

FLOWERS OF MARY:

OR

DEVOTIONS

For each Month in the Year.

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TO
OUR MOTHER MARY,

THE DOVE, THE UNDEFILED, THE BEAUTIFUL ;
THE SPOTLESS NEST WHEREIN THE LAMB LAY HIDDEN ;
THE SUNSHINE OF ANGELS, AND THE HOPE OF MEN ;
THE STAR OF THE SEA, AND THE GUIDE OF THE WANDERER ;
THE LILY OF THE FIELD, CULLED FROM ITS LOWLINESS TO ADORN
THE COURTS OF PARADISE ;
THE RESTORER OF THE FALLEN ; THE GATE OF HEAVEN (FOR AS
THE FIRST EVE CLOSED TO US ITS PORTALS BY TASTING OF
THE FRUIT OF THE TREE, SO THE SECOND EVE, BY
THE FRUIT OF HER WOMB HANGING ON THE
TREE, REOPENED ITS GOLDEN DOORS) ;
JOY OF THE SIMPLE, WHOM SHE LOVES ;
REFUGE OF SINNERS, WHOM SHE SAVES ;
MOTHER OF ALL MANKIND, WHOM SHE EMBRACES IN HER
MATERNAL ARMS WITH INCONCEIVABLE CHARITY :

TO MARY,
WHOSE VERY NAME IS SWEETER FAR THAN SWEETEST MUSIC :

TO MARY,
WHO HAS PLEADED UNWEARIEDLY FOR HER WAYWARD CHILDREN
FROM THE HOUR IN WHICH SHE LAID HER SAVIOUR AND
HER CHILD IN HIS MANGER-BED, AND, FOLDING HER
PALE HANDS, BEGAN THAT DOVE-LIKE PRAYER,
SO MEEK AND SO EARNEST, IN WHICH SHE
HAS NEVER WEARIED, AND WHICH SHE
WILL NEVER CEASE TO OFFER UNTIL
THE LAST MORTAL HAS CEASED
TO BREATHE :

TO MARY
This little Work is dedicated,
WITH A MOST EARNEST ENTREATY THAT SHE WILL TAKE IT,
AND ALL WHO PERFORM THESE DEVOTIONS, UNDER
HER SPECIAL PROTECTION, AND SHELTER THEM
IN HER IMMACULATE HEART, IN THE STRIFE
OF LIFE, IN THE HOUR OF DEATH, AND
IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.



PREFACE.

It has long been a pious custom to dedicate the different days of the week to certain devotions: thus, on Sunday, most persons offer their actions in honour of the Blessed Trinity; on Monday, of the Holy Ghost; on Tuesday, of the Angels; and few, indeed, forget on Wednesday the holy Patriarch St. Joseph, or on Saturday the gentle Queen of Angels. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi used to pine for Thursdays, and call it the "day of love," because of the institution on this day of the most Holy Sacrament; and time would fail did we attempt to enumerate the saints who have made Fridays a day of suffering and humiliation in memory of their crucified God.

Some of the months of the year also have their special devotions. In January, we think of the Holy Infancy; in March, we have St. Joseph; in May, our Mother Mary; in June, the Precious Blood; in August, the Sacred Heart of Mary; in October, the Holy Angels; in November, our dear deceased and suffering brethren. The plan of this little work is simply to enlarge upon these devotions, already almost established by custom, and to endeavour to induce others to enter into them more fully, and thus to increase *practical piety*; for, after all, to be practical is to be earnest, and

to be earnest is not far from being saintly. It is also hoped that if the little plan of devotion here proposed is carried out by many persons, much good will result from it. What may not be done for ourselves and others by *united efforts*! Imagine a hundred persons agreeing during the month of May to plead unweariedly for the conversion of sinners, and to ask it through her intercession who is the Refuge of sinners; if they did not obtain the conversion of the entire world, at least would not their prayers and fervour go a long, long way towards consoling the Heart of Jesus for the coldness and wilfulness of those who *will* not be saved? And would they not themselves have advanced far on the road to great sanctity? Yes, it is *united, persevering, earnest efforts* that we want when there is question of graces to be gained, or souls to be saved. Do any of us, even the most fervent, ever pray fervently enough? What was the prayer of Jesus? agony, blood, anguish, utter prostration. Oh, think you, was His prayer in the garden the only prayer in which He “agonised”? was He not forty days in the wilderness, tempted of devils, haunted by beasts of prey? And where did He go when the weary day of His most weary ministry was over? was it to rest His exquisitely delicate Frame, that which His Sacred Humanity made to endure all that it was possible for humanity to suffer in its keenest, bitterest anguish? Oh, no! the cold mountain was His place of rest, and prayer—such prayer as thrilled and wore away his very life-strings—His only repose. And yet we marvel if our cold supplications are not answered sooner; we are wearied and discouraged if we get not the graces and hear not of the conversions for which we think we have so anxiously asked. And be it so that we have prayed with fervour, let us be con-

tent ; we will have the merit of it, and Jesus the glory. What more can we desire ? How were His prayers answered ? Ah, let Calvary tell ! three-and-thirty years of unearthly sufferings, of keenest anguish of soul and body, and then a death rather of a broken heart than of mere bodily anguish ; and this the meed for all His zeal for sinners. How many converts had our dearest Lord to reward His soul's deep thirst for men's salvation ? and of His converts, how many were a joy to Him ? " I have prayed for him so often ; I can do no more." How frequently we hear such exclamations ! And yet can we tell how often our dearest Lord prayed for Peter, the prince of His Apostles, or for the traitor Judas ? When we get any idea of the tenderness of the Heart of Jesus, then we may faintly guess. And yet, though it often appears to us there is little or no fruit from our prayers, this may or may not be ; the operations of Divine grace are so deeply hidden and so silent that, perhaps, as the Imitation of Christ says, when we think all lost, then there is the greatest hope of gain. If we know not whether we are worthy of love or hatred, how can we tell what is doing in our souls ? Much we may and must know certainly, and our superiors or spiritual guides may know much more ; but still there is a work going on if we are at all earnest, of which, perhaps, we have but little idea ourselves. A few rough blows will hew out the block of marble from the mountain side ; but how many delicate touches, how many thoughtfully chiselled lines, are needed ere that block appears before us modelled by a master-hand into forms of beauty ! We see all around us the loveliness of creation, the deep blue of the summer sky, the burning tints of the golden sunset, the varied shades of so many flowers like, and

yet wonderfully unlike, each other, no two formed exactly in the same way, no two having exactly the same perfume; and if the Eternal gave to flowers such varied graces, and, if we may say so reverently, bestowed such thought on perfecting that which was made to perish, how much more will He not stoop, even from the throne of His glory, for the culture of those flowers who are to bloom for ever with an incredible variety of fragrance and beauty in His Paradise! We may well suppose that even the saints who have known most of the Divine secrets, and have been gifted with interior lights enabling them to discern what passed in the souls of others as well as in their own, have scarcely had more than glimpses of the wonderful work which, day by day, goes on in human hearts. How each day fresh graces are prepared for each soul; how their correspondence with these graces is watched for, pined for, by the Heart of Jesus, by our Mother Mary, by our angel-friends. Oh, how beautiful, were it but given us to see the progress of sanctification in one soul called to high sanctity, and corresponding to this call! Could we see the delicately prepared providences, the little annoyances, the great crosses, the interior trials, now light, now crushing to the very earth; could we hear the low murmurs of the Dove, the gentle whispers of the Angel, all calling the same way, all helping the happy soul to attain the same end; and could we then behold the joy of God as He gazes on the soul sparkling before Him with ever-added gems of merit, and then to see that soul lowly, utterly self-abased, dreaming not of its own beauty or its future reward, forgetting almost its own existence in its love of God, and its thirst that He should be more loved by others! Surely the most wonderful and loveliest work

in creation must be a soul that is day by day growing more and more saintly under the touch of its Divine Modeller ; and could we but for one moment gaze on such a soul, truly all earthly sights and sounds would seem dark and dim to us. Yes, God is our most dear Father, and loves us with an anxious, tender love, as far beyond our earthly conception as is the greatness of His Majesty. The more we realise this love, the more we shall advance in sanctity, for love begets love. But how shall we know more of the love of God ? how shall we *convince* ourselves that this love is as great as it is ? How, but just by acting as we would towards a fellow-mortal who had shown us great kindness, and with whom we wished therefore to be intimate and on familiar terms ;—familiar, that most expressive word, so often used amiss, so little understood ; “familiar,” yes, part of the family, one of the household. And why are we not familiar with our dearest Lord, when He, fearful lest the Majesty of His Divinity should overcome us and drive us from Him, shrouded its brightness by assuming the faded mantle of our humanity, and called Himself our Brother, when He might have condemned us as our Judge ? And how is this familiarity to be attained ? Surely by conversing constantly and affectionately, heart to heart, with our friend. Why is there so little of the spirit of prayer amongst us ? why is it considered so much a duty and so little a pleasure ? why, but simply because we are grand and dignified when we should be humble and affectionate ; as if the grandeur or well-wordedness of our prayers could make them more acceptable to Him whose converse is with little ones. It is just to remedy such defects as these, and to lead persons to more easy, simple habits of constant prayer and

ejaculations in a way which will interest them, and by interesting them make this practice easier, that these little devotions are proposed.

The great object of our lives is, or ought to be, to become saints ; and what is sanctity but always to do the will of our Heavenly Father ? It matters little, so little, *what* we do ; but it matters much, it is all, how and why we perform every action. Many of us may be guided by obedience, and let us learn to be grateful for this mercy ; others must learn the will of God from the circumstances in which they may be placed, as to exterior actions ; but there is a spring of motives deep within us which affects these, and suggests a thousand little words and looks, and even actions, independent of our more obvious exterior duties. It is this interior spring over which we must especially watch ; it is these impulses we must seek to sanctify. Why are we not saints ? Is it because we have never had an ecstasy, seen a vision, or heard with our material ears the voices of the angels ? Oh, let us ever remember that these high favours are the awful privileges of sanctity ; but they do not *make* a saint. It is the faithful, earnest, persevering, self-denying, *continuous* effort always and every where to do the holy will of God, in the *very least* things as well as in the greatest, which makes us saints ; and if we are not such, it is probably because we have not had the *courage* to conquer ourselves in little things. Let us try again, let us begin anew ; a spirit of prayer, which can only be acquired by constant, patient, earnest efforts, will be our surest help ; and we hope that those who, with child-like simplicity, will enter into these little practices will find in them an aid to attain this blessed end. Let us not be *ashamed to be simple*, to be like little children ; for it is on such

souls that the choicest gifts of Divine love are most richly outpoured.

One object is suggested for all during each month ; the particular intention of each can be easily added to this. It is also hoped that this little plan, following as it does the Church's year, will create an increased, and we had almost said personal, interest in each holy season as it comes ; and that thus we may reap a larger measure of those blessings which the Church pours out so abundantly on her solemn festivals. Each will have something to do, some office to fulfil immediately connected with the great events commemorated ; and thus, it may be, they will be more realised.

These little devotions are alike suitable to the cloister and the world. They have already been used by religious, and have enlivened and animated many who have entered into them with the child-like simple pleasure so peculiarly the charm and the joy of the cloistered life. On the last day of each month one of the community should have little billets prepared, on each of which should be written the names of the seven or nine offices for the month ; these may be held in the right hand of the religious deputed to go round with them to the sisters, and as each draws what falls to her lot, they can be returned as soon as the office is known and placed in the left hand, so that when the seventh or ninth is drawn, the whole number of billets may again be taken in the right hand, and the drawing continued until each member of the community has received her office. It is advised for persons in the world whose families do not contain a sufficient number for the offices, that they should join with others so as to complete them ; or should there be any quite alone, who could not carry out

this suggestion, let them draw a lot for themselves, and be assured that in the Communion of Saints they have brethren and sisters who are joining with them in their loving ejaculations and holy practices, and that the little stream of incense from their lonely prayer, while it loses not its individuality, will, ere it has reached the Eternal Throne, have mingled itself with the rich cloud of sweetest perfume which is ever ascending into Heaven and filling its courts with joy.

It will be observed that many of the practices are peculiarly intended for religious; probably they will be mostly used in the convent, and by those who, though they have not had the happiness to be entirely devoted to their Heavenly Spouse, are yet leading as saintly lives amid the world's distractions, and perchance with more merit than those who are sheltered from it. A very slight alteration, however, will suffice to make these devotions applicable to all: if we have not superiors, we have spiritual guides; if we have not religious sisters and a community life, we have our parents or relations with whom we live, and in whose regard we may and ought in a certain measure to practise those virtues which, while they constitute the essence and perfection of the religious life, are still but Christian duties. For schools and children, even amongst the poor, it is hoped they will also be found useful, not only as devotions which may lead them on insensibly to far higher things and to habits of prayer and serious thought, but even as an innocent recreation, to which they will look forward with no little pleasure; for it has been found by experience that children enter into these things far more readily than those who have not studied their characters and their tastes would imagine. Those religious who

have classes for instruction, either from the higher or lower ranks of society, are advised at least to *try* this plan. After explaining to their charge the object of each month's devotion, let each draw her lot, and then in some simple way have the practice attached to it explained to them; and then let it be suggested to them to make the ejaculations, or to say a *Hail Mary* for the intention, two or three times during the day.

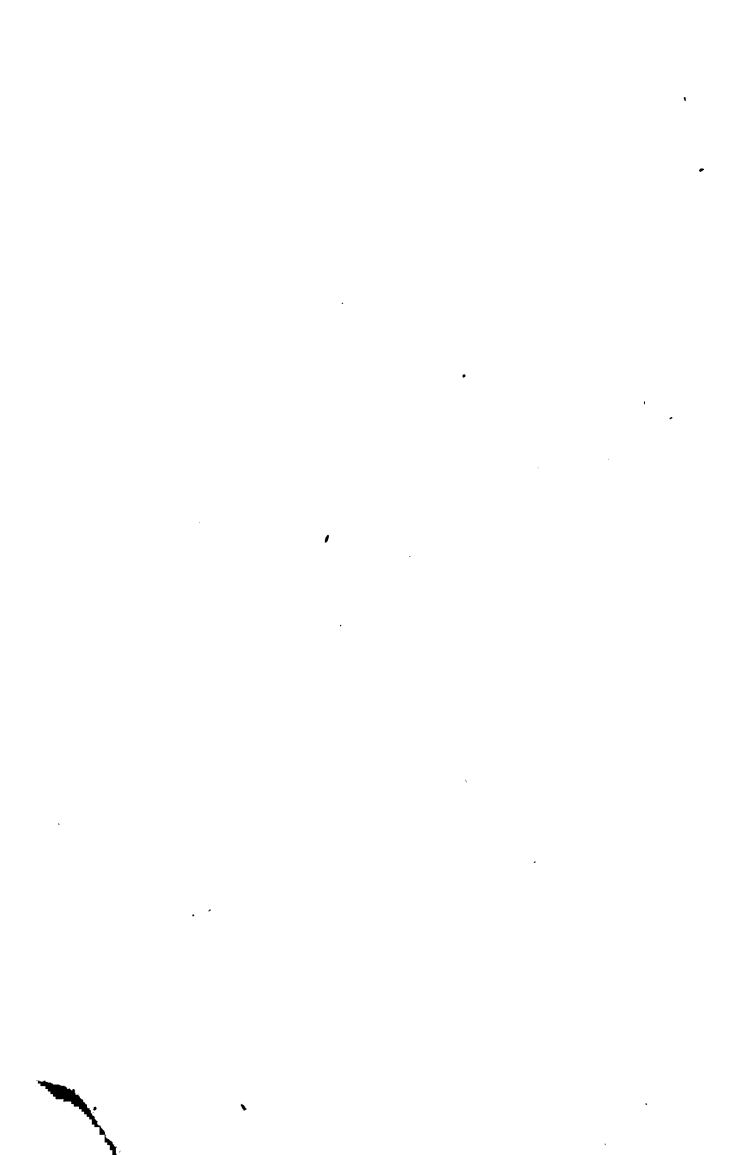


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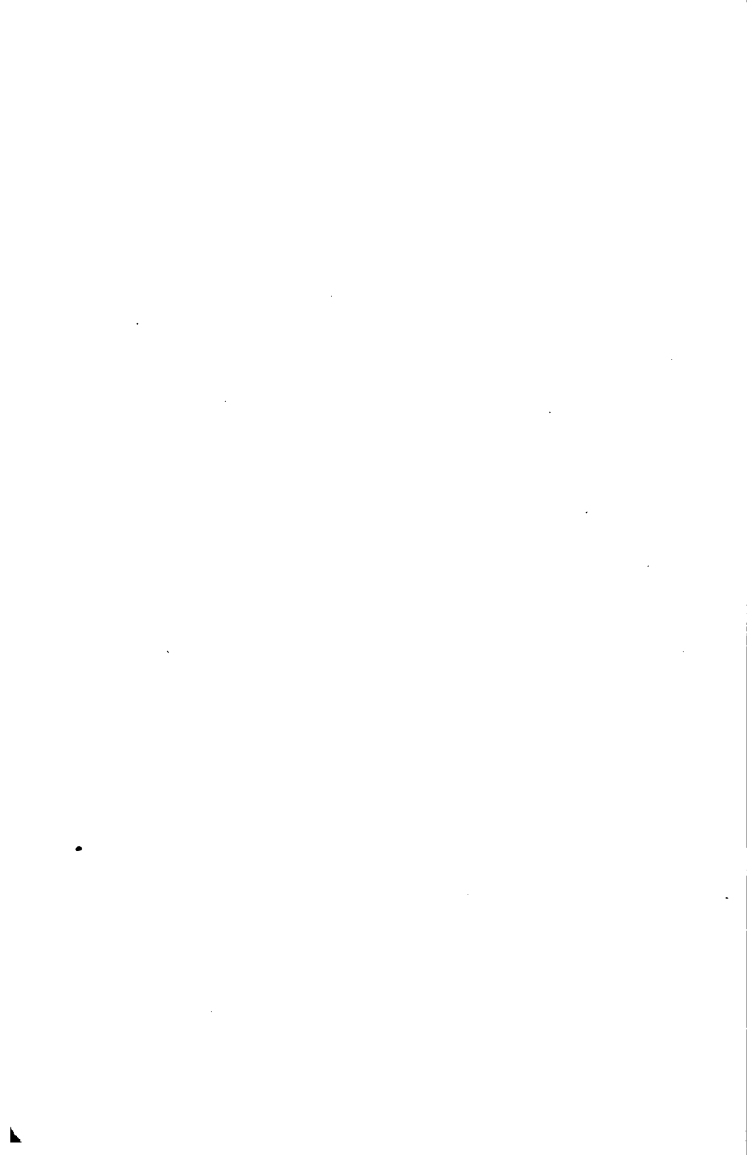


Flowers of Mary.



JANUARY.

Month of the Holy Childhood.





JANUARY.

Month of the Holy Childhood.

TRULY this must be the month of little children,—of prayer for them, of thought of them, and of desire to be like them. The “Month of the Holy Childhood;”—what volumes of tender love and sweetest mystery are contained in these words! Let us see if we cannot do something during this happy time for little children, and for ourselves, that we may be converted and become like them.

How shall we begin this blessed work? It is the Octave of Christmas. Our cribs are open still, and Alleluias are ringing in our ears.

We have striven as best we could to make our little mystical Bethlehem, and each one has represented something which has been connected with the little Infant Jesus. We have been so enraptured with love, that tears and smiles have been our only relief. Never have we seen an Infant so beautiful, so winning, so tender; never have we known a Mother so fair and gentle. We can scarcely leave the poor stable, with its rich graces and its warm love. We have gone over to Bethlehem, and we have found it so good to be there, that we can scarcely bear to leave it even for an hour. We have learned most wonderful lessons; we have made beautiful resolutions; we have trembled with fear in thought of the coming Advent, and with love at the recollection of that which is past. But we must work as well as pray, and practise as well as learn. It is the new year: the bells have chimed it in right merrily; the young are glad, for change ever brings pleasure to them; the old weep, for they are thinking of beloved ones who are laid low in their quiet graves, and they miss the greetings of their childhood. It is the new year; and there are perhaps but few, very few, who do not miss some familiar face, who do not grieve for some familiar smile. Perhaps ere another Feast of the Circumcision, we shall also have looked our last on earth. Oh, if we were sure of this, what a new year we would spend! how earnest, how anxious, how prayerful we would be! Are we, then, so certain of life that we may securely build on our certainty? Would there be no gain to us if we acted on this

doubt, and strove each year to live as if we were sure it would be our last? The mighty monarch Death is approaching us; it may be that his step is slow and stealthy, but it is not the less sure. It may be that his strides are rapid and silent, and that we shall not hear his footsteps until they have passed our threshold. It is the new year; we are congratulating each other, and making our best offerings to our beloved ones. Have we nothing to give the Beloved of all beloved? Have we no offering for our little King? Oh, come, let us get ready our best new-year's gift and present it to the little Babe of Bethlehem. Let us, if we may say so reverently, make Jesus one of the children of our family. Let us invite Him to become our guest for this month, and treat Him with all the honour our love and loyalty can prompt.

We cannot doubt that devotion to the Holy Infancy is peculiarly pleasing to our dearest Lord. Those childlike and blessed saints, who have honoured it with special tenderness, have experienced repeated proofs of the pleasure which this devotion has given to their Jesus. Again and again have those thrice-happy ones been favoured with apparitions of the Divine Infant, and their souls overwhelmed with the ineffable tenderness of His caress. St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Teresa, and blessed Dominica of Paradiso recur to our memory almost involuntarily; and we picture to ourselves, with burning love, the joy which was theirs in beholding their Infant God. But dear as is the stable of Bethlehem, we must not always dwell there. Egypt and Naza-

reth have their tales to tell, and we must learn what our sweet Saviour did and said in the days of His holy Childhood. There are few, very few, who are called to lives of constant suffering, fewer still to whom is given the mysterious privilege of nearness to their Lord in the mystic and awful woes of His agony and Passion : in this we may not, we cannot, imitate Him ; but all are called to copy His life at Nazareth. To share in Calvary is the privilege of the most saintly, the joy of the most seraphic. To dwell at Nazareth is the privilege and the duty of the humblest poorest child. O Child Jesus, teach us what Thou didst do, what Thou didst say, and how Thou didst perform all Thy actions ; and give us grace to practise the lessons which Thou wilt teach us.

Our daily lives are made up of ordinary duties ; we rise in the morning at a certain hour, we occupy ourselves during the day with certain employments, we recreate ourselves, and again as night falls we return to the repose which strengthens our bodies for renewed labours. Those who live together in one family, or community, are perhaps occupied in the same duties at the same time ; but how great is the difference in the interior spirit, which accompanies the exterior occupation, and in which all its value consists ! Let us consider the life of our blessed Saviour at Nazareth, and endeavour, by a month's thoughtful love and constant adoration of its mysteries, to learn how He would have us live. What do we behold in the cottage of the carpenter ? A man, a woman, a little Child. Apparently these are like their fellows :

apparently Joseph works, as does every other poor mechanic, to support his family ; apparently Mary toils, as other women must, for her domestic needs ; and the sweet Child who aids her, as far as His feeble strength will permit, does not He seem like other children of the poor ? The daily exterior occupations of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were just those of a very poor family ; but, oh, could we read their inmost souls, could we see their inmost hearts, we should then indeed learn a lesson we could never forget. It was a life all for God ; not that it was all prayer, in the sense in which we usually understand the word, but rather because every action, every thought, every word, was an act of the sublimest worship. We are too much inclined to think only of our Blessed Lord's more active life, of His sufferings, His death ; we forget how much He honoured God and merited for us by every action of His lowly hidden life at Nazareth. If we thought more of this, we should be more careful to unite our actions with His, and to model them as we believe He would have done.

Let us begin this year, then, by seeking to perform our actions as we think our sweet Jesus would have done, to unite them with His, and to offer continually His labours, His watchings, His rest, His eating, His steps, the beatings of His heart during His human life, to the Eternal Father. We little know the mysteries and treasures of those hidden thirty years ; but if we honour them more, and strive humbly to study them, we shall share largely in their

inexhaustible store of merits, and obtain many lights and graces for our own sanctification.

But that which impresses us most forcibly at Nazareth, as we glance at its exterior, is the poverty and the obedience of Jesus. The poverty : oh, how we love riches ; oh, how we cling to them even when we *must* leave them ; how our hearts are set on them even when with our lips we declare that all is vanity ! What is all neglect of the poor, and all preference of the rich, but a plain declaration that Herod in the palace is dearer to us than Jesus in the stable ? This month, at least, we will begin to learn something of the poverty of Nazareth. We shall see our Infant God preferring want and homelessness to riches and a throne ; we shall see our Blessed Mother toiling for her daily bread ; we will consider Jesus, grown to the age of manhood, labouring at the trade of His reputed father, and finding a means of subsistence by painfully carving the wood He had created out of nothing. What a lesson of poverty, what a lesson of labour !

There are few of us who are called to imitate our Blessed Lord by an entire renunciation of all earthly possessions : happy, thrice happy, they who are thus privileged, and who know and value the favour granted to them ; but every Christian is most assuredly called to copy the example of his Master in his degree. What should we do, then, during this month to imitate, to understand, the poverty of the Child Jesus ? Labour is the inseparable accompaniment of poverty, and perhaps its severest trial ; and there are none of us, however rich in this world's goods,

who may not and ought not to suffer in this way. Let us see what our sweet Jesus is doing. He works all day for the needs of others. He is His own servant, nay more, He is the servant of all. Who waits on Mary to carry water for her household needs? who attends Joseph to assist him in the drudgery of his occupations? It is still the holy Child Jesus. But we may say, how can we imitate Him in this? our position in life requires us to have servants, our wealth enables us to live without a trade. Well, be it so; were there not legions of angels waiting, longing,—oh, with what ardent desire!—to serve their God, and was not the wealth of worlds at His command? Are there no little hidden ways, ways which may be unseen or unnoticed by others, in which we can practise poverty? Ah! love is ingenious, it will soon tell us what we should do. Can we not find opportunities of waiting on ourselves and others? can we not spare our servants many an unnecessary labour? can we not go to the cottages of the poor, and do them some service of love which may be seen only by the angels? Can we not deny ourselves many and many a little comfort and luxury which our wealth would permit us to have? and doing all this in honour of the poverty of Jesus, we shall surely have a rich reward. Besides, we have all some duty in life to fulfil, some special work which is entirely our own, some work which if *we* do not accomplish will be left undone. We cannot surely be at a loss to find out what our talent is, though it be but one, and perhaps we may think but a poor one. Jesus

does not measure our love by the multiplicity or the nobleness of our actions : where He gives but one talent He does not expect a hundredfold in return ; but He does expect we will use what He has given. Our duty may be to nurse a sick or feeble parent, to soothe and cheer a dying brother or sister, to teach our little ones, to watch over our household, to work for the poor or to visit them ; or even we may have a talent like theirs who embroidered rich hangings for the tabernacle of the older dispensation, and this we may use to adorn the earthly resting-places of our dearest Lord. It matters little what the work is which He has given us to do, but it does matter a great deal that we should do it with all our hearts ; not as a mere pastime or recreation, but in a spirit of laborious love. We might learn much of the poverty of Nazareth, and enter deeply into the sufferings of the holy Child, did we undertake all our duties with this motive. Let us begin this year to do so, if we have not begun before. Let us imagine we are living with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, in the holy house of Nazareth ; and perform every action and duty as if it were to be done for them and with them. How few persons there are who really and laboriously enter into their occupations ! If our circumstances in life preclude us from suffering that poverty which is the portion of those who have none of this world's wealth, and we are thus deprived of the privilege of their likeness to Jesus, we may still suffer, and suffer most effectually, by this means. Hunger does not

compel us to work for food; the cries of our starving children do not urge us to strain every nerve to obtain necessaries for them; the bitter cold of winter does not chill our limbs; we are not summoned at the first dawn of the gray damp morning to the factory or the workshop; we are not obliged by stern necessity to fulfil any of our daily tasks: but let us make a necessity for ourselves, and compel ourselves to certain employments at certain times, and not excuse ourselves for slight indispositions or pleasant interruptions; let us seek to fulfil these duties in a spirit of labour, to work as hard at them as if our subsistence depended on their accomplishment, and on their being done perfectly, and we shall soon experience some of the effects of poverty. Let us try the plan for at least one month, steadily and continuously, and we shall soon experience the benefit of it. We shall learn to love Jesus more; for the more we suffer for Him and with Him, the more we shall become like Him, and to become like Him is to increase in love.

But there are other ways in which we may honour the poverty of Jesus. Our efforts should always begin with ourselves, but they must not end there. Are there no poor around our dwellings, no suffering ones near our happy homes? are there no Nazareths which we may visit, no Josephs whom we may assist? Happy, thrice happy shall we be if we honour the Holy Infancy, first by endeavouring ourselves to imitate the virtues which we see in the blessed Child Jesus, and then by doing all in our

power to assist those whom He came to redeem. It is, indeed, most painful to think how the poor suffer from the neglect and indifference of the rich. We go to Mass on Christmas-day, and we hear of the little Babe new-born; we are told of all His poverty and of all His love; and we think, had we but lived in Judea in the days when Julius Cæsar declared that all the world should be taxed, that we at least would not have suffered Jesus and Mary to dwell in a stable, and tremble with cold and poverty. We think how we would have cared for their wants, and aided them to the utmost of our power. We would have spared nothing; we would have denied ourselves, not only every comfort, but every necessary. We shudder with horror at the cruelty of Herod, and the neglect of the Jews; and we return to our comfortable homes, and are fully satisfied that we do indeed love our sweet Jesus more than ourselves, more than our wealth, more than our comforts. And what of the Bethlehems that are close to us? what of the poor who have no Christmas dinner? what of those who are as cold, as hungry, and as naked as was the Blessed Saviour? what of those who are in all the deep sorrows of poverty and sickness, to whom even Christmas brings no ray of gladness? Has not our Blessed Lord said, "Forasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me"? Has He not promised to reward even the cup of cold water? Oh, what are we about, what are we thinking of, what are we doing? Lazarus is at our gate, and we pass him by in silent

neglect. Jesus is close to us, and we will not minister to His wants.

But it may be said, what more can we do? We have been charitable, we have given large alms, we have fed the hungry and clothed the naked; but there must be some limit, some discretion, we must think of our families, of our children, of our parents. Thank God that you have done so much; but, oh, it is hard to say where should be our limit, where our discretion, when Jesus is in want. What mother could eat the last morsel of bread in her poor cottage when her hungry child was famishing for need? And yet our very dearest Lord does not ask us to deprive ourselves of necessaries for love of Him, but only of luxuries and superfluities. If we cannot make some sacrifice, some renunciation, which will cost us at least a little inconvenience, how can we ever think that we love our Infant Jesus? Oh, let us go to Nazareth, and learn there to love poverty, and to practise it as best we can; to honour the poor, and to relieve them to the very utmost of our power; at least, not to hinder those who are called to higher sanctity, and have the grace, like that Blessed One, though rich to become poor. The simple reason why we are not more charitable is, that we have so little faith. And yet can we be so sure that if we had lived in the days of the holy Infancy we would have acted more kindly to Jesus than we do now to His poor? rather ought we not to make the measure of what we do for them the measure of what we would have done for Him? Why has He so often appeared to simple

and saintly souls under the guise of a beggar or a leper, and just at the moment when they had given away all, and seemed to have nothing left but their love, implored them for some alms, or for some article of almost necessary raiment? Why but to increase our faith, to enkindle afresh our devotion, to show us, if we may say so reverently, that He really meant what He has said, and that what is done even to the least of His brethren is done to Himself. Oh, we have been cold and tepid long enough: already the dawn of the coming morn is breaking over the distant hills; already the light is streaming up over the eastern sky, and tinging with glory the gray horizon; already the signs of an end are near; the six days of labour are all but spent, and the freshness of the Sabbath of rest is craved and anticipated by our wearied souls. If the night was far spent two thousand years ago, how far must it have passed now! The stars are paler, the saints are fewer, and the dim moon is sinking slowly from our gaze; the Church is oppressed and troubled, nations are angry and turbulent; all things speak of change,—of coming strife, the precursor of coming rest. How can we tell when the sign of the Son of Man shall be seen in the heavens? how can we tell when the solemn trumpet will be heard? It is time that we dispose of our treasures; it is time that we should send them on before us and place them in safe keeping; it is time that we should prepare, by works of mercy and of love, to hear the sentence which will be according to the measure of

our deeds of charity. How many sick have we consoled? how many hungry have we fed? how many have we visited in prison? Yes, it is time we should begin and add to our store of merits, and obtain those pledges of salvation which will be most surely accepted at the last great day. Let us leave prudence and respectability and necessity for those who have but little love, and who will have but little reward. Let ours be the generosity of true nobility, which seeks only the Beloved and His glory. Yes, let us even suffer inconvenience and privation for those who represent Jesus to us, and do this rather because we love than because we shall merit. Who delays to calculate the thanks or reward which a self-devoted effort for a friend will bring? poor indeed would be such love; but our month at Nazareth will teach us more than this. Had our sweet Jesus counted the souls who would be saved, and the number of those who would give Him their all, and love Him with heroic love, and made the measure of His reward the measure of His sacrifice, where should we now be?

We have spoken of the wealthy, of those who must make labour for themselves, that they may experience some of the effects of the poverty of Nazareth; but these are by no means the largest class of the community. Between the poor and the rich there is a middle class, whose possessions may be lesser or greater, but whose circumstances are much alike, in that they are all obliged to labour in one way or another for their support. Oh, what a

lesson, what an encouragement, what a blessing, Nazareth may be to them! Let such as these spend a month with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and they will reap a treasure far more precious than that for which they have hitherto laboured. Their place may be in the workroom, behind the counter, at the desk: it matters not; all, all may be done for Jesus and with Jesus; He will count every weary stitch, every stroke of the hammer, every action of the seller or buyer. He remembers Nazareth, its household cares, its weary fatiguing labours; and even from the glories of His Father's throne, and amid the blazing light reflected from a thousand seraphs, His eyes behold the children of men and try their ways; and when He comes again amid the terrific thunders of that day of awe, and renders to every man according to his works, there shall be counted untold abundance of heavenly treasures to those who have suffered and laboured for God alone. Yes, whatever may be your occupation, whatever your daily employment, live in spirit at Nazareth: behold your God subject to all the necessities that try you so much; behold Him working for His daily bread; behold His poverty, His silence, His humility, His obedience. Consider well how perfectly He performed each action which you perhaps think too mean or too trifling to be noticed by Him; and strive, for His love, to labour and to fulfil all your duties with the utmost diligence. You *must* do them to gain earthly wealth; you *may* also do them so as to enrich yourselves with celestial treasures.

Consider also the obedience of your Infant God. He is born because the time is come at which the Eternal Father has willed He should appear. He is born in the place and under the circumstances appointed for Him: He desires no other, He seeks no other; for He came to do the will of Him who sent Him. Are we thus obedient? are we thus resigned, nay thankful, for our work, *our position in life*, our circumstances, because they manifest to us the Divine will? Behold His obedience to Joseph and to Mary; how He anticipates their wishes, fulfils their commands, seeks only their pleasure without a thought of His own. Are we thus submissive to our parents, to our superiors, to our spiritual guides? O Nazareth, dear Nazareth, we will make you our earthly home; at least, we will often visit you in spirit, and contemplate the Holy Family who dwell within your hallowed walls. We will spend this first month of the year in considering how Jesus acted in all the circumstances of His domestic life; and we will strive so closely to imitate our model, that henceforth we shall live as Jesus lived;—we will be laborious, though labour be not an obligation to our state of life, that we may become in some measure like Jesus in His poverty; and if we must labour, we will do so with all the fervour in our power, for Jesus, with Jesus, and to honour the poverty of Jesus. We will be obedient, because we see obedience every where at Nazareth; we will strive to become like those on earth whom we hope to have for our protectors in heaven; we

will live like Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, because we desire to die with them—to die at Nazareth, where their presence will comfort and sustain us in our last moments. And if we have the inexpressible happiness so closely to resemble our sweet Infant Jesus as to have made religious vows, we will offer them again and again to that dear little One, and pray, by the infinite merits of His life of poverty, obedience, and chastity, that we may attain to the utmost perfection of these great virtues, and fulfil our vows in the way that will most please Him: performing each action at the time, in the place, and in the manner prescribed by our superiors and our rule, to fulfil our vow of obedience; in a spirit of labour and self-sacrifice, to fulfil our vow of poverty; and with the most pure intention of only pleasing Jesus, to fulfil our vow of chastity. Thrice happy and thrice blessed are they whose every action thus becomes a holocaust, and a perfect fulfilment of their solemn vows.

THE FIRST OFFERER.

The heart.

Your lot is to offer your heart to the sweet Infant Jesus. Oh, with what love and tenderness you will do it! Kneel before Him as He lies in Mary's arms, cold and trembling with pain: tell Him how much you desire to love Him, how grieved you are that you cannot do so as you would wish; and then

place your heart in His little hands. He will stretch them out to receive your offering, and He will place it next to His own, and enkindle in it the fires of unextinguishable charity. Our love, our affections,—this is what our sweet Infant Jesus seeks from us more than all besides. Oh, why should we not give Him what He asks? Your virtue must be charity, because this will make your heart most acceptable to Him. Each morning go in spirit to Bethlehem, gaze upon your Infant God; consider His wonderful love, His burning zeal, which has led Him to prefer suffering and neglect to glory and the adoration of the angels. Can you ever do enough to repay Him for all He has done for you? at least, do all in your power. He only asks for love; and is it so difficult to give Him this? A little love on our side, and an abundance, an overpowering torrent on His, this is the usual measure; but must it be always thus? Let us invoke Mary and Joseph; they will teach us how to love, they will warm our cold hearts, and make them fitter offerings for our dearest Lord. Make each day at least five acts of Divine love, and perform some act of charity to your neighbour in honour of the Infant Jesus. Offer Him your heart again and again, and say: O my sweet Infant Jesus, I love Thee, and I give Thee my heart; make it what Thou wouldst have it to be.

ferings, praying that they may be sanctified by Thine.

THE FOURTH OFFERER.

The tongue.

Say to your dearest Lord, that you desire henceforth to speak only for Him, and as He would have you speak. Think how many words you have said which you would give worlds to unsay. Think how many idle, how many foolish, how many vain, sinful words you have uttered. But now you are learning at Nazareth how to speak, and how to be silent; offer, then, your tongue to the holy Child Jesus; tell Him how sorry you are that you should ever have abused the gift of speech,—a gift given to you, like all others, for His glory who created you. Say every day an Our Father in reparation for all the sins of blasphemy committed throughout the world, and endeavour to keep strict silence at certain times during the day, when you can do so unobserved, to atone for your own sins of speech. Remember, also, that you may sin by not speaking, when duty requires it, by shrinking from declaring your faith, when you are really called to do so, and even by not promoting the innocent joys and recreations of others when it is in your power; for we may glorify God as much by cheerfulness, by pleasant words, and gentle smiles, as by our silence and our down-cast looks. It is not silence or speech in itself which pleases Him, but doing each as a duty in its

THE THIRD OFFERER.

Our sufferings and afflictions.

Yes ; offer your sweet Jesus all your sufferings and afflictions. Tell Him how sorry you are that you have borne them so badly hitherto ; assure Him with all the love of your heart that you will begin now in earnest to please Him, by bearing at least patiently, if not with joy, whatever trials and crosses His love may send you. Whether your sufferings have been from poverty, from sickness, from the unkindness of others, or from interior temptations, if you go to Nazareth, you will there learn how to bear them. Stay a little while in the holy house with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and you will soon be so much in love with sufferings, that you will cry, "Not to love as now or to suffer as now, but to love more and to suffer more." Nay, you will have almost a holy jealousy of those who have been favoured with great afflictions ; and you will learn how to bear that portion of the cross with which you may be honoured. Each day, offer to your little King whatever you have suffered or may yet suffer ; and endeavour to make five acts of self-restraint whenever any little annoyance or slight is offered you by others, which you might be inclined to resent either in word or manner. You will, if you enter into this practice faithfully, become exceedingly dear to your Infant Jesus. Say to Him : O my sweet Infant Jesus, I love Thee ; I offer Thee all my suf-

not comprehend or fathom, or are employed in His necessary work, surely the eyes of the holy Child Jesus must have been ever directed upwards to His celestial home. Oh, let us, then, during our month at Nazareth, learn to use our eyes as we see the gift of sight used there; during some time of the day, keeping them fixed on the ground, as best befitting our misery and unworthiness; using them only in order to fulfil our duties better; or we may lift them to the eternal hills, in longing to behold the first dawning of the morning of salvation. O my sweet Infant Jesus, I love Thee, and I am sorry that I have so often offended Thee by using amiss the gift of sight. I offer Thee my eyes, sweet Jesus; and I resolve henceforth to use them only for Thee.

THE SIXTH OFFERER.

The hands.

Our hands are constantly employed in some way, at least they ought to be. Should we not, then, seek to use them only for Jesus, and offer them to Him? His head, His eyes, His heart, His hands, His feet, all, all are given to us, all are made to suffer for us. Let us go to Nazareth, and see what we can do for Jesus. Oh, how we long to sweep the floor, to wash the dishes, to carry the water, to serve the Holy Family whom we see there! Then, indeed, we could exclaim: "My Lord, my soul, what can I do for Thee?" Oh, we would give worlds could it have been our happy,

happy lot to use our hands to minister to Jesus. Is it so impossible? Has He not said, what is done for the least of His disciples is done for Him? Let us begin in earnest. Hitherto we have used our hands to adorn our persons, to assist us in frivolous employments; but it shall be so no longer. O sweet Infant King, we reverently kiss Thy little hands, those hands which made us, those hands which shall be pierced for us. We are—oh, so sorry, that we have hitherto done so little for Thee; but we will begin now in earnest, and our hands shall labour, or work, or write, only for the holy Child. Each day endeavour to perform some act of charity for others; employ your hands in some work of mercy; be very reverent in your attitude when engaged in prayer; and every morning offer your hands to Jesus, that they may labour for Him. O my sweet Infant Jesus, I love Thee; henceforth, with the help of Thy grace, I will employ my hands only for Thee.

THE SEVENTH OFFERER.

The head.

The head is supposed to be the centre of intellect, if not its source; you must, then, offer all your thoughts to Jesus—strive to make them continually pure and worthy of Him. Restrain your imagination, which has hitherto wandered on a thousand follies; call it home, and tell it that now it must abide at Nazareth, where you are going to remain during

this month, and assist you in meditating on the employments of the Holy Family. Our thoughts—oh, when shall we be able to control them, to give them all to God? Let your practice during this month be to restrain them, to prevent them from dwelling on foolish or sinful objects. Endeavour to become more recollected in prayer; and remember if you do not curb your imagination during your hours of business or pleasure, you will not be able to control it at prayer. Strive also to use the powers of your mind for the promotion of God's glory; and whenever you can, speak of the Infant Jesus to little children, and teach them to love Him. O my sweet Infant Jesus, I love Thee; pour into my heart Thy tenderness and love, and ever fill it with thoughts of Thee.

FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY.

THE NEW YEAR.

Look up, look up, my heart, to-day,
Take courage and be strong;
The new year cometh up to thee,
So greet it with a song.

The old year lieth dead and cold
Beneath its shroud of snow;
Its troubles and perplexities
Thou never more shalt know.

Look up, there are new crowns to win,
New battles to be fought;
Perchance before the new year goes
Thy freedom will be bought.

Oh, let the past be past, except
To weep its stains away;
Nor let the future dazzle thee,
Promise whate'er it may.

The present only is thine own,
Look up, be brave and strong;
And if thy life be all for God,
The way will not seem long.

Pine thou for strife, for pain, for grief,
As soldiers pine for fight;
For there are crowns awaiting thee
In lands of cloudless light.

NAZARETH.

THE winter sun is setting fast
 Behind the crimsoned hill,
But our daily work, our daily task,
 Lies there unfinished still.

And we are weary with our toil,
 Our life of constant care ;
And our burden often seems to us
 Far more than we can bear.

At early morn, long ere the sun
 Had risen in the east,
Our labour and our toil began,
 And still it has not ceased.

And thus we work on day by day,
 And this must always be ;
For we are poor, or else have chosen
 To live in poverty.

'Tis true ; but we will turn our thoughts
 To Nazareth's dear town,
Stay there awhile, and then our hearts
 Will be no more cast down.

See Who is working with His hands
 From early dawn till night ;
And then He asks not needed rest,
 But prays till morning light.

And thirty years have come and gone,
Yet will He not complain ;
For the burning love within His heart
Beguiles His bitter pain.

