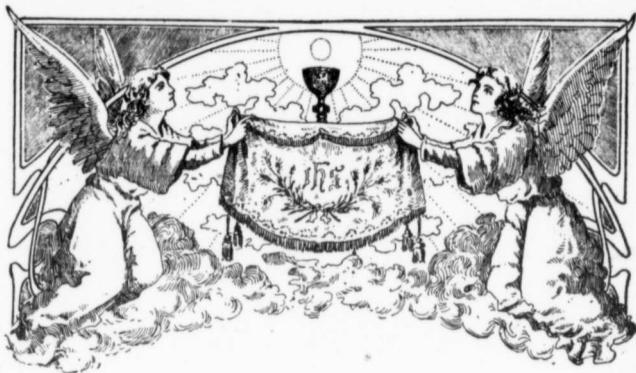




*Mary Immaculate.*



## The Christmas Light.

*O'er far Judea's hillsides bleak and wild  
They sought the new-born Child,  
And followed where the Star of Bethlehem led  
Unto His manger bed,  
That time the winter winds were sadly sighing,  
And peace on earth was dying.*

*Lo! when the midnight plains were dark  
and dim*

*The watchers sought for Him,  
And when the air was keen and still and  
cold*

*They crossed the dreary wild,  
To find at last the Christ-Child safely  
sleeping.*

*While Mary watch was keeping.*

*It was a star that led them where He lay,  
Amid the kine and hay;*

*It was a light that flashed from out the  
dark —*

*A God-sent guiding spark —  
That bade them search for Him, the royal  
Stranger,*

*Within a distant manger.*

*Ah! tell me not that Star shines not to-  
night,*

*And sheds its holy light  
Throughout the earth. Lo! on this Christ-  
mas eve*

*If thy sad heart would grieve,  
It gleams above the sanctuary railing,  
Its tranquil light ne'er failing.*

*And He, the self-same Christ that woke the  
earth*

*When Mary gave Him birth,  
Reposes near for those who seek for Him  
At morn or evening dim.*

