

that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger ; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night watches over their flock. And behold an Angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the Angel of the Lord said to them : Fear not : for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people : for this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you ; you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying : Glory to God in the highest : and on earth peace to men of good will. And it came to pass, after the Angels departed from them into Heaven, the shepherds said one to another : Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us. And they came with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger. And seeing, they understood the word that had been spoken concerning this Child. And all that heard wondered ; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart."—St. Luke, ii, 1-19.

What instructive inferences may not be drawn from these words. A young girl goes up from Nazareth to Bethlehem in the company of her husband, a man past middle age. Her delicate condition calls for kindness, rest and shelter. But no place can be found for her ; "there was no room for them in the inn." She is obliged to seek refuge in a stable. And there the Son of God is born. Ah, brethren, there are many places in the world to-day where there is no room for Mary. There are churches from which she is excluded and in which she is insulted. But this will never be true of the Catholic Church, for in the humblest Catholic chapel as in the most glorious cathedral there will always be room for Mary. There were many on that far-off night who, had they known the destiny of the pilgrim at their doors, would themselves have gladly gone cold and shelterless to give her a fitting refuge. But what excuse can they offer who, in our own day and with full