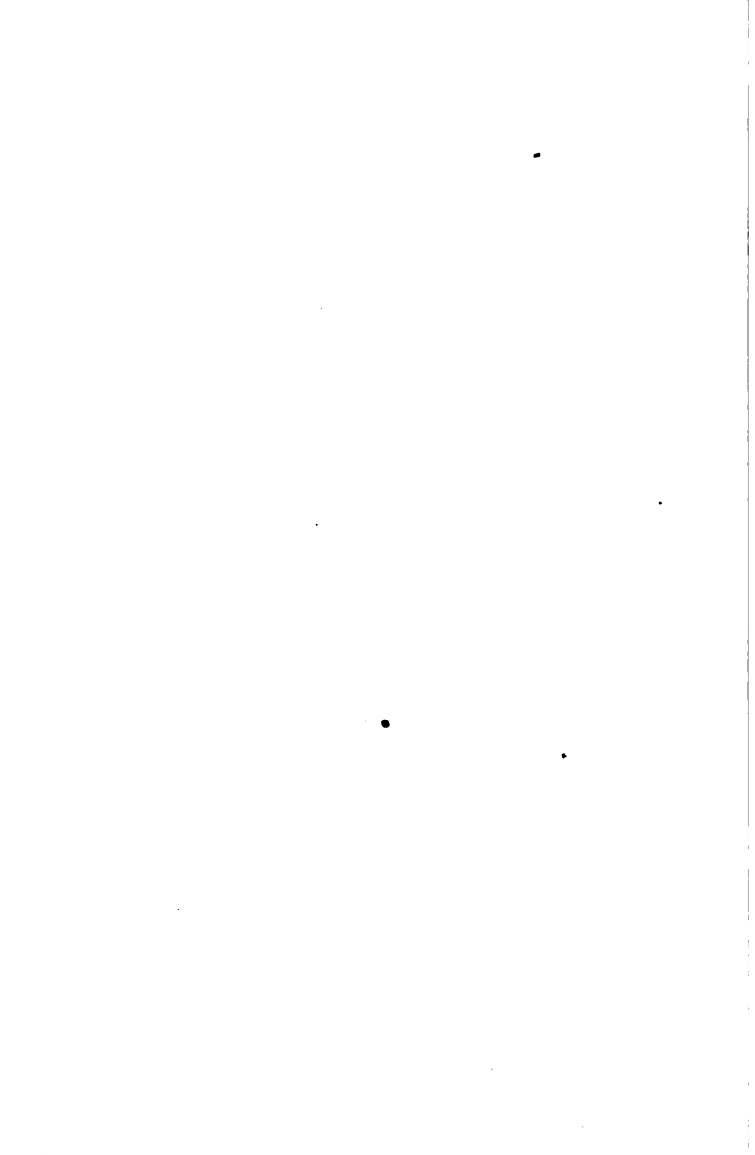
Ah, come, unite our toil with His,
Be it whate'er it may ;
Rich stores of merit we will gain,
Nor weary be our day.

Nay, the more toil, the better far,
The richer the reward ;
For thus we shall become still more
Like our beloved Lord.



FEBRUARY.

Month of the Passion.



FEBRUARY.

Month of the Passion.



WE have called this the Month of the Passion; not that Lent always begins in the early part of February, but the three preparatory Sundays warn us at least of its approach. Those who wish to continue the devotions of January until Ash-Wednesday can easily do so, and begin the Month of the Passion on that day, continuing it until Easter Sunday, and then take up the month of April with its resurrection joys.

Oh for the eloquence of a seraph, oh for the heart of a saint, to speak of the Passion of Jesus! Our Love is crucified, our Love is crucified! and we have crucified Him, and our hearts are not broken! Are they of flesh or stone? are they human or demoniacal? We have lived a whole month

at Nazareth; we have seen that wonderful Child, so gentle, so patient, so meek, so silent; we have felt the beatings of His burning heart; we have seen His tears; we have heard His prayers: is it not enough? must He suffer? must He be treated cruelly, barbarously, worse than a malefactor? and can we live and see it done?

“Have we no tears to shed for Him,
While soldiers scoff, and Jews deride?
Oh, look how patiently He hangs!
Jesus our love is crucified!”

Ah, but *is* He, then, our love? *is* Jesus our love? if He was, would we take it all so quietly? would we read the account of His Passion so coldly? would we wonder and almost smile at the folly of saints who have wept their lives away because Jesus was crucified? Did they love Him too much, or do we love Him too little? We talk about Lent, when it comes near us, as a something that must be got over,—an inconvenience, a disagreeable part of the year, a necessary evil. We must fast, or at least abstain, and neither one nor the other is pleasant to the flesh. We must suffer a little, because our God has suffered a great deal. O sweetest, dearest Lord, as if *we* should not suffer a great deal, and Thou suffer a little! oh, what would our “great deal” be to Thy little? The love is all on one side, and we fear it must be so; oh, is there no remedy? is there no help for this? would not our hearts break when we think of it, only that we know how much Mary loved? O Mother, if there is one thing for

which we must love thee more than another, it is for having loved Jesus enough. What should we do for comfort, when we think of our own coldness and neglect, if we had not Mary's love to fall back on? And then, there have been saints, thank God, who have loved our sweetest Lord almost as much as we could desire. There was St. Bonaventure, who wept over his crucifix, and learned all his science of love from it; there was St. Francis of Assisi, called the Seraphic for the tenderness of his love, whose very sight was worn away from tears; St. Theresa, whose heart seemed one flame of fire; St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, who went through the monastery crying out, "O Lord, Thou hast made a fool of Thyself through love;" and there was Blessed Giacomone, who committed so many follies that he was considered deranged; and of him it is related, that when our Blessed Lord appeared to him, and inquired why he acted thus, his reply was, "Because You have taught me; if I be foolish, You were much more so, for having died for me." It is not for us to imitate, without a special call, the holy freedoms of the saints. But who is not called to love? and why do we not love? Perhaps we have learned from our month at Nazareth to live more like Jesus; perhaps we have learnt to hallow all our actions, to perform them as we have seen Him do, and as He would desire we should; perhaps we have learnt to love the holy Child more, and grieved over the excessive sufferings of His infancy: if so, we may be better prepared to follow Him to Calvary.

There are just two reasons why we do not sympathise as we should in the woes of the Passion. One is, because we are so immersed in sin, and take so little real earnest pains to purify ourselves from its defilement; the other, that we do not meditate as we should on our Blessed Lord's sufferings. With regard to the first, so long as we are unlike our Saviour, we cannot, if we may say so with reverence, enter into His feelings. To sympathise with a friend, we must have some similarity of thought and sentiment; a person of rude and uncultivated mind cannot understand the trials of one whose intellect is refined, and whose temptations and difficulties may be perhaps not more severe, but are of a very different nature. Even when persons are in nearly the same rank of life, a highly cultivated, or naturally gifted, mind will feel, think, and suffer very differently from one whose exterior circumstances may be the same, but whose intellect is not so refined. There will often be, with the best intentions, painful jars and wounded feelings on both sides, and certainly more on the side of high intellectuality; for increased powers of mind always bring increased powers of suffering. To sympathise truly with another, there must be similarity of thought and feeling; and how is this to be produced? We see daily instances where characters the most unlike assimilate and mutually help each other; but this is always the result of intimacy and affection. Oh, love is a wonderful leveller, a wonderful smoother of difficulties, a wonderful solver of perplexities. Love, and

you may do what you will. What shall we do, then, in order to be able to sympathise with Jesus? Simply this: we must endeavour to become more like Him; we must seek to have His lineaments traced deeply on our souls, and we must strenuously endeavour to efface the evil already there. What has caused all this suffering? why must the innocent bleed and die? The answer is easy. It is sin that has slain Jesus; it is sin that hinders us from fully sympathising in His sufferings; it is sin which must be removed from our souls ere we can be loved as we would desire. Now, we are all ready enough to acknowledge the guilt and heinousness of sin, and have a particular facility for seeing it in others, and being disedified with it. Would to God we were a little oftener disedified with ourselves! we see plainly the one fault which mars the character, and hinders the perfect sanctification, of some friend or companion; we think that a little care or exertion on his part would remove it; we pity him, and we pray for him: but it never, perhaps, occurs to us that he also sees us with the same clearness; wonders as much that we do not set about the work of our reformation more vigorously; and, perhaps, if we did, it would tend more to our neighbour's conversion than all the prayers we can offer now. It is astonishing how ingenious we are when there is question of excusing ourselves; we are never so eloquent as then; and it may be remarked in passing, that the excessive charity of the saints for others has come from the same cause, with this simple difference—

their neighbour was more dear to them than themselves, and therefore they judged others as we judge ourselves. Sin blinds to sin; and the very fact of our having any one fault strongly predominant in our character, is just the very reason why we are not likely to see it. It is the light of Divine love pouring itself into our souls which shows us what we are; but if there is an obstacle to the entrance of that light in any one part, *there* is darkness and confusion. Still there are few persons really in earnest about their salvation who do not know in some measure what it is that hinders their progress in sanctity; and many have superiors to guide and instruct them in this painful and difficult work. The great thing, then, for most persons is not so much to ascertain what they must do, as, having ascertained it, to do it effectually and fervently. Oh, how many of us would be saints, and great saints, if we had but a little more generosity! A little less calculation about what we must do, and a few more noble-hearted efforts to do all we can, would send us with a swift flight to the arms of our Beloved. Let us pray, then, that we may see sin as far as may be even as God sees it; and then in our measure we will abhor it even as He does. Why do we so easily commit venial sins? Why do our daily imperfections continue, and even increase? Why, but because we do not hate sin. Let us endeavour, at least during this month, to be more in earnest. A God crucified, a God scourged, a God crowned with thorns,—ah, if these mysteries of the Passion do not

touch us, what will? Is the generosity to be all on one side? will we make no sacrifice, no efforts, or only cold and feeble ones? will we continue to give way daily to the same thoughts of pride, the same miserable vanity, the same impatience at little annoyances, the same fretfulness at little crosses, the same readiness to complain of heat or cold, of little sicknesses or pains? Ah, no; we see our Jesus crucified; and we are in love with sufferings, if it was only thus to become more like Him. We will endeavour thoroughly to purge our souls from all that we know displeases our dearest Lord, and we will meditate more deeply than we have ever done on His sacred Passion. We know that we cannot sympathise with what we do not understand; we know that we cannot love without being familiar with the object on which we desire to place our affections; but we do not wish any longer to be strangers to Jesus. He has made us the domestics of His household; and as faithful servants, nay, rather as His loving children, we must strive to aid and cheer Him in His sorrows; we will say,

“ Oh, break, oh, break, hard heart of mine ;
 Thy weak self-love and guilty pride
 His Pilate and His Judas were :
 Jesus our love is crucified !”

Self-love and pride: yes, these are the two great sources of all our miseries, of all our sweet Saviour's sufferings. Some duty has to be done, and we are weary; self-love says, Rest, or, Do it in the easiest way; and we please self-love, and wound Jesus.

Some mortification is suggested to us, some self-sacrifice; it may be but a little one, and yet all too great for our cold wills to effect: we think it is no matter about such trifles, and again we please self, and wound Jesus. An interior inspiration bids us be silent when some angry or impatient word is on our lips; but self must be gratified, and we utter it, and grieve Jesus. Some circumstance happens which excites our pride, and we are tempted to give way to it; we think that others despise us, and we are annoyed; or some slight is shown us, perhaps unintentionally, and we feel inclined to resent it. Do we think of Pilate's judgment-hall, and of Gethsemani? or do we listen to the tempting demon? Oh, if we really loved Jesus, and often considered how much He has suffered for our sins, we would surely lead other lives than we do! We will not now speak of the sufferings of His childhood, of the labours of His youth, of the weary fasts, the long nights of prayer, the days of ceaseless toil during His three years' ministry: we will not speak of His foreknowledge of all His sufferings, which added a thousandfold to their keenness; of His love for Mary, which was at once His only consolation, and one of His deepest sources of sorrow: we will say nothing of what He must have felt when His words were contemned, His preaching despised, His miracles attributed to the very demons. These one might think were woes enough for a God, but these are but as faint shadows of the awful anguish of His Passion. Behold Him at the Last Supper, knowing

that His hour was come ! Behold Him surrounded by those who, however much they professed to love Him, were ready to forsake Him at the first signal of danger ! Behold Him washing the feet of one who in a few short hours will betray Him ! And think, oh, think, of the love that burned within His heart all the while ! Unhappy Judas ! he thinks he has laid his plans very wisely ; he thinks his designs are very deep ; he hardly, perhaps, knows yet the lengths to which the demon avarice will lead him ; he does not certainly know any thing of the love of Jesus ; and yet Jesus washes his feet, and prays and yearns over his poor soul, as if He loved him as much as the disciple who leans upon His breast. But the moments quickly pass, and our Saviour longs for the hour of suffering ; for when love burns strongly, there is a thirst to suffer for the beloved. And who are the beloved of Jesus ? who are they for whom He so longs to suffer ? Each child of Adam may say, " I am the one ; " it is for me that Jesus has so longed to die ; it is for me that He has expected so eagerly His hour of anguish ; and what can I do for love of Him ? Behold Him in the garden : a few brief minutes are given Him ere the tortures fall upon Him and rend Him with their wicked violence ; but are they moments of rest ? Ah, no ! He sees not the multitudes who shall love Him, nor the millions who shall console Him for His sorrows, and give Him love for love, which is all He asks for. But He sees, as only God can see, His blasphemers, His haters, His despisers : oh, how

can they despise infinite goodness? how can they choose but love infinite love? It is true there are a few, the vision of whose saintliness is some solace to His heart; but the multitude, the vast multitude, for whom He will suffer and die, can scarcely spare a tear for His sorrows, or one heart-pulse for His love. No wonder that the clammy dew is on His brow; no wonder that the blood flows fast and thick, ere it is torn from Him by the scourge or thorns. But it is not of Himself alone He thinks, nor is it only for the cruel rejection of His love He now suffers. No; He still has His children near His heart; He wishes to experience all, and more than all, which they can ever feel or suffer; and He permits His human nature to shrink from the agony His God-head alone could bear. He knew there would be times when we should feel utterly desolate; when the face of God would seem hidden from us, and the heavens look black as a winter-cloud; when coming sorrow would look so fearful, and present anguish be so hard to bear, that we should sink to the very earth, hopeless and overwhelmed; and He would Himself experience a suffering of this kind, but in its degree far beyond aught that we could ever know, for our support and consolation in our time of trial. How many souls could scarcely bear their griefs, but for the thought of that agony? And there was yet more; those who should console, those who should support Him in this hour of dread, they also fail Him, and heaven, earth, and hell seemed leagued against the Innocent One. But this also is suffered

for our consolation. How often it happens in our interior trials, in our struggles against our passions, in our efforts to become really holy, that we are misunderstood and censured even by those who ought to assist us! There are times when all things seem against us. Perhaps we are struggling with unusual earnestness against our predominant fault; we are making our examens with more care; we are more recollected; our meditations are more fervent, our aspirations more constant: suddenly we are left to ourselves; Divine grace seems to be altogether withdrawn from us; we fall, and we almost despair. Every thing seems against us, and we are censured on all sides; perhaps there may be one pitying hand to shield us, one pitying smile to cheer us; for Jesus never lets us suffer to the full what He has borne. We are again on our way, but trembling and tottering as we go; some unkind word, some unjust suspicion, some harshness, where there should have been love, throws us back again, and deepens our despair. Oh, when shall we learn from our own trials sympathy and tenderness towards the tempted? when shall we learn to be tender, loving, and patient towards the fallen? Alas, that we, like the Apostles, should sleep the sleep of selfish indifference, whilst our brethren are agonising prostrate on the earth.

But the midnight hour is come, and Jesus passes from one torture to another: long and bitter is the night of mockery; and we behold Him in the cold damp morning, clothed in a purple garment, and treated as a fool. Then must follow the agony of

the scourging, which drains almost the last drop of His life-blood, and leaves Him more like a corpse than a living man. His head alone is untouched, but this too must suffer. We have sinned in every member of our body; Jesus must agonise in every member of His. Behold your Spouse! Behold Him crowned with the diadem with which His Mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals, in the day of the joy of His heart! Yes; there was joy in the heart of Jesus, even whilst there was blood and agony upon His brow. Truly, many waters cannot quench love, many floods cannot drown it. Behold Him, amid sufferings which His humanity could not have borne, supported by His divinity and the excess of His love! Behold Him struggling His best to carry the cross, all weak and faint as He was with anguish, and only sinking under its weight for our consolation, for our support, when we sink beneath ours! His divinity could have borne it to Calvary, had not the inexpressible tenderness of His humanity whispered to Him, that He should in all things be made like unto His brethren; that we might think we had lost all, and have no encouragement to rise again, when we falter beneath our sufferings, had we not seen that Jesus sank beneath His. Will we not, then, begin to make use of the sufferings of Jesus as He intended we should? They were endured not only for our salvation, but for our sanctification; nay more, we might almost say for our consolation. Oh, if we complain and murmur under pain or suffering of any kind, it is only because

we have not meditated as we ought on the Passion of Jesus ! But let us begin now, let us spend at least this holy season of Lent in honouring, in loving, and in endeavouring to understand the sufferings of Jesus.

The little offices suggested below for this month will, it is hoped, aid us to accomplish this pious work more effectually. Sympathy in suffering always renders us dear to those with whom we sympathise ; and we shall not find our Blessed Lord wanting in returning us love for love. He has suffered for us ; and the more we meditate on His Passion, the more surely will the benefit of it be extended to us. If pure love will not make us weep because Jesus is crucified, at least let us weep for our own sakes, and that we may obtain the remission of our sins. But we believe there are many generous souls whom pure love alone will keep on Calvary. Let us thank God there are such ; and labour ourselves to be of the number, weeping for and with Jesus, and endeavouring to atone to Him for the coldness and neglect of ungrateful men. Those whom we love will seldom be long absent from our thoughts ; and if they are in sorrow, how anxiously we seek to comfort them ! Let us do so with our best Friend, our sweet Saviour ; and let each endeavour, by an exact fulfilment of her office, to atone to Jesus crucified for the coldness and neglect of others, and to console Him amid His bitter sufferings.

THE FIRST CONSOLER OF THE HEART OF
JESUS CRUCIFIED.

Before you retire to rest, each night during this holy season offer to the Eternal Father the agony of Jesus. Reflect upon this mystery for a few minutes, and endeavour to unite your heart to the agonising heart of your Saviour. Love will suggest to you how to console Him; say at least one Our Father to Jesus in the garden, and prostrate yourself with Him there. Earnestly entreat His pardon for all your sins; ask that you may know something of what He suffers for them, in order to make you understand their heinousness. Offer to Him the love and ardour of all those who have been most devoted to this mystery; and promise Him that you will each day endeavour to comply more promptly with every Divine inspiration.

THE SECOND CONSOLER OF THE HEART OF
JESUS CRUCIFIED

must, as early in the morning as possible, kneel before her Jesus, and endeavour to console Him for the contempt and ill-treatment which He suffered during this night of mockery. Let her utter many times, with burning love, the holy Name of Jesus, and the versicle *Te ergo quæsumus*; and promise Him that she will endeavour never to neglect any duty through human respect. Let her pray that the true worshipers of Jesus may ever increase; and

say one Our Father, in atonement for all the sins which may have been committed that night; offering to the Eternal Father the humiliations of Jesus during the night of His Passion, for the conversion of bad Catholics and heretics.

THE THIRD CONSOLER OF THE HEART OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

must honour the mystery of His scourging, and offer the blood and sufferings of her sweet Jesus in this mystery to the Eternal Father, in atonement for sins of impurity; saying for this intention one Our Father, and the versicle *Te ergo quasumus*. At nine o'clock each day she shall adore Jesus scourged, and endeavour by her love to console Him in His torments; offering to Him for this intention the reparations and devotions of all those who have been most devoted to this mystery, and practising, if possible, some corporal mortification for this intention.

THE FOURTH CONSOLER OF THE HEART OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

must offer to the Eternal Father the pains and humiliations of the crowning of thorns, in reparation for sins of pride; and at some time between the hour Tierce and Sext adore Jesus crowned with the crown of His espousals. Let her say one Our Father, and the versicle *Te ergo*, in honour of this mys-

tery; and practise each day some act of humiliation for the same intention. Let her also, when kneeling to adore Jesus crowned with thorns, offer to Him, with all the fervour her love can suggest, the adorations of all those who have been most devoted to this mystery.

THE FIFTH CONSOLER OF THE HEART OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

should honour Jesus nailed to the cross at the hour of Sext. Let her place herself in spirit before Him, considering with what love He allows Himself to be bound to this bed of pain. She should say one Our Father, and the versicle *Te ergo*, in reparation for sins of disobedience, particularly those which have been committed by religious; and offer each day some act of obedience to console Jesus in this suffering, uniting it to the love and adorations of all those who have been most devoted to this mystery.

THE SIXTH CONSOLER OF THE HEART OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

shall honour Jesus in His dying agony, caring only for us, and giving us Mary for our Mother. As it approaches the hour of None, let her adore her crucified God, and return Him most fervent thanks for His exceeding love. Let her say one Our Father, and the versicle *Te ergo*, in reparation for those who do not honour our Blessed Lady as

her Divine Son intended; and let her each day make some act of love and confidence towards her, and perform some action in her honour; offering to the heart of Jesus the love and adorations of those who have been most grateful for His goodness in leaving us Mary when He Himself was taken from us.

THE SEVENTH CONSOLER OF THE HEART OF
JESUS CRUCIFIED

shall honour Jesus with His heart pierced for love of us; and beholding Him expiring rather from excessive love than from excessive pain, she shall adore Him at the hour of None, remaining prostrate for some time, overwhelmed with shame and confusion at so foul a deed, and endeavouring, to the utmost of her ability, to make atonement for the sins of the whole world. Let her pray with special fervour for all who shall die that year, particularly for those who may be much tempted on their death-beds; saying one Our Father, and the versicle *Te ergo*, for the intentions of her office, and offering each day some of her actions in preparation for death.

THE EIGHTH CONSOLER OF THE HEART OF
JESUS CRUCIFIED

shall at Vesper-time adore her sweet Jesus laid in the tomb; she shall say a *De profundis* for the holy souls, and offer some of her duties each day

for their repose. Her virtue will be silence, which she shall practise, especially towards evening, in honour of Jesus silent in the tomb. Let her adore Him as He lies there pale and lifeless, and congratulate Him with burning and tearful love that His life of pain and woe is ended; offering to Him the love and adorations of all those who have been most devout to this mystery.

THE NINTH CONSOLER OF THE HEART OF
JESUS CRUCIFIED

shall especially honour Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament. She shall thank Him with all the fervour of her heart for His love in the institution of this great mystery, and shall adore Him in the tabernacle each evening, as near the hour of Compline as her circumstances will permit. Let her say one Our Father and *Adoremus in æternum sanctissimum Sacramentum*, in reparation for the insults and outrages offered to the sacred heart by those who unworthily receive or despise this immense gift of His love; and endeavour herself to make each day three spiritual Communion in honour of Jesus silent in the tabernacle; offering to Him the love and adorations of all those saints who have been most devout to this mystery.

FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY.

THE PURIFICATION.

HAIL, Mary, Maid and Mother,
Spotless and undefiled !
I see within thine arms
Thou bear'st the sacred Child.

O Rose amid the roses !
O Lily fair and sweet !
In tearful wonder silent
I lie beneath thy feet.

I gaze, and see th' Immortal
Sleeping in holy rest ;
See Him who feeds the ravens
Take nurture from thy breast.

I see thy meek embraces ;
I hear thy dovelike voice,—
The low, half-uttered melody
With which thou dost rejoice.

I see thy queenly bearing—
Conscious, yet half afraid ;
Scarce yet thy wonder over—
How Mother and how Maid !

I see thee in the Temple,
With calm and holy dread,
To make thy lowly offering,
By blessed Joseph led.

I see th' unconscious multitude ;
They deem not Who is there,
Or sure with lowly reverence
They 'd bow to Him in prayer.

But aged Simeon knows Him—
His sight is purged by faith ;
I hear, I hear his prophecy—
The mystic words he saith.

O Mother, now it acheth
Thy heart, all undefiled !
And nearer and yet nearer
Thou draw'st thy blessed Child.

A sword must pierce thy spirit :
Sweet Mother, thou must weep ;
The Shepherd came to give His life
To save His wandering sheep.

Not e'en thy love may stay Him :
He came, He came for this—
To die a death of agony,
That we might live in bliss.

No tongue may tell the rapture,
No words the depth of woe,—
The mingled joy and bitterness,
Which thy fond heart must know.

O Mary, Maid and Mother!

O Lily fair and sweet!

In tearful wonder silent

I lie beneath thy feet.

O Pearl amidst the pearls!

O Flower amidst the flowers!

O Saint amid the saintly!

Queen of the eternal bowers!

A LENTEN HYMN.

I LAID me down to sleep, and I dreamt

A dream of a wounded Man;

I was passing Him by, but He gazed on me

As only the dying can.

I know not why, but I could not choose,

I dared not turn away;

And as I gazed on that wounded Man,

I knelt me down to pray.

And then methought a tender smile

Stole over those lips so pale;

But it passed for a look of agony

As one who stood by did rail.

Oh, 'twas a pitiful sight to see,

For His brow was all ghastly and torn;

And furrows were deep on His wounded back,

Where He the lash had borne.

'Twas a pitiful sight, those five great wounds,
And I could not choose but pray;
Oh, why does the sun not hide his light,
And why looks the world so gay?

There were wounds in His hands; they had
stretched them out,
And nailed them to a tree;
And wounds in His feet, where blood trickled
down,
So pitiful to see.

And one deep wound in His blessed side,
So deep it had reached His heart;
And blood and water had poured out,
When they touched it with the dart.

And one there was who knelt at His feet
As He hung on that cruel tree,
And ever and aye she sobbed forth
A "Jesu dulcissime!"

And she kissed His feet, and cried again,
"Jesu dulcissime!"
And wiped off the blood with her long bright hair:
'Twas pitiful to see.

There were some who laughed, and some who
jeered;
But it mattered not to me;
For I joined in that woman's heart-broken cry,
"Jesu dulcissime!"

LONELY AND FORSAKEN.

LONELY and forsaken,
Wandering on the mountains,
Fain would I be taken
To the living fountains ;

Where the gushing waters
In soothing music flow,
And my heart could never,
Never more feel woe.

A bark upon the ocean,
When storms are raging high,
Ever in restless motion ;
So, alas, am I !

Care and trouble cease not ;
Whither shall I flee ?
O Redeemer, Saviour,
I will come to Thee !

Keep me, then, oh, keep me,
While roaming on earth's mountains,
Until Thou dost take me
To the living fountains.

HIGH ABOVE SERAPHIM.

HIGH above seraphim,
Far above cherubim,

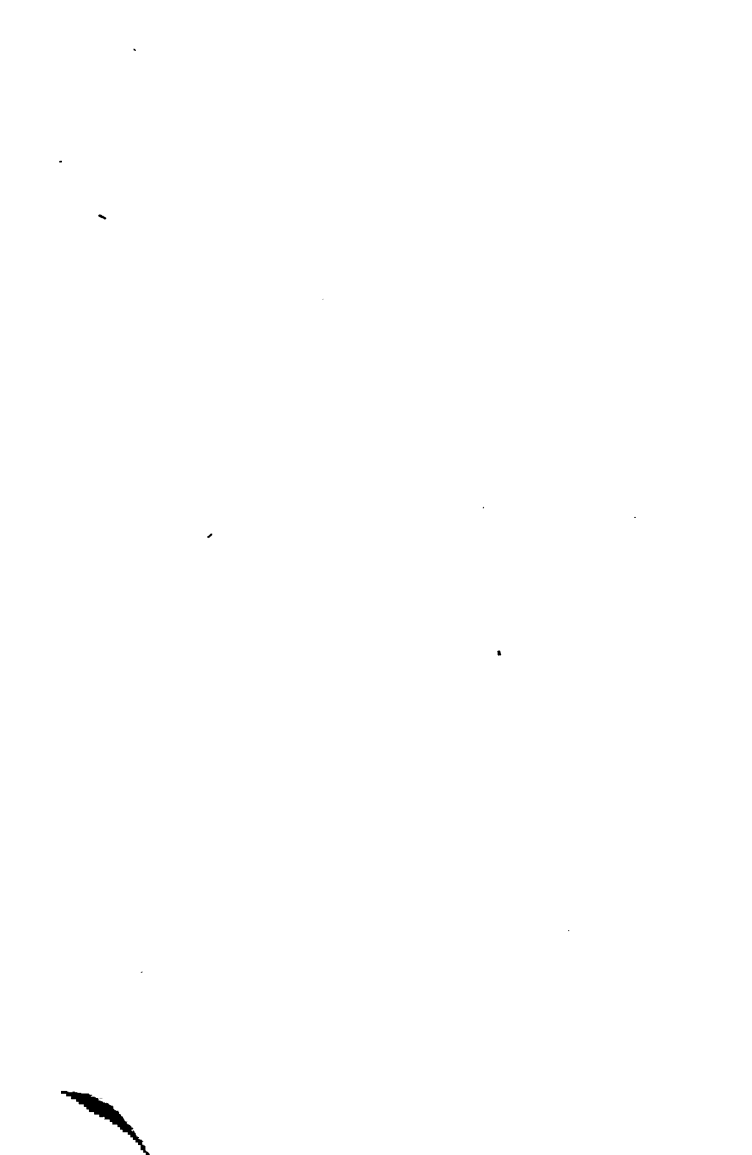
On Thy bright starry throne ;
Hear me, oh, hear !
List to my plaintive moan,
Stoop from Thy brilliant zone ;
Hear me, oh, hear !

Great in Thy majesty,
Dimming Thy light,
With its all purity,
E'en angels' sight ;
Tinging with joy the clouds,
Which are Thy throne-shrouds,
Almost too bright.
Yet list to my plaintive moan,
Stoop from Thy starry zone ;
Hear me, oh, hear !

List to my plaintive lay ;
Hear me, O God, I pray :
I am all lonely ;
Thou, and Thou only,
Canst help my soul :
Mighty Thy power ;
Aid me this hour ;
Dark waters o'er me roll !
Oh, by Thine agony !
Oh, by Thy tears !
All cruel mockings !
All Thy deep fears !
Stoop from Thy starry zone,
List to my feeble moan ;
Hear me, oh, hear !

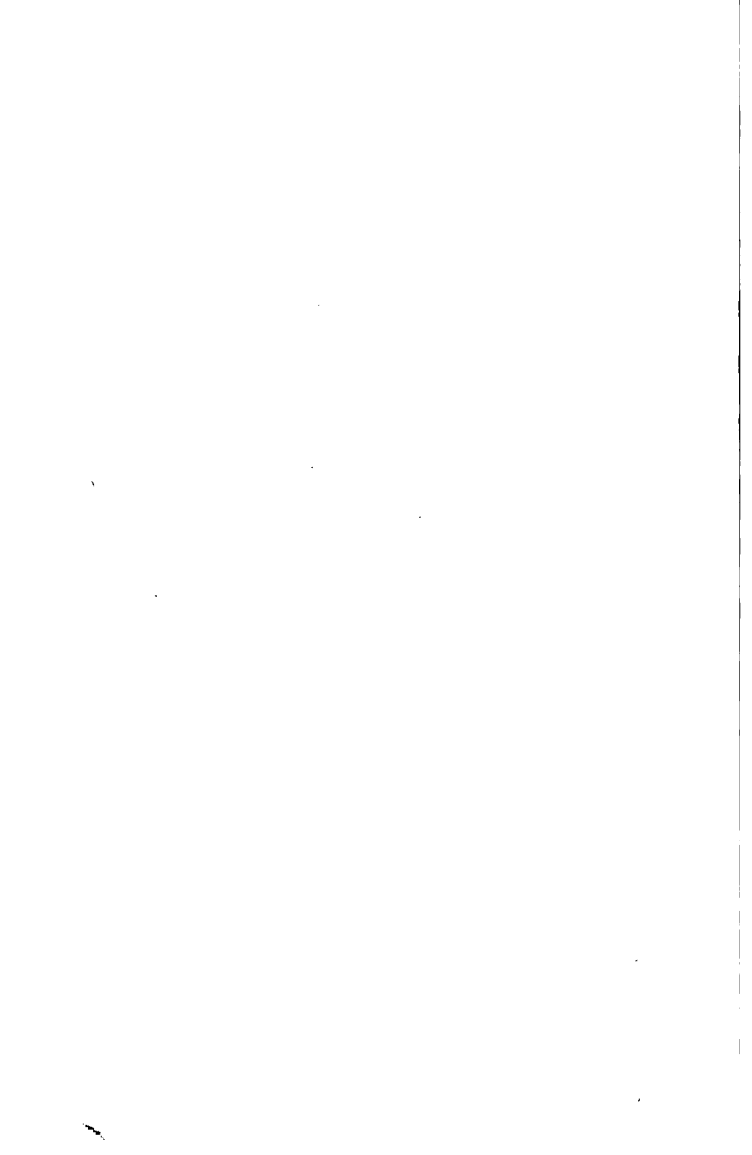
To Thee I commit
My soul and its keeping :
Watch over it,
Be I waking or sleeping ;
Until in Thy love
Thou dost bring it above,
Where never more 'twill be weary or weeping.

High above seraphim,
Far above cherubim,
Thee on Thy glorious throne
There I shall see ;
And 'mid the angel zone,
Who sing to Thee alone,
Then I shall be.



MARCH.

Month of Devotion to St. Joseph.



MARCH.

Month of Devotion to St. Joseph.



HERE is something peculiarly touching in the devotion to St. Joseph; something that thrills in our inmost souls, and kindles in our hearts a warmth and tenderness of its own. Dear Saint, we cannot choose but love you; so paternal, so tender, so gentle are you towards your unworthy children; and then, if we have ever invoked his intercession in some special trouble, some deep necessity, how speedily and graciously have we been succoured! Sweet Spouse of our Lady, we love you; and we desire that all men should love you, and know the kindness of your paternal heart, and the greatness of your glory. If we must love Mary because she is the Mother of Jesus, we cannot but love and honour St. Joseph as the protector and guardian of our Mother; as the one chosen by the Eternal Father to shield and defend the helpless

Infancy of the Incarnate God. Where did devotion to St. Joseph begin? Surely we may say reverently that Jesus was the first who was devout to Joseph, whilst Joseph was the first who protected Jesus. What a noble, what a grand simplicity there is in all the conduct of this great saint! how silent under his difficulties and perplexities! how respectful and tender in his love of Mary and his care of Jesus! If we would indeed learn to be saints, and desire the aid of one who would be at once our example and powerful helper, let us study the life of Joseph.

Do we need an example of the most perfect self-forgetfulness, let us consider the conduct of this great patriarch in the perplexities of his first dolour. He is espoused to Mary; but behold a mystery which he understands not, a miracle which he cannot fathom. Does he rashly judge, or rudely intrude uncharitable surmises? Oh, no; he is indeed perplexed, distressed, troubled; but he is silent: he adores what he cannot comprehend; he forbears to judge the mystery, as yet unfolded; he will suffer himself, for he will withdraw from Mary, and forego the privilege he has so long desired of being her protector and her guardian; he will forget himself, and be silent about his own deep griefs, but he will not add to those of others. With the calm trust of deep sanctity which ever hopes through all darkness and perplexities, the great saint has laid him down to rest: can we tell, can we guess, what acts of conformity to the Divine will he made, and how his heart watched even while his body slept? But

Jesus was incarnate in Mary's womb ; He heard all, He saw all, He knew all, though He was silent and still, and seemed as now in the tabernacle as though He neither knew nor heard. Joseph slept the sleep of blessed childlike tender love, and Jesus watched as He ever watches the sleep of His beloved ones. An angel came, and Joseph heard himself called by name, and honoured with the title of prince. "Joseph, son of David," royal scion of a royal house, the angels wait on thee with joy, and utter thy name with jubilation. The sorrow is past, and the joy is come, and thou art glad, O Joseph, with a gladness as pure and unselfish as was thy grief ; thou shalt no longer fear to be separated from Mary. But there is more joy for thee even yet ; thou shalt be the father, the protector, the guardian of thy God. Angels shall think themselves honoured to wait upon thee ; the patriarchs shall long to behold thee ; the apostles shall claim thee as their protector ; the saints shall honour thee as their father. All nations shall call thee blessed among men, and all who seek thy intercession and protection shall proclaim in time and in eternity the greatness of thy power.

But the joy of our great saint cannot last long ; he is too dear to the heart of the little Infant Jesus to be without the privilege of suffering. His God is born in a stable, and the tender soul of Joseph is well-nigh crushed as he contemplates the trials of the Mother and the Child : in vain he deprives himself of every necessary, for comforts he had none ; in vain

he weeps and prays; Jesus will suffer, and Mary and Joseph must suffer also. But again the angels comfort him; there is joy in heaven if there is sorrow on earth, and the poor shepherds and adoring kings compensate in some measure for the coldness of Bethlehem. More painful still is the third dolour; not only must the little Jesus bear neglect and cold and poverty, but pain and blood must testify the malice of our sin and the excess of Divine love; Joseph beholds that blessed Infant so touchingly meek, so patiently silent, and oh, what anguish fills his heart when the dreadful day of circumcision requires him, as the foster-father, as the reputed parent of Jesus, to cause Him yet greater sufferings. Truly, if we meditated well, or if we thought deeply on the suffering life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, we would never utter even the faintest complaint, however hard our trials might seem. But the sweet name of Jesus is uttered; not Mary,—oh, wonder of wonders!—but Joseph it is who pronounces that blessed word. Jesus, the angels have heard it, and they sing it out in gushing melody of entrancing love upon their golden harps; Jesus, they breathe the accents to each other, now low, like summer-scented breezes, now in a triumphant jubilee. Jesus, the patient souls who have waited so long in silent awful hope for the coming of One who should deliver and redeem—they, too, have heard the sound, for it has evoked a strain of harmony which shall never cease; and they, oh, with what love, with what desire, do they not utter again and again that

word! Jesus, the demons have heard it, and have fled affrighted at that name, to them so full of terrific fear: their power is henceforth shaken; their empire of tyranny is well-nigh overthrown; their oracles shall henceforth be dumb; for at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and earth and hell.

Again Joseph must suffer; but still it is for and with others; the little Babe of Bethlehem is presented in the Temple, and the dolours of Mary are foretold in mystic words. What! must she also suffer? that fair, that beautiful, that gentle lady? Ah, is there no escape? how gladly, were it possible, would he shield her with his very life, would he bear a thousand tortures to save Mary one! But it may not be, and our keenest woes are often caused by witnessing the sufferings of those we love. Mary must suffer, for she has a work to do which can be done by no other; she is a mother, and must suffer for her children, to prove the fullness of her love. She is the Mother of God, and must suffer with her Son, a suffering proportioned to the glory which she shall also share with Him. The depth of Mary's dolours can be known only to herself, suffered only by herself. Let us not intrude on this awful privilege of the Divine Maternity; she will be alone in suffering, that she may share with all in love. And even now must the prophetic words begin to have their fulfilment; even now must Joseph behold the sorrows of his Virgin-Spouse. Jesus must fly from the land of His birth, and exile Himself with the

stranger, and Joseph must be the first to make the painful announcement to Mary. Again the angel speaks; and again, in meek silence, the patriarch obeys. Again it is, in his calm and holy slumbers, that he hears the Divine command; and again he rises without a thought of self, and fulfils it with angelic speed. O great saint, obtain for us a grace like unto thine, by the tender love of thy paternal heart, by the merciful compassion of thy most gentle soul. Dearest, dearest of saints, hear the cry of your children; we are yours, for Jesus bids us "Go to Joseph;" we are yours, for your heart tells you so, whilst it pleads for us even before we ask your help. Aid us then, oh, aid us with your powerful patronage, by your mighty intercession. Jesus obeyed you whilst on earth, and He will still own your power in heaven. Ask that we may, like you, ever wait with calm patience to know the Divine will in all our trials and perplexities, and ever obey it with prompt unasking love, however it may be manifested to us. Ask that we may be as willing to go down into the Egypt of suffering, as to return into the Nazareth of peace, and that our only earthly wish and prayer may be to live and die in the love of the sacred hearts of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

But again we must speak of sorrow. The sojourn in Egypt is over; the mission of the Child Jesus has been accomplished; the land of idolatry has been sanctified by the presence of God, and thousands of saints shall one day dwell there, and atone for the defilements by which hitherto it was

disgraced. Again the toilsome journey is undertaken, but with new sources of pain and suffering. Jesus is no longer an Infant cradled on Mary's breast; He can walk alone. But how can He bear this long, this weary journey? The majesty of God is shrouded beneath the helplessness of childhood, and He will not allow His Divinity to help Him unless it be to increase His powers of suffering. Still the journey must be made, and Joseph must arrange all. Oh, sorrow of sorrows, how he will carry the Child Jesus! oh, wonder of wonders, behold that blessed little One condescending to be soothed and comforted by His foster-father amid His weary pains! well might the blessed patriarch grow old with his burden of care and grief, and almost sink beneath this accumulation of sorrows, which none but God could fully understand. But sufferings were the joy and treasure of the saint, dearer to him, as he has revealed to one of his devout clients, dearer to him even than the privilege of his guardianship of Jesus and Mary; and though he drank the chalice of woe to the last, he would not for worlds have lost one drop of its bitterness. Let us fly to his intercession; let us plead his merits: he will obtain grace for us to bear our sufferings as we ought, and to love them as we would desire; he will obtain for us strength in our temptations, light in our perplexities. His paternal heart is full of tenderness; let us try it and trust it, and we shall never be disappointed.

And now the silent years pass on unchecked by any event recorded in Holy Writ, or pious tradition:

we can only know that Jesus was the most perfect, the most obedient of children ; Mary, the tenderest and best of mothers ; Joseph, the kindest and most saintly of fathers. The mysteries of the Holy Childhood are excluded in a great measure from our view, as is the life of Jesus previous to His three years of active ministry. But one event is related for our instruction, and it is full of the dolours of Mary and the griefs of Joseph. They lose for a time the presence of their blessed Child, nor can they rest until He is again restored to them. Behold the humility of Joseph ; it is not he who utters the tender, touching reproof, if we may so call it, when the wandering One is again found ; no, the lowliness of the great patriarch leads him ever to seek a hidden life unless the Divine will requires him to act, to be silent unless the ministry of angels tells him that he must speak. Oh, when shall we become like him ? when shall our speech and our silence be only for God ?

That devotion to St. Joseph is peculiarly pleasing to our Blessed Lady we cannot for a moment doubt ; in fact, those who have been most devout to her have been insensibly drawn on to a great devotion to St. Joseph, and this in a way for which they could scarcely account. It has, indeed, seemed to some as if our Lady almost refused their requests, that they might apply to St. Joseph's intercession. In temporal matters, in cases of special temptations or perplexities, when the acquiring of an interior spirit has been the object, or when persons have

need of peculiar direction, St. Joseph has been found again and again to afford special and most speedy help. Indeed, our Blessed Lady has even condescended to desire her children to "go to Joseph" in their needs, as though she loved to share with him the power which she exercises over the loving Heart of Jesus. We read in the life of St. Teresa that, in one of her visions, she was presented by our Immaculate Mother with a gem of inestimable value, as a reward for the fervour with which she endeavoured to extend devotion to her Spouse; and to St. Gertrude she showed the glory of his throne in heaven. Many instances will recur to the memory in which Mary has herself condescended to desire her clients to take the name of Joseph, or to avail themselves of his intercession. But there is no proof so conclusive as personal experience; let us make the Novena of his Seven Joys and Sorrows in our next necessity, and the result will be more convincing than all the proofs or arguments which could be produced in any other way.

The religious of the Franciscan Order have been always singularly devoted to St. Joseph; and it was through their means that the practice of honouring his seven joys and seven sorrows was made known to the faithful. Two fathers of the order were wrecked off the coast of Flanders; the ship in which they had sailed sank, and with it 300 of the passengers. The friars seized a plank, and clung to it as their only hope for life; but each moment the peril of their situation increased, and the stormy billows threatened

to engulf them for ever. They had always been singularly devoted to St. Joseph; they invoked him, and he did not fail to succour them in their hour of need. Scarcely was their prayer ended when they beheld the holy Patriarch, who acted as their pilot, and conducted them safely to the shore. When they were landed, they prostrated, to thank their deliverer. The glorious saint addressed them; spoke to them of the seven dolours and seven joys of his mortal life; informed them how acceptable a devotion to them would be to him, and assured them that he would take under his special protection those who practised it.