*And yet how few a Christmas watch are  
keeping*

*Where He lies, never sleeping!*



## Come, let us adore Him !

~~~~~  
**C**OME, let us adore Him." Clear, joyous, the words ring forth in the sweet treble of childish voices.

Children calling us unto a Child ! Pure like the angels, they, echo the " glad tidings " that unto us is born Christ the Lord. The fragrance of their innocent homage breathes into our own hearts as we kneel in spirit with them at the manger-crib. We see the Babe upon the straw, His arms stretched upward to His Virgin Mother, as the light of a lantern shadows her with fitful gleams. Awe-stricken, Joseph, living image of the Eternal Father, stands mutely by her, and we hear angelic praise flood the midnight skies.

We watch how shepherds, whose simple faith the world would mock, come to adore, and envy the wise kings who, guided by a star, come to lay, in homage at the Baby feet, gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Infinite wisdom, a Child ! Yet need we envy them as they kneel in worship at the crib ? Is not Bethlehem's Babe ever in our midst ? In swathing-bands, lowlier than swaddling-clothes, He lies upon the altar, and about it the angels chant their praise. Even if the altar be of rarest marble, His Majesty is more abased than upon the

manger of straw. The very beauty of the Babe whispered of something divine. The little lips could part in a smile that said unutterable things. The infantile voice could coo with feeble cry, and the sweet eyes shine with love unspeakable.

Not so in the Host. Lips and voice and eyes are hushed and blinded there in bands which only a miracle may sunder, and through its fragile veil no ray of His loveliness may gleam.

More helpless than in infancy He depends upon His priests for shelter and for care. Like Joseph they must guard Him; lift Him that He may bless; bear Him through the crowded streets to the sick; lay Him back upon the altar-crib where minute after minute He waits their bidding. The Creator, obeying His feeble creatures! How utterly He trusts them! Often must they fly with Him to the Egypt of some alien abode, far from modern Herods, who would slay Him if they could. The world, too busy with its own interests to have room for Him, rejects Him as did the Bethlehemites long ago. Yet, as the lowly Babe of the manger breathes throughout the ages joy, even to those who do not believe, as His birthday comes yearly around, so the humble Host breathes grace upon those who reject It.

Like "Madonna and Child," the Veiled Presence of the Catholic altar is art's noblest inspiration.

The star of the sanctuary-lamp shines not only upon worshippers like unto the shepherds and the kings, but upon the wondering faces of many who come with conscious worship, perhaps, but in answer to a nameless "something" they cannot resist. Ah! to how many groping in spiritual darkness may we not bear the "glad tidings," that unto us is born anew, at dawn of every day, Christ, our Lord, once a shivering Babe in a manger? In the tender words of the children's hymn we will bid them "Come and adore" at the lowly altar, where He lies to-day in the swathing-bands of the Host. They will see gathered about Him there, little children and aged men, beggar, maiden and millionaire, the joyous and the sorrow-laden and if, listening to our pleading they will come with faith and love, He will breathe into their hearts, too, the peace which the angels promised.

## Frequent Holy Communion



HOLY Communion is the richest channel of grace, the most helpful means to Christian perfection, and the safest pledge of our eternal salvation when it is received in a worthy manner. Hence it is most reasonable for every Christian to receive this holy sacrament as often as his circumstances and his spiritual director will permit. It is, therefore, to be deprecated that many are content with receiving holy communion once a year. In this category of negligent Christians there are even some who deem their conduct quite justifiable. "I conform to the laws of the Church," they say; "I do my duty and that suffices." Oh, strange conceit, pitiable blindness! You are, indeed, constrained to do your duty, but you carry your indifference and your coldness towards Jesus to such extreme limits that our holy mother the Church forbids you to go beyond them under pain of mortal sin. You venture to the extreme limits of tepidity, outside of which you would become a public transgressor and incur the bans of excommunication.

You say, I do what the Church desires. Say rather, I do what the Church absolutely commands and constrains me to do. The Church really desires much more. She asks and desires most earnestly that you should receive holy communion more frequently. And she desires this because Our Lord Himself has a great desire to enter our hearts in holy communion. In the canons of the Council of Trent the Church expresses the ardent wish that all Christians were so disposed "as to be able in every mass at which they assist to receive holy communion, not only spiritually, but sacramentally, in order that richer fruits and more abundant graces might result to them from the august sacrifice." This was, indeed, the practice of the first Christians. They received holy communion at every Mass. And even if it be true that in those troublous times of persecution and martyrdom a constant union with our

dear Lord and Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament was imperative, nevertheless the unfathomable love which Jesus entertains for us in the Holy Eucharist precludes the possibility of any reasonable excuse for the diffidence and tepidity of so many Christians in our day. With joy and gratitude to God we must, however, confess that in comparison with the irreligious spirit that was rampant at the beginning of the present century our times are much better and holy communion is far more frequently received. Nevertheless so long as in our parishes the weekly reception of holy communion is looked upon, in general, as an indication, of excessive fervor and extravagant devotion, so long there is evidently wanting a correct understanding and a full appreciation of the Most Holy Sacrament and of the infinite love poured out therein by our blessed Saviour.

How does it happen that in so many cases frequent holy communion does not bear much fruit, or does not produce a proportionate increase in virtue? What means must we adopt to produce the richest fruits from frequent holy communion? In answer to the first question we must distinguish two classes among those who frequently receive holy communion without any apparent or satisfactory progress in holiness and perfection.

The first class is the minority, and they who belong to it are their own accusers, and lament over their slow progress in the way of perfection. Such Christians sometimes ask their confessor: "Shall I continue to receive holy communion frequently? It seems I am not worthy: I make so little progress in overcoming my daily imperfections." As a rule these devout souls have already, by the grace of the Most Holy Sacrament, advanced far on the road to perfection; their vision has become keen in observing their frailties, enabling them to see clearly how much remains to be done to acquire sanctity. In their anxiety they may be consoled with these words: "Take courage, my dear soul! even though you do at times suffer a relapse into faults and imperfections, your earnest struggles are recorded in the book of life; you must not relinquish any of your good practices; you must not cease to co-operate with the grace of God; you must not surrender in the fight against your evil inclinations. You will eventually succeed with the help of divine grace."

