

THE BIRDS' CHRISTMAS CAROL

they are very late to-night, and I dare not speak to her lest she should be asleep. It is almost ten o'clock."

The boy soprano, clad in white surplice, stood in the organ loft. The light shone full upon his crown of fair hair, and his pale face, with its serious blue eyes, looked paler than usual. Perhaps it was something in the tender thrill of the voice, or in the sweet words, but there were tears in many eyes both in the church and in the great house next door.

"I am far frae my hame,
I am weary aften whiles
For the langed-for hame-bringin',
An' my Faether's welcome smiles;
An' I'll ne'er be fu' content,
Until my e'en do see
The gowden gates o' heaven
In my ain countree.

"The earth is decked wi' flow'rs,
Mony tinted, fresh an' gay,
An' the birdies warble blythely,
For my Faether made them sae: