

deserted but the lights at the crib still shone brightly. Going as close to it as he could, Mr B.... threw himself on his knees and implored : " O Child Jesus ! O God whom I have denied and forsaken, give me back my child, and I promise faithfully to return to Thee forever."

Weeping bitterly but full of hope he gave a last lingering look at the Almighty Babe and left the Church. The poor mendicant he passed in the porch murmured a fervent blessing at his generosity, and thought perhaps he was a Christmas Angel in disguise.

" How is Marie ? was his first question on reaching home.

" She seems somewhat better. She slept all the time you were away but awoke just as you rang the bell."

Throwing off his coat he hastened to her and embracing her with a new gentleness, asked : " Well are you satisfied now ? I am afraid I remained too long. Did I not ? "

" No, dearest Papa, it was so beautiful, so beautiful. How could you help it."

" Yes, the little Child Jesus was there in his crib," he replied forcing a smile.

" I know " she answered " and He was even more lovable than last year."

" How do you know ? "

" Because I went to the church with you."

Thinking her delirious he showed no surprise, only tried to quieten and humor her.

Seeing he made no comment she continued : " Listen Papa, and tell me if I dont describe exactly what happened.

Thoroughly mystified he answered as gently as he could.

" Hush child ! So much excitement is not good for you. Try and be calm."

" But I am calm " retorted the wounded child.

Seeing the sensitive little mouth quiver, he relented and said : " Why so you are, my pet, and now tell me whatever you like, I'm all attention."

Happy again she resumed : " When we entered the church it was crowded ; singing was going on ; the priests were at the altar.... we went through the crowd up to