

Pure as the Breath of God !—O clean of heart !
 These happy words can tell
 The miracle
 Of how divinely innocent thou art !
 Virgin Immaculate !
 Under thy shining cloak our vileness hide,
 Lest her own kindred should disgrace the Bride.

E. C. D.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

WE have now reached the last month of the year and, instead of speaking of the sufferings of our divine Lord as we have done during the previous months, we think we may fittingly close the year by considering the joys of which the Precious Blood was the source, even at the moment of Its most painful effusions. *Love is strong as death. . . . If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing,* says Holy Scripture in the canticle of canticles. How then can we understand our Redeemer's mighty and infinite love since He gave for us, not the substance of his house, but the deluge of His Blood. This was loving His creatures not only to the end of life and beyond it, but to the utmost limit of love itself.

Love is the essential element of happiness, and it would be false to assert that any mortal could enjoy veritable felicity in complete solitude. God Himself created man for His own happiness. Intelligent creatures—the work of His hands, are the objects of His affection, and on seeing them endowed and embellished with a reflection of His own perfections He feels for them a love incomparably superior to all human sentiment.

To ransom His fallen creatures, to gain their love, the Word became flesh. This desire of winning the hearts of mankind has the greatest intensity in the Sacred Heart of Jesus whose ardent tenderness surpasses all human affections combined. Sacred writers have vainly tried to portray its strength and constancy ; for, since it is infinite,