



The Holy Family.



OUR EUGHARIST.

BEHOLD the spotless Lamb of God,
 Who takes away our sin!
 How gently at our heart He knocks,—
 Ope, ope, and let Him in!

He comes to us thro' Mary's hands,
 The Bread of Life, our Food,
 As offered erst on Calvary's hill,
 Upon the Holy Rood.

When but a babe, the Temple's court
 Received Him as its Lord;
 And now each heart a temple is
 Where He may be adored.

As Blessed Simeon held Him close
 In dying love's embrace,
 In sweet Communion we renew
 That great and wondrous grace.

Our soul in peace He doth dismiss,
 As death bids us appear
 Before the Face of that same Judge
 Whom we have worshipped here.



The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.

BEHOLD that venerable old man who has awaited during long years the Redemption of Israel ! What tears he shed ! What prayers he wafted heavenwards ! To-day a little child is presented to him. As soon as his arms clasp it, he feels and knows he holds the Desired of Nations. "It is He !"

And that pious widow who has consecrated the best years of her life to the service of the Temple. She also watched and prayed for the Messiah promised to her forefathers. What sighs ! What ardent longings went up from her very heart ! To-day the Holy Ghost guides her steps to the sacred place and in that little child Simeon raises towards heaven she recognizes the object of her desires. "It is He !" Not many weeks ago a few simple shepherds wended their way across the country in the middle of the night, following the angel's voice who had said : "Go to Bethlehem and behold a wonderful sight, a Saviour is born unto you..." "And when they saw this little Infant lying on straw, their hearts were filled with faith and love and they voiced the angel's gloria. "It is He !"

Then came the kings, the wise men. Many a night had they scanned the heavens, seeking the mysterious star foretold by the prophets... At last it appeared. They followed it and it led them to a crib wherein lay a little Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes. But a celestial light

told them He was the Messiah and they prostrated themselves in adoring, loving worship, confessing. "It is He!"

Years afterwards, God Himself will declare this truth from the heavens, and, that no testimony may be lacking to its veracity, Moses the Minister of the Law, Elias the representative of the prophets will be there, recalling by their presence the long centuries fallen humanity had waited, and God in His turn will tell us. "It is He!... He, my well-beloved Son; He whom I sent to save the world; He in whom I have put all my complacences."

Now, look at that poor soul whom thirst for happiness devours, whom the need of the infinite pursues, whose longings are never satisfied, who is tormented by a vague unrest a nameless void that nothing can fill, that inexorable weariness which, according to Bossuet, forms the basis of human nature. She sought to satisfy her longings with human affections but their only response was indifference, forgetfulness and death. Then she turned to pleasure or ambition in pursuance of her vain quest but here again found only bitter disappointment. Still she hoped and yearned and sought for peace and rest and happiness. And one day the answer came, as it will come to each of us; perhaps some blessed morning when the Source of Peace Himself will have entered into our happy hearts; perhaps on some special Festival when the compassionate Christ raised on His Eucharistic throne dispenses with a prodigal hand light, calm, peace and unspeakable happiness; perhaps some time when the sanctuary lamp alone lights up with its flickering radiance the humble tabernacle, a sudden light flooded her being, as it will ours, please God, some day, making her realize that nothing could satisfy her heart and intellect; making her understand that God alone could fill the void in her soul, give her true happiness and cause her to exclaim in her new found peace and joy, "It is He!"

He for whom my heart longed... He for whom it yearned and craved... He, the eternal, the immense, the infinite God made Man, the Man-God become Sacred Host."



The Sunday Communion.

(Fact related by a Jesuit Father.)



SOME years ago I was preaching the Lenten course of sermons at the church of X... in Paris.

One Sunday morning, shortly before the last mass which began at twelve o'clock, I was surprised to see a poor looking young girl enter the confessional where I had been quietly reading my breviary for some time, as penitents at that late hour were rare. I closed the book and to gain fuller knowledge of the soul God had directed to me questioned her concerning her state of life. Without the least shame or embarrassment, she humbly answered: "In the mornings I sweep the street crossings, and in the evenings earn a little more money by doing coarse mending. That was all the explanation she gave. Worthy poor like great saints are chary of their words, moreover, I was satisfied with her reply and let her begin her confession. Then I saw into a soul as humble as pure, yet judging accusing and condemning self by that divine light which discovers flaws even in the Angels.

Deeply touched marveling at God's wonderful work so clearly manifested in that soul, and realizing the dangers that surrounded this treasure of grace and angelic purity. I said; "My child, by what means do you keep so united to God, you who are obliged to mix so much with those who have nearly always hatred of God in their heart and blasphemy on their lips?" She answered simply: "I receive Communion every Sunday." More obtuse than this artless child, I did not immediately seize the direct relation there was in reality between the life of angels and the Bread of Angels and continued: "but what you see and hear among those 'sweepers' whose evil reputation is still better than they are, do all those things make no impression on you?" With the same simplicity this

seraphic soul replied : " I do not see or hear anything, I live in my heart and there, there is only room for my communion. Jesus has come... Jesus is coming ! It is my only thought. My dear Sunday absorbs me completely." Did you receive Communion this morning ? " I asked. " Not yet, Father. I could not leave my work until a little while ago, but I shall be able to receive at the next mass." Could you not, thirsting as you do for holy Communion, could you not receive it oftener, every day even ? " Receive Communion every day ! " she repeated brokenly, wonderingly. " Oh ! it would be too much happiness. I would die of happiness and I cannot die yet, my poor mother needs me."

The tears were running down my cheeks. Too much moved to speak I heard her whispering : Jesus every day !... Ah ! what happiness !..." An instant afterwards she had recovered that calm serenity of souls whom God possesses and said : " No, Father Our Lord does not desire me to taste the rapture of daily communion. He makes me feel that the bread of suffering must purchase the Bread of Happiness. Do not pity me, suffering makes up for not communicating."

I did not pity her. I could not help admiring her and after having asked for her address, I let her go to this Jesus who had full and entire possession of her heart, her thoughts, her innocent being.

Some days afterwards, I requested one of the Ladies of Charity to call at the address the young girl had given me. It turned out to be a small room, on the fifth floor, of one of those high dismal tenements whose very aspect breathes poverty and misery and wherein virtue and vice often live in such close contact. The poverty of the room was as evident as its spotless cleanliness ; its only occupant was a woman barely fifty years old whose pallid countenance, snow-white hair and wide open eyes swimming in tears told their own tale even more plainly than words.

