

flowers and foliage, all nature seems to rejoice at the homages paid to that glorious body, whose cruel death it bewailed at the awful moment of the crucifixion. The churches and altars are decorated in the most magnificent manner. Every thing most valuable in their treasures is displayed. The most costly vestments, the richest altar plate, and the most exquisite music, are used on this day. Nature and art combine in heightening the grandeur of the scene. Flowers, lights, evergreens, tapestry, banners, military music, the ringing of bells, discharges of musketry and cannon, painting, sculpture, triumphal arches, repositories and chapels under the open air, add to the glory of the solemnity. From the quantity of flowers, odoriferous shrubs and trees, and the great taste with which they are arranged, the interior of many of the churches seem to be transformed into most beautiful gardens. In a word, no feast of the entire year is celebrated with greater pomp, and none was ever instituted more according to the heart and feeling of the people than Corpus Christi, which in France is termed Feast of God, and which, in that great country, has been always celebrated with extraordinary splendour.

In Catholic seaports this was always a day of great rejoicing. From an early hour in the morning the vessels were decked out with all their lights, colours, and streamers. The quays were swept, watered, and strewn with flowers. The sailors and fishermen, dressed in their holiday dresses, assisted at the high mass and the procession,

On this day, and during the octave, there is an exposition of the blessed sacrament, in order more fully to excite the fervent adorations of the faithful: The churches are crowded during

the divine offices and sermons, and at no time of the day can the temple be seen without numerous adorers before the sanctuary of the Lord. All seem animated by the same spirit; that of making every atonement which love can suggest to the adorable Body which was broken for our sins.

ON THE PROCESSION OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

The origin of processions is traced by some writers to the remotest ages of Paganism. It is certain that at Lacedæmon there was a solemn procession on the festival of Diana. In the Georgics of Virgil, we read of a procession which was celebrated every year in honor of Ceres,* and at which, according to Ovid, the assistants were clothed in white, and carried lighted torches. We find a perfect idea of a procession, in the solemn manner in which the people of God were wont to transport the ark of the covenant, from one place to another. It was during one of these that David danced with holy joy before the ark of the Lord.† In the early ages of the church the relics of the martyrs were also translated in public and solemn processions of the faithful. Thus we read, that the emperor Julian was greatly enraged at a celebrated procession which took place in Antioch, at the translation of the relics of S. Babylas, martyr, from the neighbourhood of that city.‡ The bishops of the primitive church were in the habit of celebrating the divine mysteries, not only in their cathedral, but also in the other churches of the episcopal city, and particularly at the tombs of the martyrs on the anniversary of their triumph. On these

* *Cuncta tibi Cererem pubes agrestis adoret,
Terque novas circum felix est hostia fruges,
Omnis quam chorus, et socii comitentur ovantes,
Et Cererem clamore vocent in tecta, &c.*

† ii Kings vi. 14. ‡ Theodoret, Book iii. c. 10.