

"I'm glad you know the story so well, Toddles. Yes, it grew late and cold, and when the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, there was no room for them anywhere."

"Like it once was when we were traveling, mother, and all the hotels were crowded."

"And Mary and Joseph wandered about Bethlehem looking for shelter and finding none; then when St. Joseph was thinking they might have to spend the night out in the open air, some one took pity upon him and led him to a cave where cattle slept."

"And there were mangers," added Toddles, eagerly, "cause Jesus was 'wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. And He was a real Baby, like all little babies, only He was God besides."

"Exactly, darling. Let me see, how far were we?—C.A., yes, Mary and Joseph were guided to the cave, which they accepted with gratitude as a resting-place."

"Well—Bethlehem lies in a hilly country, and out on the quiet hills, there were shepherds at watch over their flocks. Now these men knew how the sky looked at night, how the stars shone and the moon shone, because it was always their work to guard the sheep during the night; and that night they were astonished to see a great light shining in the sky, which was not the light of either moon or stars. It was more beautiful than any light the world had ever seen, and the men stood still and looked in greater and greater wonder."

"I wish I'd been there, mother," said Toddles earnestly.

"Suddenly, as the light still grew, a beautiful angel stood beside the shepherds, and they felt frightened, not knowing what to think. But the radiant angel spoke gently to them, saying: 'Fear not,' and immediately all their dread passed away. Then the angel went on to tell them that Christ was born and lying in a manger, where they would find him wrapped in swaddling clothes."

"The Blessed Mother was very poor," said Toddles, sadly, "and there was no little bed there for Jesus."

"But she would not have taken all the riches in the world, darling, for that little Child who was God."