

Jeſuſ changeſ Water into Wine

— AT THE —

Marriage Feaſt of Cana.

(See frontſpiece)

IT was in this ſecluded nook of Paleſtine that the Man-God condeſcended to bleſs and ſanctify that union deſtined to people heaven, purify its joys and by His preſence atteſt its eſſentially religious character.

Among the Jews theſe nuptial ceremonies began towards evening. The bride arrayed in rich garments, her beautiful hair flowing beneath her wedding veil, her head crowned with a wreath of natural flowers, knelt to receive her parents' bleſſing, then took her place under a daiſ.

Arrived at the bridegroom's houſe, ſhe was preſented to him. One of his parents recited a long prayer, then followed a ſumptuous banquet. At Cana, the preſence of unexpected gueſts was doubtleſs the reaſon why the wine gave out and threatened the young couple with the ſhame of a public humiliation; but the Mother of Jeſus ſaw their plight and with maternal ſolicitude approached her divine Son ſaying ſoftly: They have no wine." And to pleaſe her Jeſus advances the hour of His firſt miracle and changes water into wine.

The little village of Cana ſtill exiſts at a ſhort diſtance from Nazareth. The ruins of a grand old Church, mark according to an ancient tradition, the ſpot where the miracle took place. In the hollow of a ſmiling valley, pomegranates, fig and olive-trees ſurround a fountain and protect its freſhneſs in return for the life it gives them. From this fountain the miraculous water was drawn.

In the nuptial banquet of Cana, the Holy Fathers ſee the figure of another. It is in reality an announcement, a prelude of the divine banquet to which Jeſus would ſhortly invite humanity and leave us, with His Body for food, and His Blood for Beverage. At the moment when in the feſtal hall of Cana Jeſus worked the miraculous transformation his gaze penetrated beyond the ſymbol, down the future centuries, and ſaw the table of the Cenacle, all the altars of the world, and on this table, on theſe altars produced by a word from His lips, or from thoſe of the prieſt, His repreſentative, the continual change of a little wine into His Blood, and this Blood diſtributed to the faithful, become the link of their myſterious and fruitful union with Him, the Man-God, Redeemer and Saviour.

Such is the ſublime teaching, the true meaning of the Miracle of Cana.