

Jesus said to his disciples. Whom do you say that I am?

Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. AND I SAY TO THEE THAT THOU ART PETER; AND UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.

AND I WILL GIVE TO THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven. S. Matthew xvi. 15-19.



Was anything concealed from Peter, who was styled the Rock on which the Church was built, who received the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the power of loosing and binding in Heaven and on earth?—TERTULLIAN Proserp. xxii.

There is one God, and one Church, and one Christ founded by the voice of the Lord upon Peter. That any other Altar be erected, or a new Priesthood established, besides that one Altar, and one Priesthood, is impossible. Whosoever gathers elsewhere, scatters. Whatever is devised by human frenzy, in violation of the Divine Ordinance, is adulterous, impious, sacrilegious.—St. Cyprian Ep. 43 ad plebem.

All of them remaining silent, for the doctrine was beyond the reach of man, Peter the Prince of the Apostles and the supreme herald of the Church, by following his own inventions, nor persuaded by human reasoning, but enlightened by the Father, says to him: Thou art Christ, and not this alone, but the Son of the living God.—St. Cyril of Jerusalem. Cat. xi. 11.

The Cross;

HALIFAX, SATURDAY, JAN. Y. 10.

COMPITUM;

OR,

The Meeting of the Ways at the Catholic Church.

We promised to return to this delightful Book, but it is so unique, so completely a production sui generis, that we despair of being able to convey to our readers in any mere description, an idea of its merits. The erudite and pious author points out the different roads in life which lead to the Catholic Church, and which are entitled The Roads of Children—of Youth—of the Family—of Servants—of Hospitality—of Hope—of Honours—of Honour—of the Schools—and of Travellers. As we intend to indoctrinate our readers with the noble and beautiful ideas of Mr. Digby we shall commence our series of copious extracts with the following lines:—(page 4 of the introductory chapter):

Reader, in whatever direction we look, the ruins of noble ages are disappearing fast. Each year some fragment falls. Under such an impression, it is therefore natural to wish that there might be an attempt to contrive some means of possessing a source of interest, if not as great, at least analogous and less quickly perishable, by forming a book that might correspond with the mind and conversation of that representative of other times—a book in which, as in such a house, the noise of the present change-loving generation would be excluded, so that, however we might be disposed to admire or to disapprove of what now agitates the crowd, there would be there an absolute silence, if not a total ignorance, concerning it. A place in which we might find, as it were, chambers all strewn with rolls and records derived from ancient times; some in long parchment, and worm-eaten and full of canker holes, others in clasped books, breathing the peaceful thoughts of the illustrious men in days of yore. antique pictures, such as those I mean, that seem actually to place the dead again upon their feet, grand imposing figures like those portraits by Titian and Don Diego Velasquez de Silva. then stores of almost endless variety, accumulating from many ages—all things in disorder, perhaps, covered with dust and cobwebs, not the least trace of the art or desire of producing effect.—“Nostrocismis and barbarismis,” as the author of the Rule of Hermus says, the reader will find in his work, nevertheless, along with things foregone and muddled heaps, much that is valuable, interesting, instructive, deeply affecting perhaps, capable of reviving long-banished and impressive thoughts, or of awakening curiosity to inquire respecting things that had been never learned. I may err; but methinks many would desire a book to which they could turn thus, as they would visit one of these old retired and half-forgotten mansions in the country, where no modern changes or frivolities have had influence or access; full of ancestral traditions, ancestral faith, ancestral manners, nova ibi verba, quia vetusta, as Sidonius Apollinaris says. Where are antique portraits, old manuscript and fragments, piles of ancient things innumerable, showing a thousand moral paintings, which yield matter for reflection more pregnantly than words. The book, of course, would please not the million; it would be caviars to the general, who would recoil from it as they would turn away quite horror-struck on only peeping up the

long solemn avenue that led to the old mansion from the farthest gate; but there would be some whose judgements in such matters agree with mine, and with the young, who, on the contrary moved partly, perhaps, by that sense inherent in our nature which prevented the Greeks from over placing in their temples a representation of contemporary events, would regard the plan of such a book as excellent, as they would feel the prospect of such a visit inspiring and delightful. The idea of a composition of this kind had grown familiar to the stranger who writes these pages. But circumstances at length permitted him to act upon it, at the same time suggesting the precise plan and matter which he has adopted in composing the present work, which may be called sylvain sermonis antiqui, like that of which Suetonius speaks. He loved woods.