## Jesus Asleep.

**L**ADY, beautiful, in white,  
Holding Jesus with delight,  
Lightly pressing brow to brow,  
Tell, O tell, what whisperest thou!  
On thy parted lips a smile,  
Ripples softly, and the while,  
Half imparts, that it must be,  
Word to hear on bended knee.

But, why then, O Lady dear,  
Drops each lash a pearl, a tear?  
Why then, in thy flowery crown,  
Doth a thorn a rose press down?  
Why, the smile, just now so bright,  
Hath it frozen, like a blight?  
Shadow like, what dream hath  
stayed,  
Cast thy light into the shade?



*Vision of the future may,  
Thee have shown the Passion-way.  
Born to thee from Heaven above,  
Christ must suffer, die, for love.  
Bloody shade of Calvary,  
Rests like death, on him and thee,  
Pictured dream to Mother-eyes,  
There where Jesus sleeping lies.*

*Lady Beautiful, in white,  
Keep no longer hid from sight,  
With thy gown's fine tissues spread,  
Jesus' golden, sun-crowned head.  
Draw aside thy mantle blue,  
That enwraps with Heaven's hue.  
Part the silken veil, that we,  
Christ, the Infant-God, may see.*

*Like thee, Lady, would I hold  
Jesus, him with love enfold.  
Soul to soul, with him, like thee,  
Low and sweet, speak lovingly.  
In my heart, let him repose,  
At the Feast divine disclose,  
Life in me of love, begun.—  
Let us weep, rejoice, as one.*

*Translated from French by Honora McDonough.*



## Midnight Mass.



T was Christmas Eve. The snow had ceased falling, and the moon which peeped from her drapery of clouds, revealed a carpet of spotless white, by which the ground was overspread.

Many persons were wending their way along the quiet suburban road leading from Birmingham to the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, which is situated about a mile from the town, to be present at the Midnight Mass. It was half after eleven o'clock when we entered the beautiful church, and already a large congregation had assembled.

At once is heard the solemn and measured tones of a bell which announces twelve o'clock and a long line of priests and acolytes emerge from the little chapel of St. Philip on the right, filing off in the direction of the high altar, whilst the organ begins to peal forth its soul-inspiring music, and anon all hearts are lifted up in prayer and praise at the Midnight Mass.

The Gospel is read, and again the people are seated—a pleasurable expectation on every face. Presently the master of ceremonies enters from the little chapel on the right, followed by a venerable looking, feeble old priest. Slowly he advances to the altar, slowly he kneels, rises and proceeds to the pulpit, which is situated in the centre of the church, and now every one is listening attentively to the old man on whom all eyes are fixed; his voice at first is feeble, but as he progresses with his subject it becomes more audible. His English is pure and his language classic and rich in figures of charming rhetoric, though his discourse is never carried beyond the comprehension of his hearers. At length the feeble hand is uplifted in imparting a solemn benediction, and Dr. Newman leaves the pulpit. Yes, Dr. Newman, whose conversion to Catholicity shook the very pillars of Protestantism in England, whose quiet life and powerful writings have pleaded, and still plead so eloquently on the side of eternal truth. The Mass is ended, and we leave the oratory, and again enter the world with an impression on our memory that time shall never efface.

## Our Lady of Bethlehem.

### I

**T**HE *House of Bread*. Mary is the Mother of the Living Bread that has come down from Heaven to feed the whole world. It was a starving world into which God deigned to be born. Of the bread that perisheth there was lack enough; but of that Bread which giveth life to the soul, untold multitudes had no provision. Even the spiritual food of God's Word had been adulterated by those into whose care it had been given, and whose duty it was to break and give it to the people. But the Bread of Angels was unknown. Through Mary's hands it was bestowed upon a world sick unto death with the hunger of self love and of unsatisfied desires. Yet upon this Nativity night how few of earth's children knew of the happiness in store for them! Some would not even care to know. He had come to His own, and many of them would refuse to receive Him.

They refused to receive the Messiah just as some Christians have refused to receive Him in Holy Communion: through their own fault they were not prepared. Sin must be removed from the heart before Christ will enter it as a Guest; but is there not a Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness? *O that some man would get me a drink of the water out of the cistern that is in Bethlehem by the gate!* cried David. Every Catholic church throughout the world is a Bethlehem, a House of Bread; in



every Bethlehem there is a fountain, in every church there is a confessional.

## II

*The House of Song.* Did our Lady hear that splendid burst of angel-music, *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, that frightened and then entranced the Shepherds? It seems unlikely that she did. It is quite certain that she heard something better—the first articulate cry of Jesus the Beauty of the angel-world above. It is quite certain that she saw something fairer than the Angel of the Nativity and the glory of the heavenly choir that accompanied him, for she saw and held the Chiefest among ten thousand and the Altogether Lovely. She had no eyes, no ears, for aught but her Beloved. Her own heart was full of song. It may be that her *Magnificat* became her Darling's lullaby. Whether she raised her voice or not, we know that a midnight office so acceptable to God as Mary's Matins and Lauds of the Birth of Jesus, had never risen from earth before. In her public services wisely and well does Holy Church make use of all the arts. Disdaining nothing that God has made, and lovingly utilizing poetry, painting, music, and architecture, she sanctifies the senses of her children as well as their intellect. Yet how little she depends upon that which is merely external! A little water and wine and bread and oil and wax—just the simplest commodities of life—are essential to her Lord's sacramental system. But how small is the need of the true lover of Jesus for any thing beyond these things! Truly God is in this place, we may say, and it is indeed a Bethlehem, a House of Bread—yea, and a House of Song, if only our Lord has made the Tabernacle His Home. It is better to embrace Jesus, as Mary did, than to hear even a Choir of Angels.

## III

*The House of Joy.* Joy is almost another word for Strength. Sorrow in itself and until through some action of grace, some supernatural transmutation, it is turned into joy, always makes for weakness. *The Joy of the Lord is our strength*, declared Nehemias to the Children of Israel; and what was true under the Old Law is, if pos-

sible, a thousand times more true to-day. The only joy that is at all comparable with that of Christmas is the joy of Easter. Both are lasting joys: both tell of mysteries which have brought unspeakably greater gladness to the world than any other event in the history of mankind. *Go, eat fat meats and drink sweet wine, and send portions to them that have not prepared for themselves*, said the prophet, speaking in the name of God; *Because it is the holy day of the Lord: and be not sad, for the joy of the Lord is our strength.*

