

crifice of the cross, and to be consumed at the communion of the Priest, as a Holocaust to thine honour and glory, as a propitiation for our sins, as a thank-offering for mercies, as an offering for obtaining new ones. I offer the sacrifice to these ends. I also unite my intention with that of the Priest, whatever it may be. And I specially offer this mass [here he makes a devout mention of the end he proposes for himself, either as a propitiation for such and such a sin, or for the obtaining of such and such a virtue; as humility, gentleness, vigilance, for some relative or friend, some sick person, &c. &c.]

The congregation assembled, and all devoutly kneeling with their faces turned towards the altar, a bell is rung to announce that the Priest is about to enter, which he does in his sacerdotal dress, attended by the children who are to serve him and respond during the service, and bearing in his hand the communion cup, empty, and above it a little gold plate containing the bread which is to be consecrated. It is not ordinary bread such as is used at the communion in your Church, but unleavened bread, made in little cakes the size of a crown piece, and looking exactly like a white wafer. The wine is brought by the children, and also a little water which is to be used. These are in small jugs of glass or silver as it may be, and are placed on a side table. The Priest ascends the Altar steps, and places the chalice and paten on the Altar. The book containing the words of the service of the mass, has been previously placed on the altar, and the places therein found by the clerk. The Priest then descends the altar steps, and turning his face towards the altar begins the Mass.

In large churches it would be impossible for the people to hear the words, let them be in what language they might. But it is not necessary they should. They know every thing he is doing, and follow him from part to part by his actions which they see, not by his words which they hear.

The service of the Mass is an action uniting in itself every thing in which devotion consists. And being to be applied by each individual to himself, and his own particular circumstances, it would interrupt rather than assist his prayers, if he were obliged to join in the words which the priest repeats. However, every one can join in them if he please, as he has them, or may have them, in his book in his native language; and, as I said, without hearing the priest, he knows by every action which prayer he is saying. The most general method adopted is, to follow the priest, and to fill up the intervals, and they are several, with litanies and prayers applicable to the intention previously formed.

If he follow the priest in the very words of the mass, they are very beautiful, and may be applied to every end proposed. If he follow him in other forms, they are forms composed upon the prayers

of the mass, and are also very beautiful; and the intervals leave much room for extempore prayer or litanies, &c. If he choose to have no book at all, but join in heart with every action of the service, he can thus fill up the time with extempore prayer.

The Church is as a magnificent tree, which never falls before the fiercest storms, yet allows its every branch to curve and wave in its own natural gracefulness to the slightest breath of air which passes it by, or under the gentlest dew which falls upon it. She, the Church, is most firm in essentials, but becomes all things to all men, to suit the individual character of each of her children. We will suppose a person following the Priest in the very words of the Mass, which begins thus:

‘In the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Ghost, I approach the altar of God.’

This is followed by a psalm, and the psalm by a general confession of sins, first by the Priest, and then by the people, then the general absolution, and a few responses all indicated to the people by the posture and action of the Priest. He then ascends the altar steps, asking God to take away his and our iniquities, that we may be worthy to enter the Holy of Holies. Bowing before the altar, he repeats another prayer, asking forgiveness of sins, which contains words you would not understand in their true meaning as we do. Here begins the part which changes according to each day, which is partly pointed out by the dress of the priest, and at length in our calendars, which we ought to have looked into at home. To this we now turn, and the priest reads the same from his book on the altar; he next turns and calls upon God to have mercy upon us, in a feeling devout voice; the children kneeling at the foot of the altar and repeating the same words. This is followed by the ‘Glory to God in the highest,’ as in your communion service; he then returns to his book, and reads the collect or collects for the day, which we seek in their proper places; then the epistles, &c. between these and the gospel he bows before the altar, and asks God to cleanse his heart and lips, that he may worthily announce this gospel. At the gospel all stand up; this is followed by the Nicene Creed, exactly the same as in your books; or if there is a sermon, he preaches between the gospel and the creed. After the creed, is recited a short prayer, called the Offertory, at which the priest turns round and spreading his hands towards the people says, ‘The Lord be with you,’ to which they reply in their heart, not aloud, ‘And with thy spirit.’ At every thing his action points out to us exactly which prayer, &c. he is saying. If a person enters a Church where Mass is being performed, he knows exactly without hearing a sound what the priest is saying, and in