As Madam C... approached the iron bed on which she lay, a weak voice asked : " Is that you Alice ? " Then, Madam saw the poor woman was blind as well as sick. After disclosing her identity and saying that she had called at Father M... 's request, it seemed an easy natu-

ral thing that the invalid should unburden her heart and tell her sad story to the kind sympathetic listener whose own eyes were dimmed by tears during its recital.

Married very young to a man only a year older than herself, a good, honest, upright fellow, but more given to idle day-dreaming than practical work under whose careless mismanagement she saw her fortune gradually lessen and disappear yet found in the love of her children the courage and strength necessary to face all the difficulties of her trying position. Two out of her three



children died shortly after each other and Alice the eldest and best loved was her only comfort left. Soon however a double blow fell upon poor Alice ; her father died suddenly and her mother was stricken with blindness on the day she made her first communion. This child of twelve undauntedly faced the dark future thus unexpectedly thrust upon her. Bidding adieu to devoted teachers and loving companions, she returned to her post of self-sacrifice and courageously endeavored to straighten out her father's business affairs in the hope of realizing sufficient means to support herself and mother. Unfortunately she did not succeed, and so great was their poverty that they

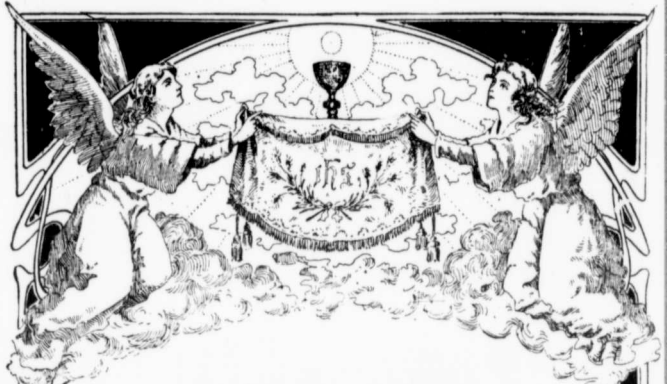
were obliged to leave their home and take refuge in the cheapest lodgings they could find.

Such was in substance the invalid's story ; but careful inspection of the room and questions adroitly asked of a kind neighbor disclosed moreover that her mother's blindness enabled Alice to hide their extreme poverty from her, also the laborious manner in which she toiled to meet their frugal expenses. She rose at daybreak and worked at her street sweeping until noon ; then, in the late afternoons and evenings, while her mother rested she darned and mended and often sat at the uncongenial task until after midnight. The little heroine had begun that life at fifteen and had kept it up cheerfully and unflinchingly for eight long years. When tactful charity sought to lighten her burden she gratefully accepted for her mother, but continued to eat the bread of suffering herself, saying smilingly : " Let me eat it... It tastes of Jesus ! "

When her mother died, I directed Alice to one of those religious communities where pure and devoted souls find, herebelow, their congenial atmosphere. Her sojourn therein was very happy but very brief. Under the Eucharistic rays and in the crucible of suffering she was consumed like an innocent victim and was often heard repeating : " To suffer and to receive holy communion every day ! Oh ! it is too much happiness ; it will kill me soon ! " The day she was allowed daily communion, she wrote : " Father, in future it will always be Sunday for poor Alice who sees in this priceless privilege the dawn of the eternal communion because no one could long exist without a miracle under such pressure of infinite love. "

In an ecstasy of love and desire she awaited the last visit of her Spouse : " Come, " she pleaded ! " Oh ! come my Jesus, and let us set out together for heaven. There at least I can love Thee and yet live forever. " Then addressing the Blessed Virgin and the saints she continued : " Tell Jesus to hasten ! Tell Him, my Beloved, how my heart yearns and longs for His coming. " Shortly afterwards she expired, her ecstatic, longing earthly cry : " Come, my Jesus, " stilled, changed forevermore into the glorious, triumphant heavenly paean : " My Jesus, I possess Thee now and shall love Thee for all eternity. "





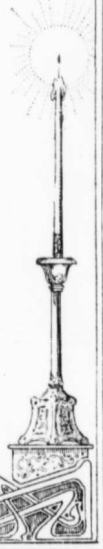
To the Sacred Host

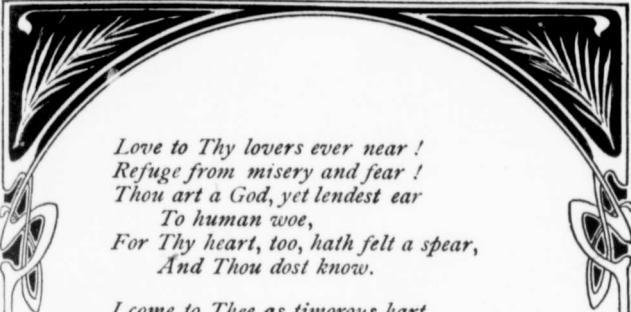


*Thou silent spirit veiled in white,
Eluding sense, deceiving sight,
But clear to faith's divine moonlight—
Mine only Friend,
Before Thy presence, chaste and bright,
My knee I bend.*

*Thou art a King, and many a stone
Shines in Thy crown, and roses blown
Stand for thy guard. But not alone
Our hands have given,
For in our hearts Thou hast a throne
And one in Heaven.*

*A thousand tapers in Thy sight
Offer their sacrifice of light
More Holy than the stars of night
That thoughtless rove
Through space, and know that they
[are bright
With mortal love.*






*Love to Thy lovers ever near !
Refuge from misery and fear !
Thou art a God, yet lendest ear
To human woe,
For Thy heart, too, hath felt a spear,
And Thou dost know.*

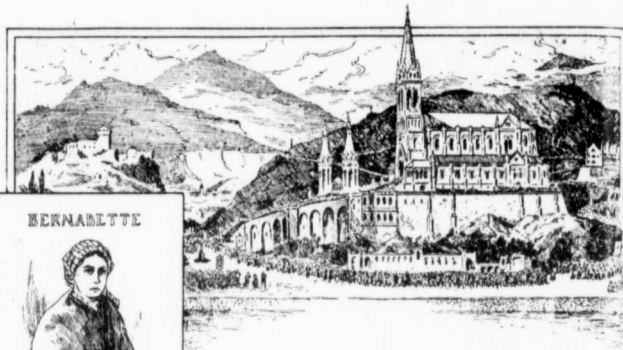
*I come to Thee as timorous hart
Flees, fainting, from the hunter's dart
I come to spend an hour apart
Alone with Thee :
The island of my love Thou art
In Hate's broad sea.*

*No pious offering I bear,
Nor blameless bosom's simple prayer ;
I only bring my secret care,
The worldling's gift.
To Thee in faith, too like despair,
Mine eyes I lift.*

*Without a star for evermore
Tossed on the ocean without shore
Whose currents wild with ceaseless roar
Insidious sweep,
I call to Thee as they of yore,
For Thou dost sleep*

*Fair Presence, solace of this spot,
Where sword and sorrow are forgot ;
My spirit from its mortal lot
Thou dost release,
And to my lips refuseth not
The kiss of peace.*





LOURDES.

