

THE CATHOLIC.

QUOD SEMPER, QUOD UBIQUE, QUOD AB OMNIBUS CREDITUM EST.—WHAT ALWAYS, AND EVERY WHERE, AND BY ALL IS BELIEVED.

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REFLECTIONS SUGGESTED BY THE FEAST OF ST. LAWRENCE.

"In die Sabbata, intra Octav. Festi Sancti Laurentii."

Many a year has now rolled on since first it became a cherished feeling of my bosom to look with sentiments of awe and veneration upon the earlier martyrs of the church. I have admired the enthusiasm of their charity,—I have almost envied their self-devotion,—and my whole soul has glowed within me, in reading the records of their heroism amid the accumulated torments of their varied martyrdoms,—my imagination had formed to itself, as it were a picture gallery, hung with the portraits of a Clements, an Ignatius, a Polycarp, a Pothinus, an Irenaeus, and a Lawrence, with hundreds of others, the victims of their burning zeal and love. Upon these I was wont to gaze in fancy, as there fell upon my softened imagination the mellow light reflected from the tradition of nearly two thousand years. Yet, in this gallery, these portraits of my own collecting then wanted to me one interesting feature—I could not then appropriate them to myself as family portraits. In vain I endeavored thus to identify myself with them. I coldly reasoned in the abstract that they were Christians, and so was I. Nay, warming my bosom with feelings glowing with something of their own enthusiasm, I beheld myself of Him who died upon the cross—I claimed Him as my Saviour—and were they not his His martyrs! Was not here a bond of brotherhood which would entitle me to the fondest embraces of these elder children of the Faith? Alas! it would not do.—I paced my imaginary gallery,—I again and again admired the portraits drawn by the pencil of my imagination, and clothed in the diversified colors with which the varied circumstances of their deaths had arranged them; but still they were to me only the pictures of heroes,—of Christian heroes indeed, venerable in their piety, admirable in their patience, calm in their resignation, and glowing in their love. They engaged my esteem,—they received the homage of my warmest commendation,—they awakened even my tenderest sympathies, but the full warmth of my soul's affection was not there. I admired them as more than men; but all my efforts were vain to realize towards them the instinctive love of brethren. They were without me—they were above me. A secret consciousness reminded me they were CATHOLICS—and I, though for many a year had abjured the name of Protestant, could not, however, bring myself to adopt that modern fiction which usurps the name of Catholic, while connected with schism, and dissevered from the presiding chair of Catholic communion.

Such were my feelings when contemplating those worthies of Christian antiquity a year ago. With what different emotions, this last St. Lawrence's day, did I ascend the hill that leads to a retired chapel in the village of . . . which, under the invocation of Our Lady, rejoices in the daily celebration of the sacred mysteries, according to the rites of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic church.

St. Lawrence was one of those holy martyrs who especially engaged the enthusiasm of my early years, from the time that an acquaintance with the treasures of ecclesiastical history made known to me the resplendent excellencies of his exalted character. Cold

indeed would be that bosom which would not throb with livelier pulsations, quickened by the ardor of his burning charity for the poor; or would not warm into an intenser glow at the affection of his zeal, when, in recollection of his diaconal office, he lunged to bear a self devoted part in that sacrifice which his holy Bishop, Pope St. Xystus, was called upon to offer of himself as a victim to the faith. Chilled would be every kindlier feeling of that breast which could not sympathize with him in the excruciating torments of his martyrdom, and rise even to a pitch of enthusiastic admiration at contemplating, in the illuminated record of his suffering, the calm heroism with which he bore them, thus triumphing in the might of his Lord over the cruel ingenuity and malice of his tormentors. What new feelings, however, did I not find awakened within my bosom, in recalling to my recollection that, as a Catholic, I was privileged to be his brother,—that while entering somewhat into a sense of his agony, I can now identify myself with his triumphs, and plead an interest in his intercession. "Yes," said I to myself, "I am a Catholic. We are members of the same church,—sheep of the same fold,—children of the same fathers, heirs of the same promises." And then came upon my mind the consoling, the absorbing thought, that I am in communion with that very church of which St. Lawrence was archdeacon—the church of Rome,—that church which was saluted by St. Ignatius, bishop of the patriarchal see of antioch, as the presiding church. Then did I feel how cold, how cheerless, how unsatisfying, is the theory of the Anglican, who, connected with that tremendous schism which has drawn down upon itself, in their just severity, the terrible censures of St. Peter's chair, is thus severed from that church which can boast a long line of martyrs of every grade and every rank, commencing with a St. Peter and a St. Paul, and commemorating in her venerable rites her Linus and her Cletus, her Clemens and her Xystus, her Lawrence and her Chrysoygonus. These are her glorious champions, who, unseen by mortal eyes, encircle her ramparts as with walls of fire: and in the glowing transports of a love inflamed by an interrupted years of blessed enjoyment of the beatific vision, shed down upon her children the reflected warmth of a fraternal charity which emanates from him who is the central source of love. Built upon the foundation rock of her St. Peter,—strong in the protection of those battlements which her martyrs, as so many living stones, have themselves reared up around her, and cemented in their blood,—she can well bid defiance to the assaults which the unhappy armies of the aliens may make upon her, and which have hitherto only recoiled upon themselves in shame, confusion and disgrace.

