

COMPITUM,

or,

The Meeting of the Ways at the Catholic Church.

An interesting—nay, a very remarkable Book under the above title, has just appeared in England. It is from the prolific pen of the talented, erudite, and pious author of *The Ages of the Faith*. Mr. Kenelm Digby has not, it is true, put his name to the work; but there is only one man in England, we might say in all Europe, who is capable of writing it, and that man is Mr. Digby, an old and illustrious convert to the Catholic Faith. To praise any thing coming from him would be "to gild refined gold, and paint the lily." He must be looked upon as the great restorer of mediæval fame, the successful champion of what were so long ignorantly termed "the Dark Ages," the noble pioneer in those fields and forests which have been so creditably cultivated by a Mailand and a Maskam, a Pugin and a Montelambert, a Voigt, and a Hurter, in a word by so many eminent writers, both Protestant and Catholic, who, shaking off the trammels of prejudice, and rejecting the current calumnies of bigotted historians, have had the honesty and courage to examine for themselves, to search into the long neglected mine of mediæval literature, and to bring forth into the light of day the most precious gems of Catholic civilization, learning and piety. Mr. Digby had formerly made a resolution never to publish again. *Compitum* is a gratifying proof that he has re-considered this perhaps hasty resolution, and we cannot sufficiently express our delight at the fact. Independently of its great religious merits and the undoubted service which it is calculated to render to the cause of Holy Mother Church, it is a literary curiosity of the first magnitude—a string of pearls from Greek and Latin Classics, from ancient and modern lore, possessing all those qualities for which old Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* is so much admired by scholars, with the additional value of the pure, lofty, and noble principles of religion, applied to every condition of life, and in language that speaks home to the heart with indescribable charms. Again and again shall we return to this book, and endeavour to make our readers acquainted with the substance of its valuable contents. To our Protestant friends we would say: procure this book, written by one who was once a Protestant, and if you read the first chapter, you will never stop until you read the last.

THE CEMETERY OF THE HOLY CROSS.

We have sometimes been pestered with enquiries relative to the old *Ordinance Shanty* for decayed Gun Carriages, which is permitted to disfigure this beautiful place of interment to the great disrespect of the dead and annoyance of the living. In consequence of another communication, received this week, we have determined to seek the fullest information on the subject, and to publish it in our columns. At present we know this much—that the Clergy have endeavoured by every means in their power to have this nuisance removed, but, we believe, in vain. For more than five years it has now stood in the midst of the city of the dead, a monument of bigotry and intolerance on the one hand, and of unexampled patience on the other. We do not believe the Government want it for any purpose; nay, we are sure it is not of the smallest possible use. The idea of a building in the midst of an enclosed Cemetery is truly ridiculous in a vicinity where the Government possesses so much ground, and so many idle warehouses.

ST. MARY'S CATECHISTICAL SOCIETY.

A Quarterly Meeting of this Society, most numerously attended, took place on Sunday evening last, immediately after Vespers, in the Vestry of St. Mary's; the Rt. Rev. Dr. Walsh in the Chair:—assisted by the Very Rev. Mr. Connolly, and Revds. Messrs. Hannan and O'Connor.

The routine business being disposed of, Returns were made by the Superintendents of the classes at St. Mary's and St. Patrick's, of the number of children in attendance during the past three months. From these it appeared the numbers were, at St. Mary's—Males 220, Females 240; at St. Patrick's—Males 100, Females 137.

There being a deficiency in the number of Teachers required for the Male department of St. Mary's and St. Patrick's, several gentlemen volunteered their services for that purpose for the ensuing three months. The following Ladies and Gentlemen were proposed and admitted members:—Mrs. Buckle, Mrs. Shea, and Miss

Campbell:—Messrs. William Buckle, Thomas Shea, Bernard Core, Patrick Ring, Thomas Shipley, and Richard Nugent.

There being no further business before the Chair, the meeting adjourned.

P. J. COMPTON,

Secretary.

Amount of Quarter's receipts, £9 12s. 9d. Halifax, Dec. 31, 1848.

THE ORDO FOR 1849.

