is from gene-

Magnificat: * anima mea
Dominum:

Et exultavit spiritus
meus: * in Deo salutari meo.

Quia respexit humilitatem
ancillæ suæ: * ecce enim ex
hoc Beatam me dicent om-
nes generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui
potens est: * et sanctum
nomen ejus.

Et misericordia ejus a pro-

¹ St. Luke, i. 35.

genie in progenies : * timen-
tibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio
suo : * dispersit superbos
mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede :
* et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bo-
nis : * et divites dimisit
inanes.

Suscipit Israel puerum
suum : * recordatus miseri-
cordiæ suæ.

Sicut locutus est ad patres
nostros : * Abraham et se-
mini ejus in sæcula.

ration unto generation, to them
that fear him.

He hath showed might in
his arm : he hath scattered the
proud in the conceit of their
heart.

He hath put down the
mighty from their seat : and
hath exalted the humble.

He hath filled the hungry
with good things : and the rich
he hath sent empty away.

He hath received Israel his
servant, being mindful of his
mercy.

As he spake to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his seed
for ever.

The *Magnificat* Antiphon is then repeated. The Prayer, or Collect, will be found in the Proper of each Sunday and Feast.

The Vespers end with the following Versicles :

Ÿ. Benedicamus Domino.

R. Deo gratias.

Ÿ. Fidelium animæ per
misericordiam Dei requies-
cant in pace.

R. Amen.

Ÿ. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Ÿ. May the souls of the
Faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE OFFICE OF COMPLINE,

DURING CHRISTMAS.

THIS Office, which concludes the day, commences by a warning of the dangers of the night: then immediately follows the public Confession of our sins, as a powerful means of propitiating the divine justice, and obtaining God's help, now that we are going to spend so many hours in the unconscious and therefore dangerous state of sleep, which is also such an image of death.

The Lector, addressing the Priest, says to him :

Pray, Father, give thy blessing.	℣. Jube, Domine, benedicere.
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The Priest answers :

May the Almighty Lord grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.	Noctem quietam, et finem perfectum concedat nobis Dominus omnipotens.
℞. Amen.	℞. Amen.

The Lector then reads these words, from the first Epistle of St. Peter :

Brethren, be sober and watch : for your adversary the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour : resist him, being strong in faith. But thou, O Lord, have mercy on us.	Fratres : Sobrii estote, et vigilate : quia adversarius vester diabolus, tamquam leo rugiens circuit quærens quem devoret : cui resistite fortes in fide. Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis.
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The Choir answers :

℞. Thanks be to God.	℞. Deo gratias.
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Then, the Priest :

Ÿ. Adjutorium nostrum
in nomine Domine.

Ÿ. Our help is in the name
of the Lord.

The Choir :

R. Qui fecit cœlum et ter-
ram.

R. Who hath made heaven
and earth.

Then the Lord's Prayer is recited in secret ; after which the Priest says the *Confiteor* ; and, when he has finished, the Choir says :

Misereatur tui omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis tuis, perducatur te ad vitam æternam.

May Almighty God be merciful to thee, and, forgiving thy sins, bring thee to everlasting life.

The Priest having answered *Amen*, the Choir repeats the *Confiteor*, thus :

Confiteor Deo Omnipotenti, beatæ Mariæ semper Virgini, beato Michaeli Archangelo, beato Joanni Baptistæ, sanctis Apostolis Petro et Paulo, omnibus sanctis, et tibi Pater : quia peccavi nimis, cogitatione, verbo, et opere : mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Ideo precor beatam Mariam semper Virginem, beatum Michaellem Archangelum, beatum Joannem Baptistam, sanctos Apostolos Petrum et Paulum, omnes sanctos, et te, Pater, orare pro me ad Dominum Deum nostrum.

I confess to Almighty God, to Blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to thee, Father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, and thee, Father, to pray to our Lord God for me.

The Priest then says :

Misereatur vestri omnipotens Deus, et dimissis

May Almighty God be merciful to you, and, forgiving

your sins, bring you to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution, and remission of our sins.

R. Amen.

V. Convert us, O God, our Saviour.

R. And turn away thy anger from us.

V. Incline unto my aid, O God.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory, &c.

ANT. Have mercy.

peccatis vestris, perducatur vos ad vitam æternam.

R. Amen.

Indulgentiam, absolutio-nem, et remissionem peccatorum nostrorum, tribuat nobis omnipotens et misericors Dominus.

R. Amen.

V. Converte nos, Deus, Salutaris noster.

R. Et averte iram tuam a nobis.

V. Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.

R. Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.

Gloria Patri, &c.

ANT. Miserere.

The *first* Psalm expresses the confidence with which the just man sleeps in peace; but the wicked know not what calm rest is. It also speaks of the eternal Word, the *Light* of the Father, who is come to dispel our darkness.

PSALM 4.

When I called upon him, the God of my justice heard me: when I was in distress, thou hast enlarged me.

Have mercy on me: and hear my prayer.

O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? why do you love vanity, and seek after lying?

Know ye also that the Lord hath made his Holy One wonderful: the Lord will hear me, when I shall cry unto him.

Be ye angry, and sin not: the things you say in your

Cum invocarem exaudivit me Deus justitiæ meæ: * in tribulatione dilatasti mihi.

Miserere mei: * et exaudi orationem meam.

Filii hominum, usquequo gravi corde? * ut quid diligitis vanitatem, et quæritis mendacium?

Et scitote quoniam mirificavit Dominus sanctum suum: * Dominus exaudiet me, cum clamavero ad eum.

Irascimini, et nolite peccare: * quæ dicitis in cordi-

bus vestris, in cubilibus vestris compungimini.

Sacrificate sacrificium justitiæ, et sperate in Domino : * multi dicunt : Quis ostendit nobis bona ?

Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui Domine : * dedisti lætitiã in corde meo.

A fructu frumenti, vini et olei sui : * multiplicati sunt.

In pace in idipsum : * dormiam et requiescam.

Quoniam tu, Domine, singulariter in spe : * constituisti me.

hearts, be sorry for them upon your beds.

Offer up the sacrifice of justice, and trust in the Lord : many say, who showeth us good things ?

The Light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us : thou hast given gladness in my heart.

By the fruit of their corn, their wine, and oil, they are multiplied.

In peace, in the self same, I will sleep, and I will rest.

For thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope.

The Church has introduced here the first six Verses of the thirtieth Psalm, because they contain the prayer which our Saviour made when dying : *Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit !* words so beautifully appropriate in this Office of the close of day.

PSALM 30.

In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum : * in justitia tuã libera me.

Inclina ad me aurem tuam : * accelera ut eruas me.

Esto mihi in Deum protectorem, et in domum refugii : * ut salvum me facias.

Quoniam fortitudo mea, et refugium meum es tu : * et propter nomen tuum deduces me, et enutries me.

Educes me de laqueo hoc, quem absconderunt mihi : *

In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded : deliver me in thy justice.

Bow down thy ear to me : make haste to deliver thee.

Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a house of refuge, to save me.

For thou art my strength, and my refuge : and for thy name's sake thou wilt lead me, and nourish me.

Thou wilt bring me out of this snare, which they have

hidden for me : for thou art my protector.

Into thy hands I commend my spirit : thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.

quoniam tu es protector meus.

In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum : * redemisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis.

The *third* Psalm gives the motives of the just man's confidence, even during the dangers of the night. Then, we have God himself speaking, and promising to show us our *Saviour*.

PSALM 90.

He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob.

He shall say to the Lord : Thou art my protector, and my refuge : my God, in him will I trust.

For he hath delivered me from the snare of the hunters : and from the sharp word.

He will overshadow thee with his shoulders : and under his wings thou shalt trust.

His truth shall compass thee with a shield : thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night.

Of the arrow that flieth in the day : of the business that walketh about in the dark : of invasion, or of the noonday devil.

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand : but it shall not come nigh thee.

But thou shalt consider with thy eyes : and shalt see the reward of the wicked.

Because *thou hast said* :

Qui habitat in adjutorio Altissimi : * in protectione Dei cœli commorabitur.

Dicet Domino : Susceptor meus es tu, et refugium meum, * Deus meus, sperabo in eum.

Quoniam ipse liberavit me de laqueo venantium : * et a verbo aspero.

Scapulis suis obumbrabit tibi : * et sub pennis ejus sperabis.

Scuto circumdabit te veritas ejus : * non timebis a timore nocturno.

A sagitta volante in die, a negotio perambulante in tenebris : * ab incursu, et dæmonio meridiano.

Cadent a latere tuo mille, et dacem millia a dextris tuis : * ad te autem non appropinquabit.

Verumtamen oculis tuis considerabis : * et retributionem peccatorum videbis.

Quoniam tu es, Domine,

spes mea : * Altissimum posuisti refugium tuum.

Non accedet ad te malum : * et flagellum non appropinquabit tabernaculo tuo.

Quoniam Angelis suis mandavit de te : * ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis.

In manibus portabunt te : * ne forte offendas ad lapidem pedem tuum.

Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis : * et conculcabis leonem et draconem.

Quoniam in me speravit, liberabo eum : * protegam eum, quoniam cognovit nomen meum.

Clamabit ad me, et ego exaudiam eum : * cum ipsum in tribulatione, eripiam eum et glorificabo eum.

Longitudine dierum replebo eum : * et ostendam illi Salutare meum.

Thou, O Lord, art my hope : Thou hast made the Most High thy refuge.

There shall no evil come to thee, nor shall the scourge come near thy dwelling.

For he hath given his Angels charge over thee : to keep thee in all thy ways.

In their hands they shall bear thee up : lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Thou shalt walk upon the asp and basilisk : and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon.

God will say of thee : Because he hoped in me, I will deliver him : I will protect him, because he hath known my name.

He will cry to me, and I will hear him : I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and I will glorify him.

I will fill him with length of days : and I will show him my salvation.

The *fourth* Psalm invites the Servants of God to persevere, with fervour, in the prayers they offer during the *Night*. The Faithful should say this Psalm in a spirit of gratitude to God, for his raising up, in the Church, adorers of his holy name, whose grand vocation is to *lift up their hands*, day and night, for the safety of Israel. On such prayers, depend the happiness and destinies of the world.

PSALM 133.

Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum : * omnes servi Domini.

Qui statis in domo Domini-

Behold now bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord.

Who stand in the house of

the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.

In the nights lift up your hands to the holy places, and bless ye the Lord.

Say to Israel: May the Lord out of Sion bless thee, he that made heaven and earth.

ANT. Have mercy on me, O Lord, and hear my prayer.

ni: * in atrijs domus Dei nostri.

In noctibus extollite manus vestras in sancta: * et benedicite Dominum.

Benedicat te Dominus ex Sion: * qui fecit cœlum et terram.

ANT. Miserere mei, Domine, et exaudi orationem meam.

HYMN.*

Before the closing of the light, we beseech thee, Creator of all things! that, in thy clemency, thou be our protector and our guard.

May the dreams and phantoms of night depart far from us; and do thou repress our enemy, lest our bodies be profaned.

Most merciful Father! and thou, his Only Begotten Son, co-equal with him! reigning for ever with the Holy Paraclete! grant this our prayer. Amen.

(This last Stanza is varied for Christmas Day, &c., and for the Epiphany. See page 118.)

CAPITULUM.

(Jeremias, xiv.)

But thou art in us, O Lord, and thy holy name has been

Tu autem in nobis es, Domine, et nomen sanctum

* According to the Monastic Rite, as follows:

Te lucis ante terminum,
Rerum Creator, poscimus,
Ut solita clementia
Sis præsul ad custodiam.
— Procul recedant somnia,
Et noctium phantasmata;

Hostemque nostrum comprime,
Ne polluantur corpora.
Præsta Pater omnipotens,
Per Jesum Christum Dominum,
Qui tecum in perpetuum
Regnat cum Sancto Spiritu.

tuum invocatum est super nos; ne derelinquas nos, Domine Deus noster.

R. In manus tuas, Domine: * Commendo spiritum meum. In manus tuas.

V. Redemisti nos, Domine Deus veritatis. * Commendo.

Gloria. In manus tuas.

V. Custodi nos, Domine, ut pupillam oculi.

R. Sub umbra alarum tuarum protege nos.

invoked upon us: forsake us not, O Lord our God.

R. Into thy hands, O Lord: * I commend my spirit. Into thy hands.

V. Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord God of truth. * I commend.

Glory. Into thy hands.

V. Preserve us, O Lord, as the apple of thine eye.

R. Protect us under the shadow of thy wings.

The Canticle of the venerable Simeon—who, whilst holding the divine Infant in his arms, proclaimed him to be the *Light of the Gentiles*, and then slept the sleep of the just—harmonises admirably with this closing Office of the day, at Christmastide; for, during this holy Season, the Church is for ever thanking God, because he has dispelled the shades of death by the rising of the Sun of Justice, in whose love she labours all day long, and takes her rest at night, saying: *I sleep, and my heart watcheth.*¹

CANTICLE OF SIMEON.

(*St. Luke, ii.*)

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine: * secundum verbum tuum in pace.

Quia viderunt oculi mei: * Salutare tuum.

Quod parasti: * ante faciem omnium populorum.

Lumen ad revelationem Gentium: * et gloriam plebis tuæ Israel.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, &c.

ANT. Salva nos, Domine,

Now dost thou dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace.

Because my eyes have seen thy Salvation,

Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples.

The Light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory.

ANT. Save us, O Lord,

¹ Cant. v. 2.

whilst awake, and watch us as we sleep ; that we may watch with Christ, and rest in peace.

vigilantes : custodi nos dormientes, ut vigilemus cum Christo, et requiescamus in pace.

Ÿ. The Lord be with you.

℞. And with thy spirit.

Ÿ. Dominus vobiscum.

℞. Et cum spiritu tuo.

LET US PRAY.

OREMUS.

Visit, we beseech thee, O Lord, this house and family, and drive from it all snares of the enemy : let thy holy Angels dwell herein, who may keep us in peace, and may thy blessing be always upon us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

Visita, quæsumus Domine, habitationem istam, et omnes insidias inimici ab ea longe repelle : Angeli tui sancti habitent in ea, qui nos in pace custodiant : et benedictio tua sit super nos semper. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Ÿ. The Lord be with you.

℞. And with thy spirit.

Ÿ. Let us bless the Lord.

℞. Thanks be to God.

May the almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless and preserve us.

℞. Amen.

Ÿ. Dominus vobiscum.

℞. Et cum spiritu tuo.

Ÿ. Benedicamus Domino.

℞. Deo gratias.

Benedicat et custodiat nos omnipotens et misericors Dominus, Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus.

℞. Amen.

ANTHEM TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Sweet Mother of our Redeemer, Gate whereby we enter heaven, and Star of the sea, help us, we fall ; yet do we long to rise. Nature looked upon thee with admiration, when thou didst give birth to thy divine Creator, thyself remaining, before and after it, a pure Virgin. Gabriel spoke his Hail to thee ; we sinners crave thy pity.

Alma Redemptoris mater,
quæ pervia cœli
Porta manes, et stella maris,
succurre cadenti,
Surgere qui curat populo.
Tu quæ genuisti,
Natura mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem.
Virgo prius ac posterius,
Gabrielis ab ore
Sumens illud Ave, peccatorum miserere.

Ÿ. Post partum, Virgo,
inviolata permansisti.

R. Dei Genitrix, inter-
cede pro nobis.

Ÿ. After child-birth, thou
didst remain most pure, O
Virgin!

R. O Mother of God! make
intercession for us.

OREMUS.

LET US PRAY.

Deus qui salutis æternæ
beatæ Mariæ virginitate fe-
cunda humano generi præ-
mia præstitisti: tribue, quæ-
sumus, ut ipsam pro nobis
intercedere sentiamus per
quam meruimus auctorem
vitæ suscipere Dominum
nostrum Jesum Christum
Filium tuum.

R. Amen.

Ÿ. Divinum auxilium
maneant semper nobiscum.

R. Amen.*

O God, who, by the fruitful
Virginité of the Blessed Mary,
hast given to mankind the re-
wards of eternal salvation;
grant, we beseech thee, that
we may experience Her inter-
cession, by whom we received
the Author of life, our Lord
Jesus Christ, thy Son.

R. Amen.

Ÿ. May the divine assis-
tance remain always with us.

R. Amen.

Then in secret, *Pater, Ave, and Credo*, page 35.

THE LAST STANZA OF THE HYMN IS THUS VARIED:

From Christmas Day till the Epiphany.

ROMAN BREVIARY.

MONASTIC BREVIARY.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria,
Qui natus es de Virgine,
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.

Amen.

Gloria tibi Domine,
Qui natus es de Virgine,
Cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.

Amen.

* In the Monastic Rite, this Response is as follows:

R. Et cum fratribus nostris
absentibus. Amen.

R. And with our absent Bre-
thren. Amen.

For the Epiphany, and during the Octave.

ROMAN BREVIARY.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria,
Qui apparuisti Gentibus,
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.
Amen.

MONASTIC BREVIARY.

Gloria tibi Domine,
Qui apparuisti hodie,
Cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.
Amen.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

AFTERNOON OF THE EVE.

CHRISTMAS-EVE, with its own happy spirit, is drawing to its close. Already has the Church terminated all her Advent Offices, by the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. In her maternal considerateness, she has permitted her children to break their Fast of preparation for the great Feast, by taking their meal at mid-day. Whilst refreshing their bodies with this repast, to which Abstinence gives merit, the Faithful feel an instinct of gladness, which comes as a harbinger, to tell them of that immense joy, which this beautiful Night will bring them, by giving them their Emmanuel.

But, so great a Solemnity as that of to-morrow, could not possibly be an exception to that usage of the Church, whereby she anticipates all her Feasts on their Eves. In a few moments, the Office of *First Vespers*, in which is offered to God the evening incense, will call us to the Church, and the splendour of the function, and the magnificence of the chants, will open our hearts to those feelings of love and gratitude, which will prepare them to receive the graces of To-Night.

Let us spend the interval in endeavouring to gain a clear knowledge of the Mystery of our Feast; and let us get well into ourselves the sentiments and spirit of the Church. We shall be assisted to do both, by considering some of the principal traditions, which attach to this joyful Solemnity.

Let us begin by listening to the Holy Fathers,

speaking of Christmas Day, with an eloquence worthy of the Feast. And first, we have St. Gregory the Theologian, Bishop of Nazianzum, who thus opens his thirty-eighth discourse, which is on the *Theophania*, or Nativity of our Lord.

“ Christ is born—glorify him ! Christ comes down from heaven—go ye forth to meet him ! Christ is on the earth—be ye lifted up above it ! *O sing to the Lord all thou earth !*¹ and to say all in one word : *Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad,*² because He that is now born is both of heaven and of earth ! Christ has assumed our Flesh—exult in fear and in joy ; in fear, because of sin ; in joy, because of hope ! Christ is born of a Virgin :—women ! honour holy virginity, that you may become Mothers of Christ !

“ Who would not adore Him, that is from the beginning ? Who would not praise and extol Him, that is born in time ? Darkness is at an end ; Light is created ; Egypt remains in darkness, and Israel is enlightened by the pillar of fire. The people that sat in the darkness of ignorance, now possesses the bright light of knowledge and wisdom. The old things are passed away, and lo ! all things are made new. The *letter* has given way, the *spirit* has triumphed ; shadows have faded, the reality is come. * * The laws of nature are set aside ; the world of Heaven is to be peopled ; Christ commands it—let us obey.

“ *O clap your hands, all ye nations !*³ for a Child is born unto us, and a Son is given unto us. The emblem of his *Government is upon his shoulder*, for his exaltation shall come by the cross ; and his name shall be called the *Angel of the Great Counsel*, that is, of the Counsel of his Father.⁴

“ Let the Baptist now cry out : *Prepare ye the way*

¹ Ps. xcvi. 1.

² *Ibid.* 11.

³ Ps. xlvii. 2.

⁴ Is. ix. 6.

“*of the Lord!* I, too, will proclaim the virtues and power of this day. He that is without flesh, takes flesh; the Word takes a Body; the Unseen is seen; the Untangible may be touched; the Eternal has a beginning; the Son of God is made the Son of Man—*Jesus Christ, yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever.*¹ Let the Jew take scandal, and the Greek mock, and the Heretic prate. They will believe when they shall see him ascending into heaven; and if not even then, at least when they shall see him coming down from heaven, and seated on his judgment-seat.”

It is hard to hear such thrilling eloquence as this, and remain cold. But let us now give ear to a Father of the Latin Church—the devout St. Bernard—who, in his Sixth Sermon for Christmas Eve, pours forth his heart’s joy in these fervent words:

“We have just heard the saying, which is full of grace, and worthy of all acceptance: *Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born in Bethlehem of Juda.* At these words, my soul melts with love, yea, and my spirit, that is within me, burns with impatience to tell you, as in other years, of this joy, this thrilling joy. Jesus means *Saviour*. And, what so necessary to them that are lost? what so welcome to them that are in misery? what so precious to them that are in despair? Besides, what salvation, what chance of salvation, was there in the law of sin, in that body of death, in so evil a day, and in such a place of affliction—had not a new and unlooked-for Salvation been *born*? Say not, that thou dost indeed desire salvation, but that, knowing thy delicacy and the grievousness of thy sickness, thou fearest lest the cure be violent. No, fear not: this Jesus is *Christ*, that is, he is all sweetness; he is meek and plenteous in mercy; he is *anointed* with

¹ Heb. xiii. 8.

“ the oil of gladness above his fellows, that is, above
 “ them, who though they receive not the fulness, yet
 “ receive of his fulness. Yet, lest thou shouldst think,
 “ that, because this Jesus is the Anointed with sweet-
 “ ness, he is therefore weak in power, it is added, he
 “ is *the Son of God*. * * * Let us, then, be exceeding
 “ glad, as we think over within ourselves, or say to
 “ each other, this sweet sentence: *Jesus Christ—the*
 “ *Son of God—is born in Bethlehem of Juda!*”

Glorious Day, indeed, is this of the Birth of the Saviour! It had been looked forward to by the human race, for four thousand years. The Church had prepared for it by the four weeks of her *Advent*, a Season which has ever such a charm about it. Nature, too, longs for this Day, on which the Sun begins his yearly victory over the dreary reign of wintry darkness. A Holy Doctor of the Syrian Church, St. Ephrem, has written the most admirable words on the beauty and fruitful virtue of this mysterious Day. Let us borrow some of these from him and say them with his enthusiasm.

“ Grant, O Lord! that we may now celebrate this
 “ the Day of thy Birth, which to-day’s Solemnity
 “ brings round to us. This Day is like thyself—it is
 “ the friend of mankind. It comes to us in its regu-
 “ lar course, visiting us each year. It grows old with
 “ the old; it is young and fresh with little children.
 “ We remember when we were young, how it came and
 “ passed away; and here it is again, faithful as ever
 “ in its welcome visit. It knows that nature could
 “ not do without it; here again like to thee, it comes
 “ in search of our fallen race. The whole earth
 “ thirsts after thy Birth-Day, O Jesus! It stands, as
 “ it were, between the past and the future, command-
 “ ing all ages, as Thou dost. It is one, and yet it
 “ multiplies itself, as Thou dost. And since we be-
 “ hold thy *past* Birth-Day in this *present* Feast, make
 “ the two resemble each other in this also—that as

“ thy Birth-Day brought Peace between heaven and
 “ earth, when the infinitely High God descended to
 “ this low earth ; so may this solemnity signify and
 “ give us *Peace*. * * And truly, if every day of
 “ the year be rich in thy gifts, how much more ought
 “ not this to overflow with them ?

“ The other days of the year borrow their beauty
 “ from this, and the other Feasts owe to this all their
 “ solemnity and loveliness. * * Thy Birth-Day,
 “ O Jesus ! is a treasure, out of which we all get
 “ wherewith to pay our debts. * * Blessed be the
 “ Day which has brought us back the Sun, after we
 “ had been wandering in the dark night ; which has
 “ brought us the Divine Sheaf, that enriches us with
 “ plentifulness ; which has given us the Vine-Branch,
 “ that is to yield us, in due time, the cup of our salva-
 “ tion. * * In the bosom of that Winter, which
 “ robs our trees of their fruit, the virgin Vine has
 “ given forth its divine growth. In the Season of
 “ frost, which strips our plants of their beauty, the
 “ Root of Jesse has given us its Bud. It is in De-
 “ cember, which hides the seed sown in the earth,
 “ that the Wheat of our salvation appears from the
 “ Virgin’s womb, into which he had entered in that
 “ fresh Spring-time, when the lambkins were skipping
 “ in our meadows.”¹

It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, if this Day, which, we may say, is an important one even to God himself, has been made a privileged one above those of the rest of the year. We have already seen that the old pagan world paid homage to it, and thus, in their own way, were carrying out the design of God. The Holy Doctors, and the Church herself in her Liturgy, allude continually to the material Sun being the symbol of Him, who is called *the Sun of Justice*. Then, again, there is the venerable tradition, which

¹ Third Sermon *On our Lord’s Nativity*.

tells us, that the Incarnation of the Son of God having been accomplished on a Friday, (March 25,) the Birth of Jesus, *the Light of the world*, must have taken place on the 25th of December, a Sunday. This gives a peculiar sacredness to Christmas Day when it falls on a Sunday, as it was on that day of the week that God began the Creation, and said: *Let there be Light!* and on the same, also, did our Lord rise from the tomb. St. Sophronius of Jerusalem has beautifully treated this mystery in his 1st Homily for Christmas Day.

In order to impress the nations of Europe, that is, of the favoured portion of the Church, with the importance of this ever blessed Day, God, who is the Sovereign Ruler of all things, has willed that on it should happen certain events of intense interest. We will select three of these. To begin with the first in order of time:—it was on a Christmas Day, that was founded the Kingdom of the Franks; for, it was on this glorious Solemnity, that King Clovis was baptised at Rheims by St. Remigius. The haughty Sicambrian, thus admitted into the Fold of Christ, became a meek and humble Christian, and the founder of the first Catholic monarchy, which is now the Kingdom of France.

A century later, that is in the year 596, our own dearest country was converted to the true faith by the labours of St. Augustine, of whom St. Gregory the Great, who sent him, says: "he was a Monk of my Monastery."¹ This holy Missionary had baptised King Ethelbert, and travelled through the land, preaching everywhere the name and Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Having reached York, he preached the word of Eternal Life to the people, and when he had ended, they seek baptism from his hands. Christmas Day is fixed upon for the regenera-

¹ Lib. 7, Ep. 30.

tion of the Catechumens, and the River which flows through the City, is chosen as the Baptismal Font. Ten thousand men, not counting women and children, go down into this stream, whose waters were to cleanse their souls. The severity of the season is unheeded by these fervent disciples of the Babe of Bethlehem, who, but a few days before, knew not so much as his Name. From the frozen waters, there comes, full of joy and innocence, the long line of Neophytes; and the Birth-Day of Jesus counts, that year, one nation more as belonging to his Kingdom.

Three hundred years after this, God gives us another glorious event in honour of the Birth-Day of his Son. It was on this divine Anniversary, in the year 800, and at Rome, in the Basilica of St. Peter, that was created the *Holy Roman Empire*, to which God assigned the grand mission of propagating the Kingdom of Christ among the barbarian nations of the North, and of upholding, under the direction of the Sovereign Pontiffs, the confederation and unity of Europe. St. Leo III. crowned Charlemagne Emperor. Here, then, was a new Cæsar, a new Augustus, on the earth; not, indeed, a successor of those ancient Lords of Pagan Rome, but one who was invested with the title and power by the Vicar of Him, who is called, in the Sacred Scriptures, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*.

Thus has God glorified, in the eyes of men, the Divine Babe who is this day born: thus has he prepared, at various times, worthy anniversaries of that Birth which gave *glory to God and Peace to men*. Time will reveal, in what other ways the Most High still wishes to magnify, upon this Twenty-Fifth of December, Himself and his Christ.

Impressed with the extreme importance of this Feast, and justly looking upon it as the beginning of the Era of the world's regeneration, the Nations of

the West, for a long time, began their year with Christmas Day, as we find in the ancient Calendars, in the Martyrologies of Ussard and Ado, and in numberless Bulls, Charters, and Diplomas. It is evident, from a Council held at Cologne, in 1310, that this manner of computing the year was still observed at that time. In several countries of Europe, our own among the rest, the custom has been kept up of wishing *a Happy Christmas*, which was the ancient salutation when this Feast was the beginning of a new year. Hence, too, in these countries, the custom of making presents, of writing letters of good wishes, and of other friendly acts. How many of our practices of every-day life have originated from Faith, and yet are looked upon as mere consequences of natural good-feeling, or even compliments which society requires us to pay to each other !

To encourage her children in their Christmas joy, the Church has dispensed with the law of abstinence, if this Feast fall on a Friday. This dispensation was granted by Pope Honorius III., who ascended the Papal Throne in 1216. It is true, that we find it mentioned by Pope St. Nicholas I., in the 9th century ; but the dispensation was not universal ; for the Pontiff is replying to the consultations of the Bulgarians, to whom he concedes this indulgence, in order to encourage them to celebrate these Feasts with solemnity and joy : Christmas Day, St. Stephen, St. John the Evangelist, the Epiphany, the Assumption of our Lady, St. John the Baptist, and Saints Peter and Paul. When the dispensation for Christmas Day was extended to the whole Church, these other Feasts were not mentioned.

In the Middle Ages, the Civil Law, also, contributed to the people's love of Christmas, by enacting, that no Creditor could demand any payment from his Debtors during the entire week of Christmas, which was called, on that account, the *week of remis-*

sion—a name which it had in common with the weeks of Easter and Pentecost.

But, let us interrupt these interesting details regarding the grand Solemnity, whose near approach makes our hearts throb with joy. Let us repair to the House of our Heavenly Father, for the Hour of Vespers is near; and on our way, let our thoughts be at Bethlehem, where Joseph and Mary are already arrived. The sun is rapidly setting; and our Divine Sun of Justice is still hid beneath the Cloud, the Womb of the purest of Virgins. Night is coming on; Joseph and Mary are going through the narrow streets of the City of David, seeking a shelter. Let our hearts be attentive, and united, in love, with the two holy Pilgrims. Every heart and voice should now be giving forth to our God the tribute of praise and grateful love. Oh! happy we, that have a tribute of Song and Psalmody ready for our use, worthy of the Day and of its ineffable Mystery—it is our Mother that offers us her Liturgy. Let us prepare to join her.

FIRST VESPERS.

After the usual invocation of the divine assistance, the Church intones, in a most solemn chant, the five following Antiphons, which precede as many Psalms.

1. ANT. Rex pacificus
magnificatus est, cujus vul-
tum desiderat universa terra.

1. ANT. The King of Peace,
whom the whole earth desi-
reth to see, hath shown his
greatness.

Psalm: Dixit Dominus, page 99.

2. ANT. The King of Peace
is magnified above all the
Kings of the earth.

2. ANT. Magnificatus est
Rex pacificus super omnes
reges universæ terræ.

Psalm : Confitebor tibi, page 100.

3. ANT. The days were com-
pleted for Mary, that she
should bring forth her first-
born Son.

3. ANT. Impleti sunt dies
Mariæ, ut pareret Filium
suum primogenitum.

Psalm : Beatus vir, page 101.

4. ANT. Know ye, that the
Kingdom of God is at hand ;
amen I say unto you, it shall
not tarry.

4. ANT. Scitote quia pro-
pe est regnum Dei : amen
dico vobis quia non tarda-
bit.

Psalm : Laudate pueri, page 102.

5. ANT. Raise up your heads :
lo ! your redemption is at
hand.

5. ANT. Levate capita ves-
tra ; ecce appropinquat re-
demptio vestra.

PSALM 116.

O ! praise the Lord, all ye
nations : praise him, all ye
people.

For his mercy is confirmed
upon us, and the truth of the
Lord remaineth for ever.

Laudate Dominum omnes
gentes : * laudate eum, om-
nes populi.

Quoniam confirmata est
super nos misericordia ejus :
* et veritas Domini manet
in æternum.

After having extolled, in these divine canticles, the
eternal generation, the *fidelity*, the *mercy*, the *great-
ness*, and the *truth*, of her divine Spouse, who is
coming, and in a few short hours will show himself

to her—the Church suspends her praise for a moment, and listens, in the *Capitulum*, to the consoling words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, concerning the coming of God our Saviour.

CAPITULUM.

(Tit. iii. 4.)

<p>Apparuit benignitas et humanitas Salvatoris nostri Dei, non ex operibus justitiæ quæ fecimus nos, sed secundum misericordiam suam salvos nos fecit.</p>	<p>The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour hath ap- peared ; not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to his mercy, hath he saved us.</p>
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Encouraged afresh by these beautiful words, the Church resumes her praises, not borrowing, this time, the psalmody of the Royal Prophet, but singing a Hymn to Jesus, her Spouse, on the glory and beauty of his Birth-Day, which makes all Nature glad, and brings the sweetest joy of heart to such as know how to love the Divine Babe. It was St. Ambrose—the Bee of Milan, as he has been called—who composed this Hymn, which is sung, to-day, in almost every part of the world.

HYMN.*

<p>Jesu, redemptor omnium, Quem, lucis ante originem, Parem paternæ gloriæ Pater supremus edidit ;</p>	<p>O Jesu ! Redeemer of man- kind ! born before the light was made, and born of the Eternal Father, equal to him in infinite glory ;</p>
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* In the Monastic Breviary, it is as follows :

<p>R. <i>Breve.</i> Hodie sciētis, * quia veniet Dominus. Hodie. V. Et mane videbitis gloriam ejus. * Quia. Gloria. Hodie.</p>	<p>Verbum. V. Et habitavit in nobis. * Alleluia. Gloria. Ver- bum.</p>
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In 2nd Vespers.

R. *Breve.* Verbum caro fac-
tum est, * Alleluia, Alleluia.

Christe, Redemptor omnium,
Ex Patre Patris Unice,
Solus ante principium
Natus ineffabiliter.

O thou the Light and brightness of the Father ! O thou the everlasting hope of all men ! hear the prayers offered thee by thy servants, throughout the world.

Be mindful, O Creator of all things ! that heretofore thou didst assume a Body like unto ours, and wast born from the sacred womb of a Virgin.

This present day, which the year has brought round to us, tells us of this mystery—that thou, the one Saviour of the world, didst come to us from the Father's Bosom.

The stars, and earth, and sea, and all that is under heaven greet this the Author of their new salvation, with a new canticle.

And we, who have been redeemed by the stream of thy precious Blood, we, too, pay thee the tribute of this Hymn, in honour of thy Birth-Day.

Glory be to thee, O Jesus ! who wast born of the Virgin ! and to the Father, and to the Spirit of love, for everlasting ages. Amen.

Tu lumen et splendor Patris,
 tris,
 Tu spes perennis omnium,
 Intende quas fundunt preces
 Tui per orbem servuli.

Memento, rerum conditor,
 Nostri quod olim corporis,
 Sacrata ab alvo Virginis
 Nascendo, formam sumpseris.

Testatur hoc præsens dies,
 Currens per anni circulum,
 Quod solus e sinu Patris
 Mundi salus adveneris.

Hunc astra, tellus, æquora,
 Hunc omne quod cælo subest,
 Salutis auctorem novæ
 Novo salutat cantico.

Et nos, beata quos sacri
 Rigavit unda sanguinis,
 Natalis ob diem tui,
 Hymni tributum solvimus.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria,
 Qui natus es de Virgine,
 Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,
 In sempiterna sæcula.
 Amen.

Tu lumen, tu splendor Patris,
 Tu spes perennis omnium,
 Intende quas fundunt preces
 Tui per orbem famuli.

Memento salutis Auctor
 Quod nostri quondam corporis
 Ex illibata Virgine
 Nascendo formam sumpseris.

Sic præsens testatur dies,
 Currens per anni circulum,
 Quod solus a sede Patris
 Mundi salus adveneris.

Hunc cælum, terra, hunc
 mare,
 Hunc omne quod in eis est,
 Auctorem adventus tui
 Laudans exultat cantico.

Nos quoque qui sancto tuo
 Redempti Sanguine sumus,
 Ob diem Natalis tui
 Hymnum novum concinimus.

Gloria tibi Domine,
 Qui natus es de Virgine
 Cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu,
 In sempiterna sæcula.
 Amen.

Ÿ. Crastina die delebitur
iniquitas terræ ;
R. Et regnabit super nos
Salvator mundi.

Ÿ. To-morrow, the iniquity
of the earth shall be cancelled ;
R. And over us shall reign
the Saviour of the world.

And now, Mary's own words are to resound in the holy place ! The sweet Canticle, which she sang at her Visitation to Elizabeth, when, holding within herself the divine and secret Treasure, she celebrated the *great things* of God's power in her—this Canticle, without which the Church never lets the sun go down, is now going to be sung. O Mary ! the hour is fast approaching, which will manifest to both heaven and earth, that divine Maternity of thine, which will make *all generations call thee Blessed*. Suffer us to unite our *souls* with thine in *magnifying the Lord*, and to *rejoice in our spirit*, as thou didst in thine, *in God our Saviour*, who is thy Son !

ANTIPHON OF THE MAGNIFICAT.

Cum ortus fuerit sol de
cœlo, videbitis Regem re-
gum procedentem a Patre,
tanquam sponsum de tha-
lamo suo.

When the sun shall have
risen in the heavens, ye shall
see the King of Kings coming
from the Father, as a Bride-
groom from his bride-chamber.

The Canticle, Magnificat, page 107.

Finally, the Church expresses all her desires in the following Prayer, which is to ascend to the Throne of God, not only at every Hour of Christmas Day, but several times each day during the Octave.

COLLECT.

Concede, quæsumus, om-
nipotens Deus : ut nos Uni-
geniti tui nova per carnem
nativitas liberet, quos sub
peccati jugo vetusta servi-
tus tenet. Per eundem Do-
minum nostrum Jesum

Grant, we beseech thee, O
Almighty God, that we who
groan under the old captivity
of sin, may be freed therefrom
by the new Birth of thine
Only Begotten Son. Through
the same Jesus Christ thy

Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

During our Vespers, the last rays of day have disappeared, and darkness has covered the earth. The Sacred Ministers, vested in their richest copes, have left the Sanctuary. In a few moments they will re-enter the Church, and repair to the Tribunal of Penance, there to administer to penitent sinners the reconciliation they ask of God through the merciful Birth of his Only Begotten Son. All is solemn silence in the Church, which, but a few moments before, echoed with the glad chants of our praise. Let us adore the Majesty of our God, and once more present our prayer to the King of Ages, that he send down the Dew, for which our earth is thirsting; and with this prayer of our hope, let us, for a last time, mingle a thought of that salutary fear of the Last Judgment, which the Church has nurtured within our souls during the holy Season of Advent.

Let us embody these sentiments in a Prayer, taken from the Gothic, or Mozarabic, Liturgy: it is a beautiful one, and most appropriate:

PRAYER FROM THE MOZARABIC BREVIARY.

(For the Nativity of our Lord, in the Evening Office, Capitula.)

Drop down Dew, ye heavens, from above—by prophesying Jesus to our earth; and let the clouds rain the Just One—let all the saintly prophets herald his coming. Let the earth be opened, that, as the Angel is speaking unto her, the Virgin may conceive and bring forth the Saviour. We pray and we beseech thee, O Almighty

Rorate cœli desuper, utique prophetando Christum, et nubes pluant justum; dum Sancti omnes ejus præconantur adventum. Aperiatur terra, ut, Angelo scilicet alloquente, Virgo concipiat, et pariat Salvatorem. Hic igitur ros, qui abs te est, omnipotens Pater, rogamus, et petimus, ut fiat

sanitas infirmorum ; et hæc pluvia matutini temporis, præbe, nostri temporis infundat arentem, quæ infusa tanta gratia præteritum facinus abluat, et æternum credentibus justitiæ lumen infundat ; nec non ejusdem Filii tui Domini nostri indemnes præsentiam contuentes, atque cum cœlicolis cœtui ejus in jubilo occurrentes, hoc canticum lætitiæ præcinamus orantes : Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini, Deus Dominus, et illuxit nobis ; cujus nos adventus redemit, et Nativitas illustravit : Qui veniens requisivit perditos, illuminavit in tenebris constitutos. Tribue ergo omnipotens Pater, ut diem Nativitatis ejus ita devotione piissima celebremus, ut judicii diem mitissimum sentiamus : ut cujus benignitatem in redemptione cognovimus, ejus pietatem in judicio mansuetam sentiamus.

Father, let this *Dew*, which comes down from thee, give health to the sick ; and this *Rain* of morn, let it sink into the parched soil of our times, and, by the infusion of its abundant grace, cleanse away past sins, and shed, over them that believe, the eternal light of justice. Moreover, may we, looking with confidence at the presence of our Lord Jesus thy Son, and joyfully going to meet him in company with the heavenly citizens, sing to him this canticle of joy and prayer : *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord : The Lord is God, and he hath shone upon us* : his Coming hath redeemed us, and his Nativity hath enlightened us : He that came looking for the lost ones, hath given light to them that sat in darkness. Grant unto us, therefore, O Almighty Father, so most devoutly to celebrate the Day of his Birth, as that the Day of his Judgment may be to us a day of exceeding mercy : that thus, having felt how great is his goodness in redeeming, we may experience how gentle is his mercy in judging us.

And now, we will leave the House of God, and attend to the duties of our state of life at home, until the hour of Matins summons us to return and celebrate the Midnight Birth of our Saviour. In order to prepare ourselves for that most imposing Service, we shall do well to resume the reflections upon the Liturgy of our Feast, which we interrupted in order to assist at Vespers. How few would keep from the Service of

Christmas Night, and how still fewer would complain that they never seem to derive that benefit from it, which they are told is so great—if they would but take the pains to ask themselves, why it is, that the Church attaches such importance to her children's joining her in the celebration of this gay Winter Mid-Night!—To assist the devotion of the Faithful, we offer them these simple instructions, for

THE HOUR BEFORE THE
MIDNIGHT SERVICE.

We will begin by telling them, that in the early ages of the Church, every great Feast was prepared for by long *Vigils*; during which the people deprived themselves of their usual rest, and spent the hours in the Church, fervently joining in the Psalms and Lessons, which made up the Office, which we now call *Matins*. The Night was divided into three parts, called *Nocturns*. At dawn of Day, they resumed their chants, in an Office, which was even more solemn than the *Matins*: it was one of Praise, and, from this its characteristic, was called by the name of *Lauds*. This Service, which occupied a very considerable portion of the night, is still kept up, though at a time less trying to nature; *Matins* and *Lauds* are, every day, publicly recited in Cathedral and Monastic Churches, and privately by every one in Holy Orders. They are by far the longest portion of the Divine Office. The want of the old spirit of devoted appreciation of the Liturgy, has made the Laity indifferent to being present at the celebration of *Matins*, and this even in Countries where Protestantism has not rendered their presence almost an impossibility. Thus, there are very few places where the people assist at *Matins*, excepting four times in the year; namely, on the three last days of Holy Week, and on Christmas Night. It is only on the last named, that the Office is said at the

same hour as anciently ; for, with regard to *Tenebræ*, they are recited on the afternoons respectively preceding each of the three Days.

The Office of Christmas Night has always been said or sung with extraordinary solemnity. Firstly, it was so just, that the moments immediately preceding the Hour, when the Holy Mother gave birth to her Jesus, should be spent in the most fervent prayers and watchings ! But, secondly, the Church is not satisfied to-night with saying her Matins : she does so every night, and the faithful may come and assist at them as often as they wish :—she follows them by the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, that so she may the better solemnise the Divine Birth ; and she begins her Mass at Mid-night, for it was at that silent hour that the Virgin-Mother gave us the Blessed Fruit of her Womb. We cannot be surprised that the Faithful, in many parts of Christendom, used to spend the whole Night in the Church.

In Rome, for many centuries—at least, from the 7th to the 11th,—two Matins were sung. The first in the Basilica of St. Mary Major. They commenced immediately after sun-set. There was no Invitatory. As soon as they were ended, the Pope celebrated the first or midnight Mass. No sooner was it finished, than the people accompanied him to the Church of St. Anastasia, and there he sang the second Mass, or, as it was called, *of the Aurora*. Again the Pontiff and people formed a procession—this time it was to St. Peter's—and having entered the Basilica, the second Matins were begun. They had an Invitatory, and were followed by Lauds. The other Hours having been sung, the Pope said the third and last Mass, at the hour of Tierce, which is our 9 o'clock. We are indebted for these details to Amalarius, and to the ancient Liturgist of the 13th century, published under the name of Alcuin. We also find them clearly indicated by the text of the

old Antiphonaries of the Roman Church, which were published by the Blessed Joseph-Maria Tommasi, and by Gallicioli.

How lively was the faith of those olden times ! To people, who lived unceasingly amidst the Mysteries of Religion, Prayer was a tie which knit them closely together, and made them pass hours in the Church without weariness. They understood the value of the Prayers of the Church ; and the Ceremonies of the Liturgy, (which complete the tribute of man's inward worship of his Creator,) were not, as now, unfortunately, they so often are, a dumb show, or, at best, an unmeaning poetry introduced for effect. What, in our days, are found only in individuals, were then in the mass of the people—faith, and a keen sense of the supernatural.

Thanks be to God ! this strong practical faith is not dead among us, and is each year spreading in the land. How often have not we ourselves been charmed at seeing the traditions of the old Catholic customs still kept up in some families, especially in those favoured parts of the country, where heresy has not been able to corrupt the simplicity of the people. We have seen, and it is one of the most pleasing recollections of our childhood, one of these families seated together, after the frugal evening collation, round a blazing fire-side, waiting for the hour to come, when the whole house was to go to the Midnight Mass. A plain, but savoury, supper, which was to be eaten on their return home, and so add to the joy of holy Christmas-Night, was prepared before-hand. A huge piece of wood, called the *Yule-Log*, was burning cheerfully on the hearth ; it would last till the Mass was over, and warm the old men and the little children, as they came in chilled by the sharp frost.

Meanwhile, till it was time for Mass, their conversation was upon the Mystery of this much-loved Night. They compassionated the Blessed Mother

and the sweet Babe, exposed to the inclemency of wintry weather, and with no other shelter than that of a wretched stable. Then, too, there were the *Christmas Carols*, in the practice of which they had spent many a pleasant evening of Advent. The whole soul was evidently in these dear old melodies, and many a tear would fall as the Song went on to tell how the Angel Gabriel visited Mary, and declared to her that she was to be Mother of the Most High God—how Mary and Joseph were worn with fatigue, going from street to street in Bethlehem, trying to find a lodging, and no one would take them in—how they were obliged to shelter in a stable, and how the Divine Child was born in it—how the loveliness of the Babe in his little crib was above all the beauty of the Angels—how the Shepherds went to see him, and took their humble gifts, and played their rude music, and adored him in the faith of their simple hearts.—And thus they spent the happy Eve, passing from conversation to song, and from one song to another, and all was on Mary or Jesus, Joseph or Bethlehem. Cares of life were forgotten, troubles were gone, melancholy was a sin—but, it was time to leave; the Village clock had just gone eleven; and of the happy group, there was a little one, who had been too young the other years, and this was his first Midnight-Mass! There was no brighter face in the procession than his. Would he ever forget—that beautiful Night!

In many of our readers, these reminiscences will excite a feeling of regret, that the miseries of the world around us make such catholic customs as these, unrealities: at all events, they will show, how the holiest feelings of religion may blend with the best joys of family and home. The lesson is worth learning, though the examples that teach it are too catholic for these rough times. Let us, therefore, leave them, and turn again to objects, which are realities, made

holy by To-Night's Mystery—they will assist us to enter still further into the spirit of the Church.

There are three places on this earth of ours, which we should visit to-night. For two of them, it can only be in spirit. The first is Bethlehem, and the Cave of the Nativity, which is Bethlehem's glory. Let us approach it with respectful awe, and contemplate the humble dwelling, which the Son of the Eternal God chose for his first home. It is a Stable in the hollow of a rock, just outside the city walls. It is about forty-feet long, by twelve in width. The ox, and the ass, as spoken of by the Prophet, are there, standing near the Manger, mute witnesses of the Divine Mystery, to which man refused to lend his own dwelling.

Joseph and Mary enter into the Stable-Cave. It is night, and all nature is buried in silence; but these two Hearts are sending up their praise and adoration to God, who thus deigns to atone for man's pride. The Virgin-Mother prepares the Clothes, which are to swathe the limbs of the Divine Infant, and longs, though with a most tranquil patience, for the blissful moment, when she shall have the first sight of the Blessed Fruit of her womb, kiss him, caress him, and feed him—the Eternal God—at her Breast.

Our Jesus, on His part, now that he is about to leave the sanctuary of his Mother's womb, and make his visible entrance into this world of sin, adores his Heavenly Father, and, (according to the revelation of the Psalmist, which is commented by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews,) thus speaks: *Sacrifice and oblation thou willedst not; but a Body thou hast fitted unto me. Holocausts for sin did not please thee. Then, said I, behold I come. In the head of the Book, it is written of me, that I should do thy will, O God!*¹

All this was happening in the Stable at Bethlehem,

¹ Heb. x. 5, 6, 7.

about this very hour of the Night. The Angels of God were singing their anthems of praise to this his incomprehensible mercy towards his rebel creatures. They looked down with admiration upon the Mother of their God, *the Mystical Rose*, whose hidden Beauty was soon to bloom and fill the world with its fragrance.

O happy cave of Bethlehem! scene of these stupendous Mysteries! who is there that can forget it to-night? Who is there that does not love it above the richest palaces of Kings?—From the very commencement of Christianity, it was the object of men's deepest veneration. When, later on, God sent the great St. Helen to resuscitate in his Church the knowledge and love of *the Holy Places* of Palestine, one of the works of the holy Empress was to build a magnificent Basilica over the spot, where stands this trophy of God's love for his creatures.

Let us go in spirit to this venerable Basilica; we shall find there groups of infidels and schismatics, but we shall also find the Religious, who have the care of it, preparing to sing the same Matins, and in the same Latin tongue, which we are to have. These Religious are the Children of St. Francis, heroic followers of the poverty of their Divine Master, the Infant of Bethlehem. Because they are poor and humble, therefore have they had, for upwards of four hundred years, the honour of being the sole guardians of these *Holy Places*, which the Crusaders grew tired of defending. Let us pray in union with them, to-night; and go with them, and kiss that sacred spot of the Cave, where is written in letters of gold: **HERE WAS JESUS CHRIST BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY. (HIC DE VIRGINE MARIA JESUS CHRISTUS NATUS EST.)**

In vain, however, should we seek at Bethlehem for the holy Crib, in which the Infant Jesus lay. The curse of God has struck that unhappy country, and deprived it of this precious relic, which now, for

upwards of twelve hundred years, has been venerated in the centre of Catholicity, Rome, the favoured Spouse of Christ.

Rome, then, is the second place we must visit on this blessed Night. And in the Holy City itself, there is one special Sanctuary, which claims all our veneration and love. It is the Basilica of the Crib, the splendid Church of Saint-Mary-Major. Of all the Churches, which the people of Rome have erected in honour of the Mother of God, this is the grandest. It stands on the Esquiline, rich in its marble and gold, but richer still in its possessing, together with the Portrait of our Lady painted by St. Luke, the humble yet glorious Crib of Jesus, of which the inscrutable designs of God have deprived Bethlehem. An immense concourse of people is to-night assembled in the Basilica, awaiting the happy moment, when this monument of the love and the humiliation of a God will be brought in, carried on the shoulders of the Priests, as an Ark of the New Covenant, whose welcome sight gives the sinner confidence, and makes the just man thrill with joy. Thus has God willed, that Rome, which was to be the new *Jerusalem*, should be also the new *Bethlehem*; and that the children of the Church should find, in this the unchangeable centre of their Faith, the varied and exhaustless nourishment of their Love.

But the Basilica of the Crib is not the only sanctuary in Rome which has an attraction for us to-night. An imposing ceremony, which embodies a profound mystery, is taking place, at this very hour, in the palace of the Vatican, near the Tomb of the Prince of the Apostles.

The Divine Infant, who is to be born amongst us, is *the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace, whose government is upon his shoulders*,¹ as we shall sing to-

¹ Is. ix. 6.

morrow, with the Church. We have already seen, how the God of Hosts has honoured this power of the Emmanuel, by leading powerful Nations to acknowledge Him, who lay in the Crib of Bethlehem, as the Lord to whom they owed their adoring fealty. The same recognition of that Babe as the *Mighty God* is made by the ceremony we allude to. The Sovereign Pontiff, the Vicar of our Emmanuel, blesses, in his name, a Sword and Helmet, which are to be sent to some Catholic warrior, who has deserved well of the Christian world. In a letter addressed to Queen Mary of England and to Philip, her husband, Cardinal Pole gives an explanation of this solemn rite. The sword is sent to some Prince, whom the Vicar of Christ wishes to honour in the name of Jesus, who is *King*: for, the Angel said to Mary: *The Lord will give unto him the Throne of David, his father.*¹ It is from Him alone that comes the *power of the sword*;² for, God said to Cyrus: *I have girded thee (with the sword);*³ and the Psalmist thus speaks to the Christ of God: *Gird thy Sword upon thy thigh, O thou most Mighty!*⁴ And because the Sword should not be drawn, save in the cause of justice, it is for that reason that a Sword is blessed on this Night, in the midst of which rises, born unto us, the divine Sun of Justice. On the Helmet, which is both the ornament and protection of the head, there is worked, in pearls, the Dove, which is the emblem of the Holy Ghost; and this, to teach him who wears it, that it is not from passion or ambition that he must use his sword, but solely under the guidance of the divine Spirit, and from a motive of spreading the Kingdom of Christ.

How beautiful is this union of energy and meekness under the one symbol and ceremony! This power of blending and harmonising the varied beauty

¹ St. Luke, i. 32. ² Rom. xiii. 3, 4. ³ Is. xlv. 1, 5. ⁴ Ps. xlv. 4.

of distinct classes of truth, is not to be found save in that Christian Rome, which is our Mother, and where God has established the centre of Light and Love. The ceremony, we have been describing, is still observed. What a grand list it would be, had we the names of all those glorious Christian Warriors, who were thus created Knights of the Church, at this solemn hour, when we celebrate the Birth of Him, who came to vanquish our enemy!—We are going to adore this Babe in his Crib; let us think of our Mother's teaching, and pay homage to him as our *Prince* and *King*, and beseech him to humble the enemies of his Church, and vanquish those who are leagued against both our perfection and our salvation.

And now, to the third of the sanctuaries, wherein is to be effected, this Night, the mystery of the Birth of Jesus. This third Sanctuary is near us; it is in us;—it is our own heart. Our heart is the Bethlehem that Jesus desires to visit, and in which he would be born, there to live and grow *unto a perfect man*, as St. Paul expresses it.¹ Why, after all, was he born in the stable of the city of David, but that he might make sure of our heart, which he loved with an everlasting love, and so ardently, that he came down from heaven to dwell in it? Mary's virginal womb held him but for nine months; he wishes us to keep him for ever in our dwelling!

O heart of man, thou living Bethlehem, hold thyself in readiness, and keep a glad feast! Already, thou hast prepared thyself for this union with thy Jesus by the confession of thy misdeeds, by the contrition of thy sins, and by the satisfaction thou hast made for them. Now, therefore, be all attention—he is coming in the Mid-Night. Let him find everything ready, ready as were the Stable, the Crib, and

¹ Eph. iv. 13.

the Swaddling-clothes. True, thou hast nothing to offer him like what Mary and Joseph had—she, a Mother's caresses; and he, the most solicitous and tender care;—but thou hast an adoration and a love like those of the poor Shepherds, and these thou must offer. Like the Bethlehem yonder in the far east, thou art living in the midst of heresy, of infidelity, and of men who ignore the divine mystery of divine love:—secret then, but hearty, must be thy prayers, like those which are ascending this night to heaven from the few faithful ones, who are assembled in the Holy Cave with the Sons of St. Francis; for, in that unfortunate Palestine, which has been a slave to the most degrading errors for this last thousand years, there are still a few who know and love God. On this glad Mid-Night, let thy soul become like that splendid Basilica of Rome, which possesses the two treasures, the Holy Crib and the venerable Portrait of the Virgin-Mother. Let thy affections and thoughts be pure as the white marble of its pillars; thy charity, bright as the gold which glitters on its ceiling; thy deeds, shining as the countless tapers which light up its beauty, and turn this night into the glare of a summer noon. Thou must learn, too, O soldier of Christ! to use a Christian's weapons; thou must fight thy way to the Crib of thy Jesus; thou must fight for thy position there, and maintain it by the unbroken loyalty of thy love; thou must fight for the happy consummation of thy victory,—union eternal with him. Treasure up these holy sentiments, and let them console and sanctify thee, during these moments which precede the coming of our Emmanuel into thee. O living Bethlehem! there is a word which heaven gave thee for these moments; take it up, and let it be thy ceaseless prayer;—*Come, Lord Jesus! come.*¹

¹ Apoc. xxii. 20.

It is time for us to depart, and go into the House of God. The Bells are not being rung for us, it is true—still, their melody wakens up Bethlehem in our hearts. How strange this joyous pealing at this midnight hour! But, is not everything strange in this mysterious night of the Birth of God? He is going to show himself to us—but it is to be in a Crib, and as a little Child. When he came on Sinai, it was surrounded with thick clouds of smoke, and amidst thunder and lightning : now, there is nothing but humility, stillness, and loveliness beyond measure. The Moon, emblem of the brightness reflected from Jesus upon Mary, is shedding its soft light on our path. The stars are twinkling in the firmament, and make us think of the Star, which is so soon to rise and guide the Magi to our Saviour's Crib.

And, whilst thus thinking over all these strange mysteries, we have reached the porch of the Church. The Sanctuary sends its light down even to the threshold of the holy place. Beautiful sight, indeed!—What wonder, that King Clovis, as he entered the Church of Rheims, on his first Christmas Night, stood dazzled with the blaze of light, and, trembling with emotion, said to St. Remigius, who had just baptised him : “Father!—is this the Kingdom thou didst promise me?”—“No, my Son,” replied the Bishop—“it is but the way that will lead thee to it.”

M A T I N S.

AFTER the *Pater, Ave, and Credo*, have been said secretly, the Church commences the Office by her usual prayer :

℣. Domine, labia mea aperies.

℞. Et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.

℣. Deus, in adiutorium meum intende.

℞. Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.

℣. Gloria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto ;

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen. Alleluia.

℣. O Lord ! thou wilt open my lips.

℞. And my mouth shall declare thy praise.

℣. Incline unto mine aid, O God.

℞. O Lord, make haste to help me.

℣. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost ;

℞. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

Then comes, with its glad burden—*Christ is born unto us*—the Invitatory, whereby the Church invites her children, every morning, to come and adore the Lord. To-night, the invitation is made by the Angels, who call us to the Crib of our Redeemer: they speak to us in the words of the Church and the Royal Prophet.

INVITATORY.

Christus natus est nobis,*
venite, adoremus.

Christ is born unto us,*
come let us adore.

PSALM 94.

Venite, exsultemus Domino,
no, jubilemus Deo Salutari

Come, let us praise the Lord
with joy, let us joyfully sing

to God our Saviour; let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to him with psalms.

Christ is born unto us, * come, let us adore.

For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods; for in his hand are all the ends of the earth, and the heights of the mountains are his.

Come, let us adore.

For the sea is his, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land: come, let us adore and fall down, and weep before the Lord that made us; for he is the Lord our God; and we are the people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Christ is born unto us, * come, let us adore.

To-day, if ye shall hear his voice, *from the Crib*, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation according to the day of temptation in the wilderness: where your fathers tempted me, *me the Lord, the Father of the Emmanuel*; they proved me, and saw my works.

Come, let us adore.

Forty years was I nigh unto this generation, and I said: These always err in heart: and these men have not known my ways: so, I swore in my wrath, that they shall not enter into my rest.

Christ is born unto us, * come, let us adore.

nostro; præoccupemus faciem ejus in confessione, et in psalmis jubilemus ei.

Christus natus est nobis, * venite, adoremus.

Quoniam Deus magnus Dominus, et Rex magnus super omnes deos: quoniam non repellet Dominus plebem suam, quia in manu ejus sunt omnes fines terræ, et altitudines montium ipse conspicit.

Venite, adoremus.

Quoniam ipsius est mare, et ipse fecit illud, et aridam fundaverunt manus ejus: Venite, adoremus, et proci-damus ante Deum: ploremus coram Domino qui fecit nos; quia ipse est Dominus Deus noster: nos autem populus ejus, et oves pascuæ ejus.

Christus natus est nobis, * venite, adoremus.

Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra, sicut in exacerbatione secundum diem tentationis in deserto: ubi tentaverunt me patres vestri, probaverunt, et viderunt opera mea.

Venite, adoremus.

Quadriginta annis proximus fui generationi huic, et dixi: Semper hi errant corde: ipsi vero non cognoverunt vias meas, quibus juravi in ira mea, si introibunt in requiem meam.

Christus natus est nobis, * venite, adoremus.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Venite, adoremus.

Christus natus est nobis,
* venite, adoremus.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Come, let us adore.

Christ is born unto us, *
come, let us adore.

After the Invitatory, the Church intones the sweet Hymn on the Birth of Jesus, composed by St. Ambrose, and which was sung in our First Vespers. Let us again sing it to our *Redeemer*, and feed our spirit on its delicious unction.

HYMN.

Jesu, Redemptor omnium.

O Jesus! Redeemer of mankind, &c.

See above, page 130.

Thus far, are the preludes to our solemn Night Office, which now commences. It is divided into three vigils, or *Nocturns*, each of which is composed of three Psalms, three *Lessons*, and three Responsories. The Responsories are a sort of interlude after each Lesson: but the third Lesson of the Third Nocturn is followed by the *Te Deum*, which takes the place of a Responsory. The Interpreters of the Liturgy thus explain the Three Nocturns of to-night's Matins. The first signifies the time, which preceded the Written Law, given by God to Moses. In the Middle-Ages, it was the custom to veil the Altar in black, during this Nocturn, to express the sentence of condemnation pronounced by God against our first Parents, and the long ages which would then have to pass before the Redeemer came. The second Nocturn signifies the time under the Written Law; and during this Nocturn, the Altar was covered with

a white veil, to denote, that, under the Law, men received a greater degree of light, by the figures and prophecies of the Old Testament. And lastly, the third Nocturn signifies the time under the Law of Grace. During this Nocturn, the Altar was covered with a red veil, to symbolise the love of God for his Spouse the Church, whereby the Son of God and our souls are mystically united.

THE FIRST NOCTURN.

The *first* Psalm celebrates the Kingly dignity of the Babe that is to be born. All nations are to be given to him as his inheritance, and the day will come, when he will judge the Kings who plot his death in Bethlehem. He is the Son of the Eternal Father, begotten in the day of eternity, and now made manifest on this night, to the eyes of men.

ANT. The Lord hath said to me : Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

ANT. Dominus dixit ad me : Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te.

PSALM 2.

Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things ?

The Kings of the earth stood up, and the Princes met together, against the Lord, and against his Christ.

They said : Let us break their bonds asunder ; and let us cast away their yoke from us.

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them : and the Lord shall deride them.

Then shall he speak to them in his anger, and trouble them in his rage.

Quare fremuerunt gentes : * et populi meditati sunt inania ?

Adstiterunt reges terræ, et principes convenerunt in unum : * adversus Dominum, et adversus Christum ejus.

Dirumpamus vincula eorum : * et projiciamus a nobis jugum ipsorum.

Qui habitat in cœlis, iridebit eos : * et Dominus subsannabit eos.

Tunc loquetur ad eos in ira sua : * et in furore suo conturbabit eos.

Ego autem constitutus sum Rex ab eo super Sion montem sanctum ejus : * prædicans præceptum ejus.

Dominus dixit ad me : * Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te.

Postula a me, et dabo tibi gentes hæreditatem tuam : * et possessionem tuam terminos terræ.

Reges eos in virga ferrea : * et tamquam vas figuli confringes eos.

Et nunc, reges, intelligite : * erudimini qui iudicatis terram.

Servite Domino in timore : * et exsultate ei cum tremore.

Apprehendite disciplinam, nequando irascatur Dominus : * et pereatis de via justa.

Cum exarserit in brevi ira ejus : * beati omnes qui confidunt in eo.

ANT. Dominus dixit ad me : Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te.

The *second* Psalm praises the loveliness of the *heavens* during the *night*, and the magnificent testimony which the countless stars render to the greatness of their Creator. It then passes on to speak of the *Sun*, whose brilliant rising is like the *Bridegroom* coming forth from the nuptial-chamber. The Sun is our Emmanuel ; his *Tabernacle*, the Womb of Mary. It is to-day that he begins his course ; starting from the deepest stage of humiliation, he will mount to the meridian of glory. Let us adore him in his humble commencement, and humble ourselves together with

But I, *the Son of Mary*, am appointed King by him over Sion, his holy mountain, preaching his commandment.

The Lord hath said to me : Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

And now, O ye Kings, understand : receive instruction, you that judge the earth.

Serve ye the Lord with fear ; and rejoice unto him with trembling.

Embrace discipline, lest at any time the Lord be angry, and you perish from the just way.

When his wrath shall be kindled in a short time, blessed are all they that trust in him.

ANT. The Lord hath said to me : Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

him. He is the *Lawgiver*, and the *Law*; he is our *joy* and our *light*; he is our *helper*, and our *Redeemer*: let us love and obey him.

ANT. The Lord is as a Bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber.

ANT. Tamquam sponsus Dominus procedens de thalamo suo.

PSALM 18.

The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands.

Day to day uttereth speech, and night to night showeth knowledge.

There are no speeches nor languages, where their voices are not heard.

Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth: and their words unto the ends of the world.

He hath set his tabernacle in the sun, *the image of his Son*; and he as a Bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber,

Hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way: his going out is from the end of heaven,

And his circuit even to the end thereof: and there is no one that can hide himself from his heat.

The law of the Lord, *which Jesus is coming to declare to us*, is unspotted, converting souls: the testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to little ones, *little as the Divine Infant in his Crib*.

The justices of the Lord are right, rejoicing hearts: the

Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei: * et opera manuum ejus annuntiat firmamentum.

Dies diei eructat verbum: * et nox nocti indicat scientiam.

Non sunt loquelæ, neque sermones: * quorum non audiantur voces eorum.

In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum: * et in fines orbis terræ verba eorum.

In sole posuit tabernaculum suum: * et ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo.

Exsultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam: * a summo cælo egressio ejus.

Et occursus ejus usque ad summum ejus: * nec est qui se abscondat a calore ejus.

Lex Domini immaculata, convertens animas: * testimonium Domini fidele, sapientiam præstans parvulis.

Justitiæ Domini rectæ, lætificantes corda: * præ-

ceptum Domini lucidum, illuminans oculos.

Timor Domini sanctus, permanens in sæculum sæculi : * judicia Domini vera, justificata in semetipsa.

Desiderabilia super aurum et lapidem pretiosum multum : * et dulciora super mel et favum.

Etenim servus tuus custodit ea : * in custodiendis illis retributio multa.

Delicta quis intelligit? ab occultis meis munda me : * et ab alienis parce servo tuo.

Si mei non fuerint dominati, tunc immaculatus ero : * et emundabor a delicto maximo.

Et erunt ut complacent eloquia oris mei : * et meditatio cordis mei in conspectu tuo semper.

Domine adjutor meus : * et Redemptor meus.

ANT. Tamquam sponsus Dominus procedens de thalamo suo.

commandment of the Lord is lightsome, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring for ever and ever : the judgments of the Lord are true, justified in themselves.

More to be desired than gold and many precious stones : and sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.

For thy servant keepeth them ; *and* in keeping them there is a great reward.

Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord ; and from those of others spare thy servant.

If they shall have no dominion over me, then shall I be without spot ; and I shall be cleansed from the greatest sin.

And the words of my mouth shall be such as may please : and the meditation of my heart, always in thy sight.

O Lord, *that art born for my sake, thou art* my helper and my Redeemer.

ANT. The Lord is as a Bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber.

The *third* Psalm shows us Christ advancing in the conquest of the world, as the mighty Conqueror. His *beauty* and *meekness* are, like his *truth* and his *justice*, perfect ; and the power of his love is irresistible. On his *right*, we have the *Queen* of this world, the august Mary ; the Lord has been pleased with her *beauty*, and her fruitful *Virginity* has been the model, after which have been formed all those pure souls consecrated to God, who are the companions of the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. In this most sublime Psalm, let us sing our canticle of praise

to the ineffable dignity of our Divine King, and to the sweetness of our incomparable Mother and Queen.

ANT. Grace is poured out upon thy lips ; therefore hath God blessed thee for ever.

ANT. Diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis ; propterea benedixit te Deus in æternum.

PSALM 44.

My heart hath uttered a good word : I speak my works, *my songs, to Jesus, the King.*

My tongue is the pen of a scrivener, that writeth swiftly.

Thou, *O Emmanuel*, art beautiful above the sons of men ; grace is poured abroad in thy lips : therefore, hath God blessed thee for ever.

Thou comest that thou mayest conquer the world ; gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most Mighty !

With thy comeliness and thy beauty, set out, proceed prosperously, and reign,

Because of truth, and meekness, and justice : and thy right hand shall conduct thee wonderfully.

Thy arrows are sharp : under thee shall people fall, into the hearts of the enemies of the King, *who sends thee.*

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : the sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of uprightness.

Thou hast loved justice, and hatedst iniquity : therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Myrrh, and stacte, and cassia

Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum : * dico ego opera mea Regi.

Lingua mea calamus scribæ : * velociter scribentis.

Speciosus forma præ filiis hominum, diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis : * propterea benedixit te Deus in æternum.

Accingere gladio tuo super femur tuum : * potentissime.

Specie tua et pulchritudine tua : * intende, prospere procede, et regna.

Propter veritatem, et mansuetudinem, et justitiam : * et deducet te mirabiliter dextera tua.

Sagittæ tuæ acutæ, populi sub te cadent : * in corda inimicorum regis.

Sedes tua, Deus, in sæculum sæculi : * virga directionis, virga regni tui.

Dilexisti justitiam, et odisti iniquitatem : * propterea unxit te Deus, Deus tuus, oleo lætitiæ præ consortibus tuis.

Myrrha, et gutta, et casia

a vestimentis tuis, a domibus eburneis : * ex quibus delectaverunt te filiæ regum in honore tuo.

Adstitit Regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato : * circumdata varietate.

Audi filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam : * et obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui.

Et concupiscet Rex decorem tuum : * quoniam ipse est Dominus Deus tuus, et adorabunt eum.

Et filiæ Tyri in muneribus : * vultum tuum deprecabuntur omnes divites plebis.

Omnis gloria ejus filiæ regis ab intus : * in fimbriis aureis circumamicta varietatibus.

Adducentur Regi virgines post eam : * proximæ ejus afferentur tibi.

Afferentur in lætitia et exultatione : * adducentur in templum Regis.

Pro patribus tuis nati sunt tibi filii : * constitues eos principes super omnem terram.

Memores erunt nominis tui : * in omni generatione, et generationem.

perfume thy garments, from the ivory houses ; out of which the daughters of kings have delighted thee in thy glory.

The Queen, *thy Mother, who shares in thy triumph*, stood on thy right hand in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety.

Thy Holy Spirit spoke to her, and said : "Hearken, O Daughter, and see, and incline thine ear : and forget thy people, and thy father's house.

"And the King shall greatly desire thy beauty : for he is the Lord thy God, and him they shall adore.

"And the daughters of Tyre with gifts, *yea*, all the rich among the people, shall entreat thy countenance."

All the glory of the King's Daughter is within, in golden borders, clothed round about with varieties.

After her shall virgins be brought to the King : her neighbours, *they that have spiritually conceived Christ*, shall be brought to thee, *O King* !

They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing : they shall be brought into the temple of the King.

Instead of thy fathers of the *Jewish people, of whose race thou didst deign to be born, but who have not known thee, O Emmanuel* ! sons are born to thee of a new race : thou shalt make them princes over all the earth.

They shall remember thy name throughout all generations.

Therefore shall people praise thee for ever, yea for ever and ever.

ANT. Grace is poured out upon thy lips ; therefore hath God blessed thee for ever.

℣. As a Bridegroom,
℞. The Lord is coming from his bride-chamber.

Propterea populi confitebuntur tibi in æternum, * et in sæculum sæculi.

ANT. Diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis, propterea benedixit te Deus in æternum.

℣. Tamquam sponsus.
℞. Dominus procedens de thalamo suo.

The Priest begins the two first words of the Lord's Prayer :

Our Father.

Pater noster.

The rest is said in silence, as far as the last two petitions, when the Priest says aloud :

℣. And lead us not into temptation.

℣. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.

The Choir answers :

℞. But deliver us from evil.

℞. Sed libera nos a malo.

Then the Priest :

Graciously hear, O Lord Jesus Christ, the prayers of thy servants, and have mercy upon us : who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest for ever and ever.

Exaudi, Domine Jesu Christe, preces servorum tuorum, et miserere nobis, qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum.

The Choir answers : *Amen.*

Then one of the Choir turns towards the Priest, and bowing down, says :

Pray, Father, give thy blessing.

Jube, Domne, benedicere.

Then the Priest :

May the Eternal Father Benedictione perpetua be-
bless us with an everlasting medicat nos Pater æternus.
blessing.

R. Amen.

R. Amen.

The Lessons of the First Nocturn are taken from the Prophet Isaias, whom the Church has followed through the whole of Advent. The *Responsories*, which follow each Lesson, assist the Faithful in those sentiments of joy, which should fill their hearts on hearing the sacred prophecies read to them, and that, too, at the very hour when they are to be accomplished.

1ST LESSON. *Isaias, Ch. ix.*

Primo tempore alleviata est terra Zabulon, et terra Nephtali : et novissimo aggravata est via maris trans Jordanem Galilææ Gentium. Populus qui ambulabat in tenebris vidit lucem magnam : habitantibus in regione umbræ mortis, lux orta est eis. Multiplicasti gentem, et non magnificasti lætitiã. Lætabuntur coram te, sicut qui lætantur in messe, sicut exultant victores capta præda, quando dividunt spolia. Jugum enim oneris ejus, et virgam humeri ejus, et sceptrum exactoris ejus superasti, sicut in die Madian. Quia omnis violenta prædatio cum tumultu, et vestimentum mistum sanguine, erit in combustionem, et cibus ignis. Parvulus enim natus est nobis, et filius datus est nobis : et factus est princi-

At the first time, the land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephtali, was lightly touched *by the Lord* : and at the last, the way of the sea beyond the Jordan of the Gentiles was heavily loaded. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light : to them, that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and hast not increased the joy. *The inhabitants of Jerusalem, whom thou hast succoured*, shall rejoice before thee, as they that rejoice in the harvest ; as conquerors rejoice after taking a prey, when they divide the spoils. For the yoke of their burden, and the rod of their shoulder, and the sceptre of their oppressor, thou hast overcome, as in the day of Madian. For every violent taking of spoils, with tumult, and garment mingled

with blood, shall be burnt, and be fuel for the fire. For a Child is born unto us, and a Son is given unto us; and the government is upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace.

R. To-day, the King of heaven deigned to be born to us of a Virgin, that he might restore lost man to the heavenly kingdom. * The host of Angels rejoices : for that eternal salvation hath appeared to the human race.

V. Glory be to God in the highest; and on earth, peace to men of good will. * The host of Angels, &c. Glory be to the Father.

Then is repeated the R. To-day, the King, *as far as* Glory be to God.

BLESSING. May the Only Begotten Son of God vouchsafe to bless and help us.

R. Amen.

patus super humerum ejus : et vocabitur nomen ejus, Admirabilis, Consiliarius, Deus, Fortis, Pater futuri sæculi, Princeps pacis.

R. Hodie nobis cœlorum Rex de Virgine nasci dignatus est, ut hominem perditum, ad cœlestia regna revocaret. * Gaudet exercitus Angelorum : quia salus æterna humano generi apparuit.

V. Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis. * Gaudet exercitus. Gloria Patri.

R. Hodie nobis cœlorum. V. Gloria in excelsis.

BENEDICTIO. Unigenitus Dei Filius nos benedicere et adjuvare dignatur.

R. Amen.

2ND LESSON. *Isaias, Ch. xl.*

Be comforted, be comforted, my people, saith your God. Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, and call to her, for her evil is come to an end, her iniquity is forgiven : she hath received of the hand of the Lord double *blessings* for all her sins. The voice of one crying in the desert : "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God.

Consolamini, consolamini popule meus, dicit Deus vester. Loquimini ad cor Jerusalem, et advocate eam, quoniam completa est malitia ejus, dimissa est iniquitas illius : suscepit de manu Domini duplicia pro omnibus peccatis suis. Vox clamantis in deserto : Parate viam Dei, rectas facite in solitudine semitas Dei nostri. Omnis vallis exaltabi-

tur et omnis mons et collis humiliabitur, et erunt prava in directa, et aspera in vias planas. Et revelabitur gloria Domini : et videbit omnis caro pariter quod os Domini locutum est. Vox dicentis : Clama. Et dixi : Quid clamabo ? Omnis caro fœnum, et omnis gloria ejus quasi flos agri. Exsiccatum est fœnum, et cecidit flos ; quia spiritus Domini sufflavit in eo. Vere fœnum est populus : exsiccatum est fœnum, et cecidit flos : Verbum autem Domini nostri manet in æternum.

R. Hodie nobis de cœlo pax vera descendit : * Hodie per totum mundum melliflui facti sunt cœli.

V. Hodie illuxit nobis dies redemptionis novæ, reparationis antiquæ, felicitatis æternæ. * Hodie per totum.

BENEDICTIO. Spiritus sancti gratia illuminet sensus et corda nostra. R. Amen.

3RD LESSON. *Isaias, lii.*

Consurge, consurge, induere fortitudine tua, Sion ; induere vestimentis gloriæ tuæ, Jerusalem, civitas Sancti : quia non adjiciet ultra ut pertranseat per te incircumcisus et immundus. Excute de pulvere, consurge, sede, Jerusalem : solve vincula colli tui, captiva

“ Every valley shall be exalted, “ and every mountain and hill “ shall be made low, and the “ crooked shall become straight “ and the rough ways plain.” And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh together shall see, that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. The voice of one, saying : Cry. And I said : What shall I cry ? All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field. The grass is withered, and the flower is fallen, because the spirit of the Lord hath blown upon it. Indeed the people is grass : the grass is withered, and the flower is fallen : but the Word of our Lord endureth for ever.

R. To-day, true peace has come down to us from heaven : * To-day, throughout the whole world, the heavens have dropped honey.

V. To-day, there has shone upon us the day of the new redemption, of the ancient reparation, of the eternal happiness. * To-day, throughout.

BLESSING. May the grace of the Holy Ghost enlighten our senses and our hearts. Amen.

Arise, arise, put on thy strength, O Sion ; put on the garments of thy glory, O Jerusalem, the city of the Holy One ; for henceforth, the uncircumcised and unclean shall no more pass through thee. Shake thyself from the dust, arise, sit up, O Jerusalem : loose the bonds from off thy neck,

O captive daughter of Sion. For thus saith the Lord : You were sold gratis, and you shall be redeemed without money. For thus saith the Lord God : My people went down into Egypt, at the beginning, to sojourn there: and the Assyrian hath oppressed them without any cause at all. And now, what have I here, saith the Lord : for my people is taken away gratis ? They that rule over them, treat them unjustly, saith the Lord, and my name is continually blasphemed all the day long. Therefore my people shall know my name in that day : for, I myself that spoke, behold I am here.

R. Whom have ye seen, O Shepherds ! say, tell us, who is it has appeared on the earth ? * We have seen the Child that is born, and choirs of Angels praising the Lord.