What stronger motives can we need to encourage us to spend with fervour the month of March? For ecclesiastics, for superiors of religious orders, or monasteries, it should be a month of hope and joy. Volumes might be filled with examples of the power of this great saint, and the efficacy of his intercession. In every tribulation, in every difficulty, we might find an instance of his goodness in assisting those who have recourse to him. The poor and the artisan must ever have a special claim on his patronage, and should be encouraged to confide with peculiar trust in his assistance. His life was like theirs—one of constant labour and toil, and of deep poverty, so deep that we are told he often had scarcely the necessaries of life for Jesus and Mary. Oh, what an encouragement and support should his example of patient, silent toil be to those whose lot is cast amidst temporal care and suffering! Surely he

will with peculiar love and tenderness help and pity such as these. He will protect the weak and feeble, he will assist the mourner and sorrowful, he will aid all in their necessities, temporal or spiritual; and as his toil and labour was all for Jesus, so will he especially assist those whose lives are, like his, devoted to Jesus, either in caring for the souls He has redeemed, or in striving to promote His glory by their own sanctification, by erecting temples in His honour, by building schools for His little ones, or by guiding and instructing those who are called to leave all, and follow their crucified God in the austere silence of the cloister. Religious superiors should especially be devout to St. Joseph, and encourage this devotion in their subjects. The example of St. Teresa, had we no other, should be sufficient to animate and inspire them to this. Who will assist them in their many and most trying needs, temporal or spiritual, so effectually as the great St. Joseph? We may say that Nazareth was the first religious house, and Joseph the first religious superior; how, then, should he not be the model and the support of all who succeed him? At Nazareth was practised the most perfect poverty, the most exact obedience, the purest chastity. Religious superiors, think of Nazareth; invoke Joseph; and, let your cares and trials be what they may, you will never be utterly cast down. Place yourselves and your subjects under his special charge. Practise during this month some additional devotion to him before his altar, at least on the Wednesdays and Sundays, and be assured you will soon experience the

beneficial effects of your piety. He will obtain for you and those under your charge that truly interior spirit, that love of prayer and recollection, which is at once the happiness and the duty of all who are specially consecrated to God. He will assist and console you in all your difficulties, and obtain for you help in your temporal necessities, so often a pressing addition to the heavy care of a superior.

But we must all die,—religious or secular, rich or poor, saintly or sinful,—the end is the same for all. Who will most effectually and most surely help us in the hour of death? Oh, happy, thrice happy shall we be, if, with the name of Jesus on our lips, the love of Mary in our hearts, and the protection of Joseph by our pillow, we breathe out our last sigh. Let us seek, by great and fervent devotion to the holy Patriarch, to procure through his intercession the grace of a happy death. That it is his particular privilege to obtain this favour for those who ask it of him we cannot doubt. Many instances might be related to prove this fact; but it is not our object to recite them here. Supernatural favours are not granted to all, but ordinary graces are never refused to those who sincerely ask them. We may not, like the blessed Sister Pudentia Zaguoni (a Franciscan nun), see St. Joseph at that hour of dread, and receive from him the Infant Jesus into our arms; but we shall assuredly experience his power and protection not the less effectually because it may be granted only in a spiritual manner.

FIRST DOLOUR AND FIRST JOY OF
ST. JOSEPH.

She who will honour the first sorrow and joy of this great saint must meditate on his spotless purity, and endeavour to make this virtue her practice during this month. Let her reflect how pure was the intention, how perfect the motives, which always actuated St. Joseph. Placed in circumstances of the most distressing perplexity, no thought of self or of his own adversities and sufferings existed even for a moment. To shield and protect his Virgin Spouse, and thus to fulfil the duty imposed on him by the Eternal Father, was his one and only object. Let us, then, seek to make his virtue ours. There are few persons whose circumstances are not at times perplexing, whose duties do not sometimes seem difficult and conflicting; but let them look to St. Joseph, and, with his glorious example as their guide, press on courageously, seeking ever more and more to purify themselves from self-love, the twin-sister of pride, and our greatest enemy. Our perplexities, our doubts, and our scruples, would soon vanish, as the mists of morning before the rising sun, if we did but forget ourselves and all our own miserable vanities and fancies, and lose ourselves in the ocean of divine love, seeking only the glory of God. Let us, then, honour this sorrow and joy of St. Joseph by endeavouring to practise great purity of intention in all our actions; by forgetting ourselves, our own conveniences, comforts, and interests, and seek-

ing only what will most glorify God, particularly when to do so seems difficult or apparently impossible to our self-love and pride.

Say one Our Father and Hail Mary each day, in honour of this sorrow and joy, for the increase of the accidental glory of the great Patriarch, and for the Pope, Cardinals, and all Bishops and priests, for whom we should especially pray during this month.

Aspiration. Spouse of our Lady, help me to honour you as you deserve.

SECOND DOLOUR AND JOY.

Let us behold St. Joseph in the manger of Bethlehem, the guardian apparently of one of the poorest of women, and the feeblest of Infants. Oh, how unlike was the appearance to the reality; what conflicting feelings must have been in the heart of Joseph! What sorrow that he could find no other home but a stable for such royal guests, and what joy that he should be permitted to protect and wait on them! May we not in all this see a special foreshadowing of what should happen in regard to the most holy Sacrament? The unbeliever sees only the form of bread; often but a poor tabernacle, a mean church, a humbly clothed priest; and the hearts of the true lovers of Jesus grieve like St. Joseph, that their sweet Saviour should thus be unknown and uncared for: but they, like him, also have their joys; they hear the celestial harmonies; they see the shepherds, the poor and ignorant ones

of this world, come to adore their hidden God; and at times even the royal kings forget their state and dignity, or rather remember who gave them both, and come to worship the Majesty of Heaven; and the spouses of the Lamb, who have left all to follow Him, they also are there, like Mary, receiving into their pure breasts the little Infant Jesus, and atoning to Him for the world's coldness. Let us, then, honour St. Joseph this month by special devotion to the most holy Sacrament; let us endeavour to throw fresh reverence into our manner and our genuflections before it.

Say each day one Our Father and Hail Mary in honour of this Sorrow and Joy, and pray especially for all religious orders of men.

Aspiration. Blessed St. Joseph, guardian of Jesus, teach me how to guard Him and love Him when He enters into my breast.

THIRD DOLOUR AND JOY.

What greater pain can a father have than to see his child suffer? and yet no father has suffered so much in this way as our holy Patriarch. Scarcely is Jesus born, scarcely has He breathed the cold and tainted air of this sorrowful world, ere His blood must flow, and His baby flesh quiver beneath the cruel knife. And yet there was a gleam of joy even in this sorrow. St. Joseph pronounces the holy name of Jesus; angels had breathed the heavenly accents in his ears, and now he utters them that they may be

heard by men and demons. Oh, with what reverence, with what joy, did he pronounce the word "Jesus!" The angels tuned their golden harps, and poured forth songs of unutterable love; the demons howled in dark dismay, while the holy souls, who had died in awful hope of their coming Redeemer, sang again the *In exitu Israel*, and murmured out their love and eager expectation. "Jesus!" oh, let us, during this month, every time we utter this holy name, bow in lowliest reverence; and remembering what sufferings were endured by Jesus and by Joseph when it was first pronounced, let us make mortification our virtue, and endeavour either in our words or thoughts to exercise some special self-restraint.

Say one Our Father, &c., and pray especially for all orders of religious women, and implore the divine mercy that they may not lose by relaxation, or trifling but unnecessary dispensations, self-indulgence, or uncontrolled thoughts, words, and gestures, the merit of the great act of self-oblation which they have made at their religious profession.

Aspiration. St. Joseph, perfect lover of Jesus, obtain for me that I may love Him as much as He desires.

FOURTH DOLOUR AND JOY.

Here we find passive and patient suffering with a joy, which seems like a foretaste of the beatific vision. The little Jesus is in the arms of the aged Simeon; and Mary, pale and tearless, hears, with a

more than saintly resignation, of the seven most bitter dolours which must pierce her sacred heart.

If Mary suffers, Jesus must also suffer; for Jesus and Mary are so closely united by the divine Maternity that they seem almost one. And St. Joseph, what shall we say of him? If Jesus is his Saviour and his God, Mary is his Immaculate Spouse, the dearest treasure of his heart; and must she suffer also? Oh, great St. Joseph, so noble, so unselfish, when shall we learn to imitate your virtues? when shall we think only of Jesus and Mary, and forget ourselves in love of them? Let us, then, seek during this month for an increase of love to Mary; let us honour St. Joseph by honouring his Spouse, and by thinking often of her bitter dolours; and let us pray for the unconverted, the tepid, the careless. Oh, it is those who are driving the nails into the hands and feet of Jesus, the sword into the heart of Mary, and bowing the aged Patriarch to the very earth with sorrow; and who would add to the cares and burdens of one already worn old with grief? At least let us not do so; let us endeavour to comfort our great patron amidst his accumulated sorrows by giving ourselves up heart and soul to God, and by a constant and fervent devotion to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, a devotion of deeds and self-sacrifice, particularly by endeavouring to practise that virtue which we stand most in need of.

One Our Father, &c., and pray especially for the conversion of sinners.

Aspiration. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my life.

FIFTH DOLOUR AND JOY.

There are few events in the life of St. Joseph more touching and interesting than the flight into Egypt. Let us ponder on it, and consider well the marvellous patience of our holy Patriarch in this mystery. Scarcely has he had the consolation of seeing Jesus adored by the shepherds and kings, and worshiped as the Deliverer of Israel by holy Simeon, than fear and desolation break in upon his soul. The tyrant Herod, emblem and type of earthly power and pride, thirsts for the blood of the Infant Jesus, and thinks to establish his throne by crime and injustice. Have we never in a measure followed his example? or, if like St. Joseph, we have suffered for righteousness' sake, have we been contented in silence, and with prompt obedience, to fly even by night, even in darkness, in doubts and obscurities, into the Egypt of suffering and privation? At least let us begin now, and strive to increase our merit for the future and atone for the past. Let us endeavour to practise during this month great conformity to the will of God, and great calmness and patience in all our trials or annoyances, receiving good and evil alike from the hands of our heavenly Father.

One Our Father, &c., in honour of this Dolour

and Joy, especially recommending all the members of your community or household to St. Joseph, to obtain for them the grace of a happy death.

Aspiration. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my life.

SIXTH DOLOUR AND JOY.

If we must admire St. Joseph's patience in the last Dolour, we must now admire and strive to imitate his obedience. Sorrow and joy again intermix with each other. Again our holy Patriarch hears the angel's voice, and without a moment's hesitation returns to his home, fearless, or at least regardless, of the consequences which he might naturally apprehend. Let us not only admire, but endeavour to imitate, him. Angels do not speak to us, it is true; but the holy will of God is as plainly declared to us by our superiors, by the providences of God, by His merciful calls, and those interior inspirations which He pours into the souls of those who, with humble and tearful hearts, say "Our Father," and only seek to do His will in all things. Our virtue, then, for this month will be the most exact obedience to our superiors, and the perfect fulfilment of every duty in our state of life, in honour of our holy patron's obedience in this mystery. Let us pray also especially for our superiors and spiritual guides, and ask for them the special protection and help of St. Joseph in their painful and difficult duties. We owe

them our deepest gratitude and our most earnest prayers: are they not more to us than any earthly parent? and should we not honour and love them as much?

Aspiration. Great St. Joseph, guardian of Jesus and of Mary, guard and protect all superiors and spiritual guides, especially those to whose care we are committed, thou who art the especial guardian of all who desire an interior spirit, and endeavour to lead others to the practice of it.

SEVENTH DOLOUR AND JOY.

St. Joseph loses Jesus; but he is not content to lose Him thus easily: with earnest prayers and burning zeal, he seeks for Him unweariedly, and rests not until he again beholds the beloved face of the Holy Child; and yet it was through no fault or negligence that this trial happened to him. How unlike is our conduct to his! How easily we lose the presence of our sweet Jesus! How careless we are in seeking to find Him again, when by our sins we have separated ourselves from Him! Let us, at least during this month, endeavour to imitate the humble love of our great patron, and strive never to lose Divine grace by our negligence or tepidity; and as pride is the vice which of all others drives Jesus most quickly from us, let us aim at acquiring a deep humility, humbly acknowledging our faults whenever we are guilty, and accepting unjust blame,

should such be given us, with tranquillity, if not with joy. To imitate the virtues of a saint is the best way of gaining their favour and truly honouring them. Let us meditate on the humility of St. Joseph in these mysteries, and make it our model during this month, practising this virtue in his honour; say an Our Father, &c., for this intention, and pray for the conversion of heretics.

Aspiration. St. Joseph, protector of the humble and lowly, obtain for us the grace of a true and deep humility.

FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH.

HYMN TO ST. JOSEPH.*

HOLY Joseph, dearest father,
 To thy children's prayer incline,
 Whilst we sing thy joys and sorrows,
 And the glories which are thine.

How to praise thee, how to thank thee,
 Blessed saint, we cannot tell;

* This hymn was written for a community of Poor Clares who had received some very special favours through the intercession of St. Joseph; but it is hoped that all the verses, except the 3d and 5th, may be used by others, and even these with a little alteration.

A suitable and very pretty air for it will be found in Mr. Formby's "Catholic Hymns," No. iii. p. 35, No. 29.

Favours countless thou hast given—
Can we choose but love thee well?

Spouse of Mary, thou didst guard her:
Shield us, too, from every harm;
Guard our Mother, guard our sisters,
With thine own paternal arm.

Near to Jesus, near to Mary,
And, kind father, near to thee,
Keep us, while on earth we wander,
And in death our helper be.

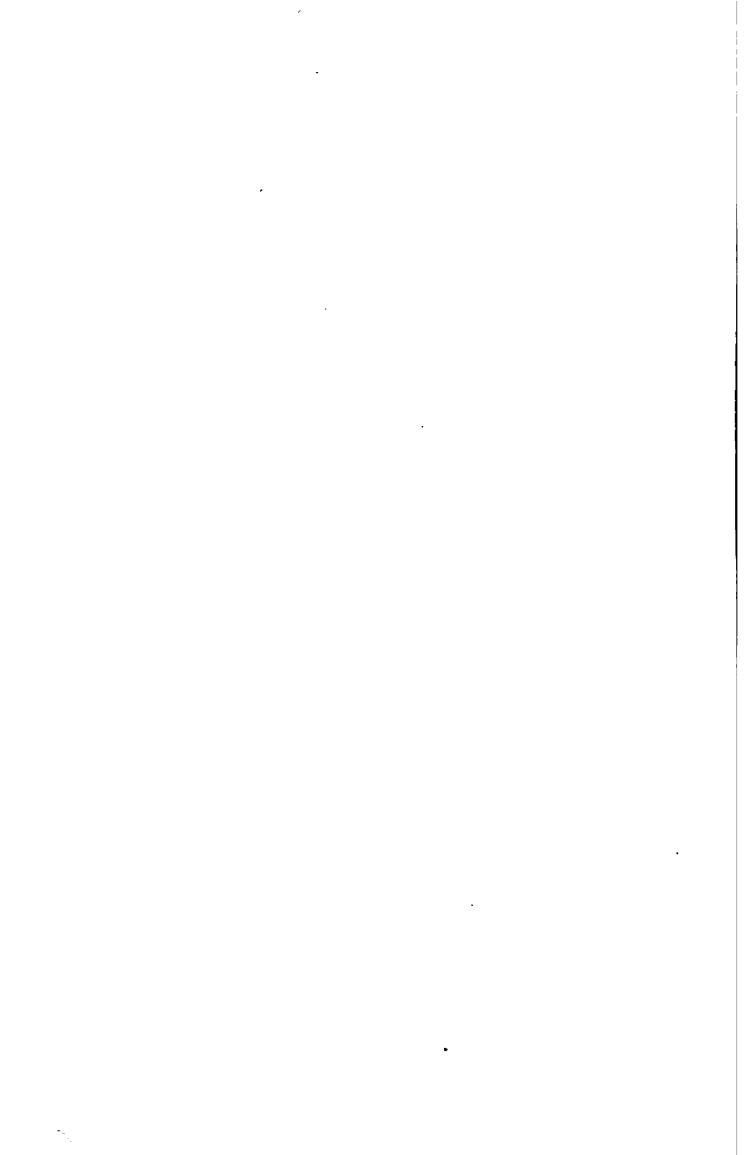
Sing we Joseph, Spouse of Mary,
And our Convent's blessed friend;
Favours countless, mercies constant,
Thou dost ever to us send.

We have prayed, and thou hast answered;
We have asked, and thou hast given.
Need we marvel? Jesus tells us,
Joseph has the stores of heaven.

One more favour we will ask thee;
Thou of all canst grant it best:
When we die, be thou still near us,
Bring us safe to endless rest.

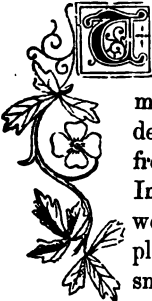
APRIL.

Month of the Resurrection.



APRIL.

Month of the Resurrection.



THE joys of Easter and of Christmas are a strange contrast. The latter Festival brings with it more of human gladness, more of earthly joy. Our dearest Lord is made man ; and we weep from excess of love and pleasure : the little Infant Jesus is so dear, and so beautiful, we feel as if we might almost dare to play with Him and to caress Him. He smiles on us as He lies in Mary's arms, and looks so helpless, and yet so full of love, that our fear all vanishes ; we almost forget that we have sinned, and that He must suffer. And the shepherds and the kings lead our fancy on yet further ; all seems mirth and joy : the stable does not look so cold as it really is ; the poverty does not seem so deep ; for the little Jesus is all we see, and His low murmurs "of sorrow and love" all we hear. But it is not so at Easter. Lent has been to most of us a time of pain and fear ; the overwhelming woes

of the Passion have crushed us almost to the earth; the sorrowful reproaches of Good Friday still ring in our ears. "Popule meus, quid feci tibi? aut in quo contristavi te?" We know not what to answer, or what to say; it is all too true: we have sinned beyond measure, and Jesus has loved beyond measure; and we can scarcely bear to breathe the pure air of heaven, so foul and tainted do we feel ourselves to be. We do not now see a little smiling Infant with arms outstretched to bless: that vision has faded from our gaze, and in its place we behold a Man, bruised, bleeding, disfigured, wounded; and those blessed hands, still, indeed, extended in benediction, but, oh, how changed! Is this, then, the beautiful little One whom we thought we should love so tenderly, and cherish so fondly? And who has done this deed of blood? this deed which has made even the earth shudder, and the heavens cover themselves with darkness? We can give but one answer: We have sinned; and Thou, O dearest Lord, Thou hast suffered. Well may we tremble and fear, even on the bright and glorious Easter morning, to raise our heads, or to utter its Alleluias. But, oh, the excess of love which thrills the heart of God! He knew what we should feel; He knew what we should suffer; He knew that shame, deep shame, for the deed which we had done would so overwhelm us, that we could hardly dare to joy, at least for our own sakes, on the day of His triumph. We might fear lest He should say that He had done all that could be done for us; that our return was so

bad, so cold, that He would do no more. We might fear lest He should come at once in power and glory to avenge Himself on those who cared so little for His sufferings and His love. And what does He do? how does He show us that all is forgiven, and we might almost say forgotten? He appears first to Mary Magdalen, to the one who had sinned so deeply, and yet loved so much; as though it were to show us that love was all He asked, and that no amount of past guilt need ever hinder us from receiving the richest treasures of His grace. Thus it is that a parent or superior often overwhelms with kindness the child who has most injured or grieved them, lest the shame and fear which they must feel, perhaps even in proportion to their repentance, should lessen their filial confidence and love. For what is all love of parents and superiors but a shadow of His who is indeed our Father? and the more like they are to Him whose authority they represent, the more will their love be like His—a combining of paternal corrections and maternal tenderness. Yes; our sweet Jesus only wishes to convince us how much He loves us. He will let nothing come between us and Him. He will approach us with the tenderest caresses when we fear most, if our fear is the fear of true and loving contrition. He will lift up our heads, bowed with shame to the earth, and lay them next to His very heart. He will make us believe He has forgotten all the past, except the little love which we have sometimes shown Him amidst our wanderings; and He will tell us, if we

will only begin to love Him now, He will cherish us more than ever. O dearest Lord, how many hearts Thou dost almost break by the excess of Thy tenderness! And so we may rejoice; nay, rather we must rejoice; for it is all, all glory now. Jesus has risen! those wounds which once disfigured Him are now so glorious we can scarcely bear their light; that brow, so lately covered with the cold damp dews of death, with blood and wounds, is now so resplendent, that the Seraphim can scarcely gaze on it. Jesus has risen! but He rises not alone; He will share His joys, He will share His glories; it is only the sufferings which He likes to keep to Himself. And what is the special joy which He gives us? It is a new and risen life: "Therefore," says the Apostle, "if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon earth; for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Are we, then, "dead"? Do dead things speak? do they move? do they act? do they complain? do they suffer? do they rejoice? O dearest Lord, would that we were indeed "dead;" for then should we truly live. But is this deadness to be a death of soul or body? Oh, surely not of soul; for our life is hid with Christ in God, and *it* cannot die. Let us now, at this blessed Eastertide, begin to die, and begin to live. Let us learn a holy indifference about every thing earthly; we are only passengers, we are only strangers, we are only pilgrims on our homeward

journey. Our bodies, it is true, are here: but then, what matter about them? they will soon lie with the bodies of those who have gone before us in the silence and corruption of the tomb. This has been just the reason why the saints not only neglected, but even ill-treated, their bodies; they were dead to them, and therefore they did not concern themselves about them; their souls only were living, and they were their only anxiety. Oh, if we were dead, or striving really earnestly to die this mystic death, how different our lives would be! And yet it is the special privilege and duty of every Christian. Let us begin, if we have not begun before. The Resurrection of Jesus has obtained for us the richest graces, and He is pouring them out in torrents upon His Church. Now is the time to ask and to receive, and now is the time to die and to rise again. Let us sing the "In exitu Israel de Egipto," and with Alleluias set out on our heavenward journey; the mountains will skip like rams, and the hills like the lambs of the flock; the difficulties will vanish, the trials will seem but as summer clouds. Once for all let us turn our backs on Egypt; God knows we have loved it long enough. "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above." Do we seek them? are all our plans and schemes for earth, or for heaven? How eager we are about every thing, but the one only thing about which we should be eager! What do we "seek"? Pleasures which we fancy we shall enjoy. How anxious we are for the visit of this friend, for the society of the other! as if the company of angels was

not one day to be ours. How we weep and mourn, almost heart-broken, when some dear tie is severed ! as if the one we loved had not gone where we ourselves should be. How we toil and fret day and night for some earthly honour or advancement ; for some additional wealth ; to attain some object, the accomplishment of which we think will add to our felicity ! as if our joys should be here at all. How we resent some affront, some injury, some slight ! as if dead persons should feel any thing, as if it matters in the very least what is done or said to a corpse. How we make our plans for this year and the next, perhaps for some long distant period ! as if we were sure of life, and as if we wished to live. How often, even in what is best and holiest, we act as if our lives were necessary to God's providences, as if others could not do His work just as well, and perhaps far better ! as if our end was to be here. Oh, let us take it as a rule, from this very hour, never to concern ourselves, or to be anxious, about any thing which is not connected with, or necessary for, our risen life. Our bodies, what matter about them ? let them complain if they will, let them talk if they must ; leave them to themselves : what is our health, our reputation, our earthly life, that we should be anxious about it ? Let us begin to be ashamed of the folly of dressing and nursing and taking such wonderful care of dead bodies ; be assured, if they are alive, their life is not a life of God. If we want bodies to honour and to please, let us wait for our resurrection ones ; then indeed will the flesh also

have its triumph and its glory; and this in proportion to the death it has suffered here. And why is it that so many great saints have been privileged to live as regards their bodies almost as though they had them not? Why but because they were so utterly indifferent to them, that they had almost ceased to be like other bodies, and had become more like those which we shall have on the glorious day of resurrection? Why have some saints been privileged to live for so long without corporal nourishment? to do without rest, which seems to us almost more necessary? Why? because their sanctity obtained for them the privilege of living almost as the blessed will hereafter; and according to the measure of our earnestness, so shall it be with us. The more we die, the more we shall live. But this death with most of us is a slow and painful work: we must not be discouraged because it is so; even the saints have had long and weary struggles before they attained to the victory which they sought. Hour after hour, day after day, week after week, in patient faith, in quiet prayer, in continuous effort, the work must be carried on. Ours must be a life-long martyrdom, a life-long crucifixion: we must stretch out our hands, and pray our dearest Lord to nail them to the Cross with His; and once there, we must wait in patient love till the spear of death pierces our hearts, and drains out the last drop of our earthly life. Every circumstance, every event of our lives may help towards this mystic death. It may be now the loss of a friend which clouds the sunshine

to us, and makes us wonder how we could ever have thought it so bright ; it may be now a heavy sickness, or some constant wearing pain, which hinders us from entering into those enjoyments, perhaps harmless enough, in which we had hitherto indulged ; it may be now some coldness, some neglect from a friend, which makes us feel, as we had never felt before, that all is vanity ; it may be now a fall into some grievous sin, which shows us our own utter weakness, and how easily we can offend our best, our only Friend ; and we long, not with impatience, but with deep sorrowful love, for the time when we shall sin no more. Yes ; to die is one great part of our Easter duty : but we have more than this to do, we must also begin to live ; and—oh, strange mystery !—in proportion to the perfection of our death will be the perfection of our life. “Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth.” What is mortification but the forerunner of death, its most sure precursor ? the more rapidly it progresses, the nearer is the hour of our departure. Mortify, then, your earthly members, your “fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, and covetousness,” your “anger, indignation, malice, blasphemy ;” kill, destroy, spare not ; your work is great, but your strength shall be proportioned to your need ; and whilst you slay with unsparing hand, oh, forget not that you have a life to cherish, a life to renew. “Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving one

another, if any have a complaint against another; even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection; and let the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body, and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God. *All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do you in the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.*" Behold our Easter work,—to practise peace, and to sing canticles of joy. On the blessed Christmas night the angels sang of peace, and men of good will learned to practise it; but it is of another peace we must sing and learn at Eastertide. The Christmas peace is the peace of expectation, of coming redemption: the Easter peace is the *pax vobiscum* of our risen Lord; it is the peace of the blessed; it is the peace of Eternal Beatitude; it is the peace of fruition; it is a forecoming of the peace that we shall have in the paradise of God. Our dearest Lord still lingers with us, no longer in suffering and pain and contempt; the closed doors cannot keep out His glorified body; the Jews can no longer persecute it. O beautiful, O blessed time! why is it not always Eastertide, since it is likeliest to heaven of all the Church's joys? It is evening, and the doors are closed, the doors of our hearts and the doors of our

chambers ; and suddenly He appears in the midst, not perhaps visible to our corporeal eyes, as when His disciples saw Him in the upper room, but, oh, scarcely less really. He speaks, and our hearts thrill and burn ; for we hear His voice, it is in our inmost soul ; but we cannot mistake it for any other, so soft, so low, so sweet are those blessed accents. He speaks to us, and we speak to Him ; no matter what we say, it is all alike : each have their own way of telling their sorrow and their love. If we cannot enter into the beautiful folly of the saints, or the delight which Jesus takes in it, at least let us not judge of that which is not given us to comprehend. Let us stand outside the door, as those have done who in humble fear have witnessed thus the raptures of the seraphic ; perchance the love and light will stream from them to us, and we may learn to revere what we cannot fully know. But, oh, when we read of the childish simplicity with which those blessed ones have spoken to Jesus, let us at least not despise or scoff or turn from it and them with contempt, lest in contemning them we contemn Him whose delight is with little ones. He will not despise the “ broiled fish and the honeycomb ;” it is not the greatness of the gifts, but the love of the giver, that He values. Yes, the Resurrection gift is “ peace ;” why should we be troubled ? what should grieve us now ? the sorrow is over, and the joy has begun. In our Father’s house are many mansions. Do we think of them ? do we long for them ? The angels are busy preparing them ; Jesus

Himself is getting them ready, and He will come and take us to Himself. Do we think enough of heaven? Alas, if we are only alive to earth; if we are full of its cares, its pleasures, its business, its toys, how can we? Is heaven really our home? is it our country? are we to dwell there for ever and ever? Is Jesus there? is Mary there? are our angel-friends waiting for us? What do we mean? what are we thinking of? Celestial mansions are preparing for us in the Paradise of God; celestial joys are awaiting us which can never be taken from us. And we, are we living as if all this was true? Alas, alas, we sit down by the wayside, and weep over our broken toys and faded flowers. Is it so difficult, then, to think of Heaven, to begin to prepare for it? "If any man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him; and We will come to Him, and will make our abode with Him." "*We,*" and "*our abode*"! Are we ambitious? do we desire honour, reputation, glory? behold enough, and to spare. "*We,*" and "*our abode*"! oh, let us repeat the blessed words over and over again, and dwell upon them until they have thrilled and nerved our souls. We are made for God; nothing can satisfy us but God. And yet, O strange perverseness of our degenerated wills! we will not seek that which alone can give us content. Not only the Son, but the Father and the Holy Ghost, will abide with us; and it is not for a passing visit, it is not for a few brief hours; it shall be an abiding presence. To "love" and to "keep His word,"—this is

all that Jesus asks. Will we refuse it to Him, when He offers us so great a gift in return? What is the beatitude of heaven but the fulness of the Divine presence, which we shall see and feel? and may not our beatitude begin even on earth, if we will it?

But Easter must be also a time of thanksgiving; our risen life should fill us with celestial joys; and where there are celestial joys, there will always be celestial gratitude. What miserably ungrateful beings we are! How many "Our Fathers" we say for one *Gloria Patri*! How many prayers we make, and how few thanksgivings! And why is this? oh, it is the old story; our pride and our selfishness. We do not half like to own that we are indebted for our graces to the Divine mercy; we think we have a sort of right to every thing we get; and what is the result of this independence? just simply that we do not get half as much as we should if we were a little more humble and a little more grateful. The flowers look up and unfold their leaves when the refreshing rain falls softly on them, and do their very best to smile when the sunshine pours down on them in rich warm floods of golden light; the birds lift up their heads, and warble sweet songs when their thirst is refreshed; and the bee murmurs its buzz of gladness for its gathered store. The flower, the bird, and the bee make their thanksgiving in their own fashion; and in what fashion do we make ours? Oh, what a bright, bright world it would be, if there was but a little more thanksgiving in it! It would make the very angels happier to see us for

once in our lives really fervently grateful to God for all His blessings. How do we spend our times of prayer, our meditations, our visits to the most holy Sacrament, our spare thoughts? We are praying: we want so many things: we are so proud, we must pray for humility; so impatient, we must pray for patience; so full of self-love, we must ask for a spirit of mortification; and so on. And pray what should we think of a poor beggar who was constantly at our door asking for something, now for food, now for clothes, now for money to pay his rent, and who never thanked us even once for what we had already given him; and suppose we never have sent him away without an alms, would not the case be worse? And is not this pretty much the fashion in which we treat our heavenly Father? Must not the angels be almost amazed at our thanklessness? But we may say we are almost afraid to thank Almighty God for the graces He has given us, lest we should grow proud of them, and then lose them altogether; as if there was not temptation and danger in our holiest actions; as if acknowledging that the gift was given, and returning thanks for it because it was given, could make us think it our own. The beggar who takes a large alms in sullen thanklessness, and hoards it without ever returning to acknowledge the charity of his benefactor, may forget who gave him the wealth by which he is enriched, and may grow proud and boastful; but the poor man who returns again to the friend by whose benevolence he is supported, and thanks him with

tears of gratitude for his charity, will scarcely forget he is indebted to another for his support. No, we may be afraid that ingratitude will make us proud; but we need never fear that our thanksgivings will have any other effect than to increase our humility.

Besides, self-interest ought to make us fond of thanksgiving. Almighty God has implanted in us certain dispositions and feelings. He acts towards us on the same principle as He teaches us to act towards others. A natural benevolence would lead us to bestow more favours on a person who was grateful for those already given; and the more thanklessness we saw in them, the less we should feel inclined to do for them. Thus it is our heavenly Father acts towards us. He likes to see us grateful, rather, if we may say so, for our own sakes than for His; for what is all our gratitude to Him? But it does us good to be grateful; it enlarges our hearts, it deepens our humility, and adds not a little to our love.

But oh, when shall we be really generous, and learn to make thanksgivings for God alone? It is a pleasant and joyful thing to have some one to thank, some one to whom we feel indebted; and if we fancy we have no mercies of our own to return thanks for, let us bless God for the mercies He pours out upon others. Oh, if we really loved, our devotions would be very different to what they now are! How grateful we are for the least kindness from a person to whom we are attached! how we thank them again and again, if not in our words, at least in our hearts, for even a smile or a look of love!

Thankfulness will make us love, and love will make us thankful; united they will form a beautiful chain, which will bind us very close to the Heart of Jesus. The humble will always be thankful; for as they feel they deserve nothing, the least favour will seem immense to their humility, and will produce a corresponding amount of thanksgiving. Cheerfulness is not sanctity, but it is very closely allied to it; who ever heard of a gloomy saint? Fanatics, and heretics, and Christians who hardly deserve the name, may indulge in gloom and moroseness; but the more we live in the sunshine of Divine love, the brighter will be our smiles, the more cheerful our countenances, the more mirthful our laughter. There may indeed be cases of deep and mysterious suffering, where joy cannot come; there may be, and there are, those whose whole lives are worn away in a mysterious sorrow, whose existence is one long suffering for and with Jesus; but these are rare instances, rare even amongst the saints; and our gloom is usually the result of wounded pride or self-love. We are vexed with every one because we are vexed with ourselves; we are cross with every one because we have got out of the sunshine of Divine love by some fault, which two minutes' contrition and humility might repair. We are suffering some constant wearing pain, and we make every one else suffer it with us, because we are so full of ourselves, and so little in love with suffering, that we will not get all the merit out of it which a little cheerfulness and patience would

give. Instead of complaining so much of the trials we have, and making ourselves unhappy, and even others, as far as it is in our power to do so, let us try a new plan, and begin to be more thankful for our mercies; let us look out for the silver linings of our dark clouds, and we shall soon be better and happier Christians. The smile of one who really loves God is something very beautiful. There is a *pax vobiscum* about it that we cannot but feel; and the real unaffected cheerfulness of a soul much tried, either by harassing or difficult duties, bodily pains or mental sufferings, does more for us than ten sermons. What have we got to make us gloomy? what should we feel grieved about, except sin and our sweet Saviour's sufferings? depend upon it, the tears we shed of real contrition, or deep sympathy with Jesus crucified, will never make us gloomy; will never cast a shade of sadness over our features; will never make us look less cheerful. Oh, let us be cheerful, let us be thankful; Heaven is our home, Paradise; let this be our Easter song; we may soon be called to its mansions of bliss. Why weep we, then, by the wayside? the angels will be our companions; they are always full of joy.

There is a land where sadness never
Tainteth the breeze;
There is a land where gladness ever
Floweth o'er glassy seas;
There is a place where no distressing
Wearies the breast,
Where every thing is filled with blessing
And perfect rest.

The spring is coming, with its manifold brightness, and it too bids us rejoice, and the white-winged angels are singing the *Regina Cæli* to their sweetest music. And Mary, our Mother, what shall we say of her at Eastertide? Oh, if ever a human heart was like to be broken with joy, it surely was hers when she saw her risen Lord: and what was her life from that moment until the moment of her Assumption? The night of sorrow was over, the morning of joy had dawned; she must linger still on earth; for Jesus will not deprive His disciples of their Mother, lest their hearts should break with utter anguish; she must linger yet on earth for the increase of her merits and her sanctity; but oh, who can imagine what acts of joy and thanksgiving filled up every moment of her existence? She was indeed risen with her risen Lord. Her heart and her treasures were gone before, and the slow fever of unearthly love consumed her mortal frame. She will teach us how to rejoice at Easter, as she has taught us how to sorrow in Lent; and she will help us to prepare, by our Easter joys, for an abundant entrance into the land of eternal praise.

We have chosen the beatitudes for our offerings this month. The blessedness of heaven to each of us will be proportioned to the measure of our sanctity; and as this is to be a month of thanksgiving and of risen life, what can we do better than endeavour to live like the blessed, and to practise the virtues which will make us such?

THE FIRST BEATITUDE.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Yes, the poor in spirit already possess that for which others long. Peace is the atmosphere of the New Jerusalem, and there all is peace. Oh, blessed, thrice blessed are those humble and lowly ones who know not their own humility, or the beauty with which they shine in the sight of the angels. Let us endeavour during this month to become poor in spirit, to think little of ourselves, to think much of others, and to practise faithfully every occasion of humiliation which may be offered to us. Let us each day offer to the sacred Heart of Jesus the humility of all the saints, whether on earth or in heaven, saying nine *Gloria Patri* in thanksgiving for the graces which have been bestowed on them.

THE SECOND BEATITUDE.

“Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land.”

Yes, the meek—those who see themselves injured without complaint, and silently bear persecution and contempt; they shall receive double for all their sufferings here. Let us endeavour, during this time of joy, to acquire the virtue of meekness, to restrain ourselves when we are inclined to utter angry or impatient words, to give gentle answers to those who speak unkindly to us. Let us offer to the risen Heart of Jesus the meekness of all those

saints who have been most distinguished for this virtue, and say nine *Gloria Patri* in thanksgiving for the graces which have been given them.

THE THIRD BEATITUDE.

“Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.”

It may be that some are almost overwhelmed with grief, even amid our Easter joys; and that, much as they may desire it, they may not be able to enter into its gladness. But if their sorrow is not immoderate or unhallowed, let them take courage, they shall be comforted. A resurrection-day will come, when broken ties shall be united, severed friends joined together, where sin and earthly sorrow no more shall mar our joys; and we cannot doubt but that those who have suffered most, if they have borne their sufferings patiently, will have the largest measure of celestial felicity. Take courage, then, all ye who mourn; look up, for your time of gladness will surely come. Say nine *Gloria Patri* in thanksgiving for the graces of conformity to the will of God bestowed on those who have had deep afflictions, and have borne them cheerfully, and offer their holy resignation to the risen Heart of Jesus, endeavouring each day either to console some one who is suffering, or to bear more cheerfully some trial of your own.

THE FOURTH BEATITUDE.

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall be filled.”

Let us learn, amidst our Easter joys, to bid adieu to all earthly desires and hopes and fears, and to seek only the one thing needful. Let us “hunger and thirst” for our sanctification, and for the means which may promote it; and if we have an earnest desire to be saints, let us thank God, for it is His gift, and a precious one. Let our practice be, great fervour in attending to our particular examen, saying each day nine *Gloria Patri* in thanksgiving for the graces bestowed on all the saints of our order or confraternity.

THE FIFTH BEATITUDE.

“Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.”

Behold an easy and a pleasant means of obtaining that which will one day be worth a thousand worlds. Oh, if the measure of the mercy that is shown to us is proportioned to the measure of our mercy to others, may we not well fear how it will be with us in the great day of reckoning? Let us endeavour each day to practise at least five acts of kind and thoughtful love towards those with whom we associate, and be very careful how we allow ourselves to judge their conduct, except when duty requires us to do so. Say nine *Gloria Patri* each day in thanksgiving for the good done by all the active

orders of religion, and offer it to the risen Heart of Jesus.

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE.

“ Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God.”

Of all the saints, Almighty God seems especially to love those who have been most distinguished for great purity of heart. How much it involves of saintliness, of self-denial, of life-long struggles! Let us make this beatitude our practice during this time of joy, and endeavour, by a strict guard over our senses, to preserve the purity of our state, whatever it may be, and also strive each day constantly to purify our intentions in all our actions; offering to the Heart of Jesus the pure desire of pleasing Him, which is the special gift of so many holy souls, and saying nine *Gloria Patri* in thanksgiving for the favours bestowed on them.

THE SEVENTH BEATITUDE.

“ Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.”

Pax vobiscum is the salutation of your risen Lord; every where you must go about uttering these words, and seeking by all your actions to promote peace, and as far as possible to reconcile any whom you know to be at variance; a smile and gentle word, an innocent jest, will sometimes effect this better than a long sermon. God is love;

and where love is, there must be peace. See, then, that you, like a truly filial child, endeavour to act as your Father would have you. Invoke your angel-guardian each morning to help you in your difficult office, and every day endeavour to give up your own will and inclinations to others, even in matters which may seem indifferent, in order the better to practise your virtue. Offer to your sweet Jesus the sanctity of all those who have striven most to make peace, and say nine *Gloria Patri* in thanksgiving for the graces bestowed on them.

THE EIGHTH BEATITUDE.

“Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice’ sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

There are many ways in which we may suffer persecution: the rack and the fire are not now the trial of our faith; but unkind words, slights, the severing of home-ties, and the rending of home-affections—those have been the sufferings of many, even in our own day. And how few can be really good and consistent Catholics, living as we do in a country where men’s opinions are so prejudiced against us, without sharing in some measure in the blessed Cross of persecution! Nor is it always from without. Those who are striving to lead holy lives must suffer; and often, in the providence of God, their trials come even from those of their own faith and household. An earnest effort to be a saint in any individual is sure to produce self-reproach in

the tepid, and this leads to unkindness in some form or other. Besides, there are the sufferings of those who are called to leave father and mother and all for God, and who can seldom accomplish their desires without much opposition, even from those very persons whose opposition is most painful. Let us, then, endeavour during this holy time to share in the blessedness of the persecuted, either by assisting them as love may suggest, or by our faithfulness to our duties and the calls of God; let us merit to suffer with them. Offer to the risen Heart of your sweet Jesus the fervour and love of all those who, for His sake, have borne persecution, and say nine *Gloria Patri* in thanksgiving for all the conversions which have taken place during the last few years.

FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL.

THE RESURRECTION.

To the land of crystal light,
 To the land of beauty bright,
 To the land where pilgrims rest,
 Where earth's troubled ones are blest,—

I'm away,

I dare not stay.

Home, home to my fatherland !
 Where stand the joyous band,

I'm away,

I dare not stay.

There's music in the quivering
 Of every angel's wing ;
 There's gladness in its golden light,
 And joy on every thing ;
 For chills of winter never blight,
 And every hour brings new delight.

Then home, home to my fatherland !

Where stand the joyous band,

I'm away,

I dare not stay.

To the land of crystal light I'm bound ;

A palace shineth there

Which mortal eye hath ne'er discerned,

Nor dreamt of ought so fair.

'Tis not that diàmond and pearl
 Upon its walls are found;
 But the Lamb, He ever walketh there,
 And sheds His light around.

And the blessed, they walk after Him,
 They follow where He goes;
 And ever as they pass along,
 The voice of music flows.

I see it now, that land of light;
 I see it now in glimpses bright.
 I'm away,
 I dare not stay;
 Home to my fatherland!

THEY ALSO SERVE WHO WAIT.

THEY also serve who wait,
 And there are those lingering without the gate
 Called Beautiful,
 Children who shall be fed;
 For God, who knoweth how to give His people bread,
 Hath store for all.

Poor-heart ones are there,
 Who fear to enter in:
 Some burdened with dark care;
 Some weeping for their sin;
 Some souls who would, but may not; by love chained
 To couch of woe, with body pained.

Oh, tremble not, dear heart : ask for an alms ;
 It will not be denied ;
 Full oft He loves those most who wit it not,
 Souls sorely tried.

Will mother's love neglect the child who cannot play,
 Pain-stricken sad,
 Because it joins not with the noisy ones
 Who riot glad ?

Ah, no, its very grief relights her love ;
 The sickly one will be the warmest nestled dove.
 And those who cannot enter in
 The gate called Beautiful
 Shall be the choicest fed.

God visiteth such souls, and maketh all their bed ;
 Whispers sweet love, bidding them wait,
 And they shall enter in another gate ;
 A gate of pearl so bright,
 A land of never-changing light ;
 Where the Good Shepherd, by His pastures sweet,
 Shall lead them ; bathe their weary feet
 In cooling streams ; comfort each heart :
 Oh, blessed they who have within that gate their
 part !

THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE.

THERE is a book of God's own keeping,
 And things are in it writ
 Of which we little wit
 Who here are weeping :

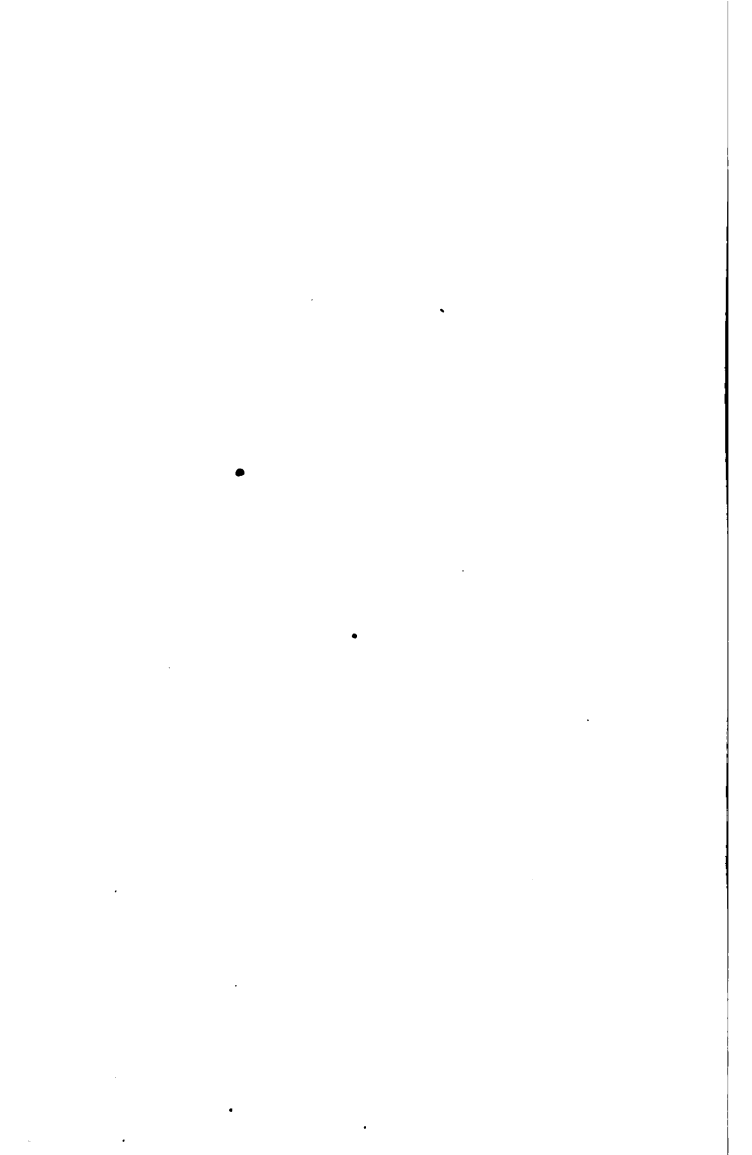
Things strange,
That pass the range
Of this our mortal vision.

