

of this night! If you knew how full of joy is my heart at its approach! for of all the feasts established in his honor, this one is, without doubt, the most precious to me. At this cold season of the year, I feel as if my whole being was warmed by this lovely sun. Oh! why cannot I take away the snow that covers the ground, and see it strewn with flowers, and the trees ornamented with their beautiful foliage? Why cannot I unite the stars of the firmament, that they may light and warm the atmosphere? It is painful to think, that on account of our sins, Jesus was born in this cold month, when the nights are so dark and dreary, and the wind so piercingly cold. Yes, this thought makes me sad at times; yet my sadness is of short duration, for my heart is filled with a holy joy at the thought of the Messiah, who has come, and I feel like singing, with the angels: "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will." How can one not be moved when they think of the Son of God leaving His heavenly throne to become a miserable mortal like unto us. What love! What mercy! Often I think of his submissiveness, and I can hardly conceive how an infinite God could have loved sinners so much. We were lost forever had not this Divine Infant come to save us; that is the reason why I feel more joyful at Christmas, than at any other time of the year. Though the feasts of Easter and Pentecost are also consecrated to him, still it was only on Christmas Eve that the angels sang, "You are perfectly right, dear Agatha," said her mother, deeply moved. "I am glad to see you so pious and grateful to your Lord." "This night," the child continued, "reminds man of the glory due to God the Father. Did not Jesus, by his obedience, give us an example of resignation to his Father's will? Did not Jesus proclaim by his terrible suffering and ignominious death all that we owe to the justice and mercy of God? Alas, a victim was wanted, to redeem man, condemned by original sin. Oh! how severe is divine justice; when, to appease it, a God must need be immolated. How happy I should have been," the pious child continued, "had I been amongst those who knelt at the crib. I envy the

happiness of the shepherds, to whom his birth was announced." "I admire your disposition, dear child," said her mother, "and I must say that such piety as yours is rarely seen; still I hope that this exalted piety may not one day make you leave your father's roof, for a religious life. You are our only child, since we lost our baby boy." "Dear mother," "Dear mother," said Agatha, "you are mistaken; I shall never leave you alone. Every day I pray that our Divine Saviour may leave me with you, and give me his grace, that I may perform well all the duties imposed on a dutiful child, for you know he has promised a long life and abundant graces to those that observe the fourth commandment, and I wish to merit them." "They will not be lacking, dear child," said her mother, "if you always remain as you are now—an obedient and dutiful child. Your conduct has been all that we could ask for. Poor child, well I remember how kind and patient you were last year, when your little brother was ill." "Not so much as you think, mother," the young girl answered; "he was such a little darling, that I really loved to take care of him. How he amused himself with my angels. Sometimes when I think of him, with his fair hair, prominent forehead, and large blue eyes, I think he looked like an angel himself." "He must be in heaven now," said his mother, wiping away a tear; he was our only son, and the pride of the house." "He was mine also, mother dear," said Agatha. "Oh! how I wish he were alive. For some time there was silence in the room; the mother was grieving for her lost child. Agatha respecting her mother's sorrow, began preparing the fish for tea, and when she had shaken up the fire and put them on, she went to fetch his slippers, that they might be dry and warm. After a few moments, her mother again asked her if she did not see her father; he is later to-night than usual, and this delay makes me anxious"; "he is often later than this, mother," said Agatha, trying to reassure the sick woman. "You are right, child, yet it seems to me that on Christmas Eve, every father of a family should be at home, that he may gather them around the tree to pray." "That is precisely