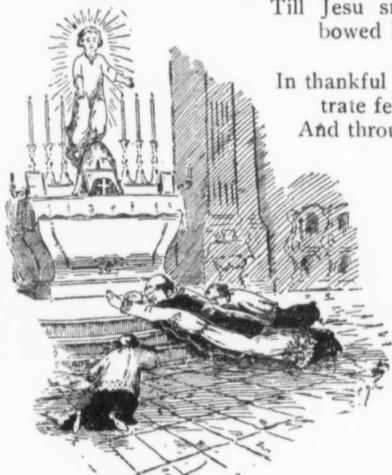


Then, a hand laying on each lovely head,
Devoutly the old man the children blessed ;
" Come early on the morrow morn "—he said,
To meet—if such His will—your Heavenly Guest."

To meet their pastor by the next noon ran
The youthful pair, their eyes with rapture bright ;
" He came ! " their happy lisping tongues began :
" And we are bid to sup with Him to-night !
Thou, too, dear father ! for we would not come
Alone, without our faithful friend ;—we said :
Oh ! be thou sure our pleadings were not dumb,

Till Jesu smiled consent, and
bowed His head."



In thankful joy Bernardo prostrate fell,

And through the hours he lay entranced in prayer ;
Until the solemn sound of vesper bell

Aroused him, breaking on the silent air,

Then rose he calm ; and when the psalms were o'er,
And in the aisles the chant had died away,

With soul still bowed his Master to adore,
Alone he watched the fast departing day.

Two silvery voices, calling through the gloom
With seraph sweetness, reached his listening ear ;
And swiftly passing 'neath the lofty dome,
Soon side by side he and his children dear
Entered the ancient chapel, consecrate
By grace mysterious. Kneeling at the shrine
Before which, robed in sacerdotal state,
That morning he had blessed the bread and wine.

Bernardo prayed. And then the chosen three
Partook the food which Christ on earth had blessed :