

THE
MONTH OF MARY:

OR

REMINISCENCES, OF

A MAY-DAY IN HALIFAX.

MIRAMICHI:

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PREFACE.

THE circumstance which led to the production of the little effusion here presented, is as follows:—The Author was asked for a contribution to the columns of a religious periodical published at Halifax, N. S., some years ago. On reflection it was thought that a simple description of some of the religious rites and devotional exercises of the Church would form a subject best calculated to edify the youthful readers for whose instruction the task was undertaken. The "Month of Mary" was then written, amid the distractions of numerous missionary duties in which the writer was engaged—which circumstance will, it is hoped, ensure the kind reader's indulgence for the imperfections found in it. Whatever of merit it may possess must be attributed entirely to the sacred but familiar subject selected, and to a desire to adhere strictly to accuracy in the description of real scenes witnessed. Two or three shorter pieces written at an earlier period, are added. A limited number of copies are issued in the present form for circulation amongst those members of the writer's flock, who are now so agreeably occupied in the interesting exercises of the "Month of Mary."

Chatham, Miramichi, N. B.

Feast of St. John before the Latin Gate, May 6, 1861.

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Part I—MORNING.

THE morn was delightful! The pure arch above
Was draped in the colors of hope and of love,
Bright azure and gold, gilding mountain and ocean,
As the sun arose glowing in matin devotion!
The rich brilliant bosom of Chebucto Bay
Stretched out in the distance to welcome the day;
The zephyr breathed forth the fresh fragrance of morn—
All nature united the day to adorn!

For it was the sweet FESTIVAL DAY of the year,
The day when the Seasons unite in their cheer—
The farewell of Winter, the welcome of Spring,
The hope of the bright joys that Summer will bring,
Of rich gifts of harvest in Autumn so gay,
Are all celebrated on MERRY MAY DAY!

I hied myself off over highland and heather,
The season's first tribute with gladness to gather;
Acadia's fair emblem that "blooms amid snows"—
The gay, smiling Mayflower through winter that grows:
And soon 'mid the scenes of my boyhood I found me,
Where oft I had rambled with fond ones around me!
When to trap the old robin, or find a new nest,
Or chase the young fledgeling, or follow with zest
The golden winged butterfly over the field,
Gave a joy that the treasures of kings never yield!
And here through the woods there already were straying,
Fine youths and fair ladies in hundreds a-maying;
With the sweet scenting flowers their persons adorning,
While the birds poured their melody forth to the morning!

I had sported a while 'mid the dew-dripping trees,
And now was returning, inhaling the breeze,
When lo! from the distance, so solemnly fell
On my ears the soft sound of the old chapel bell,
Inviting the toil-worn children of care
To unburden their hearts for a moment in prayer;
Those blessed with the good things of earth here below,
To render HIM thanks who does all goods bestow!
Calling on all, Heaven's King to adore,
And His blessing on all the day's acts to implore!
I quickened my pace. Soon the temple drew near,
There numbers from "maying" were hastening to prayer;
This, thought I, is meet; so the Saints of old trod
Through the beauties of nature up to nature's God!

I entered the church. How solemn the scene!
All is silent and breathless, all calm and serene!

Huge columns supporting the lofty, groined ceiling,
 The walls hung with paintings THE PASSION revealing!
 The altar with flowers and rich ornaments dressed,
 The shrines of the martyrs that under it rest!
 The large life-like carving of Christ crucified,
 With the thorns, and the nails, and the lance in his side!
 The portrait of Heaven's Queen lovely, benign,
 Crushing the serpent with power divine!*

The statues on each side the altar, so mild
 Of Mary the Virgin with Jesus her child!
 The figures of Saints and winged seraphs of love--
 All raising the mind to the glories above!

At the foot of the altar a prelate so holy,
 Is striking his bosom and bowing him lowly;
 "Confiteor Deo"—to Heaven confessing,
 And God, through his Saints, for mercy addressing,
 Ere he presume before Him to appear,
 In whose presence e'en angels tremble with fear!
 Again to renew for the dead and the living,
 That sacrifice one, all-atoning, life-giving,
 Which Jesus on Calvary, covered with blood,
 Himself Priest and Victim—once offered to God;
 To appease His dread justice, to save a lost race,
 To gain for man mercy and pardon and grace!
 'Round the steps of the sanctuary young acolytes kneeling,
 Like angels they seem, yet as sinners appealing,
 Hearts softened, eyes moist, to their Father in Heaven,
 That the faults of their youth be in mercy forgiven!

Down the nave and the aisles, in silence adoring,
 The faithful are mingled promiscuous, imploring
 The Father of mercies to pity their race,
 And their sins through the blood of the Lamb to efface!
 Each suppliant too, has his own special grief,
 Each feels his own burden, and begs for relief.
 Here a mother is weeping—she prays for her son,
 Who doubtless left home like the prodigal one;
 There, a daughter's bewailing the loss of her mother,
 A sister begs grace from above for her brother;
 A widow, here, offers her orphans to God,
 Begs the Father of Orphans to lighten the rod
 Of her bitter affliction! A blushing young bride
 There fervently prays for the spouse at her side!