V. Say, what have ye seen ? and tell us of the birth of Christ. * We have seen. Glory. * We have seen.

filia Sion. Quia hæc dicit Dominus : Gratis venundati estis, et sine argento redimemini. Quia hæc dicit Dominus Deus : In Ægyptum descendit populus meus in principio, ut colonus esset ibi : et Assur absque ulla causa calumniatus est eum. Et nunc quid mihi est hic, dicit Dominus ? quoniam ablati sunt populus meus gratis : dominatores ejus inique agunt, dicit Dominus : et tota die nomen meum blasphemat. Propter hoc sciet populus meus nomen meum in die illa : quia ego ipse qui loquebar, ecce adsum.

R. Quem vidistis pastores ? dicite, annuntiate nobis, in terris quis apparuit ? * Natum vidimus, et choros Angelorum collaudantes Dominum.

V. Dicite, quidnam vidistis ? et annuntiate Christi nativitatem. * Natum vidimus. Gloria. * Natum vidimus.

THE SECOND NOCTURN.

The *fourth* Psalm is a hymn in praise of the Christian Church, which begins to-day, and receives, in the stable of Bethlehem, the first believers—the Shepherds. This new *Sion*, which is to contain *the City of our God*, is founded on the sides of *the North*, to show that it shall be open to the Gentiles. In vain will the Princes of the earth seek, in their conceited calculations, to destroy the Church : God, who has founded her, will make her triumph. Empires shall pass away, and their persecutions : the

Church will survive them all, knowing neither wrinkle nor decay.

ANT. Suscepimus, Deus, misericordiam tuam in medio templi tui.

ANT. We have received thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

PSALM 47.

Magnus Dominus, et laudabilis nimis : * in civitate Dei nostri, in monte sancto ejus.

Fundatur exultatione universæ terræ mons Sion : * latera aquilonis, civitas regis magni.

Deus in domibus ejus cognoscetur : * cum suscipiet eam.

Quoniam ecce reges terræ congregati sunt : * convenerunt in unum.

Ipsi videntes, sic admirati sunt, conturbati sunt, commoti sunt : * tremor apprehendit eos.

Ibi dolores ut parturientis : * in spiritu vehementi conteres naves Tharsis.

Sicut audivimus, sic vidimus in civitate Domini virtutum, in civitate Dei nostri : * Deus fundavit eam in æternum.

Suscepimus Deus, misericordiam tuam : * in medio templi tui.

Secundum nomen tuum, Deus, sic et laus tua in fines terræ : * justitia plena est dextera tua.

Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised, in the City of our God, in his holy mountain.

On this day, with the joy of the whole earth is Mount Sion founded, on the sides of the North, the City of the great King.

In her houses shall God be known, when he shall protect her.

For behold the kings of the earth assembled themselves : they gathered together.

They saw, so they wondered, they were troubled, they were moved : trembling took hold of them.

There, were pains as of a woman in labour. With a vehement wind thou shalt break in pieces the ships of Tharsis.

As we have heard, so have we seen, in the City of the Lord of hosts, in the City of our God : God hath founded it for ever.

We have received thy mercy, O God, *which appeared to us in Bethlehem ; we have received it* in the midst of thy temple.

According to thy name, O God, so also *is* thy praise unto the ends of the earth : thy right hand is full of justice.

Let Mount Sion rejoice, and the daughters of Juda be glad : because of thy judgments, O Lord !

Surround Sion, and encompass her : tell ye in her towers.

Set your hearts on her strength ; and distribute her houses, that ye may relate it in another generation :

For this is our God, our God unto eternity, and for ever and ever : he, *our Pastor*, shall rule us for evermore.

ANT. We have received thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

The *fifth* Psalm prophesies the peaceful reign of the Son of David, who comes *to save the poor, and humble the oppressor*. His coming is in sweetness and silence, like the dew of night. It is this very night that he comes to us from Mary's virginal womb. He is *the rain* announced by the Prophets, which is to fall upon the parched earth. His kingdom shall be glorious and eternal. In a few days hence, *the Kings* shall prostrate themselves at his feet, offering him the *gold* of Arabia and the *incense* of Saba. He, on his part, will give to his people, for their nourishment, the Bread of his own Body ; and thus his Church will be, for ever, a Bethlehem, that is, *a House of Bread*.

ANT. There shall spring up an abundance of peace, in the days of the Lord ; and he shall rule.

Lætetur mons Sion, et exsultent filiæ Judæ : * propter judicia tua, Domine.

Circumdate Sion, et complectimini eam : * narrate in turribus ejus.

Ponite corda vestra in virtute ejus : * et distribuite domos ejus, ut enarretis in progenie altera :

Quoniam hic est Deus, Deus noster in æternum, et in sæculum sæculi : * ipse reget nos in sæcula.

ANT. Suscepimus, Deus, misericordiam tuam in medio templi tui.

PSALM 71.

Give to the King thy judgment, O God ! and to the King's Son, *who is born to-day*, thy justice,

Deus, judicium tuum Regi da : * et justitiam tuam filio Regis.

Judicare populum tuum in justitia : * et pauperes tuos in judicio.

Suscipiant montes pacem populo : * et colles justitiam.

Judicabit pauperes populi : et salvos faciet filios pauperum : * et humiliabit calumniatorem.

Et permanebit cum sole, et ante lunam : * in generatione et generationem.

Descendet sicut pluvia in vellus : * et sicut stillicidia stillantia super terram.

Orietur in diebus ejus justitia, et abundantia pacis : * donec auferatur luna.

Et dominabitur a mari usque ad mare : * et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrarum.

Coram illo procident Æthiopes : * et inimici ejus terram lingent.

Reges Tharsis, et insulæ munera offerent : * Reges Arabum et Saba dona adducent.

Et adorabunt eum omnes reges terræ : * omnes gentes servient ei.

Quia liberabit pauperem a potente : * et pauperem, cui non erat adjutor.

Parcet pauperi et inopi : * et animas pauperum salvas faciet.

To judge thy people with justice, and thy poor with judgment.

Let the mountains receive peace for the people ; and the hills justice.

He, *the Messias*, shall judge the poor of the people, and he shall save the children of the poor ; and he shall humble the oppressor.

And *his kingdom on earth* shall continue with the sun, and before the moon ; throughout all generations.

He shall come down *mysteriously in the midnight* like rain upon the fleece, and as showers falling gently upon the earth.

In his days, shall justice spring up, and abundance of peace, till the moon be taken away.

And he shall rule from sea to sea ; and from the river *Jordan*, unto the ends of the earth.

Before him the Ethiopians shall fall down ; and his enemies shall lick the ground.

The Kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents ; the Kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts.

And all kings of the earth shall adore him ; all nations shall serve him.

For he shall deliver the poor from the mighty, and the needy that had no helper.

He shall spare the poor and needy ; and *he shall be called Jesus*, because he shall save the souls of the poor, *his creatures*.

He shall redeem their souls from usuries and iniquity : and their name shall be honourable in his sight.

And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Arabia, for him they shall always adore : they shall bless him all the day.

He is the bread of life ; therefore, under his reign there shall be firmament on the earth on the tops of the mountains ; above Libanus shall the fruit thereof be exalted : and *they* of the City, *his Church*, shall flourish like the grass of the earth.

Let his name be blessed for evermore : his name continueth before the sun.

And in him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed : all nations shall magnify him.

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who alone doth wonderful things.

And blessed be the name of his majesty for ever : and the whole earth shall be filled with his majesty. So be it. So be it.

ANT. There shall spring up an abundance of peace, in the days of the Lord ; and he shall rule.

Ex usuris et iniquitate redimet animas eorum : * et honorabile nomen eorum coram illo.

Et vivet, et dabitur ei de auro Arabiae, et adorabunt de ipso semper : * tota die benedicent ei.

Et erit firmamentum in terra in summis montium, superextolletur super Libanum fructus ejus : * et flore- bunt de civitate sicut foenum terrae.

Sit nomen ejus benedic- tum in saecula : * ante solem permanet nomen ejus.

Et benedicentur in ipso omnes tribus terrae : * omnes gentes magnificabunt eum.

Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel : * qui facit mirabilia solus.

Et benedictum nomen ma- jestatis ejus in aeternum : * et replebitur majestate ejus omnis terra : fiat, fiat.

ANT. Orietur in diebus Domini abundantia pacis, et dominabitur.

The *sixth* Psalm is a hymn of gratitude for the *blessing* brought us by the Divine Infant. The anger of the Almighty Lord is appeased at the sight of a Crib containing the Son of God and the Son of Mary ! Let us listen with delight to the words of the New-Born Babe. *Justice and Peace have kissed* : Incarnate *Truth* now dwells on our earth,

and the *Justice* of the Eternal Father looks down from heaven upon our Emmanuel.

ANT. Veritas de terra orta est ; et justitia de cœlo prospexit.

ANT. Truth is sprung out of the earth ; and justice hath looked down from heaven.

PSALM 84.

Benedixisti, Domine, terram tuam : * avertisti captivitatem Jacob.

Lord, thou hast blessed thy land : thou hast, *this night*, turned away the captivity of Jacob.

Remisisti iniquitatem plebis tuæ : * operuisti omnia peccata eorum.

Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people : thou hast covered all their sins.

Mitigasti omnem iram tuam : * avertisti ab ira indignationis tuæ.

Thou hast mitigated all thy anger : thou hast turned away from the wrath of thy indignation.

Converte nos Deus salutaris noster ; * et averte iram tuam a nobis.

Convert us, O God, our Saviour ! and turn off thy anger from us.

Numquid in æternum irasceris nobis : * aut extends iram tuam a generatione in generationem ?

Heavenly Father ! wilt thou be angry with us for ever ? or wilt thou extend thy wrath from generation to generation ?

Deus tu conversus vivificabis nos : * et plebs tua lætabitur in te.

Thou wilt turn, O God, and bring us to life ; and thy people shall rejoice in thee.

Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam : * et salutare tuum da nobis.

Show us, O Lord, *Him who is* thy mercy : and grant us thy Salvation.

Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus, * quoniam loquetur pacem in plebem suam.

I will hear, *near my Saviour's Crib*, what the Lord God will speak in me, for he will speak peace unto his people :

Et super Sanctos suos : * et in eos qui convertuntur ad cor.

And unto his Saints : and unto them that are converted to the heart.

Verumtamen prope timentes eum salutare ipsius : * ut inhabitet gloria in terra nostra.

Surely, his Salvation is near to them that fear him : that glory may dwell in our land.

This day, in Bethlehem, Mercy and Truth have met each other : Justice and Peace have kissed.

Truth is sprung out of the earth : and Justice hath looked down from heaven.

For, the Lord will give goodness : and our earth shall yield her fruit.

Justice shall walk before him, *the Man-God* : and shall set his steps in the way.

ANT. Truth is sprung out of the earth, and Justice hath looked down from heaven.

Ÿ. Thou art beautiful, *O Jesus*, above the sons of men.

R. Grace is poured forth on thy lips.

Our Father.

Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi : * justitia et pax osculatæ sunt.

Veritas de terra orta est : * et justitia de cœlo prospexit.

Etenim Dominus dabit benignitatem : * et terra nostra dabit fructum suum.

Justitia ante eum ambulabit : * et ponet in via gressus suos.

ANT. Veritas de terra orta est, et Justitia de cœlo prospexit.

Ÿ. Speciosus forma præ filiis hominum.

R. Diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis.

Pater noster.

After the *Pater Noster* has been recited, as in the First Nocturn, the Priest says :

May his goodness and mercy help us, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth for ever and ever.
R. Amen.

Ipsius pietas et misericordia nos adjuvet, qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivit et regnat in sæcula sæculorum. R. Amen.

The Book of the Sermons of the Holy Fathers is now opened, and a passage is read from one of those magnificent discourses of St. Leo the Great, which enraptured the people of Rome in the fifth century.

BLESSING. May God the Father Almighty be propitious and merciful unto us.

R. Amen.

BENEDICTIO. Deus Pater omnipotens sit nobis propitius et clemens.

R. Amen.

4TH LESSON.

Sermon of Saint Leo, Pope.

On this day, dearly Beloved, is born our Saviour : let us be

Sermo Sancti Leonis Papæ.

Salvator noster, dilectissimi, hodie natus est : gau-

deamus. Neque enim fas est locum esse tristitiæ, ubi natalis est vitæ: quæ consumpto mortalitatis timore, nobis ingerit de promissa æternitate lætitiã. Nemo ab hujus alacritatis participatione secernitur. Una cunctis lætitiæ communis est ratio: quia Dominus noster peccati mortisque destructor, sicut nullum a reatu liberum reperit, ita liberandis omnibus venit. Exsultet sanctus, quia propinquat ad palmam: gaudeat peccator, quia invitatur ad veniam: animetur Gentilis, quia vocatur ad vitam. Dei namque Filius secundum plenitudinem temporis quam divini consilii inscrutabilis altitudo deposuit, reconciliandam auctori suo naturam generis assumpsit humani, ut inventor mortis diabolus, per ipsam quam vicerat, vinceretur.

R. O magnum mysterium, et admirabile sacramentum! ut animalia viderent Dominum natum jacentem in præsepio: * Beata Virgo, cuius viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.

V. Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum. * Beata Virgo.

glad: for, surely, it is a sin to be sad on the Birth-day of that Life, which, ridding us of the fear of death, gladdened us with the promise of immortality. From a share in this gladness, not one of us is excluded. To all, there is the one same cause of joy: for, our Lord, the destroyer of sin and death, came to deliver all, seeing that all were slaves to guilt. Let the Saint exult, because he is now brought near to his crown; let the Sinner rejoice, because he is invited to his pardon; let the Gentile be of good heart, because he is called to life. For, when there had come the fullness of time, fixed by the inscrutable depths of the divine counsel, the Son of God assumed to himself the nature of man, in order to restore it to the favour of its Maker; that thus, the Devil, the author of Death, might be conquered by that very nature, whereby himself had conquered.

R. O great Mystery, and wonderful secret! brute beasts to see their new-born Lord laid in a manger! * Blessed is the Virgin, that deserved to carry in her womb, Christ our Lord!

V. Hail Mary! full of grace, the Lord is with thee. * Blessed is the Virgin.

At Rome, if there be in the Holy City the Knight, who has received the Helmet and Sword, blessed, as we have described, by the Sovereign Pontiff—the *fifth* Lesson is given to him to sing, because it speaks

of the great Battle, between Christ and Satan, in the glorious mystery of the Incarnation. Whilst the Choir is singing the Responsory *O magnum mysterium*, the Knight is taken, by the Master of Ceremonies, to the Pope. Standing before the Holy Father, he draws his Sword, thrice sets its point on the ground, thrice brandishes it in the air, and then wipes the blade upon his left arm. He is then taken to the Ambo, or reading-desk, takes off his Helmet, and, having vested the Cope over his armour, he sings the Lesson. These ceremonies of our holy Mother, the Church of Rome, were drawn up in days, when *might* was not *right*, and brute force was made subservient to moral power and principle. The Christian Warrior, cased in his steel armour, was resolved, as indeed he was bound, never to draw his Sword save in the cause of Christ, the conqueror of Satan:—was there anything strange in his expressing this by a sacred ceremony?

BLESSING. May Christ grant unto us the joys of eternal life.
R. Amen.

BENEDICTIO. Christus perpetuæ det nobis gaudia vitæ.
R. Amen.

5TH LESSON.

In the conflict thus entered into for our sakes, the combat was fought by our Omnipotent God with great and admirable equity; inasmuch as it is not in his own Majesty, but in our lowliness, that he attacks our bitter foe; opposing him with the self-same form, and self-same nature as ours, Man like us in everything save sin: for, that which is written of all men, had no place in this Nativity: "Not one is free from defilement, no, not the child whose life

In quo conflictu pro nobis inito, magno et mirabili æquitatis jure certatum est, dum omnipotens Dominus cum sævissimo hoste non in sua majestate, sed in nostra concreditur humilitate: objiciens ei eandem formam, eandemque naturam, mortalitatis quidem nostræ participem, sed peccati totius expertem. Alienum quippe ab hac Nativitate est, quod de omnibus legitur: Nemo mundus a sorde, nec infans cujus est unius diei

vita super terram. Nihil ergo in istam singularem Nativitatem de carnis concupiscentia transivit, nihil de peccati lege manavit. Virgo regia Davidicæ stirpis eligitur, quæ sacro gravidanda foetu, divinam humanamque prolem prius conciperet mente, quam corpore. Et ne superni ignara consilii ad inusitatos paveret affatus, quod in ea operandam erat a Spiritu Sancto, colloquio discit angelico, nec damnum credit pudoris, Dei Genitrix mox futura.

R. Beata Dei genitrix Maria, cujus viscera intacta permanent: * Hodie genuit Salvatorem sæculi.

V. Beata quæ credidit, quoniam perfecta sunt omnia quæ dicta sunt ei a Domino. * Hodie genuit Salvatorem.

BENEDICTIO. Ignem sui amoris accendat Deus in cordibus nostris.

R. Amen.

“on earth is but one day.” Into this admirable Birth, then, there passed nothing pertaining to the concupiscentia of the flesh, there entered not aught of the law of sin. A Virgin of the royal family of David is chosen, who, having to be made Mother of the Divine Child, the God-Man, conceived him in her soul, before she conceived him in her womb. And lest the ineffable mystery should make her fear, were she left ignorant of the Divine plan, she is told by the Angel of that which was to be done in her by the Holy Ghost, and was given to see how she could be Mother of God, yet remain a pure Virgin.

R. The Blessed Mother of God, Mary, remaining ever the spotless Virgin, * Hath this day given birth to the Saviour of the world.

V. Blessed in that she believed, for all those things have been done in her, that were said unto her by the Lord.

BLESSING. May God enkindle within our hearts the fire of his love.

R. Amen.

6TH LESSON.

Agamus ergo, dilectissimi, gratias Deo Patri, per Filium ejus in Spiritu sancto: qui propter multam charitatem suam, qua dilexit nos, misertus est nostri: et cum essemus mortui

Let us, therefore, dearly Beloved, give thanks to God the Father, through his Son, in the Holy Ghost: because, through his exceeding charity, wherewith he hath loved us, he has had compassion upon

us ; and when we were dead in our sins, quickened us unto life together with Christ, that we might be a new creature in him, and a new substance. Therefore, let us put off the old man with his acts, and, having been made partakers of the generation of Christ, let us renounce the works of the flesh. Learn thy own worth, O Christian ! and, having been made a partaker of the divine nature, scorn to become again the vile thing of old. Remember of what Head and of what Body thou art a member. Remember how thou, having been snatched from the power of darkness, hast been translated into the Light and Kingdom of God.

R. O holy and immaculate Virginity, I know not with what praises I shall extol thee : * For thou didst bear in thy womb Him whom the heavens cannot contain.

V. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Glory. * For thou.

peccatis, convivificat nos Christo, ut essemus in ipso nova creatura, novumque figmentum. Deponamus ergo veterem hominem cum actibus suis, et adepti participationem generationis Christi, carnis renuntiemus operibus. Agnosce, O Christiane, dignitatem tuam : et divinæ consors factus naturæ, noli in veterem vilitatem degeneri conversatione redire. Memento cujus capitis et cujus corporis sis membrum. Reminiscere, quia erutus de potestate tenebrarum, translatus es in Dei lumen et regnum.

R. Sancta et immaculata Virginitas, quibus te laudibus efferam, nescio : * Quia quem cœli capere non poterant, tuo gremio contulisti.

V. Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui. Gloria. * Quia.

THE THIRD NOCTURN.

The *seventh* Psalm of Christmas-Day's Matins, is the prayer of the Jewish people for their Deliverer, the Messiah. Juda has fallen under the Roman power ; she has lost *the sceptre* ; Jerusalem is polluted by the presence of the Gentiles ; and yet, the Christ appears not. This Psalm reminds the God of Jacob of the promises made to David and his seed, of that everlasting Kingdom, which is so long in coming, and of those other Prophecies, whose accom-

plishment can alone put a stop to the haughty blasphemies of the Gentiles. But, the hour has come; Juda and the Gentiles are to be kept no longer in suspense; Jehovah is about to fulfil his word.

ANT. Ipse invocabit me, alleluia : Pater meus es tu, alleluia.

ANT. He shall cry out to me, alleluia : "thou art my "Father," alleluia.

PSALM 88.

Misericordias Domini * in æternum cantabo.

In generationem et generationem : * annuntiabo veritatem tuam in ore meo.

Quoniam dixisti : in æternum misericordia ædificabitur in cœlis : * præparabitur veritas tua in eis.

Disposui testamentum electis meis ; juravi David servo meo : * usque in æternum præparabo semen tuum.

Et ædificabo in generationem et generationem : * sedem tuam.

Confitebuntur cœli mirabilia tua Domine : * etenim veritatem tuam in Ecclesia Sanctorum.

Quoniam quis in nubibus æquabitur Domino : * similis erit Deo in filiis Dei ?

Deus, qui glorificatur in concilio Sanctorum : * magnus et terribilis super omnes, qui in circuitu ejus sunt.

Domine Deus virtutum, quis similis tibi ? * potens es Domine, et veritas tua in circuitu tuo.

The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever.

Unto generation and generation, I will show forth thy truth with my mouth.

For thou hast said : Mercy shall be built up for ever in the heavens ; thy truth shall be prepared in them.

Thou hast said : "I have "made a covenant with my "elect ; I have sworn to David, "my servant ; thy seed will I "settle for ever.

"And I will build up thy "Throne unto generation and "generation."

The heavens shall confess thy wonders, O Lord : and thy truth in the Church of the Saints.

For who in the clouds can be compared to the Lord : or who among the sons of God shall be like to God ?

God, who is glorified in the assembly of the Saints : great and terrible above all them that are about him.

O Lord God of hosts, who is like unto thee ? thou art mighty, O Lord, and thy truth is round about thee.

Thou rulest the power of the sea : and appeasest the motion of the waves thereof.

Thou hast humbled the proud one, as one that is slain : with the arm of thy strength, thou hast scattered thy enemies.

Thine are the heavens, and thine is the earth ; the world and the fulness thereof thou hast founded : the north and the sea thou hast created.

Thabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name : thy arm is with might.

Let thy hand be strengthened, and thy right hand exalted : justice and judgment are the preparation of thy Throne.

Mercy and truth shall go before thy face : blessed is the people that knoweth jubilation.

They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance, and in thy name they shall rejoice all the day : and in thy justice, they shall be exalted.

For thou art the glory of their strength : and in thy good pleasure shall our horn be exalted.

For our protection is of the Lord : and of our King, the Holy One of Israel.

Then thou spokest in a vision to thy Saints, and saidst : " I have laid help upon " one that is mighty, and have " exalted one chosen out of my " people.

" I have found David my " servant : with my holy oil I " have anointed him.

" For my hand shall help

Tu dominaris potestati maris : * motum autem fluctuum ejus tu mitigas.

Tu humiliasti sicut vulneratum, superbum : * in brachio virtutis tuæ dispersisti inimicos tuos.

Tui sunt cœli, et tua est terra, orbem terræ et plenitudinem ejus tu fundasti : * aquilonem et mare tu creasti.

Thabor et Hermon in nomine tuo exultabunt : * tuum brachium cum potentia.

Firmetur manus tua : et exaltetur dextera tua : * justitia et judicium præparatio sedis tuæ.

Misericordia et veritas præcedent faciem tuam : * beatus populus qui scit jubilationem.

Domine, in lumine vultus tui ambulabunt, et in nomine tuo exultabunt, tota die : * et justitia tua exaltabuntur.

Quoniam gloria virtutis eorum tu es : * et in beneplacito tuo exaltabitur cornu nostrum.

Quia Domini est assumptio nostra : * et sancti Israel Regis nostri.

Tunc locutus es in visione Sanctis tuis, et dixisti : * Posui adjutorium in potente, et exaltavi electum de plebe mea.

Inveni David servum meum : * oleo sancto meo unxi eum.

Manus enim mea auxilia-

bitur ei : * et brachium meum confortabit eum.

Nihil proficiet inimicus in eo : * et filius iniquitatis non apponet nocere ei.

Et concidam a facie ipsius inimicos ejus : * et odientes eum in fugam convertam.

Et veritas mea, et misericordia mea cum ipso : * et in nomine meo exaltabitur cornu ejus.

Et ponam in mari manum ejus, * et in fluminibus dexteram ejus.

Ipse invocabit me : Pater meus es tu : * Deus meus, et susceptor salutis meæ.

Et ego primogenitum ponam illum : * excelsum præ regibus terræ.

In æternum servabo illi misericordiam meam : * et testamentum meum fidele ipsi.

Et ponam in sæculum sæculi semen ejus : * et thronum ejus sicut dies cœli.

Si autem dereliquerint filii ejus legem meam : et in judiciis meis non ambulaverint.

Si justitias meas profaverint : * et mandata mea non custodierint.

Visitabo in virga iniquitates eorum : * et in verberibus peccata eorum.

Misericordiam autem meam non dispergam ab eo : * neque nocebo in veritate mea.

Neque profanabo testa-

“him : and my arm shall strengthen him.

“The enemy shall have no advantage over him : nor the son of iniquity have power to hurt him.

“And I will cut down his enemies before his face : and them that hate him I will put to flight.

“And my truth, and my mercy, shall be with him : and in my name shall his horn be exalted.

“And I will set his hand in the sea ; and his right hand in the rivers.

“He shall cry out to me : “Thou art my Father, my God, and support of my salvation.

“And I will make him my First-Born, high above the Kings of the earth.

“I will keep my mercy for him for ever : and my covenant faithful to him.

“And I will make his seed to endure for evermore : and his Throne as the days of heaven.

“And if his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments :

“If they profane my justices, and keep not my commandments :

“I will visit their iniquities with a rod : and their sins with stripes.

“But my mercy I will not take away from him : nor will I suffer my truth to fail.

“Neither will I profane my

“covenant: and the words,
“that proceed from my mouth,
“I will not make void.

“Once I have sworn by my
“Holiness, I will not lie unto
“David: his seed shall endure
“for ever.

“And his Throne as the sun
“before me: and as the moon
“perfect for ever, and a faith-
“ful witness in heaven.”

These are thy words, O Lord!
but thou hast rejected and de-
spised: thou hast put off thy
Christ.

Thou hast overthrown the
covenant of thy servant: thou
hast profaned his sanctuary on
the earth.

Thou hast broken down all
his hedges: thou hast made
his strength fear.

All that pass by the way
have robbed him: he is become
a reproach to his neighbours.

Thou hast set up the right
hand of them that oppress
him: thou hast made all his
enemies to rejoice.

Thou hast turned away the
help of his sword: and hast
not assisted him in battle.

Thou hast made his purifi-
cation to cease: thou hast cast
his Throne down to the ground.

Thou hast shortened the
days of his time: thou hast
covered him with confusion.

How long, O Lord, turnest
thou away unto the end? shall
thy anger burn like fire?

Remember what my sub-
stance is: for hast thou made
all the children of men in
vain?

Who is the man that shall
live, and not see death? that

mentum meum: * et quæ
procedunt de labiis meis, non
faciam irrita.

Semel juravi in Sancto
meo si David mentiar: *
semen ejus in æternum ma-
nebit.

Et thronus ejus sicut sol
in conspectu meo: * et sicut
luna perfecta in æternum,
et testis in cœlo fidelis.

Tu vero, repulisti et de-
spexisti: * distulisti Chris-
tum tuum.

Evertisti testamentum
servi tui: * profanasti in
terra sanctuarium ejus.

Destruxisti omnes sepes
ejus: * posuisti firmamen-
tum ejus formidinem.

Diripuerunt eum omnes
transeuntes viam: * factus
est opprobrium vicinis suis.

Exaltasti dexteram depri-
mentium eum: * lætificasti
omnes inimicos ejus.

Avertisti adjutorium gla-
dii ejus: * et non es auxi-
liatus ei in bello.

Destruxisti eum ab emun-
datione: * et sedem ejus in
terram collisisti.

Minorasti dies temporis
ejus: * perfudisti eum con-
fusione.

Usquequo Domine, aver-
tis in finem: * exardescet
sicut ignis ira tua?

Memorare quæ mea sub-
stantia: * numquid enim
vane constituisti omnes filios
hominum.

Quis est homo qui vivet,
et non videbit mortem: *

eruet animam suam de manu inferi ?

Ubi sunt misericordiæ tuæ antiquæ Domine : * sicut jurasti David in veritate tua ?

Memor esto Domine opprobrii servorum tuorum : * (quod continui in sinu meo) multarum gentium.

Quod exprobraverunt inimici tui Domine : * quod exprobraverunt commutationem Christi tui.

Benedictus Dominus in æternum : * fiat, fiat.

ANT. Ipse invocabit me, alleluia : Pater meus es tu, alleluia.

shall deliver his soul from the hand of hell ?

Where, O Lord, are thy ancient mercies, according to what thou didst swear to David, in thy truth ?

Be mindful, O Lord, of the reproach of thy servants, (which I have held in my bosom,) of many nations :

Wherewith thy enemies have reproached, O Lord : wherewith they have reproached the change of thy Christ.

But, blessed be the Lord for evermore ! *this Christ is coming to us, and this very night !* so be it—so be it !

ANT. He shall cry out to me, alleluia : “thou art my “Father :” alleluia.

The *eighth* Psalm is one of delighted joy at the coming of our Infant Jesus, our *Saviour*. It calls on all nations to adore him, and on all nature to do him homage. This Messiah is come to *reign* over us : he is come to *correct*, that is, to uphold the whole of creation, which was fallen :—a *New Canticle*, then, dear Christians !

ANT. Lætentur coeli, et exsultet terra ante faciem Domini, quoniam venit.

ANT. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, before the face of the Lord ; for lo ! he cometh !

PSALM 95.

Cantate Domino canticum novum : * cantate Domino omnis terra.

Cantate Domino, et benedicite nomini ejus : * annuntiate de die in diem Salutare ejus.

Annuntiate inter Gentes

Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle : sing to the Lord all the earth.

Sing ye to the Lord and bless his name : show forth his Saviour from day to day.

Declare his glory among the

Gentiles : his wonders among all people.

For the Lord is great, and exceedingly to be praised : he is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the Gentiles are devils : but the Lord made the heavens.

Praise and beauty are before him : holiness and majesty in his sanctuary.

Bring ye to the Lord, all ye kindreds of the Gentiles, bring ye to the Lord glory and honour : bring to the Lord glory unto his name.

Bring up sacrifices, and come into his courts : adore ye the Lord in his holy court.

Let all the earth be moved at his presence : Say ye among the Gentiles : the Lord hath reigned, *he hath reigned in his Crib.*

For, *by his much-loved Birth,* he hath corrected the world, which shall not be moved ; he will judge the people with justice.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad ; let the sea be moved, and the fulness thereof ; the fields and all things, that are in them shall be joyful.

Then shall all the trees of the woods rejoice, before the face of the Lord, because he cometh : because he cometh to judge *and save* the earth.

He shall judge the world with justice ; and the people with his truth.

ANT. Let the heavens re-

gloriam ejus : * in omnibus populis mirabilia ejus.

Quoniam Magnus Dominus, et laudabilis nimis : * terribilis est super omnes deos.

Quoniam omnes dii Gentium dæmonia : * Dominus autem cœlos fecit.

Confessio et pulchritudo in conspectu ejus : * sanctimonia et magnificentia in sanctificatione ejus.

Afferte Domino patriæ Gentium, afferte Domino gloriam et honorem : * afferte Domino gloriam nomini ejus.

Tollite hostias, et introite in atria ejus : * adorete Dominum in atrio sancto ejus.

Commoveatur a facie ejus universa terra : * dicite in Gentibus, quia Dominus regravit.

Etenim correxit orbem terræ qui non commovebitur ; * judicabit populos in æquitate.

Lætentur cœli, et exsultet terra, commoveatur mare, et plenitudo ejus : * gaudebunt campi, et omnia quæ in eis sunt.

Tunc exsultabunt omnia ligna silvarum a facie Domini, quia venit : * quoniam venit judicare terram.

Judicabit orbem terræ in æquitate : et populos in veritate sua.

ANT. Lætentur cœli, et

exsultet terra, ante faciem Domini, quoniam venit. joyce, and let the earth be glad before the face of the Lord ; for lo ! he cometh !

The *ninth* Psalm, too, is a *New Canticle*, in praise of the Saviour that is coming, and of the Father that sends him to us. Jehovah has remembered his mercies, and the whole earth will soon be permitted to see its Emmanuel. Let our holy songs, this beautiful Night, be full of enthusiasm, and lend a voice of praise to all Nature, for, all Nature was regenerated by its Creator being born on this earth.

ANT. Notum fecit Dominus, alleluia, Salutare suum, alleluia.

ANT. The Lord hath made known, alleluia ! his Saviour, alleluia !

PSALM 97.

Cantate Domino canticum novum : * quia mirabilia fecit.

Salvavit sibi dextera ejus : * et brachium sanctum ejus.

Notum fecit Dominus Salutare suum : * in conspectu Gentium revelavit justitiam suam.

Recordatus est misericordiæ suæ, * et veritatis suæ domui Israel.

Viderunt omnes termini terra : * salutare Dei nostri.

Jubilate Deo omnis terra : * cantate, et exsultate, et psallite.

Psallite Domino in cithara, in cithara et voce psalmi : * in tubis ductilibus, et voce tubæ corneæ.

Jubilate in conspectu Regis Domini ; * moveatur

Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle : because he hath done wonderful things.

On this day, his right hand hath wrought for him salvation ; and his arm is holy.

The Lord hath made known his Saviour : he hath revealed his justice in the sight of the Gentiles.

He hath remembered his mercy, and his truth toward the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth, *that were expecting it*, have seen the salvation of our God.

Sing joyfully to God, all the earth ; make melody, rejoice, and sing.

Sing praise to the Lord on the harp, on the harp and with the voice of a psalm : with long trumpets, and sound of cornet.

Make a joyful noise before the Lord, our King : let the

sea be moved, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

The rivers shall clap their hands, the mountains shall rejoice together at the presence of the Lord; because he cometh to judge *and save* the earth.

He shall judge the world with justice, and the people with equity.

ANT. The Lord hath made known, alleluia! his Saviour, alleluia!

Ÿ. He shall cry out to me, alleluia!

R. "Thou art my Father," alleluia!

Our Father.

mare, et plenitudo ejus, orbis terrarum, et qui habitant in eo.

Flumina plaudent manu, simul montes exsultabunt a conspectu Domini; * quoniam venit judicare terram.

Judicabit orbem terrarum in justitia : * et populos in æquitate.

ANT. Notum fecit Dominus, alleluia, Salutare suum, alleluia.

Ÿ. Ipse invocabit me, alleluia.

R. Pater meus es tu, alleluia.

Pater noster.

The *Pater noster* having been recited, as in the two first Nocturns, the Priest says :

May the Almighty and merciful Lord, deliver us from the chains of our sins. R. Amen.

A vinculis peccatorum nostrorum absolvat nos omnipotens et misericors Dominus. R. Amen.

Then are read the beginnings of the three Gospels, which are said in the three Masses of Christmas Day. To each portion of these Gospels is appended a passage from a Homily by one of the Holy Fathers.

The first of the three is that of St. Luke, and the Homily given is that of St. Gregory the Great. It relates the publishing of the Emperor Augustus' edict, commanding a census of the whole world. This seventh Lesson, according to the Ceremonial of the Roman Church, is to be sung by the Emperor, if he happen to be in Rome at the time; and this is done, in order to honour the Imperial power, whose decrees were the occasion of Mary and Joseph going to Bethlehem, and so fulfilling the designs of God,

which he had revealed to the ancient Prophets. The Emperor is led to the Pope, in the same manner as the Knight who had to sing the fifth Lesson; he puts on the Cope; two Cardinal-Deacons gird him with the sword, and go with him to the Ambo. The Lesson being concluded, the Emperor again goes before the Pope, and kisses his foot, as being the Vicar of the Christ whom he has just announced. This ceremony was observed in 1468, by the Emperor Frederic III., before the then Pope, Paul II.

BENEDICTIO. Evangelica lectio sit nobis salus, et protectio! R. Amen.

BLESSING. May the reading of the Gospel bring us salvation and protection. R. Amen.

Lectio sancti Evangelii secundum Lucam.
Cap. II.

Lesson from the holy Gospel according to Luke.
Ch. II.

7TH LESSON.

In illo tempore, exiit Edictum à Cæsare Augusto, ut describeretur universus orbis. Et reliqua.

At that time, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. And the rest.

Homilia S. Gregorii Papæ.

Homily of Saint Gregory, Pope.

Quia, largiente Domino, Missarum solemnities ter hodie celebraturi sumus, loqui diu de Evangelica lectione non possumus; sed nos aliquid vel breviter dicere Redemptoris nostri Nativitas ipsa compellit. Quid est enim quod nascituro Domino, mundus describitur, nisi hoc quod aperte monstratur, quia ille apparebat in carne, qui electos suos adscriberet in æternitate? Quo contra de reprobis per Prophetam dicitur: Delean-

Since, by the divine bounty, we are, this day, thrice to celebrate the solemn office of Mass, we cannot speak long on the lesson of the Gospel; and yet, this very Nativity of our Redeemer compels us to say something, however brief. Why, then, is it, that when our Lord was about to be born, *the world is enrolled*; if not that hereby is shown, that He, who appeared in the flesh, is He that would *enrol* his elect in eternity? Just as, when speaking of the repro-

bate, the Prophet says : *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living ; and with the just, let them not be written.* Then, again : *Jesus is born in Bethlehem ; 'tis well ; for Bethlehem signifies a House of Bread, and Jesus said of himself : I am the living Bread, that came down from heaven.* The place, therefore, in which he is born, had had the name of *House of Bread* given to it, because *there* would appear in the material reality of our flesh, He who was to refresh the souls of the elect with spiritual repletion. And, why is he born, not at his Mother's home, but away from it ? Is it not, to show, how, by his assuming human nature, he was born, so to say, in a foreign country ?

R. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, that bore the Son of the Eternal Father ; and blessed are the breasts, that fed Christ the Lord, * Who deigned to be born, this day, of the Virgin, for the world's salvation.

V. A holy day hath shone upon us ; come, ye Gentiles, and adore the Lord. * Who deigned.

tur de libro viventium, et cum justis non scribantur. Qui bene etiam in Bethlehem nascitur : Bethlehem quippe domus panis interpretatur. Ipse namque est qui ait : Ego sum panis vivus qui de cœlo descendi. Locus ergo, in quo Dominus nascitur, domus panis antea vocatus est : quia futurum profecto erat, ut ille ibi per materiam carnis appareret, qui electorum mentes interna satietate reficeret. Qui non in parentum domo, sed in via nascitur, ut profecto ostenderet, quia per humanitatem suam, quam assumpserat, quasi in alieno nascebatur.

R. Beata viscera Mariæ Virginis, quæ portaverunt æterni Patris Filium, et beata ubera, quæ lactaverunt Christum Dominum, * Qui hodie pro salute mundi de Virgine nasci dignatus est.

V. Dies sanctificatus illuxit nobis : venite Gentes, et adorete Dominum. Qui hodie.

The second of the three Gospels, which forms the subject of the eighth Lesson, is also taken from St. Luke, and the Homily is by St. Ambrose. It gives the description of the Shepherds going to the holy Stable.

BLESSING. May our sins be wiped away by the words of the Gospel. R. Amen.

BENEDICTIO. Per Evangelica dicta deleantur nostra delicta. R. Amen.

Lectio sancti Evangelii secundum Lucam.

Cap. II.

Lesson of the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Ch. II.

8TH LESSON.

In illo tempore : Pastores loquebantur ad invicem : Transeamus usque Bethlehem, et videamus hoc verbum quod factum est, quod Dominus ostendit nobis. Et reliqua.

At that time the Shepherds said one to another : Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word, that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed unto us. And the rest.

Homilia sancti Ambrosii
Episcopi.

Homily of Saint Ambrose,
Bishop.

Videte Ecclesiæ surgentis exordium : Christus nascitur, et Pastores vigilare cœperunt : qui gentium greges, pecudum more ante viventes, in caulam Domini congregarent, ne quos spiritualium bestiarum, per offusas noctium tenebras paterentur incursus. Et bene pastores vigilant, quos bonus pastor informat. Grex igitur populus, nox sæculum, pastores sunt sacerdotes. Aut fortasse etiam ille sit Pastor, cui dicitur : Esto vigilans et confirma ; quia non solum Episcopus ad tuendum gregem Dominus ordinavit, sed etiam Angelos ordinavit.

Here, see the beginning of the infant Church : Christ is born ; and Shepherds are watching, as about to herd, into the Lord's fold, that Gentile flock, which had hitherto lived like brute animals, and this, lest, during the thick darkness of night, they might suffer from the attacks of spiritual wild beasts. And it is well said, that *the Shepherds are watching*, for Shepherds, trained by the Good Shepherd, do watch. So that, *the Flock* is the people ; *the Night* is the world ; *the Shepherds* are the Priests. Or, perhaps, we might interpret him to be *the Shepherd*, to whom it is said : *Be thou watchful, and give strength* ; for, not only has our Lord set Bishops to guard the Flock, he has set the very Angels.

R̄. Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis : * Et vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi Unigeniti a Patre ; plenum gratiæ et veritatis.

R̄. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us : * And we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the Only-Begotten of the Father ; full of grace and truth.

Ÿ. All things were made by him ; and without him was made nothing. * And we saw. Glory be to the Father, &c. * And we saw.

Ÿ. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt: et sine ipso factum est nihil. Et vidimus. Gloria. Et vidimus.

The third Gospel, which forms the subject of the ninth Lesson, is the beginning of that according to St. John, and is commented by St. Augustine: it speaks of the Eternal Generation of the Word.

BLESSING. May Christ, the Son of God, teach us the words of the Holy Gospel. R. Amen.

BENEDICTIO. Verba Sancti Evangelii doceat nos Christus Filius Dei. R. Amen.

Lesson of the holy Gospel according to John.
Ch. I.

Lectio sancti Evangelii secundum Joannem.
Cap. I.

9TH LESSON.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the rest.

In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Et reliqua.

Homily of St. Augustine, Bishop.

Homilia sancti Augustini Episcopi.

Lest thou shouldst think that this is some commonplace thing, as thou art wont to do when men talk to thee, hear what it is thou art to think: *The Word was God.* After this, some infidel Arian will come forward and tell me, that the Word of God was *made*. How is it possible, that the Word of God could be made, when God made all things *by* the Word? If this very Word of God was also made, by what other Word was he made? If thou reply, that the Word of the Word is the one by which he was made—then, I will answer

Ne vile aliquid putares, quale consuevisti cogitare, cum verba humana soleres audire, audi quid cogites, Deus erat Verbum. Exeat nunc nescio quis infidelis Arianus, et dicat, quia Verbum Dei factum est. Quomodo potest fieri, ut verbum Dei factum sit, quando Deus per Verbum fecit omnia? Si et Verbum Dei ipsum factum est, per quod aliud Verbum est? Si hoc dicis, quia hoc est Verbum Verbi, per quod factum est illud; ipsum dico ego unicum Filium Dei. Si autem non dicis Verbum Verbi,

concede non factum, per quod facta sunt omnia. Non enim per seipsum fieri potuit, per quod facta sunt omnia. Crede ergo evangelistæ.

thee, that this very one is He whom we mean by the Son of God. But, if thou do not say there is a Word that made the Word,—then grant, that He, by whom all things were made, was Himself not made, since He, by whom all things were made, could not make Himself. Therefore, believe the Evangelist.

Our three Night *Vigils* are over: we have sung our songs of praise; we have listened to our Mother the Church telling us of the Prophecies of the beautiful Coming: and meanwhile, the Night has advanced, and now the long-expected, the ever-sacred hour of Midnight has come, and we are to see the Divine Infant Jesus, lying in his Crib and smiling upon his Mother. Jubilee is the duty of this sweetest moment: let our hearts beat with delight! Jesus, our Salvation, is coming down from heaven, and for our sakes. What a joy it is, that our dear Church gives us a Canticle, which is a worthy reception of this our God! Come, then, Christians, let us make the holy place echo with our grand *Te Deum*!

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING.

Te Deum laudamus:* te Dominum confitemur.

Te æternum Patrem; * omnis terra veneratur.

Tibi omnes Angeli; * tibi cœli, ut universæ potestates.

Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim: * incessabili voce proclamant.

Sanctus,
Sanctus,
Sanctus, * Dominus Deus
Sabaoth!

We praise thee, O God! we acknowledge thee to be our Lord.

Thee, the Father everlasting, all the earth doth worship.

To thee the Angels, to thee the heavens, and all the Powers:

To thee the Cherubim and Seraphim, cry out without ceasing:

Holy!
Holy!
Holy! Lord God of Sabaoth!

Full are the heavens and the earth of the majesty of thy glory.

Thee the glorious choir of the Apostles.

Thee the laudable company of the Prophets.

Thee the white-robed army of Martyrs doth praise.

Thee the holy Church throughout the world doth acknowledge.

The Father of incomprehensible majesty.

Thy adorable, true, and only Son.

And the Holy Ghost the Paraclete.

Thou, O Christ, art the King of glory.

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

Thou being to take upon thee to deliver man, didst not disdain the Virgin's womb.

Thou having overcome the sting of death, hast opened to believers the kingdom of heaven.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.

Thee we believe to be the Judge to come.

Pleni sunt cœli et terra * majestatis gloriæ tuæ.

Te gloriosus * Apostolorum chorus.

Te Prophetarum * laudabilis numerus.

Te Martyrum candidatus * laudat exercitus.

Te per orbem terrarum * sancta confitetur Ecclesia.

Patrem * immensæ majestatis.

Venerandum tuum verum, * et unicum Filium.

Sanctum quoque * Paraclitum Spiritum.

Tu Rex gloriæ, * Christe.

Tu Patris, * sempiternus es Filius.

Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, * non horruisti Virginis uterum.

Tu devicto mortis aculeo : * aperuisti credentibus regna cœlorum.

Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes : * in gloria Patris.

Judex crederis * esse venturus.

All kneel at the following Verse :

We beseech thee, therefore, to help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious Blood.

Make them to be numbered with thy saints in eternal glory.

O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine inheritance.

Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, * quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.

Æterna fac cum sanctis tuis * in gloria numerari.

Salvum fac populum tuum Domine : * et benedic hæreditati tuæ.

Et rege eos: * et extolle
illos usque in æternum.

Per singulos dies * bene-
dicimus te.

Et laudamus Nomentum
in sæculum: * et in sæcu-
lum sæculi.

Dignare, Domine, die isto,
* sine peccato nos custo-
dire.

Miserere nostri, Domine:
* miserere nostri.

Fiat misericordia tua Do-
mine super nos, * quemad-
modum speravimus in te.

In te Domine speravi: *
non confundar in æternum.

And govern them, and exalt
them for ever.

Every day, we magnify thee.

And we praise thy Name for
ever and ever.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep
us this day without sin.

Have mercy on us, O Lord,
have mercy on us.

Let thy mercy, O Lord, be
upon us, as we have put our
trust in thee.

In thee, O Lord, have I put
my trust: let me not be con-
founded for ever.

Our Hymn of Thanksgiving sung, the Church con-
cludes the Office of Matins by the following Prayer,
in which she embodies all her desires on this Feast of
the *New Birth* of the Only Begotten Son of God.

OREMUS.

LET US PRAY.

Concede, quæsumus, om-
nipotens Deus, ut nos Uni-
geniti tui nova per carnem
nativitas liberet, quos sub
peccati jugo vetusta servitus
tenet. Per eundem.

Grant, we beseech thee, O
Almighty God, that we who
groan under the old captivity
of sin, may be freed therefrom
by the new Birth of thine
Only Begotten Son. Through
the same Jesus Christ, &c.

MIDNIGHT MASS.

It is now time to offer the Great Sacrifice, and to
call down our Emmanuel from heaven: He alone can
fully pay the debt of gratitude, which mankind owes
to the Eternal Father. He will intercede for us on
the Altar, as he did in his Crib. We will approach
him with love, and he will give himself to us.

But such is the greatness of to-day's Mystery, that the Church is not satisfied with only once offering up the Holy Sacrifice. The long-expected and precious Gift, deserves an unusual welcome. God the *Father* has given his *Son* to us ; and it is by the operation of the *Holy Ghost* that the grand Portent is produced :—let there be, then, to the ever Blessed Three, the homage of a triple Sacrifice !

Besides :—this Jesus, who is born to-night, is born thrice. He is born of the Blessed Virgin, in the stable of Bethlehem ; he is born by grace, in the hearts of the Shepherds, who are the first fruits of the Christian Church ; and he is born eternally from the Bosom of the Father, *in the brightness of the Saints* :—to this triple Birth, therefore, let there be the homage of a triple Sacrifice !

The first Mass honours the Birth according to the Flesh, which, like the other two, is an effusion of the Divine Light. The hour is come : *the people that walked in darkness, have seen a great Light ; Light is risen to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death.*¹ Outside the holy place, where we are now assembled, there is dark Night :—*material* Night, caused by the absence of the sun ; *spiritual* Night, by reason of the sins of men, who either sleep in the forgetfulness of God, or wake to the commission of crime. At Bethlehem, round the Stable, and in the City, all is deep darkness ; and the inhabitants, who would not find room for the Divine Babe, are sleeping heavily :—will they waken when the Angels begin to sing ?

Midnight comes. The Holy Virgin has been longing for this happy moment. Her heart is suddenly overwhelmed with a delight, which is new even to Her. She falls into an ecstasy of love. As her Child will, one day, in his almighty power, rise

¹ Is. ix. 2.

through the unmoved barrier of his Sepulchre ; so now, as a sun-beam gleaming through purest crystal, he is born, and lies on the ground before her. With arms outstretchèd to embrace her, and smiling upon her—this is her first sight of her Son, who is Son also of the Eternal Father ! She adores—takes him into her arms—presses him to her heart—swathes his infant limbs—and lays him down in the manger. Her faithful Joseph unites his adoration with hers ; and so, too, do the Angels of heaven, for, the Royal Psalmist had sung this prophecy of their adoring him on his entrance into the world.¹ Heaven opens over this spot of earth, which men call a Stable ; and from it there mount to the Throne of the Eternal Father, the first prayer, the first tear, the first sob, of this his Son, our Jesus, who thus begins to prepare the world's salvation.

The eyes of the faithful are now riveted on the Sanctuary, where the same Jesus is to be their Holy Sacrifice. The procession of the sacred Ministers has entered the Holy of Holies, and the Priest comes with them to the foot of the Altar. The Choir is singing its opening-canticle, *the Introit* ; where we have our God himself speaking to his Son, and saying : *This Day, have I begotten thee.* Let the Nations rage, if they will, and be impatient of the yoke of this Babe of Bethlehem ; he shall subdue them, and reign over them, for he is the Son of God.

INTROIT.

Dominus dixit ad me :	The Lord hath said unto
Filius meus est tu ; ego	me : Thou art my Son ; this
hodie genui te.	day have I begotten thee.

<i>Ps.</i> Quare fremuerunt	<i>Ps.</i> Why have the nations
gentes, et populi meditati	raged, and the people devised
sunt inania ? <i>V.</i> Gloria	vain things ? <i>V.</i> Glory, &c.
Patri. Dominus dixit.	The Lord hath said, &c.

¹ Ps. xcvi. 7.—Heb. i. 6.

The *Angelic Hymn* is preceded by the *Kyrie eleison*; but these nine supplications for mercy over, it bursts forth with those sublime words: GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO; ET IN TERRA PAX HOMINIBUS BONÆ VOLUNTATIS! Let us unite, heart and voice, in this the chant of the Angels: *Glory be to God! Peace be to men!* These our heavenly Brethren first intoned it, and they are, at this moment, round our Altar, as they were round the Crib; they are singing our happiness. They are adoring that divine Justice, which gave not a Redeemer to their fallen fellow-angels, yet, to us gives the very Son of God to be our Redeemer. They are magnifying that deep humiliation of Him, who made both Angels and men, and who so lovingly favours the weaker of the two. They know that our gratitude needs help, and so they lend us their sweet voices to give thanks to Him, who, by this mystery of love and magnificence, is enabling us poor mortals to one day fill up the thrones left vacant by the rebel Spirits. Oh! yes; let us all, men and Angels, Church of earth and Church of heaven, let us sing: *Glory be to God! and Peace to men!* The more the Son of the Eternal Father has had to humble himself in order to enrich and exalt us, the more fervently must we cry out our warmest praise, and hymn this Mystery of the Incarnation: *Tu solus Sanctus! Tu solus Dominus! Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe!—Thou only, O Jesus! art Holy! Thou only art Lord! Thou only art Most High!*

The Collect then follows, summing up all our prayers in one:

LET US PRAY.

OREMUS.

O God, who hast enlightened this most sacred Night by the brightness of Him, who is the true Light: grant, we beseech

Deus, qui hanc sacratissimam noctem veri luminis fecisti illustratione clarescere: da, quæsumus, ut

cujus lucis mysteria in terra cognovimus, ejus quoque gaudiis in cœlo perfruamur. Qui tecum.

thee, that we who have known the mysteries of this Light on earth, may likewise come to the enjoyment of it in heaven. Who liveth, &c.

Lectio Epistolæ beati Pauli Apostoli ad Titum.

Lesson of the Epistle of Saint Paul the Apostle to Titus.

Cap. II.

Ch. II.

Charissime, apparuit gratia Dei Salvatoris nostri omnibus hominibus, erudiens nos, ut, abnegantes impietatem et sæcularia desideria, sobrie, et juste, et pie vivamus in hoc sæculo : expectantes beatam spem, et adventum gloriæ magni Dei et Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi : qui dedit semetipsum pro nobis, ut nos redimeret ab omni iniquitate, et mundaret sibi populum acceptabilem, sectatorem bonorum operum. Hæc loquere et exhortare, in Christo Jesu Domino nostro.

Dearly beloved, the grace of God, our Saviour, hath appeared to all men, instructing us, that denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly, in this world ; looking for the blessed hope, and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ : who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works. These things speak, and exhort, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This *God our Saviour* hath at length appeared ! and with such grace and mercy ! He alone could deliver us from *dead works*, and restore us to life. At this very hour, he *appeareth to all men*, laid in his narrow Crib, and fastly wrapped, as a Babe, in swaddling-clothes. Yea, here have we *the Blessed One*, whose visit we had so long *hoped* for ! Let us purify our hearts, that he may be pleased with us ; for though he is the Infant Jesus, he is, also, as the Apostle has just told us, *the Great God*, and the Son of the Eternal Father, born from all eternity. Let us unite with the Angels and the Church in this hymn to our *Great God*, Jesus of Bethlehem.

GRADUAL.

With thee is the principality in the day of thy strength ; in the brightness of the Saints : from the womb, before the Day-star, I begot thee.

Ÿ. The Lord said to my Lord : Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies my footstool.

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Ÿ. The Lord hath said to me : Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Alleluia.

Tecum principium in die virtutis tuæ, in splendoribus sanctorum : ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

Ÿ. Dixit Dominus Domino meo : sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Dominus dixit ad me : Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te. Alleluia.

GOSPEL.

Sequel of the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Ch. II.

At that time, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. This enrolling was first made by Cyrenus, the governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph, also, went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem ; because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapt him up in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger ; because there was no room for them

Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Lucam.

Cap. II.

In illo tempore : exiit edictum a Cæsare Augusto, ut describeretur universus orbis. Hæc descriptio prima facta est a præside Syriæ Cyrino : et ibant omnes, ut profiterentur singuli in suam civitatem. Ascendit autem et Joseph a Galilæa de civitate Nazareth, in Judæam, in civitatem David, quæ vocatur Bethlehem ; eo quod esset de domo et familia David, ut profiteretur cum Maria desponsata sibi uxore prægnante. Factum est autem, cum essent ibi, impleti sunt dies ut pareret. Et peperit filium suum primogenitum, et pannis eum involvit, et reclinavit eum in præsepio ; quia non erat eis locus in diversorio. Et pastores erant in regione eadem vigilantes, et custo-

dientes vigiliis noctis super gregem suum. Et ecce Angelus Domini stetit juxta illos, et claritas Dei circumfulsit illos, et timuerunt timore magno. Et dixit illis Angelus: Nolite timere: ecce enim evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum, quod erit omni populo: quia natus est vobis hodie Salvator, qui est Christus Dominus, in civitate David. Et hoc vobis signum: Invenietis infantem pannis involutum, et positum in præsepio. Et subito facta est cum Angelo multitudo militiæ cœlestis, laudantium Deum, et dicentium: Gloria in altissimis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.

in the inn. And there were in the same country Shepherds watching and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold an Angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the Angel said to them: Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for, this day, is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace to men of good will.

O Divine Infant! we, too, must needs join our voices with those of the Angels, and sing with them: *Glory be to God! and Peace to men!* We cannot restrain our tears at hearing this history of thy Birth. We have followed thee in thy journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem; we have kept close to Mary and Joseph on the whole journey; we have kept sleepless watch during this holy Night, waiting thy coming. Praise be to thee, sweetest Jesus, for thy mercy! and love from all hearts, for thy tender love of us! Our eyes are riveted on that dear Crib, for our Salvation is there; and there we recognise thee as the Messiah foretold in those sublime Prophecies, which thy Spouse the Church has been repeating to us, in her solemn prayers of this Night. Thou art *the Mighty God—the Prince of Peace—the Spouse of*

our souls—our *Peace*—our Saviour—our *Bread of Life*. And now, what shall we offer thee? *A good Will*? Ah! dear Lord! thou must form it within us; thou must increase it, if thou hast already given it; that thus, we may become thy Brethren by grace, as we already are by the human nature thou hast assumed. But, O Incarnate Word! this Mystery of thy becoming Man, works within us a still higher grace:—it makes us, as thy Apostle tells us, *partakers of that divine nature*,¹ which is inseparable with thee in the midst of all thy humiliations. Thou hast made us less than the Angels, in the scale of creation; but, in thy Incarnation, thou hast made us *Heirs of God*, and *Joint-Heirs* with thine own divine Self!² Never permit us, through our own weaknesses and sins, to degenerate from this wonderful gift, whereby thy Incarnation exalted us, and oh! dear Jesus, to what a height!

After the Gospel, the Church triumphantly chants the glorious Symbol of our Faith, which tells, one by one, the Mysteries of the Man-God. At the words: *Et Incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine*, ET HOMO FACTUS EST, profoundly adore the great God who assumed our human nature, and became like unto us, his poor creatures; let your adoration and love repay him, if it were possible, for this his incomprehensible abasement. In each of to-day's Masses, when the Choir comes to these words in the *Credo*, the Priest rises from the sedilia, and remains kneeling, in humble adoration, at the foot of the Altar, whilst they are being sung. You must unite your adorations with these of the Church, which is represented by the Celebrant.

During the Offering of the bread and wine, the Church tells us, how the Birth of Jesus Christ filled heaven and earth with joy. In a few short moments,

¹ II. St. Pet. i. 4.

² Rom. viii. 17.

there will be on our Altar, where we now see mere bread and wine, the Body and Blood of this same Jesus, our Emmanuel.

OFFERTORY.

Lætentur coeli et exsultet
terra, ante faciem Domini,
quoniam venit.

Let the heavens rejoice, and
the earth be glad, in the pre-
sence of the Lord, for that he
is come.

SECRET.

Accepta tibi sit, Domine,
quæsumus, hodiernæ festi-
vitatæ oblatio : ut, tua gra-
tia largiente, per hæc sacro-
sancta commercia in illius
inveniamur forma, in quo
tecum est nostra substan-
tia. Qui tecum vivit.

Receive, O Lord, the offer-
ings we make to thee, on this
present solemnity : that by
thy grace, through the inter-
course of these sacred mys-
teries, we may be conformable
to Him, in whom our nature
is united to thine. Who liveth,
&c.

The Preface then gives expression to the thanksgiving of the people, and finishes with the triple *Sanctus* to the God of Sabaoth. At the Elevation, when, in the midst of the mysterious silence, your Saviour, the Incarnate Word, descends upon the Altar, you must see, with the eye of your faith, the Crib, and Jesus stretching out his hands to his Eternal Father, and looking upon you with extreme tenderness, and Mary adoring him with a Mother's love, and Joseph looking on and weeping with joy, and the holy Angels lost in amazement at the mystery. You must give your heart to the New-Born Babe, that he may fill it with what he wishes to see there; nay, beg of him to fill it with himself, and make himself its Master and its All.

After the Communion, the Church,—which has just been united to the Infant God by partaking of the sacred mysteries,—once more celebrates the Eternal Generation of that Divine Word, who was born from

the Bosom of the Father before any creature existed, and who has appeared to the world, this Night, before the Day-Star has risen.

COMMUNION.

In the brightness of the Saints, from the womb, before the day-star, I begot thee.

In splendoribus Sanctorum, ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

The Church terminates this her first Sacrifice, by praying for the grace of indissoluble union with the Saviour, who is born to her.

POSTCOMMUNION.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord our God, that we, who celebrate with joy the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, by partaking several times of these sacred mysteries, may, by a worthy conduct of life, come to be united with him. Who liveth, &c.

Da nobis, quæsumus, Domine Deus noster, ut qui Nativitatem Domini nostri Jesu Christi mysteriis nos frequentare gaudeamus, dignis conversationibus ad ejus mereamur pervenire consortium. Qui tecum.

The sacred Night is passing quickly on; and will soon bring us to the Second Mass, which is to sanctify the hour of day-break, or the Aurora. Every day in the year, the Church passes the hour before Sun-rise in prayer, for the rising of the Sun is a beautiful figure of the mystery of Jesus' coming to this earth, to give it light. This portion of the Divine Office is called *Lauds*, on account of its being wholly made up of praise and joy. On Christmas Day, however, she somewhat anticipates the usual hour, in order that she may begin, at the precise time of the Aurora, a more perfect and more divine Sacrifice of Praise—the Eucharistic Oblation, which satisfies all the obligations we owe to the Divine bounty.

The Office of *Lauds* is celebrated with the same

solemnity as that of Vespers; and altogether, the two Offices are much alike. Both of them tell us of the Divine Sun of Justice; Lauds celebrate his glorious rising, whilst Vespers—which are said at sun-set, when the shades of evening are beginning to fall upon the earth—remind us, how we must long for that eternal Day which shall have no night, and whose Lamp is the Lamb.¹ *Lauds* are the morning, Vespers the evening, incense. The mysteries of the liturgical *day*, begin with the first, and end with the second.

LAUDS.

Ÿ. Deus, in adiutorium
meum intende.

℞. Domine ad adjuvan-
dum me festina.

Gloria Patri, et Filio : et
Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et
nunc, et semper, et in sæcula
sæculorum. Amen. Alle-
luia.

Ÿ. Incline unto my aid, O
God.

℞. O Lord, make haste to
help me.

Glory be to the Father, and
to the Son, and to the Holy
Ghost.

As it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.
Alleluia.

The *first* Psalm of Lauds shows us our Lord in his infinite power and majesty. His admirable Birth has renewed our earth. He is born in time; but he was before all time. The *voice* of the deep sea betokens marvellous power; the power of our Emmanuel is more wonderful far. Let us lead lives worthy of the holiness of his *House*, which he has come to throw open to us.

ANT. Quem vidistis pas-
tores? Dicite: annuntiate

ANT. Whom have ye seen,
O Shepherds? Say, tell us,

¹ Apoc. xxi. 23.

who is it has appeared on the earth?—We have seen the Child that is born, and choirs of Angels praising the Lord, alleluia, alleluia.

nobis, in terris quis apparuit? Natum vidimus, et choros Angelorum collaudantes Dominum, alleluia, alleluia.

PSALM 92.

The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty: the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself.

For, *this day, by his birth*, he hath established the world, which shall not be moved.

Thy throne, *O Divine Infant!* is prepared from old: thou art from everlasting.

The floods have lifted up, O Lord! the floods have lifted up their voice.

The floods have lifted up their waves, with the noise of many waters.

Wonderful are the surges of the sea: wonderful is the Lord on high.

Thy testimonies are become exceedingly credible: holiness becometh thy House, O Lord, *which is thy Church*, unto length of days.

ANT. Whom have ye seen, O Shepherds? Say, tell us, who is it has appeared on the earth?—We have seen the Child that is born, and choirs of Angels praising the Lord, alleluia, alleluia.

Dominus regnavit, decorem indutus est: * indutus est Dominus fortitudinem et præcinxit se.

Etenim firmavit orbem terræ: * qui non commovebitur.

Paratâ sedes tua ex tunc: * a sæculo tu es.

Elevaverunt flumina, Domine: * elevaverunt flumina vocem suam.

Elevaverunt flumina fluctus suos: * a vocibus aquarum multarum.

Mirabiles elationes maris: * mirabilis in altis Dominus.

Testimonia tua credibilia facta sunt nimis: * domum tuam decet sanctitudo, Domine, in longitudinem dierum.

ANT. Quem vidistis pastores? Dicite: annuntiate nobis, in terris quis apparuit? Natum vidimus, et choros Angelorum collaudantes Dominum. Alleluia, alleluia.

The *second* Psalm is an invitation to all nations, that they enter into Bethlehem, that House of our Lord which is now filled with his sweet presence. He is the sovereign Pastor, and we are *the Sheep of his pasture*. Though he be the *Mighty God*, yet is

he most *sweet* and *merciful*; let us celebrate his coming with *joy* and gratitude.

ANT. Genuit puerpera regem, cui nomen æternum, et gaudia matris habens cum virginitatis honore, nec primam similem visa est, nec habere sequentem, alleluia.

ANT. The Mother has given birth to the King, whose name is eternal: she has both a Mother's joy and a Virgin's privilege: not one has ever been, or shall ever be, like her, alleluia.

PSALM 99.

Jubilate Deo omnis terra:
* servite Domino in lætitia.

Sing joyfully to God, all the earth! serve ye the Lord with gladness.

Introite in conspectu ejus:
* in exultatione.

Come in before his presence, with exceeding great joy.

Scitote quoniam Dominus ipse est Deus: * ipse fecit nos, et non ipsi nos.

Know ye, that *this Infant*, the Lord, is God: he made us, and not we ourselves.

Populus ejus, et oves pascuæ ejus, introite portas ejus in confessione: * atria ejus in hymnis, confitemini illi.

We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture; go ye into his gates, with praise: into his courts, with hymns, and give glory to him.

Laudate nomen ejus, quoniam suavis est Dominus; in æternum misericordia ejus: * et usque in generationem et generationem veritas ejus.

Praise ye his name, for the Lord is sweet; his mercy endureth for ever: and his truth to generation and generation.

ANT. Genuit puerpera regem, cui nomen æternum, et gaudia matris habens cum virginitatis honore, nec primam similem visa est, nec habere sequentem, alleluia.

ANT. The Mother has given birth to the King, whose name is eternal; she has both a Mother's joy and a Virgin's privilege: not one has ever been, or shall ever be, like her, alleluia.

The two following Psalms, which the Church unites into one, are the prayer of the faithful soul to her God, at dawn of day. From her first waking, she *thirsts after* the great God, her Creator and Redeemer. To-day we have this same God lying before

us in his Crib ; he comes that he may *fill* our souls, and nourish us, with his own substance :—how shall we do otherwise than *rejoice* in him ? The orb of day will soon light up the east ; but our Sun of Justice, the Lamb, is already shedding his bright soft rays upon us. May he mercifully pour out his *light* on all nations ! May all the earth bless this divine *Fruit*, which the Virgin-Mother has *yielded* !

ANT. The Angel said unto the Shepherds: I bring you tidings of great joy; for, this day, is born unto you the Saviour of the world, alleluia.

ANT. Angelus ad pastores ait: Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum: quia natus est vobis hodie Saviour mundi, alleluia.

PSALM 62.

O God, my God, to thee do I watch, at break of day.

For thee my soul hath thirsted, for thee my flesh, oh! how many ways.

In a desert land, and where there is no way, and no water: so, in the sanctuary of *Bethlehem* have I come before thee, to see thy power and thy glory.

For thy mercy is better than lives: thee my lips shall praise.

Thus will I bless thee all my life long: and in thy name, I will lift up my hands.

Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness, *O Bread of Life!* and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.

If I have remembered thee upon my bed, I will meditate on thee in the morning: because thou hast been my helper.

And I will rejoice under the covert of thy wings; my

Deus, Deus meus: * ad te de luce vigilo.

Sitivit in te anima mea: * quam multipliciter tibi caro mea.

In terra deserta, et in via, et in aquosa: * sic in sancto apparui tibi, ut viderem virtutem tuam, et gloriam tuam.

Quoniam melior est misericordia tua super vitas: * labia mea laudabunt te.

Sic benedicam te in vita mea: * et in nomine tuo levabo manus meas.

Sicut adipe et pinguedine repletur anima mea: * et labiis exsultationis laudabit os meum.

Si memor fui tui super stratum meum, in matutinis meditabor in te: * quia fuisti adjutor meus.

Et in velamento alarum tuarum exultabo, adhæsit

anima mea post te : * me
suscepit dextera tua.

Ipsi vero in vanum quæ-
sierunt animam meam, in-
troibunt in inferiora terræ : *
tradentur in manus gladii,
partes vulpium erunt.

Rex vero lætabitur in Deo,
laudabuntur omnes qui ju-
rant in eo : * quia obstruc-
tum est os loquentium ini-
qua.

soul hath stuck close to thee :
thy right hand hath received
me.

But they have sought my
soul in vain ; they shall go
into the lower parts of the
earth : they shall be delivered
into the hands of the sword,
they shall be the portions of
foxes.

But *the just man thus de-
livered* shall, as a King, re-
joice in God ; all they shall be
praised that swear by Him :
because the mouth is stopped
of them that speak wicked
things.

PSALM 66.

Deus misereatur nostri,
et benedicat nobis ; * illu-
minet vultum suum super
nos, et misereatur nostri.

Ut cognoscamus in terra
viam tuam : * in omnibus
gentibus Salutare tuum.

Confiteantur tibi populi
Deus : * confiteantur tibi
populi omnes.

Lætentur et exsultent
gentes : * quoniam judicas
populos in æquitate, et gen-
tes in terra dirigas.

Confiteantur tibi populi
Deus, confiteantur tibi po-
puli omnes : * terra dedit
fructum suum.

Benedicat nos Deus, Deus
noster, benedicat nos Deus :
* et metuant eum omnes
fines terræ.

May God have mercy on us,
and bless us ; may *the divine
Infant, from his Crib*, cause
the light of his countenance
to shine upon us, and may he
have mercy on us.

That we may know thy way
upon earth, *O Emmanuel!*
thy salvation in all nations.

Let people confess to thee,
O God ! let all people give
praise to thee.

Let the nations be glad and
rejoice : for thou judgest the
people with justice, and di-
rectest the nations upon
earth.

Let the people, O God, con-
fess to thee : let all the people
give praise to thee : *for, to-
day*, the earth hath yielded her
Fruit.

May God, our God, bless us,
may God bless us : and all the
ends of the earth fear him.

ANT. The Angel said unto the Shepherds : I bring you tidings of great joy ; for, this day, is born unto you the Saviour of the world, alleluia.

ANT. Angelus ad pastores ait : Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum : quia natus est. vobis hodie Salvator mundi, alleluia.

The Canticle, in which the Three Children, in the fiery Furnace of Babylon, bid all creatures of God bless his name, is sung by the Church in the Lauds of every Feast. It gives a voice to all creatures, and invites the whole universe to bless its divine Author. How just it is, that, on this day, heaven and earth should unite in giving glory to the God, who comes down among his own creatures, and repairs the injury done to them all by sin.

ANT. With the Angel was a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying : Glory to God in the highest ; and on earth, peace to men of good will, alleluia.

ANT. Facta est cum Angelo multitudo cœlestis exercitus laudantium Deum, et dicentium : Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis, alleluia.

CANTICLE OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

(*Dan.* 3.)

All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord : praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord : O ye heavens, bless the Lord.

O all ye waters, that are above the heavens, bless the Lord : O all ye powers of the Lord, bless the Lord.

O ye sun and moon, bless the Lord : O ye stars of heaven, bless the Lord.

O every shower and dew, bless ye the Lord : O all ye spirits of God, bless the Lord.

Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino : * laudate et superexaltate eum in sæcula.

Benedicite Angeli Domini Domino : * benedicite cœli Domino.

Benedicite aquæ omnes, quæ super cœlos sunt, Domino : * benedicite omnes virtutes Domini Domino.

Benedicite sol et luna Domino : * benedicite stellæ cœli Domino.

Benedicite omnis imber et ros Domino : * benedicite omnes spiritus Dei Domino.

Benedicite ignis et æstus Domino : * benedicite frigus et æstus Domino.

Benedicite rores, et pruina Domino : * benedicite gelu et frigus Domino.

Benedicite glacies et nives Domino : * benedicite noctes et dies Domino.

Benedicite lux et tenebræ Domino : * benedicite fulgura et nubes Domino.

Benedicat terra Dominum : * laudet et superexaltet eum in sæcula.

Benedicite montes et colles Domino : * benedicite universa germinantia in terra Domino.

Benedicite fontes Domino : * benedicite maria et flumina Domino.

Benedicite cete, et omnia quæ moventur in aquis, Domino : * benedicite omnes volucres cœli Domino.

Benedicite omnes bestiæ, et pecora Domino : * benedicite filii hominum Domino.

Benedicat Israel Dominum : * laudet et superexaltet eum in sæcula.

Benedicite Sacerdotes Domini Domino : * benedicite servi Domini Domino.

Benedicite spiritus et animæ justorum Domino : * benedicite Sancti et humiles corde Domino.

Benedicite Anania, Azaria, Misaël Domino : * laudate et superexaltate eum in sæcula.

Benedicamus Patrem et

O ye fire and heat, bless the Lord : O ye cold and heat, bless the Lord.

O ye dews and hoar frosts, bless the Lord : O ye frost and cold, bless the Lord.

O ye ice and snow, bless the Lord : O ye nights and days, bless the Lord.

O ye light and darkness, bless the Lord : O ye lightnings and clouds, bless the Lord.

Oh ! let the earth bless the Lord : let it praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye mountains and hills, bless the Lord : O all ye things that spring up in the earth, bless the Lord.

O ye fountains, bless the Lord : O ye seas and rivers, bless the Lord.

O ye whales, and all that move in the waters, bless the Lord : O all ye fowls of the air, bless the Lord.

O all ye beasts and cattle, bless the Lord : O ye sons of men, bless the Lord.

Oh ! let Israel bless the Lord : let them praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord : O ye servants of the Lord, bless the Lord.

O ye spirits and souls of the just, bless the Lord : O ye holy and humble of heart, bless the Lord.

O Ananias, Azarias, Misaël, bless ye the Lord : praise and exalt him above all for ever.

Let us bless the Father, and

the Son, with the Holy Ghost ; let us praise and exalt him above all for ever.

Blessed art thou, O Lord, in the firmament of heaven : and worthy of praise, and glorious, and exalted above all, for ever.

ANT. With the Angel, was a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying : Glory to God in the highest ; and on earth, peace to men of good will, alleluia.

Filium cum sancto Spiritu : * laudemus, et superexaltemus eum in sæcula.

Benedictus es Domine, in firmamento cœli : * et laudabilis et gloriosus, et superexaltatus in sæcula.

ANT. Facta est cum Angelo multitudo cœlestis exercitus laudantium Deum et dicentium : Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis, alleluia.

The three last Psalms of Lauds, which the Church unites under the same Antiphon, are also the last of the Psaltery. They sing the *praise* of the Lord, and urge all creatures to bless his holy name. The *first* of the three has a great resemblance with the Cantic of the Three Children ; the *second* invites the Saints to sing to Him, who has glorified them, and made them the instruments of his providence ; the *third* calls on every thing that can *breathe forth* music, to come and honour our dearest Infant King with sweetest thrills of melody.

ANT. A Little Child is, this day, born unto us, and he shall be called *God, the Mighty One*, alleluia, alleluia.

ANT. Parvulus filius hodie natus est nobis, et vocabitur Deus, Fortis, alleluia, alleluia.

PSALM 148.

Praise ye the Lord from the heavens : praise ye him in the high places.

Praise ye him, all his Angels : praise ye him, all his hosts.

Praise ye him, O sun and moon : praise ye him, all ye stars and light.

Laudate Dominum de cœlis : * laudate eum in excelsis.

Laudate eum omnes Angeli ejus : * laudate eum omnes virtutes ejus.

Laudate eum sol et luna : * laudate eum omnes stellæ et lumen.

Laudate eum cœli cœlorum : * et aquæ omnes quæ super cœlos sunt, laudent nomen Domini.

Quia ipse dixit et facta sunt : * ipse mandavit, et creata sunt.

Statuit ea in æternum, et in sæculum sæculi : * præceptum posuit, et non præteribit.

Laudate Dominum de terra : * dracones et omnes abyssi.

Ignis, grando, nix, glacies, spiritus procellarum : * quæ faciunt verbum ejus.

Montes et omnes colles : * ligna fructifera, et omnes cedri.

Bestiæ et universa pecora : * serpentes et volucres pennatæ.

Reges terræ et omnes populi : * principes, et omnes iudices terræ.

Juvenes, et virgines, senes cum junioribus, laudent nomen Domini : * quia exaltatum est nomen ejus solius.

Confessio ejus super cœlum et terram : * et exaltavit cornu populi sui.

Hymnus omnibus Sanctis ejus : * filiis Israel, populo appropinquantis sibi.

Praise him, ye heavens of heavens : and let all the waters that are above the heavens, praise the name of the Lord.

For he spoke, and they were made : he commanded, and they were created.

He hath established them for ever, and for ages of ages : he hath made a decree, and it shall not pass away.

Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all ye deeps.

Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy winds, which fulfil his word.

Mountains and all hills ; fruitful trees, and all cedars.

Beasts and all cattle ; serpents and feathered fowls.

Kings of the earth, and all people ; princes and all judges of the earth.

Young men and maidens ; let the old with the younger praise the name of the Lord : for his name alone is exalted.

His praise is above heaven and earth : and he hath, *this Day*, exalted the horn of his people.

A hymn to all his Saints : to the children of Israel, a people approaching to him.

PSALM 149.

Cantate Domino canticum novum : * laus ejus in Ecclesia Sanctorum.

Lætetur Israel in eo, qui fecit eum : * et filii Sion exsultent in rege suo.

Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle, let his praise be in the Church of the Saints.

Let *the new* Israel rejoice in him that made him, and let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.

Let them praise his name in choir : let them sing to him with the timbrel and the psaltery.

For the Lord is well pleased with his people : and the meek and humble, like the Babe of Bethlehem, he will exalt unto salvation.

The saints shall rejoice in glory : they shall be joyful in their beds.

The high praises of God shall be in their mouth : and two-edged swords in their hands.

To execute vengeance upon the nations : chastisements among the people ;

To bind their kings with fetters : and their nobles with manacles of iron ;

To execute upon them the judgment that is written : this glory is to all his Saints.

Laudent nomen ejus in choro : * in tympano et psalterio psallant ei.

Quia beneplacitum est Domino in populo suo : * et exaltabit mansuetos in salutem.

Exsultabunt Sancti in gloria : * lætabuntur in cubilibus suis.

Exaltationes Dei in gutture eorum : * et gladii anticipites in manibus eorum.

Ad faciendam vindictam in nationibus : * increpationes in populis.

Ad alligandos reges eorum in compedibus : * et nobiles eorum in manicis ferreis.

Ut faciant in eis iudicium conscriptum : * gloria hæc omnibus Sanctis ejus.

PSALM 150.

Praise ye the Lord in his holy places : praise ye him in the firmament of his power.

Praise ye him for his mighty acts : praise ye him according to the multitude of his greatness.

Praise him with sound of trumpet : praise him with psaltery and harp.

Praise him with timbrel and choir : praise him with strings and organs.

Praise him on high sounding cymbals, praise him on cymbals of joy : let every spirit praise the Lord.

Laudate Dominum in Sanctis ejus : * laudate eum in firmamento virtutis ejus.

Laudate eum in virtutibus ejus : * laudate eum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis ejus.

Laudate eum in sono tubæ : * laudate eum in psalterio et cithara.

Laudate eum in tympano et choro : * laudate eum in chordis et organo.

