

in the Bible, he had assuredly the same right to and converse with the unseen world, as well as examine its veracity or inspiration, and reject in the subordinate, yet collateral department of both, if so it seemed reasonable to him. If Protestants love the Bible in reality, as they pretend and struck her ear,—in the very external arrangement of her sacred structure, as well as in the mere material book, but extend it to what alone solemn order and soothing tenor of her services, makes that book valuable—its true signification, she was considerate, if not studious, of their comfort and edification. Her portals open wide for and let them prove to the world their willingness to do so. Let them reject and condemn their prayer by day and by night; her oft commemoration of saints, poor in estate or in spirit, and so four hundred errors at least, and adopt from the the meeter to console, as well as animate, their Bible some creed that will have the appearance of brethren in the church on earth; her days of holy truth, because it will have unity. They will then rest, to refresh the weary bodies of those who have some fair pretensions to say they love the must work to eat, and of glorious celebration, to effect that object, or rather vainly weeping over invigorate the soul and to attune it to 'heaven's the dissensions which are every day dividing Pro- high harmonies:' no doubt, in these, and such like testantism into new fragments; but an union of ways, the church has ever attuned her Divine sentiment never will and never can be effected origin, and fulfilled her exalted destiny; partly when so many and such jarring elements are the realizing, even in this world, to the poor, the materials; while the broad principle of private promise from the mount, that 'theirs is the kingdom judgment allows every man to think as he con- of heaven.' But this promise the church—sistently pleases, it is idle to expect that all still speaking generally, and without going out of the-way to look for flaws in the pleasant picture—will think alike. Until Protestants, however, do has surely fulfilled in other ways than these. Her this—until they show us that the Sacred Scrip- treasury is the receptacle, and herself the distributor of Christian liberality. All those sweet thoughts tures, as interpreted by them, are not a mere col- of piety, mercy, and self-denial, which are sug- lection of fanciful theories and conflicting private gested by the mention of 'alms,' are of the church, opinions—let them, in the name of consistency, as distinguished from any of its longer and less cease to accuse us of being opposed to the Bible, interesting synonymes; those thoughts, which since the charge can with infinitely more truth be even the poet has embodied in words almost, against themselves—let them take first the without hyperbole, Divine:—

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AS THE PROTECTOR OF THE POOR.

"Such as was our Lord when on earth, such Again, it is trite, but all the truer, to say that since He has been withdrawn from it has been the where were once amphitheatres there are now Catholic Church; the pledge of his reverence, and hospitals; and, assuredly, the mere exterior of an depository of his gifts in relation, as to others, so hospital, or a mere walk through its interior, with especially to the poor. No function of mercy can all its spaciousness, and cleanliness, and airiness, and quietness, beautiful as the sight is, and striking be named or imagined—of mercy, whether toward the bodies or souls of the poor,—which the church as an evidence of the beneficent influence of Christian- Catholic has not, from first to last, through evil ity, can convey no idea of the extent to which report and good report, recognized and discharged, the church has ameliorated the temporal as well as as well in the clearness of her early dawn, as spiritual condition of her poor. She preaches the through the mists which clouded her meridian 'gospel' to the poor, as well as heals the broken- brightness. As in the fourth century so in the hearted, delivering the captive and recovering the first, and in the twelfth as in the fourth, in the blind. The church has also been the parent of the days of St. Augustine and St. Ambrose, as of St. religious orders, devoted brethren, 'Sisters of Paul and St. Barnabas; of Pope Gregory the Mercy and Charity,' homeless missionaries, preach- Seventh and St. Thomas of Canterbury, as of St. ers in the fields and streets—all are emanations Augustine and St. Ambrose, she was still alike, from her. From her have flowed the resignation of the church of the poor. And as time went on, and of wealth, holy retirement, ascetism, celibacy. all her Divine visible system, which at first existed of them institutes, directly or indirectly subservient to the interests of the poor. These and such are but in germ, was more and more unfolded and the ways in which and through which the present displayed, her concern for the poor of Christ world, since Christ came, has been postponed to the next;—the poor befriended, and the rich saved; she was, in all her Divine provisions for worship

'The quality of mercy is not strained;

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven

Upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed;

It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.'