* It is unnecessary to remark, that this is not intended to imply that the Blessed Virgin is not one of God's creatures, or that she has any *Divine attribute*, or power not received from God. Of course not; but that she is that highly favoured being—the most exalted of creatures—to whom God alluded in Paradise, "*whose seed should crush the serpent's head.*"

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Here a father, who earns by his toil and his sweat,
 For his wife and his little ones raiment and meat,
 Implores "that the blessing of Heaven descend
 On his darlings! may angels defend
And protect them from sin, and from shame, and from danger
 May they never be forced to seek bread from the stranger!"
 A lady there kneels, like a princess arrayed,
 Rich plumage, silks, jewels, profusely displayed,
 Deck her off as a queen, or a new-wedded bride,
 Or a votary of fashion, or daughter of pride—
 She pores o'er her book—'tis wet with a tear,
 God's grace has prevailed, she is melted in prayer!
 She thinks of His swaddling clothes—manger—straw bed—
 Of His flight into Egypt—His thorned-crowned head!
 Ah! she sees—she resolves! She'll henceforth lay aside
All the gew-gaws of vanity, baubles of pride!
Vain pomps of the world she'll renounce! Of her store
 She'll distribute profusely to solace the poor!
 Her life shall be spent in His service alone
 Whose blood was poured forth for her sins to atone!
 The Service proceeds. Now the celebrant stands
 Erect at the altar. With uplifted hands,
 Mien solemn, voice suppliant, eyes dimmed with a tear,
 He pleads for his people, repeating the "prayer!"
 Now the Missal's removed—while the Gospel's reciting,
All stand through respect, bright tapers are lighting,
 When ended, with reverence he kisses the Word,
 Which has just been announced as the voice of the Lord!
 "*Orate Fratres*"—Brethren pray
 That my offering and yours be accepted this day!
 "*Sursum Corda*"—Our hearts let us raise
 To the Lord God of hosts, in thanksgiving and praise!
 Now tinkles the bell. Lo! the moment is nigh—
 That moment so awful, when **HE, THE MOST HIGH,**
 Will descend on the altar! *our Sacrifice, food!*—
 "THIS IS MY BODY!"—"THIS IS MY BLOOD!"
 The words are pronounced!—The Host's elevated!
 The Chalice is raised! The people prostrated
 In deep adoration! in homage profound!
 Each heart glows in worship! each head meets the ground!
 O wonder of wonders! O mystery! far
 More mysterious than all other mysteries are!
 O Sacrament hidden! O miracle grand!—
 But, my soul, is it thus? What I can't understand
 Must I believe?—Yes. Bow down, and adoring, believe!
 Or say 'twas the wish of thy God to deceive!
 No alternative's left. Words can't be more plain—
 Words spoken by Jesus again and again!

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" *He that eateth my body and drinketh my blood*"*
 Are the words, not of angels, or men—but of God!
 Then, my Jesus, I believe!—Thy infallible word
 Can never deceive. Thou'rt omnipotent, Lord!
 What Thou wilt Thou canst. There is nought
 That to Thee is impossible. All things were wrought
 At Thy Word, instantaneous, from nothing. "*Be light.*
 And it was at Thy bidding! The night
 Of *Thy Supper*, the same mighty God
 Said, "*This is my body*"—" *This is my blood!*"
 Who then can doubt? Ah! the sceptic's a fool!
 Vain dupe of the serpent! 'Twas taught in the school
 Of the wisest of masters that "*Blessed is he*
Who confiding, believes and yet does not see!"†

Now pious communicants kneel 'round the rails,
 With joy, fear, hope, trembling, each heart fervent hails
 The moment so precious, so awful, when Jesus
 Their Saviour, Creator, God! merciful pleases
 To feed them Himself in the Holy Communion
 With his own Flesh and Blood!—O ineffable union
 Of God with His creature! O heavenly Feast,
 To which all are invited! The greatest, the least,
 The poor, the afflicted, lame, blind, rich, high, low,
 All, all, are welcome, if worthy! But woe
 To the wretch who, unworthy, comes there unadorned †
 With the "nuptial robe!"—Traitor! like Judas, he's spurned
 And rejected! "The Bread of Life," meant for salvation,
 Perfidious he eats to his own condemnation!
 Woe also to him who the message refuses
 To come to the banquet! Such wretch rather chooses
 The revel of demons, foul joys in sin given,
 Than all the bright glories of Jesus in Heaven!
 Approaching the altar, there, clad all in white
 Some two hundred Virgins, young, innocent, bright,
 Yet modest and graceful, in order advancing ‖
 To feast on the "Living Bread!" O sight entrancing!
 To witness those "little ones" thus led in youth
 To their Saviour who loves them, in purity, truth!
 To see each, like Mary, thus choose the best part,
 Ere the fangs of the Serpent has poisoned her heart!
 But who are those angelic guardians that guide them,
 In sable robe, solemn, there moving beside them?
 They are Sisters of Charity, daughters of Heaven,
 Whose hearts, in the cloister, to Jesus are given!
 O Sister of Charity, heavenly maid!

* John VI. 55. † John XX. 29. ‡ I Corinthians, XI. 29.
 ‖ It happened that on that morning a number of young girls made
 their first Communion.