Often he, as fayer are wont, in privis place, Did spend his dayes and lov'd in forests wyld to space.

Under the vast shade of branches, who, in fact, can be insensible to the charm of that silence, of those fretted vaults, of those umbrageous aisles, whether lighted by the cheerful beams of morning, or at the hour so sad and solemn, familiar to the reader of our old romance, as that when dog and wolf are undistinguishable. It is pleasant to be near such scenery, though only by remembrance, to fancy one's self again beneath the archings of the grove

Clad in cathedral gloom from age to age, Lighten'd with living splendours; and the flowers Tinged with new hues, and lovelier upsprung, By millions in the grass

On the elevated range which prematurely hides the setting sun from a city in France, whose ancient is better than its recent fame, and yet, in which many of this age have followed gentle studies in their youth, there is a gloomy forest bearing the venerated name of the great saint, whose huge abbey towers still form one of its chief ornaments. With students of that land, which in days of yore the Bretons styled the country of forests, he often took an evening walk outside the gates, to gaze from a distance on that tranquil scene, but during the summer months coming to reside at the very skirts of the wood, the stranger became familiar with many of its secrets. In the house where he was lodged, there was a small upper room of which the window received the light of the setting sun, and displayed in full beauty the vast undulating tract of the forest as far as the eye could reach. An old map of all its alleys, suspended there time out of mind, was the only decoration of that little delicious chamber, and on that map he used often to trace his walks, unravelling the intricate mazes through which he had wandered during the day. A certain Palmer-like guest one night, as he remained with him alone, observed that it would be well to draw out a map of the intellectual forest, through which men travel from youth to age, noting each turn of the various tracks that predecessors, as if with human feet, have worn, and showing how wonderfully nature has provided avenues and attractive openings to guide all pilgrims safely to their end. There was, besides, here a local peculiarity, which seemed to add a peculiar force to the suggestion; for, in the level forest's central gloom was one bright spot where stood a convent, girt by a smooth sunny lawn, towards which innumerable paths conducted from all sides the least practised wanderer. Once a monastery of Augustine Friars, a holy sisterhood now possessed it; the lady abbess, an aged woman of noble blood, and of more noble mind, whose prayers were sought for by former emperors and more

recent queens, had for her chaplain a real man of God, and now it is to be believed with Him, enjoying the peace he ever loved. Truly the house he lived in was a type of the serene interior world in which he spent his days; and may this passing tribute to his memory be received with indulgence, as part of the debt of friendship that is now sanctified by death.

This ancient forest, this vast intricate labyrinth of boughs, through which were found so many paths proceeding from all sides, and yet all centring in a religious house, seemed to the stranger to present a lively image of that mysterious existence which the mortal race is leading upon earth for so in the centre of the vast wilderness through which our spirits wander the Catholic Church stands alone, with all ways concentrating and meeting in it; along all of which signals and crosses have been set up to show how every path leads to it, even when men desire most to stray the farthest. The image, indeed has often been used. In that most ancient monastic monument, which is entitled Regula Magistri, the life of man is thus symbolically painted: 'from the stock of Eve and Adam generated, we descend,' it says, 'upon the way of this life, and taking the temporal yoke of a foreign existence, we preambulate the road of this world in ignorance and uncertainty. Suddenly, on the right hand, towards the east, we behold an unexpected fountain of living water, and to us hastening a voice comes crying, Qui sitis, venite ad squam.' What is life? asks the disciple, in an old chronicle, which seems to be the work of our Alcuin, who to the question of Pepin, What is man? replied, 'A passing traveller.' Life, answers the monk interrogated, is a forest, a wilderness through which man has to travel from youth to age.

