

which changed the night of this beautiful day into a heaven all strewn with stars! How, at the sound of the bells which announced the consummation of that great act, it prostrated itself, and hailed the Virgin without spot or blemish! What holy canticles were addressed to her in the convents, in the bosom of families, in the secrecy of hearts!

Then came the evening, and it was then that the faith, that the joy of the people shone and burst out, and the entire city became a temple raised to Mary. From the previous evening, notwithstanding the rain, and despite the tempest, thousands of lights saluted the dawning of the day which was about to break: but the evening of the *fête* the city was literally a city of fire; not a balcony, not a window, not a skylight which had not its illumination lamps. The great thoroughfares of the city, the Corso, the Papal way, Ripetta, are luminous streams; the public squares, the monuments, the churches, bear piles of fire. The Capitol gleams and flashes with light, and the orchestras in the open air hail in the name of the Roman people the triumph of the Queen of Heaven, who is also the Queen of the Church of Rome. Everywhere are transparencies and images of Mary, inscriptions in her honor; above all the device, *Maria sine labe originali concepta*. An immense multitude urged their way through the city; the whole population is in the streets, on the squares, but especially at St. Peter's, whose dome bore high in the air a sparkling diadem. One might say that a special providence had wished to give to that illumination, of which every one acknowledged the greatness and the beauty, an unaccustomed splendor. A dark cloud, the only one there was in the sky, which was there as if to keep us in mind