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Thy name is thy eulogy ! If honour's paid
 To whom honour is due, then what is thy worth,
 Thou angel of comfort ! to men here on earth ?
 What species of virtue to thee is unknown ?
 What love for the suffering has not thy heart shown ?
 What office of mercy, of duty what call
 Is ignored by a daughter of Vincent de Paul ?
 In saintly seclusion pass cheerful thy days,
 In fasting and penance, prayer, psalmody, praise !
 Yet not to the cloister thy deeds are confined ;
 Nor yet to thy schools, where the young heart and mind
 Are, by patient yet pleasing toil, copiously stored
 With wisdom and science and fear of the Lord ;
 No, far wider range takes thy charity's aim,
 All classes, creeds, colours, thy sympathy claim !
 The friend of the orphan, thy tenderest cares
 Are exhausted to save thy young charge from the snares
 Of the wicked one. Patient, enduring, thy sweet toil is given,
 To rescue from Satan an angel for Heaven !
 To solace the sorrowful, comfort the weak,
 To soothe the afflicted, to tend on the sick ;
 Where battles are raging, where bullets are flying,
 To whisper sweet accents of hope to the dying !
 In the plague-stricken town where the scourge's fell breath
 Bears the stench of disease, the contagion of death !
 Where friends are deserters, where stoutest hearts quail,
 'Tis thine, holy woman, to stand without fail
 At thy post philanthropic ! No danger can move
 The resolve of thy soul in its mission of love !

The mass is now ended. The " *Ite*" is said ;
 The blessing is given, the last gospel's read.
 The priest has retired, the crowd, one by one,
 To their various employments, light-hearted, are gone,
 Yet I lingered awhile, I could not depart,
 The lesson there taught me sunk deep in my heart !
 The fervour I witnessed, the homage sincere,
 The tears of compunction, the silent heart-prayer,
 The attitude humble and suppliant—all showed
 There was *there*, if on earth, the true worship of God !
 No vain, ostentatious, pharisaical show,
 No hypocrite meaning, or wailings of woe ;
 No loud, egotistical boastings in prayer,
 No cant or mock groaning of spirit was there !
 But piety real, unassuming, and lowly,
 The worshippers true, humble, meek-hearted, holy !

Though years have elapsed since the scene of that morn,
 Yet ever my thoughts to that temple return.
 Other bright spots of youth from my memory may pass,
 But I'll never forget that May morning's LOW MASS !

Part II—EVENING.

At evening again, solemn chimed through the air
The "dongs" of the bell that was calling to prayer.
My heart, as yet full of the morning's emotions,
Still panted to witness the Vesper devotions
In old Mother Church—so I joined with the throng
That towards the Cathedral was hastening along.

I entered—but oh! what a contrast!—the scene
Which at Mass in the morning was calm and serene—
Was now changed. The effulgence of light
That on entering the edifice burst on my sight!
The gorgeous magnificence, gracefully blending
With soft sombre shades, through the temple extending!
The images—tableaux in frames of rich gilding,
And carvings and sculpture — arranged through the building
Though mute, yet expressive and solemn, appealing
In language sublime to the soul's inmost feeling!
The concourse of worshippers crowding the aisle,
With awe reverential affected the while!

"The Children of Mary"—young virgins in white,
Encircling the statue all radiant and bright
Of their Patron and model, their lovely "May Queen"
There crowned with sweet flowers and chaplet of green.
The clergy, all robed in rich gold and silk vesture,
So saintly their mien! grave and solemn their gesture!
The incense so fragrant! meet emblem of prayer! *
That, curling in graceful clouds, perfumed the air! †
The sweet swelling thunder melodious that rolled
From the organ, whose pipes were all gilded with gold,
Till, blending with angel-like voices, it soared
Through the high vaulted roof to the throne of the Lord!
This bright *tout ensemble* so solemn, so grand!
Made me think of Mount Thabor!—I could understand,
Why Peter in transports of joy, love and fear,
Exclaimed aloud, "*Lord it is good to be here!*" †

Ah! shame on the fanatic pedants who hold
That nor paintings, nor sculpture, nor silver nor gold,
Nor ornaments rich, nor ceremonies grand,
Nor organs of music, nor musical band
With instruments playing sweet heavenly airs,
Nor vestments embroidered, nor incense at prayers,
Nor sacred devices, nor forms emblamatic—
No baubles like these, say those prophets erratic,

* Psalm CXL, 2. † Matthew XVII. 4.

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Should e'er be allowed the Lord's temple within,
 To use them in worship—profanity, sin!
 Ah! little they know of the Lord or His laws!
 Or the means best adapted to forward the cause
 Of true, fervent, devotional worship in man,
 Whose nature mysterious they know not to scan!

More wisely inspired is the "*pillar of truth*,"*
 The Church, which tho' old, is still blooming in youth!
 The "*Spouse of the Lamb*,"† without "*wrinkle or spot*,"‡
 Or "*blemish*," or failing, or error or blot
 Whatsoever!—kept perfect by HIM who first made her,
 Whose *word that can't fail* is pledged "ever,"|| to aid her,
 And make her true Pastors "*forever*" inherit
 "*To teach them all truth*," His adorable "*SPIRIT*!"§