Ut quondam Creta fertur Labyrinthus in alta Partibus textum cœcis iter, anepitemque Nilie vis habuisset solum, qua signa sequenda Palleret indeprentus et irreparabilis error. Thus far then the comparison is familiar, having been used by celebrated authors as by Don Juan de Mens, the Spanish Ennius, in his poem El Labyrintho, by Strengelius in the work through which he compares the dangers of the world, under diabolic seduction, to the frauds of the Egyptian Labyrinth; by brother Jerome Lauret of Catalonia, the monk of Mont Serrat, in his book entitled Sylva allegoriarum, by Antonio de Escobar and Mendoza, and by many others; but if we take advantage of the peculiar feature presented by this tract of the land of forests, where all ways converge in a centre representing that point towards which, as we shall prove, the human spirit tends, which the Greeks, as if endowed with true knowledge, called reus, the last end, referable itself to nothing else, but to which all other things are to be referred, we shall find that it is in an especial manner one of those figures which St. Isidore says are of the greatest utility, by enabling men to explain things much more easily than by any other mode of discourse; that it induces a train of thoughts which may lead us far delightfully over ground abundantly fruitful in the riches of solid learning; for it will not be useless or difficult to show how through this tangled forest of life, darksome and intricate as it may at first appear, there are innumerable roads which all conduct men to the citadel of truth, if they would only follow the directions afforded them on each side, reading

• Apud Luc. Holstein Codex Regularum. † En v 588. ‡ Labyrinthi ab Ægyptiis structi fraudes cum mundi a diabolo reducti pernicia collata. § D Isidori De Summo Bono, lib iii 14.

the signals set up, as it were, by the hand of God, to direct the pilgrim wandering safe through every way, and then, that having such signals, it is not pardonable to go astray, in this journey which may render us worthy of the eternal home.

It shall be our object then, in the following books, to show not only, as the historian says, 'that all these things for which man, through build, or toil, obey virtue,' but that all words and scenes—whatever may be spoken or beheld, the tastes, passions, prejudices, interests, that sway each being, all sources of ideas, even to the weak touch that moves the finest nerve, and in one human brain causes the faintest thought, shall at some time or other wait upon her purposes in the highest religious acceptation of the term, either guiding or binding men to the Catholic Church, where nought enters of what validity and pitch soever, but falls into abatement and low price, being lost in the general effluence. Some of the heathen philosophers taught, that whosoever would use his ear to listen, might hear the voice of his guiding genius ever before him calling, and, as it were, pointing to the way which is his part to follow, sounds which, it is said, were really heard by the Apostle of Ireland, when in a vision of the night, reading the word Hiberniacum, which occurred in letters given to him by one who said he had come from thence, he thought that at the same moment he heard the voice of those who were near the wood of Fochlaid, in Tirawly, near the Western Ocean, who exclaimed, Rogamus te, sancte puer, ut venias et amboles inter nos; which so moved him that he could read no more. Othris, in blessed ages, as the Stoics, accounted reason, which they called the Hegeiaimon, to be the common Mercury conducting without error those that give themselves obediently to be led accordingly. But whatever inference a great English poet drew from such observations, those whom truth itself enlightens, believe for certain that there are express ministers sent from highest heaven to discharge this service to the souls of men, as St Peter Damian and all the Holy Fathers teach, following the sacred Scriptures. St Benedict, as Sigebert writes, going from Subiaco to Mount Cassino, wherever two ways branched off beheld two youths, whose office it was to direct him which to take. Many, clothed in simple human flesh, are made unconsciously to perform this angelic ministry, and circumstances and objects of every form are employed to supply the place of living monitors; for no road of life, whether solitary or frequented, has been left without some influence to guide those who follow it to the Church of God, into which every stream of truth must empty itself, as doth an inland brook into the main of waters. If men who wandering on would only inquire for their true country, and evince the anxiety of Telemachus inquiring for his father, saying

En us mori epesi broton 6 assan akoues. Ek Dios;

they would not be left in long uncertainty; for even in the absence of living guides, they would be led to mark more objects innumerable on all sides, which can supply the requisite direction, in the moral forest, as in Shakespeare's wood, the trees will serve as books, and, as it were, on these books we shall find thoughts characterized, that every eye which looks shall see truth witnessed every where, and, indeed, 'Why should a desert silent be?' for it is unpeopled?

• Ogygia seu Rec Hiber. Chronolog P iii v 85. † De la Corda, De Excellentia calcium S p 12. ‡ H Od 216.

Regule Solitariorum, l. ap. Luc Holstein. Codex Reg. † iv 3.