

**REGINA SÆCULORUM, OR,
MARY VENERATED IN ALL AGES.
DEVOTIONS TO THE BLESSED
VIRGIN, FROM ANCIENT
SOURCES**

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M. LEON GAUTIER & E. A. M.

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M. LÉON GAUTIER,

BY
E. A. M.



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DEDICATION.

TO thee, O Glorious and Immaculate Virgin, do we offer this little nosegay culled from the wide garden of the Church; beseeching thee to grant that its fragrance may not only strengthen and refresh thine own children, but also that the sweetness of thy name, O Mother of our God and Saviour Jesus, Mother of our own Crucified and Glorified Redeemer, Jesus, may draw into the Fold of His Church, those yet without, for whose salvation thou didst bear Jesus, and Jesus died. To these, O thou who art as tender in thy loving compassion, as thou art spotless in thy perfect purity, and all-powerful in thy intercession,

Monstra te esse Matrem :

AND WIN THEM HOME.

AVE MARIA.





PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH various Books of Devotions to Our Blessed Lady have, within the last few years, appeared in England, yet none among them occupy the same ground as that taken by the present collection; for the greater part of which we are indebted to the valuable and interesting Book of M. Léon Gautier, entitled *Prières à la Vierge, d'après les MSS. du Moyen Age, &c. &c.*,¹ its principal aim being to show from the most ancient, as well as from subsequent authoritative sources, how the devotion to Mary has ever been an integral part of the tradition of the Church. That it should not have been so, would be equally impossible to faith and to reason. The marvel is that it should ever have become necessary to argue in favour of

¹ Paris. Victor Palmé.

showing reverence to the Mother, with those who profess to honour the Son.

Our Lady's great panegyrist is the Archangel Gabriel,¹ who might be called the Prophet and Evangelist of the Incarnation. We read of him in the Book of Daniel, when he foretold it; in the Gospel of S. Luke, when he announced its precursor; and again as the favoured angel of the Annunciation. And who is he? He says of himself to the father of the Baptist, "*I am Gabriel, who stand before God;*" that is, in the immediate presence and glory of the very Source and Fountain of Grace. And when, fresh from the light of the uncreated Godhead, he speeds into the pure presence of Mary, the heavenly Ambassador salutes her with the words, "*Hail, FULL of Grace!*" using a word which, in the original Greek, we are told by Origen, occurs nowhere else in Scripture, and which implies that she was not only free from sin at that time,

¹ V. *Lectures on Catholic Faith and Practice*, by the Rev. J. N. Sweeney, p. 278, Lect. xv., *Mary, Mother of God*.

but that she had been formed in Grace, and "had not been infected by the breath of the venomous Serpent." Hers was no ordinary office, and no ordinary splendour surrounded her. At her coming into the world, Grace awaited her who was chosen to be the Mother of God.

The devotion to Our Lady naturally had its first development in the East. In the West, the early Christians traced her image in the gloom of the catacombs. The Cemetery of Priscilla might indeed be called the Catacomb of Mary, from the frequency and importance of the representations of her which it contains. In the Catacomb of SS. Peter and Marcellinus, Mary appears as the heavenly advocate, whose arms, outstretched in prayer, are upheld by two mysterious personages, as were those of Moses by Aaron and Hur on Mount Horeb. It is thus a great mistake to assert that no representations of Mary existed anterior to the Council of Ephesus. Even as early as the second century there was a particular type according to which the Virgin Mother