More wisely, I say, does she act; for she knows
 The nature of man;—his joys and his woes,
 His virtues and failings, his changing temperament,
 Now plunged in grief, now uplifted in merriment!—
 And like the Good Shepherd, her master, with joy
 Does she use all legitimate means, and employ
 All her wisdom, and efforts, and wealth, to recover
 The poor erring sheep, and preserve them forever
 For Jesus their Shepherd, secure in His fold!
 Hence all her exertions—her treasures, her gold,
 Her jewels of art, her eloquence thrilling,
 Her music, now joyous, now mournful, and filling
 The hearts of her children with joy or with sadness,
 With sorrow for sin, or if pardoned, with gladness!
 Her Sacraments, channels of grace from above,
 Blest, hallowed incentives of hope and of love!—
 All the riches of earth, all the treasures of Heaven,
 Of which she was made the dispenser—are given,
 Received, and employed in her temples! 'tis *there*
 Where her children assemble for penance, praise, prayer,
 Instruction and worship! Hence all she can do
 To embellish the holy place—all that to view,
 To the ear, the heart, soul, is delightful, combine
 To add to the splendour of God's holy shrine!
 So that poor weary mortals may find their delight
There with God and His angels, from morning till night!
 That there, to encourage weak souls, may be given
 A glimpse as it were—a sweet foretaste of heaven!
 Besides, she considers that nothing on earth—
 Not the riches of mines, gifts of genius or birth,
 Achievements of talent in science or arts,

* I Timothy, III. 15. † Ephesians V 31 32. ‡ Ephesians V.
 27. || Isaiah LIX. 21. § John XIV., XV., XVI passim. Mat-
 thew XXVIII. 20.

All the beauty that pencil or chisel imparts,
 Nor the rapture that music so sweet can afford,
 Is too good to employ in the praise of the Lord!
 For the Lord is the Author of all that is grand,
 Great, good, and delightful! From His mighty hand
 Came the treasures of earth, the pearls of the deep,
 The orbs that so brilliant their steady course keep!
 The plants and the trees with their foliage so green,
 And the flowers that so beautiful brighten the scene!
 The birds with their plumage that through the air glide,
 Or sing in the branches, or soar in their pride!
 And the beasts that roam, and the fishes that swim,
 All, all were created to glorify Him!
 Hence He commanded His servants of old*
 To sacrifice to Him the *first* of each fold,
 To offer in homage *first fruits* of the earth,
 To present at His shrine each *first son* that had birth!
 Thus each *best* and most *highly prized* creature and treasure
 God willed should be given for His service and pleasure!
 Hence it is "Holy Mother the Church" lets us know
 That to-day God is what He was ages ago,
 The tokens of love that delighted Him then,
 He still looks for, receives from the children of men.
 As He gives us all we possess and enjoy,
 'Tis right that in gratitude we should employ
 In His honour and worship, His service and pleasure,
 A portion, at least, of each talent and treasure:
 Not that He stands in need of our offerings; but we
 For our own sakes, in thanks for His favours, should be
 Most willing and prompt to return Him some token
 Of love for His word whether written or spoken.
 'Tis therefore His children so gladly unite
 To present Him their offerings. The poor widow's mite,
 The jewels of princes, the rubies and rings
 Of queens and princesses, the diamonds of kings—
 The trophies of soldiers so valiant, who fight
 For their Country, Law, Liberty, Justice and Right!
 The free grateful gifts of the rough sons of toil,
 Which they honestly earn cultivating the soil,
 Or tuning the anvil, or hewing hard stones,
 More happy at labour than kings on their thrones!
 The brave hardy fisherman's offering so cheerful,
 Obtained as it is oft in peril so fearful!
 The sailor's free tribute hard earned amid danger!
 The merchant's rich gift from the land of the stranger;
 Like the gold, myrrh and frankincense kings from afar,
 Brought to Jesus in Bethlehem when led by His Star, †

* Exodus XIII. 12. Lev. II. † Matthew II. 11.

So the offerings of all—rich, poor, young and old,
 Of the faithful of Christ composing His fold,
 Are presented as tokens of homage and love,
 Thanksgiving and worship to Jesus above,
 In adorning His Temple, enriching His Shrine,
 To render it worthy His presence Divine!
 Nor does He refuse His benignant regards
 To those who thus merit celestial rewards!
 Well pleased He accepted the perfume and unction
 That proved the poor Magdalene's love and compunction!
 But spurned the low miser, the traitor who cried
 "O why all this waste? O the poor!" while he lied!
 For not *love of the poor* moved the hypocrite elf,
 But his vile, sordid avarice—*love of the pelf!*

Hark! now the children of Mary are singing,
 Their sweet touching hymn to the Virgin! and bringing
 With artless simplicity, innocence meek,
 Big tears from the eye down the manliest cheek!
 'Tis the Litany now—the sweet "Mater Sanctissima!"
 "Ora pro nobis! O Virgo Purissima!"
 Now swells from the clergy in voices stentorian
 Yet rich and harmonious, the old "Chant Gregorian!"
 Impressive and solemn! The organ replies
 Melodious and soothing! as if in the skies
 A choir of angels were hovering there,
 And joining their voices with mortals in prayer!

A priest at the foot of the altar low bends,
 Now slowly the steps of the pulpit ascends,
 'Tis the preacher—tall, portly, and graceful, with look
 Meek, reverend, tender; he opens the book,
 The blest book of the Gospels!—now solemn and clear
 The text he announces vibrates in each ear!

Ah! long shall I think of that priest and his theme,
 The Glories of Mary! The heavenly beam
 That played on his features all radiant and glowing
 As on he advanced! The rich eloquence flowing
 In language of Heaven, his subject inspiring!
 So melting his tone, as extatic, admiring
 The beauty surpassing of Heaven's bright Queen,
 He painted her loveliness!

"Never has been
 Either since or before, any one of God's creatures
 So richly endowed with all graces! No features
 Of being created, on earth or in Heaven
 So lovely as those which to Mary were given!"

* Matthew XXVI. 7, 12; Mark XIV. 3, 9; Luke VII. 37, 48.

