

altar, while the organ chimed forth softly and the choir began —

“Jesus, Thou art coming,  
Holy as Thou art;  
Thou the God Who male me,  
To my loving heart.”

The priest, turning to the people, and elevating the Sacred Host, said, “Ecce Agnus Dei,” and descended to administer First Communion. Still the man remained standing at the door, gazing in astonishment. What a holy scene! One by one the little ones arose at the altar railing and others took their places, till finally the long line was nearly ended. The man never for a moment took his eyes from the children until, “Who? Yes! It must be my Mary! Last of all. Yes, last, but not least, Mary slowly returned from the altar, her head erect, but her eyes lowered, and her hands reverently joined in adoration. “My wife!” the man gasped, as behind the child a tall woman walked, she too, with downcast eyes and hands joined in prayer. He took a step forward and leaning against the back of a bench gazed intently at the two as they slowly proceeded to their places. What could be the meaning of that smile that each bore? Happiness shone in their radiant countenances. Still the choir sang —

“Thou art my Good Shepherd  
I Thy little lamb,  
Take myself, dear Jesus,  
All I have and am.  
Take my heart and fill it  
Full of love for Thee;  
All I have, I give Thee  
Give Thyself to me.”

The man fell upon his knees and his head dropped upon his hands; tears filled his eyes as the organ ceased and the echo within his heart cried “Take myself, dear Jesus; give Thyself to me.”

The following Christmas found not two, but three persons happy; too happy for this world, kneeling before the altar awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom.

*Kathleen Kearns in Sunday Companion.*