

counts" with John Middlehampton, or *vice versa*, as it might chance to prove.

The "gospellers," in short, had "taken action" against the rector of Ditchley Saint Mary's for "illegal ritual practices," and for the presence in his church of "ornaments liable to be put to superstitious uses." The chancellor had, accordingly, given the customary three months' warning, wherein the rector might, if he chose, "remove" the obnoxious ornaments himself. Failing which, the "gospellers" had authority to do so themselves. And the three months would end on the day after Christmas.

The "First Vespers of the Nativity" has been duly chanted with all the splendor of ritual and beauty of music for which Ditchley Saint Mary's had been famous, even before "Father" Butler's arrival. The lights and flowers on the "altar," the "crib," the statues of our Lady, of St. Joseph, of St. Hugh, of St. Aldhelm, famous as a Wessex "worthy," all showed signs of the approach of the great festival. And, before the crib, before the statue of our Lady which, with the others, must, — so the State decreed — be "removed" in two days, either by loving, reverent hands, or by the rude, desecrating hands of "Protestants," knelt men and women — women chiefly — telling their beads in honor of her "of whom was born Jesus." Truly, a sad and strange Christmas eve.

To the rector, that day, had come a message, which, as it seemed, he could not do better than take for the theme of his Christmas sermon. It had been sent him by an old friend, of like mind with himself, the superior of a Brotherhood working in the East End slums of London. Of ancient lineage, rich, and a scholar of no ordinary attainments, refined of mind, and delicately nurtured, "Father" Longridge had sacrificed home, ease and wealth, all that the world holds dear, to live and labor, with the "Brothers" of his choosing, among the poor, the vile, the outcast, seeking to win to Christ the souls for whom Christ died,