

are tempted often times to murmur, to forget that the path in which He would have us walk, however rugged and stony it be is the one which will lead us to Him. From the tabernacle He watches over us in the midst of the troubles and dangers which beset us ; He will remain with us all along the way if, like Mary and Joseph, we rely on Him. Yes, He is with us, that hidden God who in the holy Sacrament makes Himself our Companion, our Guide, our Light and our Strength.

This earth is no longer a place of exile, for we can kneel at the altar-rail and be at home with our Father. It need not be a place of misery and tears, for He who is the joy of heaven is with us. O Mary ! of all creatures most closely united to Jesus, help us to keep close to Him, to flee with Him from the dangers that threaten our souls !

The Holy Family had for some time dwelt in exile when an angel again came to St. Joseph in sleep, and told him that he might now safely return with Jesus and Mary to Israel, for Herod was dead. To Nazareth, therefore, they bent their steps, and once more resumed the peaceful home life that had been disturbed by the dread of the enemy. "And the Child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom ; and the grace of God was in Him" (St. Luke II, 40,) How precious must these years have been to Mary ! We are told that "she kept His words in her heart", and pondered them over, all her life long : and we can imagine the joy and love with which she actually heard them. If they seem beautiful even to us, so naturally cold and hard of heart, what must they have been to Mary, hearing them spoken in the sweet tones of that divine voice which had such power to win and subdue, and watching the heavenly expression with which they were uttered ?

He was now old enough to help St. Joseph in the latter's daily toil, and His Mother's tenderness and admiration would have increased, if that were possible, in marking His humility and diligence.

Whether, distaff in hand, as painters love to portray her, she watched Jesus at His work, or whether she busied herself in other parts of the humble little home, she was