

*Helen* [with a patronizing air]. And your mother said very right, my dear; so, since mamma has given you permission, you may walk in our procession; only you must take care to keep at a respectful distance, and not to sing too loud.

The village children fall back.

*Angel to Agnes*. Our Lord so loved the poor, that he became one of them, and lived among them as his friends.

*Agnes*. Let my littleness be of itself an humble flower for our Lord. I am unworthy to be the least among the poor, since he so loved them.

She retires, and mingles with the village children. When the litanies are ended, HELEN and OSWALD stand still, and the rest await their orders.

*Helen*. I am tired of walking in procession and singing, are not you? What shall we do next?

One of the village children advances with a basket of roses in his hand.

*Child to Oswald*. If you please, sir, I found this in the summer-house, where Miss Agnes sent us for our flags and bulrushes; and thinking mayhap you wanted these roses to dress up for your procession, I made bold to bring them with me here.

*Oswald*. Oh, that is famous! We are now in the amphitheatre, awaiting the arrival of the emperor Diocletian, who is anxious to witness the tortures of the Christian martyrs. Somebody must represent the emperor Diocletian, and none can act that part so well as myself; because I am up in the Roman history, and understand Latin and all that. I will just go behind that arbutus to arrange my toga, and to throw away my palm; and then you, Charlie Baker, you will do for a trumpeter to announce my arrival; and all the rest, except Helen and Agnes, must cry, "Long live Cæsar! long live the immortal Diocletian!" and must strew these roses in my path when I arrive. This basket comes just in the right time.

*Agnes*. No, Oswald, no! Pray do not touch those roses; they were gathered from my own garden, and you know what for.

*Oswald*. If I choose to have them, I should like to see you prevent me! I will make you repent of it if you try.