The new Directory for 1849 is in the hands of the Printer, and may be expected from day to day. Meantime, for the convenience of those at a distance, we have printed in our last number the Calendar for the entire of the present month. Advertisements can be inserted in the Directory on reasonable terms. No better vehicle could be selected for the conveyance of intelligence to the Catholics of this and the sister Provinces. We believe the Catholic Directory for this year is to be published under the joint auspices of the Bishops of Arichat and Halifax.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The letter of "Biblicus" has been received; but its statements are so extraordinary that we are unwilling to insert it without further enquiry. The writer states that at a late meeting of the Colonial Church Society—the Queen's Representative in the Chair!—an old woman of the name of Cogswell thought proper to indulge in a wanton and heartless tirade against the benevolent Pius IX. and the learned and pious Monsignore Palma, who was shot by accident in the Palace of the Quirinal. If our Correspondent will verify his statement, we will readily publish his letter. We have examined some of those vapid, milk-and-waterish, Glory-Hallelujah, and Songs-of-Zion Journals, where we thought we might find some report of this; but we were disappointed. All we could discover was, that Parson Uniacke, of Roundabout notoriety, pronounced the blessing. They must have been much the better of that, as the wren said to the ocean on a certain memorable occasion. When the delicious dew of his divine distilment descended on the heads of those hoary sinners, it must indeed have been a heavenly sight and one over which angels would shed tears of gladness. How strange it is that some people will never learn sense—that they cannot meet together in the sacred name of Religion without violating one of its first ordinances, fraternal charity. We have been present at many Catholic meetings in Halifax for the propagation of the only true Faith, and we never heard one word of abuse against their absent brethren of other creeds.

But who ever heard of a Jury of old women meeting together without abusing and recording a verdict of Guilty against their absent neighbors?

We have made these few remarks, taking it for granted, that the main facts alleged by our Correspondent are true; though we cannot pledge ourselves for the details. We think it exceedingly bad taste to invite Her Majesty's Representative to listen to unprovoked philippics against ninety thousand Catholics who are under his government; because we know that Sir John Harvey has lived on the best terms with his Catholic fellow subjects both in Ireland and elsewhere, and it must have pained him much to hear them insulted in the sacred person of their Supreme Pontiff. We have no disposition whatever to meddle with our neighbours' religious celebrations; but we do expect they will not make them occasions for flinging their wanton insults upon our heads. We know how to retort, as they are already aware; and we tell them that we will not suffer their insults to escape with impunity, especially when perpetrated in the presence of authority. Let them not imagine that we are asleep. If we slumber, it is like the vigilant hare, with our eyes wide open. Before we dismiss this ungracious topic, we will pay a cheerful tribute to the estimable Bishop of Nova Scotia. We do not remember one instance on the various occasions when Dr Inglis has appeared in public for years past, that a single unkind, offensive, or unchristian expression has dropped from his lips against his Catholic fellow citizens. Would to God that some of the lay and clerical preachers in the Establishment would imitate his example, and we should never have the peace of the Province disturbed as it was by the wicked religious warfare of 1817.

Old Mrs. Cogswell, as a member of the Hebrew persuasion, ought to have been more grateful to Pius IX.; for that Holy Pontiff has been extremely kind to all the Jews in his dominions.

(For the Cross.)

THE CATHEMERINON OF PRUDENTIUS.

No. 9.

HYMNUS IN EXQUIS DEFUNCTORUM.*

Thou God of light! the soul's inspiring breath! Whose powerful thought arranged, with noble plan, The two-fold element of Life and Death, And thus did'st give existence unto Man.

And they are thine—each glorious part is thine— For thee alone is formed the beauteous whole, And while in vigor they shall thus ectwine, For thee shall live the body and the soul.

But when, anon, dissolv'd the wondrous ties, Each nature hastens to its place of birth; The ardent spirit, soaring, seeks the skies, The flesh descends and mingles with the earth.

Yes—when the bands that bound them are unbound, The man is seen to wither and decay; The body lies beneath the gloomy ground, The soul is wafted on the breeze away.

For it is meet that all created things, Weakened and worn, at length must languish quite; Torn is each tie to which our friendship clings, Thus must this mortal texture disunite.

Yet, Gracious Lord! thou hast o'erwatched thy own, For Death's dark bondage thou hast rendered vain; A way of virtue hast thou brightly shown, By which the mouldering limbs shall rise again.

If e'er the will, despising reason's ray, Spurns Virtue's path, and chooses that of lust, The conquered soul is also borne away, And loves the carnal, grovelling in the dust.

But if the spirit flies the path of ill, Still ever-mindful of her glorious light, A captive guest then will she take the will, And waft it with her to the heav'nly height.

And though the body lies a lifeless mass Soon as the spirit bursteth from control, Yet short the period that is doomed to pass, When it regains its union with the soul.

Per soon the season cometh, when behold! The friendly fire shall warm the bones no more, And bear along its domicile of old, All life and animation as before.

That former putrified and loathsome frame, Reclining darkly in the dreary tomb, Again all burning in the soul's bright flame, Is wafted to the skies, on rapid plume.

Hence—the great care bestowed upon the grave; Hence—the last honors that attend the dead; There do we bid the willow-bough to wave, There strew the flowers above the buried head.

And first we bring the flowing winding-sheet, Pure as the snow, to wrap the breathless clay: Then we embalm it with an odour sweet, And so preserve the body from decay.