It was to be a common and a universal, not a solitary and a selfish, joy; it was to be in fact like unto the true Christmas joy. The worship of God came first: nothing must interfere with that. Then they were bidden to feast—not forgetting *to send portions* to all who had not prepared, or who could not prepare through lack of means. For the Joy of Christ is a diffusive joy. When we want to apply a really searching test as to the genuineness of our religion, we ask ourselves this one question: "How much do I contribute to the happiness of those about me?" In our measure, and according to our opportunities, we must be like Our Lady of Bethlehem—a *Cause of Joy*.

### Premiums for 1907.

A fac-simile of the lovely engraving of the Immaculate Conception, which can be seen in frontispiece this month, nicely printed on glazed paper and measuring  $12\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$  inches, will be mailed, free of all charges, to any person sending to our office, from the 15th of December 1906 to the 31st of January 1907, a new subscriber to the "SENTINEL," as well as to the old subscribers renewing their subscription within the same time.

Besides the above picture, special premiums will be given if a larger number of subscriptions are sent.

As in the past years 10 subscriptions will entitle the sender to a free copy for 1907.

Kindly address:

THE DIRECTOR OF THE SENTINEL, 490 MOUNT-ROYAL AVE., MONTREAL.



## The Wheat of Bethlehem.

(A Legend).



**I**N Bethléhem, House of Bread, in the manger where slept the new-born Child.

The Child announced by the star, sung by the angels, contemplated by the shepherds, adored by the Magi warmed by the animals, watched over by the Virgin Mother and her chaste Spouse.

A sheaf of wheat overlooked by the harvester, mingled with the straw, serving the Infant God as a bed.

Joyously and triumphantly it bore the the sweet burden saying : "Gentle Child-God, I am deeply honored in being chosen to help support thy sacred members ;

My greatest desire is to feed Thee to be joined to Thee to be changed into Thee.

And the Child, who hears the voices of all creatures, listened to the prayer of the sheaf of wheat.

\* \* \*

So, when Joseph and Mary took the Child to lead Him into Egypt (because Herod, most wicked of men, sought to put to death the life of the world) ;

The wheat with its myriad bending points clung tenaciously to His clothing in order to accompany its sweet Creator.



And not far, from Bethléhem, they crossed the field of Amaléel, a guileless Israelite, a just and God-fearing man ;

Who, seeing the travellers pass, graciously and cordially greeted them, saying : " The Lord be with you and give you long life and good health :

And also to that lovely child you carry, more beautiful than any ever seen in Israel ; like the Messiah Himself, who I think could not be more comely."

" Many thanks to you, charitable man : " — thus spoke the Mother of God — " The Lord give thee grace to see the day of His Christ."

Then, perceiving the golden sheaf on the child's robe, she took it and throwing it into an open furrow said : " May it please Thee, my divine Son, multiply those grains and Thy blessings to the house of Amaléel."

And as it fell the wheat prayed : " May it please Thee, O my Lord, make of me the bread to feed thy Sacred Body so that I may not be separated from Thee."

The grain of wheat took root, budded and flowered and bore a hundred for one.

And the following year each grain was again sown and matured and bore a hundred for one.

Thus it was at each harvest in Amaléel's field ; and the Lord's blessing was showered on his house because he had saluted the Child of Salvation.

And in consequence he became very rich and very powerful in the land of Juda.

Every year in the month of Nisan, he made of his wheat an unleavened loaf and carried it to Jerusalem for the feast of the Azymes.



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At that time, Jesus called Peter and John, the beloved Apostles and said to them: "Behold the hour is come in which I keep the Pasch with my disciples.

Go you and find me a suitable Cenacle; and all that is prescribed in the Law of the Prophets get ready: the lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs."

Peter and John set out to fulfil the command. On the way, they met a man carrying beautiful white loaves, whom they accosted, saying: "We beseech thee give us some of those loaves, for the Master to celebrate the Pasch as it is written."

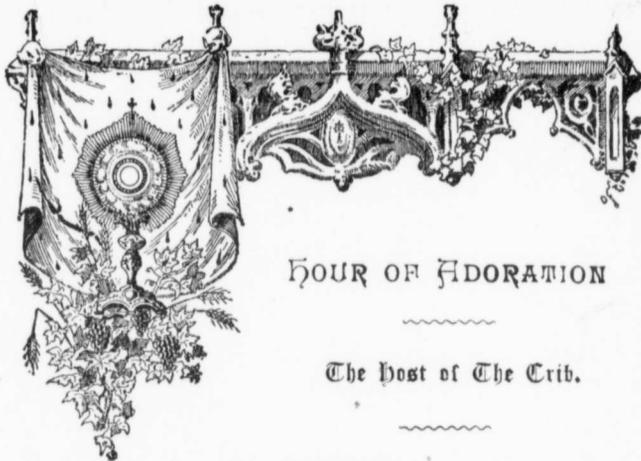
The man replied: "Take, dear friends, take all you require. I gladly give it to you who I know are the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth."

And I, Amaléel, I also believe He is the Messiah, the true Son of God, come to redeem the world.

And after the supper, Jesus took the unleavened bread and gave thanks to His Father, for the hour of His love had come.

Then seeing its dearest wish realized, the wheat become bread gratefully murmured: "Thanksgiving be to Thee, O Lord God of Goodness, who hast vouchsafed to hear my prayer and hast changed me into food for Thy Most Holy Body."





## HOOR OF ADORATION

### The Host of The Crib.

#### I. — Adoration.

Let us represent to ourselves the Sacred Host, the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus, not in the radiance of the sparkling ostensorium, nor in the golden ciborium in which He reposes, but in a crib upon a little straw. Behold in His countenance the most lovely graces of infancy, the purest, the sweetest, the most lovable, and then humbly prostrating, gazing upon Him with love and admiration, with respect and confidence, adore Him at the moment of His birth.

To adore as we ought, let us unite with Mary when she prostrated at the moment of His birth, to offer Him the homage of her love. Here was adoration of the purest faith. She saw beyond the appearances, the weakness, the indigence of the little Child. She proclaimed the greatness, the power, the majesty of God. With a gaze full of emotion, she penetrated those abysses of His Divinity, and then returned to the feebleness of His infancy, which she likewise adored. She passed over nothing, neither in the Godhead nor in the Child, which she did not adore, bless, and praise. Contradictory appearances, far from checking her faith, became for her a lever by which to rise to the dazzling heights of the divine perfections.

Mary's adoration was that of the most ardent love. The most blessed of all mothers, it was her right, her duty, to love her Son even to adoration. That adoration of love strictly united her to Jesus, delivered her wholly to Him. She no longer lived in herself, nor for herself. She lived in Him and for Him. She had positively gone out of self, and she dwelt in Him. It was a perfect ravishment

out of self and into Him. She no longer thought of self. It was all Jesus, all for Him, to serve Him, to nourish Him, to protect Him, to love Him, to aid Him in His work of salvation.

Like Mary, then, let us adore with faith and love Jesus, the Infant of the Host, at the moment of His birth in Bethlehem. But let us examine, contemplate, see all that He is, in order that we may adore Him as He ought to be adored.

Let us recognize under the features of this Babe of one day, the Word of the Father, the Son of God, the Eternal, the Infinite!

Yes, Jesus, I know, I believe that in Thee is the plenitude of the Divinity, and that in becoming a child, Thou didst lose no prerogative. In Thy littleness, therefore, I adore Thy infinite greatness; in Thy birth at this moment, I adore Thy eternity; in Thy silence, the Eternal Word of God; in Thy sleep, the activity of the Creator; in Thy impotence, the almighty power which governs the world; in Thy tears, the joy of the Father and of the Holy Spirit; in Thy poverty, the riches of Him who has need of nothing. Little Babe, Thou art my God! I adore Thee!

