



Maud Hart and Delos Wheeler  
Lovelace Family Papers.

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~~Flight~~

~~limited, Dup~~  
old

not corrected  
except for  
new page.

approval when Veçius Rusco planned.

Candace had brought food, Iris went out to get provisions packed for the journey. Deborah, with that new import born of imminent marriage, had offered everything she owned, and of what her father owned, and kept peeking anxiously at the baby.

"He won't mind a trip at all," Mary said.  
"He'll never know whether it's me or 'riser joggling him."

"I hope you're not too disappointed," Deborah said.  
"Joseph told us you'd been talking of nothing but going back home of course, you'll miss the wedding too."

"I'm sorry to have you miss the wedding," Deborah said.

"I'm sorry too," Mary said. "But Joseph says we mustn't stay, so we mustn't. Much as I'd like to see you in a crown of myrtle blossoms and the two of you breaking the goblet."

Deborah <sup>glanced delightedly</sup> looked at Lucianus, bowed over the map, and ~~stuttered~~ slowly back to Mary.

"<sup>to Mary,</sup> And I know you're disappointed," she said, "not to be going back to Nazareth. Joseph told us you'd been talking of nothing but going back home."

The baby sighed and stirred and Mary stroked him ~~softly~~ <sup>and looked down with a</sup> thoughtful gentle ~~face~~.

She recalled Joseph's <sup>account</sup> description of the rude Moabite country ~~to~~ toward Egypt and pictured herself ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ riding deeper and deeper into repelling hills and canyons and barren desert.

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Around Nazareth the countryside would soon be blooming with flowers of more colors than she could name. The streams in spring-time abundance would be giving drink to fig, <sup>o</sup> pomegranate, olive, apricot, date and walnut trees. Grapevines would be clothing their black <sup>stump</sup> branches in rich leafage. Life and beauty would burgeon on the folding hills. How <sup>the</sup> ~~xx~~ larks would sing, winging up to the sky, and <sup>how the</sup> bluebirds, lighter than feathers, <sup>would</sup> perch on the greening branches, and how <sup>the dove on her own roof</sup> ~~the dove~~ would coo, while she rode into the sterile south!

Mary shook her head in self-rebuke.

"But I've never been to Egypt," she said, more to herself than to Deborah. "I've never been farther from Nazareth than Bethlehem. I'll like a longer journey."

Joseph overheard ~~the remark.~~

"It'll be a lot longer," he said soberly.

"Briar can take his time.

"As if he ever did anything else."

"That donkey!" Mary said, ~~angrily~~

Lucianus handed his sketch over to Rusco and the latter approved and handed it to Joseph.

"There's your road," he said. "Read the thing just the way you would a building plan. It takes you the long way but I think it's the right one."

"It'll be a rough way," Lucianus said. Like most young men he was doubtful that anyone older than himself had the strength for a rough road. "The country East of the Dead Sea is rugged."

"But Joseph can travel it with an easy mind," Rusco said. "I heard yesterday that a couple of robbers have turned up over there but they'll be after big game. They won't waste time on a man with

~~"The litter will take care of everything between here and Jericho," Bracae said.~~

*Bracae*

"And below the Dead Sea," ~~Rusco~~ <sup>Rusco</sup> said, "he can just angle west, keeping clear of the main highway until <sup>he reaches</sup> the border of Egypt. <sup>"The nearest border town is Rinocolura, and Herod's power ends there."</sup> Rusco said.

"There'll be hills nearly as tough as mountains,"

Lucianius said.

*Joseph said, and Mary nodded.* "The Tribes climbed them," ~~Mary~~ <sup>Mary</sup> said, "By thousands! and hundreds of thousands!"

~~And so can I."~~

~~And so can I."~~

"Hundreds of thousands?" Rusco said. "I know that country <sup>clear to</sup> below Moab and into the Wildernesses of Zin and Paran. I know it clear to Goshen. Maybe <sup>Thousands</sup> ~~hundreds~~ climbed, and ~~maybe a few thousands.~~ But hundreds of thousands? Never!"

"I <sup>have</sup> ~~ve had~~ my own notions about those <sup>hundreds of Thousands</sup> big totals,"

Joseph chuckled. "I think that since it all happened a cipher or two got tacked on."

"Amateurs never make accurate reports," Tribune Marcus Seclator Lucianius said profoundly. *and Deborah nodded in admiring agreement*

"It's all desert now," Rusco said, "east of Zin, and south, and for that matter north." He nodded. "That's quite a well one of your people built, Joseph, at Beersheba."

"Abraham built it," Joseph said. "Right down through rock."

"It certainly comes in handy these days," Rusco said. "The whole region is parched and tormented. It's flat sometimes, rolling sometimes, and sometimes just <sup>a</sup> wind-blown ~~mounds~~ litter ~~with~~ bits of dull purple stone, but always desert. And hot! You'll need to be careful of water."

This is right " Joseph said " And  
of the places <sup>in</sup> Egypt that I  
know I can do well in, is the  
besert.