Reminiscences of the Last
National Pilgrimage.

I NEVER considered myself specially fortunate until it happened to be in Lourdes at the time of the National Pilgrimage of Catholic France and an eye witness of that grand religious demonstration teeming with faith and love. It was a sight to be seen once in a life-time and remembered forever.

Twenty seven cars brought to Lourdes 33,000 hale and hearty pilgrims, about a thousand sick, between seven and eight hundred priests and a great many bishops. From the very first morning this immense crowd besieged the confessionals and hastened to Holy Communion. During four days the Basilica, the Crypt and the Church of the Rosary were thronged. The greater part of the morning was spent assisting at the numerous masses celebrated in the Grotto and at fifty other altars. A series of uninterrupted devotional exercises constituted the most edifying spectacle of this the largest pilgrimage that ever graced that famed shrine and consisted of midnight mass, nocturnal adoration, vespers, sermons, etc. Not for a moment did prayer or worship cease : while the beads were being recited by some ; others were singing quaint dialect hymns with a pathos and charm hard to describe ; further away eager crowds mounted Calvary's steps on their knees and beneath the shadow of Redemption's sign kneel

many fervent supplicants praying with arms extended in the form of a cross ; while at the Grotto itself, there was always such a great crowd that more than once I had to abandon the hope of reaching it. The hospitals are taxed to accommodate the sick who are daily carried to the piscine by voluntary litter-bearers whose kindness is proverbial, and many of whom are of noble lineage and great wealth and though unused to toil yet bear with infinite care and tender solicitude those poor sufferers upon whose pale emaciated faces in the majority of cases is depicted an indescribable blending of patient resignation and exultant hope. They represent all human ills and expect to be cured or at least notably helped, still, when disappointed as some among the many naturally must be — our blessed Lady knows how to soften the blow and enable them to say " Fiat."

Some as I was informed by reliable authority had the sublime generosity to offer their lives for their companions ; twenty-five of those peerless souls did the same for their sorely tried country France.

This generous piety saddens as well as gladdens ; but the saddest sight of all is witnessed during the procession of the Blessed Sacrament which takes place in the afternoon from five to six o'clock. The sick have been previously borne on stretchers or beds and laid in two long rows lining the way where Our Lord will pass. Every available space is crowded ; wherever people can gather they are massed as thick as bees. Slowly the procession leaves the Grotto and the Adoremus in æternum rings out loud and clear, while in the distance the silvery strains of the Ave Maria Stella, the Laudate Dominum, or the Laudate Mariam fills the air with angelic harmonies. The banners of the various pilgrims follow each other in quick succession. Each pilgrim carries a lighted taper and the sun falls on their uncovered heads. The procession halts on the large square in front of the Church of the Rosary. Finally the dias followed by the bishops and a solid mass of faithful passes also. Suddenly a voice which must be heard to be realized, a voice of unusual clearness, strength, purity, penetration and feeling ; a voice before which every orator's pales ; the voice of a priest who extends his arms before the Sacred Host exclaims :

“ Lord we adore Thee ! Lord we adore Thee ! Lord we believe ! Lord we believe but increase our belief. “ The pilgrims then take up the refrain repeating alternately : “ Lord we hope in Thee ! Lord we love Thee ! Lord, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God ! Lord Thou art the Resurrection and the Life ! Thou art my Lord and my God ! Jesus, Son of Mary, cure our sick ! Lord if Thou wilt Thou canst heal me ! Say but one word and I shall be made whole ! Lord grant that I may see ! Lord grant that I may speak ! Grant that I may walk ! Grant that I may hear ! Hosanna to the Son of David ! Hosanna ! Hosanna ! Hosanna ! ”



Meanwhile the Blessed Sacrament advances very slowly going from one sick person to another ; stooping as formerly on Judeas plains and listening with infinite pity and tender compassion to their plaint. Then ensue scenes that beggar description as miracle after miracle is performed by the Divine Healer and the hosanna of praise is changed into a glorious triumphant burst of loving thanksgiving. For, to-day as long centuries ago paralytics arise and walk, the blind see, the deaf hear, and all those marvels are wrought through Mary's intercession in an enchanted country nestling in the midst of a mountainous range such as imagination would find it hard to conceive.

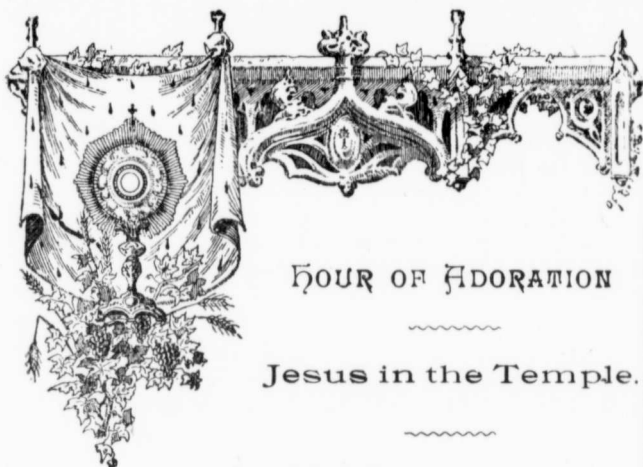
The Blessed Sacrament is deposited on an altar erected outside the church of the Rosary and benediction given. Afterwards the multitude follow to the official bureau of medical investigation those chosen among many upon whom the Lord Christ has lain His healing Hand. On Sun lay alone twelve of these were examined by Dr. Bois-sarie and two hundred other physicians. They abide by the doctors verdict but whatever it may it cannot alter the ineffable beatitude I saw written on their countenances and which will lengthen if there is a corner left in one of the three churches the golden laurels of Our Lady of Lourdes.

This procession of the Blessed Sacrament is the main daily feature of the pilgrimage. Mary is so to speak then secondary at Lourdes, but a few hours later the Virgin most sweet, most merciful and most powerful has her turn. At eight o'clock sharp the facade and spire of the Basilica and of the Church of the Rosary as if touched with a magic wand simultaneously glisten and glow with thousands of tiny multicoloured electric bulbs heralding the opening of a beautiful spectacular feast. One by one the torches light up and soon the earth looks as starry as the thickly studded firmament, but instead of remaining stationary these innumerable stars, or be more literal their bearers organize in due order and the procession leaves the Grotto ascends the left slope of the Rosary hill passes before the Basilica, descends the right slope to the end of the Esplanade and returns by the opposite way to the steps of the church of the Rosary forming a colossal brilliant crown around the beautiful state of Our Lady which rises between the church square and the Esplanade.