## II. — Thanksgiving.

“Most lovely Babe, dost Thou find in me any right, any title, any attractions, to incline Thee to be born thus in the feebleness of infancy?”

“No, but I love thee, I cover thee with My love, and thou dost appear to Me lovable. Thou art, also, the creature of My Father. He has founded on thee His hopes, and He expects from thee glory, which thou canst still render Him. In thy features, disfigured by sin and misery, I recognize traces of the resemblances to Him which I have come to restore. And, again, shorn of the happiness which He destined for thee, and which I have come to restore, thou art in a state of suffering. Behold, these are thy titles! They are so powerful that they draw Me to thee, attach Me to thee, even impose upon Me certain obligations. Captured by love, I give Myself up without regret, even with joy, unreservedly and forever!”

“But, lovely Babe, tell me, I beg of You: To what will Thy birth lead? Wilt Thou stay with us, or wilt Thou appear as a lightning-flash from heaven, to vanish after having cast a ray of hope upon the earth, like the flower of the valley, which opens in the morning, but dies in the evening exhaling its perfume to the setting sun?”

“The love that impels Me to thee, is generous, is lasting, is eternal. What it gives, it never recalls, so I am with thee forever. I shall grow, I shall spend thirty-three years in this flesh in the land of Judea. Then dying for love of thee, for love of thee, also, I shall make Myself a Sacrament. In It I shall for love of thee

remain till the end of time. Then I shall lead thee into My Paradise, in which we shall be together for all eternity."

"O, Jesus, how could I ever thank Thee as I ought, had I not the thanksgiving of Mary, Thy Mother and mine, to offer Thee?"

The thanksgiving of Mary! This Child is hers. He is her Son, her true Son, His Flesh, His Blood, His Life, all come from her. This adorable Child is truly her Son. He is all beautiful in countenance. He has all virtues in His soul, and He possesses every greatness, every power. And He resembles her. He is more like her than ever son was like a mother. O Mary! O Mary!

And He is her Saviour, also! The Blood that tinges His veins, and that will flow upon the cross, is the price of her immaculate preservation. He came to earth for her above all others. He loves her more than all others taken together in heaven or on earth, and it is she that He wishes to save the first. Mary sees and understands His love. She feels it. O abyss of joy!

Abyss of humility, also, for she knows, she acknowledges that she deserves not that honor, that glory, that love.

Sweet Infant of the Host, Thou wilt be born by Communion in my heart. I shall press Thee in my arms. and I shall say as did Thy Mother: He is mine! He belongs to me! His Flesh, His Blood, His Heart, His Life — all are mine! He comes to perfect my redemption, to secure my salvation. — O abyss of joy!

Seeing what I am, compared with what Thou dost give me, what my love is, compared with Thine, I am confounded in my nothingness, my poverty, my unworthiness. It is an abyss of misery, O Jesus, but that, also, shall bless Thy love, since Thou dost deign to visit it!

### III. — Reparation.

"But, Divine Infant, I do not understand why, being God, Thou didst will to be born as Thou wast. That Thou didst come for love of me, I bless Thee; but why in the state in which I now behold Thee?"

"It is because I came to expiate, and that, Priest and Victim, from the moment of My Incarnation, the first act of My outward life ought to be the stable is so cold, so bare, Thy linen so coarse, Thy Mother so poor?"

"Yes, it is that I may begin at once to atone for cupidity, covetousness, and all the sins that the passion for earthly goods makes man commit."

"Why Thy littleness, Thy hunger, thirst, tears and all the weakness of human infancy?"

"They are to expiate man's pride, his self-confidence, his presumption, self-love, vanity, haughtiness, and all the other evil offshoots of vainglory."

"But why art Thou abandoned by men and reduced to the company of the lower animals? If all men are Thy subjects, why dost Thou not force them to flock around Thee, and render Thee homage?"

"This abandonment repairs the sins of the heart, attachment to creatures, and those numberless faults that arise from human affection."

"But what is this, O tender Child?... Thy countenance is losing its joyous brightness, Thy glance is becoming sad, Thy smile is fading away, Thy Heart is troubled. It beats more quickly, and sometimes it stands still. A chill is running through all Thy members. One might say that the blood is freezing in Thy veins, and Thy eyes are full of tears. What dost Thou see? Upon what art Thou gazing so fixedly and in such terror?"

"Ah! I am looking upon Calvary, which I shall have to mount some day. I accept it, but O, the horror to look upon it! It is My Cross that I am already carrying, My agony, My passion, My death, that I am enduring in anticipation! — O, how dreadful it will be! And again, it is My passion and death down through the ages in the abasement of the Eucharist. How humiliating! how ignominious! how lasting!"

"Canst Thou not turn away from the sight, O sweet Child, and permit the ocean of Divine joys to inundate Thy Heart?"

"Ah, no! How painful soever is this Passion of My Heart, I love it, I am pleased with it, because it is the work given Me by My Father, and it alone can satisfy the craving to suffer for thee which torments Me."

"My Jesus, can I not do something, at least, to comfort Thee? It would be so sweet to Me dry Thy tears."

"Compassionate Me, purify thyself, love Me! Detest thy faults which I am at this moment expiating. Offer me the reparation of My Mother. It is so sweet to Me!"

Mary did, indeed, know that her dear Jesus was a Victim, that she was nourishing a Lamb for sacrifice, and she longed to suffer and to die with Him. Since the Passion of the Son began at the Crib, it was there, also, that the Mother delivered herself up to compassion with Him.

She compassionated His poverty, His weakness, His isolation. What! my God, my King in such a state!

Perhaps, she accuses herself for not being able to give Him a home better than a stable; at least, she feels it keenly. She unites herself with Jesus in the sacrifice of Redemption, and supplements it by her own anguish, her own privations, and the cruel blows dealt her love. Mother of all mankind, it is for all that she suffers, for the crimes of the present as well as for those of the future, — Ah, yes, and it was especially for my own sins.

O Jesus, Son of this tearful Mother! — O Mary, — by your sufferings of Bethlehem, pardon me!

Mary begs us to continue her compassion, her reparation before the Eucharistic Crib, in which her well-beloved Son is still more feeble, still more exposed than in the stable. Let us, then, assiduously surround Him with respect and love. Let us offer Him in reparation our prayers, our works, and our sufferings of each day.

#### IV. — Prayer.

Amiable Child, smiling Victim, I know not whether I can tell Thee how much in this mystery of Thy birth Thou dost excite my confidence and dost impel me to pray with faith. Everything invites me, everything calls me, everything tells me that Thou wilt hear me favorably.

The sight of Thee — Thou art so sweet, so gracious, so amiable! Thy smile is so encouraging, Thy glance so benevolent! Thy hands seem opening to bestow Thy gifts, Thy arms are outstretched to receive and to embrace!

The motive of Thy birth — for it is through love for me and for my good that Thou hast come, that Thou dost offer Thyself, deliver Thyself; and after giving Thyself, is there anything that Thou canst refuse me?