Laudate eum in cymbalis benesonantibus, laudate eum in cymbalis jubilationis : * omnis spiritus laudet Dominum.

ANT. Parvulus filius hodie natus est nobis, et vocabitur Deus, Fortis, alleluia, alleluia.

ANT. A Little Child is, this day, born unto us, and he shall be called *God, the Mighty One*, alleluia, alleluia.

The Capitulum is taken from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews; we shall have it repeated, and with several additional verses, in the Epistle of the Third Mass.

CAPITULUM.

(Heb. 1.)

Multifariam, multisque modis olim Deus loquens patribus in Prophetis: novissime diebus istis locutus est nobis in Filio, quem constituit hæredem universorum, per quem fecit et sæcula.

God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke, in times past, to the fathers by the Prophets; last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also he made the world.

R. Deo gratias.

R. Thanks be to God.

Sedulius, a Christian Poet of the fourth century, is the author of the beautiful Hymn, which now follows:—

HYMN.*

A solis ortus cardine
Ad usque terræ limitem,
Christum canamus Principem,
Natum Maria Virgine.

From where the sun rises,
to the furthest west, let us all
sing to Jesus our King, the
Son of the Virgin Mary.

* In the Monastic Breviary, it is as follows :

R. *breve*. Verbum caro factum est, * Alleluia, alleluia. Verbum. V. Et habitavit in nobis. * Alleluia, alleluia. Gloria Patri. Verbum.

A solis ortus cardine
Ad usque terræ limitem,

Christum canamus Principem,
Natum Maria Virgine.

Beatus Auctor sæculi
Servile corpus induit;
Ut Carne carnem liberans,
Ne perderet quos condidit.

The blessed Creator of the universe assumed the Body of a servant : that he might thus by Flesh deliver flesh, and save from perdition the creatures of his hands.

The heavenly grace enters into the womb of the Virgin-Mother : the young Maiden carries within her a Secret, which she knows not.

This chastest living Dwelling becomes, in that instant, God's own Temple : the purest of Virgins conceives the Son of God.

She gives him birth : Him, whom Gabriel had foretold, and whom the Baptist, exulting in his mother's womb, perceived when yet unborn.

He suffered himself to be laid on the straw : he disdains not the Crib : and He, who feeds the hungry birds, is fed himself on a few drops of milk !

The heavenly citizens keep glad choir, singing their angel-hymns to God : and the Shepherd, the Creator of the world, is looked at by shepherds.

Beatus auctor sæculi
Servile corpus induit :
Ut carne carnem liberans,
Ne perderet quos condidit.

Castæ Parentis viscera
Cœlestis intrat gratia :
Venter puellæ bajulat
Secreta, quæ non noverat.

Domus pudici pectoris
Templum repente fit Dei ;
Intacta nesciens virum.
Conceptit alvo Filium.

Enititur puerpera
Quem Gabriel prædixerat,
Quem ventre matris ges-
tiens,
Baptista clausum senserat.

Fœno jacere pertulit :
Præsepe non abhorruit :
Et lacte modico pastus est,
Per quem nec ales esurit.

Gaudet chorus cœlestium,
Et Angeli canunt Deo ;
Palamque fit pastoribus
Pastor, creator omnium.

Castæ Parentis viscera
Cœlestis intrat gratia :
Venter Puellæ bajulat
Secreta, quæ non noverat.

Domus pudici pectoris
Templum repente fit Dei :
Intacta nesciens virum,
Verbo conceptit Filium.

Enixa est Puerpera
Quem Gabriel prædixerat,
Quem matris alvo gestiens,
Clausus Joannes senserat.

Fœno jacere pertulit,
Præsepe non abhorruit :
Parvoque lacte pastus est,
Per quem nec ales esurit.

Gaudet chorus cœlestium,
Et Angeli canunt Deo :
Palamque fit pastoribus
Pastor, Creator omnium.

Gloria tibi Domine,
Qui natus es de Virgine,
Cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.
Amen.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria,
Qui natus es de Virgine,
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.

Amen.

Ÿ. Notum fecit Dominus,
alleluia.

℞. Salutare suum, alle-
luia.

Glory be to thee, O Jesus,
that wast born of the Virgin !
and to the Father, and to the
Spirit of Love, for everlasting
ages.

Amen.

Ÿ. The Lord hath made
known, alleluia.

℞. His salvation, alleluia.

The Canticle of Zachary is now sung: it is the Church's daily welcome of the rising Sun. It celebrates the coming of Jesus to his creatures, the fulfilment of the promises made by God, and the apparition of the Divine *Orient* in the midst of our darkness.

ANT. Gloria in excelsis
Deo, et in terra pax homi-
nibus bonæ voluntatis, alle-
luia, alleluia.

ANT. Glory be to God in
the highest; and, on earth,
peace to men of good will,
alleluia, alleluia.

CANTICLE OF ZACHARY.

(*St. Luke, 1.*)

Benedictus Dominus Deus
Israel: * quia visitavit, et
fecit redemptionem plebis
sue.

Et erexit cornu salutis
nobis: * in domo David
pueri sui.

Sicut locutus est per os
Sanctorum: * quia a sæculo
sunt Prophetarum ejus.

Salutem ex inimicis nos-
tris: * et de manu omnium
qui oderunt nos.

Ad faciendam misericor-
diam cum Patribus nostris:
* et memorari testamenti
sui sancti.

Jusjurandum quod jura-
vit ad Abraham patrem nos-
trum: * daturum se nobis.

Blessed be the Lord God of
Israel: because he hath, *this
day*, visited and wrought the
redemption of his people.

And hath raised up an horn
of salvation to us, in the house
of David his servant.

As he spoke by the mouth
of his holy Prophets, who are
from the beginning.

Salvation from our enemies,
and from the hand of all that
hate us.

To perform mercy to our
Fathers, and to remember his
holy testament.

The oath which he swore to
Abraham, our Father; that
he would grant to us.

That being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we may serve him, without fear.

In holiness and justice before him, all our days.

And thou, child, *the Precursor of our Emmanuel*, shalt be called the Prophet of the Most High : for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.

To give to his people the knowledge of the Salvation *brought them by the Messias*, unto the remission of their sins.

Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient, from on high, hath visited us.

To enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death ; to direct our feet into the way of peace.

ANT. Glory be to God in the highest ; and, on earth, peace to men of good will, alleluia, alleluia.

Ut sine timore de manu inimicorum nostrorum liberati : * serviamus illi.

In sanctitate et justitia coram ipso ; * omnibus diebus nostris.

Et tu puer, Propheta Altissimi vocaberis : * præibis enim ante faciem Domini parare vias ejus.

Ad dandam scientiam salutis plebi ejus : * in remissionem peccatorum eorum.

Per viscera misericordiæ Dei nostri : * in quibus visitavit nos, Oriens ex alto.

Illuminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent : * ad dirigendos pedes nostros in viam pacis.

ANT. Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis, alleluia, alleluia.

COLLECT.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who groan under the old captivity of sin, may be freed therefrom by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son. Through the same, &c.

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem Nativitas liberet, quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet. Per eundem.

THE SECOND MASS,

OR

MASS OF THE AURORA.

The Office of Lauds is finished: the Canticles of joy are ended, wherewith the Church thanks the Eternal Father for his having made to rise upon us the divine Sun of Justice. It is time to offer up the second Sacrifice, or, as it is called, *the Mass of the Aurora*. In the first, the Church celebrated the temporal Birth of the Word according to the flesh. In this, she is going to honour the second Birth of the same Son of God;—a Birth full of *grace and mercy*;—that which is accomplished in the heart of the faithful Christian.

See, then, how, at this very hour, Shepherds are told by the Angels to go to Bethlehem, and how they hasten thither. With great eagerness they enter the Stable, which is scarcely large enough to hold them. Obedient to the warning received from heaven, they are come to see *the Saviour*, who, they have been told, *has been born unto them*. They find all things just as the Angels had said. Who could tell the joy of their hearts, and the simplicity of their faith? They are not surprised to find, in the midst of poverty greater even than their own, Him whose Birth has made the very Angels exult. They find no difficulty in acknowledging the wonderful mystery; they adore, they love, the Babe that lies there before them. They are at once Christians, and the Christian Church begins in them; the mystery of a God humbled for man, finds faith in these humble souls. Herod will plot the death of this Babe; the Synagogue will rage; the Scribes and Doctors will league together against the Lord and his Christ; they will put this

Saviour of Israel to death ;—but, the faith of the Shepherds will not be shaken, and will find imitators in the wise and powerful ones of this world, who will come, at last, and bow down their reason to the Crib and the Cross.

What is it that has come over these poor Shepherds ? Christ has been born in their hearts ; he dwells in them by faith and love. They are our Fathers in the Church. They are our Models. Let us imitate them, and invite the Divine Infant to come into our souls, which we will so prepare for him, as that he may find nothing to prevent his entering. It is for our sakes, also, that the Angels speak ; it is to us, also, that they tell the glad tidings ; for, the Mystery, that has this Night been accomplished, is too grand to have the pastoral slopes of Bethlehem for its limits.—In order to honour the silent coming of the Saviour into the souls of men, the Priest is preparing to go to the altar, and a second time offer the spotless Lamb to the Father, who hath sent him.

As the Shepherds fixed their eyes on the Crib, so let ours be on the Altar, where we are soon to behold the same Jesus, hidden under appearances, that are humbler even than the swathing-bands. These rustic swains enter into the Cave, not yet knowing Him, whom they are going to see ; but their hearts are quite ready for the revelation. Suddenly, they see the Infant ; and as they gaze upon him in speechless wondering, Jesus looks at them from his Crib, and smiles upon them :—they are changed men, full of light, and the Sun of Justice has made Day in their souls. It is to be the same with us : the words of the Prince of the Apostles are to be verified in us : *the Light, that shineth in a dark place*, has been our one desire and attention—now *the Day will dawn, and the Day-Star arise in our hearts.*¹

¹ II. St. Pet. i. 19.

This long longed-for Aurora has come ! The divine Orient has risen upon us, to set now no more ; for, we are firmly resolved to keep from the night of sin, which his grace has destroyed. His mercy has made us to be *children of light and children of the day*.¹ There must be no more sleep of death for us. We must watch in ceaseless vigilance, remembering how the Shepherds were keeping *their watch*, when the Angel came to speak to them, and Heaven opened over their heads. All the Chants of this *Mass of the Aurora* speak to us of the brightness of the Sun of Justice ; they must be sweet to us, as is to captives, long buried in the cold darkness of their dungeon, the ray of that morning, which is to set them free. See, Christians, how this God of Light shines upon us from his Crib ! The face of his Mother is lit up with the immense brightness, on which she looks with all the fixedness of her contemplating love ; and Joseph, too, has the shining vivid on his features, which makes them more beautiful and venerable than we have ever seen them. Passing by the ungrateful Bethlehem, which deserves to be left in darkness—this same divine Light breaks upon the whole world beyond the Cave, and gradually enkindles within millions of hearts, a burning love for this glorious Sun of Justice, who delivers man from the labyrinth of his errors and passions, showing him, and giving him, the sublime end for which he was created.

In the very midst of her celebration of this mystery of the Birth of Jesus, the Church offers us another object of admiration and joy :—it is one of her own children. Whilst solemnising the divine Mystery of to-day's Feast, she commemorates, in this the second Mass, one of those glorious heroines, who preserved the Light of Christ within their souls, in

¹ I. Thess. v. 5.

spite of all the attacks made to rob them of it. Her name is Anastasia. This holy Widow of Rome suffered martyrdom under the persecution of Dioclesian, and had the privilege of being thus born to eternal life, on the Birth-Day of that Jesus, for whom she suffered death.

She had been married to a Pagan of the name of Publius ; himself also a Roman ; who, being irritated against her on account of her great charities to the Christians, treated her with every sort of cruelty. She endured all with admirable patience ; and when this heavy trial was removed from her by the death of her husband, she devoted herself to visiting and solacing the holy Confessors, who had been cast into the prisons of Rome, for the Faith. Being, at length, apprehended as a Christian, she was tied to a stake and burnt to death. Her Church, in Rome, which is built on the site where formerly stood her house, is the *Station* for this Second Mass. The Sovereign Pontiffs used formerly to say it here, and the ancient custom was observed, in our own times, by Pope Leo 12th.

How admirable is this delicate considerateness of our holy Mother the Church ! Wishing to associate one of her Saints with the glory of this present Solemnity, on which the *Virginity* of Mary receives its triumphant recompense—it is a holy *Widow*, that is chosen for this signal honour ; that it might hereby be shown, how the Married State, though inferior in merit and holiness to the State of *Virginity*, is not excluded from the blessings, which the Birth of the Son of Mary merited for the world. There was a Virgin, St. Eugenia, that might so well have been selected ; for, she suffered a glorious martyrdom, under Galerian, on this same feast, and in the same City, as did the wife of Publius : but no—the preference is given to Anastasia, the Widow. This choice of the Church—which is dictated by her hea-

venly wisdom, and by the love she has for all her children—forcibly reminds us of a beautiful passage in one of St. Augustine's Sermons for Christmas Day :

“ Exult, O ye Virgins of Christ! for the Mother of Christ is your companion. You could not be his Mother; but, for his sake, you would be Virgins: He that is not born *of* you, is born *to* you. And yet, you remember his words: *Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, is my brother, and sister, and mother.*¹ Now, have you not done the will of his Father?

“ Exult, O ye Widows of Christ! for ye have vowed a holy continency to Him, that made Virginitiy fruitful. And thou, too, O nuptial chastity! you, I mean, that are faithful in the married state, you also may exult; for what you lose in the body, you do not lose in your hearts. * * Let your soul be virginal by its faith, for it is by her Faith that the Church is a Virgin. * * Jesus is Truth, and Peace, and Justice; conceive him by your faith, give him birth by your good works; in order that what the womb of Mary did in the *Flesh* of Jesus, your heart may do in the *law* of Jesus. Believe me, you yourselves are children of virginity, for are you not the members of Christ? Mary is Mother of Jesus, who is our Head; and the Church is the mother of you who are his Members. Yes, the Church is, like Mary, both Mother and Virgin: she is Mother, by her tender charity; and Virgin, by the purity of her faith and holiness.”²

But, the Holy Sacrifice is about to commence. The Introit tells us of the Birth of Jesus our Sun of Justice. The brightness of his first rising, is the presage of his mid-day splendour. *Strength* and *Beauty* are his. He is armed for victory, and his name is *Prince of Peace*.

¹ St. Matth. xii. 50.

² Ninth Sermon *On our Lord's Nativity*.

INTROIT.

A light shall shine upon us, this day ; because the Lord is born for us : and his name shall be the Wonderful One, God, the Prince of Peace, the Father of the world to come ; of whose reign there shall be no end.

Ps. The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty : the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself. *Ÿ.* Glory, &c. A light.

Lux fulgebit hodie super nos ; quia natus est nobis Dominus : et vocabitur Admirabilis, Deus, Princeps pacis, Pater futuri sæculi ; cujus regni non erit finis.

Ps. Dominus regnavit, decorem indutus est : indutus est Dominus fortitudinem, et præcinxit se. Ÿ. Gloria Patri. Lux fulgebit.

The prayer of the Church, in this the Mass of the Aurora, is the begging of God to pour upon our souls the rays of the Sun of Justice, that so we may become fruitful in works of Light, and be no more the slaves of darkness.

COLLECT.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that as we are enlightened by the new light of thy Word become flesh, we may show, in our actions, the effects of that faith, which shineth in our minds. Through the same, &c.

Da nobis, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, ut qui nova incarnati Verbi tui luce perfundimur, hoc in nostro resplendeat opere, quod per fidem fulget in mente. Per eundem.

Commemoration of St. Anastasia.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that as we celebrate the solemnity of blessed Anastasia, thy Martyr, we may be sensible of the effects of her prayers to thee in our behalf. Through, &c.

Da, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, ut qui beatæ Anastasiæ, Martyris tuæ, solemnia colimus, ejus apud te patrocina sentiamus. Per Dominum.

EPISTLE.

Lectio Epistolæ beati Pauli
Apostoli ad Titum.

Cap. III.

Charissime : apparuit benignitas et humanitas Salvatoris nostri Dei : non ex operibus justitiæ, quæ fecimus nos ; sed secundum suam misericordiam salvos nos fecit per lavacrum regenerationis, et renovationis Spiritus Sancti, quem effudit in nos abunde per Jesum Christum Salvatorem nostrum : ut justificati gratia ipsius, hæredes simus secundum spem vitæ æternæ, in Christo Jesu Domino nostro.

Lesson of the Epistle of Saint Paul the Apostle to Titus.

Ch. III.

Most dearly beloved : the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared : not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour : that being justified by his grace, we may be heirs according to hope of life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This Sun which has appeared on our earth, is God our Saviour, full of tenderest mercy. We were far off from God, and were sitting in the shades of death—the rays of the divine Light had to reach down to us in the deep abyss of our sins ; and now, praise be to this Infinite Mercy ! we are set free, and, with our freedom, have received regeneration, justification, and heirship to eternal life. Who shall henceforth separate us from the love of this Infant Jesus ? Is it possible, that we ourselves can ever frustrate the designs of that love, by rendering all that it has done for us useless, and becoming once more the slaves of darkness and death ? May God forbid it ! and grant us grace to maintain our *hope of everlasting life*, which the Mystery of our Redemption has purchased for us.

GRADUAL.

Benedictus qui venit in Blessed be he that cometh

in the name of the Lord : the Lord is our God, and he hath shone upon us.

Ÿ. This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty : the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself with might. Alleluia.

nomine Domini : Deus Dominus, et illuxit nobis.

Ÿ. A Domino factum est istud, et est mirabile in oculis nostris.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. Dominus regnavit, decorem induit : induit Dominus fortitudinem, et præcinxit se virtute. Alleluia.

Sequel of the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Ch. II.

At that time : The Shepherds said one to another : Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word, that has come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us. And they came with haste ; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in a manger. And seeing, they understood of the word, that had been spoken to them, concerning this Child. And all that heard, wondered ; and at those things that were told them by the Shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. And the Shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Lucam.

Cap. II.

In illo tempore : Pastores loquebantur ad invicem : Transeamus usque Bethlehem, et videamus hoc verbum quod factum est, quod Dominus ostendit nobis. Et venerunt festinantes ; et invenerunt Mariam et Joseph, et infantem positum in præsepio. Videntes autem cognoverunt de verbo quod dictum erat illis de puero hoc. Et omnes qui audierunt, mirati sunt, et de his quæ dicta erant a pastoribus ad ipsos. Maria autem conservabat omnia verba hæc, conferens in corde suo. Et reversi sunt pastores glorificantes et laudantes Deum in omnibus quæ audierant et viderant, sicut dictum est ad illos.

Let us imitate the earnestness of the Shepherds in their hastening to Jesus. No sooner do they hear the Angel's words, than they start for the holy Stable

in Bethlehem. Once in the presence of the Divine Infant, they know him by the sign that had been given them by the Angel ; and Jesus is born in their souls by his grace. These happy men delight, now, in their poverty, for they find that He, too, is poor. They feel that they are united to him for ever, and their whole lives shall testify to the change that this December Night has worked in them. They do not keep the great event to themselves ; they tell every one about the Babe of Bethlehem, they become his Apostles, and their burning words fill their listeners with astonishment. Like them, let us glorify the great God, who, not satisfied with calling us to the admirable Light, has set it in the very centre of our hearts, by uniting us to himself. Let us often think of the Mysteries of this glorious Night, after the example of Mary, who keeps unceasingly in her most pure Heart the wonderful things that God has been accomplishing by her and in her.

During the Offertory of the sacred gifts, the Church extols the power of our Emmanuel, who, that he might reform this fallen world, humbled himself so far, as to have a few poor Shepherds for his courtiers, He whose Throne and Divinity are from eternity.

OFFERTORY.

Deus firmavit orbem terræ, qui non commovebitur : parata sedes tua, Deus, ex tunc ; a sæculo tu es.

God hath established the world, which shall not be moved : thy throne, O God, is prepared from of old ; thou art from everlasting.

SECRET.

Munera nostra, quæsumus, Domine, Nativitatis hodiernæ mysteriis apta proveniant, et pacem nobis semper infundant : ut, sicut homo genitus idem refulsit et Deus ; sic nobis hæc

May the offerings, O Lord, we make, be agreeable to the mystery of this day's Birth, and always pour forth peace upon us : that as He, who, though born Man, showed himself also God, so may this

earthly substance give us that which is divine. Through the same, &c.

terrena substantia conferat quod divinum est. Per eundem.

Commemoration of St. Anastasia.

Graciously receive, O Lord, we beseech thee, our offerings, and grant, by the merits of blessed Anastasia, thy Martyr, that they may avail to our salvation. Through, &c.

Accipe, quæsumus, Domine, munera dignanter oblata : et beatæ Anastasiæ, martyris tuæ, suffragantibus meritis, ad nostræ salutis auxilium provenire concede. Per Dominum.

After both Priest and people have communicated, the holy Church, all illumined with the sweet Light of her Spouse, to whom she has just been united, applies to herself the words, which the Prophet Zachary formerly addressed to her, when he announced the coming of the King, her Saviour.

COMMUNION.

Rejoice, O daughter of Sion ; shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold ! thy King will come to thee, the Holy One, and the Saviour of the world.

Exsulta, filia Sion ; lauda, filia Jerusalem : ecce Rex tuus venit Sanctus, et Salvator mundi.

POSTCOMMUNION.

May we, O Lord, always receive new Light from this Sacrament, which reneweth to us the memory of that wonderful Birth, which destroyed the old man. Through the same, &c.

Hujus nos, Domine, sacramenti semper novitas natalis instauret : cujus natiuitas singularis humanam repulit vetustatem. Per eundem Dominum.

Commemoration of St. Anastasia.

Thou hast fed, O Lord, thy family with these sacred oblations ; ever, therefore, comfort us with her intercession, whose feast we celebrate. Through, &c.

Satiasti, Domine, familiam tuam muneribus sacris : ejus, quæsumus, interuentione nos refove, cujus solemnia celebramus. Per Dominum.

The Mass of the Aurora ended, and the Birth of *Grace* having been honoured by this second immolation of the divine Immortal Victim—the Faithful retire from the Church, that they may refresh themselves by sleep, and so, be in readiness for the Third Mass.

Mary and Joseph are in the Stable of Bethlehem, watching near the Crib. The light which reflects from the new-born Babe, and which surpasses the brightness of the sun that is just rising, fills the Cave and shines on the rocks outside; but, now that the Shepherds are gone, and the Angels are singing elsewhere, there is silence in the sacred grotto. As we lie down to take our rest, let us think upon the Divine Infant, and how he passes this his first night, in his humble Crib. That he may conform to the necessities of our human nature, which he has assumed, he closes his tender eye-lids, and sleep comes, because he so wills it, and lulls his senses to rest:—but, even while *asleep, his heart watcheth*,¹ offering itself unceasingly for us. At times, he smiles on his Mother, who keeps her eyes fixed on him, loving him as She alone can love; he prays to his Eternal Father, and implores pardon for guilty man; he expiates for our pride by his own humiliations; he shows himself to us as the model of the infancy we must now begin to practise. Let us ask him to give us of the merit which attaches to this his sleep; that so, after having slept in peace, we may wake in his grace, and walk on, strenuously, in the path we have now entered.

¹ Cant. v. 2.

CHRISTMAS MORNING.

BEFORE MASS.

THE merry-pealing Bells have wakened us up, echoing to us the sweet burden of our *Matin-Song*, and *inviting* us to come once more and adore our Jesus, and assist at the Mass of the Day, which we call the *Third Mass* : *Christ is born unto us ; come ! let us adore !*

The sun is shining in the east—not, indeed, as he will in his summer's pride ;—still, brightly enough to tell us, that his triumph over winter has begun. Now, we say, the day will grow longer ! Under this emblem, let us see and adore our Sun of Justice, Jesus, our sweet Saviour, who has also begun, to-day, to run his triumphant course !¹

Until the hour of Mass comes, let us keep up in our souls the spirit of this glorious Festival, by reading the following selections from the ancient Liturgies. They are full of joy and tender devotion, and tell us, of the triumph of Light, of the loveliness of the new-born Babe, and of the glory of the Virgin-Mother.

We will begin with these stanzas of Prudentius, the prince of Christian Poets : they are taken from his Hymn, which is thus headed : *The Eighth of the Kalends of January : (VIII. Kal. Januariæ.)*

HYMN.

Why is it, that the Sun,	Quid est, quod arctum cir-
which rises to-day, leaves his	culum
narrow path ? Is it not, that	Sol jam recurrens deserit ?

¹ Ps. xviii. 6.

Christusne terris nascitur
Qui lucis auget tramitem ?

Heu, quam fugacem gratiam
Festina volvebat dies !
Quam pene subductam facem.

Sensim recisa extinxerat !
Cœlum nitescat lætius,
Gratetur et gaudens humus ;
Scandit gradatim denuo
Jubar priores lineas.

Te cuncta nascentem, puer,
Sensere dura, et barbara,
Victusque saxorum rigor
Obduxit herbam cotibus.

Jam mella de scopulis
fluunt,
Jam stillat ilex arido
Sudans amomum stipite ;
Jam sunt myricis balsama.
O sancta præsepis tui,
Æterne Rex, cunabula,
Populisque per seclum sacra,
Mutis et ipsis credita.

Now let us listen to the several Churches, beginning with those of the East, as being nearest to the country where the great Event took place. First, comes the Church of Syria ; her Chanter is St. Ephraim ; and he begins his song thus :

Nato Filio, lumen affulsit,
et ex mundo tenebræ fugatæ,
illuminatusque est orbis ;
laudes ergo referat
Nato, qui illum illuminavit.

Ortus est ex utero Virginis,
eoque viso defecerunt
umbræ : et tenebræ erroris
ab eo expulsæ ; orbisque

Jesus is born on our earth,
Jesus, who comes to widen for
us the way of Light ?

Ah ! how speedily did the
rapid Day turn his sweet face
from us ! how, each time,
shorter was his stay, preparing
us for total night !

But now, let the heavens
wear brighter looks, and the
glad earth be happy, for, the
Sun begins, once more, to
mount the longer path.

Dear Infant Jesus ! all
things, however hard and
senseless, feel that thou art
born : the very stones relent,
and verdure comes from rocks.

The flinty mountain-side
drips now with honey ; the
oak's stiff trunk now sweats its
sappy tears ; and balsam oozes
now from humblest shrub.

How holy is thy cradle-crib,
O King eternal ! How sacred
ever to mankind ! Nay, the
very Ox and Ass stand over it
as theirs !

The Son of God is born—
Light has shone forth, darkness
has fled from the earth, and
the world is enlightened ; let
it praise the New-Born Babe,
that gave it light.

He has risen from the Vir-
gin's womb ; the shades of
night have seen him and fled :
the darkness of error has been

scattered ; let the whole earth
sing praise to Him, by whom
it has been illumined.

*totus illustratus ; laudes er-
go illi referat.*

The Church of Armenia thus sings to our Emmanuel, during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass :

A fresh flower has, this day,
sprung up from the Root of
Jesse : and a daughter of
David has given birth to the
Son of God.

*Novus flos hodie oritur ex
radice Jesse, et filia David
parit Filium Dei.*

A multitude of Angels and
the Heavenly Host, coming
down from heaven with the
Only Begotten King, sang and
said : This is the Son of God !
Let us all exclaim : Ye hea-
vens exult, and ye foundations
of the world be glad ! for, the
Eternal God has appeared
upon the earth, and has con-
versed with men, that he may
save our souls !

*Multitudo Angelorum et
militiæ cœlestis, descenden-
tes de cœlis cum unigenito
rege cantabant et dicebant :
Hic est Filius Dei. Omnes
dicamus : exsultate cœli, et
lætamini fundamenta mun-
di, quia Deus æternus in
terris apparuit, et cum ho-
minibus conversatus est, ut
salvet animas nostras.*

The Greek Church thus cries out in her beautiful language :

Come ! let us rejoice in the
Lord, celebrating the mystery
of this day. The wall of di-
vision is destroyed ; the fiery
sword is sheathed, and the
Angel no longer keeps us
from the Tree of Life. I,
yea I, that was driven, by the
sin of disobedience, from the
Paradise of delights, may now
enter and feast. The unchange-
able Image of the Father, the
type of his eternity, assumes
the form of a servant, and is
born of a Virgin-Mother ; yet,
he suffers not any change :
for, that which he was, he con-
tinues to be—the true God ;

*Venite, exsultemus Domi-
no, hodiernum celebrantes
mysterium. Murus dirutus
est medius ; avertitur flam-
meus gladius, Cherubim
a ligno vitæ recedit. Et ego
paradisum deliciarum par-
ticipo, a quo per inobedien-
tiam expulsus fueram. In-
commutabilis imago Patris,
typus ejus æternitatis, for-
mam servi accipit, ex nupti-
necia matre progrediens,
nullam passus commutatio-
nem : quod enim erat per-
mansit, Deus cum esset
verus ; quod autem non erat
præteraccipit, homo factus.*

per philanthropiam. Illi clamemus : Qui natus es de Virgine, miserere nobis.

but that which he was not, he now becomes, being made Man for love of man. Let us cry out to him : O thou, that art born of the Virgin ! have mercy on us.

The holy Roman Church, by the mouth of St. Leo, in his Sacramentary, thus celebrates the mystery of the divine Light :

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare : nos tibi gratias agere, æternæ Deus, quia nostri Salvatoris hodie lux vera processit, quæ clara nobis omnia et intellectu manifestavit et visu. Quibus non solum præsentem vitam suo splendore dirigeret, sed ad ipsam nos majestatis immensæ gloriam perduceret intuentiam.

It is truly meet and just, right and available to salvation, that we should give thanks to thee, O Eternal God : because, this day, has risen the true light of our Saviour, whereby all things are made clear to our intellect and sight : that thus, by his own brightness, he might not only direct us in this our present life, but bring us to the very vision of thy divine Majesty.

The same Church of Rome, in the Sacramentary of St. Gelasius, makes the following prayer to the heavenly Father, who sent his Son to redeem us :

Omnipotens, sempiternæ Deus, qui hunc diem per incarnationem Verbi tui, et per partum beatæ Virginis consecrasti ; da populis tuis in hac celebritate lætitiæ, ut et qui tua gratia sunt redempti, tua adoptione sint filii.

O Almighty and everlasting God, who hast consecrated this day by the Incarnation of thy Word, and the Delivery of the Blessed Virgin ; grant to thy people, upon this joyous solemnity, that they who have been redeemed by thy grace, may also be made thy children by adoption.

And, again, the same Church thus invokes upon her children the Light of Christ : she uses the words of the Sacramentary of St. Gregory the Great :

Concede nobis, omnipotens Deus, ut salutare tuum,

Grant unto us, O Almighty God ! that the Saviour—whom

thou sendest for the world's salvation on this day's solemnity, whereon the heavens are renewed in light—may ever rise in our hearts and renew them.

The Church of Milan, in its Ambrosian Liturgy, also celebrates the new Light and the joys of the Virgin-Mother :

When our Lord came, he dispelled all the darkness of night ; and where had been no light, there was made brightness, and the day appeared.

Rejoice and be glad, O Mary, thou joy of Angels ! Rejoice, O thou Virgin of the Lord, and joy of the prophets ! Rejoice, thou Blessed one, the Lord is with thee. Rejoice, thou that didst receive, at the Angel's announcing, Him who is the joy of the world. Rejoice, thou that didst give birth to thy Creator and Lord. Rejoice, in that thou wast worthy to be made the Mother of Christ.

The ancient Church of Gaul expresses its gladness by these joyous Antiphons, and which were adopted, for several ages, by the Church of Rome :

The purest of Virgins gave us our God, who was this day born of her, clothed in the flesh of a Babe, and she was found worthy to feed him at her Breast : let us all adore Christ, who came to save us.

Ye faithful people, let us all rejoice, for our Saviour is born in our world : this Day, there has been born the Son of the

nova cœlorum luce mirabile, quod ad salutem mundi hodierna festivitate processit, nostris semper innovandis cordibus oriatur.

Adveniens Dominus, abstulit omnem caliginem noctis ; et, ubi non erat lumen, facta est claritas, et apparuit dies.

Gaude, et lætare, exultatio Angelorum. Gaude, Domini Virgo, prophetarum gaudium. Gaudeas, benedicta, Dominus tecum est. Gaude, quæ per Angelum gaudium mundi suscepisti. Gaude, quæ genuisti factorem et Dominum. Gaudeas, quia digna es esse Mater Christi.

Hodie intacta Virgo Deum nobis genuit, teneris indutum membris, quem lactare meruit ; omnes Christum adoremus qui venit salvare nos.

Gaudeamus omnes fideles, Salvator noster natus est in mundo : hodie processit Proles magnifici germinis,

et perseverat pudor virginitatis.

O mundi Domina, regio ex semine orta, ex tuo jam Christus processit alvo, tanquam sponsus de thalamo: hic jacet in præsepio qui et sidera regit.

great Mother, and she yet a pure Virgin.

O Queen of the world, and Daughter of a kingly race! Christ has risen from thy womb, as a Bridegroom coming from the bride-chamber: He that rules the stars, lies in a Crib.

The Gothic Church of Spain unites her voice with that of all these others, and, in her Mozarabic Breviary, thus hails the rising of the Divine Sun :

Hodie lumen mundi prodiit: hodie salus ævi emicuit: hodie Salvator Israel de climate cœli descendit, ut eruat omnes captivos, quos antiquus hostis prædo per primi hominis delictum captivaverat: et ut cæcis mentibus lumen, surdis auditum, gratia præveniente, restitueret: ob istius tanti mysterii beneficia montes et colles tripudiant, ipsaque mundi elementa ineffabili gaudio ista in die melos decantant: ob hoc gemebunda prece pii Redemptoris clementiam suppliciter exoramus; ut nos, qui in tenebris peccatorum nostrorum involvimur, per cordis acclamationem protinus experimur, ut illo in nobis apparente, et splendor gloriæ jucundius, ac multiplicius nostris in præcordiis vigeat, et salutis gaudia sine fine dulcescant.

To-day, has risen the Light of the world: to-day, has shone forth the earth's salvation: to-day, the Saviour of Israel has come down from the heavenly country, that he may set free all the slaves, whom the old enemy and robber had enslaved by the sin of our first Parent; that he might, also, restore, by his preventing grace, light to the blind of heart, and hearing to the deaf. For the benefits of this so great a mystery, let the mountains and hills leap with joy, and the very elements of the world be exceeding glad, on this day, and sing sweet melody. Therefore, let us, in humblest prayer, suppliantly beseech our most merciful Redeemer; that we, who are beset by the darkness of our sins, may, by this our hearts' acclamation, be speedily delivered; that, he appearing among us, the brightness of his glory may more joyously and abundantly gleam in our souls, and the happiness of salvation gladden them with never-ending sweetness.

Let us end this our stroll among the ancient Liturgies, by culling a flower from Erin. The Church of Ireland, in the seventh century, used to sing this Antiphon on Christmas Day, which we have taken from the Banchor Antiphonary, published by Muratori. Here, again, we find the idea so often alluded to:—the triumph of the Sun's light, which begins to-day, considered as the image of Jesus' Birth.

From this Day, night decreases, day increases, darkness is shaken, light grows longer, and the loss of night shall make the gain of day.

Ab hodierno die nox minuitur, dies crescit, concutuntur tenebræ, lumen augetur, et in lucro lucis nocturna dispendia transferentur.

And now, Christians, let us to the House of our God, and prepare for our third Sacrifice.

THE THIRD MASS.

The Mystery, which the Church honours in this Third Mass, is the eternal generation or Birth of the Son of God, in the Bosom of his Father. At midnight, she celebrated the God-Man, born, in the Stable, from the Womb of the glorious Virgin Mary; at the Aurora, this same Divine Infant, born in the souls of the Shepherds; there still remains for her adoration and praise, a Birth more wonderful than these other two—a Birth, which dazzles the eye of Angels, by its splendour, and bears its eternal witness to the inward fruitfulness of God. The Son of Mary is also the Son of God; and a grand duty of to-day, is that we hymn aloud the glory of this his ineffable Generation, which makes him consubstantial to his Father, God of God, and Light of Light. Let us, then, raise up our thoughts even to that eternal Word, who *was in the beginning with God,*

and was himself God;¹ for, he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the figure of his substance.²

The Church's first Chant in this her Third Mass is an acclamation to the new-born King. She celebrates the kingly power and majesty which he will derive, as Man, from the Cross that is, one day, to be upon his shoulders; as God, he has been the Almighty King from all eternity, and this, too, she celebrates. He is, also, *the Angel of the great Counsel*; that is, he is the One *Sent* from heaven to fulfil the sublime *Counsel*, or design, of the Most Holy Trinity—to save mankind by the Incarnation and the Redemption. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word, made this *Counsel*, together with the other Two: his devotedness to his Father's glory, and his love for man, made him take upon himself the execution of the divine Plan.

INTROIT.

Puer natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis; cujus imperium super humerum ejus: et vocabitur nomen ejus magni Consilii Angelus.

Ps. Cantate Domino canticum novum, quia mirabilia fecit. *V.* Gloria Patri. Puer.

A Child is born unto us, and a Son is given to us; and the government is upon his Shoulder: and his name shall be called the Angel of the great Counsel.

Ps. Sing to the Lord a new Canticle, for he hath done wonderful things. *V.* Glory, &c. A Child, &c.

In the Collect, the Church prays that the *New Birth*, whereby the Eternal Son of God deigned to be born in time, may produce its effect in us, and work our deliverance.

COLLECT.

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus: ut nos

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who

¹ St. John, i. 1.

² Heb. i. 3.

groan under the old captivity of sin, may be freed therefrom by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son. Through the same, &c.

Unigeniti tui nova per carnem nativitas liberet ; quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet. Per eundem.

EPISTLE.

Lesson of the Epistle of Saint Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews.

Ch. I.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the Fathers, by the Prophets ; last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and holding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on high : being made so much better than the Angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For, to which of the Angels hath he said, at any time : *Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee ?* And again : *I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son ?* And again, when he bringeth in the First-Begotten into the world, he saith : *And let all the Angels of God adore him.* And to the Angels, indeed, he saith : *He that maketh his Angels Spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.* But to the Son : *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of justice is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast*

Lectio Epistolæ beati Pauli Apostoli ad Hebræos.

Cap. I.

Multifariam multisque modis olim Deus loquens patribus in Prophetis ; novissime diebus istis locutus est nobis in Filio, quem constituit hæredem universorum, per quem fecit et sæcula. Qui cum sit splendor gloriæ, et figura substantiæ ejus, portansque omnia verbo virtutis suæ, purgationem peccatorum faciens, sedet ad dexteram Majestatis in excelsis : tanto melior Angelis effectus, quanto differentius præ illis nomen hæreditavit. Cui enim dixit aliquando Angelorum : *Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te ?* Et rursum : *Ego ero illi in Patrem, et ipse erit mihi in Filium.* Et cum iterum introducit Primogenitum in orbem terræ, dicit : *Et adorent eum omnes Angeli Dei.* Et ad Angelos quidem dicit : *Qui facit Angelos suos Spiritus, et ministros suos flammam ignis.* Ad Filium autem : *Thronus tuus, Deus, in sæculum sæculi : virga æquitatis, virga regni tui. Dilexisti justitiam, et odisti iniquitatem : propterea unxit*

te Deus, Deus tuus, oleo exsultationis præ participibus tuis. Et: Tu in principio, Domine, terram fundasti; et opera manuum tuarum sunt cœli. Ipsi peribunt, tu autem permanebis; et omnes ut vestimentum veterascent, et velut amictum mutabis eos, et mutabuntur: tu autem idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficient.

loved justice, and hated iniquity: therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And: Thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth, and the works of thy hands are the heavens. They shall perish, but thou shalt continue; and they shall all grow old as a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the self-same, and thy years shall not fail.

The great Apostle, in this magnificent opening of his Epistle to his former brethren of the Synagogue, lays great stress on the Eternal Generation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whilst our eyes are fixed on the sweet Infant in his Crib, St. Paul bids us raise our thoughts up to that infinite Light, from the midst of which the Eternal Father thus speaks to this Child of Mary: *Thou art my Son; to-day have I begotten thee*: this *to-day* is the Day of eternity, a Day which has neither morning nor evening, neither rising nor setting. If the Human Nature, which he has vouchsafed to assume, places him below the Angels; he is infinitely above them by his own essence, whereby he is the Son of God. He is God, he is Lord, and no change can come upon him. He may be wrapped in swathing-bands, or nailed to a Cross, or put to a most ignominious death—all this is only in his human nature; in his Divinity, he remains impassible and immortal, for he was born of the Father, from all eternity.

GRADUAL.

Viderunt omnes fines terræ Salutare Dei nostri: jubilate Deo omnis terra.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God: sing joyfully to the Lord, all thou earth.

Ÿ. The Lord hath made known his salvation : he hath revealed his justice in the sight of the Gentiles.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. A sanctified day hath shone upon us : Come, ye Gentiles, and adore the Lord ; for, this day, a great Light is come down upon the earth. Alleluia.

Ÿ. Notum fecit Dominus Salutare suum : ante conspectum gentium revelavit justitiam suam.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. Dies sanctificatus iluxit nobis : Venite, gentes, et adorate Dominum ; quia hodie descendit lux magna super terram. Alleluia.

GOSPEL.

The beginning of the holy Gospel according to John.

Ch. I.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made. In him was life ; and the life was the Light of men ; and the Light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to give testimony of the Light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the Light, but was to give testimony of the Light. That was the true Light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him ; and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as

Initium sancti Evangelii secundum Joannem.

Cap. I.

In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil, quod factum est. In ipso vita erat ; et vita erat lux hominum ; et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebræ eam non comprehenderunt. Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Joannes. Hic venit in testimonium, ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine, ut omnes crederent per illum. Non erat ille lux, sed ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine. Erat lux vera quæ illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum. In mundo erat, et mundus per ipsum factus est ; et mundus eum non cognovit. In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt. Quotquot autem

receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri: his qui credunt in nomine ejus; qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo nati sunt. ET VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST, et habitavit in nobis: et vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi Unigeniti a Patre, plenum gratiæ et veritatis.

received him, to them he gave power to be made the sons of God: to them that believe in his name, who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, and dwelt among us: and we saw his glory, as it were the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

O Eternal Son of God! in presence of the Crib, where, for the love of us, thou vouchsafest this day to show thyself to thy creatures—we confess thy eternity, thy omnipotence, thy divinity, and most profoundly do we adore thee. Thou wast in the beginning; thou wast in God; and thyself wast God. Everything was made by thee, and we are the work of thy hands. O Light, infinite and eternal! O Sun of Justice! enlighten us, for we are but darkness. Too long have we loved our darkness, and thee we have not comprehended: forgive us our blindness and our errors. Thou hast been long knocking at the door of our hearts, and we have refused to let thee in. To-day, thanks to the wonderful ways of thy love! we have received thee: for who could refuse to receive thee, sweet gentle Infant Jesus! but, leave us not—abide with us, and perfect the New Birth which thou hast begun in us. We wish, henceforth, to be neither *of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man*, but of God, by thee and in thee. Thou hast been *made Flesh*, O Word Eternal! in order that we may become *sons of God*. We beseech thee, support our weak human nature, and fit us for this our sublime destiny. Thou art born of God thy Father; thou art born of Mary; thou art born in our hearts; thrice glorified be thou for this

thy triple Birth, O Jesus ! so merciful in thy Divinity, and so divine in thy self-sought humiliations !

At the Offertory, the Church sings praise to her Emmanuel for the work of his hands, the universe ; for it was He made all things. The sacred gifts are offered up, in the midst of a cloud of incense. The Church cannot lose sight of the Infant Jesus and the Crib ; but she is unceasingly praising the power and majesty of the Incarnate God.

OFFERTORY.

Thine are the heavens, and thine is the earth ; the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded : justice and judgment are the preparation of thy throne.

Tui sunt cœli, et tua est terra ; orbem terrarum et plenitudinem ejus tu fundasti : justitia et judicium præparatio sedis tuæ.

SECRET.

Sanctify, O Lord, our offerings, by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son : and cleanse us from the stains of our sins. Through the same, &c.

Oblata, Domine, munera nova Unigeniti tui natiuitate sanctifica : nosque a peccatorum nostrorum maculis emunda. Per eundem.

During the Communion, the choir sings the happiness of this earth of ours, which has to-day seen its Saviour by the mercy of the Divine Word, made visible in the flesh, yet so as that he loses nothing of his own infinite glory. Then, in the Postcommunion, she prays by the mouth of the Priest, that her children, who have eaten of the spotless Lamb, may partake of the immortality of this same Jesus : for, by vouchsafing to be born by a human Birth in Bethlehem, he has, this Day, given them the pledge of their receiving a divine life.

COMMUNION.

The whole earth hath seen the salvation of our God.

Viderunt omnes fines terræ Salutare Dei nostri.

POSTCOMMUNION.

Præsta, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus : ut natus hodie Salvator mundi, sicut divinæ nobis generationis est auctor ; ita et immortalitatis sit ipse largitor. Qui tecum.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that as the Saviour of the world, who was born this day, procured for us a divine birth, he may also bestow on us immortality. Who liveth, &c.

After the Blessing, the following Last Gospel is read.

Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Matthæum.

Sequel of the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

*Cap. II.**Ch. II.*

Cum natus esset Jesus in Bethlehem Juda, in diebus Herodis regis, ecce Magi ab Oriente venerunt Jerosolymam, dicentes : Ubi est, qui natus est Rex Judæorum ? vidimus enim stellam ejus in Oriente, et venimus adorare eum. Audiens autem Herodes rex, turbatus est, et omnis Jerosolyma cum illo. Et congregans omnes principes sacerdotum, et scribas populi, sciscitabatur ab eis ubi Christus nasceretur. At illi dixerunt ei : In Bethlehem Judæ : sic enim scriptum est per Prophetam : Et tu, Bethlehem, terra Juda, nequaquam minima es in principibus Juda : ex te enim exiet dux qui regat populum meum Israel. Tunc Herodes, clam vocatis Magis, diligenter didicit ab eis tempus stellæ, quæ apparuit eis : et mittens illos in Bethlehem, dixit : Ite, et interrogate diligenter de puero : et,

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of king Herod, behold there came Wise Men from the East to Jerusalem, saying : Where is he that is born King of the Jews ? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to adore him. And Herod hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together all the chief Priests and the Scribes of the people, he enquired of them, where Christ should be born. But they said to him : in Bethlehem of Juda : for so it is written by the Prophet : And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda : for out of thee shall come forth the captain, that shall rule my people Israel. Then, Herod, privately calling the Wise Men, learned diligently of them the time of the star, which appeared to them : and sending them into Bethlehem, said :

Go, and diligently enquire after the Child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore. Who, having heard the king, went their way. And behold, the star, which they had seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the Child, with Mary, his Mother, (*here, all kneel,*) and falling down they adored him. And opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in sleep, that they should not return to Herod, they went back, another way, into their own country. *R.* Thanks be to God.

cum inveneritis, renuntiate mihi, ut et ego veniens adorem eum. Qui, cum audissent regem, abierunt. Et ecce stella, quam viderant in Oriente, antecedebat eos, usque dum veniens staret supra ubi erat puer. Videntes autem stellam, gavisissimi sunt gaudio magno valde. Et intrantes domum, invenerunt puerum cum Maria matre ejus, (*here, all kneel,*) et procidentes adoraverunt eum. Et, apertis thesauris suis, obtulerunt ei munera; aurum, thus, et myrrham. Et responso accepto in somnis ne redirent ad Herodem, per aliam viam reversi sunt in regionem suam. *R.* Deo gratias.

SECOND VESPERS.

The Even-Song of God's praise is about to close this beautiful Day:—let us go and unite in it. The material sun is fast sinking in the west:—but, our Sun of Justice shall never set for us, who have received him into our hearts. Yes, let us go join our Mother, the Church, and chant, in the songs of the Royal Prophet, the happiness of our earth, that has yielded its divine Fruit; the glories of this new-born Saviour; and the mercies, which he has brought us. God forbid! that our hearts should have lost, since morning, aught of their earnest fervour!—has not Christ been born within us? Therefore, let our

psalmody proclaim his praises, and ascend to him, with all that beauty, and loveliness, and merit, which the divine Liturgy always adds to our own individual fervour.

Ÿ. Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.

℞. Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto ;

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen. Alleluia.

Ÿ. Incline unto my aid, O God.

℞. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

The *first* Psalm of Second Vespers for Christmas Day, is that which always begins the Evening Office, on Sundays and Feasts. It celebrates the Eternal Generation of the Word, and prophesies his Sufferings and his Triumph.

ANT. Tecum principium in die virtutis tuæ, in splendoribus Sanctorum : ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

ANT. With thee is the principality in the day of thy strength, in the brightness of the Saints ; *for the Father has said to thee* : From the womb, before the day-star, I begot thee.

PSALM 109.

Dixit Dominus Domino meo : * Sede a dextris meis.

The Lord said to my Lord, *his Son* : Sit thou at my right hand, *and reign with me*.

Donec ponam inimicos tuos : * scabellum pedum tuorum.

Until, *on the day of thy last coming*, I make thy enemies thy footstool.

Virgam virtutis tuæ emitte Dominus ex Sion : * dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.

O Christ! the Lord, *thy Father*, will send forth the sceptre of thy power out of Sion : *from thence*, rule thou in the midst of thy enemies.

Tecum principium in die virtutis tuæ, in splendori-

With thee is the principality in the day of thy strength, in

the brightness of the Saints : *for the Father hath said to thee* : From the womb, before the day-star, I begot thee.

The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent : he *hath said, speaking of thee, the God-Man* : Thou art a Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech.

Therefore, O Father! the Lord, *thy Son*, is at thy right hand : he hath broken kings in the day of his wrath.

He shall, *also*, judge among nations ; he shall fill the ruins *of the world* : he shall crush the heads in the land of many.

He cometh now in humility ; he shall drink, in the way, of the torrent *of sufferings* : therefore, shall he lift up the head.

ANT. With thee is the principality in the day of thy strength, in the brightness of the Saints ; *for the Father has said to thee* : From the womb, before the day-star, I begot thee.

The *second* Psalm praises our Lord for the *Covenant* he has made with his people, and for the *Redemption* he has, this day, sent us. The human race was sunk into the depth of misery : the God of mercy, faithful to his promises, gives us, in Bethlehem, Him who is the Bread of life—the heavenly food, that preserves from death.

ANT. He hath sent Redemption to his people ; he hath commanded his covenant for ever.

bus Sanctorum : * ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

Juravit Dominus, et non pœnitebit eum : * Tu es sacerdos in æternum, secundum ordinem Melchisedech.

Dominus a dextris tuis : * confregit in die iræ suæ reges.

Judicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas : * conquasabit capita in terra multorum.

De torrente in via bibet ; * propterea exaltabit caput.

ANT. Tecum principium in die virtutis tuæ, in splendoribus Sanctorum : ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

ANT. Redemptionem misit Dominus populo suo, mandavit in æternum testamentum suum.

PSALM 110.

I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart : in the

Confitebor, tibi, Domine, in toto corde meo : * in con-

cilio justorum et congregatione.

Magna opera Domini : * exquisita in omnes voluntates ejus.

Confessio et magnificentia opus ejus : * et justitia ejus manet in sæculum sæculi.

Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum, misericors et miserator Dominus : * escam dedit timentibus se.

Memor erit in sæculum testamenti sui : * virtutem operum suorum annuntiabit populo suo.

Ut det illis hæreditatem gentium : * opera manuum ejus veritas et judicium.

Fidelia omnia mandata ejus, confirmata in sæculum sæculi : * facta in veritate et æquitate.

Redemptionem misit populo suo : * mandavit in æternum testamentum suum.

Sanctum et terribile nomen ejus : * initium sapientiæ timor Domini.

Intellectus bonus omnibus facientibus eum : * laudatio ejus manet in sæculum sæculi.

ANT. Redemptionem misit Dominus populo suo, mandavit in æternum testamentum suum.

counsel of the just, and in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord : sought out according to all his wills.

His work is praise and magnificence : and his justice continueth for ever and ever.

He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord : *and being the Bread of life*, he hath given food to them that fear him.

He will be mindful for ever of his covenant *with men* : he *will come and* will show forth to his people the power of his works.

That he may give them, *his Church*, the inheritance of the Gentiles : the works of his hand are truth and judgment.

All his commandments are faithful, confirmed for ever and ever : made in truth and equity.

He hath sent Redemption to his people : he hath, *thereby*, commanded his covenant for ever.

Holy and terrible is his name : the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

A good understanding to all that do it : his praise continueth for ever and ever.

ANT. He hath sent Redemption to his people ; he hath commanded his covenant for ever.

The *third* Psalm tells the happiness and hopes of the just man, on the day of Jesus' Birth. In the

very midst of darkness, there has suddenly risen up the bright and lovely *Light*, that is, our Emmanuel, our *merciful* God. *The upright of heart* are enlightened by him: but, wo to the *sinner* that will not receive him!

ANT. To the upright of heart a Light has risen up in darkness;—the merciful, and compassionate, and just Lord.

ANT. Exortum est in tenebris lumen rectis corde: misericors et miserator, et justus Dominus.

PSALM 111.

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he shall delight exceedingly in his commandments.

His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the righteous shall be blessed.

Glory and wealth shall be in his house: and his justice remaineth for ever and ever.

To the righteous a Light is risen up in darkness: he is merciful, and compassionate, and just, *and is born among men to-day.*

Acceptable, *on this day*, is the man that showeth mercy and lendeth; he shall order his words with judgment: because he shall not be moved for ever.

The just shall be in everlasting remembrance: he shall not fear the evil hearing.

His heart is ready to hope in the Lord; his heart is strengthened: he shall not be moved, until he look over his enemies.

He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor; his justice remaineth for ever and ever:

Beatus vir, qui timet Dominum: * in mandatis ejus volet nimis.

Potens in terra erit semen ejus: * generatio rectorum benedicetur.

Gloria et divitiæ in domo ejus: * et justitia ejus manet in sæculum sæculi.

Exortum est tenebris lumen rectis: * misericors et miserator, et justus.

Jucundus homo qui miseretur et commodat, disponet sermones suos in judicio: * quia in æternum non commovebitur.

In memoria æterna erit justus: * ab auditione mala non timebit.

Paratum cor ejus sperare in Domino, confirmatum est cor ejus: * non commovebitur donec despiciat inimicos suos.

Dispersit, dedit pauperibus, justitia ejus manet in sæculum sæculi: *

cornu ejus exaltabitur in gloria.

Peccator videbit et irascetur, dentibus suis fremet et tabescet : * desiderium peccatorum peribit.

ANT. Exortum est in tenebris lumen rectis corde : misericors et miserator et justus Dominus.

his horn shall be exalted in glory.

The wicked shall see, and shall be angry; he shall gnash with his teeth, and pine away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

ANT. To the upright of heart a Light is risen up in darkness;—the merciful, and compassionate, and just Lord.

The *fourth* Psalm expresses the *cry* of distress sent forth to its Deliverer by the human race, when in the depth of its misery and degradation. But, this *cry* was also one of hope; for God had promised to come to its deliverance. At length, the Lord, whose *mercy* is infinite, has vouchsafed to descend upon the earth, and our *Redemption* begins this very day.

ANT. Apud Dominum misericordia, et copiosa apud eum redemptio.

ANT. With the Lord, there is merciful forgiveness; and with him, a plentiful Redemption.

PSALM 129.

De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine : * Domine, exaudi vocem meam.

Fiant aures tuæ intendentes : * in vocem deprecationis meæ.

Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine : * Domine, quis sustinebit ?

Quia apud te propitiatio est : * et propter legem tuam sustinui te, Domine.

Sustinuit anima mea in verbo ejus : * speravit anima mea in Domino.

From the depths have I, *thy people*, cried to thee, O Lord: Lord hear my voice.

Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If thou wilt observe iniquities, O Lord, Lord, who shall endure it ?

For with thee there is merciful forgiveness; and by reason of thy law, I have waited, *all these long ages*, for thee, O Lord.

My soul hath relied on his word; my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

From the morning watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy, and with him plentiful redemption.

This day he hath been born among us, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

ANT. With the Lord, there is merciful forgiveness; and with him, a plentiful Redemption.

A custodia matutina usque ad noctem: * speret Israel in Domino.

Quia apud Dominum misericordia: * et copiosa apud eum redemptio.

Et ipse redimet Israel: * ex omnibus iniquitatibus ejus.

ANT. Apud Dominum misericordia, et copiosa apud eum redemptio.

The *fifth* Psalm celebrates *the Ark* of the Lord, which rested in Ephrata. Mary was the true Ark, of which that of old was but a type: in Her did our Lord take up his *dwelling*; in Her did he place the throne of his Majesty. Let our God, then, *arise*, and take possession of his Church, which begins, to-day, in Bethlehem; let him arise, and, together with Mary, the Queen of mercy, govern us. Henceforth, he is to dwell among us—console us in all our tribulations—*satisfy* us *poor* ones *with the Bread* of eternal life—invest the new *Priesthood* with singular powers—shine, in his Church, as the *Lamp* of immutable truth—triumph over all his *enemies*—in a word, whilst the crowns of other kings shall fall off, the one which sits on the brow of our divine King, our sweet Babe of Bethlehem, *shall flourish* for everlasting ages.

ANT. I will set upon thy throne, *O David*, *one* of the fruit of thy womb.

ANT. De fructu ventris tui ponam super sedem tuam.

PSALM 131.

O Lord, remember David, and all his meekness.

Memento, Domine, David: * et omnis mansuetudinis ejus.

Sicut juravit Domino : *
votum vovit Deo Jacob.

Si introiero in tabernaculum domus meæ : * si ascendero in lectum strati mei.

Si dederò somnum oculis meis : * et palpebris meis dormitationem.

Et requiem temporibus meis, donec inveniam locum Domino : * tabernaculum Deo Jacob.

Ecce audivimus eam in Ephrata : * invenimus eam in campis silvæ.

Introibimus in tabernaculum ejus : * adorabimus in loco ubi steterunt pedes ejus.

Surge, Domine, in requiem tuam : * tu et arca sanctificationis tuæ.

Sacerdotes tui induantur justitiam : * et Sancti tui exsultent.

Propter David servum tuum : * non avertas faciem Christi tui.

Juravit Dominus David veritatem, et non frustrabitur eam : * De fructu ventris tui ponam super sedem tuam.

Si custodierint filii tui testamentum meum : * et testimonia mea hæc, quæ docebo eos.

Et filii eorum usque in sæculum : * sedebunt super sedem tuam.

Quoniam elegit Dominus Sion : * elegit eam in habitationem sibi.

How he swore to the Lord : he vowed a vow to the God of Jacob.

“If I shall enter into the “tabernacle of my house : if “I shall go up into the bed “wherein I lie ;

“If I shall give sleep to my “eyes : or slumber to my eye- “lids,

“Or rest to my temples, “until I find out a place for the “Lord, a tabernacle for the “God of Jacob.”

Behold ! we have heard of it that it *was in Bethlehem of Ephrata* ; we found it in the fields of the wood.

We will go into his tabernacle ; we will adore in the place where his feet have stood.

Arise, O Lord, into thy resting place ; thou and *Mary*, the Ark which thou hast sanctified.

Let thy priests be clothed with justice : and let thy Saints rejoice.

For thy servant David's sake, *O heavenly Father* ! turn not away the face of thy Christ.

The Lord hath sworn truth to David, and he will not make it void : “Of the fruit of thy “womb, I will set upon thy “throne.

“If thy children will keep “my covenant, and these my “testimonies, which I shall “teach them ;

“Their children also, for “evermore, shall sit upon thy “throne.”

For the Lord hath chosen Sion, *his Church* : he hath chosen it for his dwelling.

He hath said : “ This is my
“ rest for ever and ever : here
“ will I dwell for I have chosen
“ it.

“ Blessing, I will bless her
“ widow, *by the Birth of my*
“ *Son ; in Bethlehem*, I will
“ satisfy her poor with Bread.

“ I will clothe her priests
“ with salvation : and her
“ Saints shall rejoice with ex-
“ ceeding great joy.

“ There, *in my Church*, will
“ I bring forth the horn, *the*
“ *strength*, of David : I have
“ prepared a lamp for my
“ Christ.

“ His enemies I will clothe
“ with confusion : but upon
“ him shall my sanctification
“ flourish.”

ANT. I will set upon thy
throne, *O David!* one of the
fruit of thy womb.

Hæc requies mea in sæ-
culum sæculi : * hic habi-
tabo, quoniam elegi eam.

Viduum ejus benedicens
benedicam : * pauperes ejus
saturabo panibus.

Sacerdotes ejus induam
salutari : * et Sancti ejus
exultatione exultabunt.

Illuc producam cornu Da-
vid : * paravi lucernam
Christo meo.

Inimicos ejus induam con-
fusione : * super ipsum au-
tem effloreat sanctificatio
mea.

ANT. De fructu ventris
tui ponam super sedem tu-
am.

CAPITULUM.

(Heb. 1.)

God, who at sundry times,
and in divers manners, spoke,
in times past, to the Fathers,
by the Prophets ; last of all,
in these days, hath spoken to
us by his Son, whom he hath
appointed heir of all things,
by whom, also, he made the
world.

Multifariam, multisque
modis olim Deus loquens
patribus in Prophetis : no-
vissime diebus istis locutus
est nobis in Filio, quem
constituit hæredem univer-
sorum, per quem fecit et
sæcula.

HYMN.*

O Jesu ! Redeemer of man-
kind ! born before the light
was made, and born of the
Eternal Father, equal to him
in infinite glory ;

Jesu, redemptor omnium,
Quem, lucis ante originem,
Parem paternæ gloriæ
Pater supremus edidit ;

* For the version, as preserved in the Monastic Rite, see
page 130.

Tu lumen et splendor Pa-
tris,
Tu spes perennis omnium,
Intende quas fundunt preces
Tui per orbem servuli.

Memento, rerum conditor,
Nostri quod olim corporis,
Sacrata ab alvo Virginis
Nascendo, formam sump-
seris.

Testatur hoc præsens dies,
Currens per anni circulum,
Quod solus e sinu Patris
Mundi salus adveneris.

Huncastra, tellus, æquora,
Hunc omne quod cœlo sub-
est,
Salutis auctorem novæ
Novo salutat cantico.

Et nos, beata quos sacri
Rigavit unda sanguinis,
Natalis ob diem tui,
Hymni tributum solvimus.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria,
Qui natus es de Virgine,
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.

Amen.

Ÿ. Notum fecit Dominus,
alleluia.

R. Salutare suum, alle-
luia.

O thou the light and bright-
ness of the Father! O thou
the everlasting hope of all
men! hear the prayers offered
thee by thy servants, through-
out the world.

Be mindful, O Creator of all
things! that heretofore thou
didst assume a Body like unto
ours, and wast born from the
sacred womb of a Virgin.

This present Day, which the
year has brought round to us,
tells us of this mystery—that
thou, the one Saviour of the
world, didst come to us from
the Father's Bosom.

The stars, and earth, and
sea, and all that is under hea-
ven, greet this the Author of
their new salvation, with a
new Canticle.

And we, who have been re-
deemed by the stream of thy
precious Blood, we, too, pay
thee the tribute of this Hymn,
in honour of thy Birth-Day.

Glory be to thee, O Jesus!
who wast born of the Virgin!
and to the Father, and to the
Spirit of love, for everlasting
ages.

Amen.

Ÿ. The Lord hath made
known, alleluia.

R. His Salvation, alleluia.

ANTIPHON OF THE *Magnificat*.

Hodie Christus natus est;
hodie Salvator apparuit;
hodie in terra canunt An-
geli; lætantur Archangeli;
hodie exsultant justi, di-
centes: Gloria in excelsis
Deo, alleluia.

This day, Christ is born;
this day, the Saviour hath ap-
peared; this day, the Angels
sing on earth; the Archan-
gels rejoice; this day, the just
exult, saying: Glory be to
God in the highest, alleluia.

The Canticle, Magnificat, page 107.

LET US PRAY.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who groan under the old captivity of sin, may be freed therefrom by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son. Through the same, &c.

OREMUS.

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem Nativitas liberet, quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet. Per eundem.

Commemoration of St. Stephen.

ANT. But Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great signs among the people.

Ÿ. Thou hast crowned him, O Lord, with glory and honour.

℞. And hast placed him over the works of thy hands.

ANT. Stephanus autem plenus gratia et fortitudine, faciebat signa magna in populo.

Ÿ. Gloria et honore coronasti eum, Domine.

℞. Et constituisti eum super opera manuum tuarum.

LET US PRAY.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that we may imitate him whose memory we celebrate, so as to learn to love even our enemies : because, we now solemnise his martyrdom, who knew how to pray, even for his persecutors, to our Lord Jesus Christ thy Son. Who liveth, &c.

OREMUS.

Da nobis, quæsumus, Domine, imitari quod colimus, ut discamus et inimicos diligere : quia ejus natalitia celebramus, qui novit etiam pro persecutoribus exorare Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum. Qui tecum.

For Compline, see page 109.

The great Day is over, and the night is coming upon us, when sleep will refresh us after the holy fatigues of last night. Before retiring to rest, let us give the holy Martyrs a thought, whose memory is offered to our veneration by the Church, in her Martyrology of this 25th of December. Dioclesian and his colleagues in the Empire had recently published the famous edict of persecution, which waged against the Church the fiercest war she has ever sustained. The edict was torn down from the Emperor's palace, at Nicomedia, by one of the Christians, who paid for this holy daring by a glorious martyrdom. The faithful of the same City were ready for the combat, and feared not to brave the Emperor's power, by continuing to frequent their Church, which was condemned to be pulled down. Christmas Day came, and several thousands of them had assembled there, in order to celebrate, for the last time within those walls, the Nativity of our Saviour. Being informed of it, the Emperor became furious, and sent one of the officers of his court to order the Church doors to be fastened, and a fire to be enkindled on each side of the building. This being done, the clang of trumpets was heard, and then a herald's voice proclaiming, to the faithful, in the Emperor's name, that they who wished to save their lives, would be permitted to leave the Basilica, on the condition of their offering incense on an altar of Jupiter, which had been placed near the door; but, that, otherwise, all were to be left a prey to the flames. One of the Christians thus answered, in the name of the whole assembly: "We are all of us Christians; we honour Christ as the one only God and King; and we are all ready to lay down our lives for him, on this Day." Whereupon the soldiers were commanded to set fire to the Church. In a very short time, it was one immense mass of flames, whence was offered to the Son of

God,—who deigned to begin, on this same day, the human life he had assumed,—the generous holocaust of these thousands of lives, laid down as witness to his having come into this world. Thus was glorified, in the year 303, our Emmanuel, who had come from heaven to dwell among us. Let us, after the example of the Church herself, join our homage to the Babe of Bethlehem with that offered him by these courageous Christians, whose fame the Liturgy will perpetuate even to the end of time.

Once more let us visit, in spirit, the dear Cave, where Mary and Joseph are loving, and nursing, and adoring, the Divine Infant. Let us, too, adore him, and ask his blessing. St. Bonaventure, with an unction worthy of his seraphic soul, thus expresses the sentiments which a Christian should have, on this Day, when admitted to the Crib of Jesus : “ Do thou, “ also, kneel down—thou hast delayed too long. “ Adore the Lord thy God, and then reverence his “ Mother, and salute, with much respect, the saintly “ old man Joseph. After this, kiss the feet of the “ Infant Jesus, laid as he is on his little bed, and ask “ our Lady to give him to thee, or permit thee to “ take him up. Take him into thine arms, press him “ to thy heart, and look well at his lovely face, and “ reverently kiss him, and show him confidently the “ delight thou takest in him. Thou mayest venture “ on all this, because it is for sinners that he came, “ that he might save them : it was with sinners that “ he so humbly conversed, and, at last, gave himself “ to sinners, that he might be their food. I say, then, “ that his gentle love will permit thee to treat him as “ affectionately as thou pleasest, and will not call it “ too much freedom, but will set it down to thy “ love.”¹

¹ *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, by St. Bonaventure.

As a conclusion to our Feast, we give two favourite Pieces of the Middle-Ages, whereby our Fathers expressed their joy on this glorious Solemnity. The first is a Sequence, which is to be found in all the Roman-French Missals. For a long time, it was thought to have been written by St. Bernard: but, we have seen it in a Manuscript of the 11th century, and, consequently, it must have been written earlier than the date usually assigned to it.

SEQUENCE.

Lætabundus
Exsultet fidelis chorus.
Alleluia.

Regem regum
Intactæ profudit torus :
Res miranda !

Angelus Consilii
Natus est de Virgine,
Sol de Stella.

Sol occasum nesciens,
Stella semper rutilans,
Semper clara.

Sicut sidus radium,
Profert Virgo Filium
Pari forma.

Neque sidus radio,
Neque Virgo Filio
Fit corrupta.

Cedrus alta Libani
Conformatur hyssopo
Valle nostra.

Verbum ens Altissimi
Corporari passum est,
Carne sumpta.

Esaias cecinit,
Synagoga meminit ;
Numquam tamen desinit
Esse cæca.

Let the choir of all the faithful exult in their joy. Alleluia !

The Virgin's womb hath given us the King of Kings !
O wonderful mystery !

The Angel of the great Counsel is born of the Virgin, the Sun is born of a Star !

The Sun knows no setting ;
the Star is ever shining, ever bright.

As a star gives forth its ray,
so does the Virgin her Child.

The star loses naught of its purity by the ray it yields, so neither does the Virgin by her Child.

The lofty cedar of Libanus comes down into our valley, making itself little as the hyssop.

He that is the Word of the Most High God, deigns to take a body unto himself ; he assumes our flesh.

Isaias had foretold all this ; and the Jews, though they knew the prophecy by heart, see not its accomplishment in this mystery.

If they will not believe their Prophets, let them believe the Sybils, who thus sang :

“Unhappy people, delay not, believe, at least, the ancient oracles ! Why wilt thou be cast off, O wretched nation ?
“This is the Child, of whom thy bookstell thee : He is the Son of a Virgin-Mother.”
Amen.

Si non suis vatibus,
Credat vel gentilibus,
Sibyllinis versibus
Hæc prædicta :
Infelix, propera,
Crede vel vetera :
Cur damnaberis, gens mi-
sera ?
Quem docet littera
Natum considera :
Ipsum genuit puerpera.
Amen.

The second Piece is a Sequence in honour of the most Holy Mother of God. It belongs to the 15th century. It is one of the many imitations of the Easter Sequence, *Victimæ Paschali*, which are to be found in many of the Missals of the 15th and 16th centuries.

SEQUENCE.

Let the Christian people hymn their praises to the Virgin Mary.

Unhappy Eve was the cause of our ruin ; but Mary brought forth a Son, who redeemed us sinners.

Death and life were thus strangely reconciled : there reigns, now, God, the Son of Mary.

Tell us, O Mary, Virgin most merciful and kind !

How thou, the creature of Him that was born of thee, didst become his Mother ?

The Angel is witness, that was sent to me from heaven.

He that is my hope was born of me his Mother : but the Jews will not believe.

Virgini Mariæ laudes
Intonent Christiani.

Eva tristis abstulit ;
Sed Maria protulit
Natum, qui redemit
Peccatores.

Mors et vita modulo
Convenere mirando :
Mariæ Filius
Regnat Deus.

Dic nobis, Maria,
Virgo clemens et pia :
Quomodo facta es geni-
trix,

Cum tu sis plasma
De te nascentis ?

Angelus est testis
Ad me missus cœlestis.

Natus est ex me spes
mea ;

Sed incredula
Manet Judæa.

Credendum est magis soli
 Gabrieli Forti,
 Quam Judæorum
 Prævæ cohorti.
 Scimus Christum proces-
 sisse
 Ex Maria vere :
 Tu nobis nate,
 Rex ! miserere.
 Amen.

Faith must be had to Ga-
 briel, *the Power of God*, rather
 than to the perverse Jewish
 tribe.

We know that Christ was,
 in very truth, born of Mary :
 do thou, her Son ! our King !
 have mercy on us.

Amen.

DECEMBER 26.

SAINT STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR.

ST. PETER DAMIAN thus begins his Sermon for this Feast:

“ We are holding in our arms the Son of the
 “ Virgin, and are honouring, with our caresses, this
 “ our Infant God. The holy Virgin has led us to the
 “ dear Crib. The most beautiful of the Daughters
 “ of men has brought us to the most beautiful
 “ among the Sons of men,¹ and the Blessed among
 “ women to Him that is Blessed above all. She
 “ tell us * * that now the veils of prophecy are
 “ drawn aside, and the counsel of God is accom-
 “ plished. * * Is there anything capable of dis-
 “ tracting us from this sweet Birth? On what else
 “ shall we fix our eyes? * * Lo! whilst Jesus is
 “ permitting us thus to caress him; whilst he is over-
 “ whelming us with the greatness of these mysteries,
 “ and our hearts are riveted in admiration—there
 “ comes before us *Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, doing great wonders and signs among the*
 “ *people.*² Is it right, that we turn from our King,
 “ to look on Stephen, his soldier? No—unless the
 “ King himself bid us do so. This our King, who
 “ is Son of the King, rises * * to assist at the
 “ glorious combat of his servant. * * Let us go
 “ with him, and contemplate this standard-bearer of
 “ the Martyrs.”

The Church gives us, in to-day's Office, this opening of a Sermon of St. Fulgentius for the Feast of St. Stephen: “ Yesterday, we celebrated the temporal

¹ Ps. xliv. 3.² Acts, vi. 8.

"Birth of our eternal King: to-day, we celebrate
 "the triumphant passion of his Soldier. Yesterday,
 "our King, having put on the garb of our flesh, came
 "from the sanctuary of his Mother's virginal womb,
 "and mercifully visited the earth: to-day, his Soldier,
 "quitting his earthly tabernacle, entered triumphantly
 "into heaven. Jesus, whilst still continuing to be
 "the eternal God, assumed to himself the lowly
 "raiment of flesh, and entered the battle-field of
 "this world: Stephen, laying aside the perishable
 "garment of the body, ascended to the palace of
 "heaven, there to reign for ever. Jesus descended
 "veiled in our flesh: Stephen ascended wreathed
 "with a martyr's laurels. Stephen ascended to
 "heaven amidst the shower of stones, because Jesus
 "had descended on earth midst the singing of
 "Angels. Yesterday, the holy Angels exultingly
 "sang, *Glory be to God in the highest*; to-day, they
 "joyously received Stephen into their company.* *
 "Yesterday, was Jesus wrapped, for our sakes, in
 "swaddling-clothes: to-day, was Stephen clothed
 "with the robe of immortal glory. Yesterday, a
 "narrow crib contained the Infant Jesus: to-day,
 "the immensity of the heavenly court received the
 "triumphant Stephen."

Thus does the sacred Liturgy blend the joy of
 our Lord's Nativity with the gladness she feels at
 the triumph of the first of her Martyrs. Nor will
 Stephen be the only one admitted to share the
 honours of this glorious Octave. After him, we shall
 have John, the Beloved Disciple; the Innocents of
 Bethlehem; Thomas, the Martyr of the Liberties of
 the Church; and Sylvester, the Pontiff of Peace.
 But, the place of honour amidst all who stand round
 the Crib of the new-born King, belongs to Stephen,
 the Proto-Martyr, who, as the Church sings of him,
 was "the first to pay back to the Saviour, the Death
 "suffered by the Saviour." It was just, that this

honour should be shown to *Martyrdom*; for, Martyrdom is the Creature's testimony, and return to his Creator for all the favours bestowed on him: it is Man's testifying, even by shedding his blood, to the truths which God has revealed to the world.

In order to understand this, let us consider what is the plan of God, in the salvation he has given to man. The Son of God is sent to instruct mankind; he sows the seed of his divine word; and his works give testimony to his divinity. But, after his sacrifice on the cross, he again ascends to the right hand of his Father; so that his own testimony of himself has need of a second testimony, in order to its being received by them that have neither seen nor heard Jesus himself. Now, it is the Martyrs who are to provide this second testimony; and this they will do, not only by confessing Jesus with their lips, but by shedding their blood for him. The Church, then, is to be founded by the Word and the Blood of Jesus, the Son of God; but she will be upheld, she will continue throughout all ages, she will triumph over all obstacles, by the blood of her Martyrs, the members of Christ: this their blood will mingle with that of their Divine Head, and their sacrifice be united to his.

The Martyrs shall bear the closest resemblance to their Lord and King. They shall be, as he said, like *lambs among wolves*.¹ The world shall be strong, and they shall be weak and defenceless: so much the grander will be the victory of the Martyrs, and the greater the glory of God who gives them to conquer. The Apostle tells us, that Christ crucified is *the power and the wisdom of God*;²—the Martyrs, immolated, and yet conquerors of the world, will prove, and with a testimony which even the world itself will understand, that the Christ whom they

¹ St. Luke, x. 3.

² I. Cor. i. 24.

confessed, and who gave them constancy and victory, is in very deed *the power and the wisdom of God*. We repeat, then—it is just, that the Martyrs should share in all the triumphs of the Man-God, and that the liturgical Cycle should glorify them as does the Church herself, who puts their sacred Relics in her altar-stones ; for, thus, the Sacrifice of their glorified Lord and Head is never celebrated, without they themselves being offered together with him, in the unity of his mystical Body.

Now, the glorious Martyr-band of Christ is headed by St. Stephen. His name signifies *the Crowned* ;—a conqueror like him could not be better named. He marshals, in the name of Christ, the *white-robed army*, as the Church calls the Martyrs ; for, he was the first, even before the Apostles themselves, to receive the summons, and right nobly did he answer it. Stephen courageously bore witness, in the presence of the Jewish Synagogue, to the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth ; by thus proclaiming the Truth, he offended the ears of the unbelievers ; the enemies of God, became the enemies of Stephen, and, rushing upon him, they stone him to death. Amidst the pelting of the blood-drawing missives, he, like a true soldier, flinches not, but stands, (as St. Gregory of Nyssa so beautifully describes it,) as though snow-flakes were falling on him, or roses were covering him with the shower of their kisses. Through the cloud of stones, he sees the glory of God ;—Jesus, for whom he was laying down his life, showed himself to his Martyr, and the Martyr again rendered testimony to the divinity of our Emmanuel, but with all the energy of a last act of love. Then, to make his sacrifice complete, he imitates his divine Master, and prays for his executioners : falling on his knees, he begs that this sin be not laid to their charge. Thus, all is consummated—the glorious type of Martyrdom is created, and shown to the world, that it may be

imitated, by every generation, to the end of time, until the number of the Martyrs of Christ shall be filled up. Stephen sleeps in the Lord, and is buried in peace—in *pace*—until his sacred Tomb shall be discovered, and his glory be celebrated a second time in the whole Church, by that anticipated Resurrection of the miraculous *Invention* of his Relics.

Stephen, then, deserves to stand near the Crib of his King, as leader of those brave champions, the Martyrs, who died for the Divinity of that Babe, whom we adore. Let us join the Church in praying to our Saint, that he help us to come to our Sovereign Lord, now lying on his humble throne in Bethlehem. Let us ask him to initiate us into the mystery of that divine Infancy, which we are all bound to know and imitate. It was from the simplicity he had learnt from that Mystery, that he heeded not the number of the enemies he had to fight against, nor trembled at their angry passion, nor winced under their blows, nor hid from them the Truth and their crimes, nor forgot to pardon them and pray for them. What a faithful imitator of the Babe of Bethlehem! Our Jesus did not send his Angels to chastise those unhappy Bethlehemites, who refused a shelter to the Virgin-Mother, who in a few hours was to give birth to Him, the Son of David. He stays not the fury of Herod, who plots his Death—but meekly flees into Egypt, like some helpless bondsman, escaping the threats of a tyrant lordling. But, it is under such apparent weakness as this, that he will show his Divinity to men, and He the Infant-God prove himself the Strong God. Herod will pass away, so will his tyranny; Jesus will live, greater in his Crib, where he makes a King tremble, than is, under his borrowed majesty, this prince-tributary of Rome; nay, than Cæsar-Augustus himself, whose world-wide empire has no other destiny than this—to serve as handmaid to the Church,

which is to be founded by this Babe, whose name stands humbly written in the official registry of Bethlehem.