Not mortals, or angels, archangels or cherubim,
 Prophets, apostles, or holiest seraphim,
 Ever were favoured so highly!—And why?
She alone was made MOTHER OF CHRIST THE MOST HIGH!
This title's the source of her singular merit,
She alone was o'ershadowed as *Spouse* by THE SPIRIT!*
Such union with DEITY, since or before,
 Was never enjoyed by another! *The more*
Closely she thus with her God was united,
The more was she worthy in whom He delighted!
 Hence, over all creatures, and next to her Son
 Is that loveliest, worthiest, holiest one!
 O'er all other daughters, exalted alone,
 In the kingdom of God is she nearest His Throne!
 For ages *predestined* for this holy station,
 God blessed and preserved her even in her creation—
 Conception, birth, childhood, life—free from all evil,
 Defilement and sin—from all power of the devil!
 By *miracle* thus was she *specialy* graced,
 And made worthy the office in which she was placed.
 But alas! there are poor silly men who deny
 That Mary could ever be gifted so high!
 And what makes their case worse, they profess to believe
 The Bible, but read it not,—thus they deceive
 Themselves and their neighbours!—or, reading, they see not
 The plainest things there! and assert them to be not!
 If God fitted Moses his office to fill—
 Endowed him with courage, light, heavenly skill,
 And help'd him by miracles mighty to do
 The great work that he made him for; could He not too,
 Fit Mary for her greater office? If John,
 The Baptist, Precursor of Jesus, was one
 Who was specially made *for that office*, conceived
 In the womb of his mother by *miracle*, † believed
 To be kept throughout life from all sinfulness free,
 The “more than a prophet,” ‡ the “angel”—if he
 Was thus sanctified, honoured, endowed
 With the loftiest graces, *because* to the crowd
 He was sent to *announce* the Messiah—*much more*
Highly favoured must she be—THE VIRGIN—who bore
 THE EXPECTED OF NATIONS! *Of her alone*
Was HE flesh of her flesh, and bone of her bone!
 From *her virginal womb* came THE LAMB without spot!
 No sin, or in *act* or *original* blot,
 Could reach that IMMACULATE DAUGHTER! whom God
 For the sake of HIS SON, had exempted! *whose blood*

* Luke I. 35. † Luke I. 18, 34. ‡ Matthew XI. 9.

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XV.

*Was the source unpolluted whence wonderful came
The adorable body of JESUS!*

“ Oh! shame

On the infidel idiots who say that the Mother
Of Christ the Messiah's no better than other
Weak daughters of Eve! Poor stultified sceptics!
Who read, by *their* system of biblical optics,
The Scriptures reversely — whose keen “ eye of faith”
Sees the Bible to mean—not at all what it saith!
Thus God, when he spoke of the woman whose Seed
Was to conquer the Serpent;* not *Mary*, indeed,
Did He speak of—but—no matter whom!
Isaias foretold of the *Virgin* whose womb
Would conceive the Emmanuel;† not *Mary* at all
Could he speak of!—impossible! that they would call
Rank idolatry!—Make *her* the theme
Of God's inspired Prophet? and couple *her* name,
Though mother, with that of Emmanuel, her Son?
Never—could such an absurd thing be done!
God sent an archangel to *Mary*. He came
And saluted her “ *Hail Full of Grace! Thy Name‡
Shall be Blessed amongst women! The Lord is with thee!*”
O, surely the angel's mistaken—must be!
For *that's* just the Papists' idolatrous prayer,
To the *Virgin*, at morning, noon, night—everywhere!
Just so did the Jews with our Saviour! They read
The Scriptures—but yet would not believe what they said!

Again—these consistent logicians deny
That it's lawful to pray to the *Saints* now on high;
But no harm whatsoever, they freely admit,
To supplicate *sinner*s on earth—not a bit!
We may ask of our *weak fellow man* here below
To “ pray for us;”|| and if he humbly do so,
God will graciously hear him, though sinner he be,
And bless those he prays for, with grace, clemency,
But to ask the same thing of a saint that is blest
With God, now in Heaven, from labour at rest,
O, *that were idolatry*, spiritual treason!

Proclaim those exponents of Scripture and reason!

Thus alas do “ false prophets” deceive and betray!
The poor sheep who are led by their teaching astray.

Not so with the sheep of the “ one only fold,”§
Well taught by true pastors, they reverently hold
In profound veneration the whole of God's word,

* Genesis III. 15. † Isaiah VII. 14. ‡ Luke I. 28. || Romans
XV. 30. § John X. 16.

Both unwritten and written! As Christ never erred
 In His teachings, commandments, or doctrine, so they
 With docile affection His precepts obey!
 He said "Search the Scriptures"* "The Church[†] thou shalt
 hear!" †

Both lessons are followed with love and with fear!
 The Scriptures are searched as God's true, written word,
 When the Paraclete speaks through the Church, He is heard!
 In the true Church alone God's word is respected
 Received, and submitted to, never rejected:
 The Scriptures are read, studied, believed and obeyed
 By the "Child of THE CHURCH"—no part is gainsayed,
 Omitted, slurred over, perverted, denied,
 Nor its meaning, to suit each one's whim, set aside!
 THE SPIRIT that guided the pens that first wrote it,
 Abides with THE CHURCH—guides HER PASTORS to quote it,
 To guard and expound it, to preach and explain,
 In teaching all nations, ‡ while nations remain!

