

The Family Circle

GATES AND DOORS.

There was a gentle hostler
(And blessed be his name!)
He opened up the stable
The night Our Lady came.
Our Lady and Saint Joseph,
He gave them food and bed,
And Jesus Christ has given him
A glory round his head.
So let the gate swing open
However poor the yard,
Lest wear people visit you
And find their passage barred.
Unlatch the door at midnight
And let your lantern's glow
Shine out to guide the traveller's feet
To you across the snow.

There was a courteous hostler
(He is in heaven to-night)
He held Our Lady's bridle
And helped her to alight;
He spread clean straw before her
Whereon she might lie down,
And Jesus Christ has given him
An everlasting crown.

Unlock the door this evening
And let your gate swing wide,
Let all who ask for shelter
Come speedily inside.
What if your yard be narrow?
What if your house be small?
There is a Guest coming
Will glorify it all.

There was a joyous hostler
Who knelt on Christmas morn
Beside the radiant manger
Wherein his Lord was born.
His heart was full of laughter,
His soul was full of bliss
When Jesus, on His Mother's lap,
Gave him His hand to kiss.

Unbar your heart this evening
And keep no stranger out,
Take from your soul's great portal
The barrier of doubt.
To humble folk and weary
Give hearty welcoming,
Your breast shall be to-morrow
The cradle of a King.

Yes dearest Babe those tiny Hands
That play with Mary's hair,
The weight of this mighty world
This very moment bear.

—JOYCE KILMER.

OUR BLESSED LADY.

In the corner of a dark hut, with a dim light beside him, sat a bearded publican.

"Why do people travel if they can't pay their toll?" he growled, and again he went over the tirade he had earlier in the day let loose against the paupers who had passed that way.

"It's been quite a good day," he declared in a wheezy chuckle, as he turned the money over in his hand, "but it could have been better, far better!"

This and like scenes were those witnessed by the angels as they looked down on Bethlehem the first Christmas Eve. Hardly a heart was found that was not steeped in sin. The whole world was buried in a cloud of darkness that knew neither love nor fidelity. Vice was the only virtue; self-satisfaction the only

good; Satan everywhere held undisputed sway as lord and master.

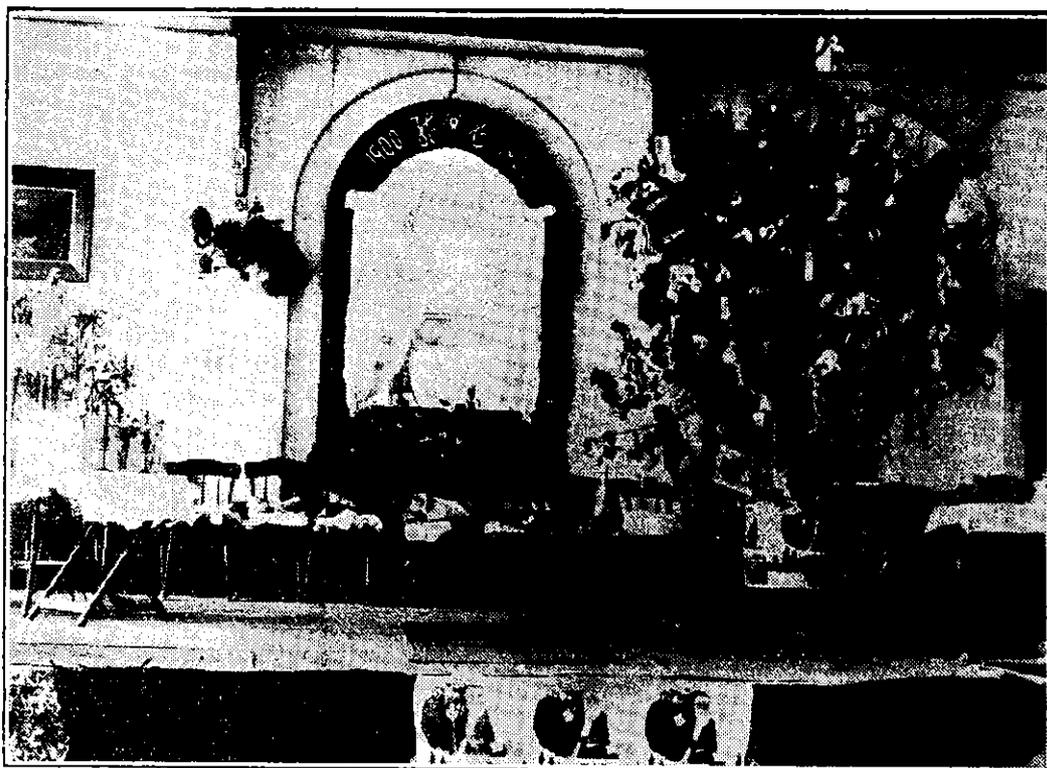
It was surely a sad sight to behold, this sinful world of ours. Not the spot that one would have chosen for the God of purity and love to take up His abode. Yet the angels rejoiced as they awaited the birth of the Redeemer, for they saw that one heart at least could welcome their King. The world was corrupt, indeed, but the Heart of Jesus was to be adored by one human heart that was pure and loving—the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Mary's whole life had been one long act of love for God. Her spotless purity had given her an insight into His secrets never at-