With what new feelings of delight do I now walk in my picture gallery, hung round with so many family portraits, all sharing in the common lineaments of a family likeness, yet at the same time distinguished by those characteristic features which mark the peculiarity of each. Were my pencil practised, and the tone of my colouring sufficiently warm, with what pleasure would I take a copy of each portrait in this ancestral hall of my imagination, thus glorying in a descent and relationship with the Fisherman and the Tent-maker, as beyond all that titled celebrity or accumulated wealth can boast. And as to excellence of family descent, I here carry mine beyond the proudest pretensions of the

worlding, since eighteen hundred years is no small time to rear a gem of the genealogical tree.

A year ago, I was, as it were, a wanderer, without a proper name. This year, grafted on the stock of Catholicity, I have found a home in the church, a father in her priesthood, and brethren in her canonized saints. Placed as within the Gothic arches of the venerable pile of her time honored edifice, circled with a halo of glory streaming amid the dim obscurity of ancient days, they shed a hallowed light upon the young enthusiasm of my boyish years; and connecting the pre-ent with the past, they lend to the sober reality of Christian triumphs that charm of energy, devotedness, and high bearing amid danger, which serves to rivet the unchained imagination upon the pages of romance. Now, in the sobered calm of maturer years, I hail them as my brethren. I walk with greater confidence, supported upon the arms of their friendship, and from their lips and example would draw fresh lessons of wisdom, humility, and love.

DEO GRATIAS.

W. S. S.

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF MUSIC UNDER THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.—The oratorio, which is generally regarded in the light of sacred music, was never warmly patronized by the fathers of the Catholic church, for this reason,—that the performance partook too much of the character of a drama more suitable to the theatre than the church. The oratorio is commonly ascribed to St. Philip, of Neri, born in 1515, and who founded the congregation of the oratory at Rome, in 1540. This pious ecclesiastic, wishing to turn towards religion the mania which the inhabitants of Rome displayed for the theatre (a mania that frequently caused them to absent themselves from divine worship, particularly in the time of the carnival,) formed the idea of having these sacred interludes written by good poets, set to music by the first composers, and performed by the most celebrated singers. This experiment succeeded; crowds were attracted to these concerts, which took the name of oratorios from the church of the oratory where they were performed. The style of the oratorio was at first a *melange* of the madrigal and the cantata, adopted to some pious allegorical subject; but the ostentatious simplicity of the earlier compositions speedily gave place to the meretricious graces of the dramatic style, so that oratorio music differs little if at all from that of the theatre.

ANOTHER OXONIAN. "Mr. Segur, a Professor of Hebrew, at Oxford, made his abjuration on Friday last, St. Edward's day (October 13). *Deo Gratias.*"—*Catholic Herald.*

In Belgium, one Catholic Archbishop and four Bishops attend to the spiritual wants of four millions of people, and receive only £170,000, priests, colleges and all; whilst the Beresford family alone, received over £1,000,000 for bearing the name of Protestant Bishop, &c. in Ireland; and doing exactly nothing at all towards the spiritual wants of the two hundred thousand Protestant souls entrusted to their care.—*Catholic Cabinet.*

A wet silk handkerchief, tied without folding over the face, is, it is said, a complete security against suffocation from smoke; it permits free breathing, and at the same time excludes the smoke from the lungs. It has been effectually tried.