There was a widow lone and desolate ;
Her prayer was heard,
And, ere 'twas answered, written there,
E'en every word.

There was a gush of joy, a look of love,
From a young saint, and that
Was registered above.
A prodigal's deep sigh,
A mourner's heart-wrung cry,
Tears from a bruised reed,
And many an anguish borne from bitter need,
The first prayer of a young child,
The torn heart-strings of a maiden mild,
Widows' mites, mingled with orphans' prayers,
Self-sacrifices, patient-borne cares,
And rapturous words, and utterings so faint—
Were there ; the jubilations of a dying saint,
Triumphs of truth,
Struggles 'gainst unbelief,
Wrongs of the oppressed unheeded here
Marked for relief,
And many a silent thing,
Borne up to heaven by angel swift of wing,
Thoughts, looks, unuttered feelings there
Were catalogued, and marked as prayer.


M A Y.

The Month of Mary.



M A Y.

The Month of Mary.



AND what can we have for May but flowers, bright flowers? Even nature says so; for we see them shooting up their fair blossoms, and laughing in the warm sunshine. Easter has come, and its hallelujahs are lingering in our ears, and we must be glad. The children are gone to pull violets down in the green lanes, with their merry shouts and noisy laughter, so noisy as if noise was a very part of their happiness; and the quiet nun in her convent-garden is pulling flowers too: there is a sweet smile on her lip, and a bright glance in her eye; for she looks up as she pulls each flower, and offers it for some special intention to that sweet Mother whose Altar it is so soon to deck. She is praying as she gathers the flowers; for her life is a life of prayer, and her exterior occupations make little difference to her, for each is still a prayer; but there are tears

in her eyes, which almost belie the smile on her lips. O dear nun, weep on, and smile on; the morning is coming, it will not be long; weep that your Mother is not known, and is not loved, nay, that she is blasphemed and scorned;—that gentle Lady! as if men could love Jesus more by loving Mary less; as if they could honour the Son by dishonouring the Mother. Weep on, dear nun, your Mother has sent an angel to gather up your tears; he has taken them to her, and will water the flowers of Paradise with them; and you, you who are culling flowers for Mary here, and weeping that you have no better reparation to make her than the offering of a few blossoms which will fade almost as soon as they are gathered,—ah, if you could see, if you could know, what Mary is doing for you, if you knew how she watches you, how she prays that you may yet be one of her fairest flowers, how you would smile! and yet you could not wonder; she is your Mother, and mothers have such wonderful hearts, such wonderful ways of showing their love; and who has such a heart as our Mother Mary?

Yes, flowers, bright flowers for the month of Mary; for Mary is the Queen of flowers, the Lily of spotless bloom. And why, it may be asked, do we honour Mary so much? why are we so anxious to deck her Altars, to speak of her, to praise her? Ah, why? Let us go back a little and consider, and then, when we have considered, let us say if we ever have loved her enough, or praised her enough. Long years ago, there was a garden, fair and beau-

tiful, and in it there were two who walked in peaceful love, fairer and more beautiful than all besides. But not always did the garden retain its beauty, or they who walked therein their innocence. It is an old story, and we weary of hearing it. Woman fell, and with her fall, oh, what a heavy, bitter curse she brought on this earth, once so beautiful! Long, long years passed: the Patriarchs died in faith and love, and the Martyrs sealed with blood their testimony, and the Prophets sang in mystic strains the coming One who should restore the fallen; and the souls of the good passed away in holy hope, for they knew that a Virgin would conceive and bear a Saviour,—and that Virgin! oh, how shall I speak of her? foreshadowed by the sacred Ark which none might touch, because of the holiness of that which it contained; by the unconsumed yet burning bush; by the fleece of Gideon; by Aaron's blossoming rod; by the Eastern gate, which only one might pass; by Judith, with her victories; by Abisag, with her love;—how shall I speak of her? she is our Queen, but yet I may not fear, for she is also our Mother.

The sunset of early spring had left its last golden gleams upon the mountains of Judea, and that maiden knelt alone, wrapt in trance of ecstatic prayer. She knelt, her body almost following her pure soul in its flight to the realms of bliss, and she pleaded—oh, how she pleaded!—for her guilty people, and for the coming One who should deliver them; and it is said, that in her deep humility she even prayed that she

might live to see the Mother of her Saviour, and to be her slave. What wonder that she drew Him into her heart, whose handmaid she believed herself unworthy to be? But the moment is coming: her prayers are heard, her longings will be satisfied. A light to which all earthly light is dim fills the chamber where she kneels, and a voice of unearthly music thrills her soul; with simple magnificence we are told the tale day by day. "Angelus Domini annuntiavit Mariæ, et concepit de Spiritu Sancto." Oh, that most wonderful Angelus; what a tale it tells, how carelessly it is heard, how coldly said; and yet what a volume is wrapt up in its few simple words! The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary. Innocence comes to innocence, grace to grace, beauty to beauty; the long-expected moment has arrived; the fullness of time is come; the Eternal Father sends one of His bright archangels to visit the lowly maiden, and she conceives of the Holy Ghost. What do we say? what do we hear? can it be possible? will the highest descend to the lowest? will the Monarch redeem the slave? yes; the prophecy of David and the Sibyl are fulfilled, and all which was foretold by Isaias in mystic words shall be accomplished. But it is not enough that the Saviour should be willing to come. He who has given to His creatures the mysterious gift of a free will, never can shackle it; and as Eve consented to sin, so Mary must consent to our salvation, her lowly *Ecce ancilla* must be heard ere the final decree can go forth, ere the Word can be made flesh; and its music must fill

the courts of Heaven, and reach the ear of the God of love, ere He will descend into the Virgin's womb. Why falterest thou, O Mary? why does the colour come and go so quick upon thy cheek of unearthly beauty? why dost thou tremble like a dove scared by the fowler? Ah, sweet Mother, thou knowest not all as yet, that spotless pearl of thy untainted virginity shall still remain intact. Thou who didst dream only to be the servant of the Mother of thy God; thou who didst dream only that thou shouldst see Him on the bosom of another, and adore Him from afar; thou, even thou, O spotless Lily, shalt bear Him in thy womb and shelter Him in thy bosom; and He will partake of no human nature save thine. Oh, speak, dear Lady, speak; for heaven and earth and hell are listening for the accents of thy blessed voice. And she has spoken: low and sweet is the murmur of her voice, like the music of the forest-leaves in summer; she has spoken, God has heard, and now the Dove broods over her, flooding her soul with joys and graces of which we, in our poverty and sin, may not dare to speak. The golden portals of Paradise are unclosing; the angels who have guarded it are sheathing their fiery swords; and the tree of life is seen once more, and now its leaves are for the healing of nations.

Yes, flowers; bright, bright flowers for our own sweet month of May, flowers for the altar of Mary: for Mary was the first altar where Jesus lay; and as we visit Him in His tabernacle day by day, surely we must think of her, who was the first and the

purest shrine of our Incarnate God; and if we grieve that our altars are not more beautiful, and our tabernacles more worthy of our sweet Jesus, we can at least offer Him the undefiled womb in which He once lay, and the seraphic love with which He was entertained in it. Can we love Mary enough? Never; it is impossible, until we love Jesus enough, and this we can never do; and the lives of the saints all tell us the same story, that just in proportion to our love of Jesus will be our love of Mary; for why do we love her, but for love of Him? why, but that she is our constant resource in our sorrow that we do not love Jesus enough. Just because our hearts would often break with sorrow, or sink into utter despair, if we had not that sinless one, with her burning unvarying love, to offer in atonement and reparation for our miserable coldness. If we are not saints ourselves; if we are full of imperfections and full of sins, and know that we are continually grieving the Sacred Heart, what joy to know that others are filling it with gladness! what joy to offer up their sanctity, or even to know that Jesus is consoled by it! It is just as we would feel in the case of an earthly friend whom we most tenderly loved, and to whom nevertheless we could render no service, no return for countless favours; what pleasure to see another do what we cannot, to see another make up what we would so gladly accomplish! And if we so rejoice to see sanctity in a frail creature like ourselves, and feel so glad to know that it comforts the heart of Jesus, oh, with how much more reason may we

gladden ourselves with the thought of the love of Mary!—the love which knew no change; the love which ever increased; the love which cared so little for the homelessness of Bethlehem, and the scoffs of Calvary, because it was near the Beloved. O Mother, our own sweet Mother, in this your own dear month, while we offer continually your love to the Heart of Jesus, obtain for us some little increase of this heavenly fire, and some more ardent zeal to enkindle it in the hearts of others.

Though devotion to the ever-blessed Virgin, and confidence in her intercession, has always been one of the surest marks of a truly Catholic spirit, the peculiar devotion of the month of May, or, perhaps, we should rather say, the dedication of it to our blessed Mother, is a more modern practice than many suppose. It originated near the source of all the Church's earthly graces; and Father Salomia, an Italian priest, was the first to propagate this devotion, now so universal. In 1815, March 21st, Pope Pius VII. sanctioned this practice by an apostolic brief, and granted 300 days' indulgence, for each day of the month, to all the faithful who should perform any prayers, devotions, or acts of virtue in honour of the blessed Virgin; also a plenary indulgence, which might be gained on any day during the month, under the usual conditions; both indulgences may be applied to the holy souls. Even if experience had not already assured us, that the richest treasures of Divine grace may be obtained during this sweet month through our Blessed Mother's intercession,

common sense would suggest the probability that what was then asked would be most easily obtained. We know that to honour the Mother is, indeed, to please her Divine Son; and can we doubt but that, during this month, in which the whole Catholic world unites to honour Mary, Jesus will place at her disposal His richest graces? Yes: let us ask, and ask what we will; let us plead with the Mother the glory of her Son, and with the Son the love of His Mother; and what may we not hope to obtain? But why is it that Jesus so loves Mary? or rather, we might say, why was it that He chose her, and her only, for His Mother? Ah, why? our hearts must tell: her life will answer. Yes; it was her sanctity, her lowliness and her love, her correspondence with grace, and thereby its continual increase in her heart, which drew into her bosom the Incarnate Word. How, then, can we honour Mary, but by imitating her virtues; those graces which are dearer to her than all besides. A devotion which is merely in words or affections will neither honour our Blessed Lady nor benefit ourselves; but a devotion which consists in a continual imitation of her virtues is surely a grace to be earnestly prayed for and carefully treasured. Let us, then, strive to spend this month in this spirit; and ere its close we may hope that Mary's flowers will bloom with a fragrance of unearthly sweetness, and adorn her altar as she would herself desire; and as each month of Mary comes round with the succeeding year, we may trust that, under her maternal care, and through her powerful

intercession, we shall become ever more and more like our Blessed Mother, and fitter to bloom in that Paradise of which she is the choicest flower.

Those who practise these devotions for this month are requested to offer them specially for the conversion of sinners, having this general intention in addition to the more particular one, attached to each office, and their own private petitions. We can scarcely imagine any object nearer to the Immaculate Heart of our Queen than to see sinners converted; and we must not think she pines less for souls now than when she stood beneath the bloody Cross of Calvary, offering to the Eternal Father all that had been suffered by the Fruit of her womb.

Can we doubt of her love and anxiety for poor sinners, when we read the thrilling touching tale of her appearance to the poor peasant children of Corps, and hear of her bitter burning tears falling hot and fast from her grief-worn eyes, because Jesus was offended, because sinners would not be converted? If nothing else would move us to pray for the conversion of sinners, surely this must; so now let us begin to help our sweet Mother in her own most blessed work; and, it may be, the graces we ask for others will return again into our own bosoms, and bring us a rich store of heavenly gifts.* Let us each draw

* It is seldom desirable to add much to our ordinary devotions, particularly for religious persons; we do not, therefore, suggest much beyond an Aspiration or "Our Father" for any of the offices. In many cases it would be better that persons should fix upon some devotion which they daily use,

our lot, and see what flower we are to represent on this little mystical altar, with which we are to honour Our Lady during this month.

MARY'S LILY.

Purity was Mary's dearest grace; her Immaculate Conception her greatest privilege. Mary's Lily must, then, strive to imitate her Mother's spotless purity. Jesus loves to see His own image reflected in the hearts of His beloved ones. But oh, if there be the slightest breath, the slightest stain, on those hearts, how can He reflect Himself there? how can they be burning-glasses which will ever draw to themselves fresh fire and love? Mary's Lily should, then, strive to purify herself by a great singleness of

and endeavour to say this with more attention and devotion for the intention of their office; for it is not *quantity* but *quality* which is of real value to us, or does honour to God in matters of devotion. Those who have office to say, could easily propose to themselves, during the month of May, for instance, to say the "Hail Mary," as it occurs, with more fervour and attention than they have hitherto done; or where their practice is one of thanksgiving, to put a little additional earnestness into their *Gloria Patri* or *Te Deum*. Most persons in the world say the *Angelus* at least at their morning and evening devotions; and here they could either add the prayer or aspiration of their office, or make it their intention in the Salutation. When we have learned fervour in the prayers we do say, then, indeed, we may add to them; and to live a life of continual prayer should be our constant endeavour, as it will surely be our greatest consolation and support.

intention in all her actions, and by carefully abstaining from any word, or look, or thought which might sully this most priceless virtue.

It was Mary's humility which drew Jesus into her womb; it was her purity which kept Him there. Let Mary's Lily, then, strive to prepare herself for all her Communions this month by great humility, and then entertain Jesus by the purity of her intentions in all her actions. Offer every day some little devotion in honour of the Immaculate Conception, and in thanksgiving for this grace having been bestowed on our Blessed Lady; and say often during the day, *Mater purissima, ora pro nobis.*

"As the lily amongst thorns, so is my love amongst the daughters." The Lily should pray especially for France; for the conversion of sinners there; and join herself with those who are honouring Our Lady's month in that country.

MARY'S VIOLET.

O beautiful Mother, how lowly wert thou! and how sweetly the perfume of thy humility has ascended before the throne of God! Look down, sweet Lady, upon thy child, who is to represent this flower upon thy Altar, and obtain for her the grace to imitate thee in thy lowliness. Mary's Violet should hide herself under the green leaves of silence; she should speak little this month, and pray much.

Every day she should strive to perform some special acts of humility in honour of her Blessed Mother, in order to obtain this virtue through her intercession; saying the *Magnificat* in thanksgiving to the Eternal Father for the great graces of perfect lowliness which were bestowed on our Lady. Let the Violet also strive to atone for all the proud words and boastful speeches of sinners, and for the vainglory in which even the good sometimes indulge, by her constant silence, her gentleness, and humility in speech.

Let her pray for Ireland as the crushed violet, ever trodden under foot and suffering, and yet ever clinging with unchanging devotedness to the faith of its fathers.

“Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields; let us abide in the villages.”

MARY'S ROSE.

And if the red red rose be the emblem of earthly love, if we cull it as the meetest flower for the loveliest and fairest, why should not our Mother's Altar be adorned by its rich bloom? Let Mary's Rose, then, seek during this month to send forth the fragrance of perpetual worship before the throne of the Eternal and Ever-blessed Trinity; let her imitate the profound adoration with which our Queen ever adores the Three Divine Persons; and in honour of her perpetual worship, so sublime and

yet so lowly, let the Rose say every day nine *Gloria Patri*. Let her practice be, continual acts of Divine love, and of the tenderest charity to those around her. Love is ingenious; it will suggest a thousand devices, a thousand ways in which love to Jesus and love to those whom Jesus has redeemed may blend and be united together. Thus will the Rose ever increase herself in heavenly love, and continually be presenting the sweetest fragrance on the Altar of Mary. She must also pray specially for England; and ask, through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, for its conversion; and that the land so loved by Mary may return her love again a thousandfold.

“Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it.”

MARY'S HEARTSEASE

must think of the bitter dolours of her Mother, and strive to console her for them by her fervour. What child would refuse to love and help a suffering mother? And what mother has ever suffered like ours? Let Mary's Heartsease, then, consider her office a very sacred one, as it will require peculiar tenderness and love to fulfil it well. Perhaps it is only those who have suffered, and suffered deeply, who can sympathise with suffering, who can enter into the peculiar and delicate love which must be offered to a suffering heart, lest we should wound where we desire to heal and soothe. Think

of Mary's patience amidst her awful woes, and offer every day some acts of patience in her honour. You will not fail to find many occasions for it. Pray for all those who are in trouble, and strive all you can to lighten the burden of others; a smile, a kind look, a gentle word, where you see depression of soul or weakness of body, may do far more than you can tell; and you will imitate your Mother, and be a flower she will love to see on her Altar, if you strive, like her, to be the comforter of the afflicted. Pray for the German empire, and all the great central states of Europe.

“ His left hand is under my head, and His right hand shall embrace me.”

MARY'S PASSIONFLOWER

must place herself under the Cross, with her most Blessed Mother, and there continually offer the Precious Blood of Jesus, in union with Mary's offering of it on Mount Calvary. Let her do this for the intentions of all who are practising these devotions; and thus, making herself the intercessor for all, she will share in their prayers and merits. Let her pray for all who are in their agony, or suffering from violent temptations, and offer each day some act of mortification for this intention, saying also seven “Hail Marys” in honour of the seven dolours. Pray for Rome and the Papal States.

“ A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me; He shall abide between my breasts.”

MARY'S SUNFLOWER.

Happy Flower! Jesus was the Sun of Mary's soul, and He will be the Sun of yours; oh, think how our Lady's heart was ever turned to Him whom her soul loved: think how she conversed with Him, and, as it were, turned her eyes and thoughts continually inwards, as He lay in her most blessed womb; that she might see Him only, hear Him only, converse with Him only; and then, when she was severed from Him and sought Him sorrowing, was not her thought by day and her dream by night still of Him? And when He left her for His three years' ministry, how her soul ever turned with the instinct of her heavenly maternity towards the places where she knew He was; and at last, His sorrows and hers being consummated, when He had ascended to His Father's throne, oh, who shall say with what acts of love and desire the soul of Mary pined? who shall say whether she lived on earth or in Heaven from that moment in which the cloud carried Him out of her sight, until the moment when the parted clouds were opened by the joyous angels who bore her up to be for ever in His presence? Happy Flower! if you do but faithfully fulfil your part on Mary's Altar. You must love Jesus for Mary, and with Mary; she pines, she weeps, because Jesus is not loved: if you love Him, you will help to dry her tears, and to console her heart. He lies now hidden, and, alas, too often neglected, in the most holy Sacrament. Let your heart, then, con-

stantly turn thither; make many acts of love and adoration to Jesus in the tabernacle; let your virtue be recollection and silence, your occupation reparation; and in your Communion pray for all who are joining you in the practice of these devotions, and for the town in which you reside.

“I to my Beloved, and my Beloved to me.”

MARY'S PALM.

The palm is the symbol of victory, and therefore your office must be one of joy and thanksgiving. During this month, make every day some special acts of thanksgiving for our Blessed Lady's celestial joys, particularly for her assumption and coronation. How many there are who seldom or never make acts of thanksgiving! and yet does not a grateful heart, by its very gratitude, win for itself fresh love and fresh favours? Be it yours, then, to atone for the thankless and ungrateful; be it yours to thank our dearest Lord for the Mother He has given us. Look up, and look on; pray for the weary, the depressed, the dejected. The night is never so long but at length the morning cometh; already it dawns in the Eastern skies: Jesus longs to have His spouses home; Mary pines for her children; the angels look for their companions. A little while of suffering and of pain, a little while of grief and care, and then we shall wear the white robes, and bear the palm-branch of victory. Let the Palm, then, look up and look on, and have her heart and

thoughts continually in Heaven. If it be Easter-tide, let her seek to rise with her risen Lord to a new and holier life; if Ascension, let her follow Him whither He hath ascended, and live at His sacred feet, continually uttering acts of adoring praise. Let Mary's Palm remember, that she who returns thanks for the graces and favours bestowed on others, and rejoices in their sanctity, will herself share largely in their merits. Pray for the conversion of the Jews, and for all foreign missions.

“Arise, make haste, my beautiful One, and come.”

FOR MAY—MONTH OF MARY.

THE ROSARY FOR SINGING.

In the midnight calm and holy,
 Came an angel from the sky,
 Singing to that Maiden lowly,
 While the Dove was hovering nigh.

“Ave,” sang that angel glorious;
 “Ave, Maiden,” so sing we:
 Hear us Lady, hear us Mother,
 ’Tis thy children call on thee.

O'er Judea's mountain hasting,
 To her cousin's home she speeds;
 Whilst in thoughts prophetic musing,
 She her soul in rapture feeds.

Scarce is heard her voice so lowly,
Ere the babe is sanctified—
Sanctified, the great Precursor,
Ere his God for him hath died.

Sing we, then, the wond'rous story
Of Messiah's glorious birth,
Sung by prophet old and hoary :
Joy is come indeed to earth.

Ave, Mother, plead for sinners,
Speak for us one little prayer ;
Ask for us one little blessing
From that Babe so dear and fair.

Now, within the Temple glorious,
Stands the Mother with her Son ;
And she hears what woes must crush her,
Ere her earthly race is run.

Plead for us, O gentle Lady,
By the anguish of that hour ;
Plead for us by all your dolours ;
May we never grieve you more.

Ave, Mother, thou art seeking,
Seeking for thy Blessed Child,
Thou art weeping, thou art praying,
Gentle Lady, Mother mild.

Thou hast found Him, sweetest Mother,
Thou wilt never lose Him more ;
Plead that we e'en too may find Him,
Love Him better than before.

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES.

Ave, Mother, thou art weeping ;
Now thy tears are tears of blood ;
Thou hast seen the soul's deep anguish
Of thy Child, and of thy God.

Ave, Mother, He is prostrate,
Crushed beneath His creatures' guilt ;
Ave, Mother, breathe one whisper,
'Twas for us His Blood was spilt.

Now the soldiers rude and cruel
Tear that blessed Flesh so pale ;
Mother, thou dost weep and shudder ;
Mother, sure thy heart will fail.

Deep the gashes, deep the anguish,
Of thy Blessed, Blessed Son ;
Ave, we must sink with sorrow—
We the cruel deed have done.

See the Cross upon His shoulder,
By the cruel scourge all torn ;
Ave, Mother, oh, what torture
Thy Belov'd for us hath borne.

Lo, He falls beneath His burden,
Crushed and bleeding now He lies ;
Ave, Mother, get us sorrow,
Get us tears and heart-wrung sighs.

Now the last dread deed is doing,
 Paler grows the trembling sun;
 Now they pierce the Side all bleeding
 Of that silent patient One.

Mother, Mother, we are weeping,
 But our tears will not undo
 All that cruel bitter sorrow ;
 Mother, you must suffer too.

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES.

Ave, Mother, Mother joyous,
 Glorious is the Easter Day ;
 Jesus, like the sun in splendour,
 From the tomb now bursts away.

Thou dost see Him, thou dost greet Him,
 Sure thy heart must break with bliss ;
 Thou hast given, thou hast taken,
 Mother, His first nuptial kiss.

Thou must loose Him, Ave, Mother ;
 To His Father's throne He goes ;
 There to plead His wounds and merits
 For thy children's sins and woes.

Ave, Mother, now thy spirit
 Pines and pants and longs to be
 With thy own beloved Jesus ;
 Mother, get such love for me.

Ave, Mother, maiden-queen like,
Thou presidest over all ;
While the chosen ones of Jesus
Low before the Dove now fall.

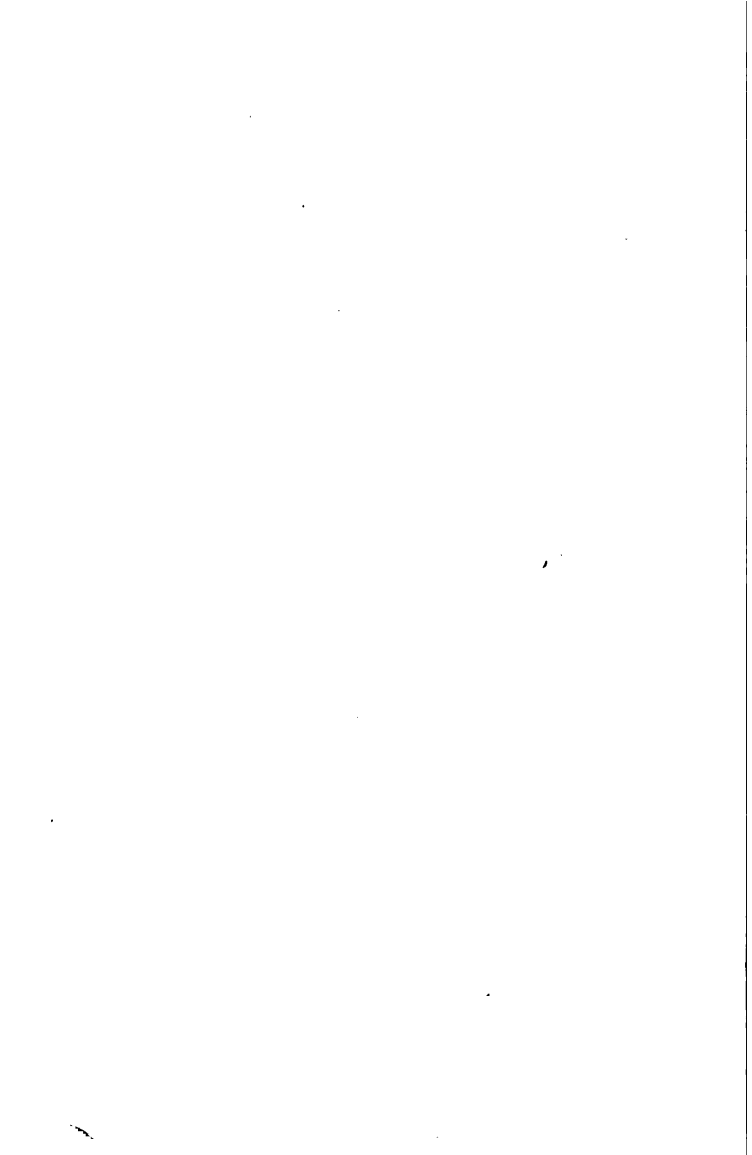
Ave, Mother, time is hastening,
Angels weary for their Queen ;
Thou in rapture now beholdest
Glories we have never seen.

Now thy soul doth pine and quiver,
Fainting with celestial bliss ;
Once again thy Saviour greets thee,
Gives once more the nuptial kiss.

Loved to Heaven, wooed to glory,
Mother, was it life or death,
That long trance of mystic silence
In which ceased thy earthly breath ?

Crowned now our Queen, our Mother,
Seated by her Son's right hand,
Sing we our own dearest Lady,
Brightest of the heavenly band.

Ave, Ave, Mother dearest,
Listen to our lowly cry ;
Bless us, guard us, keep us, Mother,
While we live, and when we die.



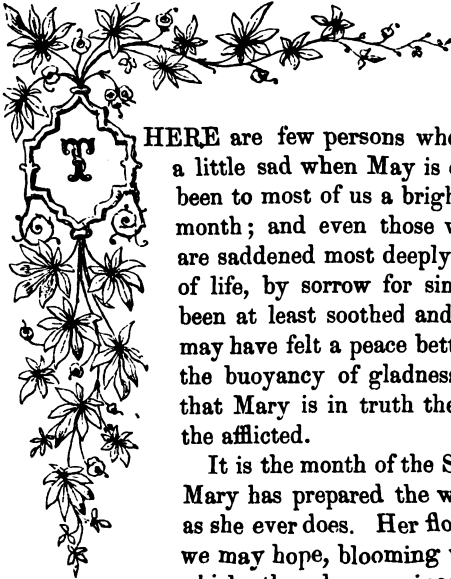
J U N E.

Month of the Sacred Heart.



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Month of the Sacred Heart.



HERE are few persons who do not feel a little sad when May is over. It has been to most of us a bright and joyous month; and even those whose hearts are saddened most deeply by the trials of life, by sorrow for sin, must have been at least soothed and calmed, and may have felt a peace better even than the buoyancy of gladness, and found that Mary is in truth the consoler of the afflicted.

It is the month of the Sacred Heart. Mary has prepared the way for Jesus, as she ever does. Her flowers are now, we may hope, blooming with a beauty which they have gained during the

past month through her intercession, and will be able to love with a purer, deeper love this burning Heart.

It may be that the earthly bloom of some flower is over; it may be that some were too beautiful, or too frail, to bear longer the rude winds of earth, and that Mary asked them for her garden in Paradise. But even there they will not be unmindful of those who still linger by the waters of Babylon; there they will offer the burning love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and His most Precious Blood, for those whom they have left amid earth's weary strife.

It does not seem necessary to say any thing here of the origin and establishment of this devotion. Every one knows that it was revealed by our Divine Lord Himself to the blessed Mother Margaret Mary Alacoque, about two hundred years ago; and that since it has prospered and increased in spite of all oppositions. How could it be otherwise when established by God Himself?

Yes, it is the month of the Heart of Jesus; and who has bid us honour this Heart? who has bid us love it? why did long years pass over before this devotion was heard of in the Church? why was it reserved for one poor, we had almost said ignorant, nun, whose whole life was one long martyrdom, to declare to the world that the Heart of Jesus should be honoured and loved? That blessed nun tells us herself, our Jesus knew that a time would come when the love of many would wax cold; when the chilling blight of heresy, and the bitter frost of

worldliness, would all but destroy the harvest of souls; when men would forget that the Word had been made flesh, and that a God had become man that He might suffer, and by His suffering at least try to convince us of His love: and it was necessary to reserve for this time of coldness the devotion of all others most likely to touch us, that of the Heart of Jesus! Ah, behold Him! behold the Man stretched out upon the Cross, not in repose, but in keenest anguish! His Blessed Flesh is torn, torn with whips and nails; and there is none to wipe away the Blood which gathers so thick and cold upon His brow. His whole Body is one Wound; but oh, His love is not satisfied with this. The doves must have a nest; there must be a shelter from the snare of the fowler. He is wounded, but He will not have us wounded; He would take us in His Arms, but they are nailed fast to the tree. What will He do, then, in the excess of His love? Oh, He has found out a new device: earthly lovers may shelter and protect with their arms; but our Beloved will open a cavern for us, even in His inmost Heart. Oh, the unimaginable, inexpressible love of the Wound of the Heart of Jesus! It would seem, when our sweet Lord permitted Himself to be nailed to the tree, as if all were over, as if the utmost stretch of love could do no more. There was Blood enough shed to save a million worlds; there had been reparation and agony enough for more souls than could ever exist; then why this Wound? Oh, why but to give the doves a nest. We might be terrified by the rude soldiers;

we might dread the scoffing multitude; we might fall a prey to the prowling demons, if alone and defenceless we stood at the foot of the Cross. Our sweet Lord foresaw all this, even from all eternity, and, determining that there should be no device of love untried, He opened to us His Sacred Heart.

Here is the shelter from the fowler, the nest of the dove, the home of the troubled ones. Oh, how many would have laid down by the wayside and died, sick and weary with sorrow and with sin, had not this blessed refuge been found for them! How many fear death so exceedingly that they almost grieve that they have had to live because they must die, and when the dread hour has come, perhaps, they have feared least of all; for they have climbed by the ladder of faith into the Side of love, and laid them down to sleep in peace! Oh, what should we do, or where should we go, if we had not this Heart for our shelter? Tempted, depressed, forsaken, perhaps, by those whom we might expect to comfort us, whither shall we flee? where shall we turn? Oh, the human Heart of Jesus is at the right hand of God, loving us, pleading for us, as though there were none but our poor sinful selves to be loved or pleaded for. This is the home of the sorrowful; for no heart ever felt or ever sympathised with sorrow like this Heart. This the home of the lonely; for none ever knew the trial of loneliness like unto Him. This is the home of sinners; for here is the Fountain which will cleanse them from all guilt. But, above all, this, this is the home of the spouses. *In pace in idipsum dormiam et requies-*

cam. Here they pasture all day long in green places, refreshed and sheltered from the burning heats. Here they enter, when wounded, to be healed; when sick, to be cured; when tempted, to be refreshed; when sorrowful, to be comforted. Here they enter to ask, and pray, and cry for suffering, that they may become more like Him whose Heart suffered beyond all human strength. Here they enter to plead for sinners, to pray for the increase of saints; and, when the evening shadows fall and their day of toil, and perhaps necessary intercourse, with the world is over, oh, then indeed they fly, as doves in a cloud, to enter their blessed nest: they have pardons to ask, they have petitions to make, they have acts of love to utter. Then, indeed, they say, "The night is never so long but at length the morning cometh." Then they lie down to rest; but still murmuring, "My Beloved to me, and I to Him;" and they sleep as only His beloved sleep, or, waking, still pray on, while the poor world revels in its giddy pleasures; and then comes at last the night that will have no earthly morning—the rest that will end, not in a weary waking, but in an eternal repose. Ah, happy, ah, blessed doves! now do they indeed nestle yet deeper into the cavern of love, and with an *In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum*, they sleep their last long sleep, safe from every fear and every care, in that Heart where they have already been so often sheltered. For what is death to those who die daily, who each night lay themselves down to rest, watching with their souls, we might almost say, while

their bodies sleep?—what but that for which their whole life has been a preparation and a desire, since they have pastured day by day, and slept night by night, in this wondrous cavern. And so the dark monarch Death but removes gently the film from their eyes, and they behold that Heart amidst all the magnificence of the Godhead.

And is this all? oh, no; one might think it enough that we could nestle there; enough that it might be our shelter and our home: no, there is more, even more yet; for there He feeds us with Himself. Oh, more than mother's love! oh, more than human tenderness!—and we, what return do we make for all this excess of love? Surely the angels must stand amazed at our coldness, not to say contempt; but shall it be always so? is there no remedy? are we never to give Him love for love? Let us not be discouraged. Jesus so longs for our love, so thirsts for our affections, and for the possession of those hearts which we are so unwilling to give Him, that He will make it all easy for us. His object in revealing this devotion was simply to enkindle a fire in our hearts. He longs to do this for us; and if we are willing, if we do not hinder Him, what is there He will not do for us? But there is one thing which must ever accompany the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and that is, a sincere love for humiliation and suffering. This we are assured of by the saintly soul who first proclaimed this devotion, amidst trials and contradictions which few could have borne. It would seem, indeed, as if our

Blessed Lord wished to foreshow in her what would be the portion of all who should peculiarly attach themselves to this devotion. The heart is the source or centre of all our affections, and it is through our affections that our keenest sufferings come. We may well believe that our dearest Lord suffered far less from the actual pain of the agony and the scourging, than from the spiritual anguish caused by the coldness and neglect of those whom He longed to redeem. We know ourselves how much harder it is to bear an unkindness, particularly when it comes from those we love, than any amount of bodily pain, and how in bodily pain one kind word or look from those we love will soothe and go far to remove our trial. What, then, must we do? what return can we make for this excessive love? and how can we console Jesus in His sufferings? Love can only be repaid by love; and when once we love perfectly, we have done all; and even this our dearest Lord has made easy for us. He knew how hard we should find it to fix our hearts on Him as we would desire; He knew, when His bodily Presence was withdrawn from the gaze of the faithful, that absence would cause forgetfulness, and that many would find it hard to remember and to love an unseen God. But the tenderness of His human Heart, which knew so well all the weakness of ours, has found the remedy. He is not absent or unseen; He is still with us; we may still gaze on Him, though His beauty is veiled and shrouded under material elements; we may still converse with Him, though He answers not, save in

those still and hidden whispers which only His Beloved can hear and understand. Still He will bless us, as really as He blessed His disciples when a cloud received Him out of their sight; and still He will love us, with a love which we shall only understand in proportion as we come to know the value and blessedness of His Sacramental Presence; and because men would not think of this, because they would not believe, or only half believed, whilst they could see nothing to attract their human sense, our Blessed Lord, stooping with inconceivable condescension to our every weakness, has even bidden that we should picture His Sacred wounded Heart with its deep cavern open for us to enter there, hoping that this might touch our cold affections, and win from us some sparks of love. Again and again our dearest Lord declared to the blessed Mother Margaret how dear this devotion was to Him, and how specially He would love and protect all who would honour His Sacred Heart, and practise the devotions which He Himself taught her. What further inducement can we need for such a practice? Is it not enough for the lover to know what the Beloved desires? how much more to comply when He entreats. Let us, then, fly to the Heart of Jesus; let us enter with full confidence into the wound which He has opened so wide to receive us. This is the home of saints and the refuge of the sinner; the furnace wherein our cold hearts are kindled; the place where we may learn to love suffering, and to suffer with the courage of true lovers. Above all, it is here we

may learn those lessons of meekness and humility which are peculiarly required from those who would love or be loved by this gentle Heart. He has told us to learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart; He does not ask from us great sufferings, or great miracles, or great ecstasies, or long prayers; He is content Himself to take all the great and hard things; He leaves us that which is simple and easy, —to copy the meekness and humility of His Heart; and how can we do this better than by taking these virtues for our daily practice, and by asking continually for grace, such grace as will enable us to copy our great Example? Let us, then, strive to spend this month in adoration and love of that Heart, and in endeavouring faithfully to imitate its virtues. Those who are familiar with the life of that blessed nun of whom we have before spoken, will remember how strongly she speaks on the subject of this devotion, and how distinctly she declares that it was revealed to her again and again by our Divine Lord, that nothing could be more acceptable to Him; writing to a friend, she says, “Contrive that all religious persons may embrace it; for they will derive so much assistance from it, that no other means will be necessary to reëstablish the first fervour and the most exact regularity in the worst-ordered communities, and it will bring to a height of perfection those who already live in a well-ordered convent.” What a joy for the spouses of Jesus to have this assurance, and to know that this devotion will not only please their Divine Saviour, but will also be a means of

enriching themselves with inconceivable graces! Nor is it only for religious that great favours are promised. Secular persons, she added, will by this devotion obtain all the assistance necessary for their state,—peace in their families, support in their labours, and blessings from Heaven in all their undertakings. How should it be otherwise, when we are striving to love Jesus and copy the virtues of His Heart, and this in the very way that He has Himself pointed out? are we not, in fact, striving to be saints? for what is sanctity but perfect love, and what is perfect love but the utter forgetfulness of self, and the absorption of the whole being in the will of the Beloved. The nine offices for this month are slightly altered, but still founded on the plan of those already published in various little works of devotion to the Sacred Heart; they simply carry out the design suggested by the blessed Margaret Alacoque. The general intention for all during this month should be, reparation to the Most Holy Sacrament for the blasphemies of heretics and the coldness and indifference of bad Catholics.

FIRST OFFICE: THE PROMOTER.

Oh, what an office is this! to promote the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to do all that can be done by word, and work, and prayer, that Jesus may be more loved and honoured, and that the inexpressible tenderness of His Sacred Heart may be known,

even if it were possible, to all the world. Let the Promoter, then, pray continually to the Eternal Father to give light to all, that the Sacred Heart of Jesus may be loved by all, and implore the Holy Ghost to inflame the whole world with His heavenly love; and, remembering that this Heart first beat in the womb of Mary, let her beseech that dear and gentle Mother to pray for the extension of this devotion, and that our poor cold hearts may burn with a love like her own. And, as we can do nothing for others unless we are ourselves on fire with this love, let the Promoter enter constantly into the Sacred Heart, and unite herself to it, associating herself with the choir of Thrones to honour it with them. For this intention let her say five *Gloria Patri* each day, and for her virtue let her seek for some soul who has not tasted the sweets of heavenly love, and strive to lead it to Jesus; let her also seek to animate those with whom she lives by her fervour and fidelity to all the duties of her state, promoting the glory of God by her example as well as by her words. Let her remember, that as she who seduces others to crime is guilty of very grievous sin, so it is most meritorious to strive by our devotion to lead our brethren to a holy life and devout practices.

“ Sweet Heart of my Jesus, may I always love Thee more and more.”

SECOND OFFICE : THE REPARATOR.

Although it is hoped that the general intention of all who practise these devotions during this month will be reparation to the Most Holy Sacrament, still this duty falls especially to the Repairator. Let her heart and thoughts be often with Jesus, shut up and lonely in the Tabernacle; let her remember how many churches there are where Jesus is present, with, perhaps, none or few to adore Him; let her think of the outrages and injuries He receives, even from His friends. It will be her office to atone for all those who are negligent in theirs, to offer reparation for all those things which may displease the Sacred Heart in her community or family. Who would be sufficient for such a work as this? who would not tremble lest their own sins might grieve that Sacred Heart more than those of any other? Let the Repairator, then, offer to Jesus the burning love of Mary, and the ceaseless homage which she paid Him whilst she was herself the Tabernacle in which He lay. Let her also offer to the Eternal Father the burning love of the Heart of Jesus, and his zeal for the Divine honour, and calling also to her assistance the choir of Powers, she may hope worthily to fulfil her office. Let her endeavour each day to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament for these intentions, and by great fervour in her Communions and prayers, and great recollection in hearing holy Mass, let her strive to atone for those who

neglect these sacred duties. She who endeavours to repair the outrages offered to the Divine justice may surely trust that her own sins will be the more readily forgiven.

“Heart of my Jesus, when shall I know Thee? when shall I love Thee?”

THIRD OFFICE : THE ADORER.

The Adorer must endeavour to compensate for all neglect of prayer and Divine worship; she must especially pray for those who commit mortal sin by not hearing Mass on holidays of obligation, and for those who neglect their daily prayers; she shall, in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, continually adore the Ever-blessed Trinity, listening in spirit to the continual Sanctus of the Angels, and, with the choir of Dominations, she shall often say, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!” offering with them all the good done throughout the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; she shall also offer to this Heart the sanctity and love of any persons whom she may believe to be peculiarly holy, praying at the same time for a great increase of all the graces already bestowed on them, and that Jesus may by this means be more honoured and loved. If she sees any act of virtue performed by others, let her also offer it up for the greater glory of God; thus she may benefit herself by participating in their merit, and adore the Heart of Jesus in a way that

will be most pleasing to Him. But her special virtue should be, great reverence and respect in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament, adoring it by her subdued manner and deep stillness, and making her genuflections with peculiar reverence; these also she can offer during the month for the intentions of her office.

“Sweet Heart of my Jesus, I adore Thee, I worship Thee, I love Thee.”

FOURTH OFFICE: THE LOVER.

Who shall teach you how to fulfil your most sacred office? and where will you learn how to love Jesus? You also must go to Mary; ask her, and she will teach you. She alone has loved Him as He should be loved. Her heart is the only one which has ever burned with pure and unalterable love. Say to her, “O my sweet Mother, I long, I pine, to love Jesus; but I know not how. Teach me, my Mother, teach me; and I will strive to learn and to obey faithfully the instructions which you will give me.”

The Lover of the Sacred Heart of Jesus must consider herself specially bound to atone to Him for the neglect, coldness, and unfaithfulness of His consecrated spouses. It is the wound with which He is wounded in the house of His friends that He feels most deeply; and for these the Lover must atone. Let her also strive to comfort her Beloved most

tenderly in the sorrows of His passion, thinking of this especially on Fridays. It is little acts of thoughtful love that please us most. Our Jesus knows we cannot do great things for Him. We are children; we can only offer Him our toys and our flowers. No matter for that; it is the love He looks at, not the offering.

The Lover must unite herself to the choir of Seraphim in continual acts of love to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and when going to rest, she shall beg them to take her place before the Blessed Sacrament whilst she sleeps, offering up every beat of her heart during the night as an act of love, and saying, "I sleep; but my heart watcheth in the Heart of my Beloved." When waking in the night, she shall still think of Jesus; and, if a religious, hasten to the choir, the first moment that obedience will permit, to prostrate herself before her Spouse, and strive to atone to Him for the pain He has suffered from all the sins committed during the night. Let her, then, make her heart ready, that Jesus may enter there, and be refreshed and comforted for His rejection by so many whom He asks to love Him, but who will not do so. Her virtue must be, the fidelity of the spouse who seeks, with the purest intention in every action, only to please her Beloved, and this in little things as well as in greater. Let the Lover, therefore, make many acts of Divine love, and continually seek to purify her intention in all that she does, seeking in all things only the pleasure of her Beloved.

“Heart of burning love, enkindle in mine Thy heavenly fire, and ever feed it with thoughts of Thee.”

FIFTH OFFICE : THE DISCIPLE.

