

Ave Maria.

Blanche E. Holt Murison.

Ave Maria, Virgin-Mother holy!
With humble hearts we come to Bethlehem
This Christmas eve; while silently and slowly
A million stars weave night a diadem.
 O Mother-heart, O gentle maiden mild,
 We bring our homage to thy little child!

Ave Maria, blessed and thrice blessed!
Mysterious means by men not understood;
Though all unknown, acknowledged and confessed,
The harbinger of everlasting good.
 O little Babe of Fatherhood divine,
 We bow in heart before Thy manger-shrine!

Life of all life, in mystic incarnation
Beheld of men, while angels sang to Thee;
We come again to bring our adoration,
On this the night of Thy nativity.
 We gather round to touch Thy garment's hem,
 O little Babe of royal Bethlehem!

Mother and Child, no words can ever falter
The rapture and devotion that we feel;
As low before Judæa's stable-altar,
With bended knee and praiseful heart we kneel.
 But, oh, the prayer goes forth—do Thou abide
 Spirit of Love with us this Christmas-tide.