

## THE VICTIM.

IT is the twenty ninth day of the month of March, of the year 33. What a glorious morning ! The spring is still young, chilly and tender, yet developed, for we are in the land of Judea. The earth stirred by a silent force is awakening from her long winter's sleep, to expand beneath the smile of her royal friend, the sun, as he returns to her. The most hardy of the flowers have their calices half open, revealing their fresh little faces, while upon the lowly aromatic plants humming and swaying beneath their weight of bees, the glowing olive trees are casting their tessellation of shadows like a net work designed to capture all this joy. The fig trees, which have made their way here and there through the great rocks of Bethphage, are in bud—and Jesus is coming out from that kindly home in Bethany where He has slumbered during the past night “whilst His Heart was watching.” In the distance, through the morning mist, the lonely peak of Calvary is dimly to be seen. Between Calvary and Jesus—the fair spring ! Through the lips of the Master, channel of love, from His Heart, golden chalice of incense, prayer ceased not to flow. Well might He have said in the words of David, which open the Holy Sacrifice : “I will go the altar of the Lord of the God who reneweth my youth.” Jesus was thirty three years old. He had just performed the most striking of His miracles : the raising of Lazarus from the dead ! His name and reputation were spread abroad in Judea. His foster father, holy Joseph lay sleeping in the grave—it is true—but His Mother was with Him still. And that day He had set His face toward Jerusalem—His route brought one first to Bethphage, which lies at the entrance to the valley of Josaphat, then to the Garden of Olives, bordering on Bethphage to the brook of Cedron flowing in the bed of the valley, and to the Golden Gate, which, opening upon the slope opposite to the Garden of Olives, admitted the pilgrim into the Holy City. So far as Bethphage, He walked on the sides of the summit of the Mount of Olives, with the open country below and to right and left of Him. Nature had the opportunity, as He passed by, of mingling the perfume of