M A S S .

The Introit is composed of the words of the holy Martyr, who, in the language of the Royal Psalmist, tells us of the plot formed against him by the wicked, and of his own humble confidence in God, whereby he triumphed over their persecutions. From the murder of the innocent Abel to the future Martyrs, who are to shed their blood in the days of Antichrist—the Church is always under persecution; in some one country, she is ever shedding her blood; but, her strength lies in her fidelity to Jesus her Spouse, and in the simplicity, which the Babe of Bethlehem is come to teach her by his own example.

INTROIT.

Sederunt principes, et adversum me loquebantur; et iniqui persecuti sunt me; adjuva me, Domine Deus meus, quia servus tuus exercebatur in tuis justificationibus.

Ps. Beati immaculati in via, qui ambulant in lege Domini. *V.* Gloria Patri. Sederunt.

Princes sat, and spoke against me; and sinners persecuted me: help me, O Lord my God, for thy servant hath practised thy commandments.

Ps. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. *V.* Glory, &c. Princes sat, &c.

In the Collect, the Church asks, for both herself and her children, that divine vigour, which makes the holy Martyrs forgive their persecutors, and perfects, not only their testimony to the truth, but also their imitation of Jesus Christ. It speaks the praise of St. Stephen, who was the first to follow our Saviour's example.

COLLECT.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that we may imitate him whose memory we celebrate, so as to learn to love even our enemies ; because we now solemnise his martyrdom, who knew how to pray, even for his persecutors, to our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son. Who liveth, &c.

Da nobis, quæsumus, Domine, imitari quod colimus : ut discamus et inimicos diligere ; quia ejus natalitia celebramus, qui novit etiam pro persecutoribus exorare Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum. Qui tecum.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

LET US PRAY.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who groan under the old captivity of sin, may be freed therefrom by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son. Through the same, &c.

OREMUS.

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus : ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem nativitas liberet, quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet. Per eundem.

EPISTLE.

Lesson from the Acts of the Apostles.

Ch. VI. and VII.

In those days, Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people. Now there arose some of that which is called the Synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them that were of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen ; and they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke. Now hearing these things, they were cut to the heart, and they

Lectio Actuum Apostolorum.

Cap. VI. et VII.

In diebus illis, Stephanus, plenus gratia et fortitudine, faciebat prodigia et signa magna in populo. Surrexerunt autem quidam de synagoga, quæ appellatur Libertinorum, et Cyrenensium, et Alexandrinorum, et eorum qui erant a Cilicia et Asia, disputantes cum Stephano, et non poterant resistere sapientiæ, et Spiritui qui loquebatur. Audientes autem hæc, dissecabantur cordibus suis, et

stridebant dentibus in eum. Cum autem esset Stephanus plenus Spiritu Sancto, intendens in cœlum, vidit gloriam Dei, et Jesum stantem a dextris Dei. Et ait : Ecce video cœlos apertos, et Filium hominis stantem a dextris Dei. Exclamantes autem voce magna continuerunt aures suas, et impetum fecerunt unanimiter in eum. Et ejicientes eum extra civitatem, lapidabant. Et testes deposuerunt vestimenta sua secus pedes adolescentis, qui vocabatur Saulus. Et lapidabant Stephanum invocantem, et dicentem : Domine Jesu, suscipe spiritum meum. Positis autem genibus, clamavit voce magna, dicens : Domine, ne statuas illis hoc peccatum. Et cum hoc dixisset, obdormivit in Domino.

gnashed with their teeth at him. But Stephen being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up stedfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said : Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. And they crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord ran violently upon him. And casting him forth without the city, they stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying : Lord Jesus ! receive my spirit. And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying : Lord ! lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord.

Thus, O glorious Prince of Martyrs ! thou wast led outside the gates of the City for thy sacrifice, and thy punishment was that of blasphemers. The Disciple was to be like to his Master, in all things. But neither the ignominy of such a death, nor its cruelty, could daunt thy great soul : thou didst carry Jesus in thy heart, and, with Him, thou wast stronger than all thy enemies. And what was thy joy, when thou sawest the heavens open, and this same Jesus in his glorified Humanity, standing at the right hand of God, and looking upon thee with love ! A God looking complacently on the creature that is going to die for him, and the creature permitted to behold the God for whom he is dying—truly, this was more than enough to encourage thee ! Let thine enemies

cast their stones against thee, and bruise and tear thy flesh, as they please:—nothing can distract thee from this sight of the Eternal King, who raised himself from his throne to applaud thee, and deck thee with the *Crown*, which he had prepared for thee from all eternity! Now that thou art reigning in the kingdom of heaven, pray for us, that we also may be faithful, and faithful even unto death, to this same Jesus, who not only left his throne, but even came down among us as a Little Child.

GRADUAL.

Princes sat, and spoke against me: and the wicked persecuted me.

Ÿ. Help me, O Lord my God: save me for thy mercy's sake.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the power of God. Alleluia.

Sederunt principes, et adversum me loquebantur: et iniqui persecuti sunt me.

Ÿ. Adjuva me, Domine Deus meus; salvum me fac propter misericordiam tuam.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. Video cœlos apertos, et Jesum stantem a dextris virtutis Dei. Alleluia.

GOSPEL.

Sequel of the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Ch. XXIII.

At that time: Jesus said to the Scribes and Pharisees: Behold, I send to you Prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them you will put to death, and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just, even unto the blood of Zacharias, the son of

Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Matthæum.

Cap. XXIII.

In illo tempore: dicebat Jesus scribis et Pharisæis: Ecce ego mitto ad vos Prophetas, et sapientes, et scribas; et ex illis occiditis, et crucifigitis, et ex eis flagellabitis in synagogis vestris, et persequemini de civitate in civitatem: ut veniat super vos omnis sanguis justus, qui effusus est super terram, a sanguine Abel justus usque ad sanguinem Zachariæ, filii Barachizæ,

quem occidistis inter templum et altare. Amen dico vobis, venient hæc omnia super generationem istam. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, quæ occidis Prophetas, et lapidas eos qui ad te missi sunt, quoties volui congregare filios tuos, quemadmodum gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas, et noluisti! Ecce relinquetur vobis domus vestra deserta. Dico enim vobis, non me videbitis amodo, donec dicatis: Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Barachias, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Amen, I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not? Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see me, henceforth, till you say: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

The Martyrs are given to the world that they may continue the ministry of Christ on the earth, by bearing testimony to his word, and by confirming this testimony by their blood. The world has despised them; like their divine Master, they have shone in the darkness, and darkness has not understood their light. Nevertheless, many have received their testimony, and the seed of the Martyrs' blood has brought forth in them the rich fruit of Faith. The Synagogue was cast off by God for its having shed the blood of Stephen, after having imbrued its hands in that of Jesus. Unhappy, they who cannot appreciate the Martyrs! Let us, who are Christians, take in the sublime lessons taught us by their generous sacrifice; and let our respect and love for them testify, that we are grateful for the noble ministry they have fulfilled in the Church, and are still fulfilling. The Church is never without Martyrs, just as she is never without Miracles: it is the twofold testimony that she will give to the end of time, and by which she evidences the divine life she has received from her almighty Founder.

During the Offertory, the Church once more proclaims the merits and the glorious death of Stephen; and by this she teaches us that the sacrifice of the holy Deacon is united with that of Jesus himself.

OFFERTORY.

The Apostles chose Stephen, a Levite, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, whom the Jews stoned, praying and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Alleluia.

Elegerunt Apostoli Stephanum Levitam, plenum fide et Spiritu Sancto; quem lapidaverunt Judæi orantem, et dicentem: Domine Jesu, accipe spiritum meum. Alleluia.

SECRET.

Receive, O Lord, these offerings in memory of thy Saints; and as their sufferings have made them glorious, so may our devotion render us free from sin. Through, &c.

Suscipe, Domine, munera pro tuorum commemoratione Sanctorum; ut sicut illos passio gloriosos effecit, ita nos devotio reddat innocuos. Per Dominum.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

Sanctify, O Lord, our offerings, by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son, and cleanse us from the stains of our sins. Through the same, &c.

Oblata, Domine, munera, nova Unigeniti tui natiuitate sanctifica, nosque a peccatorum nostrorum maculis emunda. Per eundem.

United by Holy Communion to her divine Spouse, the Church, too, *sees the heavens opened*, and *Jesus standing at the right hand of God*. She sends up to this Incarnate Word the yearnings of her intense love, and derives from the heavenly Food she has received that meekness, which makes her bear with the injuries and insults put upon her by her enemies, in order that she may win them all to the faith and love of Jesus Christ. It was by partaking of this same heavenly Food, that Stephen got the superhuman strength, whereby he won his victory and *Crown*.

COMMUNION.

Video cœlos apertos, et
Jesum stantem a dextris
virtutis Dei : Domine Jesu,
accipe spiritum meum, et
ne statuas illis hoc peccat-
tum.

I see the heavens opened,
and Jesus standing on the
right hand of the power of
God : Lord Jesus, receive my
spirit, and lay not this sin to
their charge.

POSTCOMMUNION.

Auxilientur nobis, Do-
mine, sumpta mysteria : et
intercedente beato Ste-
phano, Martyre tuo, sempi-
terna protectione confir-
ment. Per Dominum.

May the mysteries we have
received, O Lord, be help to
us : and, by the intercession
of the blessed Martyr Ste-
phen, strengthen us with
thy perpetual protection.
Through, &c.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

Præsta, quæsumus, omni-
potens Deus ; ut natus ho-
die Salvator mundi, sicut
divinæ nobis generationis
est auctor, ita et immortali-
tatis sit ipse largitor. Qui
tecum.

Grant, we beseech thee, O
Almighty God, that as the
Saviour of the world, who was
born this day, procured for us
a divine Birth, he may, also,
bestow on us immortality.
Who liveth, &c.

 VESPERS.

The solemnity of the Christmas Octave—from which the Feast of St. Stephen has, in a manner, distracted us—returns at Vespers, in all its splendour. The Church sings the Psalms and Antiphons of Christmas Day, and the Martyr's Feast is, so to speak, suspended until she comes to the *Capitulum*. In this same way she celebrates the Vespers on all the Feasts which are kept during this Octave.

The Psalms and Antiphons are given above, *page*
234.

CAPITULUM.

(Acts, VI.)

But Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people.

Stephanus autem plenus gratia et fortitudine faciebat prodigia, et signa magna in populo.

HYMN.*

O God! thou the inheritance, Crown, and reward of thy Soldiers! absolve from the bonds of our sins us who sing the praises of thy Martyr.

Deus tuorum militum Sors, et corona, præmium, Laudes canentes Martyris Absolve nexu criminis.

For, counting the joys of the world, and the deceitful bait of its caresses, as things embittered with gall, thy Martyr Stephen obtained the delights of heaven.

Hic nempe mundi gaudia, Et blanda fraudum pabula, Imbuta felle deputans, Pervenit ad cœlestia.

Bravely did he go through, and manfully did he bear, his pains; and, shedding his blood for thy sake, he now possesses thy eternal gifts.

Pœnas cucurrit fortiter, Et sustulit viriliter, Fundensque pro te sanguinem, Æterna dona possidet.

Therefore, most merciful Father! we beseech thee, in most suppliant prayer, forgive us, thy unworthy servants, our sins, for it is the feast of thy Martyr's triumph.

Ob hoc precatu supplicii Te poscimus, Piissime, In hoc triumpho Martyris, Dimitte noxam servulis.

* In the Monastic Breviary, it is as follows :—

R. *breve.* Posuisti, Domine,
* Super caput ejus. Posuisti.
V. *Coronam* de lapide pretioso.
* Super. Gloria Patri. Gloria
et honore.

Deus, tuorum militum
Sors, et *corona*, præmium,
Laudes canentes Martyris
Absolve nexu criminis.

Hic nempe mundi gaudia,
Et blandimenta noxia,
Caduca rite deputans
Pervenit ad cœlestia.

Pœnas cucurrit fortiter,
Et sustulit viriliter
Pro te effundens sanguinem
Æterna dona possidet.

Ob hoc precatu supplicii
Te poscimus, Piissime,
In hoc triumpho Martyris
Dimitte noxam servulis.

Gloria tibi Domine,
Qui natus es de Virgine,
Cum Patre, et Sancto Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.

Amen.

Jesu tibi sit gloria,
Qui natus es de Virgine,
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.

Amen.

Ÿ. Stephanus vidit cœlos
apertos.

℞. Vidit et introivit; beatus homo cui cœli patebant.

Glory be to thee, O Jesus,
that wast born of the Virgin!
and to the Father, and to the
Spirit of love, for everlasting
ages. Amen.

Ÿ. Stephen saw the heavens
opened.

℞. He saw and entered;
blessed man, to whom the
heavens opened.

ANTIPHON OF THE *Magnificat*.

ANT. Sepelierunt Stephanum viri timorati, et fecerunt planctum magnum super eum.

ANT. Devout men buried Stephen, and made great mourning over him.

OREMUS.

Da nobis, quæsumus, Domine, imitari quod colimus ut discamus et inimicos diligere, quia ejus natalitia celebramus, qui novit etiam pro persecutoribus exorare Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum. Qui tecum.

LET US PRAY.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that we may imitate him whose memory we celebrate, so as to learn to love even our enemies, because we now solemnise his martyrdom who knew how to pray, even for his persecutors, to our Lord, Jesus Christ, thy Son. Who liveth, &c.

Commemoration of St. John.

ANT. Iste est Joannes, qui supra pectus Domini in cœna recubuit: beatus Apostolus, cui revelata sunt secreta cœlestia.

Ÿ. Valde honorandus est beatus Joannes.

℞. Qui supra pectus Domini in cœna recubuit.

ANT. This is John, who leaned upon the Lord's breast at the Supper. Blessed Apostle, unto whom were revealed heavenly secrets.

Ÿ. Most worthy of honour is the blessed John.

℞. Who leaned upon the Lord's breast at the Supper.

OREMUS.

Ecclesiam tuam, Domine, benignus illustra, ut beati Joannis Apostoli tui et Evangelistæ illuminata doctrinis, ad dona perveniat sempiterna.

LET US PRAY.

Mercifully, O Lord, enlighten thy Church, that being taught by blessed John, thy Apostle and Evangelist, she may come to thy eternal rewards.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

ANT. This day, Christ is born; this day, the Saviour hath appeared; this day, the Angels sing on earth; the Archangels rejoice; this day, the just exult, saying: Glory be to God in the highest, alleluia.

Ÿ. The Lord hath made known, alleluia.

R. His Salvation, alleluia.

ANT. Hodie Christus natus est; hodie Salvator apparuit; hodie in terra canunt Angeli: lætantur Archangeli: hodie exsultant iusti, dicentes: Gloria in excelsis Deo, alleluia.

Ÿ Notum fecit Dominus, alleluia.

R. Salutare suum, alleluia.

LET US PRAY.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who groan under the old captivity of sin, may be freed therefrom by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son. Through the same, &c.

OREMUS.

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem nativitas liberet, quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet. Per eundem.

In honour of our Protomartyr, we will now give a selection from the ancient Liturgical Hymns, wherein his merits were celebrated by the various Churches. We begin with the Hymn composed by St. Ambrose, and which is in the Breviary of the Church of Milan.

HYMN.

To Stephen the first Martyr, let us sing a new canticle: may it be sweet to them that sing, and bring grace to them that believe.

Come, ye disciples of the Lord, thus let us sing: let us give praise to the Martyr, who was the first, after the Redeemer, to follow the cross of Jesus.

For, having been found, by

Stephano primo Martyri
Cantemus novum canticum,
Quod dulce sit psallentibus,
Opem ferat credentibus.

Psallamus hoc discipuli,
Laudem dicamus Martyri,
Qui primus, post Redemptorem,
Christi secutus est crucem.

Hic enim per Apostolos

Probatus in laudem Dei,
Vexilla mortis rapuit,
Ut præferretur omnibus.

O præferenda gloria !
O beata victoria !
Hoc meruisse Stephanum
Ut sequeretur Dominum.

Ipse martyr egregius,
Amore Christi prædicans,
Sancto repletus Spiritu,
Vultum gerens Angelicum.

Ille levatis oculis,
Vidit Patrem cum Filio,
Monstrans in cœlis vivere,
Quem plebs quærebat per-
dere.

Judæi magis sæviunt,
Saxaque prensant manibus,
Currebant, ut occiderent
Sacratum Christi militem.

Iste paratus vertice,
Gaudens suscepit lapides,
Rogans pro eis Dominum,
Gaudens tradidit spiritum.

Gloria tibi, Domine,
Gloria Unigenito,
Una cum Sancto Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.

Amen.

The Gallican Sacramentary, on the Feast of St. Stephen, thus glorifies God for the graces bestowed on this the first of the Martyrs.

(Missa S. Stefani.)

Deus omnipotens, qui Ec-
clesiæ tuæ sanctum Step-
hanum martyrem, primum
messis tuæ manipulum de-
disti, et primitivam oblatio-

the Apostles, to be fervent in God's service, he outran all others and bore off the Banner of death.

O glorious First place ! O blessed victory ! Stephen to be the first to follow his Lord !

The noble Martyr preaches to men for the love of Christ, with his heart full of the Holy Spirit, and his face beaming as an Angel's.

He raises his eyes, and sees the Father with the Son : he tells the people how he beholds, living in heaven, Him whom they had sought to destroy.

The Jews grow the more enraged, and, seizing up stones in their hands, they ran out to kill the holy Soldier of Christ.

He was ready, and standing up, right gladly receives the stones : he asks God to forgive them, and joyfully breaths forth his soul.

Glory be to thee, O Lord ! Glory be to thine Only Begotten Son, together with the Holy Ghost, for everlasting ages.

Amen.

O Almighty God ! who didst give the holy Martyr Stephen to thy Church as the first sheaf of thy harvest, and didst make this First-offering to be the

herald of a new confession, because he had yielded such quick ripened fruits,—grant to this whole assembly, by the intercession of thy well-deserving Martyr, that he may aid the Church by his prayers, as he honoured her by his ministry.

nem novellæ confessionis ostendisti præconem, quod fructus maturescentes exhibuit; præsta universo cœtui, intercessione martyris meriti, ut Ecclesiam tuam juvet suffragio, quam ornavit ministerio.

The Gothic Church of Spain has, in her Mozarabic Missal, these magnificent praises to God in his holy Martyr.

(In natali S. Stephani, Contestatio.)

It is meet and just, it is right and just, that we praise thee, and bless thee, and give thee thanks, O Almighty and eternal God! that art glorified in the assembly of thy Saints, whom thou didst choose before the foundation of the world, and didst mark with a spiritual blessing unto heavenly things; whom also thou didst associate to thine Only Begotten Son, by his Incarnation and his redeeming the world by the cross. Thou didst make to reign in them thy Holy Spirit, under whose guidance they were led, by the sweetness of thy mercy, to the glory of happy martyrdom. It is just, therefore, O God of hosts, that this festive solemnity should be kept in thy praise; that this sacred day should be devoted to thee; for on it, the blood of blessed Stephen, thy first Martyr, was shed in testimony of thy truth, and thy name thereby received exceeding honour. For this is he, who was the first Confessor of that Name, which is above all

Dignum et justum est; æquum et justum est: te laudare, teque benedicere, tibi gratias agere, omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui gloriaris in conventu Sanctorum tuorum; quos ante mundi constitutionem præelectos spirituali in cœlestibus benedictione signasti: quosque Unigenito tuo per adumptionem carnis, et crucis redemptionem sociasti. In quibus Spiritum tuum Sanctum regnare fecisti; per quem ad felicis martyrii gloriam pietatis tuæ favore venerunt. Digne igitur tibi, Domine virtutum, festa solemnitas agitur; tibi hæc dies sacrata celebratur; qua beati Stephani primi martyris tui sanguis in tuæ veritatis testimonio profusus, magnificum nominis tui honorem signavit. Hic est enim illius Nominis primus Confessor, quod est supra omne nomen: in quo unicum salutis nostræ præsidium, Pater æternæ, posuisti. Hic in Ecclesia tua

quam splendidum ad cunctorum animos confirmandos, unicæ laudis præcessit exemplum ! Hic post passionem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, victoriæ palmam primus invasit. Hic ut levitico ministerio per Spiritum Sanctum ab Apostolis consecratus est ; niveo candore confestim emicuit, martyrii cruore purpureus. O benedictum Abrahæ semen, Apostolicæ doctrinæ, et dominicæ crucis prior omnium factus imitator et testis ! Merito cœlos apertos vidit et Jesum stantem ad dexteram Dei. Digne igitur et juste talem sub tui nominis confessione laudamus, omnipotens Deus ; quem ad tantam gloriam vocare dignatus es. Suffragia ejus nobis pro tua pietate concede. Talis pro hac plebe precetur ; qualem illum post trophæa venientem exsultans Christus exceperit. Illi pro nobis oculi sublimentur ; qui adhuc in hoc mortis corpore constituti, stantem ad dexteram Patris Filium Dei in ipsa passionis hora viderunt. Ille pro nobis obtineat, qui pro persecutoribus suis dum lapidaretur, orabat ad te, sancte Deus, Pater omnipotens, per Dominum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, qui pro peccatis nostris nasci carne per Virginem, et pati dignatus est mortem : ut martyres suos suo pati doceret exemplo. Cui merito omnes Angeli atque Archangeli sine cessatione pro-

names, and in which, O Eternal Father, thou didst place the only source of our salvation. This is he, that left in thy Church an example of courage, but oh ! who can say how grand is the example, and how above all praise ? This is he, that was the first to seize the palm of victory, after the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is he, whom the Apostles, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, had scarce consecrated to the levitical ministry, than he straightways shone with a snow-white purity, and was vested in the scarlet of a martyr's blood. O truly noble child of Abraham ! worthy to become the first follower and witness of the Apostles' teaching, and of Jesus' cross ! How well did he deserve to see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God ! It is, therefore, meet and just, O Almighty Lord, that, whilst giving praise to thy Name, we praise him whom thou didst graciously call to this so great glory. In thy mercy, grant that we may have him to intercede for us. May he pray for this thy people, now that he is in possession of the glory with which Christ welcomed him after his victory. May he now, for our sakes, lift up those eyes, which, during this his mortal life, and in the hour of his martyrdom, beheld the Son of God standing at the right hand of the Father. May he be heard for us, who, whilst his persecutors were stoning him,

prayed for them unto thee, O Holy God, Father Almighty, through our Lord Jesus Christ thy Son, who, for our sins, vouchsafed to be born of the Virgin, and suffer death; teaching his Martyrs, hereby, by his own example, how they should suffer. To whom most justly do all the Angels and Archangels cry out unceasingly, saying: Holy, Holy, Holy!

clamant, dicentes : Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.

Let us next listen to the Greek Church singing the praises of our Protomartyr. She thus extols him in her Menæa:

(XXVI. Decembris, in magno Vespertino, et passim.)

Illumined in thy soul with the grace of the Holy Ghost, thy face shone like that of an Angel, O Stephen! The brightness that was within sent forth its rays upon thy body, and thy soul evinced to the beholders the light and contemplation thou didst enjoy, when the heavens were miraculously opened before thee, O thou the leader and the glory of the Martyrs!

The thickly falling stones were to thee as the steps of a ladder reaching the gate of heaven, and by which ascending, thou didst behold our Lord standing on the Father's right hand, offering thee, with his own life-giving right hand, that which was thy very name—a *Crown*: and now thou standest near him, thou the glorious conqueror, and the first combatant.

Illustrious by thy wonders

Mente illustratus Spiritus gratia, forma velut Angelus videris, Stephane, dato tibi in corpore qui intus erat splendore, et mente tua cernentibus manifestante fulgorem quo fruitus es, luminisque contemplationes, cœlis tibi mirabiliter apertis, o martyrum caput et gloria.

Quasi gradus scalæ, ad cœlestem ingressum tibi fuerunt lapidum flocci, super quos ascendens contemplatus es stantem Dominum, ad Patris dexteram, tibi offerentem homonymam coronam sua vivifica dextera, cui vicinus adstas victor gloriosus, athletarumque primitiæ.

Signis et miraculis corus-

cans, cœlestibus documentis, impiorum combussisti synedrium, et ab illis necatus lapidibusque obrutus, pro injectantium tu deprecatus es venia, vocem imitatus Salvatoris, in cuius manus commendasti sacratissimum spiritum tuum, Stephane.

Regi et Domino omnium nato in terra, Stephanus perlucidus offertur, non pretiosis decoratus gemmis, sed ex proprio sanguine floridus : at, o martyrum amatores, venite, decerpitis carminum floribus cingamus sertis tempora, et hymnis alternantes canamus : qui sapientia et charitate coruscas mente, protomartyr Christi Dei, deprecare pro nobis pacem et magnam misericordiam.

Tu ad auxilium Apostolorum Christi digne vocatus es, et ut fidelis diaconus, o vere nominate Stephane, administrasti ; tamquam Christus per sanguinem transivisti.

Clarissimus, sicut sol, o Deifer, ad orientem exorsus es, radios emittens confessionis tuæ, et magnæ fortitudinis atque generosissimæ oppugnationis.

Illum qui ex Matre virinascia apud nos hospitatus est, martyrum primus, in immutabili Patris divinitate stantem et gloria, in cœlis contemplatus es.

Heri apud nos per car-

and miracles and heavenly teaching, thou didst burn the Chair of the impious. They stoned thee to death, and thou didst pray God to forgive them, using thy Jesus' own words, and into his hands commending thy own most saintly spirit, O Stephen !

To the King and Lord of all, who is born on our earth, is offered the beautiful Stephen, not adorned with precious gems, but glittering in the scarlet of his own blood. Come then, ye that love the Martyrs, cull the flowers of song, and wreath them into hymns passed on from choir to choir. O Protomartyr of Jesus our God ! thy spirit beams with wisdom and love ; pray for us, that we may receive peace and plentiful mercy.

Thou wast deservedly made an aid to the Apostles of Christ, and thou didst minister to them, O well-named Stephen, as the faithful Deacon. Like Jesus, thou too didst pass through blood.

O man carrying God within thee ! thou didst rise in the east like a sun of fairest light, shedding the rays of thy confession, and great fortitude, and most generous resistance.

Thou, the first of Martyrs, didst look up to heaven and see standing in the immutable divinity and glory of the Father, Him that was born of a Virgin-Mother and became a guest among us.

Yesterday, the Master be-

came a guest among us by assuming our flesh ; to-day, his servant is unguested from the flesh ; he is stoned, and made the Protomartyr, the god-like Stephen.

To-day, there shone a bright star for the Birth of Christ—the Protomartyr Stephen ; and all the earth was illumined by his dazzling rays. He confuted all the impiety of the Jews, showing them their errors by words of wisdom, and proving his doctrine by the Scriptures, and showing them that Jesus, who was born of the Virgin, was very Son of God. The Protomartyr, the god-like Stephen, confounded their blasphemous impiety.

Thou art beyond all praise, O Stephen ! No tongue can say how honestly was won the laurel-branch thou bearest. No mortal mind can wreath a *Crown* worthy thy great acts.

Thou, most saintly Stephen ! wast first of Deacons, and first of Martyrs ; for thou didst open the way to the Saints, and hast led the countless Martyrs to their God : therefore did the heavens open over thy head, and God appear unto thee. Pray to him for us, that he save our souls.

nem hospitabatur Dominus, hodie e carne deospitatur servus ; hodie lapidatur famulus, et ideo perficitur Protomartyrdivinusque Stephanus.

Stella fulgida hodie in Christi nativitate resplenduit Protomartyr Stephanus, omnes mundi fines suis illuminans fulgoribus ; at Judæorum omnem extinxit impietatem, sapientiæ verbis illos animadvertens et de Scripturis disserens ; illisque suadens natum ex Virgine Jesum ipsum Dei esse Filium ; illorum impiam confundit malitiam Protomartyr et divinus Stephanus.

Laudum, Stephane, omnem superasti modum, et fers ineffabiliter et sine dolo tuas victoriæ palmas ; non enim potest mens mortalis tuis dignam præconiis coronam intexere.

Primus in diaconis et primus in martyribus demonstratus es, sanctissime Stephane ; iter enim fuisti sanctis, et multos ad Dominum perduxisti martyres ; ideo cœlum tibi apertum est, et Deus tibi apparuit : ipsum deprecare salvare animas nostras.

The Western Churches of the Middle-Ages have left us an almost endless variety of Liturgical compositions, more particularly of Proses and Sequences, in honour of St. Stephen. We have no hesitation in giving our preference to the one composed by Adam of Saint Victor. We shall always think it a duty to

bring into notice the works of this great Liturgical Poet, whose compositions were, for a long period, so dear to the faithful in England, France, Germany, and in almost all the Churches of northern Europe.

SEQUENCE.

Heri mundus exsultavit,
Et exsultans celebravit
Christi natalitia.

Heri chorus Angelorum
Prosecutus est cœlorum
Regem cum lætitia.

Protomartyr et Levita
Clarus fide, clarus vita,
Clarus et miraculis.

Sub hac luce triumphavit
Et triumphans insultavit
Stephanus incredulis.

Fremunt ergo tamquam
feræ,
Quia victi defuere

Lucis adversarii.
Falsos testes statuunt,
Et linguas exacuunt
Viperarum filii.

Agonista, nulli cede,
Certa, certus de mercede,
Persevera, Stephane.

Insta falsis testibus,
Confuta sermonibus
Synagogam Satanæ.

Testis tuus est in cœlis,
Testis verax et fidelis,
Testis innocentia.

Nomen habes Coronati :
Te tormenta decet pati
Pro corona gloria.

Pro coronæ non marcenti
Perfer brevis vim tormenti :
Te manet victoria.

Tibi fiet mors Natalis,

Yesterday, the world exulted, and, in its exultation, celebrated the Birth of Jesus.

Yesterday, the Angelic Choir, in great joy, stood round the King of heaven.

The Protomartyr and Deacon Stephen, illustrious for his faith, illustrious for his holy life, illustrious also for his miracles;

On this day triumphed, and, in his triumph, vanquished the unbelieving Jews.

These enemies of the Light rage like savage beasts, at seeing their own defeat.

This brood of vipers bring up false witnesses, and sharpen their tongues.

Flinch not, Combatant! Thou art sure of thy reward : fight and persevere, O Stephen!

Withstand the false witnesses, and confute, by thy answers, the synagogue of Satan.

Thine own Witness is in heaven, a Witness true and faithful, and he is Witness of thine innocence.

Thy name is *The Crowned* : it behoves thee to suffer, so to win thy *Crown* of glory.

For a *Crown* which is to last for ever, what are torments which last but an hour, and are followed by victory ?

Thy death will be thy Birth ;

thy last pang will introduce thee into eternal life.

Full of the Holy Ghost, Stephen fixes his gaze on the heavens above :

Seeing there the glory of God, he pushes on to victory, he pants for the crown.

Behold, Stephen! on God's right hand is thy Jesus, and he is fighting for thee.

Boldly tell it to the crowd, that the heavens are opened for thee, and that Jesus shows himself to thee.

He then commends his spirit to his Saviour, for whom he deems it sweet to be thus stoned to death.

Saul makes himself guardian of the garments of all that cast the stones : casting thus himself each stone they throw.

But Stephen compassionating their madness, falls on his knees, and prays that this sin be not laid to the charge of his murderers.

Thus did he sleep in Christ, who thus imitated Christ : and now for ever lives with Christ—Stephen, first of Martyrs.

St. Augustine, and common report, assure us, that he raised up six dead men to life, in Africa.

When, through God's mercy, his Relics were discovered, the earth, which was parched by a drought, received a plentiful rain.

The very fragrance that came from his Relics, put diseases and demons to flight. Truly, then, is he worthy of praise, and honour, and eternal remembrance.

Tibi pœna terminalis
Dat vitæ primordia.

Plenus Sancto Spiritu,
Penetrat intuitu

Stephanus cœlestia.
Videns Dei gloriam,

Crescit ad victoriam,
Suspirat ad præmia.

En a dextris Dei stantem
Jesum pro te dimicantem,

Stephane, considera.
Tibi cœlos reserari,

Tibi Christum revelari,
Clama, voce libera.

Se commendat Salvatori
Pro quo dulce ducit mori,
Sub ipsis lapidibus.

Saulus servat omnium
Vestes lapidantium,
Lapidans in omnibus.

Ne peccatum statuatur
His a quibus lapidatur,
Genu ponit et precatur
Condolens insanïæ.

In Christo sic obdormivit,
Qui Christo sic obedivit !
Et cum Christo semper vivit
Martyrum primitiæ.

Quod sex suscitaverit
Mortuos in Africa,
Augustinus asserit,
Fama refert publica.

Hujus, Dei gratia,
Revelato corpore,
Mundo datur pluvia
Siccitatis tempore.

Solo fugat hic odore
Morbos et dæmonia,
Laude dignus et honore
Jugique memoria.

Martyr, cujus est jucun-
 dum
 Nomen in Ecclesia,
 Languescentem fove mun-
 dum
 Cœlesti fragrantia. Amen.

O Martyr, whose name is so
 dear to the Church! refresh
 our fainting world by celestial
 fragrance. Amen.

With these praises, which the venerable ages of old offered to thee, O Prince and First of Martyrs! we presume to unite ours. Fervently do we congratulate thee, that thou hast had assigned thee, by the Church, the place of honour at the Crib of our Jesus. How glorious the confession thou didst make of his Divinity, whilst thy executioners were stoning thee! How rich and bright the scarlet thou art clad in, for thy victory! How honourable the wounds thou didst receive for Christ! How immense, and yet how choice, that army of Martyrs, which follows thee as its leader, and to which fresh recruits will for ever be added, to the end of time!

Holy Martyr! help us, by thy prayers, to enter into the spirit of the mystery of the Word made Flesh, now that we are celebrating the Birth of our Saviour. Thou art the faithful guardsman of his Crib:—who could better lead us to the Divine Babe, that lies there? Thou didst bear testimony to his Divinity and Humanity; thou didst preach this Man-God before the blaspheming Synagogue. In vain did the Jews stop their ears; they could not stifle thy voice, which charged them with deicide, in that they had put to death Him, who is at once the Son of Mary and the Son of God. Show this Redeemer to us also, not, indeed, standing in glory at the right hand of his Father, but the sweet and humble Babe, as he now manifests himself to the world, into which he has just been born, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger. We, too, wish to bear witness to him, and to tell how his Birth is one of love and mercy; we wish to show, by our lives, that he has

been born in our hearts. Obtain for us that devotedness to the Divine Infant, which gave thee such courage on the day of trial: we shall have devotedness, if, like thee, we are simple-hearted and fearless in our love of Jesus; for love is stronger than death. May we never forget, that every Christian ought to be ready for martyrdom, simply because he is a Christian. May the life of Christ, which has again begun within us, so grow within us, by our fidelity and our conduct, that we may come, as the Apostle expresses it, *to the fulness of Christ*.¹

But, be mindful, O glorious Martyr! be mindful of the Holy Church in those countries, where it is the will of God that she resist even unto blood. May the number of thy fellow-martyrs be thus filled up, and let not one of the combatants grow faint-hearted. May every age and sex be staunch; that so, the testimony may be perfect, and the Church, even in her old age, win immortal laurels and crowns, as in the freshness of her infancy, when she had such a champion as thyself. But, pray, too, that the blood of these Martyrs may be fruitful, as it was in times past; pray that it be not wasted, but become the seed of abundant harvests. May infidelity lose ground, and heresy cease to canker those noble hearts, who, once in the Truth, would be the glory and consolation of the Church. Our own dear Land has had her Martyrs, who, in the hope that God would avenge their blood by restoring her to the Faith, gladly suffered and died—oh! Prince of Martyrs! pray, that this their hope may be speedily fulfilled.

We must not end this second day of the Christmas Octave without visiting the Stable of Bethlehem, and adoring the divine Son of Mary. Two days have

¹ Eph. iv. 13.

scarce elapsed, since his Blessed Mother placed him in this humble Crib; but these two days are of more value, for the salvation of the world, than the four thousand years which preceded the Birth of this Babe. The work of our Redemption has made a great step; the cries and tears of the New-Born Child have begun the atonement of our sins. On this the Feast of the First Martyr, let us consider how the cheeks of the Infant Jesus are moistened with Tears, and how these tears are the first expression of his sufferings. "Jesus weeps," says St. Bernard, "but not like other children, certainly not for the same cause as other children. * * They weep from passion; He, from compassion. They weep because they are galled by the yoke, that sits heavy on all the children of Adam; Jesus weeps, because he sees the sins of the children of Adam." (*3rd Sermon for the Nativity.*) Oh! how dear to us ought to be these Tears of a God, who has made himself our Brother! Had we not sinned, God would not have wept. Ought not we, too, to weep over sin, which thus saddens, by the sufferings it causes to our sweet Infant Jesus, the heavenly joy of his Birth among us?

Mary, also, sees these Tears, and her maternal heart is pained. She feels that her Child is to be the *Man of Sorrows*; and, before many days are over, the same awful truth will be told her in prophecy. With the consolation she offers to her Babe, let us unite ours, by giving him our love. It is the one thing he seeks by all the humiliations he has taken upon himself. It is to gain our love that he has come down from heaven, and been born among us in the midst of the mysteries we are now celebrating. Let us love him, therefore, with all our love, and ask our Lady to present him our humble offering. The Psalmist has said: *The Lord is great, and exceedingly to be praised*: let us add, with St.

Bernard : *The Lord is a Little Babe, and exceedingly to be loved.*

We will honour the Birth of our Jesus, to-day, by this venerable Sequence of St. Gall's Monastery, written by the Blessed Notker. It recounts the combat of our Emmanuel against Satan, and his victory. This victory is the source of those won by Stephen and all the Martyrs.

SEQUENCE.

Come! let us resume our holy songs of praise in strains worthy of this Day,

Whereon the much-loved Light rises to the world.

It is in the gloomy hour of Night, that the dark shadows of our sins are made to disappear.

This day, did the Star of the sea bring forth to the world the joy of its new salvation.

Her Child makes hell tremble; nay, cruel Death is filled with fear at the sight of Him who is to be its death.

Long-triumphant pestilence, now captive, mourns out her sighs; and the crushed serpent lets go his prey.

Fallen man, the strayed sheep, is carried back to the eternal joys.

The heavenly host of Angels are full of joy to-day;

For, the tenth groat was lost and is found.

O Child! blessed above all! by whom mankind was redeemed.

Eia, recolamus
Laudibus piis digna.

Hujus diei carmina,
In quo nobis lux oritur
Gratissima.

Noctis inter nebulosa,
Pereunt nostri criminis
Umbracula.

Hodie sæculo
Maris stella
Est enixa

Novæ salutis gaudia.
Quem tremunt barathra,
Mors cruenta pavet ipsa,
A quo peribit mortua.

Gemet capta
Pestis antiqua,
Coluber lividus perdit
spolia.

Homo lapsus,
Ovis obducta,
Revocatur ad æterna
Gaudia.

Gaudent in hoc die
Agmina Angelorum cœlestia,
Quia erat drachma decima
Perdita,

Et est inventa.
O proles
Nimium beata,
Qua redempta
Est natura.

Deus, qui creavit omnia,
 Nascitur ex femina.
 Mirabilis natura,
 Mirifice induta,
 Assumens quod non
 erat,
 Manens quod erat.
 Induitur natura
 Divinitas humana :
 Quis audivit talia,
 Dic, rogo, facta ?
 Quærere venerat
 Pastor pius quod perierat.
 Induit galeam,
 Certat ut miles armatura.
 Prostratus
 In sua propria
 Ruit hostis spicula.
 Auferuntur tela
 In quibus fidebat,
 Divisa sunt illius spolia,
 Capta præda sua.
 Christi pugna
 Fortissima
 Salus nostra est vera,
 Qui nos suam
 Ad patriam
 Duxit post victoriam.
 In qua sibi laus est
 Æterna. Amen.

The God, who created all things, is born of a Woman.

He, whose nature is admirable, clothes himself by an admirable mystery, assuming what he was not, and remaining what he had ever been.

A divine Person puts on human nature : I beseech thee, tell me, was aught like this ever heard of ?

The Good Shepherd came to seek that which was lost.

He puts on the helmet, and, as a soldier, fights in armour.

The enemy is defeated and falls upon his own arrows.

The weapons he trusted in are taken from him, his booty is divided, his prey is taken from him.

Our true salvation comes of this most glorious battle of Christ ;

Who, after the victory, led us to his own kingdom,

Where everlasting praise is given to him. Amen.

And now, turning towards his Blessed Mother, we will offer her the tribute of this beautiful Sequence, taken from the Cluny Missal, of 1523.

SEQUENCE.

Angelicæ nos respice,
 O dignitatis Domina.
 Cum Filio in solio
 Cœlo regnas per sæcula.

Dulcis Maria,
 Vere dulcis, vere pia,
 Vere mitissima.

Look down upon us, O Queen of the Angel kingdom.

With thy Son, thou reignest for ever on the heavenly throne.

Sweet Mother Mary ! truly sweet, and loving, and most gentle !

Thou art, as a fountain, full of love and clemency ; and as a land flowing with honey.

Thou mercifully aidedst the sorrowing Theophilus to obtain the forgiveness of his sin.

By thy prayers, the guilty one of Egypt rises from her abominations.

O Mother of Mercy ! O singular hope of the fallen !

Bear up, this day, to heaven, the prayers and sighs of thy clients.

Thou art the honour of Israel, thou art the glory of the world.

Restore us to the favour of our Emmanuel,

Whom thou didst feed at thy sacred breast,

And whose sweet Infant limbs thou didst warm.

Do thou, our Mediatrix, appease him in our regard,

On the dread Day, we beseech thee.

We are here to offer up to God our Father the merits of our Jesus ;

By their virtue, do thou, we beseech thee, obtain forgiveness for the guilty, and bring courage to them that fear.

Thou art our good, our merciful, Mother ; thou art our hope, O Mary !

Let every devout soul respond : *Amen !*

Tota affluens pietate,
Clementia,
Tota melliflua.

Tu flebili Theophili
Culpæ ades propitia.

Te auspice,
A fornice
Surgit rea Ægyptia.
O mater misericordiæ,
O lapsorum spes unica.

Votiva servorum
Hodie infer cœlo
Suspiria.

Tu decus Israel,
Tu mundi gloria.

Nostro Emmanuel
Tu reconcilia,
Quem lactasti tua sacra
mamilla.

Illa ejus membra
Fovens dulcia.
Mediatrix nostra,
Nobis hunc placa.
In illa oramus die
Tremenda.

Oblaturi hic adsumus
Deo Patri tuæ prolis
Pignora,
Quorum virtute, quæsumus,

Reos munda,
Trementes corrobora.
Tu bona, tu clemens,
Tu spes nostra,
O Maria.

Amen dicat mens devota.

DECEMBER 27.

SAINT JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST.

NEAREST to Jesus' Crib, after Stephen, stands John, the Apostle and Evangelist. It was only right, that the first place should be assigned to him, who so loved his God, that he shed his blood in his service; for, as this God himself declares, *greater love than this hath no man, that he lay down his life for his friends*,¹ and Martyrdom has ever been counted, by the Church, as the greatest act of love, and as having, consequently, the power of remitting sins, like a second Baptism. But, next to the sacrifice of Blood, the noblest, the bravest, and which most wins the heart of Him who is the Spouse of souls, is the sacrifice of Virginity. Now, just as St. Stephen is looked upon as the type of Martyrs, St. John is honoured as the Prince of Virgins. Martyrdom won for Stephen the Crown and palm; Virginity merited for John most singular prerogatives, which, while they show how dear to God is holy Chastity, put this Disciple among those, who, by their dignity and influence, are above the rest of men.

St. John was of the family of David, as was our Blessed Lady. He was, consequently, a relation of Jesus. This same honour belonged to St. James the Greater, his Brother; as also to St. James the Less, and St. Jude, both Sons of Alpheus. When our Saint was in the prime of his youth, he left, not only his boat and nets, not only his Father Zebedee, but even his betrothed, when everything was pre-

¹ St. John, xv. 13.

pared for the marriage. He followed Jesus, and never once looked back. Hence, the special love which our Lord bore him. Others were Disciples or Apostles, John was the Friend, of Jesus. The cause of this our Lord's partiality, was, as the Church tells us in the Liturgy, that John had offered his Virginity to the Man-God. Let us, on this his Feast, enumerate the graces and privileges that came to St. John from his being *The Disciple whom Jesus loved*.

This very expression of the Gospel, which the Evangelist repeats several times—*The Disciple whom Jesus loved*¹—says more than any commentary could do. St. Peter, it is true, was chosen by our Divine Lord, to be the Head of the Apostolic College, and the Rock whereon the Church was to be built: he, then, was *honoured* most; but St. John was *loved* most. Peter was bid to love more than the rest loved, and he was able to say, in answer to Jesus' thrice repeated question, that he did love him in this highest way: and yet, notwithstanding, John was more loved by Jesus than was Peter himself, because his Virginity deserved this special mark of honour.

Chastity of soul and body brings him who possesses it into a sacred nearness and intimacy with God. Hence it was, that at the Last Supper—that Supper, which was to be renewed on our Altars, to the end of the world, in order to cure our spiritual infirmities, and give life to our souls—John was placed near to Jesus, nay, was permitted, as the tenderly loved Disciple, to lean his head upon the Breast of the Man-God. Then it was, that he was filled, and from their very Fountain, with Light and Love: it was both a recompense and a favour, and became the source of two signal graces, which make

¹ St. John, xiii. 23; xix. 26; xxi. 7; xxi. 20.

St. John an object of special reverence to the whole Church.

Divine wisdom wishing to make known to the world the Mystery of the Word, and commit to Scripture those profound secrets, which, so far, no pen of mortal had been permitted to write—the task was put upon John. Peter had been crucified, Paul had been beheaded, and the rest of the Apostles had laid down their lives in testimony of the Truths they had been sent to preach to the world; John was the only one left in the Church. Heresy had already begun its blasphemies against the Apostolic Teachings; it refused to admit the Incarnate Word as the Son of God, Consubstantial to the Father. John was asked by the Churches to speak, and he did so in language heavenly above measure. His Divine Master had reserved to this his Virgin-Disciple the honour of writing those sublime Mysteries, which the other Apostles had been commissioned only to teach—**THE WORD WAS GOD, and this WORD WAS MADE FLESH** for the salvation of mankind. Thus did our Evangelist soar, like the Eagle, up to the Divine Sun, and gaze upon Him with undazzled eye, because his heart and senses were pure, and therefore fitted for such vision of the uncreated Light. If Moses, after having conversed with God in the cloud, came from the divine interview with rays of miraculous light encircling his head:—how radiant must have been the face of St. John, which had rested on the very Heart of Jesus, *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!*¹ how sublime his writings! how divine his teaching! Hence, the symbol of the *Eagle*, shown to the Prophet Ezechiel,² and to St. John himself in his Revelations,³ has been assigned to him by the Church: and to this title of *The Eagle* has been

¹ Coloss. ii. 3.

² Ezechiel, i. 10; x. 14.

³ Apoc. iv. 7.

added, by universal tradition, the other beautiful name of *Theologian*.

This was the first recompense given by Jesus to his Beloved John—a profound penetration into divine Mysteries. The second was the imparting to him a most ardent charity, which was equally a grace consequent upon his angelic purity, for purity unburdens the soul from grovelling egotistic affections, and raises it to a chaste and generous love. John had treasured up in his heart the *Discourses* of his Master: he made them known to the Church, and especially that divine one of the Last Supper, wherein Jesus had poured forth his whole Soul to *his own*, whom he had always tenderly loved, but most so *at the end*.¹ He wrote his *Epistles*, and Charity is his subject: *God is Charity—he that loveth not, knoweth not God—perfect Charity casteth out fear*—and so on throughout, always on Love. During the rest of his life, even when so enfeebled by old age as not to be able to walk, he was for ever insisting upon all men loving each other, after the example of God, who had loved them and so loved them! Thus, he that had announced more clearly than the rest of the Apostles the divinity of the Incarnate Word, was by excellence the Apostle of that divine Charity, which Jesus came to enkindle upon the earth.

But, our Lord had a further gift to bestow, and it was sweetly appropriate to the Virgin-Disciple. When dying on his cross, Jesus left Mary upon this earth. Joseph had been dead now some years. Who, then, shall watch over his Mother? who is there worthy of the charge? Will Jesus send his Angels to protect and console her?—for, surely, what man could ever merit to be to her as a second Joseph? Looking down, he sees the Virgin-Disciple standing at the foot of the Cross: we know the rest, John is to be

¹ St. John, xiii. 1.

Mary's Son — Mary is to be John's Mother. Oh! wonderful Chastity, that wins from Jesus such an inheritance as this! Peter, says St. Peter Damian, shall have left to him the Church, the Mother of men; but John, shall receive Mary, the Mother of God, whom he will love as his own dearest Treasure, and to whom he will stand in Jesus' stead; whilst Mary will tenderly love John, her Jesus' Friend, as her Son.

Can we be surprised after this, that St. John is looked upon by the Church as one of her greatest glories? He is a Relative of Jesus in the flesh; he is an Apostle, a Virgin, the Friend of the Divine Spouse, the Eagle, the Theologian, the Son of Mary; he is an Evangelist, by the history he has given of the Life of his Divine Master and Friend; he is a Sacred Writer, by the three Epistles he wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; he is a Prophet, by his mysterious Apocalypse, wherein are treasured the secrets of time and eternity. But, is he a Martyr? Yes, for if he did not complete his sacrifice, he drank the Chalice of Jesus,¹ when, after being cruelly scourged, he was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, before the Latin Gate, at Rome. He was, therefore, a Martyr in desire and intention, though not in fact. If our Lord, wishing to prolong a life so dear to the Church, as well as to show how he loves and honours Virginity,—miraculously stayed the effects of the frightful punishment, St. John had, on his part, unreservedly accepted Martyrdom.

Such is the companion of Stephen at the Crib, wherein lies our Infant Jesus. If the Protomartyr dazzles us with the robes he wears of the bright scarlet of his own blood—is not the virginal whiteness of John's vestment fairer than the untrod snow? The spotless beauty of the Lilies of Mary's adopted Son, and the bright vermilion of Stephen's Roses—what

¹ St. Matth. xx. 22.

is there more lovely than their union? Glory, then, be to our New-Born King, whose court is tapestried with such heaven-made colours as these! Yes, Bethlehem's Stable is a very heaven on earth, and we have seen its transformation. First, we saw Mary and Joseph alone there—they were adoring Jesus in his Crib; then, immediately, there descended a heavenly host of Angels singing the wonderful Hymn; the Shepherds soon followed, the humble simple-hearted Shepherds; after these, entered Stephen *the Crowned*, and John *the Beloved Disciple*; and, even before there enters the pageant of the devout Magi, we shall have others coming in, and there will be, each day, grander glory in the Cave, and gladder joy in our hearts. Oh! this Birth of our Jesus! Humble as it seems, yet, how divine! What King or Emperor ever received, in his gilded cradle, honours like these shown to the Babe of Bethlehem? Let us unite our homage with that given him by these the favoured inmates of his court. Yesterday, the sight of the Palm in Stephen's hand animated us, and we offered to our Jesus the promise of a stronger Faith: to-day, the Wreath, that decks the brow of the Beloved Disciple, breathes upon the Church the heavenly fragrance of Virginitv—an intenser love of Purity must be our resolution, and our tribute to the Lamb.

MASS.

The Church commences her chants of the holy Sacrifice with words taken from the Book of Ecclesiasticus, which she applies to St. John. Our Lord has proclaimed his mysteries to the Church, by the teaching of his Beloved Disciple. He favoured him with his divine intimacy, which filled him with the spirit of wisdom. He clad him with a robe of glory, in reward for his virginal purity.

INTROIT.

In medio Ecclesiæ aperuit os ejus ; et implevit eum Dominus Spiritu sapientiæ et intellectus ; stolam gloriæ induit eum.

Ps. Bonum est confiteri Domino, et psallere nomini tuo, Altissime.

V. Gloria. In medio.

He opened his mouth in the midst of the Church, and the Lord filled him with the spirit of wisdom : he clad him with a robe of glory.

Ps. It is good to give praise to the Lord, and to sing to thy name, O Most High.

V. Glory, &c. He opened.

In the Collect, the Church asks for the Light, that is, for the Word of God, of whom St. John was the propagator by his sublime writings. She aspires to the eternal possession of this Emmanuel, who is come to enlighten the world, and who has revealed to his Beloved Disciple the secrets of heaven.

COLLECT.

Ecclesiam tuam, Domine, benignus illustra : ut beati Joannis, Apostoli tui et Evangelistæ, illuminata doctrinis, ad dona perveniat sempiterna. Per Dominum.

Mercifully, O Lord, enlighten thy Church : that being taught by blessed John, thine Apostle and Evangelist, she may come to thy eternal rewards. Through, &c.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem nativitas liberet, quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who groan under the old captivity of sin, may be freed therefrom by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son.

Commemoration of St. Stephen.

Da nobis, quæsumus, Domine, imitari quod colimus : ut discamus et inimicos diligere, quia ejus natalitia celebramus, qui novit etiam pro persecutoribus exorare

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that we may imitate him whose memory we celebrate, so as to learn to love even our enemies, because we now solemnise his martyrdom who

knew how to pray, even for his persecutors, to our Lord Jesus Christ thy Son. Who liveth, &c.

Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum. Qui tecum.

EPISTLE.

Lesson from the Book of Wisdom.

Ecclus. ch. XV.

He that feareth God, will do good ; and he that possesseth justice, shall lay hold on her, and she will meet him as an honourable mother. With the bread of life and understanding she shall feed him, and give him the water of wholesome wisdom to drink, and she shall be made strong in him, and he shall not be moved ; and she shall exalt him among his neighbours ; and in the midst of the Church she shall open his mouth, and shall fill him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and shall clothe him with the robe of glory ; she shall heap upon him a treasure of joy and gladness, and our Lord God shall cause him to inherit an everlasting name.

Lectio libri Sapientiæ.

Eccli. cap. XV.

Qui timet Deum, faciet bona ; et qui continens est justitiæ, apprehendet illam, et obviabit illi quasi mater honorificata. Cibabit illum pane vitæ et intellectus, et aqua sapientiæ salutaris potabit illum ; et firmabitur in illo, et non flectetur ; et continebit illum, et non confundetur ; et exaltabit illum apud proximos suos ; et in medio Ecclesiæ aperiet os ejus, et adimplebit illum Spiritu sapientiæ et intellectus, et stolam gloriæ vestiet illum ; jucunditatem et exultationem thesaurizabit super illum, et nomine æterno hæreditabit illum Dominus Deus noster.

The *Wisdom* here spoken of, is Jesus the Eternal Word, who came to St. John and called him to the Apostolate. The *Bread of life* wherewith she fed him, is the divine Bread of the Last Supper, the Body and Blood of Jesus ; the *wholesome Water*, is that promised by our Saviour to the Samaritan Woman, and of which St. John drank so abundantly from its very source, when he rested his head on the Heart of Jesus. The *immovable Strength*, is the

Saint's close and resolute custody of the treasure of his Virginity, and the courageous profession of the religion of Christ before the Proconsuls of Domitian. The *Treasure* which Wisdom heaped upon him, is the magnificence of the prerogatives granted to him. Lastly, the *everlasting Name*, is that glorious title given him of *John the Beloved Disciple*.

GRADUAL.

Exiit sermo inter fratres,
quod discipulus ille non
moritur; et non dixit Jesus:
Non moritur;

Ÿ. Sed: Sic eum volo manere,
donec veniam; tu me sequere.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. Hic est discipulus ille,
qui testimonium perhibet
de his; et scimus quia verum
est testimonium ejus.
Alleluia.

A report was spread among
the brethren, that that Disciple
should not die; but
Jesus said not: He should not
die;

Ÿ. But: So I will have him
remain till I come; follow thou
me.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. This is the Disciple that
beareth testimony of these
things; and we know his testi-
mony is true. Alleluia.

GOSPEL.

Sequentia sancti Evangelii
secundum Joannem.

Cap. XXI.

In illo tempore, dixit Je-
sus Petro: Sequere me.
Conversus Petrus vidit il-
lum discipulum quem dili-
gebat Jesus, sequentem, qui
et recubuit in cœna super
pectus ejus, et dixit: Do-
mine, quis est qui tradet te?
Hunc ergo cum vidisset Pe-
trus, dixit Jesu: Domine,
hic autem quid? Dicit ei
Jesus: Sic eum volo manere
donec veniam, quid ad te?
Tu me sequere. Exiit ergo
sermo iste inter fratres, quia

Sequel of the Holy Gospel
according to John.

Ch. XXI.

At that time: Jesus said to
Peter: Follow me. Peter turn-
ing about, saw that Disciple,
whom Jesus loved, following,
who also leaned on his breast
at supper, and said: Lord,
who is he that shall betray
thee? Him, therefore, when
Peter had seen, he saith to
Jesus: Lord, and what shall
this man do? Jesus saith to
him: So I will have him to
remain till I come, what is it
to thee? Follow thou me.
This saying, therefore, went

abroad among the brethren, that that Disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him : He should not die ; but : So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee ? This is that Disciple, who giveth testimony of these things, and hath written these things ; and we know that his testimony is true.

discipulus ille non moritur. Et non dixit ei Jesus : Non moritur ; sed : Sic eum volo manere donec veniam, quid ad te ? Hic est discipulus ille, qui testimonium perhibet de his, et scripsit hæc ; et scimus quia verum est testimonium ejus.

This passage of the holy Gospel has been much commented upon. Some of the Fathers and Commentators interpret it as signifying, that St. John was to be exempt from death, and that he is still living in the flesh, awaiting the coming of the Judge of the living and the dead. It is certain that this opinion regarding our Apostle has been entertained ; and one of the arguments in its favour was this very passage. But, the general opinion of the Holy Fathers is, that nothing further is implied by it, than the difference between the two vocations of St. Peter and St. John. The former shall *follow* his divine Master, by dying, like Him, on the cross ; the latter *shall remain*—he shall live to a venerable old age—and at length, Jesus *shall come* and take him out of this world, by sending him a sweet and peaceful death.

During the Offertory, the Church makes a remembrance of the *flourishing Palms* which grew up around the Beloved Disciple ; she tells us of the spiritual children he had trained, and of the Churches he had founded ; all which, like young *cedars* round the venerable parent-tree on Libanus, multiplied under the fostering care of their Father.

OFFERTORY.

The just shall flourish, like the palm-tree ; he shall grow up like the cedar of Libanus.

Justus ut palma florebit ; sicut cedrus, quæ in Libano est multiplicabitur.

SECRET.

Suscipe, Domine, munera quæ in ejus tibi solemnitate deferimus, cujus nos confidimus patrocinio liberari. Per Dominum.

Receive, O Lord, the offerings we make to thee, on his feast, by whose intercession we hope to be delivered. Through, &c.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

Oblata, Domine, munera, nova Unigeniti tui natiuitate sanctifica: nosque a peccatorum nostrorum maculis emunda.

Sanctify, O Lord, our offerings by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son, and cleanse us from the stains of our sins.

Commemoration of St. Stephen.

Suscipe, Domine, munera, pro tuorum commemoratione Sanctorum; ut sicut illos passio gloriosos effecit, ita nos devotio reddat innocuos. Per Dominum.

Receive, O Lord, these offerings in memory of thy Saints; and as their sufferings have made them glorious, so may our devotion render us free from sin. Through, &c.

The Preface as in *page 70*: but on the Octave-Day it is as below.*

* PREFACE.

For the Octave-Day.

Vere dignum et justum est æquum et salutare, te Domine suppliciter exorare, ut gregem tuum, Pastor æterne, non deseras, sed per beatos Apostolos tuos continua protectione custodias. Ut iisdem rectoribus gubernetur, quos operis tui vicarios eidem contulisti præesse Pastores. Et ideo cum Angelis et Archangelis, cum Thronis et Dominationibus, cumque omni militia cœlestis exercitus, hymnum gloriæ tuæ canimus, sine fine dicentes: Sanctus, &c.

It is truly meet and just, right and available to salvation, humbly to beseech thee, that thou, O Lord, our eternal Shepherd, wouldst not forsake thy flock, but keep it under thy continual protection, by thy blessed Apostles. That it may be governed by those whom thou hast appointed its vicars and pastors. And therefore with the Angels and Archangels, with the Thrones and Dominations, and with all the heavenly host, we sing an everlasting hymn to thy glory, saying: Holy, &c.

The mysterious words of the Gospel are repeated in the *Communion*, that is, at the moment when Priest and people have partaken of the Victim of salvation; they convey this teaching—that he who eats of this Bread, though he must die the death of the body, will yet live for the *coming* of the supreme Judge and Rewarder.

COMMUNION.

A report was spread among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. But Jesus said not: He should not die; but: So will I that he remain till I come.

Exiit sermo inter fratres quod discipulus ille non moritur. Et non dixit Jesus: Non moritur; sed: Sic eum volo manere donec veniam.

POSTCOMMUNION.

Being refreshed, O Lord, with this heavenly meat and drink, we humbly beseech thee, that we may be assisted by his prayers, on whose feast we have received these sacred mysteries. Through, &c.

Refecti cibo potuque cœlesti, Deus noster, te supplices deprecamur; ut in cujus hæc commemoratione percepimus, ejus muniamur et precibus. Per Dominum.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that as the Saviour of the world, who was born this day, procured for us a divine birth, he may, also, bestow on us immortality.

Præsta, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus: ut natus hodie Salvator mundi, sicut divinæ nobis generationis est auctor, ita et immortalitatis sit ipse largitor.

Commemoration of St. Stephen.

May the mysteries we have received, O Lord, be a help to us; and, by the intercession

Auxilientur nobis, Domine, sumpta mysteria; et intercedente beato Stephano,

Martyre tuo, sempiterna of the blessed Martyr Stephen,
 protectione confirmat. Per strengthen us with thy perpetual
 Dominum. protection. Through, &c.

VESPERS.

The Antiphons and Psalms are sung as yesterday, the Feast of St. Stephen: they are given in *page 234*. After the last Psalm, the Office of St. John is resumed, commencing as follows:

CAPITULUM.

(*Ecclus. XV.*)

Qui timet Deum, faciet bona: et qui continens est justitiæ, apprehendet illam, et obviabit illi quasi mater honorificata.	He that feareth God, will do good: and he that possesseth justice, shall lay hold on her, and she shall meet him as an honourable mother.
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HYMN.*

Exsultet orbis gaudiis: Cælum resultat laudibus; Apostolorum gloriam Tellus et astra concinunt.	Let the earth exult with joy: let the heavens re-echo with praise: the glory of the Apostles is sung by both earth and heaven.
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* According to the Monastic Rite it is as follows:—

R. <i>Breve.</i> Constitues eos prin- cipes, * Super omnem terram. Constitues. V. Memores erunt nominis tui, Domine. * Super. Gloria Patri. Constitues. Exsultet cælum laudibus, Resultet terra gaudiis; Apostolorum gloriam Sacra canunt solemniam. Vos sæcli justi iudices Et vera mundi lumina, Votis precamur cordium, Audite preces supplicum. Qui cælum verbo clauditis, Serasque ejus solvitis,	Nos a peccatis omnibus Solvite jussu, quæsumus. Quorum præcepto subditur Salus et languor omnium, Sanate ægros moribus, Nos reddentes virtutibus. Ut cum iudex advenerit, Christus in fine sæculi, Nos sempiterni gaudii Faciatis esse compotes. Gloria tibi, Domine, Qui natus es de Virgine, Cum Patre, et Sancto Spiritu, In sempiterna sæcula. Amen.
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O ye, the Judges of the world, and the true Lights of the earth ! we pray to you with all earnestness of heart : hear the prayers of your clients.

'Tis ye that have power, by your word, to shut and open the gates of heaven : we beseech you, loosen us from the bonds of sin.

Sickness and health promptly do your bidding ; oh ! heal our languid souls, bring us growth in virtue ;

That so, when Jesus, our judge, shall come again at the end of the world, he may grant us to be partakers of never-ending bliss.

Glory be to thee, O Jesus, that wast born of the Virgin ! and to the Father, and to the Spirit of love, for everlasting ages.

Amen.

V. Most worthy of honour is the blessed John.

R. Who leaned upon the Lord's breast at the supper.

Vos sæculorum iudices,
Et vera mundi lumina :
Votis precamur cordium,
Audite voces supplicum.

Qui templa cœli clauditis,
Serasque verbo solvitis,
Nos a reatu noxios
Solvi jubete quæsumus.

Præcepta quorum protinus
Languor salusque sentiunt ;
Sanate mentes languidas,
Augete nos virtutibus.

Ut cum redibit Arbiter
In fine Christus sæculi,
Nos sempiterni gaudii
Concedat esse compotes.

Jesu tibi sit gloria,
Qui natus es de Virgine :
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu
In sempiterna sæcula.

Amen.

V. Valde honorandus est
beatus Joannes.

R. Qui supra pectus Do-
mini in cœna recubuit.

ANTIPHON OF THE *Magnificat*.

ANT. There went abroad among the brethren this saying, that that disciple should not die : and Jesus did not say to him : He should not die ; but : So I will have him to remain till I come.

ANT. Exiit sermo inter fratres, quod discipulus ille non moritur : et non dixit Jesus : Non moritur ; sed : Sic eum volo manere donec veniam.

LET US PRAY.

Mercifully, O Lord, enlighten thy Church ; that being taught by blessed John, thine Apos-

OREMUS.

Ecclesiam tuam, Domine, benignus illustra, ut beati Joannis Apostoli tui et Evan-

gelistæ illuminata doctrinis, ad dona perveniat sempiterna. Per Dominum.

tle and Evangelist, she may come to thy eternal rewards. Through, &c.

Commemoration of the Holy Innocents.

ANT. Hi sunt, qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati: virgines enim sunt, et sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit.

Ÿ. Herodes iratus occidit multos pueros.

℞. In Bethlehem Judæ, civitate David.

ANT. These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

Ÿ. Herod, being angry, killed many children.

℞. In Bethlehem of Juda, the city of David.

OREMUS.

Deus cujus hodierna die præconium Innocentes martyres non loquendo, sed moriendo confessi sunt, omnia in nobis vitiorum mala mortifica: ut fidem tuam, quam lingua nostra loquitur, etiam moribus vita fateatur.

LET US PRAY.

O God, whose praise the holy Martyrs, the Innocents, published this day, not by speaking, but by dying; mortify in us all our vicious inclinations: that we may show forth, in our actions, thy faith, which we profess with our lips.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

ANT. Hodie Christus natus est: hodie Salvator apparuit: hodie in terra canunt Angeli, lætantur Archangeli: hodie exsultant justi, dicentes: Gloria in excelsis Deo. Alleluia.

Ÿ. Notum fecit Dominus, alleluia.

℞. Salutare suum, alleluia.

ANT. This day, Christ is born; this day, the Saviour hath appeared; this day, the Angels sing on earth; the Archangels rejoice; this day, the just exult, saying: Glory be to God in the highest, alleluia.

Ÿ. The Lord hath made known, alleluia.

℞. His salvation, alleluia.

OREMUS.

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem

LET US PRAY.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who groan under the old captivity

of sin, may be freed therefrom by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son.

Nativitas liberet, quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet.

Commemoration of St. Stephen.

ANT. Devout men buried Stephen, and made great mourning over him.

ANT. Sepelierunt Stephanum viri timorati, et fecerunt planctum magnum super eum.

Ÿ. Stephen saw the heavens opened.

Ÿ. Stephanus vidit cœlos apertos.

R. He saw and entered: blessed man, to whom the heavens opened.

R. Vidit et introivit: beatus homo cui cœli patebant.

LET US PRAY.

OREMUS.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that we may imitate him whose memory we celebrate, so as to learn to love even our enemies, because we now solemnise his martyrdom who knew how to pray, even for his enemies, to our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son. Who liveth, &c.

Da nobis, quæsumus, Domine imitari quod colimus, ut discamus et inimicos diligere: quia ejus natalitia celebramus, qui novit etiam pro persecutoribus exorare Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium tuum. Qui tecum.

Now let us listen to the several Churches, proclaiming, in their liturgical praises, the glory of St. John. We begin with the Church of Rome, from which we take this beautiful Preface of the Leonian Sacramentary.

PREFACE.

It is truly meet and just, right and available to salvation, that we should give thanks to thee, O Almighty Father! now that we are celebrating the Feast of thy blessed Apostle, John the Evangelist. Having received the vocation of our Lord Jesus

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi gratias agere, Pater omnipotens, beati Apostoli tui Joannis Evangelistæ natalitia venerantes. Qui Domini nostri Jesu Christi Filii tui vocatione suscepta, terrenum respuit patrem, ut

posset invenire cœlestem : retia sæculi, quibus implicabatur, abjecit, ut æternitatis dona mente libera sectaretur : nutantem fluctibus navem reliquit, ut in ecclesiasticæ gubernationis tranquillitate consisteret : a piscium captione cessavit, ut animas mundanis gurgitibus immersas, calamo doctrinæ salutaris abstraheret : destitit pelagi profundari mari, secretorum scrutator redditus divinorum. Eo usque procedens, ut et in cœnæ mysticæ sacrosancto convivio in ipsius recumberet pectore Salvatoris ; et eum in cruce Dominus constitutus, vicarium sui, Matri Virgini Filium subrogaret, et in principio Verbum, quod Deus erat apud Deum, præ cæteris ostenderet prædicandum.

Christ thy Son, he left his earthly father, that he might find one in heaven. He threw down the nets of this world, wherein he was entangled, that he might, with a free soul, pursue the goods that are eternal. He abandoned his boat, which was ever tossing on the waves, that he might calmly steer a spiritual bark in the Church. He gave up his trade of fishing, that, by the hook of saving doctrine, he might draw out souls ingulfed in the surges of the world. He ceased his searchings in the deep waters of the sea, that he might be made worthy to penetrate into secrets divine. Even thus was he favoured—he leaned his head on the Saviour's breast, in the most holy banquet of the mystic supper ; our Lord, when hanging on the cross, gave him to the Virgin-Mother to be her Son in His own stead ; and it was he, above all others, that showed how this was to be preached : *In the beginning was the Word, who was God with God.*

The Church of Milan, in her Ambrosian Missal, thus sings forth the praises of the Beloved Disciple :

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi gratias agere, æterne Deus : beati Joannis Evangelistæ merita recolentes, quem Dominus Jesus Christus non solum peculiari semper decore ornavit ; sed et in cruce positus, tamquam

It is truly meet and just, right and available to salvation, that we should give thanks to thee, O Eternal God ! whilst celebrating the merits of blessed John the Evangelist, whom our Lord Jesus Christ not only adorned with every peculiar grace, but to whom also,

he, when fastened to the cross, lovingly granted, as though it were the gift of inheritance, to take his own place and be the Son of Mary. Even unto this grade of honour did thy divine goodness raise him, that being changed from a fisherman into a Disciple, and, in the dispensing thy Truth, going beyond the measure of other men,—he, above all others, both saw and preached the very Divinity of thy Eternal Word.

hæreditario munere prosecutus, vicarium pro se Patri Filium clementer attribuit. Quem ad eum usque dignitatis gradum divina benignitas evexit, ut et factus ex piscatore Discipulus, et humanæ dispensationis modum excedens, ipsam Verbi tui sine initio Deitatem præ cæteris et mente conspiceret, et voce perferret.

The Mozarabic Missal has the following prayer to our holy Apostle and Evangelist :

PRAYER.

O Son of God, Begotten of the Unbegotten infinite God ! who didst open the sacred treasury of thy Breast to thine Apostle, when he, reclining on thy Bosom, merited to drink in, from the very fountain of thy Heart, the streams of his own Gospel : look upon us with an eye of pity, that so, by thee, we may know thy mysteries, and do the good thou hast manifested unto us. Reveal unto us the hidden things of thy Heart, whereby we may be taught both the weakness of our own nature, and the Divinity which is thine. Show us thyself, that we may love thee ; show us in ourselves what we must correct. That thus, by the prayers of thy beloved Disciple, our evil ways being converted, pestilence may flee

Genite ingeniti Filius Dei summi ; qui sacrum illud arcanum pectoris tui dilecto tuo Joanni Apostolo reserasti : cum in sinu tuo recubans Evangelii sui fluentia ex ipso pectoris tui fonte haurire promeruit. Tu nos intuere propitius, ut per te abdita cognoscamus, per te bona quæ manifesta sunt impleamus. Reserans nobis pectoris tui occulta, quibus possimus cognoscere, et conditionis nostræ infirmitatem, et ad tuæ divinitatis pervenire cognitionem. Manifestans de te quid amemus, indicans de nobis quid corrigamus. Quo hujus dilecti tui suffragiis, moribus nostris in melius commutatis, aufugiat pestis, dispereat languor, pellatur mucro. Quidquid ad-

versum est fidei christianæ intereat ; quidquid prosperum, convalescat. Arceantur fames, sedentur lites, hæresum obtrudantur fautores. Fœcundetur frugibus terra, vestiatur virtutibus anima ; atque cuncta nobis in commune proveniant bona. Quo tibi Deo nostro fideliter servientes, et his sine peccato utamur concessis, et post deliciis fruamur æternæ possessionis. Amen.

from us, sickness disappear, and the sword be sheathed. May all that is adverse to Christian faith perish ; may all that prospers it, be strengthened. May famines cease, may dissensions be appeased, may the upholders of heresy be confounded. May the earth be pregnant with fruits, our souls be clad with virtues, and all good things come unto us all. That thus, faithfully serving thee our God, we may both use these gifts without sin, and, hereafter, enjoy the bliss of possessing thee for eternity. Amen.

The following Hymn, which we have taken from the Milan Liturgy, is attributed to St. Ambrose ; it certainly bears a resemblance to his style—sublime thoughts, majestically told.

HYMN.

Amore Christi nobilis
Et filius Tonitruï,
Arcana Joannes Dei
Fatu revelavit sacro.

Captis solebat piscibus
Patris senectam pascere ;
Turbante dum natat salo
Immobili fide stetit.

Hamum profundo merse-
rat,
Piscatus est Verbum Dei ;
Jactavit undis retia,
Vitam levavit hominum.

Piscis bonus pia est
Fides,
Mundi supernatans salum,

John—the honoured loved-one of Jesus, and named by Him the *Son of Thunder*—revealed in sacred words, the hidden things of God.

He was a fisherman, and supported his aged parent by his toil : whilst sailing on the troubled waves, he received the faith, and firmly did he hold to it.

He throws his hook into the deep, and takes the Word of God ; he lets down his nets into the waters, he draws in Him who is the Light of the world.

His fervent Faith is the good Fish which swam through the briny flood of this

world ; it rested on the Breast of Christ, and thus spoke in the Holy Spirit :

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

“All things were made by Him.” Then, let us sing the praises of this Disciple, and since he bears the laurels of the Spirit, let his writings be his crown.

Martyrdom has been granted to many, and this shedding of their own blood purifies them from every sin ; but John did what was better than Martyrdom—he taught to the world that which made the Martyrs.

Yet we are told, that he was bound by wicked men, and plunged into boiling oil ; it did but cleanse him from this world’s dust, and give him victory over the enemy.

Glory be to thee, O Lord, that wast born of the Virgin ! and to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost, for everlasting ages. Amen.

We will now give a few stanzas from the Hymns which the Greek Church, in her accustomed pomp of language, sings in honour of St. John. She keeps his Feast on the 26th September.

(XXVI. Septembris, in magno Vespertino, et passim.)

Come, ye Faithful, let us this day crown with sacred

Subnixa Christi pectore,
Sancto locuta Spiritu :

“In principio erat Verbum,
Et Verbum erat apud Deum,
Et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat
In principio apud Deum.

“Omnia per ipsum facta sunt.”
Sed ipse laude resonet ;
Et laureatus Spiritu,
Scriptis coronetur suis.

Commune multis passio,
Cruorque delictum lavans ;
Hoc morte præstat Martyrum.
Quod fecit esse Martyres.

Vinctus tamen ab impiis,
Calente olivo dicitur
Tersisse mundi pulverem,
Stetisse victor æmuli.

Gloria tibi, Domine,
Qui natus es de Virgine ;
Cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu
In sempiterna sæcula.
Amen.

Venite, sapientiæ abyssum et orthodoxorum scrip-

torem dogmatum, Fideles, hymnis coronemus divinis hodie, Joannem gloriosum et dilectum : is enim intonuit : *Verbum erat in principio*. Ideo voce tonitru simili demonstratus est, quasi Evangelio mundum illuminans, multisapiens et celeberrimus.

Vere aperteque tu manifestatus es amicus ex corde magnus Christi magistri ; pectori enim illius incubuisti, unde hausisti sapientiæ dogmata, quibus tanquam Dei præco divinus, ditas omnem terræ circuitum, quam possidens jucunda Christi Ecclesia nunc gaudens exornat.

Gaude, vere theologe, gaude, Matris Domini fili amabilissime : tu enim stans juxta crucem Christi, divinam audisti vocem Magistri : Ecce nunc mater tua, ad te clamantis. Ideo digne te omnes ut Christi Apostolum magnum et dilectum beatificamus.

Contemplator ineffabilium revelationum, et interpret supernorum Dei mysteriorum, Zebedæi filius, scribens nobis Christi Evangelium, divine loqui Patrem, et Filium, et Spiritum nos docuit.

Lyra a Deo mota cœlestium odarum, mysticus ille scriptor, os divina loquens, Canticum canticorum dulciter decantat, et precatur salvari nos.

hymns the glorious and Beloved John, an abyss of wisdom, and the writer of orthodox dogmas : for it was he that uttered, *In the beginning was the Word*. Therefore did he appear as with the voice of thunder, enlightening the world with his Gospel—he the exceeding wise and world-wide famed Disciple.

Thou wast truly and manifestly the great bosom-friend of Jesus thy Master ; for thou didst recline upon his Breast, imbibing thence the dogmas of wisdom, wherewith, as God's sublime herald, thou enrichest the earth's circuit, and which the glad Church of Christ, now possessing it, exultingly honours.

Rejoice, thou true Theologian ! rejoice, thou most amiable Son of our Lord's Mother ! for, when standing nigh the Cross of Jesus, thou didst hear his divine voice saying unto thee : Behold now thy Mother. Therefore do we all bless thee, as the great and Beloved Apostle of Christ.

The contemplator of ineffable revelations, the interpreter of God's most high mysteries, the son of Zebedee, wrote us the Gospel of Christ, and thereby taught us how to speak theologically of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

This heaven-hymned Harp attuned by God, this mystic writer, this mouth that speaks divine things, is now sweetly singing the Canticle of Canticles, and prays for our salvation.

Let us, O ye mortals ! proclaim his many praises :— John, *the Son of thunder*—the source of divine language—the Prince of Theology—the first preacher of true wisdom’s dogmas—the Beloved and Virgin-Disciple.

The streams of Theology gushed from thy venerable lips, O Apostle ! the Church of God has drunk them in, O teacher of truth ! and adores the consubstantial Trinity. O holy Theologian John ! now pray that our souls may be unwavering and saved.

The flower of purity, the fragrant perfume, breathes upon this day’s feast ; let us, therefore, pray to him : Blessed Apostle John ! who didst recline upon Jesus’ Breast ! who didst pour out The Word upon the earth ; who didst guard the Virgin as the apple of thine eye ! Oh ! ask Jesus to show his great mercy unto us.

Come, ye faithful ! let us bless the most renowned John, the exalted one among the Apostles, the trumpet of theology, the spiritual guide—he that brought the world into subjection to God—he that was raised above the earth, not taken away from it, and is living and awaiting the dread second coming of our Lord. O thou the mystic Friend of Christ, that didst lovingly lean upon his Breast, help us, who celebrate thy memory, help us by thy prayers to present ourselves guiltless before our judge.

Tonitru filium, divinorum sermonum fundamentum, theologiæ ducem, et primum præconem veræ sapientiæ dogmatum, Joannem dilectum et virginem, o mortaliolum genus, multis laudem acclamationibus.

Flumina theologiæ, ex venerando ore tuo salierunt, Apostole, quibus Ecclesia Dei potata, adorat, orthodoxe, Trinitatem consubstantialem ; et nunc deprecare, Joannes theologe, stabiliri et salvari animas nostras.

Virgultum puritatis, boni odoris unguentum apparuit nobis in hodierna festivitate ; ad ipsum igitur clamemus : Tu qui supra pectus recubuisti Dominicum, tu qui mundo stillare fecisti Verbum, Joannes Apostole ; qui Virginem custodivisti ut pupillam oculi, postula pro nobis apud Christum magnam misericordiam.

Apostolorum celsitudinem, theologiæ tubam, spiritalium ducem, qui orbem terrarum Deo subegit, venite, fideles, beatificemus Joannem illustrissimum, e terra sublatum et non ablatum, sed viventem et expectantem terribilem Domini secundum adventum ; cui ut inculpabiliter assistamus deprecare, amice mystice Christi pectori ejus innixe cum amore, tuam memoriam celebrantes.

As usual, we will close these liturgical praises of our dear Saint, by a Prose of the Western Churches in the Middle-Ages, which we have taken from the collection of the Monastery of Saint Gall. It was composed by the Blessed Notker, and was for centuries in the Roman-French Missals.

SEQUENCE.

Joannes, Jesu Christo
 Multum dilecte virgo.
 Tu ejus amore
 Carnalem in navi
 Parentem liquisti.
 Tu leve conjugis
 Pectus respuisti,
 Messiam secutus,
 Ut ejus pectoris
 Sacra meruisses
 Fluente potare.
 Tuque in terris positus,
 Gloriam conspexisti
 Filii Dei,
 Quæ solum sanctis
 In vita creditur
 Continuanda esse perenni.
 Te Christus
 In cruce triumphans,
 Matri suæ dedit custo-
 dem ;
 Ut Virgo
 Virginem servares,
 Atque curam suppedita-
 res.
 Tute carcere
 Flagrisque fractus,
 Testimonio pro Christo
 Es gavisus.
 Idem mortuos suscitans,
 Inque Jesu nomine
 Venenum forte vincis.
 Tibi summus tacitum
 Præ cæteris Verbum suum
 Pater revelat.

O John ! the dearly Beloved
 Virgin-Disciple of Jesus !

For love of Him, thou didst
 leave thy father Zebedee and
 his boat.

Thou didst disdain the ca-
 resses of thy young betrothed,
 and didst follow the Messiah,

That thou mightest merit to
 drink at the sacred fount of
 his Heart.

Thou, too, when on this
 earth, didst behold the trans-
 figuration of the Son of God,

Which vision, as we are
 taught, is not granted save to
 the Saints in life eternal.

Jesus, when conquering on
 his cross, entrusted his Mother
 to thy keeping ;

That thou, a Virgin, mightest
 protect and care the Virgin, in
 His stead.

Imprisoned and torn by
 scourges, thou didst rejoice—
 for it was thy bearing testi-
 mony to Christ.

Thou, too, raisest the dead
 to life, and, in the name of
 Jesus, breakest the poison's
 power.

To thee, above the rest, the
 Almighty Father reveals his
 own embosom'd Word.

Do thou ever commend us
all to God, by unwearied in-
tercession,

O John, Disciple dear to
Christ!
Amen.

Tu nos omnes
Sedulius precibus
Apud Deum

Semper commenda,
Joannes, Christi care.

Amen.

Beloved Disciple of the Babe of Bethlehem!—how great is thy happiness! how wonderful is the reward given to thy love and thy purity! In thee was fulfilled that word of thy Master: *Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God.* Not only didst thou see this God-Man—thou wast his Friend, and on his Bosom didst rest thy head. John the Baptist trembles at having to bend the head of Jesus under the water of Jordan; Magdalene, though assured by his own lips that her pardon was perfect as her love, yet dares not raise her head, but keeps clinging to his feet; Thomas scarce presumes to obey him when he bids him put his finger into his wounded Side;—and thou, in the presence of all the Apostles, sittest close to Him, leaning thy head upon his Breast! Nor is it only Jesus in his Humanity that thou seest and possessest; but, because thy heart is pure, thou soarest, like an eagle, up to the Sun of Justice, and fixest thine eye upon him in *the light inaccessible*, wherein he dwelleth eternally with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

Thus was rewarded the fidelity wherewith thou didst keep intact for Jesus the precious treasure of thy Purity. And now, O worthy favourite of the great King! forget not us poor sinners. We believe and confess the Divinity of the Incarnate Word, whom thou hast evangelised unto us; but we desire to draw nigh to him during this holy season, now that he shows himself so desirous of our company, so humble, so full of love, so dear a Child, and so poor! Alas! our sins keep us back; our heart is not pure like thine; we have need of a Patron to introduce

us to *our Master's Crib*.¹ Thou, O Beloved Disciple of the Emmanuel! thou must procure us this happiness. Thou hast shown us the Divinity of the Word in the bosom of the Eternal Father; lead us now to this same Word made flesh. Under thy patronage, Jesus will permit us to enter into the Stable, to stand near his Crib, to see with our eyes, and touch with our hands,² this sweet Fruit of eternal Life. May it be granted us to contemplate the sweet Face of Him, that is our Saviour and thy Friend; to feel the throbs of that Heart, which loves both thee and us—and which thou didst see wounded by the Spear, on Calvary. It is good for us to fix ourselves here near the Crib of our Jesus, and share in the graces he there lavishes, and learn, as thou didst, the grand lesson of this Child's simplicity:—thy prayers must get us all this.

Then too, as Son and Guardian of Mary, thou hast to present us to thine own and our Mother. Ask her to give us somewhat of the tender love wherewith she watches over the Crib of her Divine Son; to see in us the Brothers of that Child she bore; and to admit us to a share of the maternal affection she had for thee, the favoured confidant of the secrets of her Jesus.

We also pray to thee, O holy Apostle! for the Church of God. She was planted and watered by thy labours, embalmed with the celestial fragrance of thy virtues, and illumined by thy sublime teachings;—pray now, that these graces may bring forth their fruit, and that, to the end of her pilgrimage, faith may be firm, the love of Jesus fervent, and christian morals pure and holy. Thou tellest us, in thy Gospel, of a saying of thy Divine Master: *I will not now call you my Servants, but my Friends*:³ pray, dear Saint, that there may come to this, from

¹ Is. i. 3.

² I. St. John, i. 1.

³ St. John, xv. 15.

our hearts and lips, a response of love and courage, telling our Emmanuel, that, like thyself, we will follow him whithersoever he leads us.

Let us, on this second day after our Divine Infant's Birth, meditate upon the Sleep he deigns to take. Let us consider how this God of all goodness, who has come down from heaven to invite his creature man to come to him and seek rest for his soul—seeks rest himself in our earthly home, and sanctifies, by his own divine Sleep, that rest, which to us is a necessity. We have just been dwelling, with delighted devotion, on the thought of his offering his Breast as a resting-place for the Beloved Disciple, and for all souls that imitate John in their love and devotedness: now, let us look at this our God, sweetly sleeping in his humble Crib, or on his Mother's lap.

St. Alphonsus Liguori, in one of his delicious *Canticles*, thus describes the Sleep of Jesus and the enraptured love of the Mother:

Mary sings—the ravish'd heavens
 Hush the music of their spheres;
 Soft her voice, her beauty fairer
 Than the glancing stars appears:
 While to Jesus slumbering nigh,
 Thus she sings her lullaby.

Sleep my Babe! my God! my Treasure!
 Gently sleep: but ah! the sight
 With its beauty so transports me,
 I am dying of delight:
Thou canst not thy Mother see,
 Yet thou breathest flames to me.

If within your lids unfolded,
 Slumbering eyes! you seem so fair;

When upon my gaze you open,
 How shall I your beauty bear ?
 Ah ! I tremble when you wake,
 Lest my heart with love should break.

Cheeks than sweetest roses sweeter,
 Mouth where lurks a smile divine—
 Though the kiss my Babe should waken,
 I must press those lips to mine.
 Pardon, Dearest, if I say,
 Mother's love will take no nay.

As she ceased, the gentle Virgin
 Clasped the Infant to her breast,
 And upon his radiant forehead
 Many a loving kiss impress'd :
 Jesus woke, and on her face
 Fixed a look of heavenly grace.

Ah ! that look, those eyes, that beauty,
 How they pierce the Mother's heart ;
 Shafts of love from every feature
 Through her gentle bosom dart.
 Heart of stone ! can I behold
 Mary's love, and still be cold ?

Where, my soul ! thy sense, thy reason ?
 When will these delays be o'er ?
 All things else, how fair so ever,
 Are but smoke :—resist no more !
 Yes ! 'tis done ! I yield my arms
 Captive to those double charms.

If, alas, O heavenly beauty !
 Now so late those charms I learn,
 Now at least, and ever, ever,
 With thy love my heart will burn
 For the Mother and the Child,
 Rose and Lily undefiled.

Plant and fruit, and fruit and blossom,
 I am theirs, and they are mine ;
 For no other prize I labour,
 For no other bliss I pine ;
 Love can every pain requite,
 Love alone is full delight.¹

Let us, then, adore the Divine Babe in this state
 of Sleep, to which he voluntarily subjects himself,

¹ Translation by the Very Rev. R. A. Coffin.—We subjoin the original :

Fermarono i cieli
 La loro armonia,
 Cantando Maria
 La nanna a Gesù.

Con voce divina
 La Virgine bella,
 Più vaga che stella,
 Diceva così :

Mio figlio, mio Dio,
 Mio caro tesoro,
 Tu dormi, ed io moro
 Per tanta beltà.

Dormendo, mio bene,
 Tua Madre non miri,
 Ma l'aura che spiri,
 È foco per me.

Cogli occhi serrati
 Voi pur mi ferite ;
 Or quando li aprite,
 Per me che sara ?

Le guance di rose
 Mi rubano il core :
 O Dio ! che si more
 Quest'alma per te.

Mi sforza a baciarti
 Un labbro sì raro :

Perdonami, caro,
 Non posso più, no.

Si tacque, ed al petto,
 Stringendo il Bambino,
 Al volto divino
 Un baci donò.

Si desta il diletto ;
 E tutto amoroso,
 Con occhio vezzoso
 La Madre guardò.

Ah Dio ! ch'alla Madre
 Quegli occhi, quel guardo
 Fu strale, fu dardo,
 Che l'alma ferì.

E tu non languisci,
 O dur' alma mia,
 Vedendo Maria
 Languir per Gesù.

Se tardi v'amai,
 Bellezze divine,
 Ormai senza fine
 Per voi arderò.

Il Figlio e la Madre,
 La Madre col Figlio,
 La rosa col giglio
 Quest'alma vorrà.

and contrast it with the cruel fatigues, which are one day to be His. When he is grown up, and come to the age of manhood, he will go through every toil and suffering in search of us his Lost Sheep. But these first slumbers shall not be troubled by anything of ours, which could pain this loving wakeful Heart; and the Blessed Mother shall not be disturbed in the blissful contemplation of her Sleeping Child, over whom she is, at a future time, to shed such bitter tears. The day is not far distant, when he will say: *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.*¹

“Christ has had three resting-places,” says Peter of Celles. “The first was in the Bosom of his Eternal Father. He says: *I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.*² What repose could be compared to this, of the Father’s complacency in the Son, and the Son’s complacency in the Father? It is a mutual and ineffable love, and they are happy in the union. But, whilst maintaining this place of his eternal rest, the Son of God has sought a second, in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He overshadowed her with the Holy Ghost, and slept a long sleep in her chaste womb, whilst his Body was there being formed. The holy Virgin troubled not the sleep of her Child: she kept all the powers of her soul in a silence like that of heaven; and, rapt in self-contemplation, she heard mysteries which it is not permitted to man to utter. The third resting-place of Christ is in man. Jesus dwells in a heart that is purified by faith, enlarged by charity, raised above Earth by contemplation, and is renewed by the Holy Ghost. Such a heart as this offers to Jesus not an earthly but a heavenly dwelling; and the Child,

¹ St. Matth. viii. 20.

² St. John, xiv. 11.

“ who is born unto us, will not refuse to enter it, and
“ take his rest within it.”¹

To this Eternal Word, made Flesh for our salvation, let us offer up this Hymn of our great ecclesiastical Poet, Prudentius.

HYMN.

Born from the bosom of the
Father before the world began,
his name is Alpha and Omega.
He is the beginning and end
of all things present, past, and
future.

He commanded and they
were created, he spoke and
they were made: earth, heaven,
and sea—the triple kingdom—
and all things that are in them,
under the sun and moon.

He clothes himself with a
frail Body, and with members
subject to death; lest the
human race, the offspring of
Adam, should perish together
with their first Parent, whom
a terrible sentence had con-
demned to the depth of hell.

O that happy Birth, when a
Virgin-Mother, having con-
ceived of the Holy Ghost,
brought forth the Child that
was our salvation; and the
Babe, the Redeemer of the
world, showed unto us his di-
vine Face!

Let high heaven sing, and
sing all ye Angels! Let every
living creature sing to the
praise of God! Let every
tongue proclaim it, and every

Corde natus ex parentis
Ante mundi exordium
A et O cognominatus:
Ipse fons et clausula
Omnium quæ sunt, fuerunt,
Quæque post futura sunt.

Ipse jussit, et creata,
Dixit ipse, et facta sunt;
Terra, cælum, fossa ponti,
Trina rerum machina,
Quæque in his vigent sub
alto
Solis et lunæ globo.

Corporis formam caduci,
Membra morti obnoxia
Induit, ne gens periret
Primoplasti ex germine,
Merserat quem lex profundo
Noxialis Tartaro.

O beatus ortus ille,
Virgo cum puerpera
Edidit nostram salutem,
Fœta Sancto Spiritu,
Et puer Redemptor orbis
Os sacratum protulit.

Psallat altitudo cœli,
Psallite, omnes Angeli,
Quidquid est virtutis us-
quam,
Psallat in laudem Dei:

¹ Fourth Sermon *On our Lord's Nativity.*

Nulla linguarum silescat,
Vox et omnis consonet.

Ecce quem vates vetustis
Concinebant sæculis,
Quem Prophetarum fideles
Paginæ sponponderant,
Emicat promissus olim :
Cuncta collaudent eum.

Te senes et te juvenus,
Parvulorum te chorus,
Turba matrum, virginum-
que,
Simplices puellulæ,
Voce concordēs pudicis
Perstrepant concentibus.

Fluminum lapsus, et undæ
Littorum crepidines,
Imber, æstus, nix, pruinae,
Silva, et aura, nox, dies,
Omnibus te concelebrent
Sæculorum sæculis.

Amen.

voice join in the hymn of
praise.

Behold the Promised Mes-
sias, of whom sang the Seers
in the ancient times, and whom
the Prophets foretold in their
truthful oracles ! Praise be to
him from every creature.

May the aged, and the
young, and children, mothers,
and virgins, and innocent
maidens, sing to thee, O Jesus !
and with concordant voice
chastely hymn thy praise !

May the flowing river and
the sea-shore wave, rain and
heat, snow and frost, forest
and zephyr, day and night,
for ever and for ever give thee
praise.

Amen.

Let us now honour and invoke the ever Blessed
and most Merciful Mother of our God, and use the
words of this beautiful Hymn of the ancient Roman-
French Missals :

HYMN.

Lætare, puerpera,
Læto puerperio,
Cujus casta viscera
Fœcundantur Filio.

Lacte fluunt ubera
Cum pudoris lilio ;
Membra foves tenera,
Virgo, lacte proprio.

Patris Unigenitus,
Per quem fecit sæcula,
Hic degit humanitus,
Sub Matre paupercula.

Rejoice, O Virgin-Mother !
in thy joy-giving delivery, for
thy chaste womb was made
fruitful of the very Son of
God.

O wondrous sight—Jesus
feeding from the Lily of Pu-
rity ! Yea, most pure Virgin,
thou feedest at thy breasts his
infant life.

The Only Begotten of the
Father, by whom he made this
world, is dwelling here the
Babe of a poor Mother.

There, he is feeding the holy Angels with joy :—here, he is in hunger and thirst, from his cradle.

There, he holds all things in subjection :—here, he is in subjection to a Mother. There, he commands :—here, he obeys his Handmaid.

There, he is seated on the throne of highest majesty :—here, he is lying swathed and weeping in a manger.

Think on this, O man! and to thy memory recall these stupendous works of God's mercy.

And though thy sins be great, yet canst thou not despair, for the proofs thou seest here of Jesus' love speak but of pardon.

Thou wouldst have pardon? fly to the Mother for protection, for she holds on her lap the Infinite Fountain of Mercy.

Often bend thy knee before her, and, with hopeful love, salute her thus : *Hail ! full of grace !*

As thou, of old, didst feed thy Jesus, and stay his infant tears ; so now, dear Mother, appease him angered by our sins.

Hear, O Jesus ! thy sweet Mother's prayers, and, with an eye of pity, look upon us sinners ! Correct and change us, and make us worthy to be citizens of heaven. }

Amen.

Ibi sanctos reficit
Angelos lætitia :
Hic sitit et esurit
Degens ab infantia.

Ibi regit omnia,
Hic a Matre regitur :
Ibi dat imperia,
Hic ancillæ subditur.

Ibi summi culminis
Residet in solio ;
Hic ligatus fasciis
Vagit in præsepio.

O homo ! considera,
Revocans memoriæ,
Quanta sint hæc opera
Divinæ clementiæ.

Non desperes veniam,
Si multum deliqueris,
Ubi tot insignia
Charitatis videris.

Sub Matris refugio
Fuge, causa veniæ :
Nam tenet in gremio
Fontem indulgentiæ.

Hanc salutes sæpius
Cum spei fiducia,
Dicens, flexis genibus :
Ave plena gratia.

Quondam flentis lacrymas
Sedabas uberibus :
Nunc iratum mitigas
Pro nostris excessibus.

Jesu, lapsos respice,
Piæ Matris precibus ;
Emendatos effice
Dignos cœli civibus.

Amen.

DECEMBER 28.

THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

THE feast of the beloved Disciple is followed by that of the Holy Innocents. The Crib of Jesus—where we have already met and venerated the Prince of Martyrs and the Eagle of Patmos—has to-day standing round it a lovely choir of little Children, clad in snow-white robes, and holding green branches in their hands. The Divine Babe smiles upon them—he is their King; and these Innocents are smiling upon the Church of God. Courage and Fidelity first led us to the Crib; Innocence now comes, and bids us tarry there.

Herod intended to include the Son of God amongst the murdered Babes of Bethlehem. The Daughters of Rachel wept over their little ones, and the land streamed with blood; but, the Tyrant's policy can do no more:—it cannot reach Jesus, and its whole plot ends in recruiting an immense army of Martyrs for heaven. These Children were not capable of knowing what an honour it was for them, to be made victims for the sake of the Saviour of the world; but, the very first instant after their immolation, and all was revealed to them: they had gone through this world without knowing it, and now that they know it, they possess an infinitely better. God showed here the riches of his mercy—he asks of them but a momentary suffering, and that over, they wake up in Abraham's Bosom: no further trial awaits them, they are in spotless innocence, and the

glory due to a soldier who died to save the life of his Prince, belongs eternally to them.

They died for Jesus' sake—therefore, their death was a real Martyrdom, and the Church calls them by the beautiful name of *The Flowers of the Martyrs*, because of their tender age and their innocence. Justly, then, does the ecclesiastical Cycle bring them before us to-day, immediately after the two valiant Champions of Christ, Stephen and John. The connection of these three Feasts is thus admirably explained by St. Bernard: “In St. Stephen, we have both the act and the desire of Martyrdom; in St. John, we have but the desire; in the Holy Innocents, we have but the act. * * Will any one doubt whether a crown was given to these Innocents? * * If you ask me what merit could they have, that God should crown them? let me ask you, what was the fault, for which Herod slew them? What! is the mercy of Jesus less than the cruelty of Herod? and whilst Herod could put these Babes to death, who had done him no injury, Jesus may not crown them for dying for Him?”

“Stephen, therefore, is a Martyr, by a Martyrdom of which men can judge, for he gave this evident proof of his sufferings being felt and accepted, that, at the very moment of his death, his solicitude both for his own soul and for those of his persecutors increased; the pangs of his bodily passion were less intense than the affection of his soul's compassion, which made him weep more for their sins than for his own wounds. John was a Martyr, by a Martyrdom which only Angels could see, for the proofs of his sacrifice being spiritual, only spiritual creatures could ken them. But, the Innocents were Martyrs to none other eye save thine, O God! Man could find no merit; Angel could find no merit: the extraordinary prerogative of thy grace is the more boldly brought out. *From the*

“mouth of the Infants and the Sucklings thou hast perfected praise.¹ The praise the Angels give thee, is: *Glory be to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will.*² it is a magnificent praise, but I make bold to say, that it is not perfect, till He cometh who will say: ‘*Suffer Little Children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;*’³ and in the mystery of my mercy, there shall be *peace to men* that cannot even use their will.’” (*Sermon for the Feast of the Holy Innocents.*)

Yes, God did for these Innocents, who were imolated on his Son’s account, what he is doing every moment now by the sacrament of regeneration, in the case of children, who die before coming to the use of reason. We, who have been baptised by water, should be all the more ready to honour these Little Ones, who were baptised in their own blood, and thereby associated to all the mysteries of the Divine Infancy. We ought, together with the Church, to congratulate them, for that a glorious and premature death secured them their innocence. They have lived upon our earth, and yet it defiled them not! Truly, these tender Lambs deserve to be for ever with the Lamb of God! May this same earth of ours, grown old in wickedness, draw down the divine mercy on itself, by the love and honour it gives, each year, to these sweet Children of Bethlehem, who, like the Dove of Noah’s Ark, could not find whereon to rest their feet.

In the midst of the joy, which, at this holy time, fills both heaven and earth, the Holy Church of Rome forgets not the lamentations of the Mothers, who beheld their Children cruelly butchered by Herod’s soldiers. She hears the *wailing of Rachel*, and condoles with her; and, unless it be a Sunday, she sus-

¹ Ps. viii. 3.

² St. Luke, ii. 14.

³ St. Matth. xix. 14.

pende on this Feast some of the manifestations of the joy, which inundates her soul during the Octave of her Jesus' Birth. The Red Vestments of a Martyr's Day would be too expressive of that stream of infant blood which forbids the Mothers *to be comforted*, and joyous White would ill suit their poignant grief; she, therefore, vests in Purple, the symbol of mournfulness.¹ The *Gloria in excelsis*, the Hymn she loves so passionately during these days, when Angels come down from heaven to sing it—even that must be hushed to-day: and, in the Holy Sacrifice, she sings no *Alleluia*. In this, as in everything she does, the Church acts with an exquisite delicacy of feeling. Her Liturgy is a school of refined christian consideration.

This expression of sympathy gives to-day's Office a pathetic sadness, which, however, in no ways interferes with the joy, which the Church feels in celebrating the Feast of the Holy Innocents. She keeps it with an Octave, as she does the two preceding Feasts of St. Stephen and St. John. She sanctions the practice, observed in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, of allowing young boys to share in the duties of the Choir, and blend their innocent chanting with that of the Ministers of God. She grants them several privileges, and takes pleasure in seeing the delight wherewith these children perform the several functions entrusted to them. This joy, this simplicity, this innocence, all add a charm to the divine Service; and through these youthful Choristers, the Church pays honour to the Infant Jesus, and to the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem.

In Rome, the Station for the Feast of St. Stephen is in the Church dedicated to the holy Protomartyr, on Monte Celio; that for St. John is in the Basilica of St. Mary Major; to-day, the Station is made at St.

¹ Unless it be a Sunday; in which case, the colour used is Red.

Paul's *beyond the Walls*, which possesses several of the bodies of the Holy Innocents. In the 16th century, Pope Xystus the Fifth caused a portion of these Relics to be translated to St. Mary Major's, and put near the holy Relic of our Lord's Crib.

M A S S .

In the Introit, the Church proclaims the wisdom of God in disconcerting the impious plans of Herod, and turning the murder of the Innocents into his own glory, by raising them to the dignity of Martyrs of Christ, whose praises they gratefully sing for ever.

INTROIT.

Ex ore infantium, Deus,
et lactentium perfecisti lau-
dem propter inimicos tuos.

Ps. Domine, Dominus
noster, quam admirabile est
Nomen tuum in universa
terra! *V.* Gloria Patri.
Ex ore.

Out of the mouth of in-
fants and sucklings, thou hast
perfected praise, O God, to
confound thine enemies.

Ps. O Lord, our Lord, how
admirable is thy name in the
whole earth. *V.* Glory, &c.
Out of.

In the Collect, the Church prays that her children may confess, by their works, their faith in Christ. The Holy Innocents give their testimony—the only one in their power—of suffering for their divine Master: but the Christian, who has attained the use of reason, has more to do than suffer for his faith—he must confess it before Persecutors and Tyrants, when they bid him deny it, and also before that more permanent tribunal of the world and his own passions. No man has received the glorious character of a Christian, on the condition that he should never own himself one.

COLLECT.

O God, whose praise the Holy Martyrs, the Innocents, published this day, not by speaking, but by dying; mortify in us all our vicious inclinations: that we may show forth, in our actions, thy faith, which we profess with our lips. Through, &c.

Deus, cujus hodierna die præconium Innocentes Martyres non loquendo, sed moriendo confessi sunt: omnia in nobis vitiorum mala mortifica, ut fidem tuam, quam lingua nostra loquitur, etiam moribus vita fateatur. Per Dominum.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who groan under the old captivity of sin, may be freed therefrom by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son.

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus; ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem Nativitas liberet, quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet.

Commemoration of St. Stephen.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that we may imitate him, whose memory we celebrate, so as to learn to love even our enemies; because we now solemnise his martyrdom, who knew how to pray, even for his persecutors, to our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son.

Da nobis, quæsumus, Domine, imitari quod colimus; ut discamus et inimicos diligere; quia ejus natalitia celebramus, qui novit etiam pro persecutoribus exorare Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum.

Commemoration of St. John.

Mercifully, O Lord, enlighten thy Church: that being taught by blessed John, thine Apostle and Evangelist, she may come to thy eternal rewards. Through, &c.

Ecclesiam tuam, Domine, benignus illustra: ut beati Joannis, Apostoli tui et Evangelistæ, illuminata doctrinis, ad dona perveniat sempiterna. Per Dominum.

EPISTLE.

Lesson from the book of the Apocalypse of Saint John the Apostle.

Lectio libri Apocalypsis beati Joannis Apostoli.

Ch. XIV.

In those days: I beheld the Lamb standing on mount Sion,

Cap. XIV.

In diebus illis: Vidi supra montem Sion Agnum stan-

tem, et cum eo centum quadraginta quatuor millia, habentes nomen ejus, et nomen Patris ejus scriptum in frontibus suis. Et audivi vocem de cœlo, tamquam vocem aquarum multarum, et tamquam vocem tonitruum magni; et vocem quam audivi, sicut citharædorum citharizantium in citharis suis. Et cantabant quasi canticum novum ante sedem, et ante quatuor animalia et seniores; et nemo poterat dicere canticum, nisi illa centum quadraginta quatuor millia, qui empti sunt de terra. Hi sunt qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati: virgines enim sunt. Hi sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit. Hi empti sunt ex hominibus, primitiæ Deo et Agno, et in ore eorum non est inventum mendacium: sine macula enim sunt ante thronum Dei.

and with him a hundred forty-four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder; and the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping on their harps. And they sung as it were a new canticle, before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the ancients; and no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth. These are they, who are not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb, and in their mouths there was found no lie: for they are without spot, before the throne of God.

The Church shows us, by her choice of this mysterious passage of the Apocalypse, how great a value she sets on Innocence, and what our own esteem of it ought to be. The Holy Innocents *follow the Lamb*, because they are pure. Personal merits on earth they could not have; but they went rapidly through this world, and its defilements never reached them. Their Purity was not tried, as was St. John's; but, it is beautified by the blood they shed for the Divine Lamb, and He is pleased with it, and makes them his companions. Let the Christian, therefore, be ambitious for this Innocence, which is thus singularly honoured. If he have preserved it, let him keep and guard it as his most precious treasure; if he have lost

it, let him repair the loss by repentance, and having done so, let him say with the Spouse in the Canticle: *I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?*¹

In the Gradual, we have the Innocents blessing their God for having broken the snare, wherewith the world would have made them captive. They have fled as a bird set free; there was nothing to clog their flight.

The Tract expresses the lamentation of Rachel over the cruelty of Herod and his minions. It invokes the divine vengeance, which swept away the whole family of this vile Tyrant.

GRADUAL.

Our soul hath been delivered, as a sparrow, out of the snare of the fowlers.

Ÿ. The snare is broken, and we are delivered: our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Anima nostra, sicut passer, erepta est de laqueo venantium.

Ÿ. Laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus: adiutorium nostrum in nomine Domini, qui fecit cœlum et terram.

TRACT.

They have spilt the blood of the Saints, like water, about Jerusalem.

Ÿ. And there was none to bury them.

Ÿ. Revenge, O Lord, the blood of thy Saints, which hath been spilt on earth.

Effuderunt sanguinem Sanctorum, velut aquam, in circuitu Jerusalem.

Ÿ. Et non erat qui sepeliret.

Ÿ. Vindica, Domine, sanguinem Sanctorum tuorum, qui effusus est super terram.

If the Feast of Holy Innocents fall on a Sunday, the Tract is not sung, but, in its place, the usual *Alleluia* verse, as follows:

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Ÿ. Praise the Lord, ye children, praise ye the name of the Lord. Alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. Laudate pueri Dominum, laudate nomen Domini. Alleluia.

¹ Cant. v. 3.

GOSPEL.

Sequentia sancti Evangelii
secundum Matthæum.

Sequel to the holy Gospel
according to Matthew.

*Cap. II.**Ch. II.*

In illo tempore : Angelus Domini apparuit in somnis Joseph, dicens: surge, et accipe puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Ægyptum, et esto ibi usque dum dicam tibi. Futurum est enim, ut Herodes quærat puerum ad perdendum eum. Qui consurgens, accepit puerum et matrem ejus nocte, et secessit in Ægyptum, et erat ibi usque ad obitum Herodis ; ut adimpleretur quod dictum est a Domino per Prophetam dicentem : Ex Ægypto vocavi Filium meum. Tunc Herodes videns quoniam illusus esset a Magis, iratus est valde : et mittens, occidit omnes pueros qui erant in Bethlehem, et in omnibus finibus ejus, a bimatu et infra, secundum tempus quod exquisierat a Magis. Tunc adimpletum est quod dictum est per Jeremiam Prophetam dicentem : Vox in Rama audita est, ploratus et ululatus multus : Rachel plorans filios suos ; et noluit consolari, quia non sunt.

At that time : An Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying : Arise, and take the Child, and his Mother, and fly into Egypt, and be there until I shall tell thee. For it shall come to pass, that Herod will seek the Child, to destroy him. Who arose, and took the Child, and his Mother, by night, and retired into Egypt, and he was there until the death of Herod ; that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the Prophet, saying : Out of Egypt have I called my son. Then Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the Wise Men, was exceedingly angry : and sending, killed all the men children, that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time, which he had diligently inquired of the Wise Men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias, the Prophet, saying : A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning : Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Thus does the Gospel, in its sublime simplicity, relate the Martyrdom of the Innocents. *Herod, sending, killed all the Children!* The earth paid

no attention to the fell tyranny, which made so rich a harvest for heaven: there was heard a voice in Rama, Rachel wailing her little ones—it went up to heaven, and Bethlehem was still again, as though nothing had happened. But, these favoured Victims had been accepted by God, and they were to be the companions of his Son. Jesus looked at them from his crib, and blessed them; Mary compassionated with them and their mothers; the Church, which Jesus had come to form, would, for all future ages, glorify these youthful Martyrs, and place the greatest confidence in the patronage of these Children, for she knows how powerful their intercession is with her heavenly Spouse.

During the Offertory, it is the choir of our Holy Innocents again singing their beautiful Canticle: as birds set free, they give praise to Him who broke the snare which held them.

OFFERTORY.

Our soul hath been delivered, as a sparrow, out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are delivered.

Anima nostra, sicut passer erepta est de laqueo venantium: laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus.

SECRET.

May the pious prayers of thy Saints, O Lord, be never wanting to us; both to make our offerings acceptable, and to obtain for us thy mercy. Through, &c.

Sanctorum tuorum, Domine, nobis pia non desit oratio; quæ et munera nostra conciliet, et tuam nobis indulgentiam semper obtineat. Per Dominum.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

Sanctify, O Lord, our offerings by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son, and cleanse us from the stains of our sins.

Oblata, Domine, munera, nova Unigeniti tui Nativitate sanctifica, nosque a peccatorum nostrorum maculis emunda.

Commemoration of St. Stephen.

Suscipe, Domine, munera, pro tuorum commemoratione Sanctorum : ut sicut illos passio gloriosos effecit, ita nos devotio reddat innocuos.

Receive, O Lord, these offerings in memory of thy Saints : and as their sufferings have made them glorious, so may our devotion render us free from sin.

Commemoration of St. John.

Suscipe, Domine, munera, quæ in ejus nos tibi solemnitate deferimus, cujus nos confidimus patrocinio liberari. Per Dominum.

Receive, O Lord, the offerings we make to thee on his feast, by whose intercession, we hope to be delivered. Through, &c.

In the Communion-Anthem, we again hear the voice of Rachel's lamentation. Now that the Church has been nourished by the mystery of divine charity, she could not forget the affliction of the mothers of her dear Innocents. She compassionates them all through her Office, and turns to Him who alone can comfort them that are in sorrow.

COMMUNION.

Vox in Rama audita est, ploratus et ululatus : Rachel plorans filios suos ; et noluit consolari, quia non sunt.

A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning : Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

POSTCOMMUNION.

Votiva, Domine, dona percipimus : quæ Sanctorum nobis precibus, et præsentis quæsumus vitæ, pariter et æternæ tribue conferre subsidium. Per Dominum.

Now we have partaken, O Lord, of the votive offerings : grant, we beseech thee, that by the prayers of thy Saints, they may procure us the helps of this present life, and those of that which is to come. Through, &c.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that as the Saviour of the world, who was born this day, procured for us a divine birth, he may, also, bestow on us immortality.

Præsta, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus: ut natus hodie Salvator mundi, sicut divinæ nobis generationis est auctor, ita et immortalitatis sit ipse largitor.

Commemoration of St. Stephen.

May the mysteries we have received, O Lord, be a help to us, and, by the intercession of the blessed Martyr Stephen, strengthen us with thy perpetual protection.

Auxilientur nobis, Domine, sumpta mysteria, et intercedente beato Stephano, Martyre tuo, sempiterna protectione confirment.

Commemoration of St. John.

Being refreshed, O Lord, with this heavenly meat and drink, we humbly beseech thee, that we may be assisted by his prayers, on whose feast we have received these sacred mysteries. Through, &c.

Refecti cibo potuque cœlesti, Deus noster, te supplices deprecamur, ut in cujus hæc commemoratione percipimus, ejus muniamur et precibus. Per Dominum.

VESPERS.

The Antiphons and Psalms of Christmas-Day having been sung, as given in pages 234-241, the rest of the Office is of St. Thomas of Canterbury, and is the *First Vespers* of to-morrow's Feast.

CAPITULUM.*(Jas. I.)*

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for, when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him.

Beatus vir qui suffert tentationem: quoniam, cum probatus fuerit, accipiet coronam vitæ, quam reprobis Deus diligentibus se.

HYMN.

Deus tuorum militum, *page 261.*

After the Hymn, the following Versicles and Antiphons are sung :

First Vespers.

Ÿ. Gloria et honore coronasti eum, Domine.

Ÿ. Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, O Lord.

R. Et constituisti eum super opera manuum tuarum.

R. And hast set him over the works of thy hands.

ANT. Iste sanctus pro lege Dei sui certavit usque ad mortem, et a verbis impiorum non timuit: fundatus enim erat supra firmam petram.

ANT. This Saint fought, even to death, for the law of his God, and feared not the words of the wicked; for he was founded upon a firm rock.

Second Vespers.

Ÿ. Justus ut palma florebit.

Ÿ. The just man shall flourish like the palm-tree.

R. Sicut cedrus Libani multiplicabitur.

R. He shall grow up like the cedar of Libanus.

ANT. Qui vult venire post me, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.

ANT. He that willeth to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

OREMUS.

LET US PRAY.

Deus, pro cujus Ecclesia gloriosus Pontifex Thomas gladiis impiorum occubuit: præsta quæsumus, ut omnes qui ejus implorant auxilium, petitionis suæ salutarem consequantur effectum. Per Dominum.

O God, in defence of whose Church, the glorious Prelate Thomas fell by the swords of wicked men: grant, we beseech thee, that all who implore his assistance, may find comfort in the grant of their petition. Through, &c.

Commemoration of Holy Innocents.

ANT. Innocentes pro Christo infantes occisi sunt,

ANT. Innocent Infants were slain for Christ; children at

the breast were murdered by a wicked king : they follow the spotless Lamb himself, and say ever : Glory be to thee, O Lord.

Ÿ. Beneath the throne of God, all the Saints cry out :

℞. O God, avenge thou our blood.

LET US PRAY.

O God, whose praise the Holy Martyrs, the Innocents, published this day, not by speaking, but by dying ; mortify in us all our vicious inclinations : that we may show forth, in our actions, thy faith which we profess with our lips.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

ANT. This day, Christ is born ; this day, the Saviour hath appeared ; this day, Angels sing on earth ; the Archangels rejoice ; this day, the just exult, saying : Glory be to God in the highest, alleluia.

Ÿ. The Lord hath made known, alleluia.

℞. His salvation, alleluia.

LET US PRAY.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who groan under the old captivity of sin, may be freed therefrom by the new Birth of thine Only Begotten Son. Through the same, &c.

And now, let us listen to the several Churches celebrating the triumph of the Holy Innocents.

ab iniquo rege lactentes interfecti sunt : ipsum sequuntur Agnum sine macula, et dicunt semper : Gloria tibi, Domine.

Ÿ. Sub throno Dei omnes Sancti clamant :

℞. Vindica sanguinem nostrum, Deus noster.

OREMUS.

Deus, cujus hodierna die præconium Innocentes Martyres non loquendo, sed moriendo confessi sunt, omnia in nobis vitiorum mala mortifica : ut fidem tuam, quam lingua nostra loquitur, etiam moribus vita fateatur.

ANT. Hodie Christus natus est, hodie Salvator apparuit, hodie in terra canunt Angeli, lætantur Archangeli : hodie exsultant justi, dicentes : Gloria in excelsis Deo, alleluia.

Ÿ. Notum fecit Dominus, alleluia.

℞. Salutare suum, alleluia.

OREMUS.

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus : ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem Nativitas liberet, quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet. Per eundem.

Their chants for this Feast are very beautiful. We will begin with the following fine Preface, which is in both the Ambrosian Missal, and in the Leonian Sacramentary.

PREFACE.

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare : nos in pretiosa morte parvulorum te, sancte Pater omnipotens, gloriosius collaudare : quos propter Filii tui Domini nostri Salvatoris infantiam immani sævitia Herodes funestus occidit : immensa clementiæ tuæ dona cognoscimus. Fulget namque sola magis gratia, quam voluntas : et clara est prius confessio, quam loquela. Ante passio, quam membra passionis existerent : testes Christi, qui ejus nondum fuerant agnitores, O infinita benignitas Omnipotentis : cum pro suo nomine trucidatis, etiam nescientibus, æternæ meritum gloriæ perire non patitur ; sed proprio cruore perfusis et salus regenerationis expletur et imputatur corona martyrii !

It is truly meet and just, right and available to salvation, that we should exceedingly praise thee, O Holy Almighty Father, in the precious death of the Infants, whom the unhappy Herod, with savage cruelty, slew because of the Infant Jesus, thy Son, our Lord. Herein do we recognise how immeasurable are the gifts of thy mercy, for the splendour of thy free grace outshines the martyrs' will ; and *they* nobly confess thy name, who are not yet able to speak. They suffer martyrdom before their bodies are ripe for martyrdom : they bear testimony to Christ, before they have even known him. O the infinite goodness of the Omnipotent God ! He suffers not the merit of everlasting glory to be lost by them that are slain for his sake, though they know not what they do : and being bathed in their own blood, he effects in them the salvation of regeneration, and gives them the crown of martyrdom.

The following is from the Mozarabic Missal, and is full of unction and eloquence.

Dignum et justum est :
vere dignum et justum est,
nos tibi semper et ubique

It is meet and just, yea
truly right and just, that we
should always and in all places,

give thanks to thee, O Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, and now especially for these whose yearly feast we this day keep, celebrating the memory of their passion. These are they, whom Herod's satellites snatched from their mothers' breasts. Rightly are they called *The Flowers of the Martyrs*, for they grew in the mid-winter of infidelity, as the first buds of the Church, and, being nipped by the frost of persecution, filled the city of Bethlehem with a ruddy stream. They were Babes, and could not speak; yet did they joyfully proclaim the praise of the Lord. Their deaths profess, what their lives could not. They say by their blood, what they could not with their tongue. Martyrdom gave them power to praise, though their tongue denied them that of speech. The Infant Jesus sends these Infants, before himself, to heaven: he presents these new gifts to his Father, and offers to him, as the first fruits of martyrdom, this of the Innocents, who were slain by the wicked Herod. This enemy confers on them what their body could not; while he injures their body, he benefits it; whilst their body falls, it lives by its death, it rises by its fall, it conquers by its defeat.

gratias agere, Domine, sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus, pro his præcipue, quorum hodierno die annua festivitate recolentes memoriam passionis celebramus: quos Herodianus satelles lactantum matrum uberibus abstraxit. Qui jure dicuntur Martyrum flores; qui in medio frigore infidelitatis exorti, velut primas erumpentes Ecclesiæ gemmas quædam persecutionis pruina discussit, rutilante fonte in Bethlehem civitate. Infantes enim quia ætate loqui non poterant, laudem Domini cum gaudio resonabant. Occisi prædicant: quod vivi non poterant. Loquuntur sanguine, quod lingua nequiverunt. Contulit his Martyrium laudem; quibus abnegaverat lingua sermonem. Præmittit infans Infans Christus ad cœlos; transmittit nova xenia Patri; primitias exhibet Genitori parvulorum prima martyria, Herodis scelere perpetrata. Præstat hostis corpori; dum nocet, beneficium tribuit; dum occidit, moriendo vivitur: cadendo resurgitur: victoria per interitum comprobatur.

Our own Venerable Bede offers us the following Hymn, which is full of melody and pathos.

HYMN.

Hymnum canentes Martyrum
Dicamus Innocentium,
Quos terra flendo perdidit,
Gaudens sed æthra suscipit.

Vultum Patris per sæcula,
Quorum tuentur Angeli,
Ejusque laudant gratiam,
Hymnum canentes Martyrum.

Quos rex peremit impius,
Pius sed Auctor colligit,
Secum beatos collocans,
In luce regni perpetis.

Qui mansiones singulis
Largitus in domo Patris ;
Donat supernis sedibus,
Quos rex peremit impius.

Bimos et infra parvulos,
Herodis ira perculit ;
Finesque Bethlemiticos,
Sancto respersit sanguine.

Præclara Christo splen-
duit
Mors innocens fidelium :
Cœlis ferebant Angeli
Bimos et infra parvulos.

Vox in Rama percrebuit,
Lamenta luctus maximi,
Rachel suos, cum lacrymis
Perfusa, flevit filios.

Gaudent triumpho per-
peti,
Tormenta quique vicerant,
Quorum gemens ob verbera,
Vox in Rama percrebuit.

Ne, grex pusille, formides
Dentes leonis perfidos !

Let us chant the hymn of
the Martyred Innocents, whom
earth lost, and wept, but hea-
ven gained and was glad.

Their Angels see the Face of
the Eternal Father, and sing
the Hymn of their Martyrs,
lauding the grace of God.

A cruel king destroyed
them, the merciful Creator re-
ceived them, making them
happy with Himself in the
brightness of the never-ending
kingdom.

He that gives to each elect
a mansion in his Father's
house, places the Innocents,
massacred by the impious
king, on thrones in heaven
above.

Herod was angry, and slew
every child below the age of
two, staining with their sacred
blood the borders of Bethle-
hem.

Precious in the sight of Je-
sus shone the innocent death
of these his faithful ones ;
and Angels came down to
carry them to the land of
heaven.

A voice in Rama was heard,
lamentation of poignant grief,
and Rachel shed a flood of
tears over her infant sons,

Who now rejoice in endless
triumph, for they overcame
their torments, whose cruel
blows filled Rama with the
voice of wailing.

Fear not, Little Flock, the
prowling lion's tooth ! for the

Good Shepherd will give you the pastures of heaven.

Following the spotless Lamb of God in the path of purity, ye need not fear, dear Little Flock, a robber's wicked grasp.

The Father will wipe every tear from off your cheeks; death shall have no further power to hurt you, inclosed now within the walls of Life.

They that sow in tears, reap eternal joy: and the Creator wipes every tear away from the mourner's face.

O truly happy Bethlehem! city wherein our Redeemer was born, and where he was presented with the first Martyrs—the first Victims dedicated to the new-born King.

No, Bethlehem! thou shalt not be called the least among the thousand cities, for out of thee came the divine Leader! O truly blessed City!

Around his throne now stand, glittering in their fair bright robes, these Innocents that washed their garments red in the Blood of the Lamb.

They had sighed and wept for the kingdom of the everlasting world—now they stand joyful before God, and bright in their robes of glory, are ever singing his praise.

Pastor bonus nam pascua
Vobis dabit cœlestia.

Agnum Dei qui candidum
Mundo sequeris tramite;
Manus latronis impias
Ne, grex pusille formides.

Absterget omnem lacry-
mam
Vestris Pater de vultibus;
Mors vobis ultra non nocet,
Vitæ receptis mœnibus.

Qui seminant in lacry-
mis,
Longo metent in gaudio,
Genis lugentum Conditor
Absterget omnem lacry-
mam.

O quam beata civitas,
In qua Redemptor nascitur:
Natoque primæ Martyrum
In qua dicantur hostiæ.

Nunquam vocaris par-
vula,
In civitatum millibus,
Ex qua novus dux ortus
est;

O quam beata civitas.
Astant nitentes fulgidis
Ejus throno nunc vestibus,
Stolas suas qui laverant
Agni rubentes sanguine.

Qui perpetis pro patriæ
Regno gementes fleverant:
Læti Deo cum laudibus
Astant nitentes fulgidis.

The Greek Church is, of course, profuse in her praises of the Holy Innocents. We extract from her *Menæa* the following stanzas.

(*XXVI. Decembris, in magno Vespertino, et passim.*)

Thesaurum occultatum exquirens impius, Innocentes pueros immolavit, et Rachel inconsolabilis exundantem intuens cladem iniquam, mortemque præmaturam; quos ploravit, imis visceribus commota, eos nunc in sinu Abrahæ contemplantata gaudet.

Regem sine tempore sub tempore natum, rex impius exquirebat, et non inveniens quomodo occideret, puerorum messuit maliniam multitudinem, quos (et non cogitabat) fecit Martyres, supernique regni habitatores, et illius in sæcula impietatem exprobantes.

Te ex Virgine nato, antæcæularis Domine, teque parvulo, ob tuam bonitatem facto; parvulorum chorus tibi oblatuſ est in Martyrum sanguine; limpida anima justissime fulgidus; quos inhabitare fecisti in mansionibus sempiternis, Herodis infamantes malitiam et crudelissimam iniquitatem.

Rachel clamans lacrymatur, ut scriptum est, super filios: parvulos enim Herodes occidens impius implebat Scripturam, Judæam inundans innocuo sanguine; nam terra rubescebat infan-

The impious Herod, searching out Jesus the Hidden Treasure, slew the Innocent Children; and the inconsolable Rachel, seeing the iniquitous shedding of blood, and the premature death of her Babes, first grieving from the bottom of her heart, now rejoices seeing them in Abraham's Bosom.

The wicked king sought for the King, Eternal, yet born in time: and not finding how to kill Him, he mowed down the innocent multitude of children, thinking not that he was making them Martyrs, and citizens of the heavenly kingdom, and eternal accusers of his impiety.

Thou, O Lord! being born of the Virgin, that wast born of the Father before all ages, and having become, out of thy infinite goodness, a Little Child—there was presented unto thee a choir of little children, made Martyrs by the shedding of their blood, and clad in brightness, the most just reward of their innocence of soul. Thou didst give them to dwell in eternal mansions, where they proclaim Herod's malice and most cruel injustice.

Rachel wailing, weeps, as 'tis written, over her Babes, for Herod fulfilled the Scripture when he slew the little ones, and inundated Judea with innocent blood. The earth was reddened by the Infants' blood,

and the Gentile Church mystically made pure and beautiful. The Truth had come : to them that were sitting in the shadow of death God had shown himself, born of a Virgin for our salvation.

In this manifestation of the King of all, all exulted in heaven and on earth, save only Herod and the Jews, the murderers of the Prophets—they are sad, for they alone have cause for sadness, seeing that their kingdom is at an end ; but the kingdom of the Lord henceforth shall rule, repelling the daring of our enemies, and calling the multitude of the Faithful to come, with the holy Children, and see Him, The Little Child, that lies in the manger.

The impious Herod fearing, sent his reapers to cut the tender grass of Bethlehem's little field—the Innocents : and failing in the murder of the Infant-God, confusion fills his soul.

Rachel bewails her sons, and a loud cry is heard to-day in Rama : Herod rages and maddens in impiety : John flees to the mountains, his mother Elizabeth hides in a cave, Zachary is slain in the temple, and Jesus escapes, leaving the Hebrew land a desert.

The Innocents were the first offering consecrated to thy immaculate Birth, O Jesus ! for Herod, that fain would apprehend Thee, the Incomprehensible God, was fooled in his craft, and gave thee a choir of Martyrs. Therefore, O God

tium sanguinibus, Ecclesiaeque ex gentibus mystice purificatur, et stola induitur. Venit Veritas, sedentibus in umbra mortis Deus apparuit, ex Virgine natus ad salvandum nos.

Sursum et deorsum exultantibus omnibus in Regis omnium manifestatione, solus Herodes tristatur cum Prophetarum homicidis Judæis ; decet enim illos solos lamentari ; deinceps enim non amplius regnant, sed regnum Domini posthac dominabitur, inimicorum depulsans audaciam, et multitudinem Fidelium convocans, ad videndum cum venerandis pueris illum qui in præsepio jacet velut infans.

Herbivirentem agellum puerorum impius Herodes mittens emessuit præmaturum timidus ; et natum Dominum cum nequit interficere, omni impletur confusione.

Plorat Rachel infantes, et in Rama vox magna auditur hodie : Herodes furit et impie fremescit : Joannes fugit ad montes, petra matrem recipit, Zacharias in templo cæditur, et Christus fugit, desertam linquens Hebræorum habitationem.

Immaculatæ tuæ Nativitati, Domine, prima hostia fuerunt infantes ; Herodes enim manu apprehendere te imprehensibilem volens deceptus est, Martyrum adducens tibi chorum ; ideo te deprecamur hominem

factum salvare animas nostras.

Ad aures Domini Sabaoth pervenit cædes vestra, Infantes honorandi ; per eam enim sanguinem effudistis, et in sinu Abrahæ requiescitis, Herodis in sæcula odiosam malitiam repellentes, virtute Christi nati.

Odiosa Herodis puerorum internecio per illius cruentam militiam, et veneranda puerorum hostia, qui Christi coætanei præsacrificati et præpassi sunt : noli flere, Rachel, filios, recordata Abrahæ sinum, ubi eorum omnium lætantium est cohabitatio.

made Man ! save us, we beseech thee !

Most honoured Innocents ! the cry of your murder has ascended to the ears of the God of Sabaoth. Your blood was shed by the massacre, but ye are resting in Abraham's bosom, and, by the power of the Infant Christ, your triumph over Herod's detested malice is eternal.

Hateful is Herod's massacre of thy Children, O Rachel, by his cruel soldiers, but venerable the holocaust of thy Babes, the companions of Jesus in age, but his predecessors in their sacrifice and passion : then, weep not for thy Children, Rachel, remembering Abraham's Bosom, where is the one dwelling of them all, and they are in joy.

Into this sublime concert of the Liturgies singing the praises of the Innocents, we must admit the Latin Churches of the Middle Ages. We have selected a Prose of the 11th century, found in most of the ancient Roman-French Missals.

SEQUENCE.

Celsa pueri concrepent
melodia,
Pia Innocentum colentes
tripudia.
Quos infans Christus hodie
vexit ad astra,
Hos trucidavit frendens
insania
Herodianæ fraudis, ob
nulla crimina,
In Bethlehem ipsius cuncta,

Sound forth, O Children !
your shrill melodies,
In honour of the holy joys
of the Innocents.
The Infant Jesus took them,
this day, to the realms above,
When the rabid madness of
Herod's craft slew them,
Though guilty of no crime :
They were the Children, in
the city

And all the confines of
Bethlehem,

Two years old and under,
Dating from the time of
their birth.

The unhappy King Herod,
fearing the kingdom of the
Infant Christ,

Trembles from head to foot,
and brandishes his sword with
his haughty hand.

He, with his troubled mind,
seeks for the King of Light
and heaven ;

That, by his weapons, he
might put to death Him that
gives life :

For his eye cannot look on
the bright Light of Him, who
searcheth clouded hearts.

Herod is inflamed with rage,
and cruelly plots the death of
thousands of Innocents.

A wicked chieftain takes
with him a troop of soldiers,
and plunges his sword in the
tender flesh.

The pure stream of infant
veins, (for blood is scarce yet
formed,) flows upon the
mothers' breasts.

The brutal enemy tears the
flesh with gaping wounds, and
on the throat inflicts a fatal
gash :

Trampling out life, e'er the
tender age is sinewed into
strength.

Oh ! how glorious the bodies
of these murdered Innocents !

How happy the Mothers of
such Children !

O amiable legion of Inno-
cents !

Et per confinia,

A bimatu et infra,
Juxta nascendi tempora.

Herodes rex, Christi nati
Verens, infelix ! imperia,

Infremit totus, erigit arma
Superba dextera.

Quærit lucis et cœli Re-
gem,

Cum mente turbida ;
Ut extinguat, qui vitam
præstat,

Per sua jacula.
Dum non valet intueri
lucem splendidam,

Nebulosa quærentis pectora.
Ira fervet, fraudes auget
Herodes sævus,

Ut perdat piorum agmina.
Castrâ militum dux ini-
quus aggregat,

Ferrum figit in membra te-
nera.

Inter ubera lac effundit,
Antequam sanguinis fierent
coagula.

Hostis naturæ natos evis-
cerat

Atque jugulat :

Ante prosternit, quam
ætas parvula
Sumat robora.

Quam beata sunt Inno-
centum cæsa
Corpuscula !

Quam felices existunt
matres,
Fuderunt quæ talia pig-
nora !

O dulces Innocentum
acies !

O pia lactantum pro
 Christo certamina!
 Parvorum trucidantur
 millia :
 Membris ex teneris manant
 lactis flumina.
 Cives angelici veniunt
 obviam,
 Mira victoria,
 Vitæ captat merita
 Turba candidissima.
 Te, Christe, petimus,
 mente devotissima,
 Nostra qui venisti reformare
 sæcula,
 Innocentum gloria
 Perfrui nos concedas per
 æterna.
 Amen.

O holy infant-combats
 fought for Christ.

The Babes lay slain in thou-
 sands, and from their tender
 limbs there flows a stream of
 sinless blood.

The citizens of heaven come
 forth to meet the snow-white
 troop, that takes the crown of
 Life, won by a singular victo-
 ry.

We most devoutly beseech
 thee, O Jesus! who camest to
 reform the world,

That thou grant us to enjoy,
 for everlasting ages, the glory
 of the Innocents.

Amen.

And we, too, Blessed Babes! we celebrate your triumph, and we congratulate you in your having been chosen as the companions of Jesus when in his Crib. What a glad waking was yours, from the darkness of unconscious infancy to the divine light of life eternal! How dear to you the sword that thus transformed you! What gratitude had you not for the God, who thus chose you, out of millions of other children, to do honour to the birth of his Son, by this sacrifice of your blood and lives! Too young to fight the battle, yet did you win the crown. The Martyr's Palm waved in those tiny hands, which had not strength to pluck it. God would give proof of his munificence—he would teach us that he is Master of his gifts. And, was it not fitting, that the birth of the Son of this great King should be commemorated by largess such as this? Sweet Infant Martyrs! we give praise to our God for his having thus favoured you, and, with the whole Church, we rejoice in the privileges you have received.

Flowers of the Martyrs! we confide in your inter-

cession, and beseech you, by the reward so gratuitously conferred on you, to be mindful of us your Brethren, who are struggling amidst the dangers of this sinful world. We, too, desire to receive those same Palms and Crowns, which you have won, but with such innocence and simplicity, that the Church says you *played with them*.¹ whereas we have to fight hard and long for them, and are so often on the point of losing them for ever! The God that has glorified you, is our last end as truly as he is yours; in Him alone can our hearts find their rest; pray for us, that we may possess him for all eternity.

Pray for us, that we may obtain child-like simplicity of heart, whence comes that unreserved confidence in God, which leads man to the perfect accomplishment of his holy will. May we bear the cross with patience, when he sends it, and desire nothing but his holy will. You gazed upon the murderers who broke your gentle sleep, and you found nothing to make you fear; the bright sword they held over your cradle, had but the look of a toy you asked to play with; death stared you in the face, and you smiled on him. May we imitate you, and be meek and graceful in the trials that come to us; making them our martyrdom by the quiet endurance of our courage, and the conformity of our will with that of our Sovereign Lord and Master, who only gives the cross that he may give the crown. May we never object to or hate the instruments he uses wherewith to try us; may no harshness nor injustice nor pain ever quench the fire of our charity, nor any event ever deprive us of that peace, without which our souls live not to God.

And, lastly, O ye Innocent Lambs, slain for Jesus,

1 * * * Simpliciter
Palma et Coronis luditis.
(*Hymn for Vespers.*)

and following him whithersoever he goeth, because ye are pure—pray for us to the Lamb of God, that he permit us to come to him in Bethlehem, and, like you, fix our dwelling there, for it is the abode of love and innocence. Speak for us to Mary, a Mother more compassionate than Rachel; tell her that we are her Children, and your Brethren. She that compassionated your momentary sufferings, will pity us and help us in our long years of temptation, pain, and sorrow.

Three days have passed since the Birth of Jesus—let us visit him in the Stable, and humbly adore our Emmanuel. Let us think on the Mercy, which led him to become a Little Child in order to bring us near to himself: let us be filled with astonishment at seeing our God thus close to his creatures. “He,” says the holy Abbot Gueric,¹ “He that, in heaven, surpasses the sublime intellects of the Angels, is here on earth palpable to the dull sense of men. For, whereas God could not speak to us as spiritual beings—for we are carnal—his Word was made Flesh, that all flesh might not only hear, but might even see Him, whom the mouth of the Lord had spoken.² And whereas the world knew not the Wisdom of God in his wisdom, that same wisdom, by an ineffable condescension, made himself *Foolishness*.³ * * I give thee praise, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for that thou hast hid this Wisdom from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed it to little ones.⁴ * * The haughtiness of the proud is exceedingly adverse to the humility of this Little One; and that which is high to men, is an abomi-

¹ Sermon the Fifth *On the wonderful providence of God in the Nativity of Christ.*

² Is. xl. 5.

³ I. Cor. i. 25.

⁴ St. Matth. xi. 25.

“nation before God.¹ * * This Little One finds
 “sympathy with none save with them that are little
 “in heart, and he takes up his abode with none save
 “with them that are humble and peaceful. As,
 “therefore, these Little Children sing, glorying in
 “Him: *A Little Child is born unto us;*² so does
 “He say of them: *Behold Me and my Children,*
 “*whom the Lord hath given unto me!*³ Thus it
 “was that the glory of Martyrdom began with In-
 “nocent Babes; for the Father would give to his
 “Son, the Infant Jesus, Companions of his own
 “tender age; and hereby the Holy Ghost taught us,
 “that of such is the Kingdom of heaven.”⁴

In honour of this Childhood of the Great King, let us recite the following admirable Hymn, composed by one of the most learned men of the primitive Church, Clement of Alexandria.

HYMN.

Curb of the young untamed
 ones — Wing that protectest
 chickens which keep nigh their
 mother—sure Rudder of in-
 fant age—Shepherd of the
 King’s lambs!—call together
 thy simple children, and bid
 them praise with holy hearts,
 and sweetly sing with pure
 lips, Jesus, the King of In-
 fants.

King of Saints—Incarnate
 Word—that rulest all things—
 Dispenser of the Most High,
 the Father—support of them
 that toil—joy eternal—Saviour
 of mankind—Jesus!

Frænum pullorum indo-
 cilium,
 Penna volucrum non erran-
 tium,
 Verus clavus infantium,
 Pastor agnorum regalium,
 Tuos simplices
 Pueros congrega,
 Ad sancte laudandum,
 Sincere canendum,
 Ore innoxio,
 Christum puerorum ducem.
 Rex sanctorum,
 Verbum, qui domas omnia,
 Patris altissimi
 Sapientiæ rector,
 Laborum sustentaculum,
 Ævo gaudens,
 Humani generis
 Servator, Jesu,

¹ St. Luke, xvi. 15.

² Is. ix. 6.

³ Is. viii. 18.

⁴ St. Matth. xix. 14.

Pastor, arator,
 Clavus, frænum,
 Penna cœlestis
 Sanctissimi gregis,
 Piscator hominum
 Qui salvi fiunt ;
 Pelagi vitii,
 Pisces castos
 Unda ex infesta,
 Dulci vita inescans.

Sis dux, ovium
 Rationalium pastor ;
 Sancte, sis dux,
 Rex puerorum intactorum :
 Vestigia Christi,
 Via cœlestis.

Verbum perenne,
 Ævum infinitum,
 Lux æterna,
 Fons misericordiæ,
 Operatrix virtutis,
 Honesta vita
 Deum laudantium, Christe
 Jesu,

Lac cœleste,
 Dulcibus uberibus
 Nymphæ gratiarum,
 Sapientiæ tuæ expressum,
 Infantuli
 Ore tenero
 Enutriti,
 Mammæ rationalis
 Roscido spiritu
 Impleti,
 Laudes simplices,
 Hymnos veraces
 Regi Christo.

Mercedes sanctas
 Vitæ doctrinæ
 Canamus simul.
 Canamus simpliciter
 Puerum valentem.
 Chorus pacis,
 Christo geniti,
 Populus modestus,
 Psallamus simul Deum
 pacis.

Shepherd—Husbandman—
 Rudder—Curb—Wing celestial
 of the most holy flock—
 Fisher of the elect, drawing
 the chaste fish, by the bait of
 the sweet Bread of Life, from
 the boisterous sea of sin.

O Shepherd of the spiritual
 flock, be thou our Guide!
 Guide us, O Holy One, O King
 of spotless Children! The way
 to heaven, is to follow the foot-
 steps of Christ.

O Eternal Word—Infinite
 duration—Light Eternal—
 Fount of mercy—Author of
 virtue—the Holy Life of them
 that praise God—Christ
 Jesus!

We thy little ones, whose
 infant mouths have drunk the
 milk of heaven, drawn from
 the sweet breasts of thy wis-
 dom, grace's virgin-spring:
 filled with the dewy spirit of
 thy divine breast, we sing to
 Christ, the King, our simple
 praises, and our truthful
 hymns.

Let us together sing the holy
 recompense of the doctrine of
 Life! Let us together sing
 to the Almighty Babe! O
 choir of peace—O children
 of Christ—O wisdom-loving
 people—let us together praise
 the God of Peace!

Let us also salute Mary, the Mother of this Divine Infant, in the words of this beautiful Prose, taken from the ancient Missals of Germany.

SEQUENCE.

Glorious, powerful, and so-
vereign Empress ! Noble Mo-
ther and Daughter of Jesus !
Fair Root of Jesse, Branch
lovely in thy bloom and leaf,
watered by the plentiful grace
of God.

The soft south zephyr breath-
ed upon thee, and breathing
gave thee Fruit, and by his
power put the rough north-
wind to flight. Thou, there-
fore, believing the Angel Ga-
briel's word, didst conceive a
Flower, one day to bring Him
forth—thy Fruit.

Joseph, *the Just Man*, saw
his lovely Branch in Flower :
none else could know like
him and tremble at the
Mystery. But the secret was
sacred and well did he keep it,
revealing it to no mortal ear.
Mary was his Spouse, and he
extolled her : she was his Lady,
and he honoured her.

The heavens had truly
dropped down their dew, and
the clouds, laden with a mys-
tic rain, rained the Holy One ;
Hedwelt in the Virgin's womb.
O wondrous thing ! O thing
most strange ! A Star brings
forth the Sun ! A Maid, a
Virgin most pure, brings forth
the King of Heaven.

Then, by thy loving prayers,
commend us to thy Son, O
Mother sweet and kind, and

Imperatrix gloriosa,
Potens et imperiosa,
Jesu Christi generosa
Mater atque filia :
Radix Jesse speciosa,
Virga florens et frondosa
Quam rigavit copiosa
Deitatis gratia.

Auster levis te perflavit,
Et perflando fœcundavit,
Aquilonem qui fugavit
Sua cum potentia.
Florem ergo genuisti,
Fructum ex quo protulisti,
Gabrieli dum fuisti
Paranympho credula.

Joseph, justus vir, expavit,
Ista dum consideravit,
Sciens quod non irrigavit
Florescentem virgulam :
Bene tamen conservavit
Arcanum, nec divulgavit ;
Sponsam sed magnificavit,
Honorans ut Dominam.

Cœli quoniam roraverunt,
Nubes ex quo concreverunt,
Concretæque stillaverunt
Virginis in utero.
Res miranda ! res novella !
Nam procedit sol de stella,
Regem dum parit puella,
Viri tori nescia.

Ergo clemens et benigna,
Cunctorumque laudum dig-
na,

Tuo nato nos consigna
Pia per suffragia :
Ut mortali, quo gravamur,
Compede sic absolvamur,
Ut soluti transferamur
Ad cœli palatia.
Amen.

worthy of this and every
praise! Pray for us, that
loosened from the shackle of
mortality that weighs us down,
we may take wing to the hea-
venly courts.
Amen.

DECEMBER 29.

SAINT THOMAS,

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, AND MARTYR.

ANOTHER Martyr comes in to-day, to take his place round the Crib of our Jesus. He does not belong to the first ages of the Church :—his name is not written in the Books of the New Testament, like those of Stephen, John, and the Innocents of Bethlehem. Yet does he stand most prominent in the ranks of that Martyr-Host, which has been receiving fresh recruits in every age, and is one of those visible abiding proofs of the vitality of the Church, and of the undecaying energy infused into her by her divine Founder. This glorious Martyr did not shed his blood for the faith; he was not dragged before the tribunals of Pagans or Heretics, there to confess the Truths revealed by Christ and taught by the Church. He was slain by Christian hands; it was a Catholic King that condemned him to death; it was by the majority of his own Brethren, and they his countrymen, that he was abandoned and blamed. How, then, could he be a Martyr? How did he gain a Palm like Stephen's? He was the Martyr for the Liberty of the Church.

Every Christian is obliged to lay down his life rather than deny any of the Articles of our holy Faith: it was the debt we contracted with Jesus Christ, when he adopted us, in Baptism, as his Brethren. All are not called to the honour of Mar-

tyrdom, that is, all are not required to bear that testimony to the Truth, which consists in shedding one's blood for it: but all must so love their Faith, as to be ready to die rather than deny it, under pain of incurring the eternal death, from which the grace of our Redeemer has already delivered us. The same obligation lies still more heavily on the Pastors of the Church. It is the pledge of the truth of their teachings. Hence, we find, in almost every page of the History of the Church, the glorious names of saintly Bishops, who laid down their lives for the Faith they had delivered to their people. It was the last and dearest pledge they could give of their devotedness to the Vineyard entrusted to them, and in which they had spent years of care and toil. The blood of their Martyrdom was more than a fertilising element—it was a guarantee, the highest that man can give, that the seed they had sown in the hearts of men was, in very truth, the revealed Word of God.

But beyond the debt, which every Christian has, of shedding his blood rather than deny his Faith, that is, of allowing no threats or dangers to make him disown the sacred ties which unite him to the Church and, through her, to Jesus Christ—beyond this, Pastors have another debt to pay, which is that of defending the Liberty of the Church. To Kings, and Rulers, and, in general, to all Diplomats and Politicians, there are few expressions so unwelcome as this of *the Liberty of the Church*; with them, it means a sort of conspiracy. The world talks of it as being an unfortunate scandal, originating in *priestly ambition*. Timid temporising Catholics regret that it can elicit any one's zeal, and will endeavour to persuade us, that we have no need to fear any thing, so long as our Faith is not attacked. Notwithstanding all this, the Church has put upon her altars and associated with St. Stephen, St. John, and the Holy Innocents, this our Archbishop, who was slain in his

Cathedral of Canterbury, in the 12th century, because he resisted a King's infringements on the extrinsic Rights of the Church. She sanctions the noble maxim of St. Anselm, one of St. Thomas' predecessors in the See of Canterbury: *Nothing does God love so much in this world, as the Liberty of his Church*; and the Apostolic See declares by the mouth of Pius the 8th, in the 19th century, the very same doctrine she would have taught by St. Gregory the 7th, in the 11th century: *The Church, the spotless Spouse of Jesus Christ the immaculate Lamb, is, by God's appointment, FREE, and subject to no earthly power.*¹

But in what does this sacred Liberty consist? It consists in the Church's absolute independence of every secular power in the ministry of the Word of God, which she is bound to preach *in season and out of season*, as St. Paul says, to all mankind, without distinction of nation, or race, or age, or sex:—in the administration of the Sacraments, to which she must invite all men, without exception, in order to the world's salvation:—in the practice, free from all human control, of the Counsels, as well as of the Precepts, of the Gospel:—in the unobstructed inter-communication of the several degrees of her sacred hierarchy:—in the publication and application of her decrees and ordinances in matters of discipline:—in the maintenance and development of the Institutions she has founded:—in the holding and governing her temporal patrimony:—and lastly, in the defence of those privileges, which have been adjudged to her by the civil authority itself, in order that her ministry of peace and charity might be unembarrassed and respected.

Such is the Liberty of the Church. It is the

¹ *Libera est institutione divina, nullique obnoxia terrenæ potestati Ecclesia intemerata sponsa immaculati Agni Christi Jesu. Litteræ Apostolicæ ad Episcopos Provinciæ Rhenanæ. 30 Junii, 1830.*

bulwark of the Sanctuary. Every breach there, imperils the Hierarchy, and even the very Faith. A Bishop may not flee, as the hireling, nor hold his peace, like those *dumb dogs*, of which the Prophet Isaias speaks, and which *are not able to bark*.¹ He is the Watchman of Israel: he is a traitor if he first lets the enemy enter the citadel, and then, but only then, gives the alarm and risks his person and his life. The obligation of laying down his life for his flock, begins to be in force at the enemy's first attack upon the very out-posts of the City, which is only safe when they are strongly guarded.

The consequences of the Pastor's resistance may be of the most serious nature; in which event, we must remember a truth, which has been admirably expressed by Bossuet, in his magnificent Panegyric on St. Thomas of Canterbury, which we regret not being able to give from beginning to end. "It is an established law," he says, "that every success the Church acquires costs her the life of some of her children, and that in order to secure her rights, she must shed her own blood. Her Divine Spouse redeemed her by the Blood he shed for her; and he wishes that she should purchase, on the same terms, the graces he bestows upon her. It was by the blood of the Martyrs that she extended her conquests far beyond the limits of the Roman Empire. It was her blood that procured her, both the peace she enjoyed under the Christian, and the victory she gained over the Pagan, Emperors. So that, as she had to shed her blood for the propagation of her teaching, she had also to bleed for the making her authority accepted. The Discipline, therefore, as well as the Faith, of the Church, was to have its Martyrs."

Hence it was, that St. Thomas, and the rest of the

¹ Is. lvi. 10.

Martyrs for Ecclesiastical Liberty, never once stopped to consider how it was possible, with such weak means as were at their disposal, to oppose the invaders of the rights of the Church. One great element of Martyrdom, is simplicity united with courage; and this explains how there have been Martyrs amongst the lowest classes of the Faithful, and that young girls, and even children, can show their rich Palm-branch. God has put into the heart of a Christian a capability of humble and inflexible resistance, which makes every opposition give way. What, then, must that fidelity be, which the Holy Ghost has put into the souls of Bishops, whom he has constituted the Spouses of his Church, and the defenders of his beloved Jerusalem? "St. Thomas," says Bossuet, "yields not to injustice, under the pretext that it is armed with the sword, and that it is a King who commits it; on the contrary, seeing that its source is high up, he feels his obligation of resisting it to be the greater, just as men throw the embankments higher, when the torrent swells."

But, the Pastor may lose his life in the contest! Yes, it may be so—he may possibly have this glorious privilege. Our Lord came into this world to fight against it and conquer it—but he shed his blood in the contest, he died on a Cross. So likewise were the Martyrs put to death. Can the Church, then, that was founded by the Precious Blood of her Divine Master, and was established by the blood of the Martyrs—can she ever do without the saving laver of blood, which reanimates her with vigour, and vests her with the rich crimson of her royalty? St. Thomas understood this: and when we remember how he laboured to mortify his flesh by a life of penance, and how every sort of privation and adversity had taught him to crucify to this world every affection of his heart, we cannot be surprised at his possessing, within his soul, the qualities which fit a man for martyrdom—

calmness of courage, and a patience proof against every trial. In other words, he had received from God the Spirit of Fortitude, and he faithfully corresponded to it.

“In the language of the Church,” continues Bossuet, “*Fortitude* has not the meaning it has in the language of the world. Fortitude, as the world understands it, is the undertaking great things; according to the Church, it goes not beyond the suffering every sort of trial, and there it stops. Listen to the words of St. Paul: *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood*; as though he would say: ‘You have not yet gone the whole length of your duty, because you have not resisted your enemies unto blood.’ He does not say, ‘You have not attacked your enemies and shed their blood;’ but, ‘Your resistance to your enemies has not yet cost you *your* blood.’

“These are the high principles of St. Thomas; but see how he makes use of them. He arms himself with this sword of the Apostle’s teaching, not to make a parade of courage, and gain a name for heroism, but simply because the Church is threatened, and he must hold over her the shield of his resistance. The strength of the holy Archbishop lies not, in any way, either in the interference of sympathisers, or in a plot ably conducted. He has but to publish the sufferings he has so patiently borne, and odium will fall upon his persecutor: certain secret springs need only to be touched by such a man as this, and the people would be roused to indignation against the King! but the Saint scorns both plans. All he has on his side is the prayer of the poor, and the sighs of the widow and the orphan: *these*, as St. Ambrose would say, *these are the Bishop’s defenders, these his guard, these his army!* He is powerful, because he has a soul that knows not either how to fear or how to

“murmur. He can, in all truth, say to Henry, King of England, what Tertullian said, in the name of the whole Church, to a magistrate of the Roman Empire, who was a cruel persecutor of the Church : *We neither frighten thee, nor fear thee*.¹ we Christians are neither dangerous men, nor cowards ; not dangerous, because we cannot cabal, and not cowards, because we fear not the sword.”

Our Panegyrist proceeds to describe the victory won for the Church by her intrepid Martyr of Canterbury. We can scarcely be surprised when we are told, that during the very year in which he preached this eloquent Sermon, Bossuet was raised to the episcopal dignity. We need offer no apology for giving the following fine passage.

“Christians ! give me your attention. If there ever were a Martyrdom, which bore the resemblance to a Sacrifice, it was the one I have to describe to you. First of all, there is the preparation : the Bishop is in the Church with his Ministers, and all are robed in the sacred Vestments. And the Victim ? The Victim is near at hand—the Bishop is the Victim chosen by God, and he is ready. So that all is prepared for the Sacrifice, and they that are to strike the blow enter the Church. The holy man walks before them, as Jesus did before his enemies. He forbids his Clergy to make the slightest resistance, and all he asks of his enemies is, that they injure none of them that are present : it is the close imitation of his Divine Master, who said to them that apprehended him : *If it be I whom ye seek, suffer these to go their way*. And when all this had been done, and the moment for the sacrifice was come, St. Thomas begins the ceremony. He is both Victim and Priest—he bows down his head, and offers the prayer. Listen to

¹ Non te terremus, qui nec timemus.

“the solemn prayer, and the mystical words, of the
 “sacrifice : *And I am ready to die for God, and for*
 “*the claims of justice, and for the Liberty of the*
 “*Church, if only she may gain peace and Liberty*
 “*by this shedding of my blood!*¹ He prostrates
 “himself before God : and as in the Holy Sacrifice
 “there is the invocation of the Saints our Interces-
 “sors, Thomas omits not so important a ceremony ;
 “he beseeches the Holy Martyrs and the Blessed
 “Mary ever a Virgin to deliver the Church from
 “oppression. He can pray for nothing but the
 “Church ; his heart beats but for the Church ; his
 “lips can speak nothing but the Church ; and, when
 “the blow has been struck, his cold and lifeless
 “tongue seems still to be saying : *The Church !*”

Thus did our glorious Martyr, the type of a Bishop of the Church, consummate his sacrifice, thus did he gain his victory ; and his victory will produce the total abolition of the sinful laws, which would have made the Church the creature of the State, and an object of contempt to the people. The tomb of the Saint will become an Altar ; and at the foot of that Altar, there will one day kneel a penitent King, humbly praying for pardon and blessing. What has wrought this change ? Has the death of Thomas of Canterbury stirred up the people to revolt ? Has his Martyrdom found its avengers ? No. It is the blood of one, who died for Christ, producing its fruit. The world is hard to teach, else it would have long since learnt this truth—that a Christian people can never see with indifference a Pastor put to death for fidelity to his charge ; and that a Government, that dares to make a Martyr, will pay dearly for the crime. Modern diplomacy has learnt the secret ; experience has given it the instinctive craft of waging

¹ Et ego pro Deo mori paratus sum, et pro assertione justitiæ, et pro Ecclesiæ Libertate ; dummodo effusione sanguinis mei pacem et Libertatem consequatur !

war against the Liberty of the Church with less violence and more intrigue—the intrigue of enslaving her by political administration. It was this crafty diplomacy which forged the chains, wherewith so many Churches are now shackled, and which, be they ever so gilded, are insupportable. There is but one way to unlink such fetters—to break them. He that breaks them, will be great in the Church of heaven and earth, for he must be a Martyr: he will not have to fight with the sword, or be a political agitator, but simply, to resist the plotters against the Liberty of the Spouse of Christ, and suffer patiently whatever may be said or done against him.

Let us give ear once more to the sublime Panegyrist of our St. Thomas: he is alluding to this patient resistance, which made the Archbishop triumph over tyranny.

“My Brethren, see what manner of men the Church finds rising up to defend her in her weakness, and how truly she may say with the Apostle: *When I am weak, then am I powerful.*¹ It is this blessed *weakness*, which provides her with invincible *power*, and which enlists in her cause the bravest soldiers and the mightiest conquerors this world has ever seen—I mean, the Martyrs. He that infringes on the authority of the Church, let him dread that precious blood of the Martyrs, which consecrates and protects it.”

Now, all this Fortitude, and the whole of this Victory, come from the Crib of the Infant Jesus: therefore it is, that we find St. Thomas standing near it, in company with the Protomartyr Stephen. Any example of humility, and of what the world calls poverty and weakness, which had been less eloquent than this of the mystery of God made a Little Child, would have been insufficient to teach man what real

¹ II. Cor. xii. 10.

