

It was but proper that this blessed Daughter of the heavenly Father, destined to become the Mother of the Son and the ineffable shrine of the Holy Ghost, should not remain for a single moment under the tyrannical dominion of the enemy of God and man.

Ah! how can we help admiring the incomparable purity of Mary in her Immaculate Conception? Do we not hear, in the divine canticle, the very God who has prepared her to be His mother, say to her in the accents of loving complacency : « *Thou art beautiful, my well-beloved ; in thee there is no stain.* » The God of all holiness speaks ; His all-penetrating eye discovers in Mary no trace, no scar of sin. Therefore He congratulates her upon the gift He has deigned to make her. After this can we be astonished that Gabriel coming down from heaven to carry the divine message to her, should be seized with admiration at the sight of that purity whose inception has been so glorious and whose growth so unlimited ; that he should bow deeply, before such a marvel and say : « Hail Mary, full of grace. » Gabriel's immortal life is spent amidst all the magnificences of creation, of all the wealth of heaven ; he is the brother of the Cherubim and Seraphim ; his look extends over the nine hierarchies of angels where light and holiness shine in a sovereign manner, ever growing step by step. But behold he has seen on earth a creature of a rank inferior to the angels, the *fulness of grace*, of that grace that has been given within limits to the celestial spirits and which rests in Mary from the first moment of her creation. She is the future Mother of God, ever holy, ever pure, ever immaculate.

O great St Anne, mother of the Immaculate Conception, thou appearest to us in this glorious mystery like a cloud purpled by the dawn's first light. God chose thee as the scene of this wonder that causes astonishment in heaven and will for ever be the object of the admiration and gratitude of ages : a daughter of Adam, conceived without the stain of original sin, in the fulness of grace and the perfection of all virtues. Through thee Mary was given us ; through thee likewise we wish to go to Mary. Amidst all the favors that we ask thy maternal kindness, we cease not to pray thee to instil in our hearts true devo-