What, then, should bring the sculptur'd marble near, Or towering monument, however fair? 'Tis not with him as it would now appear— He is not dead, but only slumbering there!

This is the thought that cheers the Christian's breast, And makes him struggle, bravely, through the strife, Believing firmly that death's solemn rest Will quickly cease and all again be life.

Where'er the dead demand his work of love, He hastes and hears them to their last abode;— A faithful servant of his Lord above, This kindly care is never unbestowed.

And Nature tells each member of our race To sorrow then as o'er one common tomb; For when another leaves his earthly place, We mourn o'er his, our own peculiar doom.

The young Tobias' saintly sire, of yore, That reverend sage, by every virtue led, Forsook the pleasures of the banquet-stere, And hied away, attendant on the dead.

He left the goblet and the ready fare, While stood the waiting menials all around, Bound up his garments, and, with pious care, Prepared the body for the silent ground.

* At the burial of the dead.

And soon was seen a favour from the skies, The man of God received his just reward; The healing gail was spread upon his eyes, And sight returned, obedient to the Lord.

Thus are we taught that none shall see the X That glads the Saints in Heav'n's celestial reign, Till each hath struggled through this earthly night, Its hours of sorrow and its paths of pain.

Our close will then have more of heav'nly trust; For through the struggles that await our end, "The narrow way" is opened to the just, And 'tis by such that we to bliss ascend.

Thus, too, the bodies now deprived of breath, Shall spring again to meet a better day; Nor shall that life, thus warming out of death, From its new vigor ever fade away.

That chilly brow, which Death's destroying power Hath all defiled, and spread with fearful gloom, Shall breathe again, as fragrant as the flower, And wear the light of beauty's own sweet bloom.

Then ne'er shall Age disturb our happy course, By dimming fast the loveliness of Youth; Nor shall Disease o'er waste away our force, By preying on us with its cankering tooth.

Each dreadful plague that smites us now below, Shall at that time be evermore unknown, Or, doomed to writhe beneath our present woe, And for these pangs in thousand chains alone.

The flesh victorious and immortal then, Shall mark that Plague, from yon empyreal Heav'n, As loud it wails, and ever shall again, The griefs, the tortures once itself had given.

But, wherefore doth the lingering crowd, in vain, Thus pour abroad the mingled plaint and tear? Why should our sorrow madly thus complain, Or do we deem God's holiest will severe?

Then let the song of sadness now be o'er,— Ye weeping mothers! chase your tears away— Their loving pledges let none now deplore— This death is nothing but Life's dawning day.

Thus the dry seed springs forth to life again, Now rotted quest and buried in the earth; The youthful blade soon peers above the plain, And the ripe ear full quickly has its birth.

Then take, O Earth! this burden to thy trust, And, like a mother, clasp it to thy breast; To thee awhile we give the mortal dust, The ashes—once of generous worth possess.

For this was, once, the palace of the soul— That bright creation of Jehovah's breath; In this shone Wisdom as a burning coal, In Christ it lived—in Christ it sleeps in death.

Hide thou the body which we thus depose; Th' Eternal One shall seek it from thee yet, Still ever mindful of the lot of those Upon whose brow His image hath been set.

For soon the day of Justice shall come on, When he shall realize each ardent vow, And thou, wide rent, restore the buried one, E'en as our hands consign it to thee now!

Tho' the vile worm for weary years should prey Upon the bones till ashes would remain, And the light dust, sull ground and worn away, Were e'en no greater than the smallest grain—

Though foaming rivers and the fiercest storm Contending wildly in the skyey void, Would dash to atoms all that lifeless form— Yet, mortal man shall never be destroyed.

But while Thou call'st the body off from here, And the dead bones Thou dost again invest, Declare, O Father! in what distant sphere Dost Thou command the virtuous soul to rest?

Is it embosomed in that sacred Siro, In whom the lowly Lazarus reposed— Whom Dives saw, from out his pool of fire, With all the light of happiness enclosed?

That voice, O Lord! we ever shall obey, By which, triumphing o'er the powers of hell, Thou call'st the robber, on thy dying day, In thy blest home of Paradise to dwell.

Now to the faithful, lo! the golden gate Of immortality doth wide unfold, We may approach and seek that blest estate Which the old Serpent wrested from our hold.

Then, bid the soul, thou Guide of wandering feet! That rest attain, while thus we humbly pray, To shine once more upon that native seat From which it wandered exiled and astray.

Still shall our bosoms love each crumbling bone, Bid green boughs wave, and purple flowers abound, Imprint the title on the chilly stone, And pour blest waters o'er the hallow'd mound.

M. A. W.
New Brunswick, December 4, 1848.

* Nos tecta fovimus ossa,
Vitis et fronde locum,
Tutelaque et frigida saxa,
Liquidæ spargimus aquæ.