During this procession the Ave Maria is sung with such enthusiasm as could not fail to please Our Blessed Lady.

The torch-bearers accumulate in front of the Church of the Rosary and form a solid phalanx of scintillating lights. The Credo is then intoned and taken up by that vast crowd with an ardour good to hear ; after which a short sermon is preached and the pilgrims disperse. Stirred to my hearts depths I murmured : behold France that prays ! — and could any nation or people pray better ?





HOUR OF ADORATION

Jesus in the Temple.

I. — Adoration.

The Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not.

The Most Blessed Sacrament is the only visible form of Jesus that your eyes have ever rested on, and It has no age. Adore It under the features of the Boy of twelve who went up to Jerusalem with Mary and Joseph to celebrate the Pasch.

O how beautiful He is! How ravishing at the early age of twelve! That age still retains the charming grace of childhood, the candor and simplicity of infancy. It is, at the same time, the beginning of individual life, the aurora of youth, the promise of manhood.

We have known Thee, O Jesus, a Child at Bethlehem, and we shall meet Thee a Man on the highways of Judea at the moment of Thy Passion! But what an irreparable loss to our devout meditations could we not gaze upon Thee a Youth at Nazareth!

The treasures of grace and wisdom plentifully lavished on Thy Soul at the moment of Its creation, have never ceased to shine forth from It from day to day in greater brilliancy and abundance. Thy youth, O Flower of Jesse, is the radiant unfolding of the most beautiful of human flowers, nourished by divine sap. Son of benediction, how justly proud are Mary and Joseph of Thee! Thou art their union, their joy, their happiness! Thou art their life, the center and link of their souls, the end of their labors, the only objects of their thoughts and their solicitude. Thy existence is in their hands, and they must answer for the Treasure of earth and of heaven!

Amiable Youth, I adore Thee with the tender and maternal love of Mary, with the humble and silent admiration of Joseph. Upon Thy brow shines the reflection of the majesty of God, Thy Father. In Thy eyes, closed to every curious glance, sparkles the fire of divine omniscience. Eternal truth rests upon Thy lips, which open only to utter words so wise and prudent that the Doctors of the Law listen in admiration. In Thy precocious gravity, I adore the weight of Thy eternal years. In Thy modest and well-regulated bearing, I recognize the harmony that has presided over the creation of worlds, and governs them with number and measure. — O how beautiful Thou art, O Thou most beautiful of the sons of men, Thou only Son of God and the Virgin-Mother!

He has fulfilled the Pasch and communicated in the Paschal lamb, He, the true Lamb of the Eucharistic Pasch. While Joseph and Mary, confiding in His habitual submission, prepare to return with Him the Child Jesus, eluding their vigilance, without doubt, with a mysterious veil, withdraws from their protection, and, unknown to them, remains in Jerusalem.

Would it, then, have been so difficult for Him to obtain their consent? Could Mary have refused such a Son to delay in the holy city as long as He might judge necessary?

Jesus stole away, desiring on this occasion to act freely, of Himself, without depending on any one here below.

What does this mean, O most obedient Child? Ah! it is a great mystery, which in appearance shocks human respect, wounds the heart of flesh, and is altogether incomprehensible to the multitude.

It is the mystery of divine vocation, the call to the service of God, It is the mystery of the triumphant authority of God, of His sovereign right, superior and unparalleled. It is the mystery in which His authority rises above every other, though the most legitimate in the world. It is the mystery in which His voice silences every other voice, even those the most commonly obeyed; in which His will must vanquish every obstacle, break down all opposition, annul all resistance; in which His love must triumph over every other love, even the most lawful. It is, in fine, the mystery in which the Father in heaven must be preferred to the mother on earth, even should that mother be Mary, the most loving and the most beloved of mothers!

Adore Jesus, then, abandoning His Mother in order to accomplish the will of His Heavenly Father and to respond in haste to His call. "Must I not be about My Father's business?" Harken to this word, and lay it up respectfully in your memory. It is the expression of perfect and sublime adoration. It magnificently confesses the Creator and His rights. It places the creature on his knees before Him, offering to Him himself obedient and devoted. Repeat it after Jesus. O how glorious it is to God!

O Jesus! O zealous Servant of Thy Father and His devoted religious, Thou hast never been occupied in any other thing than the affairs of Thy Father! Thou didst finish even in the smallest detail the task that He assigned Thee. And what art Thou still doing in the Tabernacle except devoting Thyself to Thy Father, safeguarding His interests, and securing His reign? I adore Thee in the Sacrament of Thy devotedness. I adore Thee in union with Mary and Joseph who, though not perfectly comprehending this mystery, submitted to it, thus sharing in the merit of Thy obedience.

II. — Thanksgiving.

Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?

Jesus' conduct toward Mary appears hard at first sight. He had eluded her vigilance and caused her the sharpest agony. And when that tender Mother represented to Him her alarm and that of Joseph: "Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing" — Jesus has but one word in answer: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" What a short, austere answer to console the sorrow of such a Mother! It is almost a reproach to those tears which spring from love so devoted, from inquietude so legitimate.

O adorable Child, art Thou no longer the most loving, the most tender of sons? The thought would be blasphemy! — Ah! Thou dost will to afford us a great lesson. In this incident of Thy life, it is we and our good that Thou hast in view. In it Thou hast prepared in advance for all that are called to the religious life or to the priesthood the graces and helps of which they shall have need, after Thy own example, to break away from the most holy affections, when called to give themselves exclusively "to the business of the Father who is in heaven."

Thou knowest, O compassionate Master, that a vocation is established ordinarily but upon the breaking of hearts made, nevertheless, to love one another. Where vocation, that grace of predilection, ought to bring an increase of happiness and an outburst of gratitude, it almost always gives rise to struggle, estrangement, and sometimes hatred. What is the reason of this, except it be that human love, even the most legitimate, has a tendency to encroach on the domain of Almighty God. If it does not supplant Him altogether, it seeks, at least, to hold Him in a state of subordination, offering Him only a share, which He cannot accept?

But if God calls, the soul must follow the Divine Voice; if He commands, He must be obeyed. The heart of the chosen one must be subdued, must be immolated. He must not allow himself to be

overruled by their reasoning, won by their tenderness, nor shaken by their threats. He must break, and he must be broken. Such is the law. This sacrifice is the first of every vocation. It purifies the heart of the chosen one, and renders it more generous in the service of God, more susceptible to His love, and stronger for the other sacrifices that are to make up the holocaust of his life.