The Disciple of the Sacred Heart of Jesus shall, with childlike simplicity, place herself at His most blessed feet, and there meekly sit to learn the lessons of His Heart. She shall ask for a spirit of prayer and recollection, and be very watchful over herself to correspond faithfully to every attraction of Divine grace, lest by resistance she should grieve the Heart of her Master. Oh, what graces will she not receive! what lessons will she not be taught by this best of teachers, if in meek silence she hearkens to His words! Let her remember, also, that He speaks to her by His providence, and through superiors; let her therefore listen with peculiar meekness and docility to all the instructions which she may receive from her spiritual guides, and, with great fidelity, obey them in all things. Thus she will be sure of obeying and pleasing Him at whose feet she is seated. Her virtue must be, recollection and silence, and a strict guard over her eyes in the choir, refectory, and cloisters. She shall pray specially for all who are in perplexity as to their vocations, or who are not of the true fold, but who may be tending towards it.

“Heart most serene, calm me into perfect peace; Heart most loving, love me into all love; Heart of my only love, make me all Thine own.”

SIXTH OFFICE : THE VICTIM.

The Victim of Jesus must remember that she is to suffer for, and with, her Beloved ; and she must esteem herself highly honoured to receive this office, and the more so if it should seem to bring her any special suffering. Her duty is to remember that she is the spouse of a crucified God, and as such she may desire sufferings above all other spiritual gifts. She shall continually adore the Divine justice with the choir of Powers, and build in her heart a little altar of Divine love, on which she should always have some sacrifice ready for her Spouse, to console Him in His sufferings, or to appease the wrath of God against sinners. Let her remember that the special duty of a spouse of Jesus is to suffer and to love.

Her virtue shall be mortification, of which she shall strive to make at least five acts every day. Let her continually offer the sacrifice of Calvary for sinners ; and to appease the just indignation of the Almighty, on Fridays she should fulfil this duty with peculiar tenderness and fervour, especially when hearing holy Mass. If she has courage and generosity enough, let her cry be :

“ Not to love as now, or to suffer as now ; but to love more, and to suffer more.”

SEVENTH OFFICE : THE SERVANT.

The Servant must animate herself in her office

by thoughts of Him who came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. If she faithfully enters into her lot, she may obtain wonderful graces and fresh lights for her own sanctification. Let her see Jesus in all with whom she has to do, and endeavour to assist all around her, and, if it may be, to serve them in lowly offices. Let her remember with grateful love that Jesus has said, whatsoever is done even for the least of His disciples is done for Himself. What joy, then, for the Servant! she can be the slave of Jesus, and may never cease in one way or another to do Him service. And if, in serving others, she always acts as if it were Jesus whom she waited on, oh, what floods of Divine love will fill her soul, what joy will be pictured in her countenance! As she serves her sisters in the refectory, or visits the poor in their homes of suffering and want, she may whisper to herself, still seeing Jesus in each, "My Love, my Soul, what can I do for Thee? how am I not honoured to serve Thee! Or, if she sweeps the stairs or the cloisters, she may murmur to her Beloved, "My Lord, my Love, I am preparing this for Thy blessed feet;" or she may kiss (when none can see her) the place where the footsteps of the spouses have been, and still know that she kisses the footmarks of Jesus. Her virtue, then, must be, as far as her state will allow, to make herself the Servant of all, but especially the Servant of the Blessed Sacrament. Let her pray for increased Communion, and increased reverence at Communion, amongst her sisters and throughout the world, engaging the choir of Arch-

angels to join her in this service of love, and to aid her in calling the guests to the Divine banquet.

“Make me as one of Thy hired servants; for I am unworthy to be Thy spouse.”

EIGHTH OFFICE: THE SUPPLIANT.

The Suppliant must take into her charge those who are in their agony, and the holy souls. Let her plead with the Sacred Heart for them, even as she would desire that others should pray for her when her time of trial comes. Let her meditate often on the inconceivable tenderness of the Heart of Jesus, and offer it with great fervour to the Eternal Father for all who are in danger of soul or body. Let her virtue be meekness, and a great tenderness of manner towards others. Every hour of the day, and whenever she wakes during the night, the Suppliant should endeavour to think of her solemn charge, and to utter at least the holy name of Jesus for the intentions of her office; she will thus learn by degrees to participate in the exquisite tenderness of the Heart of her Beloved. Let her often think of the tears of tenderness which Jesus shed during his mortal life, and offer them up with great affection to the Eternal Father for her own needs, and for those whom she has in charge during this month. She shall invoke the choir of Angels to assist her in this duty, and particularly pray to the guardian-angels of those who are dying, or who are under sentence of death

for crime. She might also pray her guardian-angel to obtain for her a share in the prayers of those who pray much for others, particularly if they are themselves living very holy lives.

“Heart of my Beloved, pour into mine Thy tenderness, and have mercy on the dying.”

NINTH OFFICE : THE ARDENT DESIRER.

The Ardent Desirer, in union with the burning thirst which Jesus had for the salvation of souls, shall continually devote herself to this object. For this end she shall endeavour to Communicate frequently; and in her Communion she shall pray especially for the heathen and idolaters, and for all those who are labouring for their conversion. With ardent sighs let her desire and pray that the treasures of the Sacred Heart of Jesus may be known and loved by all. Lest any of her associates should be remiss in their offices, she must endeavour to fulfil hers with great fervour, in order to atone for them; and for the greater glory of God, let her each morning offer to the Eternal Father, through the Heart of Jesus, the various degrees of sanctity and love bestowed on each of her sisters, praying with the greatest fervour that these graces may be doubled to each, and that all may that day receive an increase of Divine love. She shall invoke the choir of Principalities to assist her in her office. Her virtue will be, great fervour in all the duties of her state.

The Venerable Mother Margaret assures us "that our Lord reserves incomprehensible treasures of grace for her who has this office, and that her name shall be written in the Divine Heart never to be effaced."

"Heart of my Beloved, centre of my whole being, unite me into one, and may that one be the only true One, even Thyself."

FOR JUNE—MONTH OF THE
SACRED HEART.

FOR ASCENSION DAY.

UNFOLD! unfold!
Scatter the fleecy clouds,
And touch them o'er with gold;
Open your gates of blue,
The Christ, He cometh through—
Unfold! unfold!

See with what glad amaze
The angels throng to gaze
Upon their Lord's humanity Divine;
Afresh they tune the wires
Of their melodious lyres,
And pour forth all their praise like sparkling wine.

And all on Heaven's floor,
From where the golden door
Opens to let Him in, the Conqueror blest,

With many tinted flowers,
 Cull'd from their joy-lit bowers,
 With smiling wreaths His pathway they had dress'd.

Oh, who may say what thrill
 That angel's heart did fill
 Who met the first calm gaze of his ascending Lord !
 Or tell with what glad fear
 They stoop from yonder sphere
 In golden groups to meet the Incarnate Word !

Who dare approach the shrine
 Where dwelleth God Divine,
 Or deem His joy at sight of His dear Son ?
 Who now doth enter in,
 Conqueror of death and sin,
 The battle fought, the crown of victory won.

For us, for us He died ;
 For us the purple tide,
 At touch of ruthless spear, flowed from His broken
 Heart.

Will He not rest e'en now,
 When crowns are on His brow ?
 Will He still do for us of love the part ?

He is not gone to rest
 (Are not we over bless'd ?)—
 He standeth still His broken Heart for us to plead.
 What can outshine His love,
 Now He is gone above,
 Ever to pray the Father in our stead ?

Unfold ! unfold !
 For mercy's doors must still be open wide ;
 The Church's widow'd hour
 Must have a golden dower,—
 The Paraclete comes down in fiery tide ;
 With us, Blest Spirit, stay,
 Our Love is far away ;
 Strengthen, console, and heal us by Thy power.

A HYMN OF LOVE.

I BURN, I burn, and my heart pineth
 For love of Thee, my only Lord ;
 Oh, lead me where the bright light shineth,
 The light of the Incarnate Word.

I burn, I burn, my heart it acheth,
 In its deep longings, for Thy love ;
 Oh, most sweet Jesus, take it, take it,
 And keep it till I come above

I burn, I burn, my heart it quivers,
 Oh, press it, press it to Thine own ;
 Thy voice I hear, my spirit thrilling,
 Oh, may it thrill for Thee alone.

I burn, I burn, my heart it weareth,
 In weary longings, for Thy breast ;
 Oh, most sweet Jesus, draw nearer,
 And in Thy Heart, oh, let it rest.

There I shall burn, deep and yet deeper,
 And pant and pine, but not in vain;
 There I may love, and love for ever,
 Without a sin to give Thee pain.

“Not to love as now, or to suffer as now; but to love
 more, and to suffer more.”

Not on Thabor, dearest Lord,—
 Not on Thabor give
 Me my portion or my place,
 For I would suffering live:

Would suffering live, would suffering die,
 Would suffer o'er and o'er
 Ten thousand times each martyr's pains,
 If I could love Thee more.

My Lord, were nothing to be gain'd
 But likeness unto Thee,
 The Cross and suffering still I'd choose,—
 Pain should my portion be.

I'd pine for anguish, ask for grief,
 And pray for constant pain;
 For spouses should be like their Lord,
 With whom they hope to reign.

And I could chide Thee, dearest Lord,
 Could chide Thee, and would say,
My Lord, Thou surely lov'st me not,
 Nor answerest when I pray ;

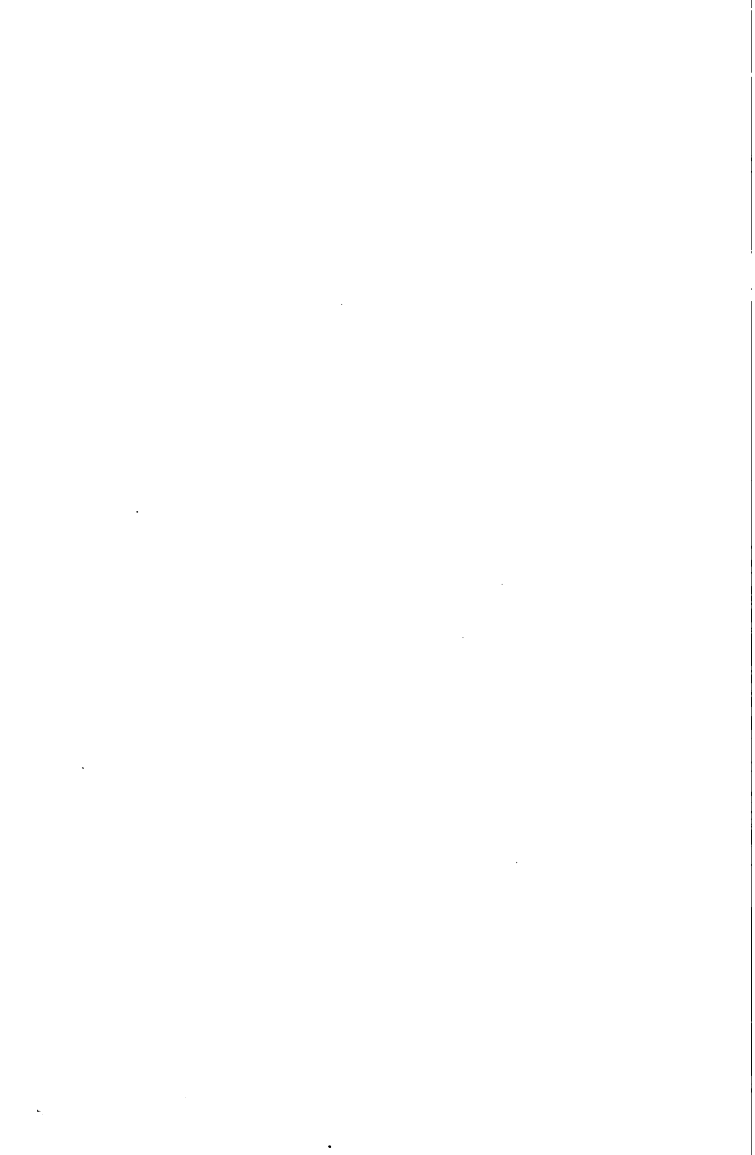
Or rather, Jesus, I must fear
 'Tis too much grace for me
To suffer as Thy saints have done,
 And thus be like to Thee.

I am not worthy, Lord, to drink
 The chalice of Thy woe ;
But oh, refuse not to Thy spouse
 The drops which from it flow.

And if I am not worthy, Lord,
 To suffer as I would,
Still give me all the pain Thou canst,
 For love of Thy dear Blood.

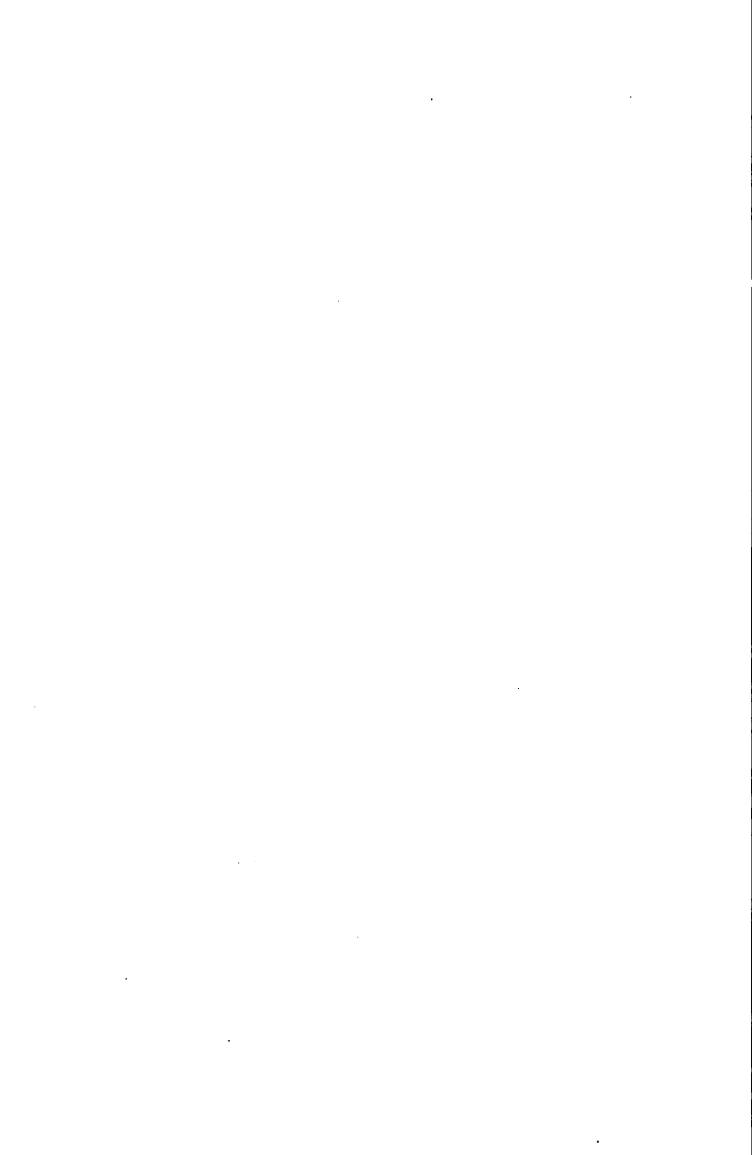
To suffer, Lord, but not as now,
 To suffer always more,
To love each day more ardently,
 More deeply than before,

Is all I wish, is all I ask,
 Is all the prayer I'd say,
Until Thou takest me to dwell
 Where I shall love alway.



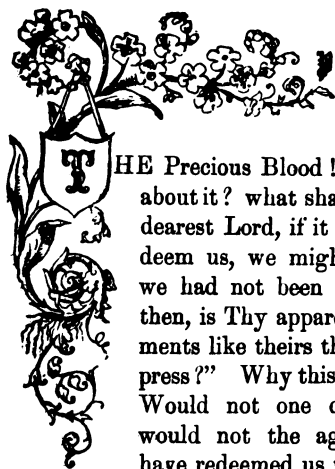
JULY.

Month of the Precious Blood.



JULY.

Month of the
Precious Blood.



THE Precious Blood ! how shall we speak about it ? what shall we say of it ? Ah, dearest Lord, if it has cost this to redeem us, we might almost wish that we had not been redeemed. “ Why, then, is Thy apparel red, and Thy garments like theirs that tread in the winepress ? ” Why this profusion of Blood ? Would not one drop have sufficed ? would not the agony of Gethsemani have redeemed us without the Blood of Calvary ? Yes ; Gethsemani might have saved us, but it would not have told us how much Jesus loved. And we, how do we show our love ? Oh, think of the seven cruel blood-sheddings, and then think of our own cowardly lives. So careful to save ourselves pain ; so anxious to escape suffering ; so critical to find out what we may do or may not do, just to escape mortal sin ; and to escape

mortal sin just because it involves hell. Oh, if Jesus had made the measure of our love the measure of His, where should we now be? Why, O dearest Lord, why is Thy apparel red? do not the wounds in Thy blessed hands and feet, and in Thy open side, speak plainly enough? why this profusion of Blood? why is Thine apparel red? why art Thou thus bathed in gore? Ah, we know, we see; but do we feel? It is Thine excessive love; Thou wilt have even Thine apparel red; and why? that ours may be white. Oh, well may we love the Precious Blood of Jesus; well may it be our song in the land of our exile. And what is the lesson it teaches us? what should be our special object in the month devoted to its honour? Surely it must be generosity; and what is generosity but another name for sanctity. Not only for our redemption, but for our sanctification, was that Precious Blood poured forth. "As children of obedience according to Him that hath called you, who is holy, be you also in all manner of conversation holy; knowing that you were not redeemed with contemptible things, but with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb unspotted and undefiled." Here, then, the inspired Apostle St. Peter tells us at once the reason why we must be holy, and the means by which we may become so. We must be holy, then, because we have been redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb; we must be holy, because Jesus gave His Blood for us so liberally that we can never do enough for Him. Have we ever thought enough of this Precious Blood? It is true we say we are re-

deemed by it; we are sanctified by it; it purchases for us all grace on earth; it has bought for us all glory in Heaven: but do we ever think that it is the Blood of a God, or consider what it cost that God each time He shed its precious drops? There was a time when we might have worshiped that Blood on earth; we might have knelt in the olive-garden, and adored the great drops as they fell on the cold shuddering ground. We might have joined with the angels who guarded them, and wept our lives away at a sight so pitiful. We might have seen the scourging, and beheld the purple tide fall unheeded on the pavement of Herod's hall. We might have stood on Calvary, and seen the garment of His humanity reddened with gore; and we might and should have worshiped every drop; for to each the Divinity was still united.

But now, where is all this Precious Blood? and where must we adore it? United, at the moment of the Resurrection, for ever and ever to the Incarnate Word, we behold this Blood at the right hand of God, and we see its rich purple tide gushing through the Sacred Heart, and purpling with unearthly beauty the five most glorious wounds. Oh, let us then worship that Most Precious Blood, so sacred and so dear; and while we worship it, and offer it to the Eternal Father for all our needs, let us remember that the Blood of Jesus once flowed in Mary's veins; for the Word was made Flesh, and that Flesh and that Blood were taken from the Virgin pure and undefiled. Thus it is that Mary can offer the Precious

Blood as none other can. Thus it is that she loves it with a love beyond all our conception. This Blood is also the song of the redeemed. The beloved disciple tells us, that when he stood amidst the multitudes whom no man could number, the white-robed ones who bore in their hands the palm of victory, an ancient said unto him: "These who are clothed in white robes, who are they? and whence come they? And I said unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb." And what song do these blessed ones sing? Oh, it is a new canticle; a song unheard before. It is also of the Precious Blood, of the Lamb who has been slain. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and open the seals thereof; because Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God in Thy Blood." And thus we find, under the elder dispensation, the shedding of blood was ever the symbol of the remission of sin, the necessary consequence of guilt. Through type and shadow the holy Jew foresaw the coming Sacrifice, the great atonement; he knew the blood of bulls and goats was but a type, and never could remit sin; and yet even "the blood of goats and oxen" sanctified such as were defiled to the cleansing of the flesh, and "all things, according to the Law, were cleansed with blood." Well might the Apostle exclaim, "How much more shall the Blood of Christ cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Yes, the Blood, the Precious Blood

of Jesus ; this must be all our hope in time, as it will be all our song in eternity. This is the offering which we should make continually to the Eternal Father ; this the atonement we must plead. We have sinned ; we are overwhelmed with guilt and shame ; we tremble with the fear of coming judgment ; where shall we find refuge ? wherewith can we satisfy the inexorable justice of God ? Oh, we have nothing of our own ; we can do nothing of ourselves : we run to Calvary ; we see the Tree still reeking with the Life-Blood of Jesus ; we crouch trembling beneath it ; we cling to it for shelter and for hope, and we are not disappointed ; we can offer more than we ask ; the sacrifice exceeds the sin. His garments are red ; but ours, as we kneel trembling beneath His Cross, become white as snow. We are tempted ; terrible thoughts rush into our souls ; we know not whether they are our own or our enemies' : we have listened to them ; we tremble lest listening has been consent ; our souls are darkened with fear ; but we run to the Cross ; it is dark there, too, for Jesus is expiring, is dying of love, and His Life-Blood is ebbing out drop by drop ; but the drops fall on us thick and fast, and our poor souls look up once more. We are in sorrow ; the dim dark waters of grief come in and overwhelm our souls ; we know not whither to turn ; we are depressed, dejected, wearied ; we seem to have no heart for our exams, our aspirations, our duties. It is hard, hard to bear, and, it may be, withal we have bodily suffering with our spiritual temptations ; shall we sit down by the way-

side and perish? Ah, no: we must run to Calvary; we must offer the Precious Blood to the Eternal Father. If we cannot even do this, we must stand with Mary beneath the Cross, and ask her to offer it for us. One drop will be enough. We may not feel it come, but we shall surely receive the secret strength we need. We have sinners for whose conversion we are pining; we have souls for whose sanctification we long; we have our own deep spiritual needs, our desires to be saints, which seem to end only in desires. What must we do? Oh, still, still let us offer the Precious Blood for ourselves, for others, for the whole Church, for the holy souls; and let us be well assured we can never offer it in vain. What are our Absolutions, our Communion, our Confirmations, but each and all channels through which the Precious Blood flows out on us? and when we fly to Mary, why is it but because we know she can offer the Precious Blood as none other can, and that the more holy the soul that makes the offering the more readily will it be accepted? Let us, then, honour Jesus this month by continual offerings of His Most Precious Blood, and by our perfect confidence in it; and let us say often, with the Church, "We therefore pray Thee help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Most Precious Blood." And indeed, if any thing could surprise us in the history of our own spiritual perverseness, it must surely be our neglect of the Precious Blood. Theoretically we are probably most of us right enough. We know what has redeemed us, what has purchased every grace

for us. But how do we *act* on our belief? How many times to-day have we offered the Precious Blood to the Eternal Father in satisfaction for our sins? When we want strength to conquer a temptation, do we at once offer that which will most surely obtain help for us? When we desire to become saints, to conquer our faults, to get new graces, do we offer the Blood shed to procure these very favours for us? How many thanksgivings have we made for it? How often have we worshiped it in the Blessed Sacrament? How do we reverence and use all sacred things as purchased by it? And what of our absolutions, when it is so individually, so peculiarly, applied to us? Oh, how different our lives would be if we really used the Precious Blood as God intends we should! How we should run on the road of sanctity if we honoured and loved and worshiped it as we ought. At least let us begin to do so now. Let us think more seriously about it, and then perhaps our faith will become more lively, and our lives correspond better with our belief.

And what should be our united object in this month's devotions? surely it can be none other than that which Jesus had in pouring out His Blood with such profusion; surely it must be to pray for the salvation of souls, and the increase of sanctity throughout the Church. He has shed His Precious Blood, not only that we might be saved from hell and eternal damnation, but also that we might be "holy and unspotted and blameless before Him." Do we ever think enough of this? We

shudder to think how, for the damned, the Blood shed amidst such agony and love is, as it were, lost ; how Jesus has borne all this for them in vain ; and we strive to make acts of reparation to Him even for the lost. But do we ever consider, as we ought, that His Blood has purchased sanctity for us ? has purchased all the graces that we abuse or slight ? has purchased graces to which, had we corresponded, we might even now perchance have been great saints ? and do we ever think of the pangs it must cost the Heart of Jesus to see so little regard for His Blood-bought gifts ? Ah, let us begin now ; let us begin in earnest. It is never too late ; this Blood will procure pardon for the past, and strength for the future. We think, indeed, had we been on Gethsemani, or in Pilate's hall, we would have knelt and adored the precious drops, even as they fell ; and we think with what burning tears, with what broken hearts, we would have shuddered to see the Blood of a God thus scorned and despised : but are these scenes over ? or are they not rather renewed every day ? there is not a Sacrament we approach in which that same Precious Blood is not poured out on us ; and how do we receive it ? Do we kneel in trembling awe, in loving fear, lest again it should be profaned or wasted ? or do we not, alas, too often scarcely heed it, and let the grace pass over us as a summer breeze ? But oh, it shall not be longer so ; we at least will not let this Blood be wasted on us ; we at least will strive, as we kneel and hear the absolving words, to bow our heads and hearts in low-

liest reverence, and to drink into our thirsty souls the precious drops. Or we will ask Mary, when the golden key of Peter has unlocked the fountains of mercy, to take in her own hand those streams, and pour them herself on us; then we shall be purified indeed; then, without fear, we may approach to drink the very Blood itself—and we know that he who eateth His Flesh, and drinketh His Blood, hath everlasting life. Yes, from the cradle to the grave that Blood still follows us. In our helpless infancy we are regenerated by it, and made part of the mystical Body of Christ; in our feeble days we are confirmed and strengthened in grace by it; in our life's weary conflict we are strengthened by it; in our old age, or, it may be, in our early youth, we are sustained by it when the terrors of death compass us round and terrify our sinful souls; in purgatory it soothes us amidst the burning flames which consume away the dross of earth; and in Heaven, in Paradise, it is our song of joy: and if we too may walk there, amidst the white-robed ones, we must sing the Precious Blood—the Blood which has made our robes so fair and shining, and our joys eternal.

Last month we learned much of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of its love and of its tenderness. Let us now learn to know the merits and treasures of His Church, which He has thus enriched by His Blood. Why do we not value more, not only the Sacraments of the Church, but all its Blood-bought treasures? Why are we not more anxious for indulgences, more

devout to relics, more earnest for blessings, more reverent in our use of holy things? why, but because we do not value as we should the Precious Blood. And why do heretics despise our rich privileges but because they do not know, or will not know, the source from whence they are drawn; but to us, who do know that all these treasures so prodigally lavished on us have been purchased by the Blood of God, what a responsibility is ours if we do not use them right! Let us, at least during this month, endeavour to consider well all that was purchased for us by the Blood of Jesus; all the channels of grace—from our absolutions to the drops of holy water which we so carelessly touch—which flow out on us daily and hourly. The greater our gratitude and reverence for the Precious Blood, the greater will be the graces which we shall receive from it.

We do not know what we lose by neglecting little graces, or despising little means of grace; if the taking only of holy water reverently and with a contrite heart will efface our venial sins, why are we not more earnest and recollected in our use of this means of grace? Let us try, at least during this month, to consider well *all* that has been purchased for us by the Precious Blood, and to use with loving reverence every, even the very least, means of grace sanctified for us by it.

THE FIRST OFFERER.*

The first offerer of the Precious Blood of Jesus must take into her care our holy Mother the Church, the Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, and priests. Let her offer the Precious Blood for them again and again to the Eternal Father, and let her feel that her office is a very sacred one; for whom is she pleading?—for the shepherds of the fold, for the stewards of the heavenly mysteries, for those who hold the keys of the heavenly kingdom, for those who offer the awful sacrifice, and daily feed on the Immaculate Lamb. Think what graces they must need, what light, what strength; think what spotless purity should be theirs, who carry in their hands the Bread of angels.

Pray, then, oh, pray this month with unwearied fervour; offer continually the Precious Blood shed from the Sacred Heart for them; or rather make all your actions an offering of it, and practise the virtue of prayer and recollection.

 THE SECOND OFFERER

has for her office to offer continually the Precious Blood of Jesus for all religious Orders both of men and women. Perhaps it was for their infidelities, for

* The offerings of the Precious Blood for this month's devotions are taken partly from those made by St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi whilst in rapture, and partly from the indulgenced offerings. Each night say seven *Gloria Patri* and the *Te ergo* for the intentions of her office.

their coldness, that He shed the Blood of His agony. Oh, where should Jesus seek for love and fidelity if not from His consecrated spouses? and do they always give Him what He has a right to expect? Offer, then, continually this month the precious drops which watered the Garden of Gethsemani, and pray that through the merits of His Blood and agony new souls may offer themselves, with fresh fervour, for consecration to their heavenly Spouse; that those who are in difficulties or perplexity about their vocations may be enlightened; and that those already consecrated to Jesus may serve Him with the perfection of all sanctity. Oh, think what joy will be yours in the day of final retribution if, through your prayers, you have gained one spouse more for Jesus, or obtained great sanctity for one already His. Practise for this intention the virtue of fidelity, and endeavour, by your own exact fulfilment of duty, in whatever may be your state of life, to atone for those who are faithless religious.

THE THIRD OFFERER

must continually offer the Precious Blood for all the faithful, particularly the Blood shed in the scourging. Let her often think how our sweet Jesus suffered when His most delicate virginal Flesh was torn with stripes and exposed to the gaze of a cruel multitude; perhaps not only for sins of impurity, but also for the cowardice of those who,

whilst they call themselves Catholics, are ashamed to act as such, and wound the flesh of Jesus, even His mystical Body the holy Church, by their unfaithfulness and human respect. Oh, miserable are they who from human love or fear will not comply with Divine inspirations, agonise the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and grieve their angel-friends. How many such are there! How many are there even of the faithful who will break a fast or neglect an abstinence to save themselves a word of scorn, or, it may be, a passing smile of pity! Let the offerer of the Blood of the scourging, then, in atonement for these unhappy Christians, strive herself to contemn all human respect, and to be especially faithful in her observance of the precepts of the Church, and of her rules. What joy for her if she can atone to Jesus for even one Friday's abstinence which has been sinfully broken!

THE FOURTH OFFERER

has for her charge to offer continually the Precious Blood shed in the Circumcision for the conversion of sinners. Let her excite herself to great love for the Blood of the Infant Jesus. Let her think how He thirsted for our salvation when He, whilst even yet a trembling Infant, could not wait for Calvary, but must begin at once to bleed and suffer. Sweet Jesus! Thou sufferest for our salvation ere Thou canst speak for it; and we, alas, how do we repay Thee? where is our zeal for ourselves or others? Oh,

let the offerer of this Blood, so dear, and so lovingly shed, plead it with great confidence before the throne of the Ever-blessed Trinity, and strive to obtain at least the salvation of one soul during this month. Think how many sinners there are whom Jesus longs to save; and yet they will not ask the grace, they will not listen to their Shepherd, or look upon His bleeding wounds. He has said that we must pray, and that we can thus help the travail of His soul, What if our prayers do but console Him, and return again into our own bosoms in new graces; will not this be enough for us?

THE FIFTH OFFERER

will offer the Blood which streamed from the pierced hands and feet of her Jesus for the conversion of heretics and infidels. Let her endeavour to practise the virtues of meekness and patience, particularly in bodily suffering, if such should happen to her, remembering the meekness with which Jesus stretched forth His blessed hands and feet that cruel men might wound them with their rough blows. Let her think how, with outstretched arms, He offered Himself even for those who reviled and injured Him,—the heretics and infidels of that day, who said, even as they say now, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?” and who will not believe that He was God, because He hides Himself under a human form. With Jesus lying on the Cross, asking all to come to Him, and with out-

stretched arms waiting to embrace them, let the offerer of this Blood continually pray for the poor heretics and infidels who, in blind ignorance or wilful pride, wander far from the Church's fold and the Church's shepherds. Ah, if she may but gain one soul, what joy for her! and oh, how that soul will thank her for all eternity!

THE SIXTH OFFERER

must take into her care those who are in their agony, and offer for them the Blood shed when Jesus was stripped of His garments, and His wounds opened afresh. Remember what thousands die every day; nay, that it is supposed numbers die each moment; yes, each moment as it passes decides the eternity of multitudes. Think how in that dreadful hour the powers of hell are leagued against the poor trembling soul for their last assault! think how terrible is their rage, how earnest their efforts, against those whom they hope to destroy! Oh, where is our charity, where our love, if we do not pray for the agonising? and if you pray for them, you pray for yourself; it is a devotion which carries its own reward with it. You also *must* die; and what will you give in that hour of dread for the prayers of others? who but will tremble to meet Him who has been his Saviour, but must now be his Judge? It is the last earthly breath, and all hangs upon it. The dim eyes are closed for ever to earthly sights

and sounds; will they open to see the smile of their Saviour, or the awful frown of their Judge? Oh, by the mercy thou hopest for in that hour, pray for mercy for others; thou canst ever offer the Precious Blood; thou wilt be heard for some, perhaps for many; and when thy last hour has come, many will plead for thee, and perchance obtain for thee what thou couldst not have merited thyself. Offer for the dying each day some little act of mortification; and this, while it helps others, will benefit yourself: for if in Heaven we could have grief, it would surely be that we had not suffered enough whilst on earth for love of Him whose human life was one unceasing sorrow.

THE SEVENTH OFFERER

has for her lot the holy souls. Let her offer for them the Blood which streamed from the Sacred Head of Jesus when He was crowned with thorns. For what do those most dear souls suffer? why are they in these purging fires? is it not for those little sins which, like so many cruel thorns, pierced the already bruised and weary Head of Jesus? Pray, oh, pray for them; Jesus longs to have them home; Mary pines for her children; and they, poor souls—oh, who may tell what they suffer whilst the slow, slow hours pass on, and they dream of that beloved Face, seen once, and only once, and then hidden from them—not in anger, thank God, but

in sorrow ; a sorrow which has almost crushed their souls. Yes, pray for them, and offer for them the Blood, the Precious Blood, which has redeemed them, and which will now cleanse away their stains; they will pray for you when they again see that Face, which is the joy of angels; and when you are in those purging flames, you will at least have their sympathy, if not their help. Offer for them many acts of humble fervour; it is perhaps some pride unpurged, or some want of generosity, which has detained them where they are. Poor souls, how they long now to be where you are, to live their lives over again, that they might love and suffer without a thought of self, that they might live for Jesus alone! Often place yourself in spirit where they are, and strive to live as you would wish you had done if in Purgatory. How many self-indulgences, how many feelings of pride, would such reflections help to crush! how many acts of generosity would it bring forth!

FOR THE MONTH OF JULY.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

O PRECIOUS Blood! O Precious Blood!
How shall I sing of thee?
How tell of all thy purple streams
Once shed for guilty me?

Once shed, and yet it ever flows;
For it doth never cease
To bring us mercy, send us love,
And fill our souls with peace.

O Precious Blood! O Precious Blood!
I cannot choose but sing,
And speak of thee, and love thee still,
The mantle of my King.

In early morn thou stealest soft,
Ere sleep hath left mine eyes,
To get for me the grace I need
For Matin sacrifice.

I offer, then, those purple streams,
Offer them o'er and o'er,
And all day long they are my joy,
My merits' richest store.

And if I work, or if I teach,
Or if I read, or pray,
Still, still that Blood I offer up,
All through the busy day.

I worship it at holy Mass,
And then I taste the Bread—
Christ's Body, and His Precious Blood,
Which He for us hath shed.

The pleasant drops of holy dew
Which wipe our stains away,
The benedictions and the grace
Which flow on us all day,

Still come from those same precious streams.
Well may we love the Blood,
And sing and praise the purple tide
Which flowed upon the Rood.

THE SONG OF THE REDEEMED.

I HEARD the sound of many waters rushing,
And harpers harping on their harps I heard,
And melody beyond all utterance gushing,
Until to tears my very soul was stirred.

Voices on voices, trumpet-tongued and glorious,
Proclaimed on high the praises of their God,
And sang the song of the victorious,
As on the sea of molten fire they stood.

Grand were the voices of the aged and hoary,
And sweet the silver accents of the young ;
But still they had the same most wondrous story,
The praise of their Redemption still they sung.

They sang of Blood, and of the Lamb once bleeding,
Who even now as slain before them lies,
As though their love He would be ever feeding
With sight of His most Blessed Sacrifice.

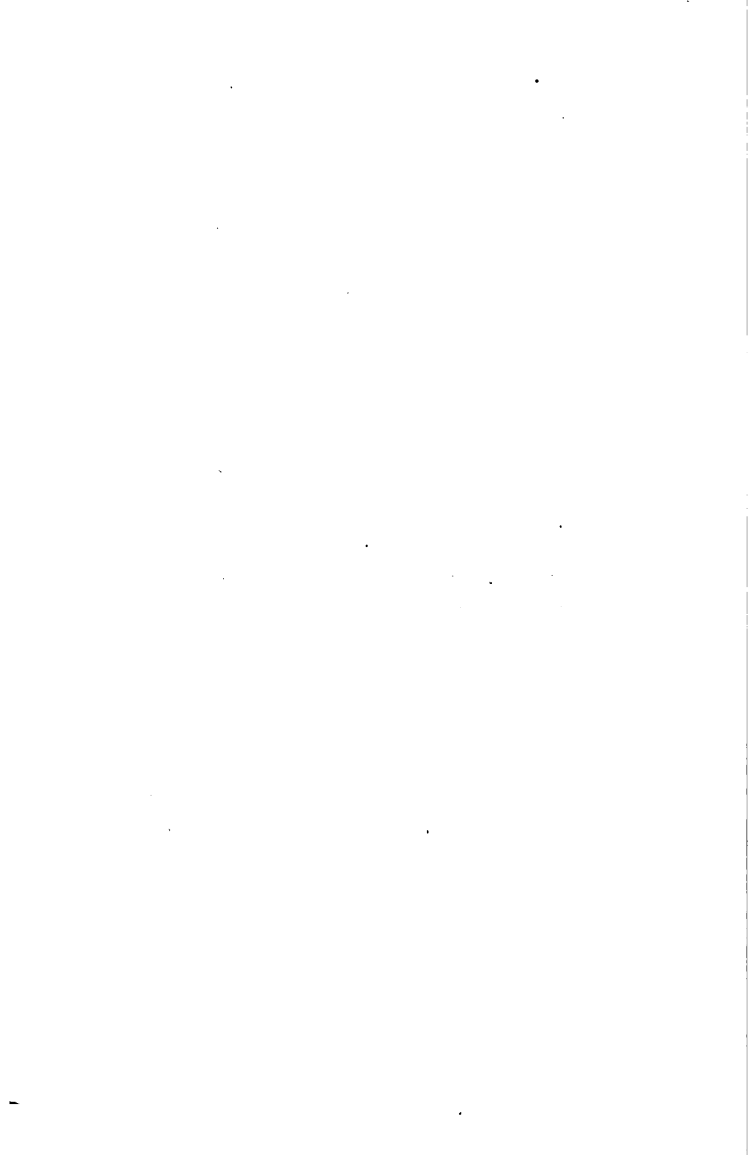
Their Alleluias rolled like roar of ocean,
Surging up anthems on the eternal shore ;
Never shall cease its glorious, restless motion,
For praise shall be their life for evermore.

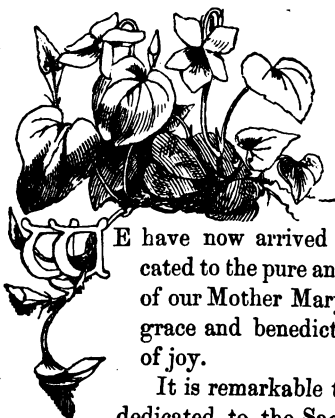
Kindreds and tongues and nations, more than countless,

Are swelling in each day new notes of praise ;
May we, amid their shouts of triumph endless,
Our little note of glad thanksgiving raise.

AUGUST.

Month of the Heart of Mary.





AUGUST.

Month of the
Heart of Mary.

We have now arrived at the month dedicated to the pure and Immaculate Heart of our Mother Mary; another month of grace and benedictions, another month of joy.

It is remarkable that the first church dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was also, at the same time, consecrated to the Heart of Mary; it remained for the gentle and blessed Pius VII. to further this devotion by granting a Feast of the same Heart, with an appropriate Office and Mass. He also erected a sodality of the holy Heart of Mary in the church of St. Eustachius at Rome in 1807, enriching it with ample indulgences. But it was not till 1836 that the famous Arch-confraternity of Paris was established. In the year 1832 M. L'Abbé Desgenettes was appointed curé of the parish of Notre Dame des Victoires. He found it in a state of the most hopeless ignorance and indifference to religion. Out of a population of

25,000 souls, the number of Communions yearly were only from 700 to 800 ; thus there were at least 24,000 immortal beings living in a state of damnation. Well might the good Abbé feel almost heart-broken, and despair of effecting any good work on such unfruitful soil. Several years passed, and the case was no better ; the good priest toiled on day after day, but his flock still continued indifferent, and the burden seemed greater than he could bear. But there was a Mother's heart watching over these stray sheep, and a Mother's hand was already stretched out to help and plead for them. On the 3d of December 1836, M. Desgenettes was saying Mass at our Lady's Altar ; he was feeling more than usually depressed and hopeless regarding his unhappy parish ; the burden seemed greater than he could bear, the evil irremediable. He began his Mass, but the thought immediately presented itself to his mind that he should consecrate his parish to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Hitherto he had not experienced any attraction to this devotion, and he did his best to repulse the idea, thinking it a mere distraction : he could not succeed ; the thought seemed, as he has since said, to "devour" him. At the *Sanctus* he entreated Almighty God to free him from this importunate fancy, as he feared to consummate the holy sacrifice amidst what he thought a sinful distraction. His prayer was heard ; but no sooner was the Mass concluded than the same idea returned to his mind with even more force than at first. At last, to free himself from it, he acqui-

esced, although he felt no confidence in what he was about to do. No sooner had he taken his pen to prepare the regulations necessary to carry out this design than he felt a strength and light which he was sure must be from God. On the 10th of December he submitted the rules to the judgment and approbation of the Archbishop of Paris, and on the 16th of that month the association was canonically established by that prelate. And what has been the result? Just what it always will be when Mary is honoured and invoked. Not only has this happy priest seen his own parish reformed and converted, but hundreds, not to say thousands, of miraculous cures and conversions have declared alike the power and the love of Mary. When this devotion was established, there were only 720 Communions in the parish during the entire year; two years later they numbered 9950. Associations have been now formed all over the world, which are aggregated to that of our Lady of Victories; for this privilege was conferred on it, with many others, by the Holy See. Since the erection of this confraternity Europe has resounded with the fame of miracles and conversions, which are attributed to the prayers of these pious associations, and to wearing the miraculous medal. What confidence, then, must we not have in the Heart of Mary? Who can fathom its tenderness? who can tell the devices of its love? It is the only Heart which breathed and burned for Jesus only, and therefore it is the Heart which we ought to love more than any heart save His. The Heart of Mary—oh,

could we but read it, what a volume of Divine love we should find therein! From the first earthly pulse of her holy Heart till the last, when she loved her life away, all, all was for Jesus; and yet those who are aliens from the Church's fold think it strange that we should love her so much. Ah me, the wonder is that we love her so little. Heart of our Mother, yes, we will, we must love you! How often did not our sweet Jesus lie cradled in your arms, and close, oh, so close, to your sacred Heart! Sweet Mother, it was well for us there was a Heart so warm to love and comfort Him; it was well for us that His Baby-head had whereon to rest. O sweet Lady, so long as your dear hands could shelter Him, and your dear Heart console Him, He had a home and love amid the world's contempt and scorn; and if in the cares of His weary life He refused this solace, it was not, O Lady, that He loved you less, but that He loved us more, if we may make bold to say so; and would rather suffer for us than have the only comfort He might have had in your Maternal care. It is remarkable what a devotion there has been amongst all the younger saints to the Assumption; what longings to die on that day or during its Octave; and to many this favour has been granted. August must therefore surely be a month of joy and hope for us. Let us, then, in our united devotions, offer them all with one heart as a thanksgiving for all the mercies we have received from God, and, above all, for the crowning mercy which we now celebrate—our Mother's Assumption, and

the graces which consequently have been poured out on us through her intercession, particularly those granted to the confraternities in honour of her most pure Heart.

