


The Porringer of Milk.

A LEGEND.

NE day it happened that there was no bread in the little house at Nazareth. St. Joseph had been ill and was not yet recovered, and the people for whom he had worked last said they would pay for the work later on.

The Virgin Mary watched the Infant Jesus with a melancholy regard. He was still so little, and must He begin to suffer so soon? He was waiting patiently for His supper, and His cheeks were very pale.

"My child," said the Blessed Mary, "we have no more bread and no money with which to buy any. Take this basket and go to Simonias, to the rich lady of the village. They say she is very charitable; perhaps she will come to our aid."

Jesus obediently set forth, singing one of the anthems of heaven; when He sang He did not remember how hungry He was. And all the little birds, hearing His sweet song, flew down from the upper to the lower branches to sing with Him. Thus escorting their Creator, the whole party traversed a thicket of venerable cedars; massive pines and spruce reared their branches where ranunculus, anemones and daisies sprinkled the sward, their delicious perfumes making balmy the air.

At length they came in sight of a beautiful house and Jesus modestly sounded the knocker at the gate. A slave appeared.

"What do you wish?" he asked.

"I wish to speak to the lady who lives here," answered Jesus.

"Then go up this marble stairway; and do not touch the brass railing, lest you tarnish it, and above all, don't brush against the paintings on the walls. Make haste.