Thrice blessed are those sheep! whose Good Shepherd pro-
 vides

For them teachers that stray not—*infallible* guides!
Infallible—not so, as mortals, weak, frail—
 But as guides in God's Church which never can fall! ||
 That Church teaches truth! when she speaks she is heard
 By those who despise not the clear written word!
 "He that hears not the Church"—mind, Christ tells no libel!—
 "A Publican"—"Heathen," is styled in the Bible! §
 He is not a "Christian" in God's holy sight,
 For he follows not Christ—save when he thinks Him right!
 Thus not the plain teaching of Christ is his guide,
 But his own "private judgment"—poor worm of pride!
 While the true Christian bows in obedience, meek, lowly,
 To Christ's simple word *infallible, holy!*
 He stops not to question, or to criticise
 Its wisdom or truth. As he knows the All-wise
 And Omnipotent God must in all things be right,
 He believes and obeys HIS WORD of wisdom and might!
 He "hears the Church" believes and respects what she says!
 And thus Christian-like the precept of Christ obeys!

Now the Church has defined that there really exists ¶
 A "Communion of Saints," which in this consists,
 That the members of Christ who His Church compose
 —Those reigning with Him now in triumph—and those
 Who "themselves shall be saved, yet so as by fire"
 Where the "stubble, hay, wood," of their works expire, —

* John V. 39. † Matthew XVIII. 17. ‡ Matthew XXVIII. 20.
 § Matthew XVI. 18. ¶ Apostles Creed.
 — I Corinthians III. 12, 15.

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And the militant members who still here fight—
 All mutually practice that virtue bright,
 Best, holiest charity, bond of love!
 By their prayers for each other to God above;
 And that He, in His mercy, graciously hears
 And is pleased to accept their mutual prayers.
 We pray for each other on earth here below;
 For the souls in Purgation, who ere they can go
 From their "prison"* to God, "the last farthing must pay"†
 To His justice due—for them we pray!

We pray not for the Saints above,
 Since they are confirmed in glory and love!
 But we study their lives, we honour their fame,
 We walk in their footsteps, we reverently claim
 That they in their glory now will mind
 And "pray for us" whom they left behind
 In this valley of tears, in affliction and need,
 Temptation, and strife, from which they're now freed!
 And oh! they do, in their glorious state,
 Remember their friends, and compassionate
 The trials and woes of their brethren here
 Working out their salvation in trembling, fear!
 O'er a sinner converted more joy is given
 To the Saints and Angels of God in Heaven
 Than over the just ones ninety-nine ‡
 Who still in the robes of innocence shine!
 Thus Angels and Saints in Heaven know
 What happens to mortals here below.
 They see our afflictions, they hear our prayers,
 They "pray for us" to our God and theirs!||
 And their prayers are granted, for God attends
 To the humble requests of His honoured friends;
 For oft He had heard their prayers, before
 They quitted the sinful flesh: much more
 Will He hear them now, that, pure and bright,
 They worship so near His throne of light!
 But of all the Saints on whom we call,
 The Mother of Jesus surpasses them all!
 The most honoured of God—His own dear Mother!—
 He loves her more than he loves any other!
 And she loves Him, and adores Him too,
 More than Angel or holiest Saint can do!
 Hence, what she implores of Him is done—
 'Tis the Mother's request of her loving Son!
 If "the prayer of the just prevaieth much,"§
 Then MARY's prayer must prevail, as such;

* I Peter III. 18, 20. † Matthew V. 25, 26. ‡ Luke XV. 7.—
 || Apoccalypse V. 8. § James V. 16.

For who more holy, more just than she
Whom God sanctified, blest in the highest degree ?
If Jesus so much loved Martha and Mary,
That their brother's death made His spirit weary—
His heart so touched by the sisters' grief,
That, so much did He love them, for their relief
To His Father He prayed, groaned, tears even shed,
To bring to life Lazarus four days dead !*
If thus for those sisters He raised their brother,
What would He not do for His own dear Mother ?
Ah ! well may we judge to what length He would go
For the prayer of that Mother who loved him so,
By the proof she had of His love divine,
When the water He changed, at her wish, into wine †
And that, mind, " before had come His hour,"
To prove by " signs " His God-like power !

Oh ! yes that Son hears that Mother's prayer !
For through all His life did that Mother share
In his joys and toils—in each step He trod,
From His birth to His death, and ascent to God !
For nine long months did she enshrine
In her Virgin womb that Son divine !
When angels from Heaven proclaimed His birth,
Singing " Glory to God—Peace to men on earth !"
That Mother was there, at Bethlehem's manger !
She too, with the shepherds, adored the young stranger !
When Kings from the East their gifts presented
To her Royal child—there, silent, contented
Was Mary admiring their wonderful news,
And adoring with them the new King of the Jews !
When Jesus first entered the temple of prayer,
'Twas Mary that brought Him, presented Him there !
When Herod sought with perfidious madness
To murder the child, that Mother in sadness
And sorrow, with Joseph her spouse and her guide,
In haste fled to Egypt her infant to hide !
She cherished her babe, well she guarded her treasure ;
She nursed Him with more than a fond mother's pleasure !
Oft He smiled in her face—oft she kissed and caressed Him !
He sucked at her paps, to her bosom she pressed Him,
She tended His childhood, she watched o'er His youth,
Yet as God she adored Him in spirit and truth !
He, model of sons, loved, honoured, revered her,
Obeyed her least wishes, consoled her and cheered her !
O, who ever saw such a son, such a mother ?
Each mutually paid what was due to the other.