It is usual for us to connect Mary's dolours and her Heart so closely together, that it seems almost impossible to mention them apart, and it is well that it should be so; if our Mother had not suffered, and if we did not know and enter into her sufferings, how could we expect her sympathy in ours? Yes, let us think of the dolours of our Mother's Heart, not only when she stood by the bleeding Cross of her only Son, not only of those seven dolours, devotion to which is so particularly the consolation of the afflicted, but let us also think of the sorrows which her Maternal Heart endured almost from the moment of her Divine Maternity. Oh, how her poor Heart must have bled in the stable of Bethlehem when she saw her trembling Infant rejected by the world He came to save, and driven houseless and homeless to bear the winter's cold in a poor stable! and then, as if these sufferings were not enough, more must be added; she must bear to see His Blood flow, and hear His feeble moan of pain. Surely the sorrows of Calvary began in her Heart in that hour, as the love of Calvary did in His. Then there was the flight into Egypt, with its aggravated and bitter trials; the blasphemies of idolaters, perhaps not as galling as the scorn of the Jews; but this must follow also: she must see Him spend a Childhood of painful labour, unnoticed and

unknown ; she must see Him bear the seeming of a slave who, she knew, was her God ; and when His ministry began, oh, what sorrows on sorrows flooded her poor soul ! surely her love for sinners was scarcely less than His, or she might have knelt at His feet and implored Him, by her Mother's love, to leave the world which scorned Him to perish as it deserved. She who knew, as none other could, the tenderness of His heart ; she who knew, as none other could, the love which consumed His being ; she who knew, as none other could, the glories of His Divinity,—ah, how could she live and bear the grief of seeing Him despised and rejected of men ! But Calvary was yet to come, the crowning sorrow of all ; and, we are told, it was revealed to a holy religious that our Mother, when all was over,—when her Jesus, cold and lifeless, and disfigured beyond all thought by the cruelty of His people, was laid in the silent tomb, and the seal set on it by His mocking guards,—returned not to her home or to the sympathy of the beloved disciple, not to rest her aching head or to seek some solace for her broken heart—no, she remembered that she was a Mother ; her younger children had killed and crucified her Elder Son ; but still she was a Mother : bad as children may be, the mother's heart still yearns towards them ; and vile as were her children, she never for one moment forgot that they *were hers*. Jesus had given them to her ; this was enough, even had she not been bound as the second Eve to repair what had been done by the first. O noble, O beautiful Mother !

and what didst thou do then? what new device has thy love sought out for us? Ah, let us see; she can scarcely move, but she has a mission to fulfil, and it must be accomplished. The Tree stands there, reeking with the Blood of her Son; and Mary, scarcely alive, drags on her feeble frame until she reaches it; and there she stands, in the cold moonlight, alone by that Tree, and offers the Blood upon it, and all that has been done and suffered for our salvation, to the Eternal Father. She has almost forgotten that she is human, almost forgotten that there are limits even to her powers of endurance; but now she has done all and suffered all, and she wakes on Easter morning from her forty hours of ecstatic prayer to see before any other the risen glories of her Beloved. O Mary! O Mother! didst thou pray for me in that hour of inconceivable anguish? didst thou think of me when thou hadst forgotten thyself and all else save our salvation? Yes, we know it, we are sure of it; mothers never forget even their worst children, and each one may believe that their Mother remembered them in that hour of woe and awful expectation.

But if our Lady's sufferings were beyond those ever endured by mortal heart, her joys were also as great; and she has revealed to her children that a devotion to them is peculiarly agreeable to her. If our hearts in the spring-time are well nigh crushed with the sorrows of our Mother and of our Redeemer, we may well be glad of a relief, and in the month of the Assumption sing with the angels of

our ascending Queen. Who can imagine or describe what the Heart of Mary must have felt during the years which passed, from that glorious day when her Son ascended into Heaven, until the moment of her own dissolution? It must have been a suffering as near to that of the pains of Purgatory as her pure soul could feel, and a suffering which perhaps increased her merit more than any other. His voice still lingers on her ear, and He had called her "Mother;" the radiance of His unearthly beauty was ever present to her imagination; the entrancing sweetness of His love was ever burning in her soul. Earth was dark and dreary to her; for there was only one gleam to brighten it, and that was the knowledge that her detention was the will of her Beloved, and perhaps this, and this only, kept her soul from passing away in excess of love and desire. But the moments and the days rolled slowly on, and the hour of her departure was at hand. The angels were looking for their Queen; they had prepared her throne, they were already singing her welcome, and Hell was trembling in dumb dismay; for well did our ancient enemy know that his power would now be shaken more than it had ever been since the Precious Blood was shed on Calvary. Yes, Mother dear, the hour is come; the parted clouds open with joy, and the angels sing with shouts of jubilation; but oh, who may picture the bliss of that Mother's heart? who may imagine the ecstasy that thrilled her soul? For ever, and for ever, and for ever, she shall feed and feast upon the sight of Jesus. For ever, and

for ever, and for ever, she shall hear His voice. For ever, and for ever, and for ever, she shall dwell with Him in the glories of His heavenly kingdom. But this is not her only joy : her children are still in her heart ; the songs and the welcomes of the angels are scarcely so dear to her as the cry of one of her feeblest little ones. O Mother, Mother ! how can we love you, how can we repay your love ! What, are not the glories of Heaven enough for you ? is not the sight of Jesus all you would ask ? will not the Beatific vision fill your soul with delight ? will you not for ever and for ever rest, absorbed in ecstatic love and bliss ? Mother, have you not all that you can desire ? what more is there, sweet Mother, what more is there that you will ask ? Oh, the dove-like voice is heard again, and the meek and beautiful hands are folded, and the knees that supported and cradled the Infant Jesus are bent before the Incarnate God. She knows the Son must hear the Mother ; she knows she has a right to ask. More than Esther shall she receive, as with a love of which Esther's was but a feeble type she pleads for her people. Mother, Mother, it is enough, it is enough ; you speak, and Jesus stoops to listen ; you ask, and Jesus hastens to grant your petition. O Mother, we can scarcely tell—is it love of Him or love of us which makes you thus seek for our salvation ? And if pleading with Jesus is not enough, you will come and plead with us—now in sternness, now in love ; now weeping, as on the mountains of sunny France, for your guilty children, striving to

move us by your tears, who will not be moved by your affection. How shall we keep the month of your Assumption, of your Immaculate Heart? where shall we find praises to praise you, or love to love you? Oh, we must even ask you for this grace, we must even plead with you to obtain us this favour.

Assumpta est Maria in cœlum, Maria assumpta est! Joy, joy!—not for the angels, though her presence will add to their felicity; not for Jesus, if we may say so reverently, though His Sacred Humanity could hardly have had all it desired until His Mother was enthroned near Him; not for the Dove, the Paraclete, whose chosen Spouse she was;—but for us. Joy, joy for us sinners,—our Mother is enthroned in the highest Heaven, and none can ever be exalted above her; next to her Blessed and Divine Son is she seated, in the glory which her Son alone could give. Oh, well may we keep with unbounded joy the Feast of her Assumption. Let us ask for all we want; let us without fear tell all our desires. Our Mother's Heart burns with inconceivable love for us, her children. She can obtain whatever she will ask; and she will ask for whatever we need. Truly Mary's Assumption is the crown of all our joy. Let us, then, sing with the angels in jubilant gladness. And oh, let us not forget who has given us Mary. Ah, dearest Lord, we will not, we cannot, be unthankful. We must love Thee; our Mother will teach us how. She will love for us, and atone to Thy Heart for our coldness and neglect.

We have remarked before how many saints have desired and have obtained the grace of dying in the month of August, or on some of our Lady's feasts. It is not for us to ask such special favours, nor perhaps would it be always wise; but one thing is quite certain, and that is, that we must die at some time. And since death is so certain and so inevitable, since it is a trial that will come to all, a doom that none can escape, truly we would do well and wisely to spend one month in the year in special earnest preparation for it. And what month can we choose better than that one which we have now entered,—the month on which we celebrate the triumph and joy of our Mother and our Queen? Not for herself alone is she assumed above the starry sky; nor is her happiness complete until she has all her children with her there. And if during our life Mary's protection is so necessary for us, what, oh, what will it not be to us in the hour of our death? It may be that she will come to us then, even if we have not asked her. There are depths of love in her Maternal Heart beyond our imaginings. But we may be quite sure, if we *do* ask her for her special protection in the hour of dread, that we shall have it. What if this August should be our last? What if our next festival of the Assumption should be spent in Heaven or in Purgatory? Of one thing we are quite certain—some time or another (perhaps sooner than we think) our last month of August will have passed by; and, even as it is passing, we may not so much as suspect that it will be the *last*. Shall we gain any thing or

lose any thing by having spent it in earnest preparation for an event which *must* happen? Our carelessness about preparation for death does indeed seem one of the strangest of the many strange infatuations of our fallen state. How few are there who make any regular, steady, consistent preparation for that dread and inevitable hour! How few have really convinced themselves that they will die! Let us at least not be of this number; and then, whether the stealthy footsteps of Death are already on our threshold, or whether his shadow looms far in the distance, it will not matter. If the time is short, the more need for earnestness; if long, shall we be any the worse for a prolonged preparation? It is the month of the Assumption; and while we sing of and honour Mary's celestial joys, let us remember that we may one day see them, and in our measure share them, if we will. Surely in our meditations, in our retreats, we have again and again chosen the death of the just as that which we hope and desire. Once more let us with all our heart choose it; and while we endeavour more earnestly than we have yet done to make our whole lives a preparation for death, let us seek during this month to know what these faults and imperfections are which we shall fear most when we appear before our Judge. Oh, let us remember, and *act* upon our knowledge, that it is *not* at the moment, or a few hours before our death, that we can repent the sins which we shall then see—oh, so clearly—in the terrible bright light of Eternity. It will then be too late to humble our

pride, to subdue our tempers, to control our words, to mortify our self-love. Let us begin now, this very month, to do it. Our ascended Queen, our gentle Mother, will help us; and if we be but earnest and faithful, bright will be our crowns and glad our joys in the celestial kingdom. But though it is most important that our whole life should be a preparation for death, and that we should spend certain times in considering more seriously what we should wish we had done then, and in endeavouring *effectually* to do it, still even for those best prepared there is a certain dread and fear in the actual fact of death. But why not prepare now, specially and particularly, for that fear? Each morning, then, during this month let us say three "Our Fathers" in honour of the three hours' agony of our sweet Jesus; and ask our Immaculate Mother, by the love and anguish with which she stood beneath the bleeding Cross, to stand by us in our hour of need. Let us place the *three last hours of our lives*—those awful moments on which so much depends—under her especial care and protection. Let us implore her to help us, then, more than she has ever helped us. Let us also offer these three hours to the Eternal Father, in union with the three hours' agony of our dearest Lord; and let us ask our Mother to present us to Him as her child at the moment of our death. And then what cause shall we have to fear, though our souls may be well-nigh withered to a point with excessive grief, when we behold Him who has loved us so much, and whom

we have loved so little? If our souls are in Mary's hands, they will be safe; and if we have asked her to take them into her keeping, she will do so. Does not a mother leave all beside to lavish her tenderest care and affection on her dying child? and will our Heavenly Mother, who has guarded and watched and shielded us in so many ways during our life, be less mindful of us in our hour of greatest need?

We have already said that devotion to our Lady's joys is peculiarly acceptable to her. Our Blessed Mother herself revealed this to St. Thomas of Canterbury. He was in the habit of reciting seven *Ave Maria* each day in honour of her earthly joys. Whilst doing so on one occasion, he was favoured with an apparition of his Blessed Patroness, who taught him to add seven more in honour of her celestial glories; promising at the same time that she would specially assist those who should perform this devotion in all their afflictions, and particularly at the hour of death. What do we need more to encourage us to perform this devotion with fervour and joy? Especially in this month, in which we are so peculiarly called on to rejoice in the glories of Mary, let us each choose our lot, and all join each day in commemorating these joys by reciting the seven "Hail Mary."

FIRST JOY.

MARY IS EXALTED ABOVE ALL THE CHOIRS OF HEAVEN.

Yes, our Mother is enthroned, high above even the burning Seraphim, in right of her exalted dignity as being the Mother of God; for He who redeemed us took not upon Him the form of angels, but the flesh of a Virgin. But, we may ask, what has exalted thee, O Lady? is it thy Maternity alone? or rather is it not that which obtained for thee the grace of thy Maternity? Ah, we know; we see Mary is exalted the highest because she has abased herself the lowest. Yes, it is our Mother's lowliness which has raised her to this throne of glory. Sweet Lady, look, oh, look upon us with an eye of pity, and while we rejoice in thy glory and thy dignity, oh, obtain for us the grace to imitate thee in thy lowliness. We are full of pride; it haunts us; it wearies us; we know not how to be humble, or how to chase this demon which assails us at every turn; we are continually grieving the meek and lowly Heart of Jesus by our proud and haughty ways; but oh, Mother, we do at least desire to be humble. Crush the pride of the old serpent who tempts us; thou who didst bruise his head in thy most pure Conception, bruise and crush his power in us; for we are all but helpless and hopeless in this strife.

Virtue. Humility.

Aspiration. Sweet Mother, He never refused you any thing, and you, you are our Mother, and

you can never refuse us ; obtain, then, for us the grace of profound humility.

SECOND JOY.

THE PRESENCE OF MARY ADDS LUSTRE TO HEAVEN.

Yes, the sunshine of Heaven was not full until our Mother entered, for she reflects as no other glorified being can do the light of God, and it streams out from her upon the blessed. Oh, if the angels joy with such exceeding joy over each new soul who comes to swell the choirs of their eternal praise, with what rejoicings must they not have welcomed Mary, and listened to her song of jubilation ! We know how much the presence of one whom we love adds to our happiness even here ; we know how the saints shed joy and heavenly brightness even over those with whom they associated ; how then must not the presence of Mary add to the felicity of the blessed ! Let the honourer of the Second Joy, then, strive in her little measure to do on earth what her Mother is doing in Heaven. Let her endeavour to add to the joys of those around her by kind words, thoughtful actions, pleasant smiles, or innocent mirthfulness, and we may be assured, that the more holy we are ourselves the more we shall add to the happiness of all around us.

Aspiration. Mother of charity and heavenly love, teach me to love thee, and to imitate thy tenderness and compassion.

THIRD JOY.

MARY IS SINGULARLY HONOURED BY THE BLESSED.

Yes, they behold in Mary the Daughter of God the Father, the Mother of God the Son, and the spouse of God the Holy Ghost; how can we wonder, then, that she is honoured by men and angels? and as the children must ever share in the reverence paid to their parents, so is it also with us; the angels rejoice to serve us because we are the children of their Queen, and are ready to do for us all that the love of her Maternal Heart may suggest. Well may we then rejoice in this Joy, which indeed, like all the Joys of Mary, are rather ours than hers; well may we seek to honour her ourselves in all possible ways, and to do all we can to persuade others to be devout to her. Let this be the practice of her to whose lot the Third Joy has fallen; let her seek to redouble all her love and reverence for this best of Mothers; let her hear Mass on Saturdays in her honour, offering special thanksgivings for the graces and favours bestowed on her, particularly for her Assumption and Coronation; and let her endeavour by word and example to lead others to be devout to Mary.

Practice. Increased devotion to Mary.

Aspiration. With what praises to praise thee I know not, O Lady; for He whom the Heavens cannot contain was enclosed in thy virgin womb.

FOURTH JOY.

MARY'S INTERCESSION IN FAVOUR OF HER SERVANTS
IS ALL-POWERFUL.

How could it be otherwise! the Son must hear the Mother; surely this beyond all other Joys is ours. What grace is there that we need? why should we want it longer? only let us have confidence, full confidence in Mary; let us plead with her her Mother's love; let us ask what we desire with humble fervour, we shall not be denied. No one ever perished who was really devout to Mary; and how many through this devotion have become great saints! and why?—because the treasures of Heaven are at her disposal, the riches of the kingdom of God are in her hands, and she gives with the abundance of a Queen and the love of a Mother. But what is it that she desires above all other things to give us? surely it must be love of Jesus; that her children should love God, this, this is her one ceaseless prayer, her heart's one deep desire. Let us, then, ask her for the gift of heavenly love, and she will most assuredly obtain it for us.

Virtue. Divine charity; and as Divine charity displays itself chiefly in seeking the welfare of souls, so let it be our special intention during this month to pray and work for the salvation of others.

Aspiration. Mother of Jesus, teach me how to love Jesus.

FIFTH JOY.

THE THRONE OF MARY IS NEXT TO THAT OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

Yes, our Blessed Mother is not only exalted above all the blessed, but her throne is next even to that of God. We know that star differs from star in glory; we know that each shall receive according to his works; and that our glory in Heaven and our eternal felicity will be in exact proportion to our measure of sanctity. If we would, then, know how "full of grace" our Lady was, let us gaze upon her throne. Each hour, each moment whilst her mortal pilgrimage lasted, she added new gems to her celestial crown, and ever increased her store of merit. Full of grace she was, as the angel declared when the Word became Flesh in her blessed womb; and, if full of grace then, oh, how must she not have overflowed with it when the time of her release from earth had arrived! Laden with merits as far beyond our conception as her sanctity is beyond our attainment, Mary was assumed into Heaven; and where could a reward great enough, or a throne high enough, be found for her, save that next to the Ever-blessed Trinity? Behold, then, your Mother, and ponder well the correspondence with grace which brought her where you behold her. Had she faltered or failed in her heavenward course, where should we have been? Be it yours, then, to honour this

Joy by your efforts to correspond with Divine grace, to hearken to every interior inspiration; to resist faithfully every temptation. Pray to her who is now safe from the land of exile and trial; she will pity your misery and help your weakness; and by honouring those graces which have so highly exalted her, and returning thanks for her celestial joys, it may be you will obtain a grace and strength in the hour of temptation and trial which you have not known before.

Virtue. Fidelity to Divine inspirations.

Aspiration. O Mother, most exalted, look down upon your child, and aid her in her miseries and struggles.

SIXTH JOY.

**GOD REGARDS AND LOVES THOSE WHO LOVE AND REVERENCE
THE BLESSED VIRGIN.**

How should it be otherwise, even were we not convinced by our daily experience, that to honour Mary is to insure for ourselves the richest benedictions of Heaven? We might reasonably expect that the Almighty would bestow special graces on those who honoured the Mother of Jesus; for in honouring her we do but rightly worship Him who has created her. An artist desires nothing so much as that his works should be seen and admired by all; to praise them, to extol their beauty and perfection, is but to offer the greatest homage to the intellect which produced them. Where is the work in creation so beautiful as

the pure soul of Mary? where the work so perfect as her sublime sanctity? Yes, let us honour God by honouring Mary, by admiring the work of His hands and the riches of His grace; let us praise Mary, and let us exalt her, that we may praise and exalt Him who created her. We cannot honour God in any way which may be more pleasing to Him, than by atoning to Him for the ingratitude of the world, for the thanklessness of those on whom He has heaped such stupendous mercies and favours. How many there are who pray! how few who make acts of thanksgiving! Let us not be of the number of the unthankful; let us spend this month in special thanksgiving to God for all the favours and benefits He has bestowed on our race through the merits and intercession of our Blessed Lady; and let her to whom this lot has fallen make each day some special acts of thanksgiving for this intention, and especially for all the conversions and miracles which have been wrought through the prayers of the Confraternities of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Virtue. Thanksgiving, and bearing crosses and trials cheerfully.

Aspiration. Cause of our joy, pray for us.

SEVENTH JOY.

MARY'S JOYS AND GLORIES ARE ETERNAL.

For ever, and for ever, and for ever. Oh, who, save those who have passed from time into eternity,

can tell the meaning of these words? Did we but meditate upon them rightly, how many temptations we should conquer, how many virtues we should gain. "Forever!"—we say the words lightly; a breath utters them. Great God, give us the grace to ponder well the words "for ever." For ever to dwell with Jesus, or for ever to be separated from Him; for ever to love and praise Him, or for ever to hate and blaspheme Him! O Mother, thou knowest now what this "for ever" means; teach us to know it, and to know it so practically that this knowledge may support and strengthen us in the hour of trial and temptation; obtain for us the grace to live with this "for ever" always in our thoughts.

Yes, our Mother's joys are eternal; her glory and her bliss can never end. Well may this be for us a month of joy and thanksgiving. Let the offerer of this devotion join herself with all the saints who have loved and honoured Mary, particularly with those most devoted to her Assumption; and praying them to help her, and to supply for her deficiencies, let her endeavour to increase the accidental glory of her Mother, by acting for eternity in every duty which she shall perform; let her cry be, "Paradise, Paradise." In temptation, in trial, when opportunity offers to perform acts of virtue, let her remember eternity, and that her reward will be sure and everlasting, as well as in exact proportion to her fidelity here. Oh, when we think of the eternal reward we shall receive for each act of humility, of mortification, or of fervour, what folly, what madness we are guilty of,

when we neglect to perform any act of virtue, or let the devil or our cowardly human nature conquer us!

Virtue. To live for eternity.

Aspiration. Virgin Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST.

FEAST OF THE PORTIUNCULA, OR OUR LADY OF ANGELS.

QUEEN of Angels, thou art glorious,
 Glorious as a bannered host;
 Thou hast crushed our foe for ever,
 He no more in pride can boast.

Lady of our hearts, we'll call thee,
 For our very own thou art;
 Mother, fold us in thy mantle,
 Rather shield us in thy Heart.

'Tis thy feast, O Queen of Angels;
 We salute thee, Lady dear;
 Show thy power, show thy mercy,
 To each soul now kneeling here.

Plead for us, O spotless Mother,
 Plead for us with thy dear Son,

That the boon He gave our Father*
 May be given us every one.

With our songs we then shall praise,
 But our words are weak and cold ;
 Look into our hearts, sweet Mother,
 There our love is better told.

THE NUN'S PRAYER TO MARY.

THOU art our Mother, beautiful and dear,
 Beneath thy spreading mantle we have nestled in,
 As, one by one, our Jesus drew us here,
 To be love's victims, and love's joys to win.

Thou art our Mother, Lady, as we bend
 In salutation† of thy dear and gentle name,
 All over us such thoughts of sweetness steal,
 We know, we feel thy love has lit the flame.

And in our wanderings and change of place,
 Thou wert our Mother still, sheltering us o'er,
 And ever at thy shrine we found the grace
 Which from thy Heart Immaculate doth pour.

We cannot choose but love thee, Lady, Queen !
 The Dove, the Undefined of our dearest Lord ;
 The spotless nest where never taint was seen,
 The holy home of the Incarnate Word.

* St. Francis of Assisi, who obtained this Indulgence.

† The Salutation of the Holy Name of Mary, a very beautiful Dominican devotion.

We have no speech to tell our love, O Queen;
 In silent rapture at thy feet we lie;
 Get us this grace—thou canst not ask in vain;
 Get us to love until of love we die.

To long, and long for Him who is our Love,
 To pine till love and grace wears earth and flesh
 away—

When will the morning come, the shadows flee?
 When shall we see Him in Eternal Day?

Mother of sorrows, and of joys the best,
 Oh, get for us the spirit of true fear and love,
 And keep us underneath thy mantle blest,
 Till thou hast brought us to Christ's joys above.

OUR LADY'S FRIAR.

It is recorded in the annals of the Franciscan Order, that when Duns Scotus was about to make his famous defence of the Immaculate Conception before the University of Paris, he bowed as he passed a statue of our Blessed Lady, and said, "Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata: da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos." Our Lady graciously inclined her head to her devoted client, who went on his way full of joy. His triumph in argument was as glorious as might be expected.

THE Friar passed our Lady's shrine,
 And lowly bowed his head;
 "Dignare me laudare te,"
 These were the words he said:

“Against thy foes, oh, give me force,
Dear Lady, in this hour ;
For I would speak of all thy praise,
Thy majesty and power.”

Her head she bent, her smile she gave,
That Lady all so fair !
And on her noble champion went,
Her glories to declare.

He told her fame Immaculate,
And loud his voice he raised ;
Like knight and scholar all in one,
His Lady well he praised.

And those who dared dispute the grace
Of her Immaculate birth,
For aye were silenced, and their pride
For ever bowed to earth.

And so 'tis said from that same hour,
That Order poor hath been
Hidden within the inmost Heart
Of its Immaculate Queen.

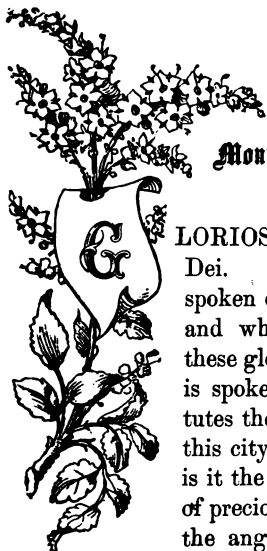
SEPTEMBER.



Month of the Religious Orders.

SEPTEMBER.

Month of the Religious Orders.



LORIOSA dicta sunt de te, civitas Dei. Yes, glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of our God; and what, then, may we ask, are these glorious things? what is it that is spoken of? what is it that constitutes the magnificence and beauty of this city? Is it the gates of pearl? is it the river of gold? is it the walls of precious stones? is it the music of the angels, or the brightness of the sun that never sets? Beautiful indeed, and beyond all our thought and conception of beauty, are the glories of the celestial city; but these are not the glories we would speak of; no; there are glories which far, far outshine them. It is the white-robed ones, the palm-bearing ones, who are indeed the glory of that land of beauty and of bliss. Star differs from star in the celestial firmament, and each has a brightness of its own: one shines with the

radiance of a small magnitude, another is as a sun of overpowering brilliancy; and yet each and all shine for one only end, and fulfil one only mission. "Cœli enarrant gloriam Dei" may be said, not merely of the material heavens, but also of the Heaven of heavens, where the saints shine as the stars in the firmament of light.

The limits of our vision, both corporal and spiritual, is perhaps one of the greatest privations of our earthly existence: as yet we only see in part; much of the beauty and magnificence of the works of nature are lost on us because we cannot see more than a small portion at a time. So it is with the spiritual world. And probably this is one cause why so many persons, in other respects most estimable and pious, have their own peculiar views and notions, and are almost peevish when they find that others differ from them.

Few are large-minded and generous; and it is notorious that to be large-minded and generous one must have had opportunities of losing oneself and one's own individuality by mixing much with others. We do not see much beyond our own little circle; our families or our communities are our worlds, and we are too apt to judge all beyond by the standard they present to us. And why is this but simply that we judge by what we see. It is natural, most natural, but certainly not in the least supernatural. And why is it the saints, and those who approach nearest to them, are always more charitable to others, more generous, more universal in their affections?

Why but because sanctity assimilates them to God, and their minds expand under its influence. The little world of self is not their only world; the interests of their family or community are not their only interests; they can do more than *say* "Our Father." God is not their God only; He is the God and the Father of all, and therefore all are their brethren; all have a share in their sympathy, a claim on their prayers, and a part in their affections; and yet we do not always find this spirit where we should have a right to expect it. Human nature asserts its empire over us, and often influences us, perhaps unconsciously. Thus it is that we have most of us our own peculiar views about sanctity, and about the various Religious Orders. We do not for a moment mean to say that persons may not have preference; that they may not like one Order more than another, or think one kind of religious exercises preferable to another; this may in certain cases be not only justifiable, but even right. Our own natural temperaments are never destroyed by the influence of Divine grace, though they are refined and purified in proportion as we submit to its influence. What is objectionable, and often wrong, is, not a preference, but a prejudice; and how few there are who are wholly free from prejudice! Let us for one month at least strive to free ourselves from this; let us ascend in spirit to our Father's house, and gaze, not only upon the beauty of its many mansions, but upon the glories of those who inhabit them. It has been already declared by those saints who have

been familiar with the angels, that each of those blessed spirits may be distinguished from his companions by some peculiar beauty or greater glory. Thus it is also with the saints; and yet the lowest envy not the highest, but rather so rejoice in their exaltation as to make it a part of their own beatitude. O blessed sanctity, which is saintly only for God and in God! O blessed souls, who are ever struggling, ever fighting, ever subduing the flesh and the devil, only because they will not have Jesus offended; only because they think there is sin enough in the world to grieve His Sacred Heart without their adding any to it! So pure and disinterested is their love, that they see not its purity and know not its disinterestedness; but Jesus knows it, Mary sees it, and the smiles of their angels testify how glad and blessed is their life.

But if the presence of the Religious Orders, with their peculiar glories, will to all eternity shed lustre on the blessed in Heaven, what part do they fulfil in the Church on earth? or rather, we might ask, what would the Church on earth be without them? How lonely we should feel without the saints! how friendless without our founders and patrons! Let us consider for a moment what we should feel if we had not our Saint Francis, our Saint Dominic, our Saint Ignatius, our Camillus, or our Vincent de Paul. It is true we have Mary, and Mary is more to us than a thousand saints; but yet we are social beings; we like companionship in our sorrows and our joys; we like, when we have some-

thing to do very difficult, to know that some one else has tried it before, and that they have had to struggle hard and often before they have finally succeeded. No one ever yet attained to great sanctity without great struggles; what is every life of a saint but a history of successive conflicts—now with the old Adam within them, now with the crafty demon, now with exterior circumstances, now with some thorn in the flesh, or with some keen unearthly suffering, sent to refine and purify their loving souls; and though such trials as the saints have had are not usually given in the same degree to those who are not called to the same exalted sanctity, or do not correspond to this call, yet we all in our measure experience what they have suffered. Thus it is that their lives are full of the deepest interest and instruction for us. The history of Religious Communities are after all the history of a great number of individuals whose characters have more or less lost their individuality, and been gradually formed and moulded to one common stamp. The natural disposition of persons usually attracts them to one or other Order in the Church, and, once sheltered in the ark, they assimilate more and more to that peculiar characteristic which first attracted them to it. Thus some find a deep interest in the lives of contemplative saints, whilst others will scarcely read any but those of the active Orders; that is, their attraction is to one or other kind of life; they follow this as advised by their directors, and the attraction develops itself in proportion

as they are faithful to their vocation, and in a way which perhaps they have hardly anticipated. But let us for this month forget as far as may be our own peculiar attraction, and admire those glorious saints who each merited separate brightness and beauty before the throne of God, and who also shine with united lustre in His Presence. One star makes not the beauty of the summer night. It is when we see multitudes that we cannot count that we exclaim, "Cœli enarrant gloriam Dei;" and thus it is with the saints. Separately they are indeed beautiful; but when their glorious phalanx is united, who may imagine the brightness which they shed over the courts of Heaven? And it is well for us it should be so; we want many examples; we need many helpers: what one has not done, another has done; and we may learn from each some special virtue. One has been victorious in one kind of temptation, and to him we can apply for help when we are troubled by it; another has conquered some other trial, which we perhaps have never felt or never known, but which some one else is almost crushed by. But there is one subject on which we all agree, and that is, the glory which has been given to God by those who have forsaken father and mother and houses and lands for His name's sake. Not only is Heaven made beautiful and earth consoled by these blessed ones, but who may tell how much reparation even one fervent religious may make for the world's forgetfulness of God, for Calvary, and Bethlehem? Who can estimate, this

side the grave, the true value of a vocation? Let it be one of our objects during this month to pray for an increase of them throughout the world; let us ask faithfulness for those who have received them; let us implore the Divine Spirit for those who may be tempted to resist these heavenly inspirations, or who may hinder others from obeying the call of God; and let us ask most earnestly for increased faithfulness for all those who are consecrated spouses of Jesus.

If for an ordinary Christian it is so dangerous a thing to resist even the least inspiration to good, what must it be to resist a call to a life of perfection? and this resistance will not be the work of a single moment, nor even one single act. The voice that calls is low and still. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider; forget thine own people, and thy father's house." Blessed, oh, thrice blessed are they who thus forget all to remember all, who leave all to have all, who renounce earth to possess Heaven, and who choose to suffer here that they may possess hereafter the fullness of the riches of the house of God, and be inundated with the torrent of celestial joys.

But if the prize to be obtained be so great, the conflict which purchases it must also be in proportion. We can well imagine that the moment the Evil One has the least idea of the consecration of a soul to God, he will set all his efforts to work to hinder this blessed consummation. Do we not every day see it, and if we see much exteriorly,

how much more is done interiorly, which never meets the human eye or reaches the human ear, of which, perhaps, the very subject is unconscious! How much need have they of prayer who are called to the sacerdotal or religious life! what charity may we not show them by the fervour of our petitions for their perseverance! If we gain for only one soul this month the crown of espousals, how much will we have effected! not only is the soul itself thus secured, but to how many thousands will the grace extend! Oh, most fearful and most mysterious is the power which each possesses to do good or evil! most wonderful are the mystic chains which link events together, and influence, or seem to influence, the very providence of God! One little link may be in our hands to-day,—one little inspiration to an act of humility, to courage against ourselves, to fortitude when home ties and home affections interfere with the call to consecrate ourselves entirely to God,—and this little link may bind together a chain of graces which will lead us to a place amongst the very Seraphim; and yet we may break this link, we may shatter this chain. O fearful possibility! O awful responsibility! well may we tremble, well may we stand in continual fear of the future and the present; but so merciful, so tender is our God, so full of love is our Father, that bad and apparently hopeless as our case often seems, His love is wonderfully ingenious in remedying evils which seem almost past hope of cure. Our broken links are not always hopelessly broken; all is not lost for one false step; and

yet we know there is a limit to Divine mercy, a point at which it merges into the terrible form of Divine justice, which still is but mercy in a sterner guise. Can we tell which link is the last that we may break and yet be safe? or can we tell what we may lose by rending some link in the chain of our providential calls or inspirations? We may despise the call or neglect the inspiration, and yet be saved; but can we tell what we have lost? Alas, how sorrowful if we should see, amidst the fires of Purgatory, a place near the very throne of God which would have been ours had we only faithfully corresponded to all the graces given to bring us there! and how, perchance, we had lost all this for want of a little courage, a little self-denial.

If we are called to high places, we must merit them by high sanctity; and high sanctity is not to be attained without great fervour and courage. Will we lose our crowns, or seek the courage to win them? Let us ask the saints, let us read their lives, let us ponder their histories, let us inquire if their beatitude has been too dearly purchased; or rather let us forget crowns and thrones, and think only of our dearest Lord, and long and pine that He may see the travail of His soul and be satisfied, that He may be consoled by our sanctity and by our victories for all He has suffered for our salvation. What matters it if we never gained one palm, so that we can please our sweet Jesus, and wipe away the Blood and tears of his bitter Passion. If we have not examined our vocations before, let us do

so carefully during this month ; and if we have, or think we have, a call to leave all for God, oh, let us beware how we trifle or delay ! If already we are religious, let us consider how we correspond to this grace, and what we can do to become more worthy of this favour ; perhaps it is but a little thing that hinders us from attaining great sanctity. Let us ask our consciences ; let us ask our superiors ; let us pray earnestly to our Mother Mary, and to our holy founders, and we shall assuredly obtain the light we need. If we are called to live in the world, let us remember that we have a vocation and work to do there for God, and let us see how we are doing it. Perhaps we are called to and designed for even higher sanctity than many in religion ; what if we should miss our crowns and lose our celestial seats because we choose to think that we must be of the world while we are in it, and that our position of being in the world and not in the cloister is an excuse for shortcomings ? let us remember how many are now honoured on the Church's Altar who sanctified themselves in the very position in which we are. Surely we know well that it is not the mere circumstance of being a religious or a secular that will make us a saint, but the fact of having faithfully corresponded to our vocation, whatever it was, and of having glorified God by a perfect fulfilment of all our duties in it. Let us, then, whether religious or secular, enter with joy and thanksgiving into our lots for this month, and gladden our hearts as we think of those who have so honoured God in their

own lives, and the lives of those whom they have led to follow their example; thus, joining ourselves for the month with some great Order in the Church, we may hope to have a share in its prayers and merits, and in the consolations which its sanctity brings to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

FIRST LOT: THE BENEDICTINE ORDER.

The calm repose of patience seems the peculiar characteristic of this grand old Order; it stands before us like a mountain covered with eternal snow, moulded into shapes of beauty rather by the hand of nature than the chisel of art; so calm and still and beautiful are the old Benedictine saints, it almost quiets us to look at their pictures or dwell on their memories. Their work and their mission was with the past; but because it is done and their crowns gained, are we to forget them, or be unmindful of the services they have rendered us? Let us to whose lot this great Order has fallen seek to imitate their virtues, and, as far as may be in our lowlier sphere, let us thank God fervently for all the saints and all the sanctity bestowed on the Order; let us seek to cherish and practise the virtue of patience in honour of its great founder St. Benedict, and imitate him, as far as we can, in his patient sufferings of so many and such grievous trials; let us also join ourselves with all those who belong to this Order, and are now living lives of calm and saintly con-

temptation, saying every day a *Pater* and *Ave* for their increase and sanctification. We may thus obtain for ourselves a share in their merits, and an interest in the prayers of their saints.

SECOND LOT : THE CISTERCIANS.

As the white habit of the Cistercians was assumed in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and in order to place the Order under her peculiar protection, the virtue of her who draws this lot should be purity. With St. Bernard, the burning lover of Jesus, and Mary for her patron, let her ask it with confidence through the intercession of this great saint, and doubtless ere the month of devotion has closed she will have obtained a large increase of this grace. This Order should be peculiarly dear to English hearts; the ruins of our most magnificent abbeys show us how the Cistercian monks clung to our land; nor have they left us in the hour of need and desolation. Let us pray earnestly that their numbers may continually increase, and that their sanctity may be as fervent and burning as it was when the voice of St. Bernard awoke the echoes of Clairveaux, and thrilled the monarchs of Europe. Let us pray that his spirit and his zeal may descend upon his followers; and who can tell what graces our united prayers may obtain for our country through their means. One *Pater* and *Ave*.

THIRD LOT : THE FRANCISCANS.

Love, burning love to Jesus as the little Babe of Bethlehem, and to Jesus crucified on Calvary, was the characteristic of the seraph of Assisi; and we are told in the chronicles of the Order, a place amongst the highest Seraphim was his reward. Happy they who have this great saint for their patron and model, his Order for their lot. Let them pray with fervour this month for its increase and sanctification, and especially that it may again flourish in England, even should it be to water its soil once more with the blood of its martyrs. Think how many, and what exalted saints, the Franciscan Order has sent to adorn the celestial Paradise. They will pray for you; they will interest themselves in your welfare in proportion as you strive by prayer and work to promote the glory of God by means of their Institute. Above all, seek yourself to copy the burning love and perfect self-forgetfulness of St. Francis; and pray through his intercession for these graces. He who was the first to receive the wounds of Jesus crucified on earth, will surely be one of those whose prayers will be most readily heard in Heaven. One *Pater* and five *Gloria* in honour of his stigmatas.

FOURTH LOT : THE DOMINICANS.

Founded very shortly after the Franciscans, but with a very different object, the Friar-Preachers seek to do by work what the Franciscans do by prayer. Let us join ourselves, then, to this Order,

and enter into its spirit during this month. The festivals of St. Francis and St. Dominic come near each other, as though those who were united in life would not be divided in death. Whilst one is wrapt in burning love and ecstatic contemplation, the other works with an ever-increasing zeal for the salvation of souls and the conversion of heretics. Let zeal, then, be your virtue for this month. With St. Dominic and his glorious sons for our patrons, we may hope to increase in it ourselves, and to impart it by our example to others. Let us pray for the increase and sanctity of this Order, again so flourishing, and that the number of its members who are devoted to active work may never forget, in their zeal for the increase of their Order, that outward works of charity, without an interior spirit of prayer, and tenderness, not only for the poor, but for all who are in affliction, can never benefit our own souls or the souls of our brethren, however much we may appear to do for them. One *Pater*, &c.

FIFTH LOT : THE CARMELITES.

The very name suggests our virtue and our saint. Prayer and St. Teresa seem linked together. Let us take this great saint for our patron, and her virtue for our practice ; and let us not be wearied if we fail again and again ; but, remembering the many struggles this blessed soul encountered before she attained her exalted sanctity, let us with fresh courage rise again after every failure, and strive to train

our wild imaginations, until we have taught them to think continually of God and Heaven ; until at least we learn to be less distracted and more fervent in our daily prayers and meditations, and more silent, unless when duty requires us to speak. Let us pray with fervour for the increase and sanctity of this great Order. Let us pray that, if it may be, even in our own days another Teresa may be raised up, who by her fervour and earnestness may revive our drooping love, and inflame our cold tepid hearts. As prayer was her virtue and the means by which she attained such sanctity, let us be earnest and fervent in using this means of grace under her protection. How else, indeed, can we hope to obtain any virtue ? prayer, without our own fervent efforts to practise the virtues we ask for, is but a delusion ; but our own efforts, without prayer, would be worse than useless. Joining ourselves with this Order, and praying fervently for its increase and sanctity, we may hope that its saints will peculiarly interest themselves on our behalf, and obtain for us a spirit of prayer, which will enable us to persevere and conquer in all our difficulties, and lead us to the highest sanctity. One *Pater*, &c.

SIXTH LOT : THE JESUITS.

In this lot we must include all the active Orders of religious men, as it would be impossible to specify each. This, as the most numerous and the most influential, claims the precedence. She to whose lot

this office falls must, with great fervour, pray for the extension of all Religious Orders and Institutes; and that each may have the grace to fulfil the designs of God over them, and to accomplish the ends of their respective founders. Let her practice be obedience; and let her seek to attain to the highest perfection of this virtue, by submitting, not only to her superiors, but even to the inclinations and wishes of those around her, when these are not opposed to any practice of virtue. Let her invoke St. Ignatius, the great model and exalter of this virtue; and be assured he will obtain it for her in its highest perfection, if she is faithful in praying for it, and in endeavouring to practise it. Let her, in obedience to the loving precept uttered by the lips of God Himself, pray with fervour that new labourers may be sent every day into the world's great harvest-field. Let her pray for those on foreign missions, or labouring amongst our crowded and often scarcely less heathen population at home. Each morning let her say one "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" to obtain strength and courage for them in their labours, and each evening one *Memorare* or *Salve*, offering up, through the pure Heart of Mary, the good they have done for the increase of their merits and the greater glory of God.

SEVENTH LOT: THE SISTERS OF CHARITY.

Here, again, we must include all the active Orders of religious women, and those also vowed in a

more contemplative life to the instruction either of poor or rich. What a field for our charity and our prayers! Let us think of the love of Jesus in condescending to accept as done to Himself whatever ministry of love we perform for others. Who would not love to nurse Jesus in His sickness; to help Jesus in His poverty; to console Jesus in His afflictions; to teach Jesus in His mysterious appearance of ignorance? And yet all this is within our reach; all this we may do every day of our lives. No wonder that saints, like the blessed Camillus, would go bounding with ecstatic joy through the wards of their hospital, and exclaim in burning accents, as they bent over each poor sufferer, "My Lord, my Soul, what can I do for Thee?" Let this be our cry during this month. Let us lose no opportunity, however trifling, of performing any service we can for others, be they rich or poor; let us do it all for Jesus, and oh, what treasures of love will be poured on us in return! Let us pray with great fervour for all in their agony, and for all those blessed and saintly souls who have given up their lives to ministries of love for the poor and afflicted members of Jesus our crucified God. If we cannot share as we would desire to do in their good works, we may assist them thus, and obtain for ourselves a share in their merits. One *Pater*, &c.

FOR SEPTEMBER—MONTH OF THE
RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

HYMN TO ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

HIGH amid the choirs of light,
 Where the golden seraphs' blaze
 Dazzles even the Angels' sight
 With the brilliance of its rays,
 Seated on a throne of bliss,
 Drinking love from Love's own fountain,
 Dwells the Saint in rapture glad,
 Thronèd on the golden mountain.
 Now no more shall pain or tears
 Crush his heart, or bow his spirit;
 Now no more shall earthly fears
 Cloud the joys he doth inherit.
 Sainly Father, we before thee
 Wait, with weeping, for thy prayers;
 Sainly Father, oh, remember
 Those who struggle 'mid earth's cares.
 Thou hast fought, and thou hast conquered;
 But for us the strife remains;
 Speed, then, gentle Saint, to help us,
 Lest we sink beneath our pains.
 By thy thirst so deep, so burning,
 For the wounds of Christ thy Love,

On our needs one kind glance turning,
Help us till we come above.

By thy heart, so kind and gentle,
By thy tender, thoughtful ways,
By thy most unearthly raptures,
By thy ecstasies of praise,

By thy weary, ceaseless vigils,
By thy constant care and strife,
Whilst thy body here subduing,—
Lead us to the Land of Life.

By our dear and gentle Mother,
By her Heart, so bent on thine,—
Holy Father, hear our pleading,
To thy children's prayer incline.

We are pining, we are striving,
But for thee the strife is o'er;
Help us, then, most blessed Father,
Bring us to the golden shore.

There with thee for ever praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son;
We will sing, our joys unending,
While the ceaseless ages run.

THE CHILD-NOVICE.

LITTLE maiden, little maiden,
There are smiles upon your cheek;
But a graver look will banish them,
Or ever you can speak.

Little maiden, little maiden,
You look up into the sky,
And then look down so drearily,
And smile away a sigh.

Little maiden, little maiden,
You were wont full blithe to be ;
Little maiden, little maiden,
What hath so changed thee ?

She looked up into the Heavens,
That little maid so fair ;
And a smile was in her dark blue eye,
And on her lip a prayer.

And the little maid she answered,
With voice most sweet to hear,
“ The little Christ, He calleth me
To be His bride so dear.

The little Christ He speaketh low,
His voice is passing sweet ;
'Tis sweeter than my mother's
When she her child doth greet.

And the little Christ stretched out His hands,
Wounded for love of me,
And He said, ‘ My little maiden,
Wilt thou come My bride to be ?’

The little Christ, He smiled a smile,
So wonderful to see !
When I said I loved Him more than all,
And I His bride would be.

And my heart is breaking, breaking fast,
For that little Christ so kind ;
His smile, His look, His gentle word,
Comes ever to my mind.

I care not now for birds, or flowers,
Or brother's merry play ;
For my heart and love no more are here,
And I would be away.

They say there is a quiet home,
Where the Christ's dear spouses dwell,
And spend their days in prayer and thought
Of Him they love so well.

