

ed with gladness at the advent of its Deliverer, and the heavens dispatch a choir of Angels to announce the stupendous event, and to proclaim Glory to God in the highest, and Peace on earth to men of good will. Christmas is, therefore, a day of joy unutterable, a day of eternal redemption, a day of triumphant deliverance from forty centuries of infernal bondage. Now is the judgment of the world, now the Prince of this world is cast forth, now, God in Christ reconcileth the world to himself. He that was born, before all ages, of the Father, is now born in time of a Virgin Mother, Immensity is confined within space, He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain is enclosed within the compass of a crib, Omnipotence has clothed itself with weakness, the King has become a slave, the Lord, a servant, the Ancient of Days, a child of infancy, the Delight of the Angels, a victim of suffering and of tears. And shall not the redeemed exult! Shall not the enfranchised slave rejoice at his delivery? Shall not the restored heir of heaven look up with delight and hope to the Kingdom of bliss? Oh, yes! this should be a day of joy to all the children of Adam, to the sinner and the saint, the Jew and the Gentile. This day the Redeemer of all appears, and He comes to wrest a victory from hell, clothed in the same weakness, over which hell had triumphed. He was not with the demon in the might of his own Omnipotence, but in the weakness of our humanity. The wisdom of the wise is confounded, the prudence of the prudent is destroyed, the maxims of the sages of this world are disproved, and a new School, the School of suffering, humility and meekness, the School of Bethlehem, the manger, and the crib, is opened for the instruction of the whole world.

Let us pass over into Bethlehem, and behold the Saviour whom God has given unto the Gentiles, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb who taketh away the sins of the world. *Venite adoremus.* Come let us adore him. We will enter into his Tabernacle, we will adore in the place where his feet have stood. Glory and benediction to the Son of the Most High who has come down from the bosom of his Father to redeem guilty man. Veneration and love to the lowly handmaid of heaven, the blessed Mary, the spotless Virgin of Nazareth, who has crushed the serpent's

head, through whom we have received this adorable Redeemer!

LITERATURE.

From *Maxims and Examples of the Saints.*

PERFECTION.

When once a man is on the road to salvation, he perceives in himself a continual desire to advance; and the nearer he approaches to perfection, so much greater is his anxiety to attain it; because the brighter the light grows to him every day, the more he seems to himself to be devoid of all virtue, and not to perform any good actions; or if he imagines he has any virtue, or performs any good action, it always appears full of imperfection, and he makes but little account of it. Thus it is that he continually labours for the acquiring of perfection without ever ceasing.—S. LAURENCE JUSTINIANI.

S. Fulgentius was so inflamed with the desire of perfection, that whatsoever he did, it always seemed but little, and he constantly aimed at something higher. S. Vincent of Paul every day acknowledged himself more imperfect, and on that account employed all his mind in studying continually how to mend himself, and advance in perfection. S. Ignatius constantly compared one day with another; and thus it was, that he made constant progress from day to day, and always with a still more earnest desire to advance, in order to arrive at that height of perfection to which God called him. S. James, the apostle, is reported by the ancient writers to have advanced every day in fervour in the divine service.

SPIRIT DRINKING.

What is the secret of this witchery which strong drink exerts over the whole man?—I will try to tell you. After being received into the stomach, it is sucked up by absorbent vessels, is carried into the blood, and circulates through the alimentary organs, the lungs, muscles, and brain, doubtless through every organ of the body. Not a blood vessel, however minute, not a thread or nerve in the whole animal machine escapes its influence. It disturbs the functions of life; it increases for a time the action of living organs, but lessens the power of that action; hence the deep depression and collapse which follow preternatural excitement. By habitual use, it renders the living fibre less and less susceptible to the healthy operation of unstimulating food and drink; its exciting influences soon become incorporated with all the living actions of the body; and the diurnal sensation, hunger, thirst and exhaustion, are strongly associated with the recollection of its exhilarating effects, and thus bring along with