And if, feeling myself too unworthy, too guilty, I dare not approach, I dare not call upon Thee, I see at Thy side two pleaders, who will speak for me, who will incline Thee to hear me, who will lead me to Thee. They are Mary, Thy Mother, who nourishes with her milk the life that she gave Thee with her blood, and Joseph, who protects both Thee and Thy Mother. They are good, and they are praying to Thee for me. They are pure, and Thou canst not refuse to listen to them.

Thou dost call to Thy Crib shepherds and kings, Jews and Gentiles, in order to do good to all. Jesus, I come with all that have need of Thee, and I pray to Thee humbly and earnestly: — First, in Thy own behalf — I conjure Thee, above all, to make Thyself known, Divine Infant, make Thyself known and loved! Make us all understand that our churches are Bethlehem, that the tabernacle is the Crib, and that the Sacred Host is Thyself, the Infant Jesus!

Next I pray for myself and for my own great needs. — Give me the grace of Christian-infancy, that is, simplicity, docility, candor, humility, confidence, and filial abandonment. Is not this the atmosphere of the Crib, the grace of Thy manger, and the fruit of Thy little infancy?

I pray especially for the children that they may preserve their grace of resemblance to Thee, which they received in Baptism. Keep them pure for their mothers, make them docile to their teach-

ers, faithful to their Church, brave for their country, and saints for heaven. Infant Jesus, bless the little children all over the world.

By the prayer of Mary at Bethlehem, by the trusting prayer of her love, by the all-powerful prayer of her maternity, by the persevering and uninterrupted prayer of her intimate union with Thee, I implore all these favors.

Did not Thy Mother always pray at Bethlehem? Was not her every look, her every smile, — every service that she rendered Thee when she nursed Thee, when she put Thee in Thy little bed, when she clothed Thee, when she carried Thee in her arms — was not all that a prayer, which Thou didst hear and answer, O grateful Child, and which rejoiced Thy Heart in thus being able to give to her?

Adorable Infant, it is before Thy Sacred Host, so full of graces, so gracious in welcoming, so sweet, so patient, and so good that henceforth I desire always to pray, to spend long hours, and to repeat my unwearied petitions, until I shall be heard.

I shall infallibly be heard if I pray in union with Mary, the Mother of Him whom the Sacred Host contains, and whom It gives!

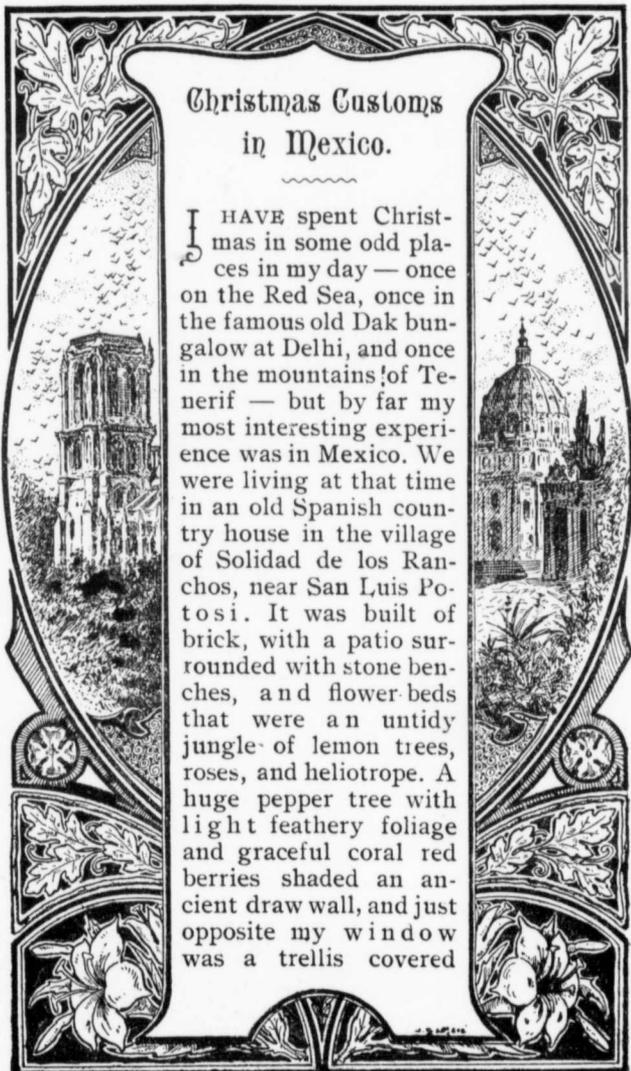
### “ Our Queen Immaculate.” <sup>(1)</sup>

THOUSAND banners float above thy aisles,  
*O fair Basilica! Thy walls are set  
 —Like jewels in a regal coronet—  
 With countless offerings, and marble tiles  
 Whose sculptured records mark the tears and smiles  
 Of grateful hearts; and like a parapet,  
 The soldiers' sword and golden epaulet  
 Are reared against thy sacred peristyles.  
 What would they say, those pledges mute and grave,  
 If living words their forms should animate?  
 A mighty chorus through thy lofty nave  
 Would rise, and make its vaults reverberate  
 With joyous echoes of the tuneful wave,  
 “ Hail, mother dear, our Queen Immaculate ! ”*

(1) See frontispiece.

## Christmas Customs in Mexico.

I HAVE spent Christmas in some odd places in my day — once on the Red Sea, once in the famous old Dak bungalow at Delhi, and once in the mountains of Tenerif — but by far my most interesting experience was in Mexico. We were living at that time in an old Spanish country house in the village of Solidad de los Ranchos, near San Luis Potosi. It was built of brick, with a patio surrounded with stone benches, and flower-beds that were an untidy jungle of lemon trees, roses, and heliotrope. A huge pepper tree with light feathery foliage and graceful coral red berries shaded an ancient draw wall, and just opposite my window was a trellis covered



with masses of the beautiful pale blue convorvulus called poetically by the Mexicans la manta de Maria. High above the abode walls rose the tall pink tower of the village church, with its green-tiled cupola and ponderous bells.

The Mexicans are the most devout and fervent Catholics it has been my lot to meet, and I looked forward to Christmas to see some quaint and interesting religious customs. Nor was I disappointed. On Christmas eve, then, having seen that the doors were securely barricaded, we set forth shortly before midnight for the church. Myriads of stars spangled the frosty sky, of great size and brilliancy, and low down on the horizon was shadowed the dark outline of the mountains of the Sam Pedro range. The streets, usually silent and deserted after dark, were thronged with people hurrying to the midnight Mass and when we reached the church it was already full. According to the Spanish and Mexican custom the main body of the building was in soft shadowy darkness, all the light being concentrated on the high altar, which was radiant with countless tapers. The light shone reflected on the throng of swarthy faces turned eagerly towards it, with a weird Rembrandtesque effect which would have fascinated Mr. Mortimer Menpes. It was a strange scene to our eyes.

From all parts of the lonely Sierras these pious peasants had flocked in to hear their Christmas Mass; wild looking herdsmen and shepherds, many of marked Indian type, wrapped about in many-colored zarapes, with dusty sandalled feet, and fringed leggings of dressed deer-skins. All were kneeling on the bare stone floor, or on the broad brims of their highcrowned charros. Presently the sacristan came in bearing an image of the Divine Infant, which he laid on the altar before the tabernacle. Then, precisely at the stroke of midnight, the venerable parish priest appeared vested in white and gold, and Mass began. When it was concluded, the priest took the Infant in his arms and held it for a moment for the congregation to see.

He then descended the sanctuary steps and advanced down the centre of the church, the people falling back on each side to make way for him as he presented the Nino de Dios to each one in turn. All crowded round; young men and maidens; old men and children; grayhair-

ed fathers with their stalwart sons ; women with their babies ; all kneeling with ardent devotion and adoring reverence to kiss the Divine Child. To the deep fervor and unquestioning faith of these simple people it seems less a ceremony than the real thing. Had they been the shepherds and had this been the stable at Bethlehem on the first Christmas morning they could not have shown deeper emotion. Finally the image was borne away and deposited in the place prepared for it.

There was no crib, but an altar had been placed within the sanctuary decorated with small fir trees and pine branches, in the middle of which was the bed of straw. Mary knelt on one side, and on the other St. Joseph wearing his pilgrim's hat, and holding his staff with its calabaga or water-gourd attached. Mary wore the usual long blue mantle over her white dress, and the artless piety of the Mexicans had adorned her with a shepherd's hat of straw, with a little bunch of pink roses at the side. It had, however, slipped off her head, and was supported by the strings, which hung loose round her neck. The priests laid the Infant between them, and the ceremony was ended.