And I would to that cloister go,
Where dwell those spouses dear ;
And so I pine thus wearily
That I must linger here."

The little maiden's mother heard,
And, though her fond heart bled,
She cried, "Then go, my little one,
And do as thou hast said.

Yes, go and be thy dear Christ's bride,
And dwell with Him always ;
But where thou goest, precious one,
Oh, for thy mother pray."

THE MEETING OF ST. FRANCIS AND
ST. DOMINIC.

The Saints were together in Rome, but unknown to each other. One night St. Dominic beheld our Lady in a vision presenting two men to her Divine Son to appease His wrath against sinners. One of these was himself, the other he had never seen. The following day he entered a church, and there beheld a poor man, meanly clad. Running to him, he embraced him again and again, and exclaimed, "You are my brother: we will go together, and none can prevail against us; we will divide the world, and conquer it for Christ." And so in truth they did; one flooding it with light, and the other with love.

"AND thou shalt go with me," he said,
"And be my friend and brother;"
And then the Saints, in converse long,
Spoke softly to each other.

"All in the silence of the night,
Whilst all around me slept,
I saw thee in a vision bright,
As I my vigil kept.

We stood before our Lady's throne,
And she for sinners prayed,
And offered us to her dear Son
That His wrath might be stayed.

She said that we would fight for Him;
And, brother, so we will!

Divide the world, and let us go
To work for Jesus still."

Thus light met love; and as they spoke
Out flashed a burning fire,
And kindled in the hearts of men
Seraphical desire.

And since that time the glorious flame
Has kindled more and more;
Francis and Dominic have sent
Their sons to every shore.

And one by love, and one by light,
They shone on earth, and now,
With seraphim and cherubim,
Before God's throne they bow.

O blessed Fathers, pray for us,
Your children we would be,
And get us light, and get us love,
Until God's Face we see.

THE BENEDICTION OF ST. CLARE.

St. Clare left her benediction in a most solemn manner to all her children, blessing, in the peculiar tenderness of her gentle loving heart, not only those who lived when she did, but each individual who should belong to her Order until the end of time. In consequence of this,

every night after matins the Poor Clares prostrate to receive the blessing of their Abbess.

EVENING shades are closing round us,
And the weary day is past,
Now the night its mantle o'er us
Throws, and we may rest at last.

Rest, and yet *our* rest is watching,
Waiting for the Bridegroom's call ;
While the busy world is keeping
Revel, we in prayer must fall.

Down before the throne eternal,
There with burning tears we cry,
Mercy, Jesus, mercy, Saviour,
Prostrate at Thy feet we lie.

Holy angels now are listening,
Poised there on golden wing ;
Hush ! they catch our every accent,
Hear us pray, and hear us sing.

Bow we, then, before th' Eternal,
Open wide is mercy's door,
And the angels still are passing
To and from the golden shore.

We have prayed, and we have chanted,
Nature wearied claims its rest ;
Ere we go a Mother's blessing
Comes to soothe each wearied breast.

Looking through the long, long ages,
Soft and low her accents thrill ;
Hush ! the white-winged angels listen :
Clare will bless her children still.

For that dear and gentle Mother,
Ere she passed from earth to Heaven,
Hath a blessing, kind and tender,
To her loving children given.

Never sure was one so thoughtful,
Never one so full of love !
She will bless and guard her children,
Even from her home above.

Kneel we, then, in prostrate silence,
Bowing lowly at the sound ;
Low and gentle are the accents,
Richest blessings fall around.

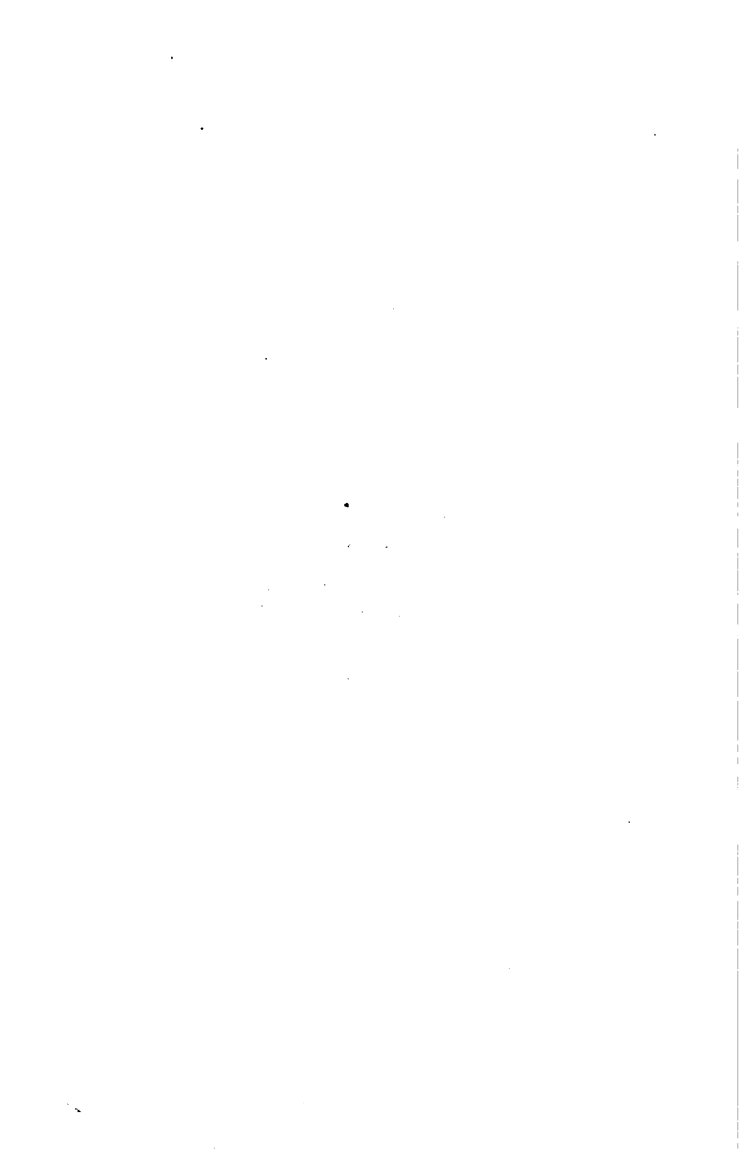
Thus with joyous hearts made stronger,
Beating gladder for that prayer,
Kneel we while our gentle Mother
Gives the blessing of Saint Clare.

Then from out the star-lit heavens,
With her gaze so calm and clear,
Blessing her who gives the blessing,
Looketh out that Lady dear.

Gentle Clare, in joy or sorrow,
Be thou still our hope and guide,
Bring us safe where thou art seated,
Ever with thee to abide.

OCTOBER.

Month of the Holy Angels.



OCTOBER.

Month of the Holy Angels.



SURELY we must devote this month to little children, and to those happy souls who, childlike in their ways, have the benedictions given to little ones, and the especial love of their Angel-friends. Do we ever think enough about the Angels? do we ever really honour them as we ought, or use the ministry of our own dear Guardians as our Father intended we should? Have we ever thought what a beautiful and merciful dispensation of Providence it was that each of us should have our own Angel-Guardian, one Angel all to ourselves—one bright, pure, sinless spirit, who ever beholds the Face of God, and dwells wrapt in the ecstatic bliss of contemplating the Beatific Vision, and yet never, never wearies in his care of our poor, sinful souls? Beautiful Angels!

we have never thought half enough of you, or loved you half enough ; but, with the help of God, we will begin now ; we will know you, and we will love you, and we hope, also, learn to grieve you less before this month is over.

It would seem as if the Angels had some peculiar care for little children ; it may be so designed by the wonderful love of the Heart of Jesus, who would have the weak and the unprotected more tenderly cared for ; or it may be that those little ones, all unstained by actual sin, or at least not bearing the dark spots upon the souls of their elders, are more precious in the eyes of the Angels because of their purity. It is also remarkable what a familiar acquaintance, if we may use the expression, some saints have had with their Angels ; and these have been peculiarly childlike souls, simple, humble, and full of pure, pure love ; they have seemed fitter for companionship with their beautiful Guardians than for the rude commerce of men. Such were St. Francis of Rome and Blessed Lucy of Narin. Perhaps few were more favoured with constant communications with their Angels than the former, and few indeed were more pure and spotless.

How often, when we read the lives of such saints, do we not pine and long to have even one glimpse of the beautiful spirit so near to us ? and yet perhaps this grace was intended for us all, if we were only faithful to the designs of God over us ; but whilst we are so full of pride and so full of self, could we even bear the pure light of unutterable

glory which streams from the lowest Angel in the celestial hierarchy? And yet we *shall* see them; and surely this thought should be one of holy sadness and of joyful fear. We shall see one who has known us better than any, save our Heavenly Father and our Mother Mary; one who has seen all our actions, heard all our words, and read our inmost thoughts. In our victories he has joyed with a joy we cannot understand, until we know the full value and merit of self-conquest. In our falls he has grieved with a sadness the depth of which we shall not comprehend until we are atoning in the fire of Purgatory for our many shortcomings. Surely the thought of the continual presence of our Angel ought to be a great means of grace to us, an immense incentive to sanctity, a reproof when we falter, an encouragement when we are tempted to despair. One watchful eye is ever over us, one willing hand is ever stretched out to help us, one pure spirit is ever praying for us; but what if we are thoughtlessly unmindful of his presence? ah, he prays on still; for the Angels are not wearied in their ministry of love. But can we expect the aid which God designs to give us through their ministry if we are ungrateful and careless of this means of grace? Let us, then, strive during this month to live in constant remembrance of the presence of our Angels. We cannot doubt that their interest in us, or perhaps we should rather say their power to help us, will increase in exact proportion to our devotion to them; and who can tell what graces

we may obtain for ourselves or others by a month of fervent love and devotion to the Holy Angels?

The very thought of these celestial spirits must do us good. Let us look upwards and onwards; celestial kingdoms are waiting for us, celestial crowns are prepared for us, celestial spirits long to have us for their companions; they watch, they gaze on us with deepest interest as we journey on day by day to the land of beauty which is their home. And oh, when we consider who are to be our companions for all eternity, surely it must nerve us to strive, to use every effort, to be worthy of admission into such a company! Already they long for us, already they speak of us, already they prepare with thoughtful love the home of each amid the many mansions of our Father's House, and felicitate themselves on the wonderful surprises they will have for us when they welcome us home. They long for the time, they count the hours, they treasure our tears, they offer our prayers, they write our victories in the Book of Life; and we, alas, alas! do we think of all this? do we think of our celestial country? do we seek every hour to prepare ourselves better for it, and add to our crowns and merits? do we strive to help those who are ready to help us? are we on the watch for every occasion of merit or sacrifice? or are we not rather madly, blindly wasting our days and hours, sitting down by the wayside to play with our foolish toys, or to nurse our wounded pride, when we should be up and doing, earnest in the strife? Are we not casting away the cross we

should embrace? are we not fretting over the sufferings we should rejoice in? Surely the lives of most of us must be a strange perplexity to the Angels, our conduct an inexplicable enigma. They know we can have grace for the asking of it, they know the brightness of the crowns prepared for us, they know the burning love of the Heart of Jesus, the tenderness of Mary,—and well may they wonder to see us perversely turning from the God who died for us, to listen to the demon who would destroy us. They think of Calvary, they remember Gethsemani; they know it was all done and suffered for us, and then they see us going on as if sin were nothing, and as if Jesus never died. Still, bad as the case is even for the best of us, we must not despair; we have let the Evil One get an occasional grasp of us, but we must not let him hold us altogether. Calvary is still there; the agony and the scourging have lost none of their merit; Jesus burns for our salvation as ardently as He did when the spear opened the wound in His Heart, already broken with love and sorrow. We have still our Angels; and if morning by morning we place ourselves under their special protection, and humbly and earnestly entreat them to guard us through the day, to succour us in temptation, to pray for us and to shield us, we know not what height of sanctity we might attain.

Almighty God certainly expects us to use every means of grace which He has given us. There is nothing superfluous, nothing unnecessary, in the plan of our redemption; nothing which we may safely

neglect in the order of His providential arrangements for our sanctification. How can we tell how many graces are destined to come to us through our Angel-Guardians? how do we know what graces or favours are given to them for us? If we must stand in awe of little children because their Angels protect their helplessness, and will not bear that they should suffer even a slight offence from their elders, what power must not these Angels have? and if they thus protect and succour those who are, perhaps, not even conscious of their existence, may we not hope that they will much more powerfully and earnestly assist those who truly honour them?

After all, whatever devotion we may have to any saint, there can scarcely be one so near to us or so much interested for us as our Angel; we are his only charge, care of us his only employment, our interest his only concern; and this, not for our own sakes, or we might well tremble lest our waywardness and sin should drive him from us, but for the pure, pure love of God, whose glory he seeks, whose pleasure he desires to fulfil. Thus we are safe; our Angels will not leave us unless we drive them away: they will not weary, hopeless as their task may be; for it is all for Jesus, and what is done for Jesus never wearies. But we must remember, that their assistance may be in proportion to our earnestness in asking it: he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Labour is a condition annexed to every blessing, either spiritual or temporal, in this our mortal life, and it is well for

our thankless hearts that it is so; for if we have so little gratitude for what we attain easily, how much less should we have were there no trouble, no exertion, required on our part!

But although our first and principal devotion in regard to the Holy Angels should be to our own Guardians, yet we must remember how closely we are united to the world of spirits, and how surrounded we are on all sides by these blessed intelligences. Do we hear Holy Mass? behold there are countless Angels, bowing in an adoration of which we have but a faint conception, atoning by their presence and their worship for our coldness and neglect; and one there is who it is believed especially presides at that august mystery, and bears the oblation to the Sanctuary of Heaven.

Then it is also supposed that the seven Sacraments have each an Angel, whose special care they are; and, indeed, it is recorded that the great Origen publicly invoked the Angel of Baptism when about to administer that Sacrament to an aged man. That the glorious St. Michael is now the especial defender of the Christian, as he was formerly of the Jewish Church, none can doubt; and that his power must be great in Heaven is sufficiently proved by the account in the Apocalypse of his overthrow of Lucifer and his rebel crew. Those who are devout to him must surely have a great and glorious protector, and one who will assist them in their earthly strife, especially in their struggles against the demon of pride, whom he first conquered and overthrew. He

is one of the seven who stand before the Ever-blessed Trinity, and ceaselessly strive to hinder violations of the Divine Law on earth, and particularly combat against the seven deadly sins.

It is believed that our Lord Himself condescended to allow His Sacred Humanity to be refreshed and comforted by the ministry of Angels, thus to teach and encourage us, as He was in all things our Example. Saint Gabriel is thought to have been the Angel honoured especially to guard the Person of his God made Man, and to obtain for his clients a peculiar devotion to the Sacred Humanity; whilst Saint Raphael, the Angel of Joy, appears before us as the special lover of our fallen race, the guide of wanderers, the comfort of the afflicted, and the joy of the sorrowful. And if Jesus allowed Himself to be ministered to by Angels, if His Sacred Humanity could be consoled and strengthened by their means, what a cause of joy and holy hope for us! He condescends to call Himself our Brother. He allows the Angels to see His weakness, that they may pity ours; He allows them to minister to Him and strengthen Him, that we may have an Example which we may follow without fear, that we may be encouraged to ask their help, and value it as we should. Many saints have prayed that their Guardian-Angels might know their inmost thoughts, and see them as nearly as might be, even as God sees them, so much have they valued their ministry and trusted to their prayers; and if we reflect on the mercy of God in giving us Angel-Guardians, and our need of

them, we cannot wonder ; rather our wonder must be, that we have hitherto thought so little of these blessed spirits. Let each, then, invoke her Angel-Guardian, and draw her lot for this month, striving by her fervour to atone for the coldness of those who either do not know or do not value the ministry of Angels.

FIRST LOT.

THE CHOIR OF SERAPHIM.

Happy is she to whose lot this office falls ; and yet let her not receive it without fear. How can we love without suffering ? and are we able to drink of the chalice of which He has drunk, and to be purified with the purification which He requires from those on whom He wills to bestow super-eminent gifts of Divine love ? If thou hast courage, let thy cry be, “ not to live as now, to suffer as now ; but to love more, and to suffer more ; ” and if thou hast not courage, ask it from these celestial spirits, these blessed lovers, who burn with such intense, and to us incomprehensible, love to the Ever-blessed Trinity. Weak and feeble as we are, let us lie in spirit beneath their burning ranks ; and it may be that the flames of heavenly fire which continually enkindle them will reach even to us. At least we can offer their burning acts of adoration and love to atone for our own coldness. Pray especially for those who ought to be the Seraphim of earth, the consecrated spouses of Jesus, and ask for them the grace to correspond with their high vocation.

Your virtue should be Divine love; strive to make many acts of it during the day, in union with the Choir which has fallen to your lot, and be assured they will assist you, if you invoke their help. Have also a special devotion to St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Seraphic Order. Perhaps there were few who burned with so ardent a love for Jesus as this great saint; and the chronicles of his Order tell us that his throne in Heaven is among the ranks of the highest Seraphim, and that the seats lost by the fallen Angels who had belonged to that Choir are reserved for his children.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee, I love Thee; or the little Psalter of Divine love. *Nine Gloria Patri.*

SECOND LOT.

THE CHOIR OF CHERUBIM.

If burning love streams from the Seraphic Choir, knowledge and the understanding of heavenly mysteries is communicated by the Cherubim; we must know, or we cannot love. Seek, then, through the intercession of your powerful patrons for this month, to know more of God, and then perhaps you may be able to love Him more; pray to them especially for light to know yourself, to know your imperfections, to know what God requires from you, and what He would have you to do. They will not fail to assist you, since their only desire is that God should be known more by all His creatures; ask them also to

obtain light for your superiors and spiritual guides, that you may be directed by them according to the designs of God in your regard. Pray for all who have the guidance of others, especially for our Holy Father the Pope, for the Cardinals, for all Bishops, and for superiors of Religious Orders, that they may never allow themselves to be influenced by human motives or human respect, but may seek only to know and do the Divine will in all their actions. Invoke also the intercession of the great St. Dominic, whose Order has so specially been used by Divine Providence for the diffusion of light and knowledge, and doubt not but that through this intercession you will attain many and great graces. Let your virtue be great fidelity to all Divine aspirations, remembering that light will be given in exact proportion to our faithfulness in corresponding with what we have already received. One inspiration to good, however small, neglected, or resisted, may lead us we know not where; one inspiration to good, perhaps even in a trifling matter, may be the first step towards a life of great sanctity.

Aspiration. Teach me Thy will, O God, and give me grace ever more faithfully to do it.

THIRD LOT.

THE CHOIR OF THRONES.

The idea of government seems naturally to associate itself with this choir; and what should be the end and aim of all who govern but to procure

peace for their subjects? Let us seek, then, from this choir the blessing of peace. Let us invoke the Angels who have the charge of the various kingdoms of the world, that they may obtain special blessings of good and wise governors for the countries committed to them. Let us be large-hearted even in our devotions; we think too little and care too little for others at all times; let us learn to be less selfish, and more anxious for the glory of God and the extension of His kingdom. Let whoever has this office say every day three "Our Fathers," invoking the choir of Thrones, and praying for peace and concord in all Catholic states and countries, and for the conversion of all heretical governments. Let her also strive to practise peace herself by the gentleness of her words, and the kindness of her manner to all with whom she associates, and by endeavouring to her utmost to make peace wherever she may find disunion. A word, a look, a smile may sometimes do it. Let her remember the dignity of peace-makers, and the special grace promised to them. Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.

Aspiration. Let peace be in thy strength, and abundance in thy towers.

FOURTH LOT.

THE CHOIR OF DOMINATIONS.

Let us ask from this choir the grace of self-government. How few there are who are masters of

themselves! and how necessary is self-mastery, no merely for our sanctification, but even for our salvation! And with our weak nature and our constant temptations, with our crafty foes and our feeble strength, we do indeed need all the celestial help we can obtain to aid us in our daily strife. It will not be refused. We are a spectacle to the Angels; they watch us with an interest proportioned to their knowledge of the great eternity which awaits us, and their earnest desire for our salvation. The virtue, then, which should be practised by whoever draws this lot is self-government, perhaps we should rather say mortification. Does it not include all that we need for our spiritual advancement? If we have mortified our tongues, we shall utter no angry, impatient, or uncharitable words; if we have mortified our sight, we shall give no curious or unnecessary glances; if we have mortified our taste, we shall be content with necessaries, and refuse all that nature does not absolutely require; if we have mortified our understanding, we shall not judge others, esteeming ourselves less than the least. Truly the field of mortification is a large one; but let us take courage. If there is much to do, there are many to help: behold a choir of the highest Angels whom we may have for our advocates. Let us, then, invoke them with confidence, and begin our work with courage, selecting for this month that particular point on which our conscience or our superiors tell us that we need most to mortify ourselves. Let us also invoke the holy martyrs, and pray especially for those en-

gaged in perilous and difficult missions in heathen lands. Let us compare their lives of ceaseless toil and mortification with ours, and we shall gain fresh courage by their example.

Aspiration. Jesus, our Love, is crucified. Nine *Gloria Patri* each day in honour of the Holy Angels.

FIFTH LOT.

THE CHOIR OF VIRTUES.

O most glorious choir, confirmed in grace, and for ever assured of the favour of God, look upon us poor, weak, trembling mortals, who, chained in the prison-house of our mortality, can scarcely lift our eyes to that celestial land where is your happy home; and yet we long, we pine to come to you, not as we hope that we may cease to suffer, but that we may cease to sin. Oh, with what bitter grief the Angels must behold the sins of men! Let us say, "Now it is enough;" now I begin; no more will I offend my Jesus, no more will I grieve these beautiful spirits whom I hope to have as my companions for all eternity. You, O Blessed Angels, are full of all virtues, while I, your unhappy client, have scarcely one. Obtain for me, then, the grace of humility, the only foundation of all sanctity, and I will strive in your honour to make this my virtue during the present month. I will hate pride, because it offends my God, because it has caused the ruin of man and the fall of Angels. I will think of your deep humility, and, uniting with the war-cry of your prince,

Saint Michael, I also will say, when tempted to pride, "Who is like God?" Succour me, then, O Blessed Spirits, for you know how deeply our fallen nature is imbued with this fearful vice; how hard it is for us to become truly humble; how strongly our crafty foe tempts us to our ruin by exciting our foolish vanity, our miserable self-conceit.

Aspiration. Great Saint Michael, prince of the celestial host, conquer in me the demon of pride, your ancient enemy and my cruel foe. Pray especially for all those who are tempted to deny their faith, or neglect the practice of it through motives of human respect or pride.

SIXTH LOT.

THE CHOIR OF POWERS.

Let us thank God, with joyous hearts, that, if there are powers of darkness, there are also powers of light, spirits of surpassing strength, beauty, and knowledge, subtle and full of celestial wisdom. Our foes are indeed many and strong. They have the knowledge of Angels with the craft of demons, and they watch for our falls and exult in our weaknesses with a malice proportioned to the depth of their degradation. But let us not fear; if we are really in earnest, if we side with our friends, and not with our enemies, we are safe. The keys of the Citadel are in our own keeping. They cannot be forced from our grasp unless we are weak enough or wicked enough to surrender them. Let us, then, invoke the

great choir of Powers to assist us in our conflict. They have already done battle with our foe, and know his strength and malice. Satan is their enemy as well as ours, for he is the enemy of God. Where is our weakest point? wherein do we most need strength? Ah, there are few who are not their own enemies; few whom self-love does not blind in some form or another. Let us, then, invoke this choir of Powers to assist us in combating ourselves, being assured that, if we are masters of our own interior, no foe can hurt us. Our virtue must, then, be great vigilance over ourselves, and a constant guard over our thoughts.

Aspiration. Heavenly Powers, aid us with your celestial strength.

SEVENTH LOT.

THE CHOIR OF PRINCIPALITIES.

The saints are the princes of the Church; and we are told they shall hereafter judge all nations. Oh, blessed they who shall judge and not be judged—blessed, not because of the greatness of their honour, but for the nearness it will give them to God! Would we, then, rank among the heavenly Principalities? let us seek the lowest place on earth, and we shall have the highest in heaven. Who was so lowly as Mary? and who is so exalted as she? The Principalities contemned the pride of Lucifer. "Who is like God?" was their cry. Thus it is that their shining ranks still adorn the palace of their King, and that their beatitude is confirmed to them for

ever. Invoke their help to obtain the grace of a perfect self-contempt, and rest not in your efforts until you really believe yourself the lowest and vilest of all God's creatures. If you abase yourself, He will regard your lowliness, and exalt you in the heavenly kingdom.

Aspiration. O most glorious Principalities, we invoke you, and pray that you will help us to obtain that place in Heaven which was prepared for us from all eternity.

EIGHTH LOT.

THE CHOIR OF ARCHANGELS.

Can we ever know how many deliverances from danger we owe to the holy Angels? Let us love to think of them, particularly of those blessed spirits who guard the various Orders of religious men and women. Let us, if we are ourselves religious, or associated to any Order, invoke especially the Angel of our community. Perhaps if we had prayed more fervently for his protection, we should have received more favours from him. We cannot expect what we do not ask for; and shall we ever know in this world how much we lose from our tepidity and sloth in asking. Pray, then, most earnestly for fervour, and that God may enlighten you as to the means He has appointed for your sanctification. Think how unwearied the Angels are in their ministry of love; and if they are unwearied in serving us, should we not in common gratitude be unwearied in honouring them? Pray to the great Archangels who have

charge of the Church, of the Religious Orders, and of all the great kingdoms of the world. Entreat them to use all their power for the salvation of sinners and the sanctification of the just; and endeavour to atone to them for the many slights and insults offered to them in the fulfilment of their holy ministries.

Aspiration. Holy Archangels, we invoke you, and pray you will shield and defend us in the day of battle.

NINTH LOT.

THE CHOIR OF ANGELS.

Whoever has this choir for their lot should especially honour and invoke the Angel-Guardians. Each morning, having humbly invoked the dear spirit who watches over you, pray to him that he may help you in all your perils, obtain strength for you in temptation, warn you in danger, and encourage you in depression. Perhaps you do not know how much you have already lost from want of fervent devotion to your Angel-friend. Let it not be so any longer. Endeavour to become intimate with your Angel, telling him your trials and perplexities, and conversing lovingly and frequently with him. Pray that he may know your inmost thoughts. Confess your faults to him, and ask him to warn you at the approach of danger. Honour also the Guardian-Angels of those with whom you associate. Remember that some have been given for their companions spirits from the ranks of the highest Sera-

phim. If you are a religious, decline, if your rule permit it, in honour of the Angels of your companions as you pass them; if you can do them any service, do it—not only because they are the spouses of Christ, but also to honour the spirits who ever accompany them. You may thus hope to obtain special favours and many graces from the holy Angel-Guardians. Make reparation each day by saying nine *Gloria Patri* in honour of those Guardian-Angels who are neglected by their clients, and also for the Guardian-Angels of heretics and idolaters. Love little children, and render them every service you can this month in honour of their Angels. They will assuredly reward you, and pray for you. Pray also to the Guardian-Angels of the dying.

Aspiration. Sweet Angel, pardon me all my faults, and the neglect I have shown you. I humbly beg your help and protection, now and in the hour of death.

FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER.

FEAST OF ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS.

MICHAEL, glorious Prince of Angels,
 Noblest of the angelic ranks,
 Lowly singing in thine honour,
 Bring we now our meed of thanks.

Mighty conqueror, bright and glorious,
Next to Mary thou dost reign,
Come and bless us with thy presence,
Bring with thee thy angelic train.

Gabriel, silver-tongued and glorious ;
Raphael, healer of our woes ;
Blessed Angels, guardians gentle,—
Be our friends, repel our foes.

Breathe into our hearts your sweetness,
Flood our souls with love divine ;
May your glorious presence ever
Round your charge protecting shine !

We will honour, we will love you,
Blessed spirits, ever more,—
Our devotion still increasing,
As your favours on us pour,—

Till with you for ever singing,
Singing in unending strain,
God the Father, Son, and Spirit,
Where the blessed ever reign.

THE ANGEL-GUARDIAN.

My blessed Angel, gentle friend,
How can I ever know
One half of all the tender love
You daily towards me show ?

Oh, never weary of your charge !
 Oh, never leave my side !
 But help and comfort me each hour,
 Whatever may betide.

When I am weary, whisper words
 Of heaven and endless rest ;
 When I am tempted, cheer my soul
 With visions of the blest.

Offer for me the Precious Blood,
 Dear Angel, when I pray,
 And when at night I rest in sleep,
 Oh, near my pillow stay !

Oh, never leave me, lest I fall
 Beneath the tempter's power,
 And get for me such grace that I
 May love more every hour !

The following is translated very freely from the Italian.

THE WILL OF GOD.

“ Mio Dio che vuoi.”

My Lord, my Love, what wilt Thou ?
 Thy blessed will is mine,
 In life or death, whate'er Thou wilt,
 My heart will not repine.

Wilt Thou that in the land of love
Thy glories I should see,
And ever sing with tuneful harp
The mercies shown to me?

My will is Thine—a worm of earth
To dwell with saints of light;
My spirit trembles at the thought
Of that most glorious sight.

Or wilt Thou that to lowest hell
My guilty soul should go?
I could not choose but love Thee still,
And all Thy praises show.

And hell no hell to me would be,
For thoughts of Thee even there
Would charm away the agony,
The blackness of despair.

Wilt Thou that I should live, my Lord?
To live, then, is my will;
And every nerve, and every pulse
Of life shall praise Thee still.

Or wilt Thou that I die, my God?
My will is still the same;
In life or death, in grief or joy,
I'll praise Thy glorious name.

Wilt Thou that every breath I take
Should come and go with pain?
To follow in Thy footsteps, Lord,
My heart is ever fain.

Or wilt Thou that with stronger frame
Vigil and fast I bear?
I'll thank Thee still 'mid ceaseless toil
For every hour of care.

Wilt Thou that I should pine in want,
Or have rich golden store?
It matters not, Lord, what Thou wilt,
Give little or give more.

Or wilt Thou that with eager love
I hang upon Thy breast,
Drinking from thence salvation's balm,
My rapture and my rest?

I have no will, O Lord, no will,
'Twas wholly merged in Thine
When in the time of love Thou cam'st—
Thou cam'st, and ravished mine.

Or wilt Thou, bitterest cup of all,
Withdraw that sense of love,
That depth of melting tenderness
Which draws my heart above?

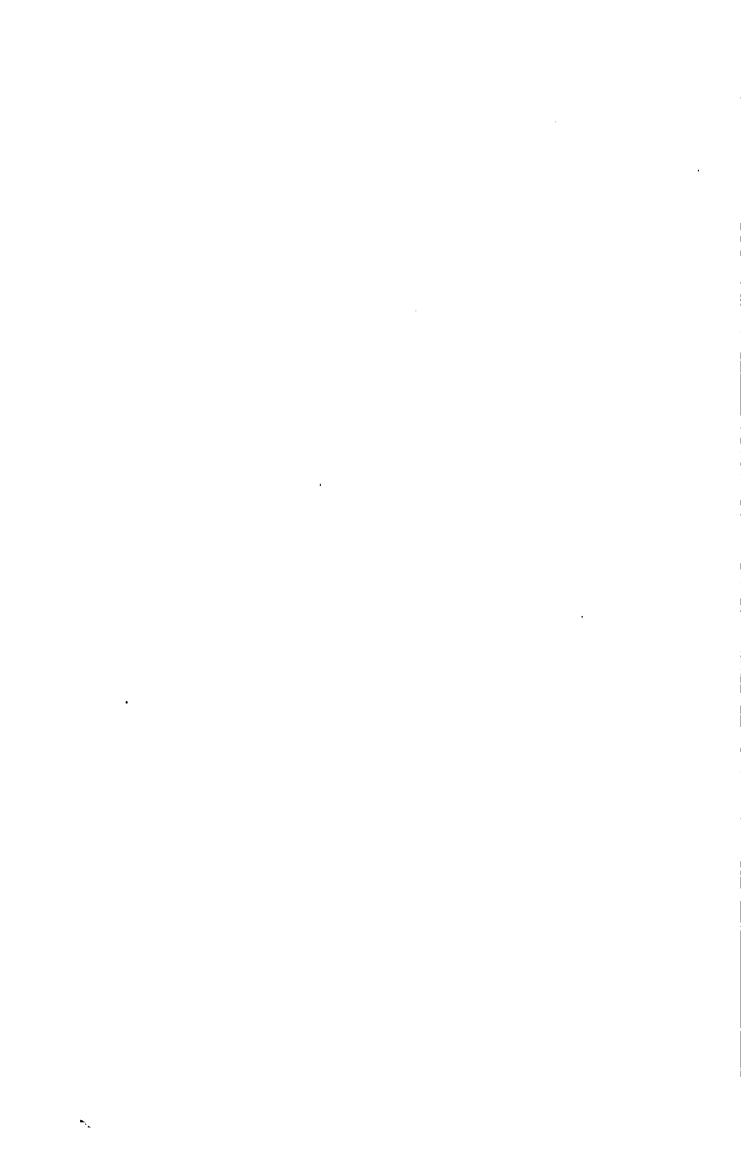
Wilt Thou no longer call me "Thine,"
 "Thine own one, and Thine only,"
And leave my heart all desolate,
 Forlorn, and cold, and lonely?

I have no will, my Lord, no will,
 'Tis nailèd to the Tree,
With those three nails so pitiful
 With which they nailèd Thee.

I have no will, my Lord, no will,
 'Tis bliss no tongue can tell
To rest in Thine and ever feel
 Thou doest all things well.

NOVEMBER.

Month of Devotion for the Holy Souls.



NOVEMBER

Month of Devotion for the Holy Souls.



C O most persons, the idea of Purgatory is simply one of pain; they try to avoid thinking about it because the subject is unpleasant, and our thoughts certainly do not naturally revert to painful subjects; they feel it is a place to which they *must* go at least, if they escape worse; they must suffer, they cannot help it, and so the less they think about it beforehand the better. Purgatory and suffering are to them synonymous terms; perhaps fear keeps them from some sins which, without this salutary apprehension, they would readily fall into; but on the whole they take their chance, and hope for the best. This, perhaps, is the view of a large class of persons, and of those who will scarcely even own to themselves what they think on the subject; but their lives are the tell-tales, and we cannot but fear that to escape hell is the utmost effort of many who ap-

parently are good Catholics. Still we would not say that they do not love God, that they are not in many ways pleasing to Him; but oh, how many are there who want only a little more generosity to become great saints! Then there is another class, farther on in their heavenward journey: souls who do love God, who do seek only to please, who are generous, often even noble-hearted, in their Master's service; souls who can say, "Our Father," and look up with childlike love to Heaven; but even with such, and with perhaps almost all, the feeling about Purgatory is much the same—it is a sort of necessary evil, a something that must be endured. They feel strongly all that justice has to say, their very sanctity and goodness leads them to desire that that which is evil in them should be taken out, even by fire; but still there are few who do really see the deep, deep love of Purgatory. We are very far from wishing to hinder persons from thinking less of its sufferings, nay, rather their very intenseness and severity only plead our case more strongly. All that has been revealed to the saints, all that has been made known to us by the Church or tradition, proclaims the same fact. Suffering, intense un-earthly anguish, is the portion of those most blessed souls; and it has been said that the pains of Purgatory only differ in duration from those of hell. Still there is this difference, oh, blessed be God! there is this difference, and it is all we could ask: in hell, the damned blaspheme their Master with the demons that torment them; in Purgatory, the holy souls

love their God with the angelic choirs who await their entrance to the land of bliss. If the souls of the damned could love, hell would cease to be hell; if the souls of the blessed ones in prison could cease to love, Purgatory would be worse to them than a thousand hells. But we must return to our first suggestion. It is the love of Purgatory of which we would speak; it is of this we would ask those who are practising these little devotions to think specially, for their own sakes, that it may be a motive of comfort and encouragement to them, and, for the sake of those dear and suffering souls, that it may be an inducement to help them more effectually.

We can never in this world understand the value or the necessity of suffering. It is enough for us to look at Calvary; enough for us to meditate on the Circumcision, the sufferings of the Holy Childhood, the life of labour and pain, the temptation, the fastings, the watchings, the days of weariness, the nights of prayer, the agony, the scourging, the crown of thorns; enough is it for us to know that one drop of the Precious Blood would have redeemed us, one pain would have satisfied for all our shortcomings; and yet how lavish, how prodigal, was Jesus of His sufferings and of His Blood! We think it enough to bear with patience the sufferings which come to us in the way of Providence; but to court sufferings, to ask for them, to rejoice in them, to seek to increase and multiply them, this, we think, is only for saints, for those called to special and heroic sanctity. Perhaps it is so; but can we

be sure that we are not called to this high dignity? Are we not at least to strive in all things to become like our sweet Jesus? and if we cannot go beyond the patient endurance of suffering, must we not fear that we fall far short of imitating perfectly His example?

We need not expect in this world to know the value of sufferings, but there are circumstances which make us *feel* it. Children do not like punishment; they seldom see the necessity for it, much less the deep good that it brings; and yet, what children love their parents most? is it not always those who are corrected and trained, even by suffering, to habits of virtue? It is notorious that spoiled children are never attached to their parents, whilst those who are kept under restraint and corrected in love are always devoted with the deepest devotion to those who have thus wisely nurtured them. And yet severity without love is, perhaps, worse than love (if there can be such a thing) without severity. We need not go far to find proofs of this assertion. Enter some poor school, and look round upon its little ones. Who are these wild, rude, untrained children whom the gentle voice of the nun, or the kind words of the confessor, has in vain endeavoured to subdue? their very faces tell their tale of misery. There has been no gentle mother's hand to check their rising passions; no grave look, no kind word, no helpful smile, no loving correction, has aided them in the awful strife of self-conquest. The bad passions of their parents have been too often

vented on their helpless offspring; their sins have been increased rather than subdued by the correction given, because it was given without love: a rough blow, a curse, a sullen threat,—how could such punishments as these train a child to the practice of virtue? There has been severity enough, we had almost said worse than severity, but there was no love to temper or direct it; and the result is all too plain, the future misery of its unhappy victims but too evident. To inflict suffering merely for the sake of witnessing the pain it gives, is to gratify the most vile passions.

The idolaters of ancient Rome gave full vent to their tyranny, as the acts of the martyrs sufficiently testify; and the same disposition still lives in heathen lands, and, alas that it should be so! manifests itself even in Christian countries, when, to gratify the anger or caprice of the moment, an injury is done, not, perhaps, to the body,—though that does not always escape,—but to the immortal soul of the young and feeble ones for whom Christ has died. Suffering without love is the very torment of the damned; and yet Purgatory shows us how much suffering may be borne for and with love. Nor is it only amongst the poor that we see such unhappy results of undue, unloving correction. The refinements of more civilised life, and the very pride of an exalted station, will prevent persons from violent exterior manifestations of their evil propensities; but they are not on this account less deeply rooted, or less destructive to the soul. The children of the

poor may have their tempers embittered, and their passions increased, by the rough blow and the rude word; but often there are other and not less bitter sufferings endured by those whose station in life might seem to exempt them from such trials. Worldliness in parents ever leads to neglect and coldness towards their children; and passion and caprice, though in a more refined form, are the motives which regulate their punishments, or suggest their not less cruel self-indulgences. But there are, thank God, among the poor, as well as among the rich, those who know and value the dignity of that authority which has been delegated to them by God; they know *for whom* they are to govern, and they endeavour, in their conduct towards those over whom they may be placed, to act as their Father in Heaven does towards them. Let us seek for such parents and such children, and then we may learn more of the value and necessity of suffering, of the deep, deep love which accompanies that severity which is used only as God uses it. We may read our own histories in the histories of those little ones, and we may reverently imagine the deep tenderness of the Heart of Jesus, and His merciful unwillingness to inflict on us the smallest pain, from the conduct of those parents. Love at once deepens suffering and supports under it. And who suffers most,—the parent who corrects, or the child who is corrected? Ah, has it not often been our keenest punishment to see the pain which the necessity of correction has given to those over us? Has it not even deep-

ened our love to them beyond all words, whilst it has enabled us to bear the utmost severity? And thus it is with our Father in Heaven. His love to us is immeasurably beyond that of any earthly parent, His wisdom incomprehensible; how, then, should not His corrections deepen our love, His paternal chastenings increase our tenderness and trust? We see, where correction really does good to children, that it always softens and subdues; there is more of clinging, intense love to the parent, though it may be there is also more of fear. And so it is in our spiritual course. In the religious life this is particularly felt where persons become again "little children," and submit, for love of God, and in order to be more like their Incarnate Saviour, to the controls and corrections of their childhood. If we are not familiar with the practices of conventual life, we need not go far for examples; the history of any cloistered saint will tell all we could wish to know. Sometimes, as in the case of the Blessed Margaret Alacoque, we find most saintly souls tried most severely by their superiors, who are nevertheless good and perfect in their own way; and sometimes, as in the beautiful lives of St. Clare and St. Agnes of Assisi, we see sister submitting to sister, and obeying one who was once her companion and equal, as if she had been always her superior. In each case correction has been given, but given with love, and in each case it has only deepened love. Thus it is in the lives of the saints who have been superiors of Orders or religious houses; we are al-

most startled at some instances of what seems to us extreme severity, nay almost harshness, when compared with the intense tenderness which seems to breathe and burn in their whole existence. To us these instances do look like harshness; but those who submitted to them felt far otherwise, and perhaps they would never have loved their superiors so deeply and truly, had they not given the correction which seems to us so severe. It is thus, we ever find, that the saints who have loved God most have suffered most; to name only one, little known, but oh, how wonderfully favoured! the sainted Lydia of Scheidam. What is her history but one continued suffering, ever increasing, to her last hour, in its intensity and keenness,—now exterior, now interior; now inflicted by demons, now by cruel, fanatical men; nay, it would seem almost, if we may say so with reverence, as if our dearest Lord took a pleasure in sending the keenest, the most acute sufferings to those who love and serve Him best. And why should it be otherwise? It is all their thirst, all their desire, to be like unto their Beloved; and if the Eternal Father spared not His only Son, but poured out on Him the full vial of the most awful anguish, can we think ourselves otherwise than honoured if we are made like unto Him, even in suffering?

Yes, Purgatory is love; and if it be true that the love of God extends even to hell, because its torments might be worse, did not His infinite mercy temper His infinite justice, how much more truly

may this be said of Purgatory ! We have no wish to enter into any detailed account of what the pains of Purgatory are supposed to be ; this is a subject for the pen of the theologian or the raptures of the saint. Awful and terrible we know they are. But there is one suffering which we wish to speak of, because we cannot but hope, if persons reflected on it seriously, that they would learn to think of Purgatory less as a necessary evil, and more as a most tender mercy, and be more inclined to enter into a hearty coöperation with those who are anxious to help the poor souls in this awful prison.

Surely the one object of our whole lives is, not so much to get to Heaven because we shall be happy there, as to see Jesus—for ever and for ever to be near Him, to gaze on Him, and to love Him without fear ; for then love will be fearless, because suffering and sin will have ceased.

And what will happen when we die ? Oh, if we were sent to Purgatory without seeing Jesus, we might bear it better. There have been souls on earth privileged to suffer for months the pains of the holy souls ; and they have lived and borne the pain, and longed, if it were possible, even for more ; but they had not seen Jesus as we shall see Him at the moment of our death. The very thought makes our life-blood run cold and shudder. What if we should indeed be saved,—we who have so trembled and feared, and known not whether we were worthy of love or hatred ? what if we should behold that face of Divinest Majesty gaze upon us even for one

moment in tenderness? And yet, unless we see it in unutterable wrath, this will be. But what then? shall we see it for ever? shall our eyes gaze on and on, and feast themselves on that sight for all eternity? shall we be ravished with the music of that voice, and captured with the beauty of those wounds? Ah, not yet; we must lose sight of that vision of delight; it must be withdrawn from us, not—thank God—in anger, but in sorrow. Oh, what are the pains of Purgatory, what the burning of its fire, in comparison of the suffering which the soul endures when separated, even for a moment, from her God? Who can tell, who can understand, who can even faintly guess, what will be the anguish of longing which will consume our very being? But why must this be? why does love, infinite, tender love, inflict such intense pain? Why does the parent turn away from his child, and forbid him his presence for a time? Is it that he loves him less than when he lavished on him the tenderest caresses? Why are his words stern and cold, while, even as he utters them, his lip quivers, and his eye is dim with tears? Why, but because suffering is needed as an atonement to justice, because love cannot be perfected without fear. “It here is tried and purified, But hath in Heaven its perfect rest.” Oh, the love of Purgatory! we shall never know it or understand it until we are there. Yes, we cannot but think that the greatest, the keenest suffering of the soul will be the remembrance of that which it has seen for a passing moment, and the pining again and for ever.

to behold the Face of God. It has been revealed to saints that so intense is this desire, that the soul would gladly place itself even in the most fearful tortures, could it thus become more quickly purged from that which withholds it from the presence of God. Did we but well consider and enter into this feeling, we should be much more careful about our imperfections and our venial sins. Let us recall some instance in which we may have offended or displeased a friend or a superior; even when we knew that all was forgiven, and perhaps almost forgotten, what pain has still remained to us! how long it has been before we could feel again the same as we did before our unhappy fault! A sense of justice is strongly implanted in our nature. We feel we have wounded another, and we find it hard indeed to repair the wound. The deeper our attachment, the deeper is the pain; because to injure love is a fault almost beyond all our powers of satisfaction. Thus it is that a soul could not be happy even in Heaven, were it possible for it to go there, without having fully satisfied the Divine justice. Thus it is that those who really love God pine and long and pray for sufferings, that they may here liquidate their debts. Not that they look on Purgatory as a necessary evil, as a something to be escaped if possible, because it involves suffering; but rather, their love is so intense and pure, that they cannot bear even the thought of a moment's separation from the Object of their desire; and they would, if it were possible, even here appear as pure in His sight as they must be to enter Heaven.

