

SONNET TO THE NEW YEAR.

[BY REV. P. DILLON, D. D., PH. D.]

For The Carmelite Review.

Hail, thou new epoch ! hail thou infant year !
 Thou comest newly from the womb of time,
 Amid the dying cycle's snow and rime,
 Thine infant radiance shadowed by its sear.
 Soon shall these wintry shadows disappear
 When timidly thy shoots of vernal prime
 Peep forth, and onward, in thy summer, climb,
 Till autumn's radiance bursts upon the sphere,
 And if, to us, who pass thee on our way,
 Thine opening hours seem shadowed o'er by care,
 May gladsome hope dispel our dark dismay
 A hope of summer bright and autumn fair—
 Or here, or where thyself and thy compeers
 Shall merge in endless joy that counts not years.

A ROMAN LILY.

For the Carmelite Review

N the twenty-first of January, one year after Diocletian issued his first edict against the Christians, fanatical hatred crushed out of existence a flower, the perfume of whose wounded petals has been wafted down to us throughout the ages. Time and nations powerless to diminish the pristine sweetness of its being, to-day, in every part of the globe, loving hearts confidently seek her aid, and the tender voices of little children joyously sing the praises of the little Roman maiden, St. Agnes—the Lily of Jesus.

Although only thirteen years of age, when she bent her head to receive the executioner's cruel stroke, Agnes had lived no uneventful life. Rich and belonging to an ancient, noble family, she had passed her days surrounded by all the pomp, splendor, and comforts of extravagant Rome.

Her parents were Christians, but did not dare proclaim their faith, and no pagan suspected it. Like all Romans of wealth, they entertained largely, and so it was an easy matter for christian friends to assemble at their house to assist at the most consoling sacrifice of the mass, there daily offered, and to fortify their souls with the Body and Blood of their Crucified Leader.

Her biographers tell us that Agnes was especially devout at these secret gatherings, and that after her first Holy Communion she begged to be allowed to receive our Lord every day.

No wonder, lingering in such an atmosphere, feeding upon such priceless food, that her heart turned from earthly pleasures and companions. The radiance of a pure soul shone from her eyes and perfected a singularly beautiful face. Jesus was constantly in her thoughts, and this entire forgetfulness of self combined with her personal charms to produce an ideally graceful girl. Her beauty was the theme of every tongue, and no entertainment seemed complete without her.

Agnes was her parents' only child, and as in those days a girl assumed social duties at an earlier age than is usual with us, she was frequently seen at banquets and other assemblies. A characteristic simplicity of dress made her a striking contrast to the richly adorned Romans, and many wondered why her robes were always of the purest white. But christian friends knew that this style of dress was chosen as the most appropriate for the child-spouse of Jesus ; and with many a prayerful sigh and anxious fluttering of the heart did they witness the surprise and chagrin expressed on every side as Agnes persistently refused all offers of marriage. Her rejected suitors determined to discover her reasons for pursuing a course at that time so unusual. They studied her face and conversation, watched her actions, followed her stealthily wherever she went, and finally discovered the truth—Agnes was a Christian. She was confronted with the charge and entreated to abandon the practice of her religion. They urged her to marry and become a leader in the gay Roman society she was so well fitted to grace. The child firmly refused, was reported to the governor, rudely torn from her happy home, and thrust into a filthy prison filled with hardened criminals.