

flowers and crowns with its glorious aureole the beautiful child in its midst.

Guiseppe trembles and Tito instinctively understanding whispers: "Brother, it's the child Jesus passing."

Jesus heard the whisper and stooping left a kiss upon his brow.

"O, beautiful Child Jesus! O, sweet Child Jesus," he pleads, "stay with us. We are so cold, so hungry, and so afraid. Stay with us and we will sing you sweet hymns, the hymns Grandma taught us long years ago in our happy Tuscan home."

With infinite patience, the Child Jesus tried to make them understand that on this Christmas night He had to go and visit all the babes in their cots and that He had not a minute to spare because the night was so short and the world so big. "But come with Me," He concluded, "and while I stoop to kiss each little babe, you will sing your joyous carols."

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They followed in the Child Jesus' footsteps, wrapped in the warm light. No longer cold, or hungry or afraid but in an ecstasy of delight, those little musicians accompany the sweet Child Jesus over valleys and plains, cities and hamlets as if borne by invisible wings.

They traverse narrow alleys and wide streets, visit sumptuous dwellings and poor hovels enter into cozy nurseries, where the cheery blaze of the Yule log lights up faces fair as roses, resting on dainty lace and snow-white linen, into poor and barren nurseries, a prey to the winds and elements where, on the bare boards, sleep poor, miserable, little babes.—And everywhere as the Child Jesus bent over the cribs, the harp and viol vibrated under the touch of the two little musicians with a hitherto unknown melody of sweet dreams, tender lullabys, loving hymns. And the sleeping babes in their rosy dream of the Christmas Bambino heard and marveled at its unearthly sweetness.

They walked on and on and upwards until the way grew very steep and the harp began to press heavily on Guiseppe's shoulder and Tito's little aching hands could no longer hold the bow. When morning dawned they halted before the golden door of a palace a hundred times more beautiful than any they had seen in their travels that night. The door seemed to open of itself and they saw radiant white-robed, white-winged figures passing to and fro and heard distant music that thrilled their soul with its marvellous rhythm.