

hope revived by the little flower, "the Star-flower of the Virgin's child." It leaned lovingly on the Persian flowers surrounding it, and the traveller no longer felt himself a stranger in an alien land, and amidst people of an alien faith, for the flower taught him that the Moslems, too, were praying to God, and seeking Him, though by a different path than the Christian.

"Each Moslem tomb, and cypress old,
Looked holy through the sunset air,
And angel-like the Muezzin told
From tower and mosque the hour
of prayer."

A "Christmas Carmen" is a song of exulting joy, with its beautiful, prophetic refrain. "All speech flow to music, all hearts beat as one."

"Sound over all waters, reach out
from all lands,
The chorus of voices, the clasping
of hands;
Sing hymns that were sung by the
stars of the morn,
Sing songs of the angels when Jesus
was born!
With glad jubilations
Bring hope to the nations!
The dark night is ending, and dawn
has begun!
Rise, hope of the ages, arise like
the sun,
All speech flow to music, all hearts
beat as one!"

Blake has a lovely little Cradle Song, in which the following stanzas are found:—

Sleep, sleep, happy child!
All creation slept and smiled.
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,
While o'er thee doth mother weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace;
Sweet babe, once like thee
Thy Maker lay, and wept for me.

Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When He was an infant small.
Thou His image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee!

Smiles on thee, on me, on all,
Who became an infant small;
Infant smiles are His own smiles;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles."

Blake sees in every child the image of the Christ child, for we are all called to be like Him, and the infant soul fresh from His hands still carries the Christ in its face.

Rosetti's mystical Sonnet on Hans Memmelinck's "Virgin and Child"

strikes the note of mystery and of strength:—

"Mytery: God, man's life, born into
man
Of woman. There abideth on her
brow
The ended pang of knowledge, the
which now
Is calm assured."

The knowledge of all that shall be accomplished does not sadden her—she is calm in the strength of her God, and will endure unto the end.

William Bell-Scott in the "Madonna di San Sisto" points out that the same beautiful thought was in the mind of Raphael:—

"Behold me here, untouched by pain,
But with foreknowledge of the day
Still far away
In darkness on the mount of death
Defiled by malefactor's breath—
When, 'It is finished!' He shall
cry,
And the immortal seem to die."

There is no death for the immortal babe she holds in her arms, and mother and child march through life and death to triumphant victory.

There is a curious "Midwinter Bucolic" by C. W. Wall, entitled "Two Babes"—the one being the New Year, the other the Christ Child.

The New Year trembles at the burden laid upon him, and he asks:

"I am sent these souls to win,
How shall I my task begin?"
Christ: "Begin with me. Oh! take
my hand,
That here beseech, who might
command.
Let us wander forth together
In this dark and wintry wea-
ther."

The New Year recognises the Christ, and gladly goes with Him, and as they pass out of the stable, he finds that the Old Year has left lying at the door a crown, and the Christ says:

"Of thorn,
Like the one that I have worn.
But come with me and do not grieve:
Men's hearts are open to receive
The Love you bring to help their
woe,
For I bring Love."

And the New Year replies:

"Ah! let us go."

It is a quaint little poem, teaching that each year Christ plays once more His passion play—goes forth to suffer and to redeem mankind.

George Herbert's "Christmas" has his own peculiar style—and charm—his own original ideas, expressed as only he can express them. It is impossible not to quote the first part entire:—

"All after pleasures as I rid one day,
My horse and I, both tired, body
and mind.
With full cry of affections, quite
astray;
I took up in the next inn I could
find.

There when I came, whom found I
but my dear,
My dearest Lord, expecting till
the grief
Of pleasures brought me to Him'
ready there
To be all passengers' most sweet
relief.

O Thou, whose glorious yet con-
tracted light,
Wrapt in Night's mantle, stole
into a manger;
Since my dark soul and brutish, is
Thy right,
To man, of all beasts, be not
Thou a stranger.

Furnish and deck my soul, that
Thou mayst have
A better lodging than a rack or
grave."

How characteristic of him is the expression, "The grief of pleasures."

Then he says he will seek a sun willing to shine as long as he is willing to sing:—

"His beams will cheer my breast, and
both so twine,
Till even his beams sing, and my
music shine."

All lovers of Tennyson know his thrice-repeated description of Christmas in "In Memoriam." Tennyson was English through and through, and it is the holly, the Christmas pastimes, the Yule log, the wassail bowl, the Church below the hill, that touch him to sadness as he remembers the past.

"This year I slept and woke with
pain,
I almost wished no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would
break
Before I heard those bells again.

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controlled me when a
boy;