

to the main entrance of the Church. The Roman children gather in thousands around the steps and sing appropriate hymns: the sight is one which can never be forgotten.

Art lends its tribute to the Christmas solemnity. What a wealth of interest and suggestiveness surrounds the wonderful creations of Fra Angelico whose Nativity canvasses in the Uffizi and the Pitti Palace in Florence are the cynosure of every artistic eye! What sublime devotion radiates from the productions of Giotto! Surely if art be "sublimated religion" one finds it here. Poesy has likewise added its tribute to the artist's brush. Who remains unmoved by the angelic rhapsodies of Prudentius (4th century)! Who remains unthrilled when the *Adeste Fideles* echoes through choir and clerestory on Christmas morn! Memory wafts us back o'er the ocean of distant years to the little church on the hilltop which glowed with "dim religious light" and bespoke the angelic message to our childish ears! Who stands unmoved when *Minuit Chrétien* (so ill-translated by our English "Holy Night") resounds through fretted vault and stately nave, reminding us that "'tis the solemn hour in which the Man-God descends from His heavenly throne to abide with sinful man."

Poets, from Chaucer to the beloved sweet singer John B. Tabb, have hymned the Nativity in divers tones; and some of our most inspiring literature is motived by the Story of Bethlehem. Milton's "Nativity" is one of the masterpieces of our language; Tennyson's Christmas songs are unsurpassed for melody and rhythm; and Longfellow, Mrs. Hemans, Phillips Brooks, and the too-little-known "Poet Priest of the South"—Abram J. Ryan, have left us imperishable poetic gems whose theme is the Story of Bethlehem. Aubrey de Vere has this choice moreau:

"Primaeval night had repossessed
 Her Empire in the fields of space;
 Calm lay the kine on earth's dark breast;
 The earth lay calm in heaven's embrace.
 That hour, where shepherds kept their flocks;
 From God a sudden glory fell:
 The splendor smote the trees and rocks.
 And lay like dew among the dell.
 God's angel close beside them stood,
 'Fear naught' that angel said; and then
 'Behold! I bring you tidings good:
 The Saviour Christ is born to men.'