

THE CROSS.



NEW

SERIES.

VOL. I.

No. 50.

And forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is Crucified to me, and I to the world.—St. Paul, Gal. vi. 14.

HALIFAX, DECEMBER 20, 1845.

CALENDAR.

- Dec. 21—4th Sunday of Advent.
 22—Monday—St Thomas, Apostle.
 23—Tuesday—St Wenceslaus, King and Martyr.
 24—Wednesday—(Fast)—Vigil of the Nativity of our Lord.
 25—Thursday—Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 26—Friday—St Stephen, first Martyr.
 27—Saturday—St John, Apostle and Evangelist.

ADVENT.

THE SOLEMN ANTHEMS.

On the 17th September the Catholic Church commences the first of the Seven Great Anthems which precede the vigil of Christmas. From this day the office of this Holy Season assumes a more solemn character. The Antiphons of the Psalms are peculiar to the time, and all bear some relation to the glorious event which is about to be commemorated. Each day, at Vespers, a beautiful anthem is chaunted, in which the Messiah is directly invoked under one or other of the superb titles with which he is invested in Scripture.

These anthems are commonly called the O's of Advent, because they all commence with this exclamation. In the Roman Church they are seven in number, and are all addressed to Jesus Christ. In other Churches, during the middle ages, two others were added, one to the Blessed Virgin, *O Virgin of Virgins!* the other to the Angel Gabriel or St. Thomas, beginning *O Gabriel!* and *O Thomas Didymus!* There were even some Churches which had twelve anthems

before Christmas, viz., three in addition to the nine we have already mentioned. *O King of Peace! O Lady of the World! O Jerusalem!*

The moment selected by the Church for making this beautiful appeal to the charity of the Son of God, is the hour of Vespers, because it was in the evening of the world—'vergente mundi vespere'—the Messiah appeared. The Antiphons are chaunted at the *Magnificat*, to denote that it is through the Blessed Mary we are to receive the Saviour whom we expect.

DECEMBER 17.

O Sapientia!

"O Wisdom who didst proceed out of the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end strongly, and disposing all things sweetly, come and teach us the way of prudence!"

O uncreated Wisdom who art about to appear in the world, how clearly we comprehend, at this moment, that thou disposest all things. By thy divine permission an edict of the Emperor Augustus is published for the enrolment of the universe. Each subject of the empire is to be enregistered in the city of his birth. The order is obeyed, and the immense Roman empire is traversed by millions in every direction. It is God, and not Augustus Cæsar that they obey. All this agitation has but one object. It is, to conduct to Bethlehem two lowly inhabitants of Nazareth in