mer sin; their great love for the Master appears all the brighter when compared with their past infidelity.

So will it be with us if we make our lives what they are meant to be. When the Infant Jesus comes to us He will be welcomed as He should be welcomed by servants of His Sacred Heart. He has no need of our gold and silver and all that they may buy; He cares not for the noisy feasting with which worldlings celebrate His coming; what He desires of us is a pure heart inflamed with a generous love, a heart that is the closest possible imitation of the Immaculate Heart of His Virgin Mother; one, like hers, perfectly united to His own, that unquenchable furnace which burns with love for men.

—Joseph Fallon, S.J., in the *Canadian Messenger*.



"MOTHERS' PARTY" CHRISTMAS TREE AND DISPLAY OF WORK
AT ST. JOSEPH'S HALL, DUNEDIN.

—Photo by Miss Ritchie.

tained by philosopher or theologian. To know God is to love Him, and so her love surpassed that of the greatest of saints, even of the angels themselves. The first great servant of the Sacred Heart possessed in a pre-eminent degree the distinctive mark of this devotion—a deep-rooted, fervent love.

When our Blessed Mother took her newborn Babe into her arms and pressed Him to her bosom, no words were needed to express the love that was in her heart. She loved Him as her God and she loved Him as her own flesh and blood. She was His forever, only His, and He was her very own.

During this Jubilee year, as the angels look down from on high, will they find in us some semblance to our model, Mary? As servants of the Sacred Heart does our purity resemble the purity of this first great servant? Is our love an imitation of that which she manifested in the stable at Bethlehem?

Unlike Mary we have been stained by sin, and the fervor of our love has cooled, but true repentance will set matters right again. The zeal of Peter, who had denied Our Lord, and the love of Mary Magdalen, who had given public scandal, are made to stand out clearly against the background of their for-

TO BETHLEHEM.

Out of the shade that covered the land,
Out of the reaches of the night,
A star broke over the lonely sand,
Marking a path to the new-born Light:
A star that gazed on a wondrous birth,
And shone like a royal diadem,
Leading the great and the Kings of the earth
Over the hills to Bethlehem.

Above Judæan field and hill,
Beyond the City's streets and strife,
Burst forth the music of good-will,
A song that was joy and peace and life:
Calling the poor and the lowly-born,
Calling the shepherds and urging them
To haste, with feet of love, that morn
Over the hills to Bethlehem.

Out from the battle of the day
And from the night of dread and fear,
From woe of sin and sorrow's way
They are ever calling us, calling clear,
To the place where perfect love began:
Calling us all to follow them
To the Son of Man and the God of Man
Over the hills to Bethlehem.

—REV. THOMAS F. BURKE, C.S.P., in the
Missionary.

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