O what need we have of Thy example, O Jesus, O most tender of sons, to sustain us in so sorrowful a crisis !

When the child is doubting, when he is hesitating to consummate the sacrifice of his nearest and dearest, what strength he derives from being able to say that he is doing only what Thou hast done before him ! If without ceasing to love her infinitely, Thou didst cause Thy Mother's tears to flow, well may he whom Thou hast called follow Thy example !

And if, on that account, his love for his own is questioned, if he is treated as cruel and heartless, O Jésus, will it not suffice for him to reply that he is but imitating Thee, that the disciple must be like unto the Master ?

And when those dear ones seek to postpone the moment of separation, when they ask for delay, O Jesus, Thy example will show what account should be made of the wiles of natural affection, Thou who, at the age of twelve, didst "go about Thy Father's business," without even acquainting Thy Mother ! — What imprudence ! cries flesh and blood. — But imprudence according to Almighty God, is the confounding of the prudent.

O Jesus, prudent Master, what light, what strength, what support, what security: what victorious defence is Thy example in this mystery !

Thou dost bestow upon me all graces in the Holy Eucharist, which is, in truth, the Sacrament of divine vocations. Are not all such graces born of Holy Communion ? and, for the most part, of First Communion ? It is only there that Thy word is sufficiently powerful, the soul sufficiently attentive. Surely, it is only there that we can draw the strength to follow Thee.

O all ye who are divided between those two powerful voices and tortured between those two sovereign attractions, that of God and that of the family, come to the Tabernacle, communicate with that Jesus who, at the age of twelve, sacrificed everything at the call of His Father. His generosity will inflame and sustain your courage.

O ye, whom these separations cast into loneliness that nothing can lessen, you whose feelings are so deeply outraged, so sorrowfully wounded, come to the Temple ! There ye will find Him who consoled His Mother, making her comprehend and accept the order of the divine will. He will strengthen your heart, He will lead you to utter the *fiat* which calms, and even cures, every wound.

III. — Reparation.

We ought to obey God rather than men. — *Acts*, v, 29.

By His eagerness to follow the call of His Father, Jesus repairs all the sins committed with regard to vocation. How numerous they are, and how grave !

Although not rigorously bound, under pain of sin, to follow a vocation through the mere fact that one is called, nevertheless, when it is clearly manifested, either by inward conviction, or by the decision of a spiritual director, it is difficult to turn a deaf ear to it without sin : in the first place, on account of the contempt of divine authority which such conduct appears to imply ; and again, and above all, by reason of the fatal consequences of such infidelity. — For how many souls is not the religious life a necessary bulwark, an indispensable refuge, outside of which they will certainly succumb, either on account of their passions, or of the surroundings in which they live ! — Now, is it not a grave fault to neglect the means which we know to be absolutely necessary to salvation ?

Again, what ingratitude toward a love which offers a privileged existence, which calls to an honor as precious as it is unmerited, and which has prepared help most powerful, most ample, most wisely proportioned to the needs of the soul ! Jesus calls His religious and His priests His friends. All that His Heart holds the most delicate, the most tender, the most loving, He calls them, and He longs to give them.

What rashness, what folly for a soul to refuse to conform to the eternal designs of God over her ! not to embrace the state for which He has created special aptitudes, and to engage in one in which she can hope for neither angels to guide her, nor assistance to sustain her, because she is not in the way marked out for her !

It is a crime for parents to oppose by violence or constraint the vocation of their children. The Council of Trent pronounces anathema against such parents. They are blind and cruel. They are in illusion, and that may perhaps excuse them ; but their love is none the less cruel, their prudence blind.

They themselves generally prepare the unhappiness of their children, for vocation is the perfection of the soul, and no being finds peace or happiness outside of its own end, its own perfection. What follows from the opposition of parents ? — Misguided existences, unhappy marriages, endless tears, souls lost by reason of parents' usurpation of the rights of God ! They think themselves the masters, the proprietors of their children, when they are only their tutors, their guardians, bound to restore them to God as soon as He demands them. — How many Christian parents alas ! be

have amiss on this point ! They sometimes show more opposition to the divine will than they who live outside the Faith.

Jesus repairs, also, for the tardiness, the unreasonable delay, the rash trials to which parents, in their so-called prudence, subject the vocation of their children. Under pretext of proving it, they make them drink immoderately of the pleasures of the world, they expose them to the most dangerous seductions, even at the risk of compromising the salvation of their precious souls. Ah, truly, many lose in this foolish experience piety and innocence, as well as vocation. O loving souls, repair ! Compassionate Our Lord, who beholds Himself thus postponed, who sees snatched from Him the souls upon whom He has long cast looks of predilection.

Another disorder in this matter is the interference of the civil powers in questions of religious vocation. Repair for the crime of society committed against Almighty God by encroaching upon the rights, the liberty, the very existence of the religious congregations. Ah ! that is touching God in the apple of His eye, wounding Him in the Heart.

Offer in reparation the merits of Jesus' offering and the tears of Mary.

If Divine Providence gives you the means, repair by helping on vocations by your counsel and assistance. If you have the happiness of living in the religious state, offer in reparation for all baffled vocations, for all attempts prepared, or already perpetrated, against religious, the homage of fidelity more exact, more generous, more devoted. Lastly, and above all, powerless as you are to offer any adequate reparation, approach the Tabernacle, and in spirit draw near to all the Tabernacles in the world ; then offer to the sanctity, to the justice of God, to repair the sins daily committed against His will, against His rights, against the choice and the calls of His love, all the Hosts that Jesus has multiplied to infinity, and in which He immolates Himself as a true religious of His Father instead of those that have not responded to His call. Offer all these Hosts in which He chants incessantly the canticle of His glory instead of all the voices that are wanting in the concert which religious, those angels of earth, should send up to Him night and day. Offer to the Father all those Hosts with their adoration, their love, and fidelity.

IV. — Prayer.

Remember, Lord, Thy Congregations, which in Thy love Thou hast Thyself founded.

Christian prayer is essentially catholic — that is, universal. It is not we alone who pray, nor do we pray by our own strength ; nor is it of our own indigence that we have to give. It is Jesus who prays in us ; it is by His infinite merits that we pray ; it is of

His infinite treasure, His inexhaustible satisfactions, that we dispose. We ought, then, never to be timid about dilating our desires, about sending afar in intention the beneficent dew of our prayers. In praying thus, in the apostolic and catholic spirit, we fulfil the duty of charity, we rejoice the Heart of Our Lord, and we efficaciously co-operate in the work of Redemption. It is, above all, when we pray in union with the Most Blessed Sacrament, with that High Priest who, really present, is offering the sacrifice of His all-powerful prayer and accomplishing by the Eucharist His grand mediation, that we render our prayer liberal, generous, far-reaching, universal. Despite the want of purity of soul, the want of sincere good will, the want of unhesitating confidence, prayer is then at its highest power, in its best condition for securing a favorable hearing.

