

THE SERMON OF ST. FRANCIS.

Up soared the lark into the air,
A shaft of song, a winged prayer,
As if a soul released from pain,
Were flying back to heaven again.

St Francis heard ; it was to him
An emblem of the Seraphim ;
The upward motion of the fire,
The light, the heat, the heart's desire.

Around Assisi's convent gate
The birds, God's poor who cannot wait,
From moor and mere and darksome wood
Came flocking for their dole of food.

" O brother birds," St. Francis said,
" Ye come to me and ask for bread,
But not with bread alone to-day
Shall ye be fed and sent away.