

the benediction of water for the Baptismal Font on the vigil of Easter, describes some of the mystic and sacred associations of this admirable element.

“O God whose spirit, in the very beginning of the world, moved upon the waters, that the nature of water might even then receive the virtue of sanctification! O God, who by water didst wash away the crimes of a guilty world, and by the overflowing of the deluge didst give us a figure of regeneration, that one and the same element might mystically become the end of vice, and the origin of virtue—look down O Lord on Thy Church, and multiply in her Thy regenerations, who by the streams of Thy abundant grace fillest Thy City with joy, and openest the Founts of Baptism all over the world for the renovation of the Gentiles, that by the command of Thy Majesty, this Water may receive the grace of Thy Son from the Holy Ghost, who by a secret mixture of His divine virtue, may render it fruitful for the regeneration of men; so that all who are to be sanctified in the immaculate womb of this divine fountain, and are to be born again new creatures, may emerge from it a heavenly offspring, and that grace, their spiritual mother, may bring them all forth unto the same infancy, howsoever distinguished by age in time, or sex in body. Therefore, O Lord, may all unclean spirits, by Thy command, depart from hence: may all the malice of diabolic wiles be totally banished: may no power of the enemy prevail here; let him not fly about to lay his snares; let him not by secret artifices creep in: let him not corrupt it by his infection. May this holy and innocent creature be free from all assaults of the enemy, and purified by the destruction of all his malice. May it become a living fountain, a regenerating water, a purifying stream—that all those who are to be washed in this saving bath, may obtain, by the efficacy of the Holy Ghost, the grace of a perfect purification. Wherefore, I bless thee O creature of Water,*

* The wickedness of men had corrupted, and devoted to the service of the devil, many of the glorious things of God's creation. Hence, the Apostle says: ‘The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly.’—(Rom. viii., 20.) But the Church knows from the same Apostle that every creature of God . . . is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.’—(1 Tim. iv., 5.)