

Ten minutes later Jacques was in the street, and soon for the first time he assisted at the divine sacrifice from a hiding place behind the great organ.

He was overcome by the sight. The twinkling lights of the altar, the solemnity of the service, the smell of sweet incense, the harmonious music of the choir, all made his heart flutter with a delight he had hitherto never known. Tears of happiness coursed down his careworn little cheeks, as from organ and choir burst forth the sublime strains of the *Minuit Chrétien* :

Minuit Chrétien, c'est l'heure solennelle  
Où l'Homme Dieu descendit jusqu'à nous,  
Pour effacer la tache originelle,  
Et de son Père apaiser le courroux.  
Le monde entier tressaille d'espérance,  
En cette nuit qui lui donne un Sauveur.  
Peuple, à genoux ! Attends ta délivrance !  
Noël ! Noël ! Voici le Rédempteur !

He understood not the words—the music made them indistinct, and his ear was not practised ; but the solemn grandeur of the melody was like an echo from heaven and sank into the innermost depths of his soul. The Mass at Dawn passed like a soothing zephyr over his sad heart. It was like the soft music of an æolian harp lulling him into a peaceful sense of security ; it filled the weary waif with fresh hope for the future.

And when on a sudden the priest disappeared followed by his numerous cortege robed in white surplices, Jacques saw with sorrow the throng below begin to surge, then, slowly separating, move away while a mysterious hand extinguished the candles on the altar. One by one the lights disappeared and the sanctuary by contrast seemed darker than the rest of the holy edifice. Yet not all the lights were extinguished, one part near the railing was spared ; it was here the lights were the prettiest. Angel hands seemed to have prepared this spot, it was so beautiful. Everybody in going out passed by it and knelt a moment in contemplation before the figure of a little child with arms out-stretched as though asking to be taken to each one's heart. It was a representation of the scene in Bethlehem's stable nearly nineteen hundred years ago when the Saviour of the world first appeared on this earth. Little