High Mass was at 10 o'clock. The distinguishing feature of the ceremony was the music, which was singular in the extreme. It seems it is the privilege of the street boys at Christmas time to provide the music. They whistle it on birdcalls to an appropriate accompaniment on the organ. The effect at first is startling ; but when it is done well (and the boys seem perfectly to understand their part), it is extremely pretty, and sounds precisely as if a whole woodful of wild birds had suddenly broken forth into a flood of joyous melody. This music is called " los Pastores "—" the Shepherds "—Why I do not know. I must add that the Mexican carols are the prettiest I ever heard, and quite original. In the afternoon we went by mule train to San Luis Potosi to visit some Spanish friends. In the Sala was an altar tastefully decorated with frosted branches of fir, colored ribbons, silver balls ; and on a lacefringed satin cushion in the middle was a wax image of the Holy Child. The children of the house had arranged it all themselves, and showed it to us with great pride ; and we were told that in every house, rich or poor, was a similar altar.



## Very Reverend Henri Leblond, S.S.S.

*Late Superior of the Congregation of the M.H.S.*

**“Consummatus in brevi, explebit tempora multa.”**

The Congregation of the Most Holy Sacrament, and particularly our community of Montreal has sustained an almost irreparable loss by the death of Reverend Henri Leblond, which occurred in Rome, on the 28th of October.

The deceased was an Adorer in spirit and truth, a priest inflamed with zeal for the glory of the Most Holy Sacrament, a man of remarkable talent and winning personality, a model of self-denial and devotedness, in a word one of those peerless heroes irrevocably and enthusiastically wedded to Christ's interests.

Father Henri Leblond was born at Changey, in the diocese of Langres (France) where he pursued his first studies under the supervision of his pastor until hearkening to the Master's call he went to consecrate himself to the service of the Blessed Sacrament. Endowed with rare intelligence, love for study and a wonderful spirit of initiation he advanced rapidly and completed a brilliant classic course while still very young. Those who had dealings with him can testify to the extent of his knowledge, and his easy grace and fluency whether treating of Literature or Philosophy. His theological studies hampered by many a difficulty, of which ill-health was not the least, were not less serious and successful. To his intellectual abilities he joined an humble prudence, an astonishing maturity of judgment which even then led his superiors to detect the unmistakable signs of his future greatness and in consequence to carefully prepare him for the most important charges.

At the early age of 23 he was raised to the dignity of priesthood, in Montreal, by His Grace Mgr. Emard.

The following day he was appointed director of the novitiate, attached to the Montreal house which important position he held for four years, discharging its duties with a kindness, prudence, and devotedness that delighted his superiors and sowed in the young souls confided to his care the germs of the most perfect religious spirit, of loyalty to the Institute, and of undying love and generosity towards the Blessed Sacrament. He was a typical, Master of Novices, firm yet never harsh ; condescending and kind yet ever just ; he loved the rule and knew how to make it loved ; he was always first to answer duty's call and possessed the happy art of drawing others to follow cheerfully that not always siren's voice ; he contrived to smooth and render less disagreeable, I might almost say pleasant, the many little hardships inevitable in a novitiate in course of formation, as was that over which he presided with such gentle kindly sway as won the love and respect of all his subjects.

Our blessed Savior loved him also and gave him a visible proof thereof by sending him, in 1899, a long and painful illness which led him close — to the Gates A jar ; but the fervent prayers and ardent incessant supplications of his novices barred the entrance and obtained his cure though not his return to the novitiate. Shortly afterwards, in the forepart of the year 1900, the distinguished Religious was named Superior of the Montreal house. It was a vast field, too vast, perhaps, for the activity of a man never very strong, and one moreover, who had taken as measure of his love, to love without measure.

Left to himself the new Superior listened only to the enthusiastic ardor of his 28 years and in consequence contracted the germs of that disease which snatched him from his beloved Congregation at such an untimely age. When his co-frères justly alarmed about his health respectfully expostulated and tried to prevail on him to be more careful, he answered : " If I reach heaven after having consumed myself in the service of the Blessed Sacrament, I will be more than satisfied."

*(to be continued.)*

## The Midnight Shepherds.



RE-EMINENTLY sublime among all the narratives that have come down to us from other days is the evangelistic record of the incidents accompanying the Redeemer's birth,—the simple story, replete with an interest that can never wane, of the first Christmas in Bethlehem of Judea. Chronicling the greatest event that had ever occurred since the creation of the earth which witnessed it, St. Luke deals not in magniloquent phrases in profuse descriptions, or epigrammatical conceits; but, with that admirable simplicity which always characterizes true sublimity, recounts the most stupendous wonders briefly, directly, vividly. Let us peruse once again a portion of that touching narrative:

“And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.”

And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be sign unto you: you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill. And it came to pass that, after the angel departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem; and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us.

And they came with haste ; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger."

Happy shepherds, thus admitted to the privilege of being among the very first to proffer the tribute of profoundest adoration to the new-born Saviour ! Who among



### *Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

Christians that reads the exquisite story now, does not envy their singularly blessed lot ? Who is not interested in their personality, the reason of their presence on the star-lit hilltops at midnight in the depth of winter ; their number, their career subsequent to the signal favor

vouchsafed them,—any details, in a word, relative to the first earthly adorers, apart from Mary and Joseph, of the transcendent mystery of the Nativity of Jesus Christ?

At the time of our Saviour's birth the pastures around Bethlehem were still as fertile as when, centuries before, David had tended his sheep thereon. Numerous flocks still covered the hillsides and lowlands; and to protect them from Arabian robbers, or from ferocious beasts, such as lions or bears, not unknown in that day in Palestine, sentinel shepherds were placed on guard. Here and there throughout the pasture lands arose towers of varying strength and height, serving at once as a refuge for the guards and a retreat for the flocks during inclement weather.

Oriental customs are as unchangeable as are Oriental costume and language, and scattered through Eastern fields and meadows may still be seen towers similar to those that surround Bethlehem. One of the most ancient of these structures in the neighborhood of Bethlehem was called the Tower of Ader, Tower of the Flock. Built ages before the birth of Christ, it had become monumental since the time when Jacob, as we learn from Genesis, fed his herds in the immediate vicinity. In this tower, not far from the Grotto of the Nativity, were the shepherds when the angels announced the "glad tidings of great joy."

