

with an unwonted reverence: "Whence is this to me, that the Mother of My Lord should come to me?" The rest said Oswald, thou knowest; how the babe unborn bare witness to the Presence of the Word made Flesh.

Yet once again was my dream other than it had been. 'Twas a winter night of radiant moon and stars, the like of which thou hast not seen, nor I, save only then, a night of bitter cold. Late though it were, the streets, methought, of the little town were thronged with strangers, seeking where they might abide, asking, and finding not. And, in their midst, who, I knew, had come hither to be taxed at the command of Cæsar, Joseph the carpenter and that Blessed One, his espoused wife. They, too, as I saw, sought shelter for the night, even shelter for that Blessed One, in the hour of her wondrous and most glorious Motherhood, when she should bring forth her Son, even the Word made Flesh. Then, as they sought vainly, and my heart was sore within me that I might not aid or succour them, came one, a shepherd youth, who gazed on them wonderingly, yet reverently. And anon: "There is a stable," saith he, "in our field hard by, if ye will go with me, peradventure it will serve for want of better shelter. Methinks the world hath come to Bethlehem to-night," Whereon, Joseph the carpenter thanked the lad, courteously, and that Blessed One smiled on him as they wended whither he did lead them. Thereat, for a season, they were hidden from mine eyes, when, on a sudden, on the cold night air, there came to mine ears a song as of angel voices singing, and a glory shone round about me, as of heaven itself. "*Gloria in excelsis*," sang they, "*Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*"; and, lo! I stood by the little stable whereof the shepherd lad had just now spoken. And over it held, meseemed, by an angel's hand, shone a star fairer than all stars of all God's firmament: within were Joseph, Mary, and her New Born Babe, Emmanuel, even the Son of the Most High, made Man for us, and for our salvation. Then, as I kneeled in humble adoration, with the Wise Men and with the shepherds, lo! the vision passed, and in mine ears the voices of our brethren, chanting: *Et Homo factus est*. Then knew I that for the soul, as for God Himself, there is no past nor future, time nor space, but only *now*: the which, in Holy Mass, is made *now* for us.