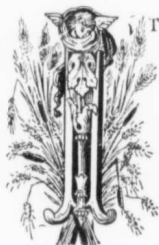




A PROMISE

(Written for the Sentinel)

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It was the First Friday exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and the altar shone resplendent. The fragrance of flowers filled the church recalling involuntarily to many of those present spring mornings or summer noontides, beautiful gardens or May festivals, where our Blessed Lady's statue had been embowered in roses, heliotropes, mignonette. And with it was mingled the odor of the incense reminding those who knelt, of vast Cathedrals, or dim monastic cloisters, where its aromatic breath was forever united with the smoke of prayer and sacrifice.

The radiance of many tapers and the glow of jewel-like colored lamps concentrated everything, — as was fitting upon the Altar, — where high above all these material things, shone the Presence. The worshippers were many and various, the parish priest accompanied by an acolyte or two, who in cassock and surplice knelt upon a Prie-Dieu, voicing the petitions of all his parishioners. Nuns of more than one Order, Friars of the Christian schools, embodiments of the spirit of prayer, and the lay people of various sorts, rich and poor, busy and idle, the fashionably clad and the shabby or threadbare, but all bringing their sins and their sorrows, their joys