Pray at that time for all God's interests, all His enterprises, all His affairs, which are those in which the Church is everywhere engaged. But if you want to pray for an interest sacred above all others, for an intention especially dear to Jesus, for His super-excellent glory, His most precious honor, pray for His religious, His sacred spouses, His priests.

Among all His loved ones, they are His dearest, His life-work of predilection, the noblest fruit of His Passion, the firmest hope of His glory.

Pray for them now more than ever. Their holy life, their works of salvation, their very existence — all are threatened. Those friends of Jesus, who cluster round His Tabernacles, who live under the same roof with Him, who console His solitude, — shall they be dispersed? Their houses, asylums for the weak, the sick, the wounded, — shall they be closed? Shall those citadels of the Church be destroyed? Those ramparts of defence razed to the ground? Those chosen phalanxes dissolved? — Shall the voice of truth be silenced? those furnaces of holiness become extinct? — Shall those lightning-rods of the guilty be laid low? — shall their never-ending songs of praise, their prayers by day and by night, their penances, their expiation cease to mount to Heaven in the name of society, ignorant and forgetful of what it owes to God? — And! what strength the Church, and still more the country, would lose by such a calamity!

Pray, then; pray earnestly! Pray through Jesus, the first Religious, the Founder, the Ideal, and the Model of the religious life; pray through Mary and Joseph, who formed with Him at Nazareth the most perfect Community; pray through the Apostolic College, the first religious congregation; pray through St. Benedict, St. Dominic, St. Francis, St. Ignatius, St. Teresa, through all the founders of religious orders; pray that this crime may be averted, this misfortune warded off, this scourge turned away.

And if you desire a formula which pleases Our Lord, and which He cannot reject, repeat to Him the august prayer which He Himself composed on the evening of the Last Supper, after He had communicated along with His Apostles. It is the Eucharistic prayer *par excellence*. Jesus said it with His eyes raised to heaven, His hands extended over His Apostles, at the hour when their dear Congregation was about to be dissolved, and its members were to suffer the most violent persecution. Place these solemn words on the lips of the Saviour, who is praying with you in the sanctuary of His Sacred Host, and say with Him :

“ Father, the hour is come. Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. I have manifested Thy name to those whom Thou hast given Me. Thine they were, and to Me Thou gavest them, and they have kept Thy word.

“ I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me, because they are Thine.”

“ And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as we also are.”

“ While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name. And now I come to Thee, and these things I say before quitting the world, that their joy may be full.”

“ I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world.”

“ I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil.”

“ Sanctify them in truth.”

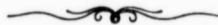
“ And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me : that they all may be one as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.”

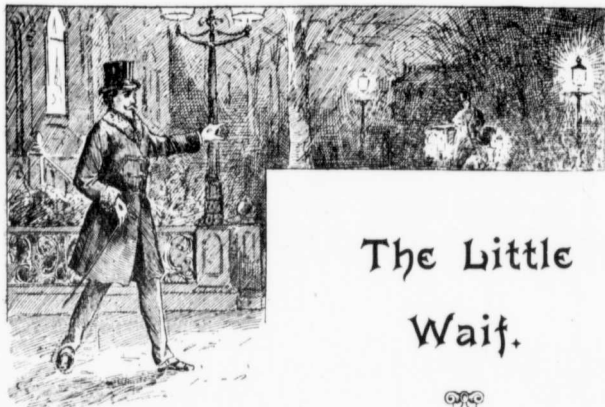
“ I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast also loved Me.”

“ Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me : that they may see My glory and the love which Thou hast borne Me from before the creation of the world.” — *St. John*, xvii.

* * *

Kind words, kind looks, kind acts and gentle handshakes are the best weapons to use in the unseen battles of life.





The Little Waif.



THE silvery chimes of a clock in the neighborhood rang out the half-hour on the still night air. Robert Santley stood for a moment outside the station from which he had just emerged, peering up and down the street with an irritable, "Half past eleven, I do declare, and not a cab to be had for love nor money. Great Scott ! I shall be late, and catch cold into the bargain !"

It was a bitter night ; snow lay on the ground ; and the sky was black with the promise of another downfall while the wind, slowly rising, whistled drearily, as its biting breath penetrated through the young man's thick fur lined coat. Burying his mouth and ears deeper in the folds of his silk muffler, he stamped impatiently.

Robert Santley was on his way to spend Christmas with a friend who had recently taken up his quarters in a suburb, at some distance from town, and in a new neighborhood. This was a first visit, and, that such a thing should be, that all the cabs should be engaged to-night had not entered into his calculations.

"Well," he said, at last, "there's no manner of use standing here ; the cold will freeze my bones. I suppose the others will be wondering at my not having turned up."

Striding along in the hope of meeting a belated vehicle of some kind, he thought of his friends all assembled, of course, by this time, in the brilliantly-lighted rooms, where in feasting and hilarious laughter and singing in the excitement born of generous wines and witty, nay perhaps even ribald conversation—they meant to spend the night till the daylight dawned.

Think of it! Thus to celebrate the Holy Night on which God became Man for us and for our salvation. The Blessed Night on which He began His life of poverty, self-sacrifice and sufferings!

Furiously Robert strode on, till in the distance he saw the two lamps of a cab, gleaming dully, passing the end of the street. Hailing it loudly, he was delighted to see it stop, then turn and move towards him.

It was a great relief. A muttered "thanks be" had hardly escaped his lips when, close by, a faint sound reached him. Weak though it was, it was an unmistakable appeal for help. Almost at his feet lay a barefooted boy, clothed in the merest rags and tatters, sinking down against the wall in utter exhaustion.

Naturally kind hearted, Robert stooped, and, by the glare of the street-lamp, saw that the little fellow was almost frozen to death; yet, a feverish light shone in the large eyes as they met his own, and lighted up the thin emaciated face, showing it blue with cold and hallowed with hunger and misery.

"Good heavens, I believe he is dying!" he muttered. "In the name of all that's vexatious what am I to do? Hello, little man," he said gently, touching the boy.

"Where's your home?"

"I have none," very faintly came the reply.

"Merciful goodness? Have you any friends?"

A shake of the head was the only reply. By this time the cab had come up, and calling to the man to turn the horse's head and draw up close to the curb, battle royal was waged with his conscience.

A duty, most unpalatable, and recognized unwillingly and resentfully, had been thrust upon him.