The saints have ever desired suffering, and consider it as the greatest favour which could be bestowed on them; not that it is in itself desirable, but because it perfects love. Let us, then, who are not saints, think of Purgatory with more affection; let us rejoice that, if we are not privileged to have keen unearthly anguish in this life, we shall yet suffer, and suffer intensely, in the next. Our love will be purified; our dross will be purged away; the weary pain which we feel continually when we think how vile we are in the sight of God, how the eye of Jesus, with all its tenderness, must often turn from us in sorrow,—the weary pain, the deep degradation of our misery and sin, will one day cease; we shall not tremble under our Father's eye, or long to hide ourselves from our Father's countenance. Now we must often feel, even when trying with our whole hearts to please God, how impure, how sullied we are before Him. Our pride, our vanity, our impatience, our self-love, are all there. God sees them; how can He, then, look on us as we desire He should? And often we almost long to be in those purging flames, even should it be for years and years, that this vileness might be burned away.

In the saints this feeling has been so deep, so earnest, so real, that it has been to them almost a Purgatory, and has purged even here those imperfections which their sanctity, and the flood of Divine love and light in which they continually lived, has made them consider as grievous sins. But to us such feelings can be but a passing wish,—a wish that

it is well to have and to cherish, and a wish that should make us seek more and more earnestly to perform every act of penance and reparation in our power, that we may, even in a slight degree, remove the cloud which hides us from our Father's smile. But in proportion to our own earnest desires to see our God, and to remove all that will hinder us here or hereafter from greater nearness to the Beatific Vision, will be our efforts for those poor souls who long and pine with a desire of which we at the best can have but a faint idea. We can help them—they cannot help themselves; and in helping them we are not merely promoting the glory of God by adding new voices to the choirs of the blessed, but we are also most materially assisting ourselves, shortening perhaps our own separation from Jesus, and purifying ourselves even here in the sight of God. It is this which makes devotion for the holy souls a subject of such deep and personal interest to each one of us; we have every possible motive to incite us to do our utmost for this purpose. Do we wish to practise charity? behold a worthy object; let us assist those who are beyond all others in need of help, for they cannot even in the least assist themselves. Are we inclined to be generous? let us think; have we no friends, no relations in Purgatory? are there none there to whom we owe a debt of gratitude? Are we full of Divine love, or at least striving to be so, and to seek nothing but the honour and glory of God? oh, what a field have we here for its exercise! think how Jesus longs to

have His spouses home; think how the Eternal Father desires His children; think how Mary, with the inconceivable tenderness of her Maternal Heart, stoops over the prison where her children are suffering, and pines and pines again to have them with her. And then consider how much these holy, blessed souls will do for you when you have procured their release. Oh, if you could during this month obtain the liberty of even one soul, it would be joy enough for a lifetime! Be, then, in earnest, be fervent, concentrate your efforts upon the one object, and you know not what you may effect; draw your lot for the month, and be assured that a special Providence watches over it, and has directed it for you; and oh, do not let the poor souls committed to your charge suffer longer through your negligence. We cannot but think that more will be done when persons take the one object for the entire month, than when, as is often the custom, this object is changed daily: the variety may amuse or interest for the moment, but we doubt if it can produce the same result as a month's studious application to the one object. A poor family helped one day, and left to starve the next, cannot benefit much by such passing charity; whereas we may do more real good by persevering in assisting certain individuals for a length of time, and perhaps place them beyond need of help. Let this be our view in regard to the holy souls: a day's devotion for one soul, or one class of souls, is indeed good, and may bring a passing relief; but a month or a year of

continued effort will perhaps procure permanent release; if not, it will certainly help greatly to promote the desired end. We may also say, in passing, that there is no reason why persons who have the devotion to it should not continue the practice which they have drawn for this month during the year; it will in no way interfere with the other little plans for each month; rather it may further them, and will certainly benefit themselves.

FIRST LOT.

THE SOULS WHOM OUR BLESSED LADY DESIRES MOST TO RELEASE.

Can we doubt for a moment who these souls will be? Ah, no, from the first throb of our Mother's heart to the last, her love of God was her only object; the promotion of His glory her only desire. Whom will she seek to release first, but those whose presence in Heaven will give the greatest glory to God,—the most perfect, the most saintly souls, whose future exaltation in glory is perhaps the very reason why they must suffer longer even than others for whom less exalted places are designed. These are the souls for whom you must plead; these the souls for whom you must use all your efforts during this month. Happy is your lot; for Mary's smile will brighten all your labours, and her thanks more than repay your toils. If you have the courage or devotion, make the vow of giving up all your satis-

factions, and those which may be offered for you, either during your life, on your passage to eternity, or after your death, for these blessed souls. What should it matter to you how much your stay in Purgatory is prolonged, if thereby you may procure the entrance of souls into Heaven who will glorify God more than you could do? It will be joy enough for you to know that Jesus will be more loved and honoured, and Mary pleased. What matter if you should be the last released, if those who loved God more enter thereby the sooner into His presence? To see the Beloved loved perfectly by others, when we cannot ourselves love Him as we desire, would be bliss enough for all eternity. But if you have not devotion, or permission from superiors for this offering, at least give all your indulgences and satisfactions during this month for Mary's souls; at least strive to make each day five acts of Divine love for this intention, and as many of charity towards your neighbour.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee, and I offer Thy Precious Blood for those souls whom Thy Blessed Mother desires to see released.

SECOND LOT.

THE SOULS MOST DEVOTED TO ST. JOSEPH.

If we love Jesus and Mary, we must also love Joseph. It is impossible to separate those so united. Your office, then, will be to plead for the souls de-

voted to this great Patriarch; and, be assured, he will not be unmindful of your interests. The care which St. Joseph takes of his clients, and the paternal interests he exerts on their behalf, has been the theme of many a volume. Most of us can add our own experience of the power of his intercession to the tale of his many grateful children. And will he be less mindful of those after death for whom he has cared so tenderly during life? Assuredly not. Let us, then, secure for ourselves his powerful patronage and his special interest by doing all in our power for the souls dear to him. His virtue, and the grace which he usually procures for those who are his clients, not merely in name, but in deed and truth, is that of a love of prayer, and an interior spirit. Endeavour each day to practise these virtues in his honour; for the benefit of these dear souls add some short prayer, if only an "Our Father" and "Hail Mary," to your ordinary devotions; and endeavour to keep yourself continually recollected by constantly making acts of the presence of God.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee, and I offer Thy Precious Blood for those souls in Purgatory who have been most devoted to St. Joseph.

THIRD LOT.

THE SOULS MOST DEVOTED TO JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Imagine, if you can, how intense must be the sufferings of these poor souls. To receive Jesus into

their hearts in the Blessed Sacrament, to adore Jesus hidden in the tabernacle,—this was their stay and consolation on earth, this their support in every sorrow ; but now they no longer have this blessedness, and they do not see the Face of Jesus as they will one day in Heaven. How intense must be the anguish of their longing ! how consuming the fire of their love ! What would Heaven be without Jesus on His throne of glory ? what would earth be without Jesus hidden in His tabernacle ? Alas, poor souls ! who cannot have either the consolations of earth or the bliss of Heaven. Perhaps their detention will be but short ; perhaps their debts are few ; for they have loved much, and love covers a multitude of sins. Offer a Communion for them at least once a week ; and, if possible, make a little visit for them each day to the Most Holy Sacrament, and then pray with all the fervour you can that they may soon be released ; and oh, how they will repay you when they have gazed upon the Beatific Vision ! Then, indeed, will they speed your entrance to the land of bliss, and obtain graces for you which will effectually shorten your sufferings in Purgatory.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee, and I am sorry that I have ever offended Thee. I offer Thy Precious Blood for the souls in Purgatory who have been most devoted to the Most Holy Sacrament.

FOURTH LOT.

THE SOULS MOST DEVOTED TO THE HOLY ANGELS.

How few are there who are really as devout to the holy angels as common gratitude and their own interest require! Let us not be of the number. We have just passed through the month specially dedicated to these blessed spirits, and it is to be hoped our love and reverence for them has been considerably deepened. How anxious must not the guardian angel of each soul be for its release! He has watched, and prayed, and striven for his precious charge for many a weary year, and now it is safe. Who will congratulate it so warmly as its beloved angel-friend? But that sweet spirit still lingers in anxious expectation. Its work, its ministry of love, is not complete until its charge has entered for ever into the home prepared for it amid the many mansions of its Father's House. Surely it is not unreasonable to suppose that the holy angel-guardians will have a very special charge and anxiety for those who, during life, have been peculiarly devoted to them. Have they not often proved it, by appearing to entreat prayers and Masses for their clients? Let us, then, assist those souls with our prayers and indulgences during this month; and we may be assured the blessed angels, who ever behold the Face of God, will not be unmindful of us in our hour of need. For this intention, let us say every day nine *Gloria Patri* in honour of the holy angels; and entreat the angel who presides at the Holy Sacrifice, and offers it be-

fore the Eternal throne, to aid us in our prayers for the release of our suffering brethren. Let us also endeavour to assist at Holy Mass each day, and then to offer the Precious Blood for these souls, practising also daily some act of mortification for them.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee, and I offer Thy Precious Blood for those holy souls who have been most devout to their angel-guardians.

FIFTH LOT.

THE SOULS SUFFERING FOR SINS OF PRIDE.

Oh, how many are detained for this most miserable, but most common, of sins! Let us seriously consider how likely we are to suffer for it ourselves; and this thought may not only help us to aid our suffering brethren, but will be also a salutary check on our conduct. What is so common as pride and vanity? and what so difficult to overcome? Oh, well may we cry each day, and many times in the day, "Jesus, meek and lowly of Heart, make my heart like unto Thy Heart." This is the virtue our Blessed Saviour requires us so peculiarly to practise, and yet this is, of all others, the very one in which we most frequently fail. Well may we tremble for our future sufferings, our future prospect of long, long separation from Jesus, when we see, day by day, the fearful wounds which this miserable vice inflicts on our souls. How many there are who never know the depth, the extent of their pride and vanity,

until they are expiating it amidst those awful flames! Let us, then, pray for them and for ourselves: for them, that we may hasten their release; for ourselves, that we may have the grace to see ourselves as we are, before we are called into the presence of God—that our superiors and our consciences may warn and enlighten us, and that we may have grace to correspond with this favour when granted. Each day let us endeavour to practise five acts of humility in honour of the humiliations of Jesus in His Passion, offering them for these poor souls, and saying one “Our Father” for their release.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee, and I offer Thy Precious Blood, and the humiliations of Thy Passion, for the souls in Purgatory suffering for sins of pride.

SIXTH LOT.

THE SOULS SUFFERING FOR SINS OF ANGER AND IMPATIENCE.

How many are there who look on impatience as a mere trifle,—a fault that hardly requires confession, because, as they will say, it is so natural! Very natural it is certainly to give way to our feelings; but oh, surely it is not supernatural. Ah, let us consider the meekness and patience of Jesus in His Passion, and in the many trials of His weary life. Let us remember that He is to be our Pattern; that we cannot enter Heaven until we have become in some measure like Him; and that this likeness must be traced either here by our patient, constant, earnest

efforts, or hereafter in burning flames. Where shall the work be done? Let us ask these dear souls; and they, with one voice, will tell us to strive and labour while we can. Here we may merit by suffering, but there we must suffer without merit. Still, we must not the less pity their case; it may one day be our own. Perhaps our earnest efforts to control our passions, our impatience, our hasty words, may not only assist them, but benefit ourselves materially hereafter. Let us, then, begin the work in earnest, and offer each day five acts of patience in honour of the meekness of our sweet Jesus in His Passion, saying also daily "The Beads of the Five Wounds" for this intention. A year's indulgence may thus be gained for a few minutes' prayer.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee, and I grieve to think how much I have caused Thee to suffer by my sins. I offer Thy Precious Blood for the poor souls in Purgatory suffering for sins of anger and impatience.

SEVENTH LOT.

THE SOULS SUFFERING FOR SINS AGAINST CHARITY.

Perhaps we shall never know here how strictly we shall be judged for sins against charity; and yet how careless we are in our words, thoughts, and actions! how easily we listen to the dispraise of others! how readily we repeat circumstances to their disadvantage! And often, very often, all this is done without consideration—without an intention of evil.

But will this altogether excuse us? We cannot hope that it will, since our most loving Saviour has Himself declared that, even for every idle word we must give an account at the day of judgment.

And then, how many words are said thoughtlessly which wound those around us! how many acts of charity we might perform, if we were but a little more thoughtful of others! How often we could prevent some sin, soothe the weary, comfort the troubled, succour the tempted, by a kind word, a smile, a little act of love! And yet we do it not; and why? Mostly because our thoughts are so full of self, that we have neither time nor reflection for others. When, oh, when shall we become like our sweet Saviour? when shall we forget all about ourselves, and think only of others,—of those whom He died to redeem? Let us now begin, and endeavour each day to perform some acts of real sincere charity to those around us, though it be but by a word or a kind look. Let us do this in honour of the seven Blood-sheddings, and to obtain the release of the souls who have fallen to our lot.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee; teach me how to love others, as Thou hast loved them. I offer the seven sheddings of Thy Most Precious Blood for the souls in Purgatory suffering for sins against charity.

EIGHTH LOT.

THE SOULS OF OUR PARENTS, RELATIONS, AND FRIENDS.

There are few who altogether neglect those whom they have known and loved, and who are now passed for ever from earth, and those marks of love which they could give them here. But are there many who really pray continuously and steadily for their deceased relations? How often is the vague idea, that they were too good to remain long in Purgatory, made an excuse for our indifference or laziness, and the poor souls are left to suffer on, without a helping hand to draw them from that gulf of pain! Let it not be so with us. However holy and good our filial piety may lead us to hope our parents have been, still they may need our prayers; and the very possibility should be a sufficient motive to urge us to use every effort on their behalf. It has been thought that the more perfect may even be longer detained in suffering than those who will not have so great a nearness to God, and whose measure of purification may thus be more easily accomplished. Let us not pass a day without saying a *De profundis* for these souls, and endeavour to atone for their shortcomings by fulfilling all our duties with great exactitude and perfection. Perhaps it is some little unfaithfulness in their conduct towards those who had been under their care, for which they now suffer; or it may be for their too great indulgence to us, or their neglect of our spiritual welfare. In any case, let us endea-

vour to assist them by our acts as well as by our prayers, by striving each day to fulfil more perfectly the duties of our state.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee, and I offer Thee the seven most bitter dolours of Thine Immaculate Mother for the souls of all those for whom I am bound to pray.

NINTH LOT.

THE SOULS OF PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS.

It is hoped that many who practise these little devotions will be consecrated to God. To such we need say nothing to remind them of the duty of praying for their brethren and sisters deceased; and yet, are our departed religious remembered as we would wish to be remembered ourselves? Alas, even the shades of the cloister are not always a protection from the miseries of the world and the love of self! But there are few families who are not in some way connected with religious persons; and oh, let them not think, even in an excess of holy charity, that their deceased friends need no prayers because they were priests or nuns; rather let them double their charity for those whose responsibilities and privileges have been so great, and whose judgment will be so much the more severe. Let them offer continually to the Eternal Father the wound of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for these poor souls, and endeavour to practise a strict silence during some part of each day for their relief.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee, and I grieve to think how often I have offended Thee by idle and sinful words. I offer the Blood of Thy wounded Heart for the souls of all religious persons suffering in Purgatory.

FOR NOVEMBER—THE HOLY SOULS.

A PLEA FROM THE SUFFERING SOULS.

HAD you but seen, as we have seen,
 The wounds of Jesus crucified ;
 Had you but heard, as we have heard,
 The heart-pulse of His open side ;

Could you but know with what a love
 He burns to have His children home,—
 Your hearts would break with tearful grief
 That you on earth must longer roam.

But we have passed from all its cares,
 Are anchored safely from its fears ;
 And yet we burn in purging flames,
 Where minutes seem like long, long years.

Oh, help, oh, pity us ! and we
 Will pay you back a thousand-fold,
 And speed your entrance to the land
 Whose streets are paved with living gold.

Oh, help, oh, pity us ! our hearts
Are burning fiercer than the fires,
Which round us play in livid flames,
To purge us from all earth's desires.

Oh, help, oh, pity us ! one prayer,
One little alms, for Jesus given,
Will help to pay our unpaid debts,—
May open us the gates of Heaven.

And when we've entered in our home,
And our first burst of praise is o'er,
We will remember you, and then
Will pray for you for evermore.

"THERE IS A LAND WHERE SADNESS NEVER."

THERE is a land where sadness never
Tainteth the breeze ;
There is a land where gladness ever
Floweth o'er glassy seas.

There is a place where no distressing
Wearies the breast ;
Where every thing is filled with blessing
And perfect rest.

There is a country where the soul
Feeleth no wearing ;
Where trouble's billows never roll,
The sad soul scaring.

There is a bliss beyond our thinking,
Where we shall dwell ;
And waters sweet we shall be drinking,
So sweet as none can tell.

A land that passeth poet's painting
To tell of its delight ;—
My soul for this glad home is fainting,
This place so bright !—

This land where anxious care and fearing
Shall cease to be ;
Whither my soul is softly steering,
Whither I fain would flee.

A land where morning's balmy brightness
Doth never cease ;
Where flowers in endless bloom and lightness
Breathe still of peace ;

Where tempest-billows ne'er are beating
On wearied head ;
For earthly change and earthly cheating
For aye are fled ;

And soothing music hath her dwelling
On every thing ;
For holy harps sweet chords are telling,
While angels sing.

A HYMN OF DIVINE LOVE.

Translated from the Italian. It was written by St. Francis of Assisi, and is considered one of the most beautiful aspirations of love ever penned. A part only is translated here.

“Amor di caritate,
Perchè m' ha sì ferito ?”

OH, Love of love, why woundest Thou
The trembling soul that clings to Thee ?
My heart, within my bosom torn,
Quivers and pants at rest to be.

It cannot rest, it cannot fly,
So strange the mystery of love's glance ;
It melts like wax in ardent fire,
And pines away in mystic trance.

It dying lives, and living dies,
With longing for its only Love ;
Oh, come, sweet Lover, Jesus, come,
Take to Thyself Thy wounded dove.

I asked Thee, Heart of burning love,
To give me of Thy heavenly fire,
Thinking my soul would bathe in bliss,
And languish with most sweet desire.

But Thou, instead of rapture sweet,
Didst wound me with Thy cruel dart,
And burn me with unearthly flames
Till flesh and soul are like to part,—

Till I no more can think, or feel,
Or breathe, or look, or sigh, or speak;
Bound in this trance of awful love,
My heart with longing, Lord, must break !

My heart, I said, O sweetest Love !
My heart, it is no longer mine ;
I know not what it thinks or feels,
So wholly is it rapt in Thine.

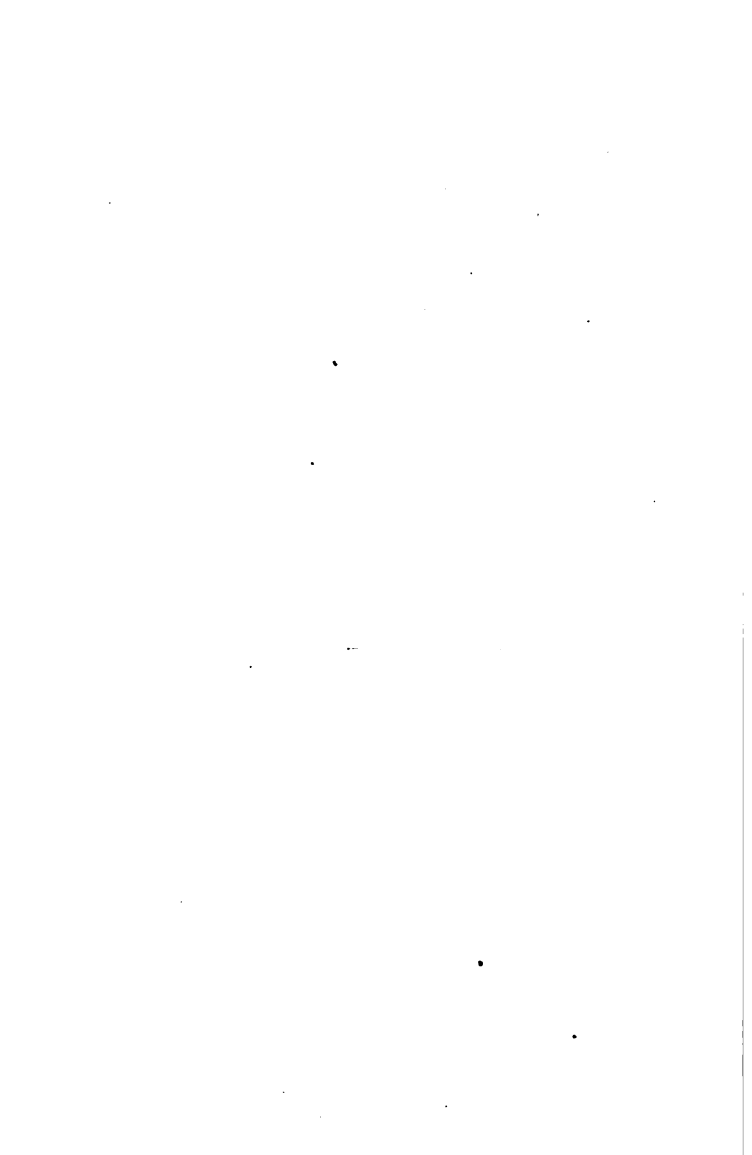
No earthly beauty now can charm,
No melody can soothe mine ear,
Since in my inmost heart of hearts
The music of Thy voice I hear.

A little plant of heavenly love,
Laden with most celestial fruit,
Is now the food on which I live ;
It hath within my heart its root.

And I have given all for all ;
And had I worlds on worlds to give,
Without a thought I'd fling them hence
To gain the love by which I live.

And I have ceased to think and feel,
To know and speak like other men,
And all my cry is, " Sweetest Lord,
When shall I love Thee, Jesus, when ?"

I do not love, 'tis all my grief;
 My heart is breaking with desire;
Oh, come, my blessed Jesus, come,
 Light in my soul this heavenly fire!



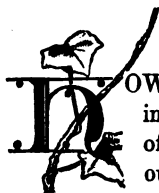
DECEMBER.

Month of the Nativity.



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HOWEVER bright may be the sunshine in our hearts in expectation of the joy of Christmas, we should scarcely allow ourselves to indulge it at once. Advent should be a time of fear; and if we must rejoice that the little Babe of Bethlehem is coming to release us from our sins, we must also weep while we think how much He will suffer ere His mission is accomplished. We must remember also that He will come again; and make each Advent a special preparation for that day of dread, when He who came to suffer and atone will appear to judge and triumph. It is a time of fear rather than of sorrow; and the Church, in her mingled cries of deprecation and joy, seems to teach us how we should prepare to celebrate Christmas. In thought we travel back, and hear the mystic strains of the prophets, the longings of the seers, the pinings of the sorrowful, the desires of the afflicted; and we think, had we lived in the days when Judea was made a waste and a desolation, we should have prayed

and cried unweariedly for the Coming One, and welcomed Him with our heart's deepest love when He appeared. Alas for our good wishes, our weak purposes, and our feeble efforts to accomplish what we most desire! Are we then, indeed, so well prepared for the second coming of our Deliverer, that we can assure ourselves we should so eagerly have welcomed the first? Are our thoughts so full of Heaven, that we long and pine for the moment when the parted clouds shall roll back, and display to our enraptured gaze the Majesty of God? Are our treasures and hopes so stored up in the celestial Paradise, that we care no longer for earth or earthly joys, and remain here only because God wills we should still be exiled, sitting, like the caged dove, with folded wings, and yet ready to unfurl them in a moment, and fly with eager desire to our Fatherland? Is there nothing that binds us to earth, nothing for which we should wish a little longer to delay, nothing from which we should find it hard to part? Let us consider well, and seek to make this month an earnest preparation for that day of fear, when the bravest hearts will quail, and the saintliest souls feel abashed and confounded in the awful presence of their Judge. Let us cry again and again, with the Church, "*Vias Tuas, Domine, demonstra mihi, et semitas Tuas edoce me.*" Yes, sanctity is our only refuge, our only salvation. We must be in earnest; we must strive; we must work while it is yet day, for the terrible night of death and darkness cometh, and who may abide its approach?

Advent should be peculiarly a time of prayer. Such severe corporal austerities are not required of us as in the more sorrowful season of the Lenten Fast. We are not, as it were, crushed to the very earth by constant contemplation of the intense sufferings of our God. We are rather encouraged to hope amid our fear, and in silent prayerful love to await the blessed Christmas morning. Even amongst those who are most devout, there is a natural tendency to realise only what we see. How few there are who enter as they should into the Church's festivals! how few who picture vividly to themselves the various scenes and circumstances which they should recall! Our imaginations are busy enough with our miserable painted joys, or our, perhaps as unreal, sorrows; but do we ever use it in humble faith to represent to ourselves the various events in the life of our sweet Jesus? It is true most of us spend some time each day in mental prayer, and then we reflect perhaps on the different stages of the Passion, or the holy Infancy; but do these thoughts abide with us? Is the thought of our dearest Lord, and what He did and said and felt during each season, as it passes, as constantly and familiarly present to us as it should be? If we have a friend placed far from us amid scenes of danger and suffering, how constantly our thoughts revert to his circumstances! how many pictures our imagination draws of his sufferings, perhaps none of them real! But still our love wins our fancy away, and we weep or smile according to

its dictates. There are few who have not at some period of their lives thus lived in imagination with others. Why can we not use this power now for the holiest and best of purposes? Let us begin our Advent with a picture of Mary and Joseph; let us consider the burning love with which our sweet Mother waited the birth of her little One; let us represent to ourselves the anxieties and care of Joseph; let us imagine, as best we can, the ecstatic love with which the Mother addressed her Babe, her tender colloquies, her sympathising words, her longings to see the Face of Jesus. Already Simeon had mystic intimation that he should see the Deliverer of His people ere his aged eyes should be closed in death. Already holy Anna knew the Advent of the Christ was near. And doubtless there were other souls,—saintly, hidden, humble,—who also longed and prayed in secret for the coming of the Blessed. The whole world was indeed in a state of expectation, although the ideas of the great mass of mankind were as vague as their hopes. They felt the galling weight of the chains which bound them captive to the demon. They vainly sought to understand the history of the past, and unravel the mysteries of the future, and dim presentiments of light and love and release were every where felt; but when or from whom it was to come they knew not. Like the hush of nature before the bursting of a summer storm, were the death-stirrings which had preceded this period of expectation. Like the murmur of the trees at the first heavy

drops of the rising hurricane, was the stir of new impulses and troubled feelings which announced to the thoughtful that some mighty and unexpected event was near at hand.

But as this Advent was to be one of mercy and deliverance, the presage of a storm, and *not* its fury, was all that was felt. Not so will it be when the Son of Man shall come in the clouds of Heaven to judge the world which rejected Him. The falling stars, the blood-stained waters, the strife of nations, the fears of men, all shall combine to announce that awful Advent. Even the Most Merciful has Himself declared those happy who shall escape the terrors of that time. Oh, let us all seek to spend each Advent in special, earnest preparation for that day of dread. Let us seek now to obtain graces which will enable us to lift up our heads with joy, when the wicked are calling on the mountains and rocks to shelter them.

But if the fear of the coming Advent overwhelms us, the love of the Advent which is passed must console and soothe our afflicted spirits. Let us return once more to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Behold Him who shall judge all mankind; behold the God who created worlds, imprisoned in a Virgin's womb, enclosed in a silent prison, speechless, blind, utterly helpless, apparently unconscious of all! Oh, what a spectacle to humble our pride, to excite our love! Let us go and kneel in spirit at Mary's feet, and adore our sweet Jesus in His first tabernacle, that ark of gold, that tower of ivory, that undefiled

nest; let us go and pour out our whole souls before Him, asking our sweet Mother to plead for us with her Infant God. Ask that you may long to see Jesus as Mary longed to see Him, and that He may smile upon you even as He smiled on her, when, amid mingled fear and love, you behold Him. Each day, in reverent love, prostrate before the Altar where Jesus lies, tell Him all your wants and hopes and fears; speak to Him as you would have spoken to Him could you have knelt at Mary's feet when He lay in her pure bosom; and oh, ask her by her Mother's love to plead for you. She will be heard, for she can never speak to her Child in vain. And then, when the blessed Christmas night has come, oh, gather up all the powers of your soul in acts of love and thanksgiving; atone for the coldness of Bethlehem; offer the fervour of Mary, of Joseph, of the angels, and of the shepherds, to atone for your own tepidity, and to comfort that Heart of burning love. See how that dear One smiles; already He stretches out His arms in eager anticipation of Calvary; already the tears tremble on His cheeks in His burning thirst for souls. He longs to begin the work of our Redemption. The love of His Divinity almost crushes the weakness of His Humanity. Ask Him what you will; He has come to love and to suffer, He has come to redeem. Prepare now for the day in which He will come to judge.

But let us not think of ourselves alone. Mary pleads for all, longs to save all; let us strive to imi-

tate her, let us endeavour to help her. See how many souls you can win for Jesus at this blessed time. Speak of Bethlehem; warm your own heart with the fire of its love, and then strive to enkindle the flame in the hearts of all around you. Perhaps more may be done for the conversion of sinners now than at any other time. There are few, whether young or old, whose hearts are not in some measure open to kindly thoughts. Family meetings, social reunions—the very name of Christmas suggests joy and love; let it be yours to make this love divine, and this joy angelic. The angels are hastening hither and thither, caroling out the birth of the Blessed One, and singing good-will to men. Let us imitate their example; let us invoke the holy angel-guardians, and go forward on our mission of love. Oh, how our sweet little Jesus will smile on us if we bring back to Him even one stray lamb! Are there no outcasts and wanderers whom our prayers may convert? Are there no little children whom we may teach to love Jesus and Mary more? Are there none who have continued years and years in sin, whom a few gentle words might reclaim? Are there no cold hearts, even among those whose lives are exteriorly regular, whom we might *love into loving*? Let us try: if we benefit no one but ourselves by our exertions, we shall not have worked altogether in vain. Let us do our utmost to have representations of the Nativity ourselves, and encourage the same pious practice in others. Why should there be a single family without its crib?

A very little money, where there is a great deal of love, would soon accomplish all. We realise things so much more when we see them; and to realise the spiritual is both so difficult and so necessary, that we should use every effort in our power to attain so happy an end. Besides, if we enter with real love into the spiritual joys of this blessed time, we shall find our little preparations for our crib a source of peculiar pleasure. Be it remembered, the practice originated with a great saint, and has ever since been continued most zealously by those who, like him, burned with love to their Infant Saviour. It was in the winter of 1220 that the seraphic St. Francis of Assisi first made a representation of the Nativity. His ardent love to the Infant Jesus, "the little Babe of Bethlehem," made him eager and ingenious to devise any means of increasing love to his beloved Saviour. Having first obtained the permission of the Holy See,—a precaution he never forgot amid all his zeal,—he gathered his disciples and a number of poor shepherds on the mountains near Greccio. Here he built a stable; and getting an image of the Virgin and Child, placed it in the straw among the animals which the poor shepherds brought with them; they had also their pipes, the music of which would have sounded harshly indeed to cultivated ears, but it breathed only the harmonies of love to the saint. Perhaps there never was so rude a representation of Bethlehem, or one so full of love. At the "Gospel" the blessed Francis preached, but could scarcely speak or contain himself from ex-

cess of love. The joy and holy mirth of all were indeed great, and none marvelled to see the saint rapt in ecstasy, and holding in his arms the little Babe of Bethlehem whom he so tenderly loved. After this event, he could scarcely speak of the Nativity without tears, and the practice of representing it became one of the peculiar devotions of his children. It soon spread in all directions; and persons needed only once to try his plan in order to be fully convinced of its benefits. Let us, then, endeavour to imitate his example; let us bring the poor and little children to see Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: the lessons they will learn, and the manner in which they will be able to realise the birth of their Infant God, will never be effaced from their memories. The sight of sorrow and misery touches us far more than the mere recital, however affecting. Let us, then, seek to be touched ourselves, and to touch the hearts of all, by showing them Jesus born in a stable, poor, silent, houseless, and uncared for save by Mary and Joseph.

OUR LADY.

O sweet Mother, how shall we represent you at the crib of Bethlehem? how shall we embrace our sweet Jesus as you embraced Him? how shall we love Him as you loved Him? how shall we console Him as you consoled Him? and yet this office has fallen to our lot, and we must represent Mary in our

little mystical crib. Sweet Mother, you teach us every thing, and you will also teach us how to fulfil this duty. Let our Advent be spent in expectation of the birth; let us reverently imagine ourselves in the circumstances of the Blessed Virgin; let us endeavour to offer all the fervent acts of love and adoration and desire which we can conceive, to welcome the Coming One. And on the blessed Christmas morning, when we have received the little Jesus into our hearts, and hold Him there as truly as Mary held Him in her blessed arms, let us offer Him all her love, her adoration, her self-forgetfulness, in atonement for our coldness and neglect. We may not doubt how earnestly our Mother offered her Divine Infant to the Eternal Father; how she pleaded for the salvation of all men. Let this be our devotion during this holy season, and let us say each day an "Our Father" for the conversion of sinners. Let us also endeavour to show special kindness to children, particularly to those of the poor, in honour of the Infant Jesus.

Aspiration. O sweet Infant Jesus, I love Thee; I offer Thee my heart for Thy crib, and I pray Thee ever to abide there.

ST. JOSEPH.

Representing the great Patriarch, who so tenderly cared for Jesus and Mary, it must be your special duty to promote in all ways devotion to the

Infant Jesus. Endeavour to have a crib in your family or convent; if it be but a poor and rough one, what matters it? Joseph could find only stables to shelter Jesus and Mary. And if you already have this happiness, strive to lead others to increased devotion to these holy representations which have been the delight of so many great saints. You must also pray specially for priests and religious, and beg that St. Joseph will plead for them with the little Infant whom he guards with so much love. In honour of the saint, you might assist, in a temporal way, a monastery or a poor priest; or, if this be not in your power, give at least an alms to some mother and her child. Practise the virtue of silence in honour of the humble silence in which St. Joseph awaited the birth of his Saviour, and attended on Him in the stable of Bethlehem. Adore with rapt and humble awe the little Babe, and strive to enter into the feelings of him whom you represent.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee; I offer Thee my heart for Thy crib, and I pray Thee ever to abide there.

THE SHEPHERDS.

Behold these poor and simple men! With what speed, with what love, they hasten to adore their newborn King! They have been honoured with the conversation of angels, and are now admitted, before all others, to worship the God of the Seraphim. Let us

learn to become poor and humble in spirit like them, and we also shall hear the songs of angels, and be led by them to see Jesus. Let us honour the poor, and, remembering how dear they were to the Sacred Heart, seek to assist them in all ways in our power. In honour of the visits of the shepherds to Bethlehem, let us seek some poor persons and bring them to the crib, endeavouring to excite their fervour and love; and, if they need it, giving them some temporal relief. Let our virtue for this month be the practice of the greatest simplicity in all our actions. The world may scorn our little representations of the stable of Bethlehem, may smile at our childlike devotions; but what does it matter? The world forgot Jesus, or rather never knew Him; the poor shepherds left their flocks, which were all their earthly wealth, and came to worship with joy their Infant God. Let us endeavour during this month to become more childlike and simple, more humble in our devotions and in our actions, and we shall have well fulfilled our office, and honoured our little King as He would desire.

Aspiration. O my sweet Infant Jesus, I love Thee. Oh, teach me how to become a little child for love of Thee.

THE KINGS.

It would seem as though our dearest Lord would leave no excuse to any. If the shepherds alone had

visited Him, we might think the poor only would be welcome to the cave of Bethlehem. But oh, thank God, it is not so. He Himself was once rich, though for our sakes He became poor; and He is again rich in all the glories of Heaven, whilst, lest the hearts of the lowly should faint, He bears even there the marks of His poverty, the wounds of His hands and feet and side, to show how much He suffered, as well as how much He loved. If we are rich, then, let us be kingly in our gifts. Behold these Eastern monarchs! examine their offerings! And yet, if you are poor, you need not despair. You can still offer the sweet frankincense of prayer, the royal myrrh of mortification, and the rich gold of charity. Your office is a noble one; seek to fulfil it worthily. Each day during this month strive to perform some special acts of kindness to others; say some prayer for the increase of devotion to the Child Jesus, and offer some little act of mortification to atone to Him for the coldness and homelessness of Bethlehem. But if you can give large alms to the poor and homeless, do it in honour of your royal patrons.

Aspiration. O my sweet Infant Jesus, I love Thee, and I desire to win all hearts to Thy love. Help me to do so.

THE ANGELS.

Did the angelic choirs ever leave the crib of Bethlehem? Were they ever absent from the work-

shop of Nazareth? How can you imitate their office? how will you fulfil your lot? Seek ever to live in spirit near your sweet Jesus; worship Him—now in Mary's womb, now in the manger, now in the embraces of Joseph, now silent and alone at Nazareth. Your office must be one of praise; for this is the life and joy of the angels. Say each day nine *Gloria Patri*, saluting your Infant God, and endeavour, by great cheerfulness under all your trials, to honour His Incarnation and its sufferings. Invite all whom you can to Bethlehem; speak of the love of the new-born Babe to all, and endeavour to kindle fresh fire in the cold hearts of those who think not of the Saviour's tenderness. As far as you can, make this blessed season a time of real joy to all those with whom you are associated, and induce them to sing canticles of love to their Infant King. On Christmas night especially, join with the celestial spirits who are every where rejoicing in our joy, and beg them to assist you in fulfilling your office worthily.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee, and I would praise Thee for ever and ever.

THE STAR.

Brightly it shines in the eastern sky, and invites all to the lowly stable. Oh, strive to be the bright star in your family or convent, who may lead all to Jesus! Seek rather by example than by words to

fulfil your office, and, by great exactness in all your duties, let your light shine brightly, and encourage the depressed and the slothful. Rejoice with the Gentiles at the light of faith now granted to them, and say each day nine *Gloria Patri* in thanksgiving for your own vocation to the true Faith. Pray during this month specially for the conversion of England. Your Infant Saviour will not refuse you any thing, and your love and fervour may win more than one soul into the fold. Pray also for those who are labouring in heathen or heretical countries; they need prayers and help in their weary work.

Aspiration. O my sweet Jesus, I love Thee. Make me evermore to shine before Thee in the brightness of Thy glory.

THE OX.

Behold your Infant God, trembling with cold and pain, warmed by the breath of oxen, and cradled in straw with the very beasts. Oh, what a lesson of humility is here! Let us strive to read it rightly, and to learn it truly. Let us endeavour to warm the Infant Jesus by the fire of our love, or at least by the fervour of our desires. What can we do for Him? How shall we honour Him? Ah, let us acknowledge that we are unworthy to be as near Him as were those happy animals on that blessed Christmas night, and let us fall before Him in lowly love, confessing our sins and our ingratitude. Let

our virtue be obedience. It is a grace very dear to the Sacred Heart. Think how obedient your Infant Jesus was to the will of His Eternal Father in all the circumstances of His birth. Think how He allows Mary and Joseph to dispose of Him as they please, and to place Him where they will. Each day make five acts of this virtue, and do it with so much love that you may warm the trembling little Infant. He will repay you with a thousand tender caresses for any difficulty you may feel in executing your office faithfully. Say also each day an "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" for all the little children you know, that this blessed time may bring them many graces.

Aspiration. O my sweet Infant Jesus, I love Thee; teach me how to love Thee more and more.

THE ASS.

The ass must bear the burdens of the weary and the sorrowful, and plead for all those who in this glad season, when others rejoice, are overwhelmed with sorrow. Let her seek with the tenderest patience to comfort and help all who are in affliction, and let no day pass without rendering some service to others, seeking specially for such as are in trouble, either of mind or body. Like St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, she must never consider herself, or her own ease or convenience, but be laborious for all and with all. Thus she may make offerings of priceless worth

to her Infant God. Let her offer each day the burning love of the little Heart of her Jesus for all who are in need or in affliction of any kind, and seek to obtain relief for them from the Fountain of Mercy. Her special practice should be great gentleness in her manner and words, seeking to avoid every expression or action which might give the least pain to those with whom she associates.

Aspiration. O my sweet Infant Jesus, I love Thee; pour into my heart the tenderness of Thine.

THE CAMEL

bears the kings from the far East to the stable of Bethlehem, and, kneeling, waits their will with patience. Let us also strive to lead others to Jesus; and though it may seem to us that our efforts are useless, and we feel tempted to despair, still let us persevere, and we shall one day receive our reward. Let our virtue be holy hope, and let us seek specially to encourage the dejected and timid. Let us each day make five acts of hope, and resolve that for the future we will never give way to depression, since we have seen so much to encourage us at Bethlehem. Let us say often, "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded."

Aspiration. O my sweet Infant Jesus, I love Thee, and I hope all things from Thy love.

FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER.

HYMN FOR ADVENT.

O UNCREATE,
From Thy glorious state
How low didst Thou stoop for me!
From Thy high throne,
Where Thou satest alone,
Thou camest my soul to free.

Darkness and clouds
Were the mystic shrouds
Which veiled from the Seraphim's purer sight
One ray of that blaze,
One moment's gaze,
Which even for them were all too bright.

Or ever the earth
Had its wondrous birth,
Or ever the mountains were sunk in the deep;
Or yet the proud sea
From its bed did flee,
Or the ocean world awoke from sleep;

Or the morning star,
 Or day-spring from afar,
 Burst over the valleys and hills of earth ;
 Or snow and hail,
 Whose treasures ne'er fail,
 Were reserved to mock the scoffer's mirth ;

Or the lightning of thunder,
 Or meek dew-drop under,
 Or treasures of water refreshed the young world,—
 Thou wert in the state
 Of Thy Majesty great,
 And arrows of wrath on Heaven's rebels hurled.

Hush ! angels are listening,
 The cloud-curtains are glistening
 That encompass the throne of the Ancient of Days ;
 He hath veiled the shrine
 Of His Being Divine,
 In humanity's form He hath shrouded His rays.

And earth hath received Him,
 Tormented and grieved Him,
 Mocked, crucified, scourged her Creator, her God ;
 And sin's fearful tainting
 Hath left His soul fainting,
 And blood-drops are quiv'ring on Olivet's sod.

But again He hath mounted
 Where glories uncouth
 Encompass Him round on the throne of His state ;

But He shall return
 While all hearts shall burn,
 Men hearing the doom of their endless fate.

Then shall tremble the mountains,
 And o'erflow the fountains,
 And deep roar to deep its wild anthem of fear,
 At the glittering light
 Of Thine arrows all bright,
 And the marvellous sheen of Thy conquering spear.

Then on high shall be furled
 Thy standard, and hurled
 To the depths of despair all the foes of our King;
 And Thou shalt invite
 All Thy saints, and unite
 For ever the blessed Thy praises to sing.

THE MIDNIGHT MASS.

THE snow lies thick on the convent-roof,
 And the midnight moon looks cold;
 But the stars shine out with a joyous light,
 As they shone on that night of old.

And the angels come, and the angels go,
 Shooting past the tall church-spire,
 While the troops who throng to the midnight Mass
 Still think they are stars of fire.

The nuns have watched, with their voiceless prayer,
Since the bells rang the Vesper chime ;
They may not sleep, and they will not rest,
At this blessed Christmas time.

And the bells ring out so sweet and low,
The bells of the midnight Mass,
And the pleasant angels stop and smile
At their music as they pass.

It is the blessed Christ His Mass,
For the blessed Christ is born
Anew in the hearts of His faithful ones
On every Christmas morn.

So the faithful watch, and the faithful pray,
Till the midnight hour is rung,
And then, with *Kyrie* and *Gloria*,
The Christ His Mass is sung.

And then all down the cloister dim
They go, the Christ to see,
As He lieth, a Babe, in His Mother's arms,
And smileth so tenderly.

We did not hear the angels sing,
But we *felt* that they were there ;
For gushings strange, such as music brings,
Came over us at prayer.

We had a hundred things to say,
And a hundred loves to give;
Fain would we never go away,
But with that sweet Christ live.

That little crib is so dear to see,
The little Christ so bright,
We wish that the morn would never come
That ends our Christmas night.