"This day is born to you a Saviour." Thus in the majestic silence of an Oriental night was verified the magnificent poetry of Solomon: "For while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word leaped down from heaven, from Thy royal throne, as a fierce conqueror into the midst of the land of destruction."

At a short distance from the Tower of Ader, on the way to Bethlehem, there still exists a little hamlet, called in Arabic Beth Saourd, or village of the Shepherds. According to the constant tradition of locality and of Palestine generally, this was the home of the lowly guests invited by angelic voices to the Crib of the Man-God. Flocks still crop the pasturage around the little village, and the boys who tend them are in all probability lineal descendants of the favored courtiers of the Infant Messiah.

That there were many shepherds in and around Bethlehem is clear from the number of flocks that pastured in its fertile valleys, plains, hillsides. How many of them were called to adore the new-born King? Even before the answer given by tradition, says Mgr. Gaume, the analogies of faith determine the number. The incarnate Word had accomplished the redemption of angels; of angels whom He had preserved from a fall, of men whom He had raised therefrom. Already the angelic world surrounded His manger-cradle, triumphing in His birth. There remained humanity to offer its homage. The three races sprung from the three sons of Noah should be represented in a mystery accomplished for all. The same signification that exists in the sacred number of the Magi holds good herein; hence there were three shepherds.

"In accordance with this and other testimony," observes Benedict XIV, "we affirm with assurance that there were three adoring shepherds, and that there were no more than three." Perpetuated from age to age by written or sculptured monuments, the tradition of the three shepherds was some years ago revived annually in Rome, the city of traditions. At the beginning of Advent, when the Eternal City was under Papal rule, the *pifferari*, or shepherds, of Sabine Hills descended their mountains, and, marching through the streets in their simple yet picturesque costume, announced, to the strains of rustic music, the approaching birth of the Child of Bethlehem. Although in considerable numbers, they ever walked three abreast—an old man, a middle-aged one, and a youth.

That these favored among all earth's children on that December night nineteen centuries ago were saints is the common opinion in both Eastern and Western churches. And it is certainly a doctrine presenting no difficulty to a fervent christian. The virtues which won for them their magnificent privilege could not but have been augmented and enhanced by their contact with the Infant Son of Mary; and the memory of that midnight scene, remarkable amidst all the occurrences that earth has ever witnessed, must have dwelt with them throughout their lives, a fountain of perennial joy, and a guerdon of final perseverance. Simplicity, humility, candor, are the characteristics in them that serve as examples for us.

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**M**IDNIGHT Mass is over. Slowly, almost reluctantly, the vast multitude leave the church as if loath to quit the golden atmosphere redolent of joyous Glorias, heartfelt Adestes, soul satisfying peace; and to disappear in the dense darkness enveloping the city, this bitterly cold Christmas night.

Through the wide open portal can be seen glimmering, away down at the end of the deserted nave, the altar candles, like distant twinkling stars, and under the vaulted roof, the brilliant luminous festives emblems, earlier greatly admired by the worshippers, now gradually dying. The massive door with its great iron fastenings closes with a clang that wakens all the mysterious echoes of the old cathedral, then, all is quiet, and profound silence reigns.

Suddenly, a slight noise breaks the perfect stillness and two children cautiously emerge from the furthest corner of the dark portico where they had been hiding and peer into the outer darkness.

"Guiseppe," the smaller one whispers, looking at him sadly, "Guiseppe, I'm so hungry and so cold!"

"Poor Tito, I'm so sorry," gently answers Guiseppe. "Try and be patient until tomorrow. Since we have earned nothing today to bring our master we must spend the night here; but it won't be long and tomorrow will bring us better luck. It will be Christmas you know, the day of peace and good-will, and we will play our choicest melodies at the church door and gather in a rich harvest, —enough to satisfy our master and enable us to return home."

The flickering gas light falls upon the speakers and discloses two children, two musicians, two little strolling artists. The elder with his big harp carefully wrapped in its green baize covering strapped to his shoulder, is barely thirteen years old, very thin and sad looking, with lovely black eyes that baffle description and unmistakably prove his Italian origin.

The other, apparently about eight years of age, holds in his numb fingers a violin which he repeatedly presses to his heart as one would a dear treasure, with a look of love, a sigh of



discouragement. His eyes are blue, a wonderful blue, as clear, pure and transparent as his own native sky and sea; his pretty blonde head with its aureole of sunny curls makes him resemble one of those pictured cherubs Angelico de Fiesole delighted to paint.

Guiseppe, feeling Tito leaning more wearily against him, searched once more in the big leather purse he carried concealed under his coarse blouse, in the hope of finding a few coppers to buy bread for the little lad whom his grandmother had confided to his care as she blessed them both ere they set out to seek their fortune in a strange land.

That was eighteen months ago and Guiseppe happy and hopeful thought as he fingered his beloved harp, how easily and readily it would win food and fame for himself and his little comrade...

Yes, months ago, that was his boyish fancy, but today stern reality confronts him—not a cent of money, not a bite of bread—for himself it does not matter so much but for his little charge Tito, for the child for whom he feels responsible before God ; the anguish is almost more than he can bear. In an agony of remorse, he encircles the little lad with his strong young arms as if to shield and warm him and lovingly and pityingly imprints on his brow a kiss that speaks volumes.

Surprised at this unusual demonstration, Tito looks up and asks : “ Brother, why are we hungry.”

## II

All day, through the busy noisy city amidst the ever hurrying crowd, in public boulevards, in narrow streets, before brilliant shops, princely hotels, elegant residences, everywhere, they might have been seen, this young harpist and the still younger violinist vying with each other in their efforts to show forth all the rhythm and beauty of their loved instruments...

Everywhere they might have been seen ; but no one saw them !

Nevertheless, they were certainly a most remarkable pair, those poor strolling artists, worthy of more than passing notice, as the deft fingers of the elder swept the harp strings with incredible grace and skill, and the bow of the younger quivered with tears, danced with joy, shook with laughter...

But no one saw them !

The day was gloomy, sunless and bitterly cold. Yet despite this, only one thought and aim seemed to have possession of the city and its inmates—preparation for the morrow.—More than once through a quickly opened door they heard glad cries of surprise. More than once through the shutters of palatial homes they saw children—children like themselves—smilingly passing to and fro. More than once Guiseppe grew pale and Tito restrained his tears with a stifled sob...

But no one saw them !

*( To be continued. )*