

brightness greater than the sun of that fair land at noon, a brightness such as fell on Saul of Tarsus, what time he journeyed to Damascus ; that filled the room with glory as of Heaven. And, in the brightness, I was ware of a presence. Nor I, alone ; she also, that Most Blessed Maid, was ware that not I, but another, spake with her. "Hail, full of grace," said he, "the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women." Reverently he spake, and bowed in lowliest homage, as an herald to a Queen, yet she was troubled as his salutation, deeming him, methought, a man, and she a Maid most pure, most innocent. Thereat, he spake again, and, lo ! his voice was full of cheer : "Fear not," saith he, "for Thou hast found favour with God." Then knew I that this was the Messenger of God, Himself, who should tell this Maid of the Coming of the Son of God ; who should wait, if I may say it, her consent, her "*Fiat mihi*," since thus only, in the councils of The Most High God, might The Word be made Flesh and dwell among us.

Thereat, meseemed, he turned to me and said : "Understandest thou what thou hast heard and seen ?" And I made lowly answer, "Yea, my lord, now do I understand." Then he : "Know thou," he saith, "that even such an homage as thou hast now seen me pay, "me, Gabriel, who stand in the Presence of God, shalt thou and all "men pay, now and ever, to this Blessed among women, who hath "found favour with the Most High, to be the Mother of His Son."

Then did my dream change, as dreams use, and, methought, I journeyed on a rugged, stony mountain pathway in company with an Hebrew carpenter of middle age, and with the Blessed One, his espoused wife. In haste they journeyed, as it seemed to me, yet gladly, as who were fain to reach their journey's end. Then came we, presently, to a walled mountain town, passed through the arched gateway, where the elders sat, in the coolth, fathers of many sons, and, therefore, not ashamed to speak even with their enemies in the gate. Through the narrow streets hasted they, and I with them, as the sun sank toward his setting, till they came to a certain house, where, it seemed, they would abide. For, lo ! as the hoofs of the patient ass, whereon the Blessed Mary rode, clattered over the stones of the street, there came one to the door clad as a priest of the House of Aaron, and with him his wife, stricken in years, even as he. And to the younger spake the elder woman, even the Blessed Elizabeth,