



Mary's little Maid



was her god-mother, and had given her this title as I held her in my arms at the baptismal font, for I felt she had a strong claim on the patronage of the Blessed Virgin. Her grandparents and parents had been devoted sodalists : she was born on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in the parish of a church dedicated to Our Lady under that title ; and she had just received the name of Mary Immaculata.

Whenever she was taken out for an airing her pious mother did not neglect to present her child before the shrine of Mary in whatever Church she passed during her walk ; and when the little one began to make her first attempts at speech, she was taught by both parents to repeat little prayers in honor of her great Patroness. When she was three years old she had developed into the most charming of little maidens with deep blue eyes, and golden curls that fell trimly around her sweet face, giving her a wise, prim look that was enchanting. Every pleasant day during the spring and summer, she could be seen going toward the parish church with flowers in her tiny hands for " Blessed Muzzer's altar." as she was careful to state to any person who happened to address her.

" You are Mary's Little Maid, surely my love, " I used to say to her on these occasions for I tried to way-lay her as often as possible. She would bestow upon me a delightful smile, and, pointing to her little kid shoes, to her sash, and the ribbon around her hair, all of an exquisite shade of blue. and then to her white dress, she would say : " Blessed Virgin's colors, Miss Annie. My