"Why," he wondered, in his annoyance. "He is nothing to me; it's no business of mine. If I give him some money..."

" Money ? Money to a dying chi'd who cannot hold it in his numbed hands ? " murmured his conscience.

" Or, I might find a hospital, perhaps."

" At this time of night ? Are you not late enough already ? Take him with you," persisted his conscience.

" Oh, indeed ! To be greeted with shouts of laughter and mocking raillery, and have it thrown up to me for the next six months ! "



" Yes ! or..." Insistently the reproving conscience made itself heard. " Yes, or—go ! Go ! eat, drink and be merry—if you can forget,—if you can that you have left a little child to die of cold and hunger ! "

" But I am not responsible," thought Robert.

Was it fancy that the boy's eyes looking up so piteously at him seemed to read his culpable hesitation, and in their depths he saw the words " Cain ! "

" I am not responsible, but... it will be death to leave the poor little chap here. I shall be a murderer if I do... so... here goes ! "

And as the driver called out impatiently, he lifted the almost inanimate form in his arms and stepped with it into the cab.

After giving the direction to take, he made the boy as comfortable on the seat as circumstances permitted. Then



with a whimsical shrug of regret at the new obligation imposed upon his charity, he took off his warm coat and wrapped it closely round the chilled form.

A grateful smile flitted over the wan face, as if in gratitude for the warm covering, and Robert felt his heart often tenderly to the little outcast. If he had been cold

this night, what must this poor little martyr have suffered ! His conscience and he were once more on friendly terms.

Watching the slowly-reviving child, for with warmth came brisker circulation, he presently questioned the boy, who, in a very few words, told his sad story. His mother had died two years before. Then his father—evidently a dissolute drunkard—had married a cruel woman, who treated her little stepson barbarously. His life was one long misery. A few weeks ago, his father died, and the ill-treatment became, if possible, worse than ever. To-day she had beaten him fiercely ; then turned him out of doors bidding him never to return.

“ That is all,” were the pathetic concluding words.

“ All ! ” thought Robert, full of compunction, thinking of his own selfish, easy, comfortable life.

After a pause the little fellow spoke again. An eager light shone through the dark eyes.

“ Are you taking me to Midnight Mass ? I know it is Christmas eve, and I have so prayed to the little Jesus to help me. It is He who sent you to me. Oh ! will you lay me down close by His crib—close to His little feet. Will you ? I shall be warm there and so happy—so happy ! ”

“ Yes, yes,” said poor bewildered Robert, as he wondered what was to be done in this new dilemma. A vague feeling of remorse and sadness began to oppress him, for the little lad’s words had revived memories of Christmas eves in the years gone by, when he, too, knelt by a dear mother’s side, assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, yes, even with fervor and love approaching the Holy Table !

How long ago it seemed since she died ! Just when the dark passions of youth were beginning to surge in his breast, whispering of freedom from restraint, and urging to independence of mind and body ; poor Robert, so full of generous impulses, but weak and inconstant ; and losing guidance when he most needed it, had gradually neglected his Christian duties ; one by one giving up practices of devotion, even his morning prayers and Sunday’s Mass, though deep down in his heart the Faith was still alive ! And now as remorseful thoughts of his aimless, worthless life passed through his mind, faith and fervor seemed to take hold of him, a horror of his way of

living pierced him like a dagger ; but with the pain of it came a whisper from the devil, and he tried to drive away the holy inspirations of grace and mercy by thoughts of the revelry that awaited him at the end of this tedious drive.

A lock of wavy black hair had fallen over the boy's brow and lay on the thin cheek as if to caress and hide some of its misery. Robert bent to gently lay it aside when the boy opened his eyes suddenly, and said.

"Mother took me the last time. We went to such a grand church : the organ was playing, and the singing was so beautiful ; the church was all lighted up ; and the flowers oh ! if you could have seen them ! "

"Why, I remember my mother taking me too, when I was a little boy," said Robert, surprised out of himself into another mental visit to the happy past.

"And," continued the plaintive voice, "when she died she spoke to me, but so low it was hard to hear her. 'My little son,' she said ; 'my darling Robert, never forget God ; always love Him, He is so good ! '"

Robert started as if he had been struck ; for these were the very words his own mother had whispered as he knelt sobbing, by her dying bed. She had placed her hand on his curly head, feebly stroking it and said.

"God bless and keep you ! " Then a few minutes later, she spoke again : "My little son, my darling Robert, never forget God ; always love Him, He is so good ! "

Only twenty minutes since an act of charity, opening a little corner of his selfish, shut-up soul, had made an entrance for the grace of God ! With his full heart beating tumultuously he turned, but—the boy was gone !

Ah ! then Robert understood. Overwhelmed with emotion he looked up into the dark sky, towards the Heaven whence his loved mother was now perhaps rejoicingly watching him and a cry for mercy and pardon rose in his heart to the God of his mother.

The cab came to a sudden halt, and the driver through the aperture in the roof, explained that he was new on this route and had missed his way.

"There is a church just round there," he said ; "I'll enquire of some of the folks going in which way I must take."

"You need not go further," was the reply the man received; and handing him his fare, Robert jumped out and made straight for the church. He entered the sacred edifice as the bells pealed the midnight hour.

Making his way to a confessional, he knelt, and with humble and contrite heart murmured "Confiteor;" laying his sinful past at the feet of God's minister, and receiving the holy absolution and a gentle "Go in peace," as the boys in the choir sang joyfully and loudly the glorious old hymn of the angels: "Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis. Laudamus te, benedicimus te, glorificamus te!"



The Purification.



FORTY days of perfect peace and unalloyed happiness had been the especial privilege of Mary, from the midnight hour when the Incarnate Word left her "ivory palace" to find His delights among men, up to this day of her Purification.

Beautiful in her humiliation, and exultant in the joy of conformity with the ceremonial of the Jewish law so dear to her, she wends her way to the temple, whose gates will lift up their heads to admit the King of Glory.

Great graces, we are told, are always preceded by interior trials. The shadow of suffering must needs fall upon the soul, removing it from the world's glare, before the divine light of grace can shine with undimmed lustre.

So, after her delightful and undisturbed possession of her heart's treasure, the Infant God whose peace had been the heritage of Bethlehem for all His creatures, but pre-eminently for His Mother, Mary, with the generosity

begotten of the nearness to God, proceeds to give Him away, to offer Him in His Father's house, this well-loved One. Strangely moved is she—she knows not why—as with the gentle Joseph carrying the timid doves, meet offering for the poor, she bears her Babe to the temple of Jerusalem.