Power is. Up to that time, man had no other idea of power than that which the sword can give, or of greatness than that which comes of riches, or of joy than such as triumph brings: but when God came into this world, and showed himself weak, and poor, and persecuted—every thing was changed. Men were found who loved the lowly Crib of Jesus, with all its humiliations, better than the whole world besides: and from this mystery of the weakness of an Infant God they imbibed a greatness of soul, which even the world could not help admiring.

It is most just, therefore, that the two laurel-wreaths of St. Thomas and St. Stephen should intertwine round the Crib of the Babe of Bethlehem, for they are the two trophies of his two dear Martyrs. As regards St. Thomas, divine Providence marked out most clearly the place he was to occupy in the Cycle of the Christian Year, by permitting his martyrdom to happen on the day following the Feast of the Holy Innocents; so that, the Church could have no hesitation in assigning the 29th of December as the day for celebrating the memory of the saintly Archbishop of Canterbury. As long as the world lasts, this day will be a Feast of dearest interest to the whole Church of God; and the name of Thomas of Canterbury will be, to the day of judgment, terrible to the enemies of the Liberty of the Church, and music breathing hope and consolation to hearts that love that Liberty, which Jesus bought at the price of his Precious Blood.

We will now listen to this dear Mother of ours, the Church, who gives us, in her Divine Office, a short history of the life and sufferings of St. Thomas.

Thomas, Londini in Anglia natus, Theobaldo successit Cantuariensi episcopo: et qui antea in administrando Cancellariæ mu-

Thomas was born in England, in the city of London. He succeeded Theobald as Bishop of Canterbury. He had previously acquitted him-

self with much honour as Chancellor, and was strenuous and unflinching in his duty as Bishop; for when Henry 2nd, King of England, in an assembly of the Bishops and Nobles of the realm, passed certain laws inconsistent with the interests and the honour of the Church, the Bishop withstood the King's avarice so courageously, that neither fair promises nor threats could draw him over to the King's side, and, being in danger of imprisonment, he privately withdrew. Not long after, all his relatives young and old, all his friends, and household, were banished, and such of them, as had attained the age of discretion, were made to promise on oath that they would go to Thomas, as perhaps he, who could not be made to swerve from his holy purpose, by any personal consideration, might relent at the heart-rending spectacle of the sufferings of them who were dear to him. But he regarded not the demands of flesh and blood, neither did he permit the feelings of natural affection to weaken the firmness required of him as Bishop.

He, therefore, repaired to Pope Alexander 3rd, from whom he met with a kind reception, and who commended him, on his departure, to the Cistercian Monks of Pontigny. As soon as Henry came to know this, he strove to have Thomas expelled from Pontigny, and, for this purpose, sent threatening letters to the

nere præclare se gesserat, in Episcopali officio fortis et invictus fuit. Cum enim Henricus Secundus Angliæ Rex, convocatis ad se Episcopis, et Proceribus regni, leges ferret utilitati ac dignitati Ecclesiasticæ repugnantibus, adeo constanter obstitit regiæ cupiditati, ut neque pollicitationibus, neque terroribus de sententia decedens proxime conjiciendus in carcerem clam recesserit. Inde propinqui ejus omnis ætatis ejecti, amici, fautores omnes, iis, quibus per ætatem liceret, jurejurando adstrictis, universos Thomam adituros, si fortasse miserabili suorum calamitatis aspectu moveretur, qui a sancto proposito privatis incommodis detereri minime potuisset. Non respexit carnem aut sanguinem, neque ullus in eo humanitatis sensus, pastoralis officii constantiam labefactavit.

Contulit igitur se ad Alexandrum Tertium Pontificem, a quo benigne acceptus est: et inde profectus, monachis Pontiniacensis monasterii, Cisterciensis Ordinis, ab eodem commendatus. Quod ut cognovit Henricus, missis ad Conventum Fratrum Cisterciensium minacibus litteris, Thomam e

Pontiniaco monasterio exturbare conatur. Quare vir sanctus veritus ne sua causa Cisterciensis familia pateretur, sponte discessit, et Ludovicum Galliae regem, ejus invitatu convenit: ubi tandem fuit, quoad, Pontifice Maximo, et ipso Rege agentibus, ab exilio summa totius regni gratulatione revocatur. Qui dum boni pastoris officium securus exsequitur, ecce calumniatores ad regem deferunt eum multa contra regnum et publicam quietem moliri: ut propterea saepius conquereretur rex, se in suo regno cum uno sacerdote pacem habere non posse.

Ex qua regis voce nefarii satellites sperantes gratum se regi facturos, si Thomam e medio tollerent; clam convenientes Cantuariam, Episcopum in templo vespertinis horis operam dantem aggrediuntur. Qui clericis templi aditus pracludere conantibus accurrens, ostium aperuit, illis usus verbis ad suos: Non est Dei Ecclesia Dei custodienda more castrorum; et ego pro Ecclesia Dei libenter mortem subibo. Tum ad milites: Vos Dei jussu cavete ne cuipiam meorum noceatis. Deinde flexis genibus, Deo, beatæ Mariæ, sancto Diony-

General Chapter of Citeaux. Whereupon, the holy man, fearing lest the Cistercian Order should be made to suffer on his account, left the Monastery of his own accord, and betook himself to the hospitable shelter to which he had been invited by Louis, King of France. There he remained, until, by the intervention of the Pope and Louis the King, he was called home from his banishment, to the joy of the whole kingdom. Whilst resuming the intrepid discharge of the duty of a good Shepherd, certain calumniators denounced him to King Henry as one that was plotting sundry things against the country and the public peace. Wherefore, the King was heard frequently complaining, that there was only one Priest in his kingdom with whom he could not be in peace.

Certain wicked satellites concluded from this expression of the King, that he would be pleased at their ridding him of Thomas. Accordingly, they stealthily enter Canterbury, and finding the Bishop was in the Church, officiating at Vespers, they began their attack. The Clergy were using means to prevent them from entering the Church, when the Saint, coming to them, forbade their opposition, and, opening the door, thus spoke to them: The Church is not to be guarded like a citadel, and I am glad to die for God's Church. Then turning to the soldiers, he said: I command you, in the

name of God, that you hurt not any of them that are with me. After this, he knelt down, and commending his Church and himself to God, to the Blessed Mary, to St. Denis, and to the other Patron Saints of his Cathedral, with the same courage that he had shown in resisting the King's execrable laws, he bowed down his head to the impious murderers, on the Fourth of the Calends of January (December 29th), in the Year of our Lord 1171. His brains were scattered on the floor of the entire Church. God having shown the holiness of his servant by many miracles, he was canonised by the same Pope, Alexander 3rd.

sio, et reliquis Sanctis, ejus Ecclesiæ patronis, Ecclesiam et seipsum commendans, sacrum caput eadem constantia, qua iniquissimi regis legibus restiterat, impio ferro præcindendum obtulit, quarto Kalendas Januarii, anno Domini millesimo centesimo septuagesimo primo, cujus cerebro respersum est totius templi pavementum. Quem multis postea illustrem miraculis idem Alexander Pontifex retulit in Sanctorum numerum.

M A S S .

The solemn Introit of to-day's Mass shows the transport of joy, wherewith the Church celebrates the Feast of our holy Martyr. The words, and the chant, which accompanies them, are only used about four times in the year. Both words and music bespeak enthusiasm and joy: and the Church on earth is elated at the thought, that she and the Angels are making one choir to the praise of the victory of Thomas of Canterbury.

INTROIT.

Let us all rejoice in the Lord, and celebrate this festival in honour of Blessed Thomas the Martyr: for whose martyrdom the Angels rejoice, and praise the Son of God.

Gaudeamus omnes in Domino, diem festum celebrantes sub honore beati Thomæ Martyris: de cujus passione gaudent Angeli, et collaudant Filium Dei.

Ps. Exsultate justi in Domino ; rectos decet collaudatio. *V.* Gloria Patri. Gaudeamus.

Ps. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye just ; praise becometh the upright. *V.* Glory, &c. Let us, &c.

In the Collect, the holy Church emphasises the merit of the glorious Martyr, by saying, that it was for the very Spouse of the Son of God that he shed his blood. After this, she expresses the special confidence she has in his intercession.

COLLECT.

Deus, pro cujus Ecclesia, gloriosus Pontifex Thomas gladiis impiorum occubuit ; præsta quæsumus : ut omnes, qui ejus implorant auxilium, petitionis suæ salutarem consequantur effectum. Per Dominum.

O God, in defence of whose Church the glorious Pontiff Thomas fell by the swords of wicked men : grant, we beseech thee, that all who implore his assistance, may find comfort in the grant of their petition. Through, &c.

If the Commemorations of the four Octaves are to be made, they will be found in the Mass of Holy Innocents, page 314.

EPISTLE.

Lectio Epistolæ beati Pauli Apostoli ad Hebræos.

Cap. V.

Fratres : Omnis pontifex ex hominibus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur in iis, quæ sunt ad Deum, ut offerat dona et sacrificia pro peccatis : qui condolare possit iis, qui ignorant et errant : quoniam et ipse circumdatus est infirmitate : et propterea debet, quemadmodum pro populo, ita etiam

Lesson of the Epistle of Saint Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews.

Ch. V.

Brethren : Every High-Priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things, that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins : who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err : because he himself, also, is compassed with infirmity : and therefore he ought, as for

the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. Neither doth any man take the honour to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was. So, also, Christ did not glorify himself that he might be made a High-Priest: but he that said to him: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. As he saith, also, in another place: Thou art a Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech.

et pro semetipso offerre pro peccatis. Nec quisquam sumat sibi honorem, sed qui vocatur a Deo, tamquam Aaron. Sic et Christus non semetipsum clarificavit ut Pontifex fieret: sed qui locatus est ad eum: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te. Quemadmodum et in alio loco dicit: Tu es Sacerdos in æternum, secundum ordinem Melchisedech.

When we meet, in the Annals of the Church, with the names of those great Bishops, who have been the glory of the Christian Pontificate, we are at once sure, that these men, the true images of the great High-Priest Jesus our Lord, did not intrude themselves, *uncalled*, into the dread honours of the Sanctuary. The history of their Lives shows us, that they were *called* by God himself, *as Aaron was*: and when we come to examine, how it was that they were so great—we soon find, that the source of their greatness was their humility, that led them to refuse the honourable burden, which others would put upon them. God assisted them in the day of trouble and trial, because their exaltation to the episcopacy had been his own work.

Thus was it with St. Thomas, who sat on his episcopal throne of Canterbury, the dignified and courageous Primate. He began by declining the high honour that was offered him. He boldly tells the King, (as St. Gregory the Seventh, before ascending the Papal Throne, told the Emperor who fain would see him Pope,) that, if forced to accept the proffered dignity, he is determined to oppose abuses. He thought by this to frighten men from putting him into the honours and responsibilities of the Pastoral charge, and hoped that they would no longer wish him

to be a Bishop, when they suspected that he would be a true one:—but, the decree of God had gone forth, and Thomas, *called by God*, was obliged to bow down his head, and receive the holy anointing. And what a Bishop he, that begins by humility, and the determination to sacrifice his very life in the discharge of his duty! He is worthy to follow, and that to Calvary, the God-Man, who, being *called*, by his Father, to Priesthood and to Sacrifice, enters this world, saying: *Behold! I come to do thy will, O God!*¹

The Gradual, in its first Versicle, applies to St. Thomas, the encomium given by the Sacred Scripture to Abraham. These words, which speak the praises of one, who surpassed all others in merit, are singularly applicable to our illustrious Martyr, whose glory exceeds that of most other holy Bishops, whose memory is celebrated by the Church.

The Alleluia-Verse repeats the words of our Saviour, in which he declares himself to be *the Good Shepherd*. Why does the Church use them on this Feast? She would, thereby, tell us, that St. Thomas was a faithful representation of Him, whom St. Peter calls *the Prince of Pastors*.²

GRADUAL.

Ecce Sacerdos magnus,
qui in diebus suis placuit
Deo.

Ÿ. Non est inventus similis illi, qui conservaret legem Excelsi.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. Ego sum Pastor bonus: et cognosco oves meas, et cognoscunt me meæ. Alleluia.

Behold a great Prelate, who in his days pleased God.

Ÿ. There was none found like him in keeping the law of the Most High.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. I am the Good Shepherd: and I know my sheep, and my sheep know me. Alleluia.

¹ Heb. x. 9.

² I. St. Pet. v. 4.

GOSPEL.

Sequel of the holy Gospel
according to John.

Ch. X.

At that time : Jesus said to the Pharisees : I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth : and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep ; and the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling, and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd : and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father ; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold : them, also, I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.

Sequentia sancti Evangelii
secundum Joannem.

Cap. X.

In illo tempore : Dixit Jesus Pharisæis : Ego sum Pastor bonus. Bonus pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis. Mercenarius autem, et qui non est pastor, cujus non sunt oves propriæ, videt lupum venientem, et dimittit oves, et fugit ; et lupus rapit, et dispergit oves : mercenarius autem fugit, quia mercenarius est, et non pertinet ad eum de ovibus. Ego sum Pastor bonus : et cognosco oves meas, et cognoscunt me meæ. Sicut novit me Pater, et ego agnosco Patrem : et animam meam pono pro ovibus meis. Et alias oves habeo, quæ non sunt ex hoc ovili : et illas oportet me adducere, et vocem meam audient, et fiet unum ovile et unus Pastor.

All the strength of the Pontiffs and Pastors of the Church consists in their imitation of Jesus. It is not enough, that they have in them the character of his Priesthood ; they must, also, be ready, like Him, to lay down their lives for their sheep. The Shepherd who thinks more of his own life than of the salvation of his flock, is a hireling—he is not a shepherd : he loves himself, and not his sheep. His flock has a claim upon his shedding his blood for them ; and if he will not, he is no longer an image of the Good Shepherd, Jesus. See how calmly St. Thomas lays down his life ! He bows down his head to

receive the blows of his executioners, as though he were simply acquitting himself of a duty, or paying a debt. After the example of Jesus, he gives his blood for the deliverance of his people; and no sooner has the sword done its work, than the Church, over which God had placed him, is set free: his blood has brought peace.¹ He withstood the wolf, that threatened destruction to his flock; he vanquished him; the wolf himself was turned into a lamb, for the king visited the Tomb of his victim, and sought, in prostrate supplication, the Martyr's blessing.

Thomas *knew his sheep*, that is, he loved them; it was a happiness to him, therefore, to die for them. He was made Pastor, on the condition that he would die for them; just as our Emmanuel was made High-Priest in order that he might offer Sacrifice, in which, too, he was both Priest and Victim. Jesus' *sheep know* their divine *Shepherd*—they *know* that he came in order to save them; therefore is it, that his Birth at Bethlehem is so dear to them. The Shepherd of Canterbury, too, is also *known* by his *sheep*; and, therefore, the Feast of his triumphant martyrdom is very dear to them, not only in the century when it happened, but even now, and so will it ever be, even to the end of time. In return for this love and devotion, paid him by the Church on earth, Thomas blesses her from heaven. We cannot doubt it—the wonderful return to the ancient Faith, which we are now witnessing in our dear England, is due, in no little measure, to the powerful intercession of St. Thomas of Canterbury; and this intercession is the return, made by our glorious Martyr, for that fervent and filial devotion, which is shown him, and which the faithful will ever show to him who was so heroically, what only the true Church can produce—a true Pastor.

¹ Col. i. 20.

In the Offertory, the holy Church sings of the *crown of glory*, wherewith our Emmanuel encircled the brow of his Martyr. The Pastor gave his blood to purchase that crown; and his death gave him *life*.

OFFERTORY.

<p>Thou hast set, O Lord, on his head a crown of precious stones: he asked life of thee, and thou didst give it him, alleluia.</p>	<p>Posuisti, Domine, in capite ejus coronam de lapide pretioso: vitam petiit a te, et tribuisti ei, alleluia.</p>
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The Secret shows us that the merits of the Martyr are united with those of the Divine Victim. Whilst offering the Blood of the Lamb to the Eternal Father, we remind him of that shed by his Martyr.

SECRET.

<p>Sanctify, O Lord, the offerings consecrated to thee; and being appeased thereby, mercifully look upon us, by the intercession of blessed Thomas, thy Martyr and Bishop. Through, &c.</p>	<p>Munera tibi, Domine, dicata sanctifica: et intercedente beato Thoma, Martyre tuo atque Pontifice, per eadem nos placatus intende. Per Dominum.</p>
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In the Communion-Verse, we have our Divine Pastor Jesus speaking to us, the same that has just been giving himself to his sheep, as their food. It is by this Holy Sacrament, that the Sheep more intimately know their Shepherd, and that the Shepherd, who has just been born in the *House of Bread*, (*Bethlehem*,) receives a proof of their love to him.

COMMUNION.

<p>I am the Good Shepherd: and I know my sheep, and my sheep know me.</p>	<p>Ego sum Pastor bonus: et cognosco oves meas, et cognoscunt me meæ.</p>
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In the Postcommunion, the Church once more pronounces the name of our great Martyr. She prays

that she may obtain, through his intercession, the grace of receiving more fully, than ever, the effects of the divine Mystery, which *cleanses* our souls, and is the *remedy* of their infirmities.

POSTCOMMUNION.

Hæc nos communio, Domine, purget a crimine : et intercedente beato Thoma, Martyre tuo atque Pontifice, cœlestis remedii faciat esse participes. Per Dominum.

May this communion, O Lord, cleanse us from sin : and by the intercession of blessed Thomas, thy Martyr and Bishop, make us effectually partakers of this heavenly remedy. Through, &c.

 VESPERS.

The Second Vespers are the same as the First, given in page 321. After the Prayer of the Feast, the following Commemorations are made :

Commemoration of the Sunday.

ANT. Dum medium silentium tenerent omnia, et nox in suo cursu medium iter perageret, omnipotens sermo tuus, Domine, a regalibus sedibus venit, alleluia.

Ÿ. Verbum caro factum est, alleluia.

℞. Et habitavit in nobis, alleluia.

ANT. While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, thy Almighty Word, O Lord, came down from thy royal throne, alleluia.

Ÿ. The Word was made flesh, alleluia.

℞. And dwelt among us, alleluia.

(or)

Ÿ. Notum fecit Dominus, alleluia.

℞. Salutare suum, alleluia.

Ÿ. The Lord hath made known, alleluia.

℞. His Salvation, alleluia.

OREMUS.

Omnipotens, sempiternus Deus, dirige actus nostros in

LET US PRAY.

O Almighty and Eternal God, regulate our actions ac-

according to thy divine will : that, in the name of thy beloved Son, we may abound in good works.

beneplacito tuo : ut in nomine dilecti Filii tui mereamur bonis operibus abundare.

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

This day, Christ is born ; this day, the Saviour hath appeared ; this day, the Angels sing on earth ; the Archangels rejoice ; this day, the just exult, saying : Glory be to God in the highest, alleluia.

ANT. Hodie Christus natus est, hodie Salvator apparuit, hodie in terra canunt Angeli, lætantur Archangeli ; hodie exsultant justi, dicentes : Gloria in excelsis Deo, alleluia.

Ÿ. The Lord hath made known, alleluia.

Ÿ. Notum fecit Dominus, alleluia.

R. His Salvation, alleluia.

R. Salutare suum, alleluia.

(or)

Ÿ. All the ends of the earth have seen, alleluia.

Ÿ. Viderunt omnes fines terræ, alleluia.

R. The Salvation of our God, alleluia.

R. Salutare Dei nostri, alleluia.

LET US PRAY.

OREMUS.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who groan under the old captivity of sin, may be freed therefrom by the new birth of thine Only Begotten Son. Through the same, &c.

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem nativitas liberet, quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet. Per eundem.

As we might expect, the Liturgy of our English Church honours her beloved Martyr with an affectionate and enthusiastic homage. We copy from the ancient Salisbury Breviary several passages, and we begin with some of the Antiphons of Matins and Lauds. The whole Office is *rhymed*, according to the custom observed in the 13th century, the time when this Office of St. Thomas was composed.

Summo sacerdotio Thomas sublimatus, et in virum alium subito mutatus.

Monachus sub clerico clam ciliciatus, carnis, carne fortior, edomat conatus.

Cultor agri Domini tribulos evellit, et vulpes a vineis arcet et expellit.

Nec in agnos sustinet lupos desævire, nec in hortum olerum tineam transire.

Exulantis prædia præda sunt malignis, sed in igne positum non exurit ignis.

Satanæ satellites irrum-pentes templum, inauditum perpetrant sceleris exemplum.

Strictis Thoma sensibus obviam procedit, non minis, non gladiis, sed nec morti cedit.

Felix locus, felix ecclesia in qua Thomæ vivit memoria: Felix terra quæ dedit præsullem, felix illa quæ fovit exulem.

Granum cadit, copiam germinat frumenti: alabastrum frangitur, fragrat vis unguenti.

Totus orbis Martyris certat in amorem, cujus signa singulos agunt in stuporem.

Thomas being raised to the fulness of the Priesthood, was suddenly transformed into a new man.

A monk, wearing the hair-shirt secretly under his cleric's dress, he subdues the rebellion of his flesh, for he was not a slave to the flesh.

Husbandman of the Lord's vineyard, he roots up the brambles, and drives the foxes from the vines.

He neither suffers wolves to prowl among the lambs, nor slugs to crawl in the garden.

He is sent into exile, and his possessions made over to wicked men; but the fire of tribulation burns him not.

The satellites of Satan rush into the Temple, and perpetrate the unheard-of crime.

Thomas advances to meet the unsheathed swords: nor threats, nor swords, nor very death can make him yield.

Happy Canterbury! Happy Church that cherishes the memory of her Thomas! Happy Land that gave such a Bishop, and happy, too, the country that harboured such an exile!

The grain of wheat falls, and bringeth forth much fruit: the precious vase is broken, and perfumes all the earth!

The whole earth seeks how most to love our Martyr, and men look in wonder at each other as they hear or see the miracles that are wrought.

Our next selection is of passages equally interest-

ing, as showing the affection and confidence of the Faithful in our glorious Martyr.

ANT. The Shepherd, slain in the midst of his flock, purchaseth peace at the price of his blood. O joyful mourning, O mournful joy! The Shepherd dead, new life is in the Flock! The Mother speaks, through her tears, the praises of her Son, for still he lives, the conqueror of the sword.

R. Cease now to mourn, that the flower of the world hath been broken by the world, O sorrowing Rachel! The tomb of thy martyred Thomas gives thee back an Abel for the Abel thou didst lose.

ANT. Hail, O Thomas! sceptre of justice, light of the earth, strong champion of the Church, beloved of the people, favourite of the clergy! Hail, admirable keeper of the Flock! keep in safety all us who rejoice in thy glory.

We cannot resist adding the following Responsory from the same Salisbury Breviary. It is remarkable for its containing an entire Prose, inserted as a Verse, with the repetition of the *Cælum domo* at the end. We need scarcely draw the attention of our readers to the freshness and beauty of this liturgical gem.

R. The grain of wheat lies smothered by the chaff, the just man slain by the sword of sinners.

* Changing his house of clay for heaven.

ANT. Pastor, cæsus in gregis medio, pacem emit cruoris pretio: lætus dolor in tristi gaudio! Grex respirat, pastore mortuo: plangens plaudit mater in filio, quia vivit victor sub gladio.

R. Mundi florem a mundo conteri, Rachel plorans, jam cessa conqueri; Thomas cæsus dum datur funeri, novus Abel succedit veteri.

ANT. Salve, Thoma, virga justitiæ, mundi jubar, robur Ecclesiæ, plebis amor, cleri deliciæ. Salve, gregis tutor egregie, salva tuæ gaudentes gloriæ.

R. Jacet granum oppressum palea, justus cæsus pravorum framea.

* Cælum domo commutans lutea.

Ÿ. Cadit custos vitis in vinea, dux in castris, cultor in area.

* Cœlum domo commutans lutea.

PROSA. Clangat pastor in tuba cornea,

Ut libera sit Christi vinea,

Quam assumpsit, sub carnis trabea,

Liberavit cruce purpurea.

Adversatrix ovis erronea.

Fit pastoris cæde sanguinea.

Pavimenta Christi marmorea

Sacro madent cruore rubea.

Martyr, vitæ donatus laurea,

Velut granum purgatum palea.

In divina transfertur horrea.

* Cœlum domo commutans lutea.

Ÿ. The vine-keeper dies in his vineyard, the general in his camp, the husbandman on the place of his toil.

* Changing his house of clay for heaven.

PROSE. Let the Pastor, trumpet-tongued, cry out to men,

That Christ's vineyard must be free :

The vineyard that he took unto himself, when he clothed himself with our flesh,

And made free by the Blood he shed upon the Cross.

A lost sheep, become an enemy,

Is blood-stained by the murder of his Shepherd.

The marble pavement of Christ's sanctuary

Is purpled with the stream of holy blood.

The Martyr, decked with the laurel-crown of life,

Is, like wheat well winnowed from its chaff,

Carried into the garner-house of heaven.

* Changing his house of clay for heaven.

The Church of France, also testified, by its Liturgy, its admiration for our illustrious Martyr. Adam of Saint-Victor composed as many as three Sequences in honour of his triumph over the enemies of God. We will give two to-day, reserving the third for the Octave-Day. They breathe the warmest sympathy for the saintly Archbishop of Canterbury, and prove how dear was the Liberty of the Church to the Faithful of those days, and how the cause, for which St. Thomas was the Martyr, was then looked upon as the cause of the whole of Christendom.

1ST SEQUENCE.

Rejoice, O Sion! and be glad; in voice and heart make holiday on this joyous solemnity.

Thy Thomas, O Jesus! is slain: for thee is he immolated, as a saving host.

He is Archbishop and Legate—yet is he humble amidst all these great honours.

Steward of the Almighty King, he is sentenced to exile, for having defended his flock.

He combats with a Pastor's weapons; he is girt with the sword of the spirit; he deserved his victory.

He sought to fight and die for the law of his God, and for the flock entrusted to him.

Then did Canterbury weep to see herself left lonely without her guide, and widowed of her Shepherd.

Whilst she wept, another city was in strangest joy:—it was Sens in France, exulting in her possession of so great a man.

While he was absent, the Liberty of the Church was weakened, and being weakened, was trampled on.

Thus, dear Shepherd, didst thou leave us, nor ever didst thou turn from off the right path of justice.

There was a time when thou wast first Lord of the Court, serving as a faithful minister in the palace of a King.

Thou didst enjoy the public favour and praise—short-lived things, as they ever are.

Gaude, Sion, et lætare,
Voce, voto jocundare
Solemni lætitia.

Tuus Thomas trucidatur:
Pro te, Christe, immolatur
Salutaris hostia.

Archipræsul et legatus,
Nullo tamen est elatus
Honoris fastigio.

Dispensator summi Regis,
Pro tutela sui gregis
Damnatur exilio.

Telo certans pastorali,
Ense cinctus spiritali,
Triumphare meruit.

Hic pro Dei sui lege,
Et pro suo mori grege,
Decertare studuit.

Tunc rectore desolatam,
Et pastore viduatam,
Se plangebatur Cantua.

Versa vice, plausu miro,
Exsultavit tanto viro
Senonensis Gallia.

Quo absente infirmatur,
Infirmata conculcatur
Libertas Ecclesiæ.

Sic nos, pastor, reliquisti,
Nec a vero recessisti
Tramite justitiæ.

Quondam coetu curiali
Primus eras, et regali
Militans palatio.

Plebis aura favorali,
Et, ut mos est, temporalis
Plaudebas præconio.

Consequenter es mutatus,
Præsulatu sublimatus,
Novus homo reparatus
Felici commercio.

Ex adverso ascendisti,
Et te murum objecisti,
Caput tuum obtulisti
Christi sacrificio.

Carnis tuæ morte spreta,
Triumphalis es athleta ;
Palma tibi datur læta,
Quod testantur insueta
Plurima miracula.

Cleri gemma, clare Thoma,
Motus carnis nostræ doma
Precum efficacia.

Ut in Christo, vera vite,
Radicati, vera vite
Capiamus præmia.

Amen.

But being raised to the episcopal dignity, thy whole heart is changed. It was a happy barter of office, for it made thee a new man.

Thou didst set thyself up as a wall against iniquity : thou didst offer thy head as a sacrifice to Christ.

The death of thy body was a small thing in thy eyes, brave champion and conqueror ! Thou didst receive a splendid Palm, as thy extraordinary and numerous miracles testify.

O glorious Martyr Thomas ! thou pearl of priests, tame the rebellion of our flesh by thy powerful prayers.

That so, being rooted in the True Vine, Jesus, we may receive the solid rewards of eternal life.

Amen.

2ND SEQUENCE.

Pia mater plangat Ecclesia
Quod patravit major Brit-
tannia
Factum detestabile ;
Pietate movetur Francia ;
Fugit cœlum, tellus et maria,
Scelus, execrabile !

Scelus, inquam, non di-
cendum,
Grande scelus et horrendum
Perpetravit Anglia.
Patrem suum prædamnavit,
Et in sede trucidavit

Restitutum propria.
Thomas totius Angliæ
Flos vernans, et Ecclesiæ
Specialis gloria,
In templo Cantuariæ
Pro legibus justitiæ
Fit sacerdos et hostia.

Our loving mother the Church weeps over Britannia's hateful deed. France is moved to compassion, and Heaven, earth, and sea, turn away from the execrable crime.

Yea, England perpetrated a crime too great to tell—a heinous, horrid crime. She gave sentence against her own Father, and having restored him to his See, she slew him.

Thomas, England's fair flower—the Church's special glory—is made Priest and Victim, for the law's of justice, in Canterbury's Church.

Between the temple and the altar, on the threshold of God's House, he is struck, but is not vanquished ; it is the rending of the veil of the temple by the edge of the sword. 'Tis Eliseus made bald, 'tis Zacharias slain. The kiss of peace just given, is broken, and the voice of the organ is changed into lamentation and weeping.

'Twas the morrow of the Innocents' Feast, when this innocent victim was dragged to execution, and struck down, and his brains picked out with a sword's point. The pavement of God's House is enriched with rubies : it is sprinkled with blood, as its Priest puts on the vestment of the Passion.

The murderers are wild with rage ; the blood of the just man is condemned, and his head is split with a sword, in the very Presence of our Lord. He that celebrates the sacred rite, is himself made sacred ; the sacrificer is made the sacrifice, leaving the world this example of courage.

The Pontiff is offered up a holocaust full of marrow—the whole world is filled with its fame, and its fragrance is most sweet unto God. For the blow which cut off the top part of his head, whereon was marked the tonsure-crown, he receives a twofold robe, when the Archiepiscopal See is restored.

The Jews scoff, and Pagans laugh, and Idolaters reproach a Christian people that broke

Inter templum et altare,
Templi super liminare
Concutitur, non frangitur ;
Sed gladiis conscinditur
Velum templi medium.
Eliseus decalvatur,
Zacharias trucidatur,
Pax tradita dissolvitur,
Et organum convertitur
In lamentum fletium.

Prope festum Innocen-
tum,
Innocenter ad tormentum
Pertrahitur, concutitur,
Et cerebrum effunditur
Cuspide mucionis.
Ad decoris ornamentum,
Templi rubet pavementum,
Quod sanguine respergi-
tur,
Dum Sacerdos induitur
Veste passionis.

Furor ingens debacchatur,
Sanguis justus condemna-
tur,
Ense caput dissecatur
In conspectu Domini ;
Cum sacrabat, hic sacra-
tur,
Immolator immolatur,
Ut virtutis relinquatur
Hoc exemplum homini.
Holocaustum medulla-
tum,
Jam per orbem propalatum,
In odorem Deo gratum
Est pontifex oblatus ;
Pro corona quæ secatur
Duplex stola præparatur,
Ubi sedes restauratur
Archiepiscopatus.

Synagoga derogat, ridet
paganismus,
Insultant idolatræ, quod

Christianismus
 Fœdus violaverit,
 Nec patri pepercerit
 Christianitatis.

Rachel plorat filium, non
 vult consolari,
 Quem in matris utero vidit
 trucidari ;
 Super cujus obitum
 Dant in fletu gemitum

Mentes pietatis.

Hic est ille Pontifex,
 Quem supernus artifex
 In cœlorum culmine
 Magnum stabilivit,
 Postquam pertransivit
 Gladios Anglorum.

Cum mori non timuit,
 Sed cervicem præbuit
 In suo sanguine ;
 Ut abhinc exivit,
 Semel introivit
 In Sancta sanctorum.

Cujus mortem pretiosam
 Testantur miracula :

Christe, nobis suffragetur
 Per æterna sæcula. Amen.

the sacred vow and murdered
 a Bishop of the Christian
 Church. Rachel bewails her
 Son, nor will she be comforted,
 for she saw him murdered
 whilst in her sacred lap : and
 every feeling heart sheds o'er
 this glorious death the tears of
 its sad grief.

This is the Pontiff, who,
 after he had passed the Eng-
 lish swords, was magnified,
 in high heaven, by the su-
 preme Creator.

Not having feared to die
 and shed his blood, he left this
 world, and entered once and
 for ever into the Holy of
 Holies.

Miracles attest how precious
 was this death ; may it, O
 Jesus ! draw down thy grace
 upon us for eternity. Amen.

O glorious Martyr Thomas ! courageous defender
 of the Church of thy divine Master ! we come on
 this day of thy Feast, to do honour to the wonderful
 graces bestowed upon thee by God. As children of
 the Church, we look with delighted admiration on
 him who so loved her, and to whom the honour of
 this Spouse of Christ was so dear, that he gladly
 sacrificed his life in order to secure her independence
 and Liberty. Because thou didst so love the Church,
 as to sacrifice thy peace, thy temporal happiness, and
 thy very life, for her ; because, too, thy sacrifice was
 for nothing of thine own, but for God alone ;—there-
 fore, have the tongues of sinners and cowards spoken
 ill of thee, and heaped calumnies upon thee. O
 Martyr truly worthy of the name ! for, the testimony

thou didst render was against thine own interests. O Pastor! who, after the example of Jesus the Good Shepherd, didst shed thy blood for the deliverance of thy flock! we venerate thee, because the enemies of the Church insulted thee; we love thee, because they hated thee; and we humbly ask thee to pardon them that have been ashamed of thee, and have wished that thy Martyrdom had never been written in the History of the Church, because they could not understand it!

How great is thy glory, O faithful Pontiff! in being chosen, together with Stephen, John, and the Innocents, to attend on the Infant Jesus in the stable of Bethlehem! Thou didst enter on the battle-field at the eleventh hour; and far from being, on that account, deprived of the reward granted to the earliest of thy brother-combatants, thou art great even amongst the Martyrs. How dear must thou not be to the Divine Babe, whose Birth-Day we are keeping, and who came into the world that he might be the King of Martyrs! What will he refuse to his grand Martyr of Canterbury? Then, pray for us, and gain us admission into Bethlehem. Our ambition is to love the Church, as thou didst—that dear Church, for love of which, Jesus has come down upon the earth—that sweet Church our Mother, who is now unfolding to us such heavenly consolations, by the celebration of the great Mysteries of Christmas, with which thy name is now inseparably associated. Get us, by thy prayers, the grace of Fortitude, that so we may courageously go through any suffering, and make any sacrifice, rather than dishonour our proud title of *Catholic*.

Speak for us to the Infant Jesus—to Him that is to bear the Cross upon his shoulders, as the insignia of *his government*¹—and tell him that we are resolved,

¹ Is. ix. 6.

by the assistance of his grace, never to be ashamed of his cause, or its defenders; that, full of filial simple love for the Holy Church, which he has given us to be our Mother, we will ever put her interests above all others; for, she alone has the words of eternal life, she alone has the power and the authority to lead men to that better world, which is our last end, and passes not away, as do the things of this world; for, everything in this world is but vanity, illusion, and, more frequently than not, obstacles to the only real happiness of mankind.

But, in order that this Holy Church of God may fulfil her mission, and avoid the snares, which are being laid for her along the whole road of her earthly pilgrimage—she has need, above all things else, of Pastors like thee, O Holy Martyr of Christ! Pray, therefore, the Lord of the vineyard, that he send her labourers, who will not only plant, and water what they plant, but will also defend her from those enemies that are at all times seeking to enter in and lay waste, and whose character is marked by the sacred Scripture, where she calls them, *the wild boar*¹ and *the fox*.² May the voice of thy blood cry out more suppliantly than ever to God, for, in these days of anarchy, the Church of Christ is treated in many lands as the creature and slave of the State.

Pray for thine own dear England, which, three hundred years ago, made shipwreck of the faith through the apostacy of so many Prelates, who submitted to those usurpations, which thou didst resist even unto blood. Now that the Faith is reviving in her midst, stretch out thy helping hand to her, and thus avenge the outrages offered to thy venerable name, by thy country, when she—the once fair *Island of Saints*—was sinking into the abyss of heresy. Pray also for the Church of France, for she

¹ Ps. lxxix. 14.

² Cant. ii. 15.

harboured thee in thy exile, and, in times past, was fervent in her devotion to thee. Obtain for her Bishops the spirit that animated thee; arm them with episcopal courage, and, like thee, they will save the Liberty of the Church. Wheresoever, and in what way soever, this sacred Liberty is trampled on or threatened, do thou be its deliverer and guardian, and, by thy prayers and thine example, win victory for the Spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our new-born King is five days old to-day! Let us contemplate him seated on his Throne. The Holy Scriptures tell us,¹ that our God sitteth upon the Cherubim, in heaven: and that, under the old and Figurative Law, he chose for his throne, on earth, the Ark of the Covenant.² Blessed be his name, for thus revealing to us the mystery of his *Throne*! But, beyond this, the Psalmist told us of another place where God rested. •*Adore*, said he, *the footstool of his feet*.³ The adoration here commanded to be paid, not to God himself, but to the resting-place of his Divine Majesty, seems to contrast with so many other passages of the Sacred Volume, wherein God commands us to adore only himself. But, as the Holy Fathers observe, the mystery is now explained. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word, the Son of God, has assumed our human nature; he has united it, in unity of Person, to his Divine Nature; and he commands us to adore this his Humanity, this Body and Soul which are like our own, this Throne of his Majesty, in a word, this ineffably holy *Footstool of his Feet*.

But this Humanity itself has its Throne. The Blessed Mother, Mary, raises the Divine Infant from

¹ Is. xxxvii. 16, *and frequently elsewhere.*

² Exod. xxv. 22.

³ Ps. xcvi. 5.

the Crib; she presses him to her heart; she places him on her knees—it is our God, the Emmanuel, throned, but with such love and majesty! on the *Ark of the New Covenant*. How far is the glory of Mary above that of the other living Throne formed to the Eternal Word by the trembling wings of Cherubim! And the Ark of Moses, made of corruptible wood, covered with plates of gold, holding within it the Manna and the Rod of Aaron and the very Tables of the Law—is it not a figure that pales in the presence of the holiness and the dignity of the Mother of God?

How adorable art thou on this Throne, O Jesus! and how amiable and easy of approach! Those tiny hands stretched out to sinners, and the smile of Mary, the Living Throne—both bid us go near. Oh! the happiness of being subjects of a King, so great and yet so endearing! Mary is the *Seat of Wisdom*, because thou, O Wisdom of the Father! art reposing on her. Reign there for ever, sweet Jesus! be thou our King, and Lord, and rule us *in thy comeliness, and beauty, and meekness!*¹ We are thy subjects, and we offer thee our adoring loyalty and love; and to Mary, the Queen thou hast given us, we promise the homage of our best devotion!

We will celebrate the Birth of our Divine King to-day, in the words used by the Greek Church in her Office of Christmas Day.

EVENING OFFICE.

Nato Domino Jesu ex sacra Virgine, lucida facta sunt omnia; pastoribus enim de nocte vigilantibus, Magis adorantibus, Angelis hymnificantibus, Herodes turbabatur, quia Deus in carne apparuit Salvator animarum nostrarum.

All things were made light, when Jesus our Lord was born of the Holy Virgin; for, the Shepherds watched at night, the Magi adored, the Angels sang hymns, Herod was troubled, because God, the Saviour of our souls, had appeared.

¹ Ps. xliv. 5.

Thy Kingdom, O Christ our God! is a Kingdom of all ages, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. The Light hath shone, He that was made flesh by the Holy Ghost, and was made Man of the ever Blessed Virgin Mary. Thy coming, O Jesus, Light of Light, Brightness of the Father, hath gladdened every creature. Every spirit hath given praise to thee the image of the Father's glory; who art, and who wast before all ages, and hast shone forth from the Virgin; O God! have mercy on us.

What shall we offer unto thee, O Jesus! for that thou, for our sakes, hast been seen on earth as Man? For, every creature is subject to thee, and rendereth thee thanks: the Angels give thee their hymns, the heavens the Star, the Magi their gifts, the Shepherds their admiration, the earth a Cave, solitude a Crib, and we, we give thee thy Virgin Mother. O God, that wast before all ages! have mercy on us.

During the reign of Augustus on this earth, the various other kingdoms ceased; and when thou, O Jesus, wast made Man from thy Virginal Mother, thine own dear Lamb, the idolatrous religion of many gods was sapped. As the cities of the world were confederated under one Kingdom; so were all nations brought to the obedience of faith in one God. People were enrolled by the decree of Cæsar; and we,

Regnum tuum, Christe Deus, regnum omnium sæculorum, et dominatio tua in omni generatione et generationem. Qui caro factus est ex Spiritu Sancto et homo factus ex Maria semper virgine, lumen illuxit. Tuus adventus, Christe Deus, lumen de lumine, Patris splendor, omnem creaturam exhilaravit. Omnis spiritus laudavit characterem gloriæ Patris; qui es et ante fuisti, et illuxisti ex virgine, Deus, miserere nobis.

Quid tibi offeremus, Christe, quia visus es super terram sicut homo pro nobis? Quælibet enim creaturarum tibi submissarum ad te profert gratiarum actionem: Angeli hymnum, cœli stellam, magi dona, pastores admirationem, terra speluncam, solitudo præsepium, nos vero matrem virginem: qui es ante sæcula, Deus, miserere nobis.

Regnante Augusto super terram, hominum cessata est polyarchia, et te homine facto ex agna, idolorum debilitata est polytheia: sub uno mundano civitates factæ sunt regno, et in unam dominationem divinitatis gentes crediderunt. Inscripti sunt populi decreto Cæsaris, inscripti sumus fideles sub divinitatis nomine, te homine facto, Deus noster. Magna tua mise-

ricordia ;) Domine, gloria thy faithful, were enrolled
tibi. under the divine name of thee
our God, when thou didst be-
come Man. Glory be to thee,
O Lord! for, great is thy
mercy.

And now, a Hymn to our Lady, the *Seat of Wisdom!*
Let us offer her this beautiful one, taken from the
Cluny Missal of 1523.

SEQUENCE.

Ave, mundi spes, Maria,
Ave mitis, ave pia,
Ave, plena gratia.

Ave, Virgo singularis,
Quæ per rubum designaris
Non passum incendia.

Ave, rosa speciosa,
Ave, Jesse virgula,
Cujus fructus
Nostri luctus
Relaxavit vincula.

Ave, cujus viscera
Contra mundi fœdera,
Ediderunt filium.

Ave, carens simili,
Mundo diu flebili
Reparasti gaudium.

Ave, virginum lucerna,
Per quam fulsit lux superna
His quos unda tenuit.

Ave, Virgo de qua nasci
Et de cujus lacte pasci
Rex cœlorum voluit.

Ave, gemma, cœli lumi-
narum,
Ave, sancti Spiritus sa-
crarium.

O quam mirabilis,
Et quam laudabilis
Hæc est virginitas.

Hail Mary! sweet hope of
the world! Hail, gentle Queen!
Hail, loving Mother! Hail,
full of grace!

Hail, peerless Virgin!
imaged in the Bush that
burned, yet was not burnt.

Hail, lovely Rose! Hail,
Jesse's Rod! whose Fruit
broke the chains of our
misery.

Hail, Holy Mother! for
whom God set aside all na-
ture's laws, and made thy
virginal womb bring forth his
Son.

Hail, matchless Queen!
'twas thou didst make the long
sad world rejoice.

Hail, Beacon of Virgins!
pouring out thy celestial light
on them whom tempests toss.

Hail, Virgin! of whom the
King of heaven would be born,
and suck the food whereon he
deigned to live.

Hail, Pearl! Hail Heavenly
Orb!

Hail, Temple of the Holy
Ghost!

Oh! how wonderful and
how venerable is this Virgi-
nity!

In it, shone forth a fruitfulness produced by the Holy Paraclete.

And she, the Virgin, how holy! how peaceful! how kind! how lovely must we deem her!

By the gift she gave us, slavery was abolished, the gate of heaven was opened, and liberty brought back again.

O Lily of purity! pray for us to thy Son, the Saviour of the humble,

That in the awful judgment, he may not sentence us to torments for our sins;

But, moved by thy holy prayers, may he cleanse us from the dross of sin,

And admit us into mansions of eternal light.

Amen! let every Christian say, Amen!

In qua per Spiritum
Facta Paraclitum
Fulsit fœcunditas!

O quam sancta!
Quam serena!
Quam benigna!
Esse virgo creditur!
Quam amœna.

Per quam servitus finitur,
Porta cœli aperitur,
Et libertas redditur.

O castitatis lilium,
Tuum precare filium,
Qui salus est humilium.

Ne nos pro nostro vitio,
In flebili iudicio,
Subjiciat supplicio.

Sed nos tua sancta prece,
Mundans a peccati fœce,

Collocet in lucis domo.

Amen dicat omnis homo.

DECEMBER 30.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF
CHRISTMAS,

OR THE SIXTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE.

(When the 30th of December does not fall on a Sunday, it is called "the Sixth Day within the Octave," and the 3rd Mass of Christmas Day is repeated, page 225; excepting only the Epistle and Gospel, which are taken from the 2nd Mass, pages 214, 215.)

This is the only day, within the Christmas Octave, which is not a Saint's Feast. During the Octaves of the Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost, the Church is so absorbed in the respective mysteries, that she puts off everything that could share her attention; whereas, during this of Christmas, there is only one day which does not celebrate the memory of some glorious Saint, and our Infant Jesus is surrounded by a choir of heroes who loved and served him. Thus, the Church, or, more correctly, God—for God is the first author of the Cycle of the Year—shows us how the Incarnate Word, who came to save mankind, desires to give mankind confidence by this his adorable familiarity.

We have already shown that the Birth of our Lord took place on a Sunday, the Day on which, in the beginning of the world, God created Light. We shall find, later on, that his Resurrection, also, was on a Sunday. This the first day of creation, and the first of the week, was consecrated, by the old Pagans, to

the Sun : with us Christians, it is most sacred and holy, on account of the two risings of our divine Sun of Justice—his Birth and his Resurrection. Whilst the solemnity of Easter is always kept on a Sunday, that of Christmas falls, by turns, on each of the days of the week—we have already had this difference explained to us by the Holy Fathers:—but, the mystery of Jesus' Birth is more aptly and strongly expressed, when its anniversary falls on a Sunday. Other years, when the coincidence does not happen, the Faithful will, at least, be led by their Christian instincts, to give especial honour to the Day, *within the Octave*, which falls on the Sunday. The Church has honoured it with a proper Mass and Office, and we of course insert them.

MASS.

It was at Midnight, that the Lord delivered his people from bondage, by the *Passage* of his destroying Angel over the land of the Egyptians: so, also, was it in the still hour of midnight, that Jesus, *the Angel of the Great Counsel*, came down from his royal throne, bringing mercy to our earth. It is just, that whilst commemorating this second *Passage*, the Church should sing the praises of her Emmanuel, who comes, clad in his *strength* and *beauty*, to take possession of his Kingdom.

INTROIT.

While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, thy Almighty Word, O Lord, came down from thy royal throne.

Ps. The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty : the

Dum medium silentium tenerent omnia, et nox in suo cursu medium iter haberet, omnipotens sermo tuus, Domine, de cœlis, a regalibus sedibus venit.

Ps. Dominus regnavit, decorem indutus est : indutus

est Dominus fortitudinem,
et præcinxit se. *V.* Gloria
Patri. Dum medium.

Lord is clothed with strength,
and hath girded himself. *V.*
Glory, &c. While all.

In the Collect, the Church prays to be directed by that divine rule, which was taught us by our Saviour, the Sun of Justice, who shone upon us in order to enlighten and guide our steps in the path of good works.

COLLECT.

Omnipotens, sempiterne
Deus, dirige actus nostros
in beneplacito tuo : ut in
nomine dilecti Filii tui me-
reamur bonis operibus abun-
dare. Qui tecum.

O Almighty and Eternal
God, regulate our actions ac-
cording to thy divine will :
that, in the name of thy be-
loved Son, we may abound in
good works. Who liveth, &c.

The Commemorations of the Octaves of Christmas, &c., are given in page 315 : that of St. Thomas of Canterbury, in page 352.

EPISTLE.

Lectio Epistolæ beati Pauli
Apostoli ad Galatas.

Lesson of the Epistle of Saint
Paul the Apostle to the Ga-
latians.

Cap. IV.

Ch. IV.

Fratres, quanto tempore
hæres parvulus est, nihil
differt a servo, cum sit do-
minus omnium : sed sub
tutoribus et actoribus est
usque ad præfinitum tem-
pus a patre : ita et nos, cum
essemus parvuli, sub cle-
mentis mundi eramus ser-
vientes. At ubi venit pleni-
tudo temporis, misit Deus
Filium suum factum ex
muliere, factum sub lege,
ut eos, qui sub lege erant,
redimeret, ut adoptionem

Brethren : As long as the
heir is a child, he differeth
nothing from a servant, though
he be lord of all : but is under
tutors and governors, until the
time appointed by the father :
so we, also, when we were
children, were serving under
the elements of the world.
But when the fulness of the
time was come, God sent his
Son, made of a woman, made
under the law, that he might
redeem them who were under
the law, that we might receive

the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Therefore, now he is not a servant, but a son. And if a son, an heir, also, through God.

filiorum reciperemus. Quoniam autem estis filii, misit Deus Spiritum Filii sui in corda vestra, clamantem: Abba, Pater. Itaque, jam non est servus, sed filius. Quod si filius: et hæres per Deum.

The Child that is born of Mary and is couched in the Crib at Bethlehem, raises his feeble voice to the Eternal Father, and calls him, *My Father!* He turns towards us, and calls us, *My Brethren!* We, consequently, when we speak to his Father, may call him, *Our Father!* This is the mystery of Adoption, revealed to us by the great event we are solemnising. All things are changed, both in heaven and on earth: God has not only one Son, he has many Sons; henceforth, we stand before this our God, not merely creatures drawn out of nothing by his power, but Children that he fondly loves. Heaven is now, not only the throne of his sovereign Majesty, it is become our inheritance, in which we are joint-heirs with our Brother Jesus, the Son of Mary, Son of Eve, Son of Adam, according to his Human Nature, and (in the unity of Person) Son of God according to his Divine Nature. Let us turn our wondering and loving thoughts, first to this sweet Babe, that has brought us all these blessings, and then to the blessings themselves, to the dear inheritance made ours by Him. Let our mind be seized with astonishment at creatures having such a destiny! and then, let our heart pour out its thanks for the incomprehensible gift!

GRADUAL.

Thou art beautiful above the sons of men: grace is poured abroad in thy lips.

Ÿ. My heart hath uttered a good word; I speak my works

Speciosus forma præ filiis hominum: diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis.

Ÿ. Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum; dico ego

opera mea Regi : lingua mea calamus scribæ velociter scribentis.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. Dominus regnavit, decorem induit : induit Dominus fortitudinem, et præcinxit se virtute. Alleluia.

to the King : my tongue is the pen of a scrivener, that writeth swiftly.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. The Lord hath reigned : he hath clothed himself with beauty : he hath clothed himself with strength, and armed himself with might. Alleluia.

GOSPEL.

Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Lucam.

Cap. II.

In illo tempore : Erat Joseph, et Maria, mater Jesu, mirantes super his quæ dicebantur de illo. Et benedixit illis Simeon, et dixit ad Mariam matrem ejus : Ecce positus est hic in ruinam et in resurrectionem multorum in Israel : et in signum cui contradicetur : et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius, ut revelentur ex multis cordibus cogitationes. Et erat Anna Prophetissa, filia Phanuel, de tribu Aser. Hæc processerat in diebus multis, et vixerat cum viro suo annis septem a virginitate sua. Et hæc vidua usque ad annos octoginta quatuor : quæ non discedebat de templo, jejuniis et obsecrationibus serviens nocte ac die. Et hæc, ipsa hora superveniens, confitebatur Domino, et loquebatur de illo omnibus, qui exspectabant redemptionem Israel. Et ut perfecerunt omnia secundum legem Domini, reversi

Sequel of the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Ch. II.

At that time : Joseph, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, were wondering at those things, which were spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his Mother : Behold, the Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel : and for a sign, which shall be contradicted : and thine own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a Prophetess, the Daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asar : she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years : who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving day and night. Now she, at the same hour, coming in, confessed to the Lord, and spoke of him, to all that looked for the redemption of Israel. And after they had performed all things according to the law of

the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their city, Nazareth. And the Child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom : and the grace of God was in him.

sunt in Galilæam, in civitatem suam Nazareth. Puer autem crescebat, et confortabatur, plenus sapientia : et gratia Dei erat in illo.

The passage of the Gospel selected for this Mass, though bearing on the Divine Infancy, yet gives us, and we may almost say prematurely, the terrible prophecy of Simeon regarding the dear Babe of Bethlehem. The heart of Mary, that was overflowing with joy at the miraculous Birth of her Child, is here made to feel the *sword* spoken of by the venerable Priest of the temple. Her Son, then, is to be but *a sign that shall be contradicted!* The mystery of man's being adopted by God is to cost this Child of hers his life!—We that are the *Redeemed in his Blood*, we may not yet dwell on the fatigues and the Passion and the Death of our Emmanuel ; the time will come for that ; at present, we are forbidden to think of Him other than the sweet Child that is born to us, and the source of all our happiness, by his having come among us. Let us catch up the words of Anna, who calls him *the Redemption of Israel*. Let our eye delight in the sight of the earth regenerated by the birth of its Saviour. Let us admire and study well this Jesus newly born among us, and adore, in humble love, the wisdom and grace that are in him.

During the Offertory, the Church celebrates the wonderful renovation wrought in the world, a renovation which saved it from destruction. She sings the praises of the great God who came down into the poor Stable of Bethlehem, yet left not his eternal throne.

OFFERTORY.

God hath established the world, which shall not be
Deus firmavit orbem terræ, qui non commovebitur ;

parata sedes tua, Deus, ex
tunc : a seculo tu es.

moved ; thy throne, O God, is
prepared from of old ; thou
art from everlasting.

SECRET.

Concede, quæsumus, om-
nipotens Deus ; ut oculis
tuæ majestatis munus obla-
tum, et gratiam nobis piæ
devotionis obtineat, et effec-
tum beatæ perennitatis ac-
quirat. Per Dominum.

Grant, we beseech thee, O
Almighty God, that this sacri-
fice, offered to thy divine ma-
jesty, may obtain for us the
grace of true devotion, and a
happy eternity. Through, &c.

*The Commemorations of the four Octaves are given
above, page 319 ; that of St. Thomas, page 357.*

The words chanted by the Church at the Communion are those spoken by the Angel to St. Joseph. She has given this Divine Infant to her Faithful children in holy Communion, in order that they may carry him in their hearts, and bids them guard him against the snares laid for him by his and their enemies. Let the Christian, therefore, take heed lest Jesus should be taken from him. Let him, by strict watchfulness and by good works, crush the tyrant sin that seeks the life of the Divine Guest of his soul. It is for this reason, that, in the Postcommunion, the Church prays, that our vices may be destroyed, and our desires for a virtuous life be blessed.

COMMUNION.

Tolle puerum, et matrem
ejus, et vade in terram Is-
rael ; defuncti sunt enim qui
quærebant animam pueri.

Take the Child and his
Mother, and go into the land
of Israel : for they are dead,
who sought the life of the
Child.

POSTCOMMUNION.

Per hujus, Domine, ope-
rationem mysterii, et vitia
nostra purgentur, et justa
desideria compleantur. Per
Dominum.

May the efficacy of this sa-
crament, O Lord, cleanse us
from our sins, and obtain for
us the accomplishment of our
just desires. Through, &c.

The Commemorations of the four Octaves are given above, page 320 ; that of St. Thomas, page 358.

VESPERS.

The Antiphons and Psalms are those of Christmas Day, *pages 234-241* ; after which the Office is of St. Sylvester, Pope and Confessor.

CAPITULUM.

(*Ecclus. XLIV.*)

Behold a great Prelate, who in his days pleased God, and was found just : and in the time of wrath he was made a reconciliation.

Ecce sacerdos magnus, qui in diebus suis placuit Deo, et inventus est justus : et in tempore iracundiæ factus est reconciliatio.

HYMN.*

This Confessor of the Lord, whom the christian people,

Iste Confessor Domini, colentes

* In the Monastic Breviary it is as follows :—

R. *Breve.* Elegit eum Dominus, * Sacerdotem sibi. Elegit. V. Ad sacrificandum ei hostiam laudis. * Sacerdotem sibi. Gloria Patri. Elegit.

Iste Confessor Domini sacra-
tus
Festa plebs cujus celebrat per
orbem,
Hodie lætus meruit secreta
Scandere celi.
Qui pius, prudens, humilis,
pudicus,
Sobrius, castus fuit, et quietus,
Vita dum præsens vegetavit
ejus
Corporis artus.
Ad sacrum cujus tumulum
frequenter

Membra languentum modo sani-
tati,
Quolibet morbo fuerint gravata,
Restituuntur.
Unde nunc noster chorus in
honorem
Ipsius, hymnum canit hunc li-
benter :
Ut piis ejus meritis juvemur
Omne per ævum.
Sit salus illi, decus, atque
virtus,
Qui supra cœli residens cacu-
men,
Totius mundi machinam guber-
nat
Trinus et unus.
Amen.

Quem pie laudant populi per orbem,

Hac die lætus meruit beatas Scandere sedes.

Qui pius, prudens, humilis, pudicus,
Sobriam duxit sine labe vitam,
Donec humanos animavit auræ

Spiritus artus.

Cujus ob præstans meritum, frequenter.

Ægra, quæ passim jacuere membra,

Viribus morbi domitis, saluti

Restituuntur.

Noster hinc illi chorus obsequentem
Concinit laudem, celebresque palmas ;

Ut piis ejus precibus juvemur

Omne per ævum.

Sit salus illi, decus, atque virtus,

Qui super cœli solio coruscans,

Totius mundi seriem gubernat,

Trinus et unus.

Amen.

Ÿ. Amavit eum Dominus et ornavit eum.

R. Stolam gloriæ induit eum.

throughout the world, devoutly celebrate, merited on this day to ascend in joy to the heavenly mansions.

As long as the present life kept him in this world, he was pious, prudent, humble, modest, sober, and irreproachable.

Such were his merits, that, oftentimes, they who were sick were restored to health, by his intercession, and the virulence of disease was conquered.

Therefore is it, that our choir sings willingly his praise and his palms ; that so, by his prayers, we may be helped for all eternity.

To him, the Tri-une God, that shineth on his heavenly throne, and governs the universal world—be salvation, honour, and power !

Amen.

Ÿ. The Lord loved him and adorned him.

R. And hath clothed him with a robe of glory.

ANTIPHON OF THE *Magnificat*.

Sacerdos et Pontifex, et virtutum opifex, pastor bone in populo, ora pro nobis Dominum.

O Priest and Pontiff, and worker of virtuous deeds, good Shepherd of thy people, pray for us to the Lord.

OREMUS.

Da, quæsumus, omnipo-

LET US PRAY.

Grant, we beseech thee, O

Almighty God, that the venerable Solemnity of blessed Sylvester, thy Confessor and Bishop, may improve our devotion, and strengthen in us the hopes of salvation. Through, &c.

tens Deus, ut beati Silvestri, Confessoris tui atque Pontificis, veneranda solemnitas et devotionem nobis augeat et salutem. Per Dominum.

Commemoration of the Sunday.

ANT. The Child Jesus advanced in age and wisdom with God and men.

ANT. Puer Jesus proficibat ætate et sapientia coram Deo et hominibus.

The Prayer, as in *page 376.*

Commemoration of Christmas Day.

Page 292.

Commemoration of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Page 322.

Commemoration of St. Stephen.

Page 262.

Commemoration of St. John.

Page 291.

Commemoration of Holy Innocents.

Page 322.

On this the sixth day since the Birth of our Emmanuel, let us consider how the Divine Infant lies in the Crib of a Stable, and is warmed by the breath of the Ox and the Ass, as Isaias had foretold: *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel hath not known me.*¹ Thus does the great God enter that world, which his own hands have created! The dwellings of men are refused him, for man has a hard heart for his God, and an indifference which is a real contempt. The only shelter he can find to be born in, is a Stable; and that necessitates his coming into the world in the company of poor dumb brutes.

¹ Is. i. 3.

At all events, these animals are his own work. When he created the irrational world of living things, he subjected it, as the inferior part of creation, to Man; and Man was to ennoble it, by referring it to the Creator. When Adam sinned, this subjection, this harmony, was broken. The Apostle teaches us, that the brute creation is not insensible to the degradation thus forced upon it by sinful Man.¹ It obeys him with reluctance; it not unfrequently rebels against and deservedly punishes him; and on the day of judgment, it will take the side of its Creator, and avenge itself of that wickedness, of which Man has made it the unwilling instrument.²

In the mystery of his Birth, the Son of God visits this part of his creation; men refused to receive him, and he accepts the hospitality of the dwelling of brutes. It is from their dwelling that he begins the divine career of the Three-and-Thirty years. The first human beings he invites into the company of his blessed Mother and his dear St. Joseph, the first he admits into the Stable to see and adore himself, are Shepherds, who were busy watching their flocks, and whose simple hearts have not been corrupted by the atmosphere of cities.

The Ox—which, as we learn from Ezechiel³ and St. John,⁴ is one of the symbolic creatures standing round God's throne—is the figure of the sacrifices of the Old Law. The blood of oxen has flowed in torrents upon the altar of the Temple: it was the imperfect and material offering prescribed to be made to God, until he should send the True Victim. The Infant Jesus, who lies in the Crib, is that Victim, and St. Paul tells us what he says to his Eternal Father: *Sacrifices, and Oblations, and Holocausts for sin, thou wouldst not have, neither are they pleasing to thee; behold, I come!*⁵

¹ Rom. viii. 19, 20.

² Wisd. v. 21.

³ Ezech. i. 10.

⁴ Apoc. iv. 7.

⁵ Heb. x. 8, 9.

The Prophet Zachary,¹ foretelling the peaceful triumph of *the Meek King*, says that he will make his entry into Sion *riding upon an Ass*. We shall assist, further on in the year, at the accomplishment of this prophecy. Now that we are at Bethlehem, in our Christmas mystery, let us observe how the heavenly Father places his Divine Son between the instrument of his peaceful triumph, and the symbol of his Sacrifice on Calvary.

Ah! dear Jesus! Creator of heaven and earth—how strange is this thy entrance into thine own world! The whole universe should have given thee a welcome of love and adoration—and yet, what motionless indifference! Not one house to take thee in! Men buried in sleep! And when Mary had placed thee in the Crib, thy first sight was that of two poor animals, the slaves of him who proudly rejected thee! Yet, this sight did not displease thee—for, thou dost not despise the work of thy hands. What afflicts thy loving Heart, is the presence of sin in our souls, the sight of that enemy of thine, which has so often caused thee to suffer. Oh! hateful sin! we renounce it, and wish, dear Jesus, to acknowledge thee for our *Lord* and *Master*, as did the Ox and the Ass. We will unite in that hymn of praise, which creation is ever sending up to thee, by henceforth adding to it the homage of our adoration and gratitude; nay, we will lend speech to nature, and give it soul, and sanctify it, by referring all creatures to thy service.

The following Prose is the composition of Adam of Saint-Victor, and is one of the most mystical of the Sequences in the Missals of the Middle-Ages. It will serve us as a further tribute of praise to the Divine Infant.

¹ Zach. ix. 9, *quoted by St. Matth. xxi. 5.*

SEQUENCE.

Splendor Patris et figura,
Se conformans homini,

Potestate, non natura,
Partum dedit virgini.

Adam vetus,
Tandem lætus,
Novum promat canticum ;
Fugitivus,
Et captivus,
Prodeat in publicum.
Eva luctum,
Vitæ fructum
Virgo gaudens edidit.

Nec sigillum,
Propter illum,
Castitatis perdidit.
Si crystallus sit humecta,
Atque soli sit objecta,
Scintillat igniculum :
Nec crystallus rumpitur,
Nec in partu solvitur
Pudoris signaculum.

Super tali genitura,
Stupet usus et natura,
Deficitque ratio.

Res est ineffabilis :
Tam pia, tam humilis
Christi generatio.

Frondem, florem, nucem
sicca
Virga profert, et pudica
Virgo Dei Filium.

Fert cœlestem
Vellus rorem,
Creatura creatorem,
Creaturæ pretium.

Frondis, floris,
Nucis, roris ;

He that is *the brightness* of
the Father, and his *figure*,
taking to himself the likeness
and nature of man,

Gave fruitfulness to the
Virgin, who became Mother,
not by nature, but by his di-
vine power.

The old Adam is at length
made glad, and may sing a
new canticle ;

And he that was a fugitive
and captive, may now come
before the world.

Eve brought forth sadness
to mankind ; Mary, the glad
Virgin, brought forth the
Fruit of Life.

Neither did she thereby lose
the treasure of virginity.

Hold a dew-wet crystal up
to the sun ; the spark glitters
through,

Yet breaks not the crystal :
so in the Birth of Jesus, it
injured naught of the Mo-
ther's purity.

Law and Nature stood won-
dering at that divine Birth,
and reason was confounded.

Yea, the Birth of Christ is
an ineffable mystery—so full
of love, and so humble !

Aaron's sapless Branch
yields leaf and flower and
almond : so does the chaste
Virgin her Child, the Son of
God.

Gedeon's Fleece bears the
dew from heaven ; the crea-
ture bears the creature's ran-
som—the Creator.

The Leaf and Flower, the
Almond and the Dew, are

mystic emblems of our Saviour's love.

Jesus is the Leaf, that shades us ; the sweet Flower, that regales us ; the Almond-Nut, that feeds us ; the Dew, that waters us with heavenly grace.

Why is it, that the Virgin's Delivery should be a stumbling-block to the Jews? Have they forgotten the dry Branch of Aaron, how it bore the Almonds ?

Let us once more contemplate the Almond-Nut ; for, viewed in its true light, it is the mystic emblem of Him that is the Light.

It unites in itself three things, and all three it gives to man : unction, light, and food.

Jesus is the Almond-Nut. The rind is the cross and passion he endured in the Flesh : the shell is his Body—his Flesh and Bones.

The Divinity and the sweetness of Jesus, which are sheathed within the Flesh, are figured by the kernel.

Jesus is Light to the blind, and unction to the sick, and soothing to holy souls.

O how sweet a Sacrament ! He changes his Flesh, that lies as hay in the manger, into the Wheat of the Elect.

Give us, O Jesus ! whom thou now feedest with thyself under the Sacramental veils, to be satiated with the sight of thy holy Face in heaven.

O Brightness of the Father,

Pietati Salvatoris
Congruunt mysteria.

Frons est Christus,
Protegendō ;
Flos, dulcore ;
Nux, pascendo :
Ros, cœlesti gratia.

Cur quod Virgo peperit
Est Judæis scandalum,
Cum virga produxerit
Sicca sic amygdalum ?

Contemplemur adhuc nucem :
Nam prolata nux in lucem
Lucis est mysterium.

Trinam gerens unionem,
Tria confert, unctionem,
Lumen et edulium.

Nux est Christus ; cortex
nucis,
Circa carnem poena crucis,
Testa, corpus osseum.

Carne tecta deitas,
Et Christi suavitas
Signatur per nucleum.

Lux est cæcis, et unguentum
Christus ægris, et fomentum
Piis animalibus.

O quam dulce sacramentum !
Fœnum carnis in frumentum
Convertit fidelibus.

Quos sub umbra Sacramenti,
Jesu, pascis in præsentī,
Tuo vultu satia.

Splendor, Patri cœternæ,

Nos hinc transfer ad pa-
ternæ
Claritatis gaudia.
Amen.

co-eternal with him! take us
hence to the joys of thy Fa-
ther's glory.
Amen.

We borrow from the Syrian Church the following stanzas of one of its Hymns, written by her sublime Poet, St. Ephrem, the Deacon of Edessa.

HYMN.

Quis sciret quonam tuam,
Domine, Genitricem no-
mine appellare deberet,
nemo fuit: Virginemne
diceret? at ejus in oculis
omnium prostabat natus:
Nuptamne affirmaret? at
ad ejus nuptias neminem
pervenisse certum erat.

Jam si Matrem tuam
mente intelligentiaque asse-
qui nemo potest, quis te at-
tingere se posse credat? Ma-
ter tua Maria sola est, si
solam cogito, alioquin so-
ror, si cum reliquis con-
fundo feminis.

Facta tibi Mater est, et in
communi sanctarum femi-
narum choro soror quoque
et sponsa: video, ut omni-
bus illam decorasti modis,
o matris tuæ decus.

Sponsa tibi data est, ante-
quam venires; venisti, te-
que concepit, et hoc supra
naturam, sicut et illud,
quod te peperit, et Virgo
permansit.

Omnium nuptarum præ-
rogativas habuit Maria: ci-
tra viri operam viscera

By what name, O Lord
Jesus! shall we call Mary thy
Mother? A Virgin? Yet, all
eyes are on thee, her Son.
Must we call her a Spouse?
Yet, we know she was not
such as men would call a
Spouse.

And now if thy Mother ex-
ceed the mind and under-
standing of all men;—who
shall think himself able to
reach Thee, O Jesus? Mary
is thy Mother, if I think of
her as she stands alone: if I
think of her in what she has
in common with other women,
she is thy Sister.

Yea, she was made thy
Mother; and she is, too, thy
Sister and thy Spouse, in the
company of other holy women.
How truly art thou thy Mo-
ther's glory, who hast given
her every kind of glory!

She was thy Spouse, before
thou camest into the world;
and when thou didst come, she
conceived thee in a superna-
tural way, and in the same
did she give birth to thee, her-
self remaining a pure Virgin.

Mary had the prerogatives
of other mothers, without their
humiliations. She conceived

thee, but was a Virgin ; she fed thee at her breasts, but was a Virgin. It was thy bidding, O Jesus ! and at once, the purest Virgin was the perfect Mother.

She carries thee in her arms, and refreshed with the lovely sight of her Jesus, she feels no weight. She gives thee food, for thou didst will to hunger ; she gives thee drink, for thou didst will to thirst. And when she willed to press thee to her heart, thy love did temper down the burning fire of thine infinite perfection, that she might fondle thee and live.

prole, lacte implevit ubera ; te jubente, statim fons lacteus erupit e terra siti-
tiente.

Aspectu illo tuo magno recreata Mater te gestat, nec tamen ipso gravatur onere ; cibum ministrat esurire volenti, porrigit poculum tibi ipsi ultro scienti sitim. Si illi amplexari te licuit, tua istud præstitit benignitas, prunam ardentem, ne pectus ejus exuret, attemperans.

DECEMBER 31.

S A I N T S Y L V E S T E R ,
POPE AND CONFESSOR.

So far, the only ones we have seen standing round the Crib of our Jesus, have been Martyrs : Stephen, overwhelmed with the shower of stones ; John, the Martyr in heart, who survived his fiery torture ; the Holy Innocents, massacred by the sword ; Thomas, murdered in his Cathedral ;—these are the champions of Christ, who keep guard in the palace of Bethlehem. Yet, all Christians are not called to be Martyrs. Besides this countless battalion of the King's favourite soldiers, there are other troops of sainted heroes which form the heavenly army—and amongst these, there are the Confessors, who conquered the world, without shedding their blood in the combat. Though the place of honour in the service of the King, belongs to the Martyrs, yet did the Confessors fight manfully for the glory of his name and the spreading of his Kingdom. The palm is not in their hands, but they are crowned with the crown of justice, and Jesus, who gave it to them, has made it be part of his own glory that they should be near his throne.

The Church would therefore grace this glorious Christmas Octave with the name of one of her Children, who should represent, at Bethlehem, the whole class of her unmartyred Saints. She chose a Confessor—St. Sylvester : a Confessor who governed the Church of Rome, and, therefore, the universal

Church ; a Pontiff, whose reign was long and peaceful ; a Servant of Jesus Christ adorned with every virtue, who was sent to edify and guide the world immediately after those fearful combats, that had lasted for three hundred years, and in which millions of Christians had gained victory by martyrdom, under the leadership of Thirty Popes—predecessors of St. Sylvester—and they, too, all Martyrs.

So that, Sylvester is messenger of the *Peace*, which Christ came to give to the world, and of which the Angels sang on Christmas Night. He is the friend of Constantine ; he confirms the Council of Nicæa ; he organises the discipline of the Church for the new era on which she is now entering—the era of Peace. His predecessors, in the See of Peter, imaged Jesus in his sufferings ; Sylvester represented Jesus in his triumph. His appearance during this Octave reminds us, that the Divine Child who lies wrapt in swaddling-clothes, and is the object of Herod's persecution, is, notwithstanding all these humiliations, *the Prince of Peace, the Father of the world to come.*¹

Let us read the history of Sylvester's peaceful Pontificate, as related by the Church in her Breviary. The character of our work excludes purely critical discussions, and we, therefore, say nothing of the objections that have been raised against the Emperor Constantine's having received Baptism, in Rome, at the hands of St. Sylvester. It is sufficient for us to tell our readers, that the Roman tradition, regarding that event, has been adopted by the most learned men, such as Baronius, Schelstrate, Bianchini, Marangoni, Vignoli, &c.

Sylvester, a Roman by birth, and son of Rufinus, was brought up, from childhood, by the priest Cyrinus. He

Silvester Romanus, pater Ruffino, a prima ætate operam dedit Cyrino presbytero, cujus doctrinam et mores

¹ Is. ix. 6.

egregie imitatus, trigesimum annum agens, Presbyter sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ a Marcellino Pontifice creatur. Quo in munere cum omni laude clericis aliis antecelleret, in Melchiadis postea locum successit, imperatore Constantino. Cui imperatori, cum lepræ curandæ causa, sibi ex infantium sanguine, medicorum consilio, balneum parari jussisset, sancti Apostoli Petrus et Paulus in quiete apparuerunt, præcipientes ei, ut si ex lepra liberari vellet, ommissa impii balnei immanitate, Silvestrum in Soracte monte latitantem accerseret: a quo salutari lavacro recreatus, in omni ditione Romani imperii templa christiano more ædificari imperaret; sublatisque inanium deorum simulacris, vero Deo cultum adhiberet. Constantinus igitur, cœlestibus monitis obtemperans, Silvestrum diligentissime conquistum vocat: a quo, Apostolorum imagines recognoscens, baptismo sanatur, et ad tuendam propagandamque Christi religionem inflammatur.

imitated his master by his learning and a good life, and, when in his thirtieth year, was ordained Priest of the holy Roman Church, by Pope Marcellinus. He surpassed the rest of the clergy in the admirable manner wherein he performed his sacred duties, and was chosen as the successor of Pope Melchiades, under the reign of the Emperor Constantine. This Emperor, having been advised by his physicians to seek the cure of his leprosy by bathing in infants' blood, was visited in his sleep by the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. They bade him refuse the sinful remedy of the bath, if he desired to be cleansed from his leprosy, and go to Sylvester, who was then hiding on mount Soracte; that having been regenerated in the saving waters of baptism, he should give orders that Churches, after the manner of the Christians, should be built in every part of the Roman empire; and that he should destroy the idols of the false gods, and worship the true God. Constantine, therefore, obeying the heavenly admonition, caused the most diligent search to be made for Sylvester, and, when found, to be brought to him. This being done, and the Pontiff having shown Constantine the portraits of the two Apostles he had seen in his sleep, the Emperor was baptised, and healed, and became exceedingly zealous for the defence and propagation of the Christian religion.

By the persuasion of the holy Pontiff, Constantine also built several Basilicas, which he enriched with sacred images, and most princely donations and gifts: he, moreover, granted permission to the Christians publicly to erect churches, which, previously, they were forbidden to do. Two Councils were held during the reign of this Pontiff: firstly, that of Nicæa, over which presided his Legates; Constantine was present, and 318 Bishops were assembled there; the holy and Catholic faith was explained, and Arius and his followers were condemned; the Council was confirmed by Sylvester, at the request of all the Fathers assembled: the second was that of Rome, at which 284 Bishops were present, and there, again, Arius was condemned.

Sylvester also passed several decrees most useful to the Church of God. For example: That the Chrism should be blessed by a Bishop only; That the Priest should anoint the crown of the head of the person he baptised; That Deacons should wear Dalmatics in the church, and a linen ornament on the left arm; That the Sacrifice of the Altar should not be celebrated excepting on a linen veil. He laid down the length of time, during which, they who received Orders, should exercise the functions belonging to each Order, before passing to a higher grade. He made it illegal for a layman to be the

Itaque auctore Silvestro multas basilicas ædificavit, quas sacris imaginibus, donisque ac muneribus magnificentissimis exornavit, facultate etiam data Christianis, quod antea negatum erat, publice templa extruendi. Hoc Pontifice habitata sunt duo Concilia, Nicænum, ubi præsentibus ejus legatis, præsentique Constantino, et trecentis decem et octo Episcopis, sancta et catholica Fides explicata est, Ario, ejusque sectatoribus condemnatis; quam etiam Synodum confirmavit, penitentibus Concilii Patribus universis: et Romanum, in quo interfuere ducenti octoginta quatuor Episcopi, ubi iterum Arius condemnatus est.

Multa item decreta fecit Ecclesiæ Dei utilia. In his: Ut a solo Episcopo Chrisma conficeretur; Ut presbyter Chrismate baptizati summum liniret verticem; Ut Diaconi dalmaticis in Ecclesia, et palla linostima ad lævam uterentur; Ut in lineo tantum velo Sacrificium altaris conficeretur. Præscripsit tempus, omnibusque Ordinibus initiati essent, exercendi singulos ordines in Ecclesia, antequam quisque ad altiorem gradum ascenderet. Ut laicus clerico non inferret crimen. Ne clericus apud profanum judicem causam diceret. Sabbati, et Dominici diei nomi-

ne retento, reliquos hebdomadæ dies Feriarum nomine distinctos, ut jam ante in Ecclesia vocari cœperant, appellari voluit : quo significaretur quotidie clericos, abjecta cæterarum rerum cura, uni Deo prorsus vacare debere. Huic cœlesti prudentiæ, qua Ecclesiam administrabat, insignis vitæ sanctitas, et benignitas in pauperes perpetuo respondit. Quo in genere providit, ut clericis copiosis egentes conjungeret : et sacris virginibus quæ ad victum necessaria essent, suppeditarentur. Vixit in Pontificatu annos viginti unum, menses decem, diem unum. Sepultus est in cœmeterio Priscillæ, via Salaria. Fecit ordinationes septem mense Decembri, quibus creavit Presbyteros quadraginta duos, Diaconos viginti quinque, Episcopos per diversa loca sexaginta quinque.

public accuser of a cleric, and forbade a cleric to plead before a civil tribunal. The names of *Saturday* and *Sunday* were to be still used ; but all the other days of the week were to be called *Ferias*, (*Second Feria, Third Feria*, and the rest,) as the Church had already begun to call them ; hereby signifying, that the clergy should put aside all other cares, and spend every day in the undisturbed service of God. To this heavenly prudence, wherewith he governed the Church, he ever joined the most admirable holiness of life, and charity towards the poor. For instance, he arranged, that those among the clergy who had no means, should live with wealthy members of the clergy ; and, again, that everything needed for their maintenance, should be supplied to Virgins consecrated to God. He governed the Church twenty-one years, ten months, and a day. He was buried in the cemetery of Priscilla, on the Salarian Way. He seven times gave ordinations in the December month ; the number of the ordained was, forty-two Priests, twenty-five Deacons, and sixty-five Bishops for various places.