* John XI. † John II. 1, 10.

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More faithful than any disciple or friend,
 That Mother accompanied Him to the end !
 She witnessed His miracles, heard Him when preaching,
 Believed in His word, meekly followed His teaching—
 She grieved at His sorrows, rejoiced at His joy,
 Though her Saviour and God, He was still her sweet Boy
 O bitterly, bitterly that Mother grieved,
 At the barbarous treatment her Jesus received !
 Bruised, broken and bleeding, her motherly heart !
 Of each wound He received, she, too, felt the smart !
 No other disciple, no martyr can know
 How poignant, intense, was that poor Mother's woe
 At the foot of the cross when she saw nailed thereon,
 In agony writhing, her own murdered Son !
 When she heard His last words unto her and to John
 " Behold thy Mother !"—" Behold thy Son !" *
 When she saw Him expire ; beheld the red tide
 That flowed out from His heart through the wound in His side !
 Received in her arms, and laid in the tomb
 His body, which once she had borne in her womb—
 Him wrapped up in swaddling clothes—laid in a manger—
 Now dead !—wrapped in sheets—in the tomb of a stranger.
 O surely her prayer must prevail much with Him,
 More than that of Apostles or bright Cherubim !
 When He 'rose from the dead, her heart was delighted,
 She also was with His disciples united,
 When He in the midst of them sudden appeared
 And, with " Peace be unto you," their spirits he cheered ;
 When from Mount Olivet Jesus ascended,
 Mary was there. When The Spirit descended
 Upon the Apostles, there, also, with John
 Was that Spouse of the Spirit, that loved, honoured One !
 In a word, from her God she was never apart—
 To accomplish His will was the joy of her heart ;
 Though the other disciples had nearly all fled,
 She never abandoned Him, living or dead,
 Then how could her prayer unto Him be rejected ?
 O no, no !—that Holy One's prayer is respected,
 Her welcome petitions are honoured above
 By the God who accepted her faith and her love.
 Ah then, Holy Mary, to thee do we pray !
 Thou knowest the snares that beset our way,
 The trials and toils of this weary life,
 For thou too hast suffered its terrible strife.
 O Mother of God ! intercede with thy Son
 For us poor sinners, ere we are undone ;
 Ask of Him mercy, and pardon, and grace

* John XIX. 26, 27.

That we prodigal children may gain His embrace.
 O Refuge of Sinners, compassionate, mild,
 Reject not our prayers!—Though wayward and wild,
 We have strayed from the light that to guide us was given
 O Star of the Sea! light us, guide us to Heaven!"

He ceased; but 'twere vain to attempt to portray
 Either Preacher or Theme!—or even to convey
 An idea faint of his eloquence grand—
 One should hear him and see him to well understand.

Not in language alone was the charm of his style,
 The action, chaste, graceful, and well timed—the smile
 That lit up his features—the eye's magic fire,
 Now glowing in love, now flashing in ire—
 The interest displayed—the accurate choice
 Of *the* word or the phrase best adapted—the voice
 Rich, soft, and melodious—the cadence—the tone
 Now tender, pathetic, in whisper, or moan,
 Now lofty, majestic, now calm, solemn, clear—
 In a word, all that speaks through the eye or the ear
 To the heart and the reason, in gesture, look, tone,
 Was combined in the style of that eloquent one!

The rapture that thrilled through my soul at the time,
 Adoration, joy, love, awe,—sensations sublime!—
 Made me feel that the DEITY really was there,
 In that temple, receiving true worship and prayer.

The lessons there taught, wheresoever I roam,
 Like angels in sleep, to my memory come;
 Oft I'm cheered 'mid my toils, when I think, weak and weary,
 Of Preacher—theme—temple!—That sweet MONTH OF MARY!

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HYMN FOR
THE NATIVITY OF THE B. V. M.

—◆—

REJOICE O man! let hymns ascend of praise and jubilee,
The Virgin Queen of earth and heaven to day is born for thee!
The "fairest lily of the Vale"—of "Jesse's root" a vine—
A hallowed branch from Juda's stock and David's royal line—
The "Star of Jacob"—Israel's hope, pure, bright, at length
appears,
To chase the midnight gloom that lowered o'er earth four thou-
sand years—
To usher in Salvation's Sun, whose radiant, saving light
The Prince and Powers of darkness shall confound and put to
flight!

To day is born the Virgin chaste, whose womb will soon enshrine
The nations' hope—the Prophets' theme—the Light of Light
divine!—

God's only Son! who from His throne descending, will assume
Man's fallen nature, penalty!—will rescue from the doom
To which Eternal Justice had condemned our rebel race—
Will shed His blood! will die for man! sin's foul blot to efface.
Then O rejoice! the holiest form on earth that e'er yet trod
To day is born—the Virgin Spouse—the Mother pure of God!

weary,
MARY!

HYMN FOR
THE ASSUMPTION OF THE B. V. M.

REJOICE! rejoice O man to-day!
 Sound the timbrel, strike the lyre!
 Thy Queen to her throne is borne away
 In glory's radiant, rich attire!
 To-day the Virgin-Mother's crowned
 With sparkling, dazzling diadem!
 Might, glory, majesty, surround
 The Daughter of Jerusalem!