Those who wait for God are never disappointed. Simeon, whose years had been spent in the perfect trust begotten of his faith in the divine promise that he should not see death till he had beheld the Lord's Christ, in the calmness and joy of a hope fulfilled, awaits the coming of the Mother and her Child.

His eyes, dimmed with age and the wistful straining after the sight of the "desired of nations," grow lustrous, as the Babe Divine is placed in his outstretched arms, and his "Nunc dimitis" breaks from his lips like the glad strain of a triumph.

But the minor chords of his canticle are kept for Mary, on whose listening ears fall now the first accents of sorrow. Like the darkness of Egypt this dolor, her first, envelops her soul. She takes back her Child, "set for the fall of many in Israel," and even in that moment of supreme trial, her soul, pierced with the sword of Simeon's prophecy, takes an eagle flight of grace which carries her to the feet of the Eternal Father. There in the lowliness of the handmaid she anticipates the words of her Son to exclaim, "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O my God!"

To Nazareth she returns with her Babe, whose arms, twined around her, now form a cross; but their very pressure brings relief.

Surely the Purification, sweet, gracious mystery as it is, holds lessons for the adorers of the Divine Eucharist. How often does the watcher before the tabernacle find his soul strangely stirred within him, as if by premonition of some coming ill! He sought the holy place with peace in his heart, drawn as if by magnet to the temple, glad to repair to the court of the King. Duty brought him, but much more was he drawn by love. The shadow, even from the cross above the tabernacle, falls upon him, and he is conscious of the nearness of trial. Then is it that the lesson of Our Lady's first dolor comes home with

strength and healing in its words. The Divine Eucharist is meant for our healing and our comfort, as well as for our food. It is often in Its divine presence that He who touches but to heal makes the iron enter the soul, and causes sorrow to draw near to many to whom it had long been a stranger. The young Mother of the first dolor teaches such the lessons of sorrow sanctified and made available unto eternity.

How many have prostrated themselves before the tabernacle with issues of life and death in their hands, pleading their own cause or that of those near and dear to them, and the answer from the silent Dweller in the tabernacle. from Him whose heart watches has been as keen-edged a sword as that which pierced the heart of Mary on Purification Day.

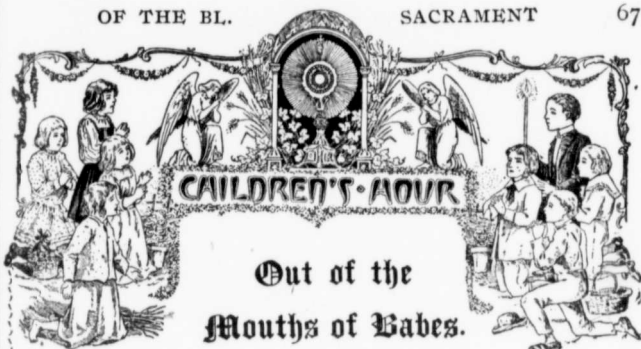
Happy they who turn not aside from the thrust, but go back to Nazareth, to their hearth and home, under the shadow, it is true, but oh! with peace even in their bitterness. Surely for such awaits even the privilege of the saintly Simeon. To wait long years, perhaps, for the fulfilment of the divine promise — but they can afford to wait even better than he, for they wait, not without the doors, nor in the courts of the temple, but within the very Holy of Holies. The Divine Eucharist is the stronghold before which they stand and wait as sentinels. The knight who spent the vigil of his great day watching and praying for the dawn which should see him honored by his prince, is the fitting emblem of those who wait and watch before the Eucharistic King. And if the vigil be not always one of peace and joy, the lesson of the Purification teaches sweetly and humbly, Expect the Lord, do manfully, and be of good courage.

“Sorrow endureth for a night; joy cometh in the morning.”

MATILDA MITCHELL CUMMINGS.

NOTICE.

Subscribers wishing to have their “Sentinel” bound have only to send us the twelve numbers of the past years and 35 cents. After a few weeks they will receive the volume in pretty lined binding with title in gilt letters.



Out of the
Mouths of Babes.

Inscribed to the Acolytes of St. John Berchmans'
Sanctuary Society.

By E. C. D.

I

A VERY babe acolyte was he,
A little lad of seven years and sunny,
Whose eager tongue repeated lispingly,
The sacred Latin (sweet as Hybla's honey),
Crooned by the mother, training her sole boy,
To serve the priest of God with surplis'd joy.

Now, "Confitebor,"—ran th' exultant words:
"Tibi" (I'll praise Thee!) "in cithara Deus!"
The silv'ry treble, clear as piping bird's,
Murmur'd the context: "Deus, Deus meus!"
Then, "Quare tristis es" (the lesson flow'd):
"Anima mea?" How the young face glow'd!

II

"Et quare conturbas me?"—Glad, the response:
"Spera in Deo!"—like a song-burst came;
Until the lad grew weary. For the nonce,
He slipp'd aside, and played his childish game,
Leaving his mother, in the gloaming dim,
To touch her harp, and chant her evening hymn.

*A thousand memories the strain awoke,
 A thousand tender dreams of lov'd ones fled ;
 The singer's voice beneath its burden broke,—
 Her heart was with the absent, or the dead !
 Amid the shadows, on her harp she leaned,
 The tears slow-dropping from the eyes she screened.*

III

*Lo ! from his corner and his quiet game,
 (The baby-face supremely sympathetic),
 The little Acolyte, inspired, came ;—
 And, leaning on her knee, with grace asthetic,
 Kiss'd from her cheek the tears her heart had shed,
 And (sweet rebuke !) his Confitebor said !*

*" I'll praise Thee on the harp, O God, my God !
 Art sad, my soul ? Why dost thou me disquiet !"
 Upon the mother's sense shone, full and broad,
 The heav'nly meaning !—Sooth'd and strengthen'd by it,
 With bright'ning face (no more by shadows haunted),
 She clasped her boy, and " Spera in Deo !" chanted !*

The Holy Family.

(See frontispiece.)

JESUS has grown into manhood. More than twenty years have elapsed since the Holy Family took up their abode in the little sequestered village which St Jerome compares to a rose upturning its dewy corolla towards Heaven. We tarry lovingly in this blessed spot, where every pathway bears traces of the feet of Jesus, where every stone has a tale to tell of Him. We long to bid the vineyards amongst which He was wont to wander, the olives under which He sat weaving plans of future love and mercy, the skies at which He used to gaze, looking beyond their golden sunsets into lands where the sun of the God-Head never sets, speak, and tell us more than we already know of the gracious young life spent at Nazareth. We long to have dwelt there, to have seen Him, spoken with Him, watched Him, followed Him, and kissed the print of His feet in the Galilean soil.