The ancient Liturgical Books of Italy had a Proper Office for St. Sylvester. We have found, in the Breviary of the old Abbatial, (now, the Collegiate) Church of St. Barbary, at Mantua, a very beautiful Office ; and from this we extract the following Antiphons and Responsories :

The storm of persecution being calmed, the religion of Christ our Lord was spread, in the Pontificate of blessed Sylvester, throughout the entire dominions of the Roman Empire.

Holily did Sylvester administer all things; he propagated the faith, and gave liberty and confidence for the preaching the Gospel in the City, the Mistress of kingdoms.

He suffered much, and it filled his life with merit; he made many rules, and they proved his wisdom.

Sylvester was a holy man, and led a life of heaven whilst on this earth: being a Pontiff of exceeding virtue, he governed the Church with heavenly prudence.

Being chosen Pontiff of God's Church, he sought a hiding place on Mount Soracte, that he might escape the cruelty of the tyrant Maxentius: there, he besought God to bless the Church, at length, with peace.

Whilst hid on the mount, the Apostles Peter and Paul admonish the Emperor to call the Pontiff: Sylvester regenerates Constantine in the saving waters of baptism, and heals him of leprosy.

Having fully instructed the Emperor Constantine in the faith of Christ, he was the first to publicly consecrate a Church, and it was the Basilica built by the Emperor: he called it *Our Saviour's*.

Sylvester, solicitous for the

Sedatis persecutionum fluctibus, beato Silvestro Pontifice, in omnem romani imperii ditionem propagatur Christi Domini religio.

Omnia pie Sylvester administravit, fidem propagavit, evangelicæque prædicationi in urbe cui regna subjiciuntur, libertatem et fiduciam dedit.

Multa sustinuit ad meritum vitæ, multa constituit ad documentum scientiæ.

Erat Sylvester vir sanctus, ac cœlestem in terris vitam præ se ferebat; ut insigni sanctitate fuit, sic cœlesti prudentia administravit Ecclesiam Dei.

Electus Dei Pontifex, tyranni Maxentii declinans immanitatem, in Soracte monte latitans, Dominum exorabat, ut pacem suam tandem daret Ecclesiæ.

Dum latitat, Apostolorum Petri et Pauli admonitu, ab imperatore Constantino vocatur, quem lepra laborantem salutari baptismi lavacro recreat ac sanat.

Constantinum Cæsarem in Christi fide plenius instruens, Augusti basilicam in Salvatoris nomine Ecclesiam primus publice consecravit.

De gloria Dei et hominum

salute sollicitus Silvester, salutaris doctrinæ præceptis populum instruens, eum a versuti serpentis dogmate, mirabiliter liberavit.

In mystico Sacerdotum numero universalem Nicænam Synodum convocans, hæreticorum machinas Spiritus Sancti virtute prostravit.

Hic est sanctus Pontifex cujus temporibus Christus pacem dedit Ecclesiæ, et romanum imperium sublimem antiquæ gloriæ apicem sacerdotis pedibus inclinavit.

O beate Pontifex, et universæ Ecclesiæ Pastor mirifice, quem Dominus in conspectu omnium gentium magnificavit et romano Cæsari celsiorem præposuit, in cœlesti gloria exsultans, ora pro nobis Dominum.

O lux et splendor coruscans, beate, Silvester sanctissime, cujus temporibus persecutionis nubes a fidei populo disjectæ sunt, et pacis tranquillitas apparuit, tuis nos precibus adjuva, ut quietis munere gaudeamus in æternum.

The Greek Church is enthusiastic in its hymns of praise to St. Sylvester. In the stanzas we extract from her Menæa, she gives to this great Pope the whole honour of the Nicene Council, and honours him as the conqueror of the Arian heresy.

glory of God and the salvation of men, instructed the people in the knowledge of saving doctrine, and delivered them, in a wonderful manner, from the errors of a wily serpent.

Convoking the General Council of Nicæa, where there was assembled a mystic number of Bishops, he subverted the machinations of heretics, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

This is the holy Pontiff, in whose day, Christ gave Peace to the Church, and the Roman Empire prostrated at the feet of a Priest the lofty summit of its ancient glory.

O blessed Pontiff, and admirable Pastor of the universal Church! whom the Lord glorified in the sight of all nations, and exalted above the Emperor of Rome; O thou, that art now exulting in heavenly glory, pray for us to our Lord.

O shining Light and Brightness, blessed and most holy Sylvester! in whose time, the clouds of persecution were scattered over the heads of the Faithful, and the calmness of peace appeared: help us by thy prayers, that we may for ever enjoy the blessing of peace.

(*In magno Vespertino, et passim.*)

Father and Hierarch, Sylvester! holily enlightened by the light of holiness! thou didst enlighten the Faithful, by thy light-giving teachings, to adore the unity of nature in the Three Persons, and didst dispel the darkness of heresies. Therefore, we, with great solemnity, joyfully hymn to-day thy glorious memory.

O Father Sylvester, that carriest God with thee! thou visible pillar of fire, that goest before the holy flock! thou shade-giving cloud, that ever leadest the faithful out of Egyptian errors by thy incomparable precepts! we venerate thy glorious and most holy memory.

O Sylvester, divinely speaking Father! by the torrent of thy prayers thou didst sink the many-headed dragon in the mire. Holy and admirable Pontiff! thou didst lead thousands of Pagans unto God, and didst humble the haughty Jews, by the astounding miracles thou didst so wisely work before their eyes. Therefore, do we honour and bless thee.

Perfect in thy obedience to the Law of God, and admirably versed in the knowledge of the inspired Scriptures, thou didst teach the truth to the heathen philosophers; thou didst lead them to confess Christ together with the Father and Spirit, and say: *Let us sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously magnified.*

Pater, hierarcha, Sylvester, sanctitatis lumine sancte illuminatus, fideles illuminasti luciferis documentis ad adorandam unitatem naturæ tripersonalem, et depulsisti hæreseon tenebras; ideoque splendide tuam hodie fulgentem memoriam gaudentes hymnificamus.

Pater Deifer, Sylvester, visibilis columna ignis sacre prægradiens sancto agmini, nubes umbrifera, educens semper fideles ex Ægypti errore tuis inerrabilibus præceptis; gloriosam ideo atque sacratissimam tuam veneramur memoriam.

Pater divinelyloquens, Sylvester, fluminibus tuarum precum multiformem luto inclusisti draconem; sacer et mirabilis, Ethnicorum ad Deum adduxisti multitudines, Hebræorum humiliasti audaciam, miracula maxima operans ante illorum oculos sapienter; ideo te honoramus et beatificamus.

Legi divinitus obediens divinæ, divineque inspiratæ Scripturæ cognitione deornatus, Ethnicorum sapientes veritatem docuisti, et Christum confiteri cum Patre et Spiritu, clamantes: Cante-mus Domino; gloriose enim magnificatus est.

Hierarcha a Deo inspiratus, ungens Sacerdotes in divino Spiritu demonstratus es, Silvester Pater, et populos illuminans, o sacerissime. Hæreseon errorem effugasti, gregem pavisti, pietatis salire faciens undas in divinæ cognitionis gramina.

Tuorum sermonum nodis omnino solvisti vanum ligamen, et ad divinam fidem errore ligatos alligasti, adaperiens, Pater, illorum mentem Sripturarum explicatione, Hierarcha beatissime.

Immobilem et æternaliter conclusum fecisti, precibus tuis, malignum, invidiosa peste infestantem eos qui ad te accedebant, o beate, qui draconibus, velut portas et pessulos, crucis sigillum imposuisti.

Supreme Pastor of the Church of Christ! thou lendest to the beauty of the holy Octave of Christmas the lustre of thy glorious merits. There thou worthily representest the countless choir of Confessors, for it was thou didst steer the bark of Peter after the three hundred years' tempest, leading her with watchful love in her first hours of calm. The pontifical Diadem, reflecting heaven in its gems, sits on thy venerable brow. The Keys of the Kingdom of heaven are in thy hands; thou openest it for the admission of the Gentiles, who embrace the faith of Christ; thou shuttest it against the Arians, in that august Council of Nicæa, where thou presidest by

Hierarcha inspired of God, Sylvester our Father! thou art shown to us as anointing Priests in the Holy Ghost, and enlightening the people, O most sacred Pontiff! Thou didst put the errors of heresy to flight, and didst feed the flock, making the waters of holiness to flow upon the pastures of souls that know God.

By thy words, which left no escape, thou didst unravel the knots of sophistry; thou didst bind to the faith them that were bound by error, opening their minds by thy interpretation of the Scriptures, most blessed Hierarch, our Father.

By thy prayers, O blessed one! thou didst for ever paralyse and imprison the wicked serpent, who sought to infect with his detestable pestilence them that approached thee: thou didst fasten down the dragons with the seal of the Cross, as with prison-gates and bolts.

thy Legates, and to which thou givest authority, by confirming it with thy apostolic approbation. The Furious storms will again soon rage against the Church, and the angry billows of heresy will beat against her; thou wilt then be in the bosom of God; but, together with St. Peter, thou wilt keep guard over the purity of the Faith of Rome. Thou wilt support Julius; thou wilt rescue Liberius; and Athanasius, aided by thy prayers, will find a shelter within the walls of Rome.

Under thy peaceful reign, christian Rome receives the reward of her long-endured persecution. She is acknowledged as Queen of Christendom, and her empire becomes the sole empire that is universal. The Son of thy pastoral zeal, Constantine, leaves the city of Romulus, which has now become the City of Peter; the Imperial majesty would be eclipsed by that greater one of the Vicar of Christ; he makes Byzantium his capital, leaving Rome to be that of the Pontiff-King. The temples of the false gods become ruins, and make room for the Christian Basilicas, in which are enshrined the Relics of the Apostles and Martyrs. In a word, the Church has triumphed over the Prince of this world, and the victory is typified by the destruction of that Dragon, which infected the air by its poisonous breath.

Honoured with all these wonderful prerogatives, saintly Vicar of Christ! forget not the Christian people, which was once thy flock. It asks thee, on this thy Feast, to make it know and love the mystery of the Birth of Jesus. By the sublime Symbol which embodies the Faith of Nicæa, and which thou didst confirm and promulgate throughout the whole Church—thou hast taught us to acknowledge this sweet Infant as *God of God, Light of Light, begotten not made, Consubstantial to the Father*. Thou biddest us to come and adore this Little Child, as *He by whom all things were made*. Holy Confessor

of Christ! vouchsafe to present us to him, as the Martyrs have done, whose Feasts have filled up the days since his Nativity. Pray to him for us, that our desires for true virtue may be fulfilled, that we may persevere in his holy love, that we may conquer the world and our passions, and at length, that we may obtain the *Crown of justice*, which is to be the reward of our Confessing him before men, and is the only object of our ambition.

Pontiff of Peace! from the abode of rest where thou now dwellest, look down upon the Church of God, surrounded as she is by implacable enemies, and beseech Jesus, the Prince of Peace, to hasten her triumph. Cast thine eye on that Rome, which is so dear to thee, and which is so faithful in her love of thee. Protect and direct her Father, King, and Pontiff. May she triumph over the wiles of political intrigue, the violence of tyranny, the craft of heretics, the perfidy of schismatics, the apathy of worldlings, and the cowardice of her own children. May she be honoured, loved, and obeyed. May the sublime dignity of the Priesthood be recognised. May the spiritual power enjoy freedom of action. May the civil authority work hand in hand with the Church. May the Kingdom of God now come, and be received throughout the whole world, and may there be but one Fold and one Shepherd.

Still watch, O holy Sylvester! over the sacred treasure of the Faith, which thou didst defend, when on earth, against every danger. May its light put out the vapours of man's proud dreams, those false and daring doctrines which mislead countless souls. May every mortal bow down his understanding to the obedience of faith in the divine Mysteries, without which all human wisdom is but folly. May Jesus, the Son of God, and Son of Mary, be King, by his Church, over the minds and hearts of all men.

Pray for Byzantium, that was once called the *New*

Rome, but which so soon became the capital of heresies, and the scene of everything that could degrade a Christian country. Pray, that the days of her deep humiliation may be shortened; that she may again see herself united with Rome; that she may honour Christ and his Vicar; that she may obey, and by her obedience be saved. May the people, misled and debased by her influence and rule, recover their dignity as men, which can only subsist when men have faith, or be regained by a return to the faith.

And lastly, O Conqueror of Satan! keep this hellish monster in the prison whither thou didst drive him; confound his pride and his schemes; let him no longer seduce the people of God's earth; but may all the children of the Church, according to the word of Peter, thy predecessor, *resist him, by the strength of their faith.*¹

Let us, on this the Seventh Day within the Christmas Octave, consider the new-born Babe wrapt in the swaddling-clothes of infancy. They are the indications of weakness; the Child that is swathed in them is helpless, and dependent on others; another's hand must loosen his bands, and until then, he is not free to move. It was in this infantine helplessness, and in the bondage of human weakness, that He, who gives life and motion to every creature, first appeared on our earth!

Let us contemplate our Blessed Lady wrapping the limbs of her Child, her God, in these swathing-bands: but who can picture to himself the respectful love wherewith she does it? She adores his humiliations—humiliations which he has taken upon himself, in order that he may sanctify every period of man's life, even that feeblest of all, infancy. So deep was the wound

¹ I. St. Pet. v. 9.

of our pride, that it needed a remedy of such exceeding efficacy as this! Can we refuse to become little children, now that He, who gives us the precept, sets us so touching an example? Sweet Jesus! we adore thee wrapped in thy Swaddling-Clothes, and our ambition is to imitate thy divine humility.

“Let not,” says the holy Abbot Gueric, “let not the eye of your faith be offended or shocked, Brethren, at these outward humble coverings. As the Mother of Jesus wrapped him in swaddling clothes, so does Grace and Wisdom, which is your spiritual mother, veil over, with certain material things, the truth of our Incarnate God, and hide, under the representation of symbolical figures, the majesty of this same Jesus. When I, Brethren, deliver to you, by my words, the Truth, (which is Jesus,) I am swathing Jesus in bands of exceeding great poverty. Happy the soul, that loves and adores not its Jesus the less because he receives him thus poorly clad! Let us, therefore, most devoutly think upon our Lord clothed in the swathing-bands, wherewith his Mother covered his infant limbs; that so, in the world of eternal happiness, we may see the glory and beauty, wherewith his Father hath clad him; and this glory is that of the Only Begotten Son of the Father.”¹

Let us once more celebrate the joyous Birth of our Jesus, making use of this ancient Prose so redolent of the piety of the ages of Faith. It is found in the old Roman-French Missals.

SEQUENCE.

Nato canunt omnia
Domino pie agamina,
Syllabatim neumata
Perstringendo organica.

Every choir devoutly sings
to the new-born King,
Melodising each word with
organ-notes.

¹ Sermon the Fifth *On our Lord's Nativity.*

Dear Holiday ! whereon the earth is filled with joy, ne'er felt before.

'Twas on this grand Night, that Angels' voices intoned the sweet *Gloria*.

A dazzling light shone at mid-night on the Shepherds.

They are tending their flocks, when suddenly they hear the divine announcement :

"Glory infinite in the heavens—and on earth, Peace :

"He that is eternal, is born of the glorious Virgin !"

Then, let the heavenly host give forth excessive jubilee,

And earth, from pole to pole, thrill with the loud melodious song.

The enemy's intolerable cruelty is crushed.

Let the whole race of men sing praise to the God now born upon the earth.

Peace is restored to the world ; let all things rejoice at the birth of the Child.

Let our *Gloria* be sung to-day with voices full and shrill, that it may echo through creation.

May He that alone rules all things—

May He that alone governs all things—

In his mercy save all kingdoms, and give them Peace.

Amen.

Hæc dies sacrata,
In qua nova sunt gaudia
Mundo plene dedita.

Hac nocte præcelsa
Intonuit et Gloria,
In voce angelica.

Fulserunt immania,
Nocte media,
Pastoribus lumina.

Dum fovent sua pecora,
Subito divina
Percipiunt monita :

Est immensa
In cœlo gloria,
Pax et in terra :

Natus alma Virgine
Qui exstat ante sæcula.

Sic ergo cœli caterva
Altissime jubila,

Ut tanto canore tremat
alta
Poli machina.

Confracta sunt imperia
Hostis crudelissima.

Humana concrepant cuncta
Deum natum in terra.

Pax in terra reddita,
Nunc lætentur omnia
Nati per exordia.

Sonet et per omnia
Hac in die gloria,
Voce clara reddita.

Solus qui tuetur omnia,

Solus qui gubernat omnia,

Ipse sua pietate salvet
omnia pacata regna.

Amen.

The saintly Abbot of Cluny, Peter the Venerable, is the author of the Hymn we will now offer to the incomparable Mother. It is full of that scriptural unction, which filled the writer's fervent soul.

SEQUENCE.

Coelum gaude, terra plau-
de,
Nemo mutus sit in laude :
Ad antiquam originem
Redit homo per Virginem.

Virgo Deum est enixa,
Unde vetus perit rixa :

Perit vetus discordia,
Succedit pax et gloria.

Tunc de cœno surgit reus,
Cum in fœno jacet Deus.

Tunc vile celat stabulum
Cœlestis escæ pabulum.

Nutrit virgo creatorem,
Ex se factum Redempto-
rem.

Latet in pueritia
Divina Sapiëntia.

Lac stilant matris ubera,
Lac fundunt nati viscera,

Dum gratiæ dulcedinem
Per assumptum dat homi-
nem.

Ergo dulci melodia
Personemus, o Maria,
Religiosis vocibus,
Et clamosis affectibus.

Salve, Virgo benedicta,
Quæ fugasti maledicta.

Salve, Mater Altissimi,
Agni Sponsa mitissimi.

Tu serpentem evicisti,
Cujus caput contrivisti,
Cum Deus ex te genitus
Ejus fuit interitus.

Rejoice ye Heavens! and be
glad, O earth! let no man
keep his lips from praise.

It was by the Virgin that
man was restored to the prime-
val state.

A Virgin brought forth our
God, and the ancient anger
ceased :

The ancient discord ceased,
and Peace and Glory came in
its stead.

Guilty man was drawn from
the mire, when God lay on his
Crib of straw.

A wretched Stable held then
within it the Food of heaven's
own gift.

The Virgin feeds the Crea-
tor—the Redeemer, who had
become her Child.

Divine Wisdom lay hid in
childhood.

The milk of the Mother's
breast fed her Jesus; her
Jesus feeds us with the milk
of his tender mercy,

Giving us the sweetness of
grace through the assuming
our human nature.

Therefore, let our sweetest
music give our *Ave Maria*,

In sacred words, and with
speaking hearts.

Hail! Virgin ever Blest,
that didst destroy the curse.

Hail! Mother of the Most
High, and Spouse of the Lamb
most meek.

Thou didst conquer the ser-
pent, and crush his head,

For the God, that was born
of thee, was the serpent's
death.

Thou art the Queen of heaven, and Reparatrix of the earth,

The loved Mother of men, and the terror of the demons of hell.

The Scriptural figures of Window, Gate, Fleece, Palace, House, Temple, and Earth—all are fulfilled in thee.

Thou art the Lily, by thy virginity; thou art the Rose, by thy martyrdom:

The Garden enclosed, the Fountain of gardens that cleanse the defilements of sin,

Purifiest them that are unclean, and bringest the dead to life.

O Queen of the Angels, and, after God, the Hope of mankind!

Thou art the couch of the King, and the Throne of God.

Thou art the Star of the East, that puttest to flight the shadows of the Western night.

Thou art the Aurora, the Sun's harbinger, and the Day that knowest not night.

Thou art Mother of the God who is our Father; thou givest life to Him who giveth life to us.

Oh! may the Holy Mother's confidence in her Son reconcile Him to us his children!

Mother of Jesus! pray for us to thy Divine Son, that he forgive us our sins,

And, after this our pardon, give us grace and glory.

Amen.

Tu cœlorum Imperatrix,
Tu terrarum reparatrix,

Ad quam suspirant homines,
Quam nequam tremunt demones.

Tu fenestra, porta, vellus,
Aula, domus, templum,
tellus:

Virginitatis liliam,
Et rosa per martyrium:

Hortus clausus, fons hor-
torum,
Sordes lavans peccatorum.
Inquinatos purificans;
Et mortuos vivificans.

Dominatrix Angelorum,
Spes, post Deum, sæculo-
rum.

Regis reclinatorium
Et deitatis solium.

Stella fulgens Orientis,
Umbras fugans Occidentis,

Aurora solis prævia,
Et dies noctis nescia.

Parens nostri tu Parentis,
Et genitrix nos gignentis.

Piæ matris fiducia,
Natos Patri concilia.

Ora Mater Deum natum,
Nostrum solvat ut reatum,

Et post concessam veni-
am,
Det gratiam et gloriam.
Amen.

The Civil Year ends to-day. At Mid-night, a New Year will begin, as the world counts time, and the

present one will sink into the abyss of eternity. It is one step further on in our lives, and brings us nearer to that *end of all things*, which St. Peter says *is at hand*.¹ The Liturgy, which begins a new Ecclesiastical Year on the First Sunday of Advent, has no special prayers, in the Roman Church, for the beginning of the Year on the First of January; but her spirit—which takes an interest in everything affecting the well-being of individuals or of society at large—her spirit is, that we should, sometime in the course of this last day of the Year, make a fervent act of thanksgiving to God, for the blessings he has bestowed upon us during the past twelve months.

Rome sets us the example. To-day, the Sovereign Pontiff goes, in state, to the *Gesù* (or, as we should call it, *Jesus' Church*), and there assists at a solemn *Te Deum*; the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament follows it, blessing, as it were, the public act of thanksgiving, and giving a pledge of blessings for the coming Year.

The only Church that has given a Liturgical expression to the sentiments, which the close of the Year inspires, is that of the Mozarabic Rite, in which there occurs the following beautiful Preface, which we gladly offer to our readers. It is part of the Mass of the Sunday, which immediately precedes the Feast of the Epiphany.

ILLATIO.

Dignum et justum est	It is meet and just, that we
nos tibi gratias agere, Do-	should give thanks to thee, O
mine sancte, Pater æterne,	Holy Lord, Eternal Father,
omnipotens Deus, per Jesum	Almighty God, through Jesus

¹ I. St. Pet. iv. 7.

Christ thy Son, our Lord ; who being, before all time, born of thee, God the Father, did, together with thee and the Holy Ghost, create all seasons, and deigned himself to be born in time, from the womb of the Virgin Mary. He, though the eternal One, established the fixed revolutions of years, through which this world runs its course, and divided the Year by regular and suitable changes of Seasons, wherewith the Sun should, in orderly variety, mark the round of the Year, as he ran the measured circuit of his course. For we, this day, dedicate, by the gifts we offer, the close of the past year, and the commencement of that which follows, unto Him, the living God, by whose mercy we have lived through the years gone bye, and are about to commence the beginning of another. Since, therefore, a sacred devotion, wherein we all share, has this Year brought us together to invoke this thy Divine Son, we pour out our humble prayers unto thee, O God, the Father ! that, whereas thou hast consecrated the present portion of the year by the Birth of this same thy Son—thou mayest vouchsafe to make this year a happy one unto us, and to give us to spend it in thy service. Fill, too, the earth with its fruits, and deliver our souls and bodies from sickness and

Christum Filium tuum, Dominum nostrum. Qui ante tempus natus ex te, Deo Patre, tecum pariter et cum Spiritu Sancto condidit tempora, dignatus est nasci et ipse sub tempore, ex utero virginis Mariæ. Qui tamen cum sit sempiternus, statutos annorum discrevit recursus, per quos evolutus deduceretur hic mundus. Distinguens annum certis atque congruentibus vicissitudinibus temporum, quibus sol certa cursus sui dimensione anni orbem inconfusa varietate distingueret. Illi etenim Deo vivo hodie et finem expleti anni, et subsequentis initium oblati muneribus dedicamus ; per quem et decursum annorum transegimus, et principium alterius inchoamus. Hunc igitur quia in annum nos ad supplicandum sancta et communis fecit devotio convenire, tibi Deus Pater, simplices fundimus preces. Ut qui in natiuitate ejusdem Filii tui præsentis temporis curricula consecrasti, præbeas nobis hunc annum habere placabilem, et dies ejus in tua transigere servitute. Terram quoque fructibus reple, animas corporaque facito morbis delictisque carere. Scandala remove, contere hostem, cohibe famem, et omnes in commune

nocivorum casuum eventus
a nostris finibus procul
exclude. Per Dominum
nostrum Jesum Christum.
Amen.

sin. Take away scandal, de-
feat our enemy, keep down
famine, and drive far from our
country all such events as
would bring evil upon her.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

JANUARY 1.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD,
AND OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS DAY.

OUR new-born King and Saviour is eight days old to-day; the Star, that guides the Magi, is advancing towards Bethlehem, and, five days hence, will be standing over the Stable where our Jesus is being nursed by his Mother. To-day, the Son of Man is to be circumcised; this first sacrifice of his innocent Flesh must honour the eighth day of his mortal life. To-day, also, a Name is to be given him—the Name will be *Jesus*, and it means *Saviour*. So that, Mysteries abound on this day: let us not pass one of them over, but honour them with all possible devotion and love.

But this Day is not exclusively devoted to the Circumcision of Jesus. The mystery of this Circumcision forms part of that other great mystery, the Incarnation and Infancy of our Saviour—a mystery on which the Church fixes her heart, not only during this Octave, but during the whole forty days of *Christmas-Tide*. Then, as regards our Lord's receiving the Name of *Jesus*, a special Feast, which we shall soon be keeping, is set apart in honour of it. There is another object, that shares the love and devotion of the Faithful, on this great Solemnity. This object is Mary, the Mother of God. The Church celebrates, to-day, the august prerogative of this divine Maternity, which was conferred on a mere creature, and which made her the co-operatrix with Jesus in the great work of man's salvation.

The holy Church of Rome used formerly to say two Masses on the first of January; one was for the Octave of Christmas Day, the other was in honour of Mary. She now unites the two intentions in one Sacrifice, in the same manner as, in the rest of this Day's Office, she unites together the acts of her adoration of the Son, and the expressions of her admiration for, and confidence in, the Mother.

The Greek Church does not wait for this Eighth Day, in order to pay her tribute of homage to Her, who has given us our Emmanuel. She consecrates to Mary the first Day after Christmas, that is, the 26th December, and calls it the *Synaxis of the Mother of God*, making the two Days one continued Feast. She is thus obliged to defer the Feast of St. Stephen to the 27th December.

But it is to-day, that we, the children of the Roman Church, must pour forth all the love of our hearts for the Virgin-Mother, and rejoice with her in the exceeding happiness she feels at having given birth to her and our Lord. During Advent, we contemplated her as pregnant with the world's salvation; we proclaimed the glory of that Ark of the New Covenant, whose chaste womb was the earthly paradise, chosen by the King of Ages for his dwelling-place. Now, she has brought him forth, the Infant-God; she adores him, Him who is her Son. She has the right to call him, *her Child*; and He, God as he is, calls her in strictest truth, *his Mother*.

Let us not be surprised, therefore, at the enthusiasm and profound respect, wherewith the Church extols the Blessed Virgin, and her prerogatives. Let us, on the contrary, be convinced, that all the praise the Church can give her, and all the devotion she can ever bear towards her, are far below what is due to her as Mother of the Incarnate God. No mortal will ever be able to describe, or even comprehend, how great a glory accrues to her from this sublime

dignity. For, as the glory of Mary comes from her being the Mother of God, one would have first to comprehend God himself, in order to measure the greatness of her dignity. It is to God, that Mary gave our human nature; it is God, whom she had as her Child; it is God, who gloried in rendering himself, inasmuch as he is Man, subject to her: hence, the true value of such a dignity, possessed by a mere creature, can only be appreciated, in proportion to our knowledge of the sovereign perfections of the great God, who thus deigns to make himself dependent upon that favoured creature. Let us, therefore, bow down in deepest adoration before the Majesty of our God; let us, therefore, acknowledge that we cannot respect, as it deserves, the extraordinary dignity of Her, whom he chose for his Mother.

The same sublime Mystery overpowers the mind from another point of view—what were the feelings of such a Mother towards such a Son? The Child she holds in her arms, and presses to her heart, is the Fruit of her virginal womb, and she loves him as her own; she loves him because she is his Mother, and a Mother loves her child as herself, nay, more than herself:—but, when she thinks upon the infinite majesty of Him, who has thus given himself to her to be the object of her love and her fond caresses—she trembles in her humility, and her soul has to turn, in order to bear up against the overwhelming truth, to the other thought of the nine months she held this Babe in her womb, and of the filial smile he gave her when her eyes first met his. These two deep-rooted feelings—of a creature that adores, and of a Mother that loves—are in Mary's heart. The being Mother of God implies all this:—and may we not well say, that no pure creature could be exalted more than she? and that in order to comprehend her dignity, we should first have to comprehend God himself? and that only God's infinite wisdom could

plan such a work, and only his infinite power accomplish it ?

A Mother of God!—It is the mystery, whose fulfilment the world, without knowing it, was awaiting for four thousand years. It is the work, which, in God's eyes, was incomparably greater than that of the creation of a million new worlds, for such a creation would cost him nothing ; he has but to speak, and all whatsoever he wills is made. But, that a creature should become Mother of God, he has had, not only to suspend the laws of nature by making a Virgin Mother, but also to put himself in a state of dependence upon the happy creature he chose for his Mother. He had to give her rights over himself, and contract the obligation of certain duties towards her. He had to make Her his Mother, and Himself her Son.

It follows from all this, that the blessings of the Incarnation, for which we are indebted to the love wherewith the Divine Word loved us, may and ought to be referred, though in an inferior degree, to Mary herself. If she be the Mother of God, it is because she consented to it, for God vouchsafed, not only to ask her consent, but, moreover, to make the coming of his Son into this world depend upon her giving it. As this his Son, the Eternal Word, spoke his FIAT over chaos, and the answer to his word was creation ; so did Mary use the same word FIAT :—*let it be done unto me,*¹ she said. God heard her word, and, immediately, the Son of God descended into her virginal womb. After God, then, it is to Mary, his ever Blessed Mother, that we are indebted for our Emmanuel.

The divine plan for the world's salvation included there being a Mother of God : and as heresy sought to deny the mystery of the Incarnation, it equally sought

¹ St. Luke, i. 38.

to deny the glorious prerogative of Mary. Nestorius asserted, that Jesus was only man; Mary, consequently was not Mother of God, but merely Mother of a Man, called Jesus. This impious doctrine roused the indignation of the Catholic world. The East and West united in proclaiming, that Jesus was God and Man, in unity of Person; and that Mary, being his Mother, was, in strict truth, "Mother of *God*."¹ This victory over Nestorianism was won at the Council of Ephesus. It was hailed by the Christians of those times with an enthusiasm of faith, which not only proved the tender love they had for the Mother of Jesus, but was sure to result in the setting up of some solemn trophy, that would perpetuate the memory of the victory. It was then that began, in both the Greek and Latin Churches, the pious custom of uniting, during Christmas, the veneration due to the Mother with the supreme worship given to the Son. The day assigned for the united commemoration varied in the several countries, but the sentiment of religion, which suggested the Feast, was one and the same throughout the entire Church.

The holy Pope Xystus 3rd ordered an immense Mosaic to be worked into the Chancel-Arch of the Church of St. Mary Major, in Rome, as a monument to the holy Mother of God. The Mosaic still exists, bearing testimony as to what was the faith held in the Fifth Century. It represents the various Scriptural types of our Lady, and the inscription of the holy Pontiff is still legible in its bold letters: XYSTUS EPISCOPUS PLEBI DEI, (*Xystus Bishop to the People of God*;) for the Saint had dedicated to the Faithful this his offering to Mary, the Mother of God.

Special Chants were also composed at Rome for the celebration of the great mystery of the Word made Man through Mary. Sublime Responsories

¹ "*Deipara*," "*Θεοτόκος*," are the respective Latin and Greek terms.

and Antiphons, accompanied by appropriate music, were written to serve the Church and her children as the expression of their faith, and they are the ones we now use. The Greek Church makes use of some of these very Antiphons for the Christmas Solemnity; so that, with regard to the mystery of the Incarnation, there is not only unity of faith, there is also oneness of devotional sentiment.

FIRST VESPERS.

The First Vespers of the Circumcision are made peculiarly solemn by the chanting of the five venerable Antiphons, to which we have just alluded. The Psalms are those which are sung at the Vespers of the Feasts of our Lady.

The *first* of these Psalms celebrates the Kingly character, the Priesthood, and the sovereign Judgeship of our Emmanuel, and implies, consequently, the wonderful dignity of Her who gave him Birth. The *second* contains the *praise* of God, who exalts the *humble*, and gives the *joys of maternity* where nature has refused them; it announces, with an air of triumph, the glories and the maternity of Mary, *Mother* of God, and *Mother* of men. The last three Psalms chant the praises of *Jerusalem*, the *City* of God—the symbol of Mary, who is *The City of God*.

ANT. O admirabile commercium! Creator generis humani animatum corpus sumens, de Virgine nasci dignatus est; et procedens homo sine semine, largitus est nobis suam deitatem.

ANT. O admirable Interchange! The Creator of mankind, assuming a living Body, deigned to be born of a Virgin; and, becoming Man without man's aid, bestowed on us his Divinity.

PSALM 109.

Dixit Dominus Domino meo: * Sede a dextris meis.

The Lord said to my Lord, *his Son*: Sit thou at my right hand, *and reign with me*.

Until, *on the day of thy last coming*, I make thy enemies thy footstool.

O Christ! the Lord, *thy Father*, will send forth the sceptre of thy power out of Sion : *from thence* rule thou in the midst of thy enemies.

With thee is the principality in the day of thy strength, in the brightness of the Saints, *for the Father hath said to thee* : From the womb, before the day-star, I begot thee.

The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent : *he hath said, speaking of thee, the God-Man* : Thou art a Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech.

Therefore, O Father! the Lord, *thy Son*, is at thy right hand : he hath broken kings, in the day of his wrath.

He shall, *also*, judge among nations ; he shall fill the ruins *of the world* : he shall crush the heads in the land of many.

He cometh now in humility ; he shall drink, in the way, of the torrent *of sufferings* : therefore, shall he lift up the head.

ANT. O admirable Interchange ! The Creator of mankind, assuming a living Body, deigned to be born of a Virgin, and, becoming Man without man's aid, bestowed on us his Divinity.

ANT. When thou wast born ineffably of the Virgin, the Scriptures were fulfilled. As dew upon Gedeon's Fleece, thou camest down to save mankind. O Lord our God ! we praise thee.

Donec ponam inimicos tuos : * scabellum pedum tuorum.

Virgam virtutis tuæ emit- tet Dominus ex Sion : * dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.

Tecum principium in die virtutis tuæ, in splendoribus sanctorum : * ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

Juravit Dominus, et non pœnitebit eum : * tu es sacerdos in æternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.

Dominus a dextris tuis : * confregit in die iræ suæ reges.

Judicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas, * conquasabit capita in terra multorum.

De terrente in via bibet : * propterea exaltabit caput.

ANT. O admirabile commercium ! Creator generis humani animatum corpus sumens, de Virgine nasci dignatus est : et procedens homo sine semine, largitus est nobis suam deitatem.

ANT. Quando natus es ineffabiliter ex Virgine, tunc impletæ sunt Scripturæ ; sicut pluvia in vellus descendisti, ut salvum faceres genus humanum : te laudamus, Deus noster.

PSALM 112.

Laudate pueri Dominum :
* laudate nomen Domini.

Sit nomen Domini benedictum : * ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum.

A solis ortu usque ad occasum : * laudabile nomen Domini.

Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus : * et super cœlos gloria ejus.

Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster qui in altis habitat : * et humilia respicit in cœlo et in terra ?

Suscitans a terra inopem : * et de stercore erigens pauperem.

Ut collocet eum cum principibus : * cum principibus populi sui.

Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo : * matrem filiorum lætantem.

ANT. Quando natus es ineffabiliter ex Virgine, tunc impletæ sunt Scripturæ ; sicut pluvia in vellus descendisti, ut salvum faceres genus humanum : te laudamus, Deus noster.

ANT. Rubum, quem videbat Moyses incombustum, conservatam agnovimus tuam laudabilem virginitatem : Dei Genitrix, intercede pro nobis.

Praise the Lord, ye children : praise ye the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord : from henceforth, now, and for ever.

From the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord is worthy of praise.

The Lord is high, above all nations ; and his glory above the heavens.

Who is as the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high : and looketh down on the low things in heaven and in earth ? *Nay, not content with this, he deigns to come down among us.*

Raising up, *from his divine Crib*, the needy, and lifting up the poor out of the dung-hill.

That he may place him with princes : with the princes of his people.

Who maketh a barren woman to dwell in a house, the joyful mother of children.

ANT. When thou wast born ineffably of the Virgin, the Scriptures were fulfilled. As dew upon Gedeon's Fleece, thou camest down to save mankind. O Lord our God ! we praise thee.

ANT. In the bush seen by Moses as burning yet unconsumed, we recognise the preservation of thy glorious Virginity. O Mother of God intercede for us.

PSALM 121.

I rejoiced at the things that were said to me : We shall go into the house of the Lord.

Our feet were standing in thy courts, O Jerusalem ! *Our heart loves and confides in thee, O Mary.*

Mary is like to Jerusalem that is built as a City ; which is compact together.

For thither did the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord : the testimony of Israel, to praise the Name of the Lord.

Because seats sat there in judgment ; seats upon the house of David ; *and Mary is of a kingly race.*

Pray ye, *through Mary*, for the things that are for the peace of Jerusalem : and may abundance be on them that love thee, *O Church of our God !*

The voice of Mary : Let peace be in thy strength, *O thou new Sion !* and abundance in thy towers.

I, *a daughter of Israel*, for the sake of my brethren and of my neighbours, spoke peace of thee.

Because of the house of the Lord our God, I have sought good things for thee.

ANT. In the Bush seen by Moses as burning yet un consumed, we recognise the preservation of thy glorious virginity. O Mother of God ! intercede for us.

ANT. The Root of Jesse hath budded ; the Star hath risen out of Jacob ; a Virgin

Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi : * In domum Domini ibimus.

Stantes erant pedes nostri : * in atriis tuis Jerusalem.

Jerusalem quæ ædificatur ut civitas : * cujus participatio ejus in idipsum.

Illuc enim ascenderunt tribus, tribus Domini : * testimonium Israel ad confitendum Nomini Domini.

Quia illic sederunt sedes in judicio : * sedes super domum David.

Rogate quæ ad pacem sunt Jerusalem : * et abundantia diligentibus te.

Fiat pax in virtute tua : * et abundantia in turribus tuis.

Propter fratres meos et proximos meos : * loquebar pacem de te.

Propter domum Domini Dei nostri : * quæsi vi bona tibi.

ANT. Rubum, quem viderrat Moyses incombustum, conservatam agnovimus tuam laudabilem virginitatem : Dei Genitrix, intercede pro nobis.

ANT. Germinavit radix Jesse ; orta est stella ex Jacob ; Virgo peperit Salvato-

rem : te laudamus, Deus
noster.

hath brought forth the Sa-
viour. O Lord our God ! we
praise thee.

PSALM 126.

Nisi Dominus ædificaverit
domum : * in vanum labora-
verunt qui ædificant eam.

Nisi Dominus custodierit
civitatem : * frustra vigilat
qui custodit eam.

Vanum est vobis ante lu-
cem surgere : * surgite post-
quam sederitis, qui mandu-
catis panem doloris.

Cum dederit dilectis suis
somnum : * ecce hæreditas
Domini, filii : merces, fructus
ventris.

Sicut sagittæ in manu po-
tentis : * ita filii excusso-
rum.

Beatus vir, qui implevit
desiderium suum ex ipsis :
* non confundetur cum lo-
quetur inimicis suis in porta.

ANT. Germinavit radix
Jesse ; orta est stella ex Ja-
cob ; Virgo peperit Salvato-
rem : te laudamus, Deus
noster.

ANT. Ecce Maria genuit
nobis Salvatorem, quem
Joannes videns exclamavit,
dicens : Ecce Agnus Dei,
ecce qui tollit peccata mundi,
alleluia.

Unless the Lord build the
House, they labour in vain
that build it.

Unless the Lord keep the
City, he watcheth in vain that
keepeth it.

It is vain for you to rise be-
fore light ; rise ye after you
have sitten, you that eat of the
bread of sorrow.

When he shall give sleep to
his beloved : behold the in-
heritance of the Lord are chil-
dren ; the reward, the fruit of
the womb.

As arrows in the hand of the
mighty, so the children of
them that have been shaken.

Blessed is the man that hath
filled his desire with them ; he
shall not be confounded when
he shall speak to his enemies
in the gate.

ANT. The Root of Jesse hath
budded ; the Star hath risen
out of Jacob ; a Virgin hath
brought forth the Saviour. O
Lord our God ! we praise thee.

ANT. Lo ! Mary hath brought
forth a Saviour unto us, whom
John seeing exclaimed : Be-
hold the Lamb of God ! Be-
hold him that taketh away the
sins of the world, alleluia.

PSALM 147.

Lauda, Jerusalem, Domi-
num : * lauda Deum tuum,
Sion.

Praise the Lord, *O Mary,*
thou true Jerusalem : O Mary,
O Sion ever holy, praise thy
God.

Because he hath strengthened *against sin* the bolts of thy gates : he hath blessed thy children within thee.

Who hath placed peace in thy borders, and filletth thee with the fat of corn, *with Jesus, who is the Bread of life.*

Who sendeth forth *by thee* his Word to the earth ; his Word runneth swiftly.

Who giveth snow like wool ; scattereth mists like ashes.

He sendeth his crystal like morsels : who shall stand before the face of his cold ?

He shall send forth his Word *by Mary*, and shall melt them : his spirit shall breathe, and the waters shall run.

Who declareth his Word to Jacob : his justices and judgments to Israel.

He hath not done in like manner to every nation ; and his judgments he hath not made manifest to them.

ANT. Lo ! Mary hath brought forth a Saviour unto us, whom John seeing exclaimed : Behold the Lamb of God ! Behold him that taketh away the sins of the world, alleluia.

Quoniam confortavit seras portarum tuarum : * benedixit filiis tuis in te.

Qui posuit fines tuos pacem, * et adipe frumenti satiat te.

Qui emittit eloquium suum terræ : * velociter currit sermo ejus.

Qui dat nivem sicut lanam : * nebulam sicut cinerem spargit.

Mittit crystallum suam sicut buccellas : * ante faciem frigoris ejus quis sustinebit ?

Emittet verbum suum, et liquefaciet ea : * flabit spiritus ejus, et fluent aquæ.

Qui annuntiat verbum suum Jacob : * justitias, et judicia sua Israel.

Non fecit taliter omni nationi : * et judicia sua non manifestavit eis.

ANT. Ecce Maria genuit nobis Salvatorem, quem Johannes videns exclamavit, dicens : Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi, alleluia.

CAPITULUM.

(*Tit. II.*)

The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us, that denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly, in this world.

Apparuit gratia Dei Salvatoris nostri omnibus hominibus, erudiens nos, ut abnegantes impietatem et sæcularia desideria, sobrie, et juste, et pie vivamus in hoc sæculo.

Then is sung the Hymn of Christmas Day, *Jesu, Redemptor omnium*, as in page 130.

Ÿ. Verbum caro factum est, alleluia.

R. Et habitavit in nobis, alleluia.

Ÿ. The Word was made flesh, alleluia.

R. And dwelt among us, alleluia.

ANTIPHON OF THE *Magnificat*.

ANT. Propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos Deus, Filium suum misit in similitudinem carnis peccati. Alleluia.

ANT. By reason of the exceeding charity wherewith God loved us, he sent us his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. Alleluia.

OREMUS.

LET US PRAY.

Deus, qui salutis æternæ, beatæ Mariæ virginitate fœcunda, humano generi præmia præstitisti: tribue, quæsumus, ut ipsam pro nobis intercedere sentiamus, per quam meruimus auctorem vitæ suscipere, Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium tuum. Qui tecum.

O God, who by the fruitful Virginité of the Blessed Mary, hast given to mankind the rewards of eternal salvation; grant, we beseech thee, that we may experience Her intercession, by whom we received the Author of Life, our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son. Who liveth, &c.

MASS.

This Station is at St. Mary's *across the Tiber*. It was but just, that this Basilica should receive such an honour, for it is the most ancient of all the Churches raised by the devotion of the Faithful of Rome, in honour of our Blessed Lady. It was consecrated in the 3rd century, by St. Callixtus, on the site of the ancient *Taberna Meritoria*, celebrated, even among the Pagans, for the fountain of Oil which sprang up in that spot, in the reign of Augustus, and flowed into the Tiber. The piety of the Christians

interpreted this as a symbol of the *Christ* that was afterwards born ; and the Basilica is sometimes called, even to this day, *Fons Olei*.

The Introit is that of the Third Mass of Christmas Day, as are also most of the portions that are chanted by the Choir. It celebrates the Birth of the Child who is born unto us, and is to-day eight days old.

INTROIT.

A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us : and the government is upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called the Angel of the great Counsel.

Ps. Sing to the Lord a new canticle : for he hath done wonderful things. *V.* Glory, &c. A Child.

Puer natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis : cujus imperium super humerum ejus ; et vocabitur nomen ejus magni Consilii Angelus.

Ps. Cantate Domino canticum novum : quia mirabilia fecit. *V.* Gloria Patri. Puer.

In the Collect, the Church celebrates the *Fruitful Virginity* of the Mother of God, and shows Mary to us as the source whence God poured out upon mankind the blessing of the Incarnation. She expresses to God himself the hopes we have in the intercession of this privileged creature.

COLLECT.

O God, who by the fruitful Virginity of Blessed Mary, hast given to mankind the rewards of eternal salvation ; grant, we beseech thee, that we may experience Her intercession, by whom we received the Author of Life, our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son. Who liveth, &c.

Deus, qui salutis æternæ, beatæ Mariæ virginitate fecunda, humano generi præmia præstitisti : tribue, quæsumus, ut ipsam pro nobis intercedere sentiamus, per quam meruimus auctorem vitæ suscipere Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium tuum. Qui tecum.

EPISTLE.

Lectio Epistolæ beati Pauli
Apostoli ad Titum.

Cap. XI.

Charissime, apparuit gratia Dei Salvatoris nostri omnibus hominibus, erudiens nos, ut abnegantes impietatem, et sæcularia desideria, sobrie et juste, et pie vivamus in hoc sæculo, exspectantes beatam spem, et adventum gloriæ magni Dei, et Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi : qui dedit semetipsum pro nobis, ut nos redimeret ab omni iniquitate et mundaret sibi populum acceptibilem, sectatorem bonorum operum. Hæc loquere et exhortare: in Christo Jesu Domino nostro.

Lesson of the Epistle of Saint
Paul the Apostle to Titus.

Ch. XI.

Dearly Beloved : The grace of God, our Saviour, hath appeared to all men, instructing us, that denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly and godly, in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ : who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works. These things speak and exhort : in Christ Jesus our Lord.

These counsels of our great Apostle, who warns the Faithful of the obligation they are under of making a good use of the present life, are most appropriate to this first day of January, which is now the beginning of the New Civil Year. Let us, therefore, renounce all worldly desires ; let us live soberly, justly, and piously, and permit nothing to distract us from the expectation of that blessedness, which is our hope. The great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who shows himself to us, in these days of his mercy, in order to instruct us—will come to us, in a second coming, in order to give us our reward. The beginning of a New Year tells us, plainly enough, that this last day is fast approaching,—let us cleanse ourselves from all iniquity, and become a people acceptable to our Redeemer, a people doing good works.

The Gradual proclaims the grand tidings of the Birth of our Jesus, and invites all nations to give

praise to him, as also to the Eternal Father, who had promised him by the Prophets, and at length sent him.

GRADUAL.

All the ends of the earth have seen the Salvation of our God : sing joyfully to the Lord, all the earth.

Ÿ. The Lord hath made known his Salvation ; he hath revealed his justice in the sight of the Gentiles.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in time past to our fathers, by the Prophets, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son. Alleluia.

Viderunt omnes fines terræ Salutare Dei nostri : jubilate Deo omnis terra.

Ÿ. Notum fecit Dominus Salutare suum : ante conspectum gentium revelavit justitiam suam.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Ÿ. Multifarie olim Deus, loquens patribus in Prophetis, novissime, diebus istis, locutus est nobis in Filio. Alleluia.

GOSPEL.

Sequel of the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Ch. II.

At that time : After eight days were accomplished, that the Child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus, which was called by the Angel, before he was conceived in the womb.

The Child is circumcised : he is, now, not only a member of the human race ; he is made, to-day, a member of God's chosen People. He subjects himself to this painful ceremony, to this symbol of one devoted to the Divine service, in order that he may fulfil all justice. He receives, at the same time, his Name :—the Name is Jesus, and it means *a Saviour*. A Saviour ! Then, he is to save us ? Yes ; and he is to save us by his Blood. Such is the divine appointment, and he has bowed down his will to it.

Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Lucam.

Cap. II.

In illo tempore : postquam consummati sunt dies octo, ut circumcideretur Puer ; vocatum est nomen ejus Jesus, quod vocatum est ab Angelo priusquam in utero conciperetur.

The Incarnate Word is upon the earth in order to offer a Sacrifice, and the Sacrifice is begun to-day. This first shedding of the Blood of the Man-God was sufficient to the fulness and perfection of a Sacrifice; but he is come to win the heart of the sinner, and that heart is so hard, that all the streams of that Precious Blood, which flow from the Cross on Calvary, will scarcely make it yield. The drops that were shed to-day would have been enough to satisfy the justice of the Eternal Father, but not to cure man's miseries, and the Babe's Heart would not be satisfied to leave us uncured. He came for man's sake, and his love for man will go to what looks like excess—he will carry out the whole meaning of his dear name—he will *be* our "Jesus," our *Saviour*.

The Offertory extols the power of our Emmanuel. Now that he is humbled by the wound of the Circumcision, it must be our delight to proclaim his power, his riches, his independence. Let us also magnify his love for us, for, it is in order to cure our wounds, that he so humbly condescends to feel their smart himself.

OFFERTORY.

Tui sunt cœli, et tua est
terra : orbem terrarum, et
plenitudinem ejus tu fun-
dasti : justitia et judicium
præparatio sedis tuæ.

Thine are the heavens, and
thine is the earth : the world,
and the fulness thereof, thou
hast founded : justice and
judgment are the preparation
of thy throne.

SECRET.

Muneribus nostris, quæ-
sumus, Domine, precibus-
que susceptis : et cœlestibus
nos munda mysteriis, et cle-
menter exaudi. Per Domi-
num.

Receive, O Lord, our offer-
ings and prayers : cleanse us
by these mysteries, and merci-
fully hear us. Through, &c.

At the Communion, the Church rejoices in the Jesus, the Saviour, who visits her, and acts up to his

sweet Name with such perfection, by redeeming the inhabitants of the whole earth. In the Postcommunion, she prays that, by the intercession of Mary, the Holy Communion may cure our hearts of their sins, that thus we may offer to God the homage of that spiritual circumcision, of which the Apostle so often speaks.

COMMUNION.

All the ends of the earth Viderunt omnes fines ter-
have seen the salvation of our ræ Salutare Dei nostri.
God.

POSTCOMMUNION.

May this communion, O Hæc nos communio, Do-
Lord, cleanse us from sin : and mine, purget a crimine : et
by the intercession of Blessed intercedente beata Virgine
Mary, the Virgin-Mother of Dei Genitrice Maria, cœles-
God, make us partakers of thy tis remedii faciat esse con-
heavenly remedy. Through, sortes. Per Dominum.
&c.

SECOND VESPERS.

The Antiphons and Psalms are the same as in First Vespers, *page 414*. The Capitulum and Hymn of yesterday are repeated ; after which are said the following :

<p>Ÿ. The Lord hath made known, alleluia.</p>	<p>Ÿ. Notum fecit Dominus, alleluia.</p>
<p>R. His salvation, alleluia.</p>	<p>R. Salutare suum, alle- luia.</p>

ANTIPHON OF THE *Magnificat*.

<p>ANT. Great is the mystery of our inheritance ! The womb of a most pure Virgin became the Temple of God. He is not defiled assuming to himself Flesh from her. All nations shall come, saying : Glory be to thee, O Lord !</p>	<p>ANT. Magnum hæredita- tis mysterium ! Templum Dei factus est uterus ne- sciens virum : non est pollu- tus ex ea carnem assumens ; omnes gentes venient, dicen- tes : Gloria tibi, Domine.</p>
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OREMUS.

LET US PRAY.

Deus, qui salutis æternæ, beatæ Mariæ virginitate fœcunda, humano generi præmia præstitisti: tribue, quæsumus, ut ipsam pro nobis intercedere sentiamus, per quam meruimus auctorem vitæ suscipere Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium tuum. Qui tecum.

O God, who by the Fruitful Virginité of the Blessed Mary, hast given to mankind the rewards of eternal salvation; grant, we beseech thee, that we may experience Her intercession, by whom we received the Author of Life, our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son. Who liveth, &c.

Commemoration of the Octave of St. Stephen.

ANT. Stephanus autem plenus gratia et fortitudine, faciebat signa magna in populo.

Ÿ. Stephanus vidit cœlos apertos.

R. Vidit et introivit: beatus homo cui cœli patebant.

ANT. But Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great signs among the people.

Ÿ. Stephen saw the heavens opened.

R. He saw and entered; blessed man, to whom the heavens opened.

PRAYER.

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui primitias Martyrum in beati Levitæ Stephani sanguine dedicasti: tribue, quæsumus, ut pro nobis intercessor existat, qui pro suis etiam persecutoribus exoravit Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium tuum. Qui tecum.

O Almighty and eternal God, who didst consecrate the first-fruits of Martyrdom in the blood of blessed Stephen the Levite; grant, we beseech thee, that he may intercede for us, who begged mercy, even for his persecutors, of our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son. Who liveth, &c.

We now give a short selection, from the Offices of this Octave of Christmas Day, which will assist the Faithful in their devotion to the Holy Mother of God. We begin with the Roman Breviary, and take from it the following Responsories of the Matins of the Circumcision.

R. Congratulamini mihi omnes qui diligitis Domi-

R. Rejoice with me all ye that love the Lord: * For

that I, when I was little *in my own eyes*, pleased the Most High, and gave birth to Him that is God and Man.

Ÿ. All generations shall call me Blessed, because God hath regarded the humility of his Handmaid. For that I.

R̄. The heart of the Virgin was strengthened, wherein at the message of the Angel, she conceived the divine mysteries. Then did she receive into her chaste womb Him, that is beautiful above all the children of men : * And She, that is Blessed forever, brought forth unto us Jesus, God and Man.

R̄. Blessed and venerable art thou, O Virgin Mary ! that wast found to be Mother of the Saviour, yet still the purest Virgin : * He was laid in the Crib, and yet filled heaven with his brightness.

Ÿ. I have heard thy hearing, and I feared ; I meditated on thy works, and I trembled : between two animals * He was laid in the Crib, and yet filled heaven with his brightness.

R̄. A purest Virgin-Mother, brought forth, without travail, * The Saviour of the world :

num : * Quia cum essem parvula, placui Altissimo, et de meis visceribus genui Deum et hominem.

Ÿ. Beatam me dicent omnes generationes, quia ancillam humilem respexit Deus. * Quia.

R̄. Confirmatum est cor Virginis, in quo divina mysteria, Angelo nuntiante, concepit : tunc speciosum forma præ filiis hominum castis suscepit visceribus : * Et benedicta in æternum, Deum nobis protulit et hominem.

R̄. Benedicta et venerabilis es, Virgo Maria, quæ sine tactu pudoris, inventa es Mater Salvatoris : * Jacebat in præsepio, et fulgebat in cælo.

Ÿ. Domine, audivi auditionem tuam et timui : consideravi opera tua et expavi : in medio duorum animalium * Jacebat in præsepio, et fulgebat in cælo.

R̄. Nesciens Mater Virgo virum, peperit sine dolore, * Salvatorem sæculorum ; ip-

sum Regem Angelorum,
sola Virgo lactabat ubere de
cœlo pleno.

Ÿ. Domus pudici pectoris
templum repente fit Dei :
intacta nesciens virum,
verbo concepit Filium : *
Salvatorem.

He, that was very King of
Angels, drank at the breast of
the Virgin-Mother the food
that heaven gave.

Ÿ. This chastest living
Dwelling becomes, in an in-
stant, God's own Temple : the
purest of Virgins conceives, at
the Angel's word, her Son : *
The Saviour.

The Greek Church, on the 26th December, (the day she consecrates to the Mother of Jesus,) pours forth to Mary her praises with her wonted profusion. We take from the Menæa the two following strophes, the former of which is also the *Benedictus*-Antiphon for the Feast of the Circumcision, in the Roman Breviary.

Mirabile mysterium de-
claratur hodie : innovantur
naturæ, Deus homo factus
est : id quod fuit permansit,
et quod non erat, assump-
sit ; non commixtionem
passus, neque divisionem.

Uvam incultam post-
quam germinasset vitis
mystica, in brachiis velut
ramusculis ferebat : Tu,
aiebat, fructus meus, tu es
vita mea, a te novi quia
quod eram adhuc sum, ô
Deus meus ; sigillum enim
virginitatis meæ videns in-
fractum, prædico te immu-
tabile Verbum caro fac-
tum ; virum non novi ; te
autem novi perniciæ solu-
torem. Casta enim sum, te
ex me egresso, sicut inve-
nisti, sic uterum meum re-
liquisti : ideo concinit om-

An admirable mystery is
this day revealed : the two
Natures are united in a new
way, God is made Man : he
remained what he was, and he
assumed what he was not, suf-
fering neither confusion nor
division.

When the mystic Vine had
produced, without human aid,
the Grape-bunch, she carried
him in her arms, as the
branches their fruit ; and she
said to him : Thou art my
Fruit, thou art my Life, and
I know from thyself, O my
God, that I am what I was :
the treasure of my virginity is
preserved, and therefore do I
confess thee to be the Immu-
table One, the Word made
Flesh. Man I know not ; but
I acknowledge thee as the
Redeemer of lost man. Thy
Birth impaired not the purity

thou gavest me, for, what I
 was when thou didst enter in-
 to my womb, that thou didst
 leave me at thy Nativity.
 Therefore is it, that every
 creature sings to me saying :
 Rejoice, O full of grace !

nis creatura ad me cla-
 mans : Gaude, gratia plena.

On this the Eighth Day since the Birth of our Emmanuel, let us consider the great mystery which the Gospel tells us was accomplished in his divine Flesh—the Circumcision. On this day, the earth sees the first-fruits of that Blood-shedding, which is to be its Redemption, and the first sufferings of that Divine Lamb, who is to atone for our sins. Let us compassionate our sweet Jesus, who meekly submits to the knife which is to put upon him the sign of a Servant of God.

Mary, who has watched over him with the most affectionate solicitude, has felt her heart sink within her, as each day brought her nearer to this hour of her Child's first suffering. She knows, that the justice of God does not necessarily require this first sacrifice, or might accept it, on account of its infinite value, for the world's salvation : and yet, the innocent Flesh of her Son must, even so early as this, be torn, and his Blood flow down his infant limbs.

What must be her affliction at seeing the preparations for this painful ceremony ! She cannot leave her Jesus—and yet, how shall she bear to see him writhe under this his first experience of suffering ? She must stay, then, and hear his sobs and heart-rending cries ; she must bear the sight of the tears of her Divine Babe, forced from him by the violence of the pain. We need St. Bonaventure to describe this wonderful mystery. “And if *he* weeps, thinkest thou his Mother could keep in her tears ? No—“ she, too, wept, and when the Babe, who was stand-

“ing on her lap, perceived her tears, he raised his
 “little hand to her mouth and face, as though he
 “would beckon to her not to weep, for it grieved
 “him to see Her weeping, whom he so tenderly
 “loved. The Mother, on her side, was touched to
 “the quick at the suffering and tears of the Babe,
 “and she consoled him by caresses and fond words;
 “and as she was quick to see his thoughts, as
 “though he had expressed them in words, she said
 “to him: *If thou wishest me to cease weeping,*
 “*weep not thou, my Child! If thou weepst, I*
 “*must weep too.* Then the Babe, from compassion
 “for the Mother, repressed his sobs, and Mary wiped
 “his eyes and her own, and put his Face to her own,
 “and gave him her Breast, and consoled him in
 “every way she could.”¹

And now, what shall we give in return to this Saviour of our souls for the Circumcision, which he has deigned to suffer, in order to show us how much he loved us? We must, according to the teaching of the Apostle, circumcise our heart from all its evil affections, its sins, and its wicked inclinations; we must begin, at once, to live that new life, of which the Infant Jesus is the sublime model. Let us thus show him our compassion for this his earliest suffering for us, and be more attentive, than we have hitherto been, to the example he sets us.

The following beautiful Sequence will assist us to praise this mystery of the Divine Infancy. We have taken it from the ancient Missals of the Church of Paris.

SEQUENCE.

Apparuit hodie
 Mira virtus gratiæ,
 Quæ Deum circumcidit.

This day, there hath been
 shown to us the wonderful
 power of grace, in the Cir-
 cumcision of the Infant-God.

¹ *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, by St. Bonaventure.

A Name of heaven's making, a Name that means Salvation—and it is "Jesus"—is given to him.

This Name imports Salvation to man : it is the Name which the mouth of the Lord hath uttered from eternity.

The Angel revealed it, months ago, to the Mother of God, and to her holy spouse.

Sacred name ! thou conquerest Satan's wicked power, and the sins of the world.

"Jesus," our ransom !
"Jesus," hope of the afflicted !
our souls are sick—do thou heal them.

What is wanting in man, supply by thy Name, which means and gives salvation.

May thy Circumcision be the cleansing and the healing of our heart's wounds.

May the Blood thou didst shed purify our stains, refresh our parched hearts, and give consolation to the sad.

We are beginning now a New Year, when friends give Gifts to friends ; let thine, dear "Jesus," be the preparing us our recompense.

Amen.

Nomen ei cœlicum,
Nomen et salvificum,
Quod est Jesus, indidit.

Nomen salus homini,
Nomen quod os Domini
Ab æterno nominat.

Dudum Matri Numinis
Hoc et sponso Virginis
Angelus denuntiat.

Tu nequam vim Zabuli,
Tu peccatum sæculi
Nomen sacrum superas.

Jesu, nostrum pretium,
Jesu, spes mœrentium,
Mentes sana miseræ.

Quod deest in homine
Supple tuo nomine,
Quod est salutiferum.

Tua circumcisio,
Cordis sit præcisio,
Efficax cauterium.

Sanguis fusus sordidos
Lavet, riget aridos,
Mœstis det solatium.

Anni nunc initio,
Pro felici xenio
Para, Jesu, præmium.

Amen.

Adam of Saint-Victor offers us one of his Hymns, to help us to speak the praises of the Holy Mother of Jesus. It is an extremely graceful poem, and, for a long period, was to be found in the ancient Roman-French Missals.

SEQUENCE.

Hail, Mother of the Saviour !
Vessel elect, Vessel of honour,
Vessel of heavenly grace !

Salve, Mater Salvatoris,
Vas electum, vas honoris,
Vas cœlestis gratiæ.

Ab æterno vas provisum,
Vas insigne, vas excisum
Manu Sapientiæ.

Salve Verbi sacra Parens,
Flos de spinis, spina carens,
Flos spineti gratia.

Nos spinetum, nos peccati
Spina sumus cruentati,
Sed tu spinæ nescia.

Porta clausa, fons hortorum,
Cella custos unguentorum,
Cella pigmentaria.

Cinnamomi calamum,
Myrrham, thus et balsamum,
Superas fragrantia.

Salve, decus virginum,
Mediatrix hominum,
Salutis puerpera.

Myrtus temperantiæ,
Rosa patientiæ,
Nardus odorifera.

Tu convallis humilis,
Terra non arabilis,
Quæ fructum parturiit.

Flos campi, convallium
Singulare lilium :
Christus ex te prodiit.

Tu cœlestis paradisus,
Libanusque non incisus,
Vaporans dulcedinem.

Tu candoris et decoris,
Tu dulcoris et odoris
Habes plenitudinem.

Tu thronus es Solomonis,
Cui nullus par in thronis,
Arte vel materia.

Ebur candens, castitatis,
Aurum fulvum, charitatis
Præsignant mysteria.

Vessel predestined from
eternity, Vessel of singular
beauty, Vessel formed by the
hand of the All-Wise One.

Hail, holy Mother of the
Word ! the Flower that grew
midst thorns, thyself the thorn-
less Flower, that decked the
thorny Earth.

The thorny earth are we,
bleeding from the prickly
thorns of sin : and thou, Oh !
thou art free from thorns.

Thou art the Gate of the
sanctuary closed for the Prince.
Thou art the Fountain of the
gardens, the Casket of sweet
ointments and perfumes.

Thy fragrance is sweeter
than that of Cinnamon, or
Myrrh, or Frankincense, or
aromatic Balm.

Hail, Virgin of Virgins !
Mediatrix of men ! Mother of
the Jesus who saved us.

Myrtle of temperance, Rose
of patience, Spikenard most
fragrant !

Vale of humility ! Soil most
fruitful, though untilled !

Flower of the field ! match-
less Lily of the valley, that
broughtest forth Christ !

Heavenly Paradise ! Cedar-
tree untouched, yet breathing
forth such sweetness !

Purity and beauty, sweet-
ness and fragrance, are all in
thee above measure.

Thou art the Throne of So-
lomon, the throne rich above
all others in form and sub-
stance.

The whiteness of the Ivory
prefigures thy Chastity ; the
glittering Gold, thy Charity.

The palm thou holdest is like no other: thou hast no equal among creatures on earth or in heaven.

Thou art the glory of the human race, and art privileged with virtues above Angels and men.

As the sun is brighter than the moon, and the moon is brighter than the stars; so is Mary exalted above all creatures.

The sun's light, which no eclipse quenches, is Mary's virginal purity: the sun's un-failing heat, is her undying charity.

Hail, Mother of Mercy! Thou art the noble dwelling of the blessed Trinity;

But, for the majesty of the Incarnate Word, thou didst prepare a special sanctuary.

O Mary, Star of the Sea! Peerless Queen, set above all the heavenly choirs!

Seated on thy lofty throne, commend us to thy Son; nor suffer our enemies to defeat us by strength or craft.

In the battle we are fighting, may we be safely shielded by thy protection. Our enemy's obstinacy and skill must needs yield to thy power, and his treachery to thy watchful care.

O Jesu! Word of the Eternal Father! save us the devoted servants of thy Mother. We are guilty, absolve us. Save us by thy grace, and make us like to thee in the brightness of thy glory.

Amen.

Palnam præfers singula-
rem,
Nec in terris habes parem,
Nec in cœli curia.

Laus humani generis,
Virtutum præ cæteris
Habens privilegia.

Sol luna lucidior,
Et luna sideribus:
Sic Maria dignior
Creaturis omnibus.

Lux eclipsim nesciens
Virginis est castitas;
Ardor indeficiens,
Immortalis charitas.

Salve, mater pietatis,
Et totius Trinitatis
Nobile triclinium.

Verbi tamen incarnati
Speciale majestati
Præparans hospitium.

O Maria, stella maris,
Dignitate singularis,
Super omnes ordinis
Ordines cœlestium.

In supremo sita poli,
Nos assigna tuæ Proli,
Ne terrores, sive doli
Nos supplantent hostium.

In procinctu constituti,
Te tuente, simus tuti;
Pervicacis et versuti
Tuæ cedat vis virtuti,
Dolus, providentiæ.

Jesu, Verbum summi Pa-
tris,
Serva servos tuæ Matris,
Solve reos, salva gratis,
Et nos tuæ claritatis
Configura gloriæ.

Amen.

JANUARY 2.

THE OCTAVE OF SAINT STEPHEN,

THE FIRST MARTYR.

YESTERDAY, we finished the Octave of the Birth of Jesus; to-day, we shall finish the Octave of St. Stephen; but this, without losing sight, one moment, of the Divine Babe, whose Court is formed by Stephen, John the Beloved Disciple, the Holy Innocents, and St. Thomas of Canterbury. In five days, we shall see the Magi prostrate before the Crib of the newborn King; they are already on the way, and the Star is advancing towards Bethlehem. Let us spend the interval in reconsidering how great is the glory of our Emmanuel, in his having lavished such extraordinary favours on these Saints, whom he has chosen to be near him at his first coming into the world. Let us begin with Stephen, for this is the last day of the Octave dedicated to him by the Church. We must take leave of him now till the month of August, when we shall again meet him on the Feast of *The Finding of his Relics*.

In a Sermon, which was for a long time thought to have been written by St. Augustine, we find it mentioned, that St. Stephen was *in the flower of his youth*, when he was called, by the Apostles, to receive the sacred character of Deaconship. Six others were ordained Deacons with him; and these Seven, whose office was to minister at the Altar here below, represented the Seven Angels, whom St. John saw standing near the Altar in heaven. Stephen was

appointed as the head of the Seven, and St. Irenæus, who lived in the second century, calls him the *Arch-Deacon*.

The characteristic virtue of a Deacon is fidelity. Hence, he is entrusted with the care of the treasures of the Church, treasures, which consist not merely in the alms destined for the poor, but in that which is the most precious thing in heaven and earth—the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which the Deacon is the minister, in virtue of his Order. For this reason, the Apostle St. Paul, in his first Epistle to Timothy, bids the Deacons *hold the Mystery of Faith in a pure conscience*.¹

It was, therefore, more than an appropriate coincidence, that the First of all the Martyrs was a Deacon, for Martyrdom is the great proof of fidelity, and fidelity is the official virtue of the Deaconate. This same truth is still more strongly impressed upon us by the fact, that the three, who stand pre-eminent amongst the Martyrs of Christ, are vested in the holy Dalmatic—the three glorious Deacons: Stephen, the glory of Jerusalem; Laurence, the pride of Rome; and Vincent, of whom Spain so justly boasts. The present holy season gives us Stephen, who has been gladdening us with his festal presence ever since Christmas Day, and Vincent, whose Feast falls on January 22nd. Laurence will come to us, with his rich waving Palm, in the sunny month of August; and Stephen, in the same month, will visit us, a second time, in the Feast of the Finding of his Relics.

With the intention of paying respect to the Holy Order of Deaconship in the person of its first representative, it is a custom in a great many Churches, on the Feast of St. Stephen, that Deacons should fulfil every office, which is not beyond their Order.

¹ I. Tim. iii. 9.

For example, the Chanter yields his staff of office to a Deacon; the Choristers, who assist the Chanter, are also Deacons, vested in Dalmatics; and the Epistle of the Mass is sung by a Deacon, because it is the passage from the Acts of the Apostles, which relates the history of the holy Martyr's death.

The institution of St. Stephen's Feast, and its being fixed on the day immediately following that of our Lord's Birth, are so ancient, that it is impossible to assign their date. The *Apostolic Constitutions*, which were compiled, at the latest, towards the close of the 3rd century, mention this Feast as already established, and that, too, on the morrow of Christmas Day. St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Asterius of Amasea, both of them earlier than the miraculous discovery of the Holy Deacon's Relics, have left us Homilies for the Feast of St. Stephen, in which they lay stress on the circumstance of its having the honour to be kept the very day after the solemnity of Christmas. With regard to its Octave, the institution is less ancient, though the date cannot be defined. Amalarius, who wrote in the 9th century, speaks of this Octave as already established, and Notker's Martyrology, compiled in the 10th century, makes express mention of it.

But, how comes it, that the Feast of a mere Deacon has been thus honoured, whilst almost all those of the Apostles have no Octave? The rule followed by the Church, in her Liturgy, is to give more or less solemnity to the Feasts of the Saints, according to the importance of the services they rendered to mankind. Thus it is, that the honour she pays to St. Jerome, for example, who was only a Priest, is more marked than that she gives to a great number of holy Popes. It is her gratitude, which guides her in assigning to the Saints their respective rank in her Calendar, and the devotion of the Faithful to the saintly benefactors, whom she now venerates as

members of the Church Triumphant, is thus regulated by a safe standard. St. Stephen led the way to Martyrdom; his example inaugurated that sublime *witnessing* by the shedding one's own blood, which is the very strength of the Church, ratifies the truths she teaches to the world, and confirms the hopes of eternal reward promised by those truths. Glory, then, and honour to the Prince of Martyrs! As long as time shall last, so long shall the Church, on earth, celebrate the name of Stephen, who was the first to shed his blood for the God who died on Calvary!

We have already noticed St. Stephen's imitating Jesus, by praying for and forgiving his enemies; it is the circumstance, which the Church continually alludes to in her Office of his Feast. But there is another very important incident in the martyrdom of our Saint, which we must, for a moment, dwell upon. One of the accomplices in the murder, which was being committed under the walls of Jerusalem, was a young man of the name of Saul. He made himself exceedingly active, for he was of an ardent temperament, and, as the Fathers observe, he helped every man who stoned the holy Deacon, because he took care of the murderers' garments whilst they committed the crime. Not long after, this same Saul, whilst travelling to Damascus, was converted into an Apostle of that Jesus, whom he had heard Stephen confess as the Son of God. He was the fruit of Stephen's dying prayer. The blood of Stephen cried to heaven for mercy—and heaven sent to the Gentiles the Apostle, who would bring them to the knowledge and love of Jesus. "What an admirable scene!" cries out St. Augustine. "Here is Stephen being stoned, and Saul taking care of the garments of them that stone him. But this Saul is now Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ, and Stephen is the servant of Jesus Christ. * * O

“Saul! thou hast been prostrated, and raised up
 “again: prostrated a Persecutor, raised up a Preacher.
 “Everywhere are thy Epistles read; everywhere
 “art thou bringing to Christ them that are his ene-
 “mies; everywhere art thou the good Shepherd,
 “surrounded by a numerous flock. Thou art now
 “reigning with Christ, in company with him thou
 “didst once stone. Both of you are looking upon us;
 “both of you now hear what I am saying; do both
 “of you pray, also, for us. He who crowned you
 “both, will hear both. Stephen was a lamb;
 “Saul was a wolf; now, both are lambs, and both
 “will acknowledge us as of the flock of Christ, and
 “will pray for us, that the Church of their Master
 “may be blessed with a peaceful and tranquil life.”¹
 Stephen and Paul, both visit us during this grand
 season of Christmas; for we shall keep the Feast of
 the Conversion of St. Paul on the 25th of January;
 and thus, Stephen leads his spiritual conquest to the
 Crib of their common Lord and Master.

Catholic piety has chosen St. Stephen as one of
 the Patrons of a Happy Death. This choice was
 suggested by the death of the holy Martyr—a death
 so tranquil that the Scripture calls it a *Sleep*, in
 spite of the cruel torture to which his executioners
 put him. Let us, therefore, beg the intercession of
 St. Stephen for that awful hour of our death, when
 we must return to our Creator these Souls of ours;
 nay, let us ask him to pray, that we may be habitu-
 ally in such a disposition of mind, as to be ever ready
 to make the total sacrifice of the life which God has
 given to us: it was a sacred deposit he entrusted to
 our keeping, and which we were to hold in readiness
 for him, whensoever he might demand it at our
 hands.

¹ Sermon 316: *The Third for the Feast of St. Stephen.*

The Mass is given above, page 255, except the Collect, which we give at the bottom of this page.

We will now select from the ancient Liturgies a few additional pieces in honour of our Saint. We begin with two Responsories, and the proper Collect for this Octave-Day, as given in the Roman Breviary.

RESPONSORIES.

R. Stephen, the servant of God, whom the Jews stoned, saw the heavens opened; he saw and entered: * Blessed man, to whom the heavens were opened.

V. While, therefore, the loud pelting of the storm of stones was beating against him, a divine brightness shone upon him from the ethereal recesses of the heavenly court. * Blessed man.

R. The gates of heaven were thrown open to Stephen, the blessed Martyr of Christ, who was the first among the Martyrs. * And he, therefore, triumphs in heaven, with his *Crown* upon him.

V. For he was the first to pay back to the Saviour the Death our Saviour deigned to suffer for us. * And he.

R. Stephanus, servus Dei, quem lapidabant Judæi, vidit cœlos apertos: vidit et introivit: * Beatus homo, cui cœli patebant.

V. Cum igitur saxorum crepitantium turbine quateretur, inter æthereos aulae cœlestis sinus divina ei claritas fulsit. * Beatus homo.

R. Patefactæ sunt januæ cœli Christi Martyri beato Stephano, qui in numero Martyrum inventus est primus: * Et ideo triumphat in cœlis coronatus.

V. Mortem enim, quam Salvator noster dignatus est pro nobis pati, hanc ille primus reddidit Salvatori. * Et ideo.

COLLECT.

O Almighty and eternal God, who didst consecrate the first-fruits of Martyrdom in the blood of blessed Stephen the Levite; grant, we beseech thee, that he may intercede for

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui primitias Martyrum in beati Levitæ Stephani sanguine dedicasti: tribue quæsumus ut pro nobis intercessor existat,

qui pro suis etiam persecutoribus exoravit Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium tuum. us, who begged mercy, even for his persecutors, of our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son.

The Church of Milan, in its Ambrosian Missal, consecrates this Preface to the praise of the Prince of Martyrs.

PREFACE.

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere, æternæ Deus : qui Levitarum præconem vocasti Stephanum. Hic tibi primus dedicavit Martyrii nomen : hic tibi inchoavit primus effundere sanguinem : hic meruit videre cœlos apertos, et Filium stantem ad dexteram Patris. In terris hominem adorabat, et in cœlo Filium Patris esse clamabat. Hic Magistri verba referebat ; quia, quod Christus dixit in cruce, hoc Stephanus docuit in sanguinis sui morte. Christus in cruce indulgentiam seminabat : et Stephanus pro suis lapidatoribus Dominum supplicabat.

It is truly meet and just, right and available to salvation, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to thee, O Eternal God, who didst call Stephen to be the first of Deacons. He was the first, that dedicated unto thee the offering of Martyrdom : he was the first to shed his blood for thee : he it was that merited to see the heavens opened, and the Son standing at the right hand of the Father. He adored Jesus the Man-God on earth, and he proclaimed him to be the Son of the Father in heaven. He repeated the words of his Master ; for, what Christ said on the cross, that did Stephen teach when shedding his blood in death. Christ, on the Cross, sowed the seed of his pardon : so did Stephen beseech his Lord to have mercy on them that stoned him.

The same Liturgy has the following Collect for St. Stephen's Feast :

COLLECT.

Ministrantium tibi, Deus eruditor et rector, qui Ecclesiæ tuæ primordia beati

O God, the teacher and ruler of them that are thy ministers, who didst adorn the early days

of thy Church by the ministry and precious blood of blessed Stephen the Levite ; grant, we beseech thee, that meeting with pardon at the hour of our death, we may deserve to follow his example, and be aided by his intercession. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Levitæ Stephani ministerio, et pretioso martyrii sanguine decorasti, da, quæsumus : ut in excessu nostro veniam consequentes, mereamur exemplis ejus imbui, et intercessionibus adjuvari. Per Dominum Jesum Christum.

The Gothic Liturgy of Spain gives us, in its Mozarabic Missal, the following admirable Prayer to St. Stephen.

CAPITULUM.

Most blessed Protomartyr *Stephen* ! thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord hath named : for that thou, who didst suffer death for him, didst, by him, receive a *Crown* for thy name, and a *Crown* for thy virtue. Thou wast the first in Martyrdom, and first in its reward ; first Martyr in the world, and the first in the courts of heaven. Here, stoned for Christ ; there, exulting in the Crown he gave thee. Here, thou didst suffer, for his sake, the most cruel torments ; there, thou didst receive the most precious *Crown*. Thou, therefore, that wast the first flower of the Church, be now her untiring patron ; that so, by thy prayers, that Jesus, for whose sake thou wast a glorious Martyr, may be merciful unto us.