Rejoice, rejoice, celestial choirs!
 To-day ascends your Virgin Queen,
 Let the music of your heavenly lyres
 Add joy and gladness to the scene!
 For O, to-day the humble maid
 Of Bethlehem is high enthroned,
 And—highest honor to creature paid—
 By all as Queen of Heaven she's owned!

The Queen of Angels and of Men,
 Of Prophets and of Cherubim,
 Was next her God on earth both when
 She bore and nursed and wept for Him!
 So now in Heaven the Judge divine,
 With justice meet rewards her worth,
 And crowns her next Himself to shine,
 As she ever was next to Him on earth!

Then O rejoice, O Man! to-day,
 Sound the timbrel, strike the lyre,
 Thy Queen to her throne is borne away
 In glory's radiant, rich attire!
 To-day the Virgin-Mother's crowned
 With sparkling, dazzling diadem,
 Might, glory, majesty, surround
 The Daughter of Jerusalem!

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A LAY OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

*The Martyrdom of the Seven Brothers, and St. Felicitas
their Mother.**

THE Matron stood, her sons beside, nor feared the Prefect's ire,
And throbb'd her heart, and glow'd her soul with hallow'd Chris-
tian fire :

"Think not, Tyrant, blandishments or bribes can e'er entice,
Or threats, or tortures force us to thy gods to sacrifice ;
For, strengthened by the Spirit of the TRUE GOD we adore,
Our homage is for HIM *alone*—Your idols we abhor !"

The Pagan frown'd and knit his brow—fire sparkled in his eyes ;—
"Deluded woman ! dost thou thus thy life—thy all despise ?—
Thy sons, thy offsprings dear, wilt thou compel me to destroy ?"
"My sons," she said, "with CHRIST shall live in everlasting joy,
If faithful to that only Lord ;—but if they bend a knee
To thy false gods, their souls in flames must burn eternally."

Again upon the morrow to the Prefect they are led,
And hop'd he still to see them swerve, and thus again he said :
"Felicitas, thy sons at length, oh pity !—Noble, young,
They yet may rise to honors high, their deeds in song be sung ;
Blast not their hopes thus premature ;—give not such flowers to
blight ;—
Spare, spare the buds to ope and bloom on glory's proudest height !"

"Name not such *cruel* pity. Thinkest thou my heart could be
The hardest, worst of mothers' hearts ?—my sons ! my sons ! will ye
List to the sympathy of hell ?—Behold yon heaven of light,
There shines THE LAMP that makes the hosts of Saints and Angels
bright !

Your JESUS !—Go ! HE waits ye *there* !—Shrink not from scourge
or fire !

Go, live with Him who deign'd for you, *in tortures* to expire !"

Enthusiastic flush'd each cheek, and glow'd each youthful heart
With holy fire, with strong desire to act a martyr's part.
And the Pagan frown'd with wrath as thus the Matron had repeated,
And with contumely and blows, the noble woman's treated !

Again the youths he summoned ; and each separately addressing,
He urg'd them still to sacrifice, entreating now—now pressing ;
But nought could move them ;—firm they stood, despite the tempt-
er's wiles ;

And brave defied the threats of Power, and fortune's luring smiles.

The eldest youth, being first addressed, thus firmly answer made :
"ONE ONLY GOD there is ; to HIM our homage shall be paid.
In vain exhaust thy cruelty—in vain each art employ,
Our faith, our hope in JESUS is !—Our souls thou'lt not destroy."

* See Butler's Lives of the Saints, July 10.

And now the Prefect frowned with rage, like a tiger fearful grown:
The martyr first is cruelly scourged, then into prison thrown!

The next being called like answer makes—the same cruel treat-
ment's given:

And thus the rest,—till smarting, writhing, all are closed in prison!

* * * * *

'Tis morn,—the sun in splendour shine's on Rome's imperial towers,
But into the Martyrs' gloomy cell no cheering ray he pours.
What list they?—Ha! behold their joy!—They see the heavenly
choir

Descending bright, their path to light, fresh courage to inspire!

Lo! See the "PRINCE of MARTYRS" with resplendent Crown of
Thorn;

In His hand the Imperial Standard—a brilliant Cross—is borne!
Beside Him, see, the "MARTYRS' QUEEN!"—behind, the Purple
Train,

Who fought their way o'er fields of blood to Heaven's eternal reign!

On either side, with crowns of gold, the Apostles glorious shine;—
The Prophets and Evangelists in radiant light divine,
And other Champions of the Faith—the Fathers, Doctors sage,
And Confessors, who firm withstood fierce persecution's rage!

Behind their QUEEN, the Vestal Train, arrayed in virgin white,
Who vowed unto THE LAMB their love, fidelity,—pure, bright!
And then the Patriarchal line—Sires, Matrons, aged, hoary,
Who trained in Virtue's radiant paths bright heirs for heavenly
glory!

And Angels glorious—Cherubim and Seraphim surrounding,
And music sweet, enrapturing, in joyous peals resounding!
Celestial sight! They've come for you, O faithful band—rejoice!
With ravished ear, your Jesus hear, as thus in glowing voice!

"Well done ye good and faithful servants; since you've faithful
been,

Come be exalted on my right in glory, bright, serene!
*My yoke is sweet, my burden light—then haste your Crowns to gain,
Who will not bear his Cross with me—with me shall never reign!"*

That day the Brothers forth were led;—their looks were firm and
calm;

With joyful hearts they met their doom—and won the martyrs palm!
But not till four months after did the Mother shed her blood,
And joined her sons, a martyr crowned, before the Throne of God!