

A THOUGHT IN SEASON.

BY LOUISA MAY DALTON, IN THE AVE MARIA.

AMID the bustle of the season preceding Christmas, and even at the very time when that blessed day of days is with us, it is an extraordinary fact that the event which the world is celebrating the worldy forget. The Babe, the central figure of all the rejoicing, is thought of seldom or not at all by the crowds that jostle one another at the bargain counter in the search of articles of more or less value wherewith to cancel the obligations of former gift-giving periods. The thought is not "Unto us a Child is born," but, "I wonder whether Jenny would prefer a Kodak or a set of silver-backed brushes?" Not "They wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger," but "I will not squander anything on that hateful Mrs. Jones this year." Not "And the Word was made flesh," but "If Alfred does not surprise me with a bicycle, I'll never forgive him."

But the Christ Child! Ah! what proportion of those who keep the day in any wise remember Him? Does the manufacturer, urging his wheels and looms day and night in order to be ready for the holiday trade? Does the merchant, engaging an extra force to serve behind his counters during the Christmas rush? Does the housewife, studying over menus, and inviting her prosperous relatives to a Christmas dinner? Do the children, those not of the household of faith, exulting in an addition to their stock of toys, or prouting because it is not larger? Do they who are hanging wreaths in the window, and filling the fireplaces with Christmas greenery? Do they who are dancing and laughing away the flying hours to the sounds of gay music which comes from behind a screen of holly?

THE PAPAL MOTTO.

During the past three centuries each of the Popes has had a special motto; and, strange to say, many of them suited exactly the Pontiffs who used them. The Popes do not select these devices; a list of them was made, centuries ago, and each Pope takes the one that falls to his turn. We take the following from a list given by a contemporary some time ago. They will suffice to answer a subscriber who is very anxious to know all about the subject:

In 1700 began the reign of Clement XI. His motto was: Flores circumdati (surrounded by flowers.) He was very eloquent, and the old chroniclers say that "every flower of rhetoric was at his command."

Innocent XIII. came in 1721, and his fitting device was: De bona religione (concerning good religion). He was followed by Benoit XIII. (1724), Miles in bello (a soldier in war). Then came Clement XII., Columna excelsa (a high column), and then Benoit XIV., whose device, Animal rurale (a rural being), was particularly fitting, as he was of rural origin.

Clement XIII. (1758) had for his motto Rosa Umbria (the Rose of Tuscan), a flower which is particularly abundant at Venice, where Clement XIII. was born. Clement XIV. was a diplomat of high order, so his device, Visus vel utriusque (a rapid glance full of discernment), was quite appropriate. He ascended the throne in 1769.

Six years later Pius VI. became Pope, and the device which fate accorded him was: Perigrinus apostolicus (the wandering apostle). It dimly foreshadowed the future, for he was compelled to flee from Rome and ended his days at Valenti. In 1800 the words Aquila repax (the rapacious eagle) became Pius VII.'s motto, and it was not amiss, for it was the imperial eagle of a Corsican which so very beset him.

Pius VIII. (1829) "Vir religiosus—the religious man"—was strikingly apt, for the great piety of this occupant of St. Peter's chair is proverbial.

In 1831 Gregory XVI. became Pope. His motto was De Balneis Etrurial (from Balneis in Etruria). In 1846 he succeeded by Pius IX., whose device was Crux de cruce—the cross of the cross. This Pope had many tribulations, which he bore in great fortitude. The present Pope is Leo XIII. He became ruler of the Church in 1878, and the device Lumen in celo (sunshine in heaven) fell to him. He is celebrated for his great wisdom.

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