

ROMAN MEMORIES

ST. PHILIP NERI.

1515—1595.

E. MCAULIFFE.

IN this lovely month of our Lady the Church honors many of her faithful children, who during their lives here below, gave up all the seductions of worldly pleasure to tread the hard and thorny paths which lead to everlasting life.

On the 26th of May is celebrated the feast of St. Philip Neri, whose life is so full of wonders that it would be impossible in a small space to do more than call attention to the subject, hoping thereby to lead my readers to seek a detailed account of the life of this glorious saint.

Florence, the most beautiful city in Italy, perhaps in the world, was his birthplace. His parents belonged to illustrious families, we read of them : " they lived in the fear of God, and the practice of his commandments ! " A short eulogy but how much it embraces ! The young Philip was educated at Rome, and on finishing his college course his father wished him to enter the commercial house of his uncle in order to require the knowledge necessary for business : but the youthful aspirant for heavenly honors could not bend his mind to the sordid heaping up of the riches which perish. In vain his uncle promised to make him his heir, nothing could shake his resolution to live for God alone !

He went back to Rome with the consent of his parents and took a course of philosophy and theology ; in his studies he outstripped all his companions, because he was free from all the distractions of pleasure. Already the sanctity of his life was manifest ; he fasted continually, he spent whole nights in prayer ; and in those hours of the day when youths of his age were wont to seek amusement, his delight was to be with the sick in the hospitals, comforting and assisting them. His good father supplied him plentifully with means for his charities.