Beatissime Stephane, Protomartyr, vocabitur tibi nomen novum, quod os Domini nominavit : ut qui mortem pro illo sumeres, coronam per illum et nomine et virtute susciperes : primus in Martyrio, primus in præmio ; primus in aula mundi, primus in aula cœli : ut hic pro Christo lapidatus, illic ab ipso coronatus, exultes ; ut pro quo hic crudelissimam sustinuisti pœnam, illic pretiosissimam susciperes coronam : ergo qui extitisti Ecclesiæ primitivus, nunc esto patronus assiduus : ut sit Christus nobis, te precante, propitius, pro quo Martyr extitisti mirificus.

The following Hymn, remarkable for its unction and simplicity of style, is to be found in most of the ancient Roman-French Breviaries.

HYMN.

Sancte Dei pretiose,
 Protomartyr Stephane,
 Qui virtute charitatis
 Circumfultus undique,
 Dominum pro inimico
 Exorasti populo.

Tu cœlestis primitivus
 Signifer militiæ,
 Veritatis assertivus,
 Testis primus gratiæ,
 Fundamento lapis vivus,
 Basis patientiæ.

Saxo cæsus, non mucrone,
 Per saxorum cuspides,
 Corpus membri passione
 Circumcidi prævides :
 Ad decorem sunt coronæ
 Rubricati lapides.

Tu cœlorum primus strata
 Consternis lapideam,
 Tu per Christum hebetatam
 Primus transis rhomphæam,
 Primum granum trituratam,
 Ditans Christi aream.

Tibi primum reserata
 Cœli patent januæ,
 Jesum vides potestate,
 Cui pugnas strenue ;
 Stans cum Patris majestate
 Tecum est assidue.

Funde preces pro devoto
 Tibi nunc collegio,
 Ut tuo propitiatus
 Interventu Dominus
 Nos purgatos a peccatis
 Jungat cœli civibus.

O holy Protomartyr Stephen,
 most dear to God ! in the
 virtue of charity, wherewith
 thou wast armed on every
 side, thou didst beseech the
 Lord to have mercy on thine
 enemies.

Thou art the Standard-
 bearer of heaven's martyr-host ;
 the herald of truth ; the first
 witness of Christian grace ;
 the living foundation-stone,
 and ground-work of martyr-
 dom.

Stones were the instrument
 of thy martyrdom, not the
 sword. The sharp-edged stones,
 like knives of a second cir-
 cumcision, tore thine innocent
 flesh ; but, tinged in thy blood,
 they were made rubies for thy
 Crown.

Thou wast the first to tread
 the stony rugged path, that
 leads to heaven ; thou wast the
 first to breast that sword, which
 had slain our Lord and lost its
 keen edge by piercing Him ;
 thou wast the earliest win-
 nowed wheat, that graced the
 granaries of Christ.

To thee were heaven's gates
 first opened, showing thee
 Jesus in his power, for whom
 thou didst so bravely fight :
 He, standing at the right hand
 of his Father's majesty, is with
 thee incessantly.

Pray now for this thy devout
 people, that our Lord, through
 thy prayers, may mercifully
 forgive us our sins, and grant
 us fellowship with the citizens
 of heaven.

Glory and honour to the God who gave thee thy Crown of roses and thy throne above the stars. May he free us from the sting of death, and save us sinners. Amen.

Gloria et honor Deo,
Qui te flore roseo
Coronavit et locavit
In throno sidereo :
Salvet reos, solvens eos
A mortis aculeo.
Amen.

We will close our selection with a Sequence, composed by Notker ; we find it in the collection of Saint-Gall.

SEQUENCE.

Let us solemnise this Feast in the union of fraternal charity,

Instructed by the sweet example of its Saint,

Who prayed for his guilty persecutors.

Hear us, O Stephen, thou standard-bearer of the infinitely merciful King,

Who heard the prayers thou didst offer him for thine enemies.

By thy prayers, O Stephen, that very Paul, who once persecuted thee, was converted to believe in Jesus,

And now exults with thee in that Kingdom, nigh which no persecutors come.

Then, we who humbly cry to thee for pity, and besiege thee with our prayers,

We, surely, shall be reconciled to our God by thy most holy prayers.

Peter ordained thee as a minister of Christ : and thou to the faithful Peter didst affirm and show this truth, that He, whom the mad populace crucified, is at the right hand of the Father.

Hanc concordi famulatu,
colamus solemnitatem,

Auctoris illius exemplo
docti benigno,

Pro persecutorum pre-
cantis fraude suorum.

O Stephane, signifer Re-
gis summe boni, nos exaudi :

Proficue qui es pro tuis
exauditus inimicis.

Paulus tuis precibus, Ste-
phane, te quondam perse-
cutus Christo credit,

Et tecum tripudiat in reg-
no, cui nullus persecutor
appropinquat :

Nos proinde, nos suppli-
ces ad te clamantes et pre-
cibus te pulsantes,

Oratio sanctissima nos
tua semper conciliet Deo
nostro.

Te Petrus Christi minis-
trum statuit : Tu Petro nor-
mam credenti adstruis, ad
dextram summi Patris os-
tendendo, quem plebs fu-
rens crucifixit.

Se tibi Christus eligit,
Stephane, per quem fideles
suos corroboret, se tibi in-
ter rotatus saxorum solatio
manifestans.

Nunc inter inclytas Mar-
tyrum purpuras coruscas
coronatus.

Christ chose thee, O Ste-
phen! as the example where-
by he would give courage to
his faithful ones, for he showed
himself to thee amidst the
shower of stones, and sweetly
consoled thee.

Now amidst the red-robed
army of the Martyrs thou
shinest as *The Crowned Prince*.

We return thee our grateful thanks, O glorious Stephen! for the help thou hast given us in this great Feast of Christmas. It is thy yearly office to initiate us into the sublime mystery of the Birth of Jesus. Thy Feast ever brings us into the company of this Divine Child, and the Church trusts to thy revealing him to the hearts of her children, as thou heretofore didst to the Jews. Thou hast done thy work, dear Saint! and here is our faith:—we adore this Babe of Bethlehem as the Word of God; we hail him as our King; we offer ourselves to him, to serve him as thou didst; we acknowledge his absolute right over us, and our obligation of serving him even to the last drop of our blood, should he put our loyalty to that great test. Stephen, the Faithful Deacon! pray for us, that we may have the grace to give our whole heart to Jesus, from this time forward; that we may use our best efforts to please him; and that we may conform our lives and affections to his blessed will. Doing this, we shall have the grace to fight his Fight, if not before tyrants and persecutors, at least before the base passions of our own hearts. We are the descendants of the Martyrs, and the Martyrs conquered the world; for Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem, had conquered it before them:—shall *we*, then, be cowards, and re-enslave ourselves to our eternal enemy? Obtain for us, also, that fraternal charity, which pardons every injury, and prays for them that hate us, and converts sinners and

heretics when all means else have failed.—O valiant Martyr of Jesus! watch over us at the hour of our death; assist us in our agony; show us that Jesus, whom thou hast shown us so often as the dear Babe of Bethlehem; show us him then as the glorified, the triumphant, but, above all, as the merciful Jesus, holding in his divine hands the Crown he has prepared for us; and may our last words be those which thou didst utter when going to thy God: *Lord Jesus! receive my Spirit!*¹

¹ Acts, vii. 58.

JANUARY 3.

THE OCTAVE OF SAINT JOHN,

APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST.

THE Octave of the Beloved Disciple closes to-day: let us devoutly offer him our parting homage. We shall meet him again, during the year; for, on the 6th of May, when the Resurrection of his Divine Master is gladdening the Church with the Easter joys, we shall have the Feast of our Apostle's Confession, made *before the Latin Gate*:—but his grand Feast ends to-day, and he has done too much for us this Christmas, that we should allow this Octave Day to pass without returning him our warmest thanks. Let us begin by exciting ourselves to a great reverence for our Saint; and for this end, let us continue the considerations, we were making this day week, on the favours conferred upon him by Jesus.

The Apostolate of St. John produced a plentiful harvest among the people to whom he was sent. The Parthians received the Gospel from him, and most of the Churches of Asia Minor were founded by him. Of these latter, seven, together with their Angels, were chosen by Christ himself,¹ to typify the several kinds of Pastors; and probably, as some have interpreted this passage of the Apocalypse, these *Seven* may be taken as representing the seven Ages of the Church herself. Neither must we forget, that these Churches of Asia Minor, shortly after St. John had founded them, sent Apostles into our western

¹ Apoc. i.

Europe. Thus, for example, the illustrious Church of Lyons was one of the conquests made by these early Missioners; and St. Pothinus, the first Bishop of Lyons, was a disciple of the disciple of St. John—St. Polycarp—the *Angel of the Church of Smyrna*,¹ whose Feast we shall keep a few days hence.

But St. John's apostolic labours in no wise interfered with the care, which his own filial affection and the injunctions of our Saviour imposed upon him—the care of the Blessed Mother and Virgin Mary. So long as Jesus judged her visible presence on the earth to be necessary for the consolidation of his Church, so long did John enjoy the immense happiness of her society, and of being permitted to treat her as his most beloved Mother. After a certain number of years, during which he had dwelt with her in the city of Ephesus, he returned with her to Jerusalem, whence she ascended to heaven *from the desert* of this world, as the Church sings of her, *as a pillar of smoke of aromatic spices of myrrh and frankincense*.² The holy Apostle had to bear this second separation, and continue preaching the Gospel until that happy day should come, when he also should ascend to that blissful region, where Jesus his Divine Friend, and Mary his incomparable Mother, were awaiting his arrival.

The Apostles, those Lights placed by the hand of Jesus himself *upon the candlestick*³ of the Church, died out by martyrdom one after the other, leaving St. John the sole survivor of the Twelve. His white hair, as the early Fathers tell us, was encircled with a thin plate of gold, the mark of episcopal dignity; the Churches treasured up the words which fell from his inspired lips, and considered them as their rule of Faith; and his prophecy of Patmos, the *Apocalypse*, proves that the future of the Church was also

¹ Apoc. ii. 8.² Cant. iii. 6.³ St. Matth. v. 15.

revealed to him. Notwithstanding all this, John was humble and simple, like the Divine Infant of Bethlehem; and one cannot read without emotion what the early writers tell us of him, how he was often seen fondling a pet bird in his venerable hands.

He that had, when young, leaned his head upon the Breast of that God, *whose delights are to be with the children of men*¹—that had stood near his Lord during the Crucifixion, when all the other Apostles kept away in fear—that had seen the soldier's Spear pierce the Sacred Heart, which so loved the world—when old age had come upon him, was for ever urging upon all he met the duty of *loving one another*. His tender compassion for sinners was such as we might naturally look for from the favourite Disciple of the Redeemer; and we are not surprised at that example—which would have been wonderful in any other Saint than John—of his going in search of a young man, whom he had loved with a Father's love, and who had abandoned himself, during the Apostle's absence, to every sort of sin: old age was no hindrance to this fatiguing search, which ended in his finding the young man amidst the mountains, and leading him back to repentance.

And yet, this same gentle and loving Saint was the inflexible enemy of heresy; for heresy, by destroying Faith, poisons Charity in its very source. It is from this Apostle, that the Church has received the maxim she gives to us—of shunning heresy as we would shun a plague: *If any man come to you and bring not the doctrine of Christ, receive him not into the house, nor say to him "God speed thee;" for he that saith unto him, "God speed thee," communicateth with his wicked works.*² St. John having, one day, entered one of the public baths, he was no

¹ Prov. viii. 31.

² II. St. John, i. 10, 11.

sooner informed that the heresiarch Cerinthus was in the same building, than he instantly left the place, as though it were infected. The disciples of Cerinthus were indignant at this conduct of the Apostle, and endeavoured to take away his life, by putting poison into the cup he used to drink from; but St. John having made the sign of the cross over the cup, a serpent was seen to issue from it, testifying both to the wickedness of his enemies, and to the divinity of Christ. This apostolic firmness in resisting the enemies of the Faith, made him the dread of the heretics of Asia; and hereby, he proved how justly he had received from Jesus the surname of *Son of Thunder*, a name which he shared with his Brother, James the Greater, the Apostle of Spain.

The miracle we have just related has suggested the assigning to St. John, as one of his emblems, a cup with a serpent coming from it; and, in many countries, in Germany particularly, there is the custom, on the Feast of St. John, of blessing wine; and the prayer, used on the occasion, alludes to the miracle. In these same countries, there also prevails the custom of taking, at the end of meals, what is called *St. John's Cup*, putting, as it were, under the Saint's protection, the repast just taken.

For brevity's sake, we omit several other traditions regarding our holy Apostle, to which allusion is made in many of the Medieval Liturgical pieces which we have quoted: but, we cannot refrain from saying a few words in reference to his Death.

The passage of the holy Gospel read on the Feast of St. John, has often been interpreted in the sense, that the Beloved Disciple was never to die, although our Lord's words are easily explained without putting such a meaning upon them. The Greek Church, as we have already seen in her Offices, professes her belief in St. John's exemption from death. It was also the opinion of several holy Doctors of the

Church, and found its way into some of the Hymns of the Western Church. The Church of Rome seems to countenance it, by one of the Antiphons in the Lauds of the Feast; but it must be acknowledged, that she has never favoured this opinion, although she has not thought proper to condemn it. Moreover, the Tomb of St. John once existed at Ephesus; we have early traditions regarding it, and miracles are related which were wrought by the miraculous oil, which flowed, for centuries, from the Tomb.

Still, it is strange, that no mention has ever been made of any Translation of the Body of St. John; no Church has ever boasted of its possessing it; and as to particular Relics of this Apostle, they are not only very rare, but a great deal of vagueness has always clung to them. At Rome, when a Relic of St. John is asked for, the only one given is a small piece of the Tomb. With these facts before us, we are forced into the idea, that there is something mysterious in this total ignorance with regard to the Body of a Saint so dear to the whole Church; whereas, the Bodies of all the other Apostles have been the subject of most interesting and detailed accounts, and we can name the Churches which have possessed either the whole or a portion of their venerable remains. Has our Redeemer willed that the Body of his dear Disciple should be glorified before the Day of Judgment? Has he, in his own inscrutable designs, withdrawn it from the sight of man, as he did that of Moses? These are questions, which will, perhaps, never be solved on this earth; but it is almost impossible not to acknowledge, as so many holy writers have done, that the mystery, wherewith it has pleased our Lord to shroud the virginal Body of St. John, may be considered as an additional reward given to the Disciple, whom he so tenderly loved; during life, on account of his purity.

Let us listen, once more, to the sweet praises given to St. John in the various Liturgies. And first, let us open the Roman Breviary, where we shall find the following Responsories:—

RESPONSORIES.

R. This is John, who, at the Supper, reclined his head on the Lord's Breast: * Blessed Apostle, unto whom the secrets of heaven were revealed.

V. He drank in the streams of the Gospel from the sacred fount itself of our Lord's Breast. * Blessed.

R. Jesus loved him, for the special prerogative of his chastity made him worthy of a special love: * Because, being chosen by Christ as a virgin, he remained a virgin for ever.

V. When, at length, he was about to die on the Cross, he commended his Virgin Mother to this his virgin disciple. * Because.

R. In that day, I will take thee to be my Servant, and I will make thee as a signet in my sight: * For I have chosen thee, saith the Lord.

R. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. * For.

The Mozarabic Breviary, in the Office of St. John the Evangelist, contains the following beautiful prayer:—

CAPITULUM.

Ineffable, O Lord, are the streams of thy Heart, where-with the Disciple, whom thou

R. Iste est Joannes qui supra pectus Domini in cœna recubuit: * Beatus Apostolus, cui revelata sunt secreta cœlestia.

V. Fluenta Evangelii de ipso sacro Dominici pectoris fonte potavit. * Beatus.

R. Diligebat autem eum Jesus, quoniam specialis prærogativa castitatis ampliori dilectione fecerat dignum: * Quia virgo electus ab ipso, virgo in ævum permansit.

V. In cruce denique moriturus, huic Matrem suam virginem virgini commendavit. * Quia.

R. In illum diem suscipiam te servum meum, et ponam te sicut signaculum in conspectu meo: * Quoniam ego elegi te, dicit Dominus.

V. Esto fidelis usque ad mortem, et dabo tibi coronam vitæ. * Quoniam.

Ineffabilia sunt, Domine, fluenta uteri tui, quibus præ cæteris dilectus ille a te

discipulus, recubans in sinu tuo, satiari promeruit : quæsumus ergo, ut, mortificatis membris nostris, tuis semper mereamur inhærere vestigiis : ut intercessu hujus sancti Joannis, ita nos ignis amoris tui concremet, et absumat, qualiter beneplacitum nos tibi in toto holocaustum efficiat.

lovedst above the rest, deserved to be filled, when leaning on thy Breast : we, therefore, humbly beseech thee, that our senses being mortified, we may deserve to walk, at all times, in thy footsteps : that thus, by the intercession of this thy holy disciple John, the fire of thy love may so burn and consume us, as to make us, in all things, a holocaust well-pleasing unto thee.

We find, also, this other prayer, in the Missal of the same Gothic Liturgy.

PRAYER.

Vide, vide, Deus, quibus gravati delictis obruimur ; qualiterque nobis ipsi quotidie efficimur causa veneni et pœna supplicii, dum cum quotidiano carnis nostræ veneno polluimur, et de reparatione melioris vitæ nullo modo cogitamus. Sed quia certum est quod hoc videas, qui semper es clemens ; et ideo per confessionem nos ad te redituros exspectas, ideo suggerimus, ut Apostolo tuo Joanne intercedente ; qui invocato nomine tuo lethale ebibens virus, non solum ipse evasit, sed etiam alios ex eodem extinctos populo suscitavit. Procul a nobis efficias et incentivam carnis nostræ libidinem, et virus persuasionis hostis antiqui, ut fide te colentes, sicut Joannem Apostolum non nocuit oblatum venenum, ita nos non noceat

See, see, O God, the sins whereby we are weighed down, and how we daily create to ourselves the poison that destroys and the pain that punishes, inasmuch as we are each day infected with the poison of the deeds of our flesh, yet give we no thought to the amending our lives. But, whereas faith teaches us that thou seest our sins, and, because thou art merciful, thou awaitest us that we return to thee by humble confession ; therefore, do we beg the intercession of John, thine Apostle, who having drunk a deadly poison, not only, by the invocation of thy name, escaped hurt himself, but raised them to life who had been poisoned by that same cup. By this his intercession, drive far from us both the lustful flames of our own flesh, and the poison of the old

enemy's suggestions ; that worshipping thee by our faith, we may be guarded against the hidden poison of latent passions, as the poison offered to the Apostle John left him uninjured.

latentium vitiorum virus occultum.

We take from the Menæa of the Greek Church a second selection of stanzas in honour of the holy Evangelist.

ON THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN.

(*XXVI. Septembris.*)

Leaving the waters of the sea, thou didst, with much wisdom, draw all nations to the Faith by the rod of the Cross ; for, as Christ told thee, thou wast a Fisher of men, drawing them unto holiness. Therefore, didst thou spread abroad the knowledge of the Word, and, by thy preachings, O Theologian Apostle, thou didst gain over Patmos and Ephesus. Beseech Christ our Lord to grant forgiveness of sin to us who lovingly celebrate thy holy memory.

Thy tongue was made the pen of Him who wrote by thee — the Holy Ghost ; it showed us, by divine inspiration, the venerable and divine Gospel.

The blaze of thy great and divine Theology, O glorious Apostle, illumined the earth that was shining with a triple light.

Truly was thy divinely taught tongue, O Theologian, as the pen of one that writes swiftly, for it beautifully wrote

Maris abyssum derelinquens, crucis calamo omnes sapienter fidei piscatus es gentes velut pisces ; nam, ut dixit tibi Christus, apparuisti piscator hominum, carpens eos ad pietatem ; ideo sparsisti Verbi gnosim ; Patmos et Ephesum sermonibus cepisti tuis, Theologe Apostole ; deprecare Christum Deum ut det lapsuum remissionem celebrantibus cum amore tuam sanctam commemorationem.

Lingua tua facta est calamus scriptoris Spiritus sancti, deifice demonstrans venerabile et divinum Evangelium.

Magnæ divinæque tuæ theologiæ faces totam, gloriose, illuminarunt terram luce trisolari splendentem.

Vere fuit tamquam calamus velociter scribentis tua lingua theodica, veram pulchre scribens gnosim et le-

gem novissimam in tabulis, theologe, cordium nostrorum.

Cœlorum scire celsitudines, marisque explorare abyssos temerarium et intentabile; astra autem numerare vel littoralem arenam par est. Sic de theologo dici non potest quot ipsum coronis quem amabat coronavit Christus, supra cujus pectus recubuit, et in mystica cœna eum lautissime refecit sicut theologum et Christi amicum.

Terrestrem petisti apud Christum sedem habere; at ille tibi pectus suum donat, o vocate theologe, tranquilla et permanente sede pulchritudinis ditatus es Apostolorum gloria.

Virginitatis florem, venerandarum virtutum electum habitaculum, sapientiæ instrumentum, templum Spiritus, os Ecclesiæ igniferum, charitatis manifestissimum oculum, venerandissimum Joannem, spiritualibus canticis nunc sursum celebremus, tamquam Christi famulum.

Evangelista Joannes, par Angelo, virgo, a Deo docte, limpidissimum latus sanguine et aqua fluens prædicasti, per quem deducimur ad vitam æternam animabus nostris.

on the tablets of our hearts the true knowledge and the New Law.

To measure the height of the heavens, and explore the depths of the sea, is a rash and vain attempt—so too is it, to count the stars or the sand on the shore. In like manner, we may not count the number of crowns wherewith Christ crowned his Beloved Disciple, who reposed on his Breast, and, in the mystic Supper, was most sumptuously regaled as the Theologian and Friend of Jesus.

Thou didst once ask to sit near Jesus on a terrestrial throne; but he gave thee to recline on his Breast, and placed thee on a peaceful and eternal throne of beauty, O thou that art called the Theologian, and art the glory of the Apostles!

Let us now loudly celebrate in spiritual canticles this servant of Christ:—he is the flower of holy Virginity, the chosen dwelling of sublime virtues, the instrument of wisdom, the temple of the Spirit, the burning tongue of the Church, the most bright eye of charity, the most venerable John.

O Evangelist John! angelic, virgin, taught of God! 'twas thou didst tell us of that Sacred Side, from whence, as from a most limpid stream, flowed Blood and Water: thus didst thou teach our souls the way to life eternal.

The Latin Churches of the Middle Ages were fer-

vent in their praises of St. John, and have left us a great many Hymns in his honour. Out of the number, we select only two; the first is the composition of Adam of Saint-Victor, and is the finest of the four written on St. John by the great lyric Poet of those times.

SEQUENCE.

'Tis the Feast of St. John—
let us rejoice; let us sing his
praise with glad hearts.

But, let our lips so speak
his praise, that our hearts be
not devoid of fervour, and so
relish the hidden joy.

This is the Disciple the
Beloved of Christ, who leaned
on his sacred breast, and im-
bibed wisdom.

'Twas to him that Jesus,
dying on the Cross, left his
Mother: John, the virgin,
was guardian of the Virgin.

His heart was filled with
burning charity; his exterior,
his miracles, his words, were a
shining light.

As the fire of criminal pas-
sion had never impaired his
soul; so did he come unhurt
from the caldron of boiling
oil.

He checked the power of
poison; death, disease, and
demons, fled at his bidding.

And yet, with all this hea-
venly power, he was the ten-
derest hearted friend to them
that were in grief.

Some precious stones had
been broken; he miraculously
brought the fragments to-
gether, and thus pieced, gave
them to the poor.

Gratulemur ad festivum,
Jocundemur ad votivum
Joannis præconium.

Sic versetur laus in ore,
Ne fraudetur cor sapore
Quo degustet gaudium.

Hic est Christi prædilec-
tus
Qui reclinans supra pectus,
Hausit sapientiam.

Huic in cruce commen-
davit
Matrem Christus; hic ser-
vavit

Virgo viri nesciam.
Intus ardens charitate,
Foris lucens honestate,
Signis et eloquio,

Ut ab æstu criminali,
Sic immunis a pœnali,
Prodiit ex dolio.

Vim veneni superavit,
Morti, morbis imperavit,
Nec non et demonibus.
Sed vir tantæ potestatis,
Non minoris pietatis
Erat tribulantibus.

Cum gemmarum partes
fractas
Solidasset, has distractas
Tribuit pauperibus.

Inexhaustum fert thesau-
rum,
Qui de virgis fecit aurum,
Gemmae de lapidibus.
Invitatur ab amico
Convivari ; Christum dico
Visum cum discipulis.

De sepulcro quo descendit
Redivivus sic ascendit,
Frui summis epulis.

Testem habes populum,
Immo, si vis, oculum,
Quod ad ejus tumulum
Manna scatet, epulum
De Christi convivio.

Scribens Evangelium,
Aquilæ fert proprium,
Cernens solis radium,
Scilicet Principium
Verbum in Principio.

Hujus signis est conversa
Gens gentilis, gens perversa,
Gens totius Asiæ.

Hujus scriptis illustratur,
Illustrata solidatur
Unitas Ecclesiæ.

Salve, salvi vas pudoris,
Vas cœlestis plenum roris,
Mundum intus, clarum
foris,

Nobile per omnia !

Fac nos sequi sanctita-
tem ;

Fac, per mentis puritatem,
Contemplari Trinitatem,
In una substantia.
Amen.

He was a living treasure,
for he changed the branches of
a tree into gold, and stones
into gems.

He is invited to a banquet
by a Friend ; that Friend was
Jesus, surrounded by his Dis-
ciples :

From the tomb wherein he
had been laid, he then came
forth alive, and ascended to
enjoy the infinite feast.

Innumerable witnesses will
tell thee, (though thyself may
see it, if thou wilt,) that round
his tomb there falls a Manna,
the symbol of that Banquet
which Jesus gave him.

The Eagle is the emblem of
this Evangelist, for he looks
stedfastly at the Sun, that is,
at the Eternal Word in the
Bosom of the Eternal Father.

By his miracles, the gentile
world, a stubborn world, the
world of Asia, was converted.

His writings enlighten, and,
by their light, confirm the one
true Church.

Hail, then, vessel of unsul-
lied chastity ! vessel filled with
heavenly dew ! pure within,
fair without, and noble in
every part.

Oh ! pray for us, that we
may follow the path of holi-
ness, and by the cleanliness of
our hearts, be rewarded with
the vision of the Tri-une God.

Amen.

Our second Sequence is taken from the ancient
Missals of the Churches of Germany, and is extremely
beautiful.

SEQUENCE.

The Word of God, who was born of God, and was not made nor created, and who came down from heaven—this Word was seen, and handled, and revealed to men, by John the Evangelist.

John sprang up amidst those true rivulets, which, from the commencement, flowed from the True Fountain; he has made the whole world drink of that life-giving nectar, that flows from the throne of God.

He soared above the heavens, and gazed, with the fixedness of his soul's eye, on the brightness of the true Sun; this spiritual contemplator saw, as it were from under the wings of the Seraphim, the Face of God.

He hears what songs are sung round the Throne by the Four and Twenty Elders and the heavenly Harpers. He has stamped upon the coin of our terrestrial city the impress and seal of the Holy Trinity.

He, the guardian of the Virgin, wrote his Gospel, that he might show to the world the profound mystery of the Divine Generation: and Jesus, after allowing him to recline on his Sacred Heart, commended his own pure Lily, Mary, to this his and her much loved one, the Son of Thunder.

He drinks a deadly poison! but the virtue of his faith preserves his virginal body from

Verbum Dei, Deo natum,
Quod nec factum nec creatum,
Venit de cœlestibus :
Hoc vidit, hoc attrectavit,
Hoc de cœlo reseravit
Joannes hominibus.

Inter illos primitivos
Veros veri fontis rivos
Joannes exsiliit,
Toti mundo propinare
Nectar illud salutare
Quod de throno prodiit.

Cœlum transit, veri rotam
Solis ibi vidit, totam
Mentis figens aciem :
Speculator spiritalis
Quasi Seraphim sub alis
Dei videt faciem.

Audiit in gyro sedis
Quid psallant cum citharæ
rædis

Quater seni proceres :
De sigillo Trinitatis
Nostræ nummo civitatis
Impressit characteres.

Iste custos Virginis
Arcanum originis
Divinæ mysterium,
Scribens Evangelium,
Mundo demonstravit :
Cordis cui sacrarium
Suum Christus liliū,
Filio tonitruī
Sub amoris mutui
Pace commendavit.

Haurit virus hic lethale,
Ubi corpus virginale
Virtus servat fidei :

Pœna stupet quod in pœna
 Sit Joannes sine pœna
 Bullientis olei.

Hic naturis imperat
 Ut et saxa transferat
 In decus gemmarum :
 Quo jubente riguit,
 Auri fulvum induit
 Virgula silvarum.

Hic infernum reserat,
 Morti jubet, referat
 Quos venenum stravit :
 Obstruit quod Ebion,
 Cerinthus et Marcion
 Perfide latravit.

Volat avis sine meta
 Quo nec vates, nec Pro-
 pheta
 Evolavit altius :
 Tam implenda, quam im-
 pleta
 Numquam vidit tot secreta
 Purus homo purius.

Sponsus rubra veste tec-
 tus,
 Visus sed non intellectus,
 Redit ad palatium :
 Aquilam Ezechielis
 Sponsæ misit quæ de cœlis
 Referret mysterium.

Dic, dilecte, de dilecto,
 Qualis sit, et ex dilecto
 Sponsus sponsæ nuncia :
 Dic quis cibus Angelorum,
 Quæ sint festa superiorum
 De sponsi præsentia.

Veri panem intellectus,
 Cœnam Christi supra pectus
 Christi sumptam resera :
 Ut cantemus de patrono,

death. Nay, the very crea-
 ture that was prepared to tor-
 ture him—the boiling oil—
 stood wondering at his feeling
 not its cruel power to pain.

Nature is obedient to him.
 He bids the stones be gems,
 and they obey : he bids the
 branch of a tree turn its pliant
 fibres into the precious metal
 of gold, and it obeys.

He bids the sepulchre and
 death yield back them whom
 poison had made their victims ;
 they obey. He stops the blas-
 phemous howlings of Ebion,
 Cerinthus, and Marcion.

He is the Eagle, soaring to
 the infinite ; nor Seer, nor
 Prophet, passed him in his
 flight. No pure mind ever
 saw more clearly than he so
 many mysteries, already past
 or yet to come.

Jesus, the Bridegroom,
 clothed in his scarlet robe,
 after being seen by men, but
 not understood, returned to
 his palace above : he sent to
 his Bride the Eagle of Eze-
 chiel, that he might relate to
 her the mystery seen in hea-
 ven.

O Beloved Disciple ! speak
 to us of thy Beloved : tell the
 Church the beauty of this thy
 Jesus, who is her chosen
 Spouse : tell her, who is the
 Bread of the Angels : tell her,
 what feasts her Spouse's pre-
 sence causes to the citizens of
 heaven.

Speak to her of that Bread
 which feeds the soul with
 truth ; reveal to her that Sup-
 per of thy Lord taken on the

Breast of thy Lord : we will
sing to the Lamb, we will sing
round the Throne, we will
praise him above the heavens,
for his having given us such a
Patron as thee.

Coram Agno, coram throno,
Laudes super æthera.

O glorious Saint! we thank thee with all the gratitude of our hearts, for the assistance thou hast so lovingly granted us, during the celebration of this grand Feast of Jesus' Birth. Thou art ever with us at Christmas ; but it is only to help us to know Jesus the more ; for, in considering thy prerogatives, we are giving praise to Him, who gave them to thee. We offer thee, then, the homage of our admiration and thanks, dear Friend of Jesus, and adopted Child of Mary! Before leaving us, suffer us to offer thee, once more, our humble petitions.

Pray, sweet Apostle of Fraternal Love! that the hearts of all men may be united in holy charity ; that dissensions may cease ; that the simplicity of the dove, of which thou wast such a touching example, may become the spirit of our present age, adverse though it seem to this commandment of our Lord. May Faith, without which love and charity cannot exist, be maintained in all its purity ; may the serpent of heresy be crushed, and its poisoned cup find neither teachers to offer it, nor disciples to drink it. May the attachment to the doctrines of the Church be firm and courageous ; may no human schemes or theories, or cowardly toleration of error, enervate the principles of truth and morals ; may the children of light boldly disown fellowship with the children of darkness.

Remember, O holy Prophet! the sublime vision granted thee of the Churches of Asia Minor ; and obtain for the *Angels*, who are set over *ours*, that unflinching faithfulness, which alone wins the victory and the Crown. Pray, also, for those countries which

received the Gospel from thee, but have since deserved to lose the Faith. They have been suffering, now for ages, the consequences of false doctrines—slavery and degradation; intercede for them, that they may be regenerated by Jesus and his Spouse the Church. From thy heavenly home, send Peace to thine own dear Church of Ephesus, and to her Sister-Churches of Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea; may they awake from their sleep; may they rise from their tomb; may Mahometanism cease its brutalising tyranny over them; may schism and heresy, which now keep the East in a state of barbarism, be extinguished; and may the whole flock be once more united in the one Fold. Cover with thy protecting love the holy Church of Rome, which was witness of thy glorious *Confession*, and which she counts as one of those her grand glories, which began with the Martyrdom of thy fellow Apostles, Peter and Paul. May she receive a fresh infusion of light and charity, now that the harvest is whitening over so many countries.¹ And, lastly, Beloved Disciple of the Saviour of mankind! pray that, on the last day, we may enjoy the sight of thy glorified Body; and, after having so often presented us, on this earth, to Jesus and Mary in Bethlehem, present us, on that day, to the same Jesus and Mary in the glories of the eternal Vision.

¹ St. John, iv. 35.

JANUARY 4.

THE OCTAVE OF HOLY INNOCENTS.

WE finish, to-day, the Octave consecrated to the memory of the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem. Thanks be to God, who has given them to us, to be our intercessors and our models! Their name will not re-appear on the Church's Calendar, until the return of the Christmas Solemnity; let us, therefore, devoutly approach these sweet Infant Saints—venerate them, love them, and address to them our farewell prayers.

The Holy Church, which, on the Feast, vested in the colour of mourning,—and this out of condolence with Rachel's grief,—now, on the Octave-Day, clothes herself in the red of her Martyrs, in order to honour these Babes, who shed their blood for Jesus. Notwithstanding, she is full of tender compassion for those poor Mothers, who suffered such agonies of grief at the sight of the murder of their little ones: she continually alludes to it in to-day's Liturgy, and reads, in the Office of Matins, a passage from an ancient Sermon, which vividly describes their feelings. We cannot withhold it from our readers. The Sermon, from which it is taken, was for a long time attributed to St. Augustine.

“When our Lord was born, there began lamentation, not indeed in heaven, but on earth! Lamentation for the Mothers, joy for the Angels, heaven for the Babes. He that is born, is God: a victim must be offered him, and Innocents must be that offering, for he came to condemn the malice of this

“ world. Tender lambs must be slain, for the Lamb, who is come to take away the sins of the world, is to be crucified. But the Mothers wail, because they lose their lambs, that scarce have voice to make their bleatings heard. O wonderful martyrdom! O sight most cruel! The sword is unsheathed, and there is no enemy; jealousy alone spurs on the band, for He, that is born, would injure no man.

“ There, then, sit the Mothers, weeping over their lambs. *A voice in Rama is heard, lamentation and great mourning.* These sweet pledges are not mere things entrusted to their care, they are the children of their own wombs; they are pledges, but they are not given, they are cruelly stolen from them. Nature herself is witness, it betrays the children whom the tyrant is in search of. The Mother tears her hair, for she has lost her beauty in losing her babe. Oh! how she sought to hide him, and the innocent one betrayed himself! He knew not how to be silent, for he had not yet learnt to fear. The Mother struggled with the executioner; he seized her child, resolved to murder him; she clung to him, resolved to hold him to her bosom. ‘Why,’ she exclaimed, ‘why separate me from my child? I gave him birth, and I fed him at my breast untiringly. I bore him in my arms with fondest care, and thy cruel hand has dashed him on the ground! This fresh and lovely fruit— thus trampled on!’

“ A second Mother bade the executioner take away her life together with that of her child: he would not, and she cried out to him: ‘Why dost thou send me away, having slain my son? If there was any fault, I only could be guilty: if there was no fault, let me die with my babe, and rid me of my wretched life.’ A third exclaimed: ‘What is it that ye seek? Ye are in search of one, and ye slay so many! and Him, who is One, ye cannot find!’

“And again another cried out: ‘Come, O come, “thou Saviour of the world! How long shalt thou “be sought for? Thou fearest no man: let these “soldiers see thee, and so not slay our children.’ “These were the lamentations of the Mothers; and the “immolation of their Babes ascended as a sacrifice “to heaven.”

Among these Children thus cruelly massacred, from the age of two years and under, there were some belonging to those Shepherds of Bethlehem, who had been called, on the Night of our Saviour's Birth, to go and adore him in his Crib. These, after Mary and Joseph, the first worshippers of the Incarnate Word, thus offered, to the God who had called them, the most precious treasure they possessed. They knew to what Child their children were sacrificed, and a holy pride filled their souls, as they thought of this new proof of God's singular mercy to them, in preference to so many others of their fellow-creatures.

As to Herod, he was foiled in his schemes, as must ever be the case with them that wage war against Christ and his Church. His edict for the murder of every male child that was two years old or younger, included Bethlehem and its entire neighbourhood; but the Child he alone cared for, and wished to destroy, escaped the sword and fled into Egypt. It was another proof of the world's folly in opposing the designs of God; and, in this instance, the very measure that was intended to effect evil, produced good—the tyrant enriched the Church of heaven with Saints, and the Church militant with so many fresh patrons.

Jesus, the new-born King of the Jews,¹ who causes Herod to tremble on his throne, is but a Little Child, without so much as one single soldier to

¹ St. Matth. ii. 2.

defend him. Herod, like all the persecutors of the Church, has an instinctive knowledge, which teaches him, that this apparent weakness is real and formidable power: what neither he nor his successors knew, was, that it is worse than useless, and worse than folly, to attempt to crush a spiritual power by the sword. This apparent weakness of the Babe of Bethlehem will increase with his years; now he flees from the tyrant who seeks his life; but later on, when he has grown into Manhood, he will not escape from his enemies; they will fasten him to an infamous gibbet, between two Thieves—but, on that very day, a Roman Governor will declare this Jesus to be *King*; he will write, with his own hand, the inscription to be nailed on the Cross: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*. Pilate will give Jesus, and with all possible formality, that very Title, which now makes Herod turn pale: the enemies of Jesus will protest, they will insist on the Title being altered; but Pilate will not change an iota, and will say: *What I have written, I have written.*¹ As on the day of his Crucifixion, he will admit one of the two Thieves to share in his triumph; so now, that he is laid in the Crib, he will share his glory with the Innocents of Bethlehem.

The Mass is given above, page 314. The Gloria in excelsis is said.

Let us once more honour these dear Innocents, by culling their praises from the various Liturgies. We will begin with three Responsories from the Roman Breviary.

RESPONSORIES.

R. Isti qui amicti sunt R. These that are clad in
 stolis albis, qui sunt, et white robes, who are they, and
 unde venerunt? Et dixit whence came they? And he
 mihi: * Hi sunt, qui vene- said unto me: * These are

¹ St. John, xix. 22.

they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

Ÿ. I saw, under the altar of God, the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held. * These.

R. These are they which have not defiled their garments; * They shall walk with me in white, because they are worthy.

Ÿ. These are they who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. * They.

R. These Saints sang a new canticle before the throne of God and the Lamb; * And the earth resounded with their voices.

Ÿ. These were purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb, and in their mouth there was found no lie. * And the earth.

runt de tribulatione magna, et laverunt stolas suas, et dealbaverunt eas in sanguine Agni.

Ÿ. Vidi sub altare Dei animas interfectorum propter Verbum Dei, et propter testimonium quod habebant. * Hi sunt.

R. Isti sunt qui non inquinaverunt vestimenta sua; * Ambulabant mecum in albis, quia digni sunt.

Ÿ. Hi sunt qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati; virgines enim sunt. * Ambulabant.

R. Cantabant Sancti canticum novum ante sedem Dei et Agni: * Et resonabat terra in voces eorum.

Ÿ. Hi empti sunt ex hominibus, primitiæ Deo et Agno, et in ore ipsorum non est inventum mendacium. * Et resonabat.

The two Collects which follow, are from the Leonian Sacramentary.

PRAYER.

O God, who though great in great things, dost nevertheless work with exceeding glory in those that are the least: grant,

Deus qui licet sis magnus in magnis, mirabilia tamen gloriosius operaris in minimis: da nobis, quæsumus,

in eorum celebritate gaudere, qui Filio tuo Domino nostro testimonium præbuerunt etiam non loquentes.

we beseech thee, that we may rejoice on this the Feast of them, who bore testimony, though they spoke not, to thy Son, our Lord.

PRAYER.

Tribue, Domine, quæsumus, fidelibus tuis, ut, sicut ait Apostolus, non efficiantur pueri sensibus, sed malitia innoxii reperiantur ut parvuli; ut Martyres festivitatis hodiernæ, quos meritis æquare non possunt, mentis simplicitate sectentur. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, to thy faithful people, that, as thy Apostle saith, they may become children *not in sense, but in malice*; that thus they may imitate the Martyrs of this day's Feast by the simplicity of their hearts, since they cannot attain to the merits they acquired. Through Christ our Lord.

We take the following beautiful prayer from the Mozarabic Breviary of the Gothic Liturgy of Spain.

CAPITULA.

Christe, inenarrabile lumen mundi, qui adhuc in ipsis cunabulis constitutus, nondum effectus martyr, martyrii palma catervas Infantium dedicasti: qui necdum loqui valentes, sub mucrone sævientium varios fecisti mugitus emittere: quorum animas de abditis infernorum, te spontanee pro nobis omnibus moriente, maluisti eripere; inspira eis, sine intermissione orare pro parvulis: ut, qui propriis non valeamus supplicationibus emundari a crimine, eorum, qui te, quocumque ieris, cum hymnis, et canticis adsequuntur, et hic et in æternum postulationibus abluamur

O Jesus, Light ineffable of the world! who, whilst yet in thy Crib, and not thyself a Martyr, didst give the palm of martyrdom to the army of Innocents: who, not being able to speak, did, by thy will, utter their many cries when being massacred by the cruel soldiers: whose souls, when thou didst freely die for all our sakes, were taken by thee from the depths of limbo:—to these same, O Jesus, inspire the desire of incessantly praying for us, the little and weak: that thus, not deserving to be cleansed from our sins by our own prayers, we may obtain both present and eternal purity by the intercession of them, that follow thee whithersoever thou goest, singing to thee their hymns and canticles.

The Missal of the same Church gives us also this prayer.

PRAYER.

O God, whose mercy is granted to every age and sex ; and who didst lavish on the Innocents such richness of fatherly love, that thou wouldst neither suffer them to be kept in Egyptian bondage, nor, (when they left this world under the Law, as their fathers had done,) to be deprived of the Gospel's fulness of grace ; but didst call them to thy kingdom, in common with them that were made perfect under the law of Grace, thus making them a lesson and an example to us of innocence that knows no evil :—grant unto us thy servants, that laying aside our power for evil, and dying to the concupiscence of the flesh, we may have no will save that of being taught by thy instructions. May our soul be thus neither rigid nor proud ; may she be gentle, and innocent, without being imprudent ; may she be humble, without being weak ; that hereby, by the timely judgment of discernment, she may both know thy good-pleasure and do it, and ignore how to do that which offends thee. May she, moreover, possess that wholesome temperance, which flows from the guidance of counsel ; that so, she both imitate the simplicity of these Innocents, in that they were children, and emulate their fortitude, in that they were combatants. Amen.

Deus cujus misericordia utrumque sexum et per omnem cucurrit ætatem, ita plurimum Infantibus affectum paternæ pietatis indulgens, ut parvulos nec ab Ægypto teneri sineres, nec ab Evangelio prohiberi, dum in Lege cum patribus evaderent mundum ; et in gratia cum perfectis vocarentur ad regnum, atque institutione doctrinæ, innocentia expers mali forma induceretur exempli. Dona nobis famulis tuis, ut malitiæ viribus defecati, in usum concupiscentiæ carnalis invalidi, docibilem servemus disciplinis voluntatem. Quo mens nec rigida nec superba, sic sit blanda, sic innocens, ne imprudens ; sic humilis, ne imbecillis ; quatenus maturo discretionis judicio sic sufficiat probare quod placeat, ut effectare nesciat quod delinquat. Atque ita salubrem sumat temperantiam moderante consilio, ut et simplicitatem imitetur infantium, et fortitudinem vindicet pugnantorum.

Amen.

Prudentius, the Poet of the Mysteries and the Martyrs, and from whom the Church has taken her beautiful stanzas for the Feast of the Holy Innocents, *Salvete, Flores Martyrum*,—celebrates the immolation of these lovely Babes of Bethlehem, in his exquisite Hymn for the Epiphany. It is from this Hymn that the Roman Liturgy has had recourse for several great Feasts; and we now extract from it the strophes which refer to our dear Innocents.

HYMN.

Audit tyrannus anxius
Adesse regum Principem,
Qui nomen Israel regat,
Teneatque David regiam.

Exclamat amens nuntio :
Successor instat, pellimur :
Satelles, i, ferrum rape,
Perfunde cunas sanguine.

Mas infans omnis occidat ;
Scrutare nutricum sinus ;
Interque materna ubera
Ensem cruentet pusio.

Suspecta per Bethlem
mihi
Puerperarum est omnium
Fraus, ne qua furtim sub-
trahat

Prolem virilis indolis.
Transfigit ergo carnifex,
Mucrone districto furens,
Effusa nuper corpora,
Animasque rimatur novas.

Locum minutis artibus
Vix interemptor invenit,

The anxious Tyrant hears
that the King of kings is come,
who is to rule over the Jews,
and sit on the throne of
David.

Maddened by jealous fear,
he calls a messenger, and says
to him: "Our rival is at
"hand—we are in danger: go,
"slave, arm thee with thy
"sword, and bathe every cradle
"with blood.

"Let every male-child be
"slain, and every nurse be
"watched, and every Babe
"feel thy sharp-edged blade,
"even whilst he sucks his
"mother's breast.

"Not a Mother about Beth-
"lehem but I suspect her ;
"then, watch them all, lest
"they hide their boys from
"thee."

On this, the executioner
goes, and, in his wild cruelty,
plunges his naked dagger into
the tender flesh and the but
freshly formed hearts of these
little ones.

But, where shall he strike?
where find space enough to

hold a gaping wound, in these infant-bodies not so big as the dagger in his hand ?

Yet still these butchers murder every child. Here, it is an infant dashed against a rock, covering its flinty sides, oh ! cruel sight ! with blood, and brains, and eyes.

There, it is a lovely babe torn from his mother's arms and thrown into a deep stream, whose gurgling waters weep whilst drowning sobs and life so sweet as these.

Hail, ye Flowers of the Martyrs ! The enemy of Christ cut you down in the very threshold of life, as rose-buds are snapped by a storm.

First Victims for Jesus ! Tender flock of his Martyrs ! ye, with sweet simplicity, play with palms and your crowns, even at the very altar of your sacrifice !

And what does Herod gain by this dark crime ? Does it give him what he sought ? The single One he cared to kill is Jesus, and He still lives !

The stream of infant-blood has ceased to flow, and He alone is safe : the Virgin's Child has escaped that sword, which robbed all other Mothers of their babes.

So was it in that time of old, when Moses, the liberator of his people, and the type of Christ, escaped the senseless edicts of the wicked Pharaoh.

We will close our selection by this Sequence of Notker, which is given in the collection of Saint-Gall.

Quod plaga descendat patens,

Juguloque major pugio est.

O barbarum spectaculum !

Illisa cervix cautibus

Spargit cerebrum lacteum,

Oculosque per vulnus vomit.

Aut in profundum palpitans

Mersatur infans gurgitem,

Cui subter arctis faucibus

Singultat unda, et halitus.

Salvete flores Martyrum,

Quos lucis ipso in limine

Christi insecutor sustulit,

Ceu turbo nascentes rosas.

Vos prima Christi victima,

Grex immolatorum tener,

Aram sub ipsam simplices

Palma et coronis luditis.

Quid proficit tantum nefas ?

Quid crimen Herodem juvat ?

Unus tot inter funera

Impune Christus tollitur.

Inter coævi sanguinis

Fluenta, solus integer,

Ferrum, quod orbatat nurus,

Partus fefellit Virginis.

Sic stulta Pharaonis mali

Edicta quondam fugerat,

Christi figuram præferens,

Moses, receptor civium.

SEQUENCE.

Laus tibi, Christe, Patris
optimi Nate, Deus omnipoten-
tentiæ,

Quem cœlitus jubilat su-
pra astra manentis plebis
decus harmoniæ :

Quem agmina infantium
sonoris hymnis collaudant
ætheris in arce :

Quos impius, ob nominis
odium tui, misero straverat
vulnere :

Quos pie nunc remuneras
in cœlis, Christe, pro pœnis
nitide ;

Solita usus gratia, qua
tuos ornas coronis splen-
dide ;

Quorum precibus sacris
dele, precamur, nostra pie
crimina vitæ,

Et quos laudibus tuis
junxeras, nobis istic dones
clemens favere :

Illis æternæ dans lumen
gloriæ, nobis terrea concede
vincere ;

Ut liceat serenis actibus
pleniter adipisci dona tuæ
gratiæ :

Herodis ut non fiat socius,
quisquis in horum laude se
exercet propeere ;

Sed æternaliter cum eis-
dem catervis tecum sit,
Domine. Amen.

Praise be to thee, O Jesus,
Son of the all-perfect Father,
Almighty God !

Unto whom the sweet hymns
of the citizens of heaven are
ever giving praise,

And the Innocent Babes
are ever singing their melo-
dious songs of praise in the
courts above.

These Babes were slain by
the ruthless sword, at the bid-
ding of a wicked king, who
hated thy name,

And now are richly rewarded
in heaven, by thee O Jesus, in
return for the sufferings they
endured ;

Herein showing thy wonted
mercy, which gives, to all who
serve thee, crowns of richest
beauty.

By the holy prayers of these
Innocents, mercifully cleanse
us, we beseech thee, from the
sins of our past lives,

And lovingly grant, that
they whom thou hast associat-
ed to thyself to give thee praise,
may become our protectors
here below.

On them bestow the light of
endless glory ; on us, the vic-
tory over earthly things,

That thus, by a life of holi-
ness, we may merit an abun-
dance of the riches of thy grace.

Of all that devoutly praise
these thy holy Innocents, may
none be made companions with
Herod,

But may they all live for
ever with thee, O Lord, in the
society of this sweet choir of
heaven. Amen.

Sweet *Flowers of the Martyrs* ! your Feast is over in our Church on earth, but your patronage will never leave us. During this new year of the holy Liturgy, which God has given us, you will watch over us, and pray for us to the Lamb, who loves you so tenderly. We entrust to you the fruits of grace which our souls have gathered from the Christmas Feasts. We have become *little children* together with our Lord ; we have begun a new life with him ; pray for us, that we may grow with him *in wisdom and age, before God and man*.¹ Secure us perseverance, by your prayers ; and, to this end, keep up in our hearts that Christian simplicity, which is the special virtue of Children of Christ. You are innocent ; we are sinners ; still, we are brethren ; love us, then, with brotherly love. You were garnered into heaven at the very dawn of the Law of Grace ; our lives have fallen on the close of time, and the world has grown cold in charity ; be near and help us ; cheer and encourage us in our combat, by showing us your lovely palms of victory ; pray to our Lord, that we may speedily obtain by repentance the heavenly crown, which his infinite mercy allowed you to win, without the fatigues and risks of a battle.

Infant Martyrs ! forget not the young generation, which has just entered on the scene of life. You were taken to eternal glory at the age of infancy ; these little ones are like you in their innocence ; love them, watch over them, pray for them. The grace of their Baptism is upon them in all its freshness, and their pure souls reflect, as a mirror, the holiness of the God that dwells in them by grace. Alas ! these Babes are to go through great trials ; many of them will forfeit the grace of God, and their Baptismal garment will lose its unspotted purity. The world will seek to corrupt their heart and mind,

¹ St. Luke, ii. 52.

and the frightful influence of bad example is almost always successful. Christian Mothers will have to weep over the ruin of their children's souls, and what consolation is there for such a grief as theirs? There is a Christian *Rama*, and a Christian *Rachel*, ever wailing in the Church: do you, sweet Innocents of Bethlehem, comfort these mothers, by praying for their little ones. Pray that our times may grow less evil, and that parents may have less need to fear, than they now have—that the first step taken by their children in the world, will be death to their souls.

JANUARY 5.

THE OCTAVE OF SAINT THOMAS,
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, AND MARTYR.

THE Catholic Church in England celebrates, to-day, the Octave of St. Thomas of Canterbury. It is but fitting, that the Country, which was beautified with the blood of the illustrious Martyr, should honour his memory with an especial fervour, and keep up his Feast during the joyful Octaves of Stephen, of John the Beloved Disciple, and of the Innocents of Bethlehem.

We have seen, on the Feast itself, how the Catholic world gave expression, through the sacred Liturgy, to its love of our great Martyr. In the Ages of Faith, a victory gained by the Church was considered as a victory for the whole human race. It is impossible for us to write the Lives of the Saints in our *Liturgical Year*, which is crowded enough as it is;—and hence we cannot enter, with anything like detail, into the actions of this the Martyr for the Liberty of the Church. But we cannot withhold from our readers the following eloquent proof of the affection and esteem in which St. Thomas was held by those who had been eye-witnesses of his sublime virtues. It is a Letter written by Peter of Blois, Archdeacon of Bath, to the Canons of Beauvoir, a few days after the Martyrdom of the Saint, whose blood was still on the pavement of the Metropolitan Church of Canterbury. Let us notice, as we read it, the self-possessed and meek enthusiasm, with which even

the grandest victories of the Church inspire her children.

“The Shepherd of our souls is dead, and my first impulse is to mourn with you over this death. Yet *Death* I may not call it, for the death where- with our Lord has honoured his Saint is rather a sleep than a death. It has been the harbouring him into rest. It has been to him the gate of life, and the admission into the delights of the heavenly country, into the power of the Lord, into the abyss of eternal light. Having to set out on a long journey, he has taken with him all he needed, and will return on the day of the full moon;¹ for his soul, full of merit, has left the body, in order to return to its ancient dwelling in the general and complete resurrection. Jealous and crafty Death came to scrutinise this treasury of merit, suspecting something to be there which he could claim. But, Thomas was too circumspect and prudent, and never permitted his true life to be tampered with. He had long *desired to be dissolved and to be with Christ*;² and, at the close of his life, was pining to take his departure from the body of this death. He has now thrown a handful of dust into Death’s face, as a tribute which he owed to the old enemy: and the false report has gone abroad, and people are telling each other, that *an evil beast hath devoured our Joseph*.³ The coat, of which he has been stripped, has given rise to this false news of his death; for Joseph lives, and rules through the whole land of Egypt. His blessed soul, unburthened of its corruptible garments, and freed from the dust of this present life, has taken her flight to heaven.

“Yes, he of whom the world was not worthy, has been called away to heaven. This light is not put out; it is but shaken by a passing wind, that it

¹ Prov. vii. 20.

² Phil. i. 23.

³ Gen. xxxvii. 20.

“ may shine all the brighter, and may, no longer kept
 “ under a bushel, give light to all that are in the
 “ house. *He hath seemed in the eyes of the unwise*
 “ *to have died;*¹ *but his life hath been hid with Christ*
 “ *in God.*² It has seemed as though Death had
 “ conquered and swallowed him up; whereas, in
 “ reality, *Death is swallowed up in victory.*³ *Thou*
 “ *hast given him, O Lord, his heart’s desire,*⁴ for he
 “ had long served thee, and, *because of the words of*
 “ *thy lips, had kept hard ways.*⁵ From earliest
 “ youth, his conduct was such as to be worthy of one
 “ advanced in years, and he restrained the rebellions
 “ of the flesh, by watching, fasting, disciplines, hair
 “ shirt, and perpetual continency. The Lord chose
 “ him for his Priest, that he might be to the people
 “ a guide, and teacher; a mirror of life, a model of
 “ penance, and an example of holiness. The God of
 “ wisdom gave him eloquence of speech, and abun-
 “ dantly infused into him the spirit of wisdom and
 “ understanding, making him the most learned of the
 “ learned, the wisest of the wise, excellent even
 “ among the best, and superior even among the
 “ greatest men. He was a herald of the divine word,
 “ a trumpet of the Gospel, a friend of the Bride-
 “ groom, the support of the Clergy, *an eye to the*
 “ *blind, a foot to the lame,*⁶ the salt of the earth, the
 “ light of his country, a minister of the Most High, a
 “ vicar of Christ, a Christ of the Lord.

“ He was upright in his judgment, energetic in
 “ administration, discreet in his orders, modest in his
 “ speech, circumspect in his advice, most abstemious
 “ in his food, gentle in temper, an angel in human
 “ flesh, meek amidst injuries, humble in prosperity,
 “ most courageous in adversity, prodigal in almsgiving,
 “ and was ever exercising some work of mercy. He

¹ Wisd. iii. 2.³ I. Cor. xv. 54.⁵ Ps. xvi. 4.² Coloss. iii. 3.⁴ Ps. xx. 3.⁶ Job, xxix. 15.

“ was the glory of Religious, the favourite of the
 “ people, the terror of Princes, *the god of Pharaoh*.¹
 “ If some men, when exalted to the supreme dignity
 “ of the Episcopacy, begin at once to be carnal-
 “ minded, and shun every bodily suffering as the
 “ greatest evil, and desire to enjoy as long a life as
 “ possible—it was not so with our Pastor. On the
 “ very first day of his promotion, he longed, but more
 “ ardently than can be told, for the end of life, or,
 “ more correctly, he thirsted to begin the life of
 “ eternity. For this purpose, he looked on himself
 “ and comported himself as a pilgrim, and *drank of*
 “ *the torrent in the Way*;² therefore is his name
 “ glorified in the heavenly Country. Thus it is, that
 “ our Brethren, the Monks of the Cathedral Church,
 “ are become as orphans, without their Father.”

The sixteenth century brought an unexpected addition to the glory of our Saint. The enemy of God and man, Henry 8th, hated the very name of the Martyr, that had died for the Liberty of the Church. There was an honour, which such a Tyrant could still add to St. Thomas' glorious name:—he could insult the Shrine, where, for four hundred years, the Saint had received the homage of the entire Catholic world. The venerable Relics of the Martyr were dragged from beneath the Altar: an absurd action was brought against Thomas, formerly Archbishop of Canterbury, and he was found guilty of high treason! His Relics were put upon a pile; and in this second Martyrdom, the fire destroyed the last remains of the holy man, whose intercession drew down upon England the protection and blessings of heaven. After all, how could a country, that was on the eve of its great apostacy from the True Faith, be expected to appreciate the rich treasure of such Relics? Besides, the See of Canterbury was defiled.

¹ Exod. vii. 1.

² Ps. cix. 7.

Cranmer sat on the Chair, which had been that of an Augustine, a Dunstan, a Lanfranc, an Anselm, and a Thomas à Becket. If our holy Martyr and Archbishop had looked through the then existing generation of his Brethren, he would, indeed, have found one, who followed his example and died a Martyr—John Fisher:—but he was the only one; and his sacrifice, glorious as it was, had not power to save his country. The Liberty of the Church had long before then been destroyed;—Faith was sure to die out.



The Mass and Vespers are as on the Feast, page 351.

We here insert the third Sequence written by Adam of Saint-Victor in honour of the glorious Primate of the Isle of Saints.

SEQUENCE.

Our Eliseus turns the bitter waters into sweet, by putting into them a new vase of salt; and by the seasoning of fresh meal, removed the bitterness from the pot of poisonous herbs;

He is slain, as a sheep that dies to save the flock, or as a child that is sacrificed, that the mother may be spared. He rises as a new Sun in a night-covered world, promising a long year of Jubilee.

Aquas plenas amaritudine
Novi salis nova dulcedine,
Ollam plenam lethali gramine

Novi farris sanat pinguedine
Elisæus;

Novus vervex pro grege moritur,

Et pro matre proles occiditur;

In obscuris sol novus oritur
In quo serus annus promittitur

Jubileus.

In these our days, by a wicked plot, a new Abel has

Abel novum Cayn malitia,
Novum Jacob Seir sævitia,

Novum Joseph fratrum in-
vidia,
Intercepit fraude nefaria,
His diebus.
Surrexerunt in patrem pueri,
Non materno parcentes ube-
ri ;
Thomas præsul dum datur
funeri,
Novum chaos videtur ingeri
Mundi rebus.

Sed occumbit Abel in gloria,
Jacob servat Mesopotamia,
Joseph regnat in aula regia,
Thomas noster in cœli curia
Coronatur.

Revovantur Anglorum gau-
dia
Bethel novus fit Dorovernia,
Fit piscina propitiaria,
In qua jugis et multifaria
Salus datur.

Dilatatur Jordanis fluvius,
Fit Naaman alter et tertius,
Derivatur Siloe longius,
Cœlum pluit manna profu-
sius
Quam solebat.

Duplicatur solaris radius,
Magnus Annæ donatur fi-
lius.
Novum vatem Herodis gla-
dius
Trucidavit inverecundius
Quam decebat.

Trucidato non desunt præ-
mia ;
Sancto namque, pro sancti-
monia,

been sacrificed by a wicked
Cain, a new Jacob by a cruel
Esau, and a new Joseph by
envious brethren.

Children have risen up
against their Father, harrow-
ing the bosom of their Mother.
A new chaos seems to have
enveloped all things on earth ;
how else could the Pontiff
Thomas have met with death ?

But Abel falls in glory, Ja-
cob is safe in Mesopotamia,
Joseph rules in the court of
the king, and our Martyr,
Thomas, wears a crown in the
palace of heaven.

'Tis merry England now
once more, and Dover's cliffs
are shores of a new Bethel,
and of a land where is a pool
of ever and many-healing
waters.

The Jordan river flows
through England's vales, and
who could tell how many Naa-
mans there receive their cure ?
The spring of Siloë has sent
her stream to Albion, and
heaven's manna falls where
once it was not known.

A long summer smiles on
the fair island. The barren
Anna is blessed with a noble
Son. But, oh ! shame above
that of old ! a Herod's sword
has slain the new Prophet.

How great is the reward of
the martyred Saint ! Life,
salvation, and celestial light,
are bestowed on him, for his

holy deeds, and for the courage of his upright mind.

And now, from heaven, he works so many miracles ! He heals leprosy, he puts devils to flight, he gives sight to the blind, he makes the lame walk, he gives speech to the dumb, he obtains a cure for every sickness.

A son of Belial, who had poured out blasphemies against the Saint, was struck blind ; and, whereas he desisted not from his mad fury, he met with a wretched death.

A man who had great devotion to the Saint, had, through a false zeal, lost his sight : he recovered it immediately, on praying to the Saint, and went his way singing joyfully his praises to God.

Crosses, made by an Angel's hand, are often known to have a heavenly power, by the powerful prayer of the loving Pastor. The dust from round his sepulchre is known to heal paralysis.

Two lamps had been presented to his Shrine, as a votive offering ; they were lit by a light from heaven. A man who had attempted to profane the holy spot, was found out by the breaking of a vase.

Pro sinceræ mentis constantia,
Vita, salus, et lux ætherea
Condonatur.

Abhinc multa facit prodigia ;
Lepram curat, fugat Dæmonia ;
Cæcis visum, claudis vestigio,
Verba mutis, ægris remedia
Imprecatur.

Vir Belial luit blasphemias
Quas in Sanctum arsit injurias ;
Visu dempto, tristes exsequias,
Maturando nefandas furias,
Terminavit.

Vir devotus in Sanctum Domini,
Zelo pravo sustractus lumini,
Sed mox datus visus acumini,
Laudes lætus divino nomini
Decantavit.

Cruces, factæ manu angelica,
Pii Patris prece benefica,
Crebro pollent virtute cœlica ;
Far fit humi, quod paralytica

Membra sanat.
Immolentur lucernæ geminæ
Accenduntur cœlesti lumine ;
Declaratur in vasis fragmine
Locum sanctum fraudes molimine
Qui profanat.

Calce puer qui matrem læ-
serat,
Pœnitendo calcem absci-
derat ;
Mox, ut opem Sancti pe-
tierat,
Bipedalem gressum meru-
erat,

Res stupenda !

Nauta potens in navi mys-
tica,
Nostra, Thoma, laudes et
cantica
Summo Regi prece gratifica
Et eidem prece magnifica
Nos commenda.

Amen.

A boy had kicked his mo-
ther, and repenting of his
deed, had maimed himself.
No sooner has he begged the
prayers of the Saint, than, oh !
wonderful miracle ! he re-
covers the use of both his
feet.

O Thomas ! thou skilful pi-
lot in the mystic Bark ! let
thy prayers give worth to our
praises and hymns, that they
be pleasing to the King, our
God ; and, by thy powerful
intercession, commend us to
the same !

Amen.

Our readers will not regret our giving insertion to the following beautiful Prose, taken from the ancient Missals of Liege.

PROSE.

Laureata novo Thoma,
Sicut suo Petro Roma,
Gaude Cantuaria !

Immo tota sit devota,
Pia laudum solvens vota,
Militans Ecclesia.

Thomas iste dum tuetur
Legem Dei, promeretur
Iram regis Angliæ.

Ergo pulsus urbe cedit,
Et transcurso mari, credit
Sese regi Franciæ.

Quem gratanter et con-
digne,
Tam devote quam benigne,
Sicut patrem visitat.

Rejoice, O Canterbury !
adorned with thy late Martyr,
Thomas, as Rome is with her
Peter.

Nay, let the whole Church
Militant be devout to thy
Saint, and pay him the holy
tribute of her praise.

This is the Pontiff, who
draws on himself the anger
of England's king, because he
defends the law of God.

For which reason he is sent
into banishment, and crossing
the sea, seeks protection from
the King of France.

The king receives him glad-
ly, as he well-deserved ; and
visits the Pontiff, devoutly
and affectionately, as he would
a father.

In France, Thomas, like a young novice, serves the King of kings with wonderful fervour.

At length, when peace was restored, though it was but the crafty show of peace, he returns to his country.

He asserts the Church's right, and serves his God; wherefore, the king, his artful enemy, grows mad with rage and wantons in his wrath.

Now like a cunning fox, and now like a savage tigress, he tries each door, each scheme :

At one time, threats; at another, flattery; but Thomas is nothing moved, unflinching as at first.

The king finding that the champion of the truth was not to be moved, and that his resolve was inflexible;

He turns all men against the Pastor, and whispers murder to a minion troop.

The parricides have understood the king; crafty and faithless, they enter the Church, that they may make away with the Champion of Liberty, and usurp his throne.

The Pontiff was at prayer in the sanctuary; he comes forth, heeding not the enemy. The serenity of his soul is ruffled not with fear of the raging troop; he goes to meet them.

The head of that saintly Priest, which had been fondly caressed on a mother's breast,

Now feels the edge of deadly steel; the blood gushes forth; and there, in the

Ubi, velut novus tyro,
Thomas, in fervore miro,
Regi regum militat.

Tandem pace reformata,
Pace dolis palliata,
Regressus ad propria.

Jura servans, Deo servit;
Inde sævit et protervit,
Hostis arte varia.

Nunc ut vulpes fradulenta,
Nunc ut tygris virulenta,
Tentat omnes aditus.

Nunc minatur, nunc blanditur,
Ille nihil emollitur,
Idem manens penitus.

Rex compertus non moveri

Virum assertorem veri,
Nec frangi propositum;

Omnes armat in Pastorem,
Cohortatur ad cruorem
Cohortem satellitum.

Ergo nequam patricidæ
Tam in fraude quam in fide,
Libertatis ut Patronum
Tollant et usurpent thronum,

Ruunt in Ecclesia.

Præsul orans in secreto,
Palam prodit, hoste spreto;
Nec turbat quies mentis
Turbæ metu sævientis,
Sed procedit obviam.

Sancti caput Sacerdotis,
Exoptatum mille votis
Suæ matris gremio,

Ferrum bibit, cruor manat,
Et ibidem cœcos sanat

In tumultu medio.

Quid loquamur quæ lo-
quuntur,
Per se satis eloquuntur,
Ubique miracula?
Dæmon cedit, mors obe-
dit,
Desperatis salus redit,
Fugit lepræ macula.

Cleri gemma, clare Tho-
ma,
Motus nostræ carnis doma
Precum efficacia.

Ut in Christo, vera vite,
Radicati, vera vitæ
Capiamus præmia.
Amen.

midst of all the disorder, gives sight to a blind man.

But, why need we tell what his miracles so eloquently proclaim throughout the world?

Devils are put to flight, death yields up her victims, health is restored to them that had lost all hope, and lepers are cleansed.

O thou gem of the Priesthood! O glorious Pontiff Thomas! thy prayers are ne'er refused—oh! calm the rebellion of our flesh.

That being rooted in Christ, the true Vine, we may receive the solid rewards of eternal life. Amen.

Thy Feast ends to-day, and we come before thee to pay thee a last tribute of our devotion, O glorious Champion of the Liberty of the Church! who standest near the Crib of our Emmanuel, as the representative of the combats he would have to fight in the future of his Church. The whole of Christendom implores thine intercession; but England claims thy special protection. Thou art one of her grandest glories, and neither heresy, which has laid waste the land, nor impiety, which has covered her with sacrilege, have made her forgetful of her great Martyr of Canterbury. She is now in the first years of a new period, which is fraught with promise of a bright future—and thy dear name is honoured with a love, which is worthy of the devotion shown thee in times now long passed away. Churches are being built in thy honour, on that very soil, where it was once made obligatory by law to hate thee. Each year is adding to the number of the members of the true Church; and they, whose conversion thus gladdens

the Angels of God, are men, whose early training taught them to look on contempt for Thomas à Beckett as a sign of patriotism and refinement. Each year, as thy Feast comes round, the day is kept with greater solemnity; thy merits are better understood, and the increase of faith sets men's hearts on thanking their God for having given thee to his Church as the type of a Bishop.

Bless, then, O holy Pontiff! this flock of thine own land, which is so fast increasing. Pray for them who are still wavering, that they may have light to see the light granted them by God. Three centuries of error and revolt!—oh! terrible but just chastisement of our dearest country! Pray that it may be taken away from her, and show, by thy loving intercession, that thou art still the good Shepherd and the affectionate Father.

At the bidding of the successor of Eleutherius and Gregory the Great, the Episcopal Hierarchy has reappeared in this beautiful Isle of ours, where thou wast once the Primate, vested with the sacred Pallium. Oh! protect the Bishops who are now so zealously governing the vineyard over which thou didst once preside, and for which thou didst shed thy blood. Ask our Lord to increase the number of his Priests; for the harvest is great, and the labourers are few. May they be endued, by the Master of the Vineyard, with the spirit of patience and courage; may they be powerful in word and work, and may their name, as thine is, be held in blessing by future generations!

THE SAME DAY.

THE VIGIL OF THE EPIPHANY.

WITH A COMMEMORATION OF
SAINT TELESOPHURUS, POPE AND MARTYR.

THE Feast of Christmas is over ; the five Octaves are closed ; and we are on the Eve of the Solemnity of our Lord's Epiphany. We must spend this fifth of January in preparing ourselves for the *Manifestation* which Jesus, the Angel of the Great Counsel, is about to make to us of his glory. A few more hours, and the Star will stand still in the heavens, and the Magi will be seeking for admission into the stable at Bethlehem.

This Vigil is not like that of Christmas, a day of penance. The Child, whose coming we were then awaiting, in the fervour of our humble desires, is now among us, preparing to bestow fresh favours upon us. This eve of to-morrow's Solemnity is a day of joy, like those that have preceded it ; and therefore, we do not fast, nor does the Church put on the vestments of mourning, even in those churches where the Octave Day of St. Thomas of Canterbury is not observed. If the Office of the Vigil be the one of to-day, the colour used is White. This is the Twelfth day since the Birth of our Emmanuel.

If the Vigil of the Epiphany fall on a Sunday, it shares, with Christmas Eve, the privilege of not being anticipated, as all other Vigils are, on the Saturday :

it is kept on the Sunday, has all the privileges of a Sunday, and the Mass is that of the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas Day. Let us, therefore, celebrate this Vigil in great joy of heart, and prepare our souls for to-morrow's graces.

The Greek Church keeps this a fasting-day, in memory of the preparation for Baptism, which used formerly to be administered, especially in the East, on the night preceding the feast of the Epiphany. She still solemnly blesses the Water on this Feast. We will, in our next volume, speak of this ceremony, of which some vestiges still remain in the Western Church.

The holy Church of Rome commemorates to-day the holy Pope and Martyr, St. Telesphorus. This Pontiff began his reign in the year 127; and among his decrees, we find that of his prescribing the holy sacrifice of the Mass to be offered up on Christmas Night, in order to honour the hour when our Saviour was born: he also ordered that the Angelic Hymn *Gloria in excelsis* should be said, on most days, at the beginning of Mass. This devotion of the holy Pope towards the great Mystery which we are now celebrating, renders his commemoration at this season of the year doubly dear to us. Telesphorus suffered a glorious martyrdom, as St. Ireneus expresses it, and was crowned with eternal glory in the year 138.

MASS.

The Mass of the Vigil of the Epiphany is that of the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas, except the Commemoration of St. Telesphorus and the Gospel.

INTROIT.

Dum medium silentium, page 375.

COLLECT.

Omnipotens, sempiternæ Deus, *page 376.*

Commemoration of St. Telesphorus.

OREMUS.

LET US PRAY.

Deus qui nos beati Telesphori, Martyris tui atque Pontificis, annua solemnitate lætificas : concede propitius ; ut cujus natalitia colimus, de ejusdem etiam protectione gaudeamus.

O God, who by the yearly solemnity of blessed Telesphorus, thy Martyr and Bishop, rejoicest the hearts of the faithful ; mercifully grant that we who celebrate his martyrdom may enjoy his protection.

Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin.

Deus, qui salutis æternæ, *page 421.*

EPISTLE.

Fratres, quanto tempore, *page 376.*

GRADUAL.

Speciosus forma, *page 377.*

GOSPEL.

Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Matthæum.

Sequel of the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Cap. II.

Ch. II.

In illo tempore : defuncto Herode, ecce Angelus Domini apparuit in somnis Joseph, in Ægypto, dicens : Surge, et accipe Puerum et Matrem ejus, et vade in terram Israel ; defuncti sunt enim qui quærebant animam Pueri. Qui consurgens accepit Puerum et Matrem ejus, et venit in terram Israel. Audiens autem quod Archelaus regnaret in Judæa pro Herode patre suo,

When Herod was dead, behold an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying : Arise and take the Child and his Mother, and go into the land of Israel : for they are dead that sought the life of the Child. Who arose, and took the Child and his Mother, and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was

afraid to go thither : and being warned in sleep retired into the quarters of Galilee. And coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth : that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets : That he shall be called a Nazarite.

timuit illo ire : et admonitus in somnis, secessit in partes Galilææ. Et veniens habitavit in civitate quæ vocatur Nazareth : ut adimpleretur quod dictum est per Prophetas : quoniam Nazaræus vocabitur.

OFFERTORY.

Deus firmavit, *page 379.*

SECRET.

Concede, quæsumus, *page 380.*

Commemoration of St. Telesphorus.

Sanctify, O Lord, the offerings consecrated to thee : and being appeased thereby, mercifully look upon us, by the intercession of blessed Telesphorus, thy Martyr and Bishop.

Munera tibi, Domine, dicata sanctifica : et, intercedente beato Telesphoro, Martyre tuo atque Pontifice, per eadem nos placatus intende.

Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin.

Muneribus nostris, *page 424.*

COMMUNION.

Tolle puerum, *page 380.*

Commemoration of St. Telesphorus.

LET US PRAY.

OREMUS.

May this communion, O Lord, cleanse us from sin, and by the intercession of blessed Telesphorus, thy Martyr and Bishop, make us effectually partakers of this heavenly remedy.

Refecti participatione muneris sacri, quæsumus, Domine Deus noster, ut cujus exsequimur cultum, intercedente beato Telesphoro, Martyre tuo atque Pontifice, sentiamus effectum.

Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin.

Hæc nos communitio, *page 425.*

The last words of our *Advent* were those of the Spouse, recorded in the prophecy of the Beloved Disciple : *Come, Lord Jesus, come !*¹ We will close this first part of our *Christmas* with those words of the Prophet Isaias, which the Church has so often spoken to us : *unto us a Child is born !*² The heavens have dropped down their Dew, the clouds have rained down the Just One, the earth has yielded its Saviour, THE WORD IS MADE FLESH, the Virgin has brought forth her sweet Fruit—our Emmanuel, that is, *God with us*. The Sun of Justice now shines upon us ; darkness has fled ; in heaven there is Glory to God ; on earth, there is Peace to men. All these blessings have been brought to us by the humble yet glorious Birth of this Child. Let us adore him in his Crib ; let us love him for all his love of us ; and let us prepare the gifts we intend to present to him, with the Magi, on to-morrow's Feast. The joy of the Church is as great as ever ; the Angels are adoring in their wondering admiration ; all nature thrills with delight :—*Unto us is born a little Child !*

¹ Apoc. xxii. 20.

² Is. ix. 6.

A P P E N D I X.

HYMN.

[The stanzas usually sung are marked thus *]

* Come, ye Faithful, in joy
and triumph, to Bethlehem,
and gaze on the new-born
King of Angels! Come, let
us adore the Lord!

* The Virgin's womb carries
the God of God, the Light of
Light, the true God, that was
born, not made. Come, let
us adore the Lord!

Lo! the Shepherds are
called, and, leaving their
flocks, hasten to the humble
Crib. Let us, also, go thither,
with joy. Come, let us adore
the Lord!

We shall see the eternal
brightness of the Eternal Fa-
ther hid under the veil of
Flesh—the Infant-God wrapt
in swaddling-clothes. Come,
let us adore the Lord!

Let us devoutly embrace
Him, who, for our sakes, is
become poor and lies on straw.

* Adeste fideles, læti, tri-
umphantes,
Venite, venite in Bethle-
hem!

Natum videte Regem An-
gelorum!

Venite adoremus! Venite
adoremus!

Venite adoremus Domi-
num!

* Deum de Deo, Lumen
de Lumine,

Gestant Puellæ viscera,
Deum verum genitum non
factum.

Venite adoremus! &c.

En grege relicto, humiles
ad cunas

Vocati Pastores adprope-
rant:

Et nos ovanti gradu festi-
nemus.

Venite adoremus! &c.

Æterni Parentis splendo-
rem æternum

Velatum sub carne videbi-
mus,

Deum Infantem pannis in-
volutum.

Venite adoremus! &c.

Pro nobis egenum et fœno
cubantem

Piis foveamus amplexibus.

Sic nos amantem quis non
redamaret?

Venite adoremus! &c.

* Cantet nunc Io chorus
angelorum,

Cantet nunc aula cœles-
tium:

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Venite adoremus! &c.

* Ergo qui natus die ho-
dierna,

Jesu, tibi sit gloria!

Patris æterni Verbum caro
factum!

Venite adoremus! &c.

Oh! who will refuse to love
Him, who so loves us? Come,
let us adore the Lord!

* Let the Angel choir now
sing its Hymns. Let the court
of the Blessed give forth its
Glory be to God in the highest!
Come, let us adore the Lord!

* To thee, O Jesus! who
art this day born, be glory.
Glory be to thee, O Word of
the Eternal Father, that art
now made Flesh! Come, let
us adore!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME,