If the threat of so much hardship bothered Mary she didn't show it.

"Where do you think you'll go in Egypt?" Rusco asked.

ot  
"Wherever I go I'll find some of our people," Joseph said. <sup>Since the Dispersion, exile</sup> ~~They're spread all over Egypt.~~ Alexandria, Memphis, Leontopolis, On! And every city has its synagogue, or a dozen! I'll probably try On first."

"On?" Rusco puzzled, ~~than saw light.~~ "Oh, that's <sup>you name</sup> the Hebrew for Heliopolis, isn't it?"

"It is closest," Joseph went on, "and of course I won't walk Mary and Brian any further than I have to."

cur  
"Brian <sup>a good walker</sup> can walk," Mary smiled. And sometimes, she thought, he seemed as wise as Balaam's beast. ~~She was sure he~~ <sup>and whenever</sup> would carry her whenever she needed to be carried. She was just as sure that she could endure whatever <sup>needed</sup> had to be endured. After

☺ That's right! ☺ Joseph said "And of all the places in Egypt that I know I can do well in, it's the nearest. <sup>take</sup> And of course I don't want to ~~walk~~ <sup>walk</sup> any farther than I have to it way

all, she would not be travelling any farther south than the Tribes had travelled north out of Egypt. If they could do it so could she."

*RP* "On could be our city of refuge, ~~just as well as~~ not," ~~Joseph~~ said.

*Mary* said.

"City of refuge?" Rusco repeated.

"In the old days," Joseph said, "cities were set apart as places of asylum. If an enemy sought vengeance and you escaped into one, you were safe until you'd had a fair trial. The cities were so close that one, ~~Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Gelath, Ramon, Bezar,~~ <sup>of them</sup> was always within a day's journey, ~~if~~ you journeyed fast enough."

*[Handwritten scribble]*

"On your journey you'll be days and days,"

Lucianius said.

"I'll make it," Joseph said.

"Now how about money?" Rusco said.

"Egypt needs carpenters. A carpenter can earn all he needs in Egypt."

*a good carpenter (r)*

"Especially the best carpenter in Judea," Mary said.

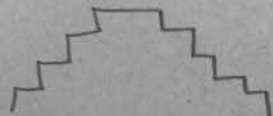
*[Handwritten mark]*

"Just the same," Rusco said, "a little backlog won't hurt," and <sup>had</sup> tried to push a purse into Joseph's hand.

"I'd take it if I needed it," Joseph said, <sup>pushing</sup> ~~giving~~ it back. "~~But I don't~~" Thanks just the same."

"And you won't let me give you a sword and shield, or a spear, or even a dagger?"

~~"We had all that out last evening,"~~ Joseph smiled.



Goblet. And of course I would like to be going back to Nazareth."

The enchantment of Galilee grew stronger as she saw herself, ~~On~~ indifferent Briar, riding deeper and deeper into the rude, repelling country of the Moabites and the still ruder region to the south, ~~which Joseph had often described.~~

Northward, ~~all~~ around Nazareth, the countryside would shortly ~~be~~ blooming with flowers of every color that she could name and more. The streams, in a springtime abundance, would be ~~washing~~ <sup>spring drink to</sup> pomegranate, fig, olive, apricot and walnut trees ~~and~~ renewing the strength which would make bountiful harvests sure. The grapevines would be clothing their barren shoots with rich leaf presaging plentiful, ~~rich~~ wines. All this while she rode into the sterile south, <sup>all this</sup> would burgeon into tender life, ~~but~~ <sup>she would see</sup> she would not see. The stately, tolerant storks, ~~would watek,~~ <sup>and</sup> and the slow, conciliatory little tortoises, ~~So would~~ the cooing doves, the unfettered larks, the blue birds as light as feathers, ~~And over~~ <sup>while</sup> all the sky's watchful eye would <sup>looked</sup> look down on Tabor's restful bosom, on the mountains to the north and on Nazareth's green hills and the fertile valley of Jezreel.

Mary shook her head in self rebuke, and her expression changed to one of anticipation.

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Joseph

"I have my staff," Joseph said. And at that Rusco shook his head in such long-suffering exasperation that Joseph had to smile, even while his heart filled toward this big, ardent, ~~skilled~~ Roman. Even among his own people there were not many who would have been as quick to offer <sup>aid so freely</sup> ~~any aid within their power.~~

"All right!" Rusco said. "Have it your way. No weapons. <sup>After all you'll soon</sup> ~~And at that, once you're through the tunnel, you'll~~ pick up a travelling party so <sup>large</sup> ~~soon~~, that not even a big robber band will think of attacking it. You'll be all right, once you're through the tunnel."

~~Tracing carefully back over the warning which had broken his sleep,~~ Joseph <sup>R</sup> was caught up short by ~~the word~~ "tunnel." <sup>He</sup> ~~Tracing back over the warning which had broken his sleep,~~ he ~~and retreated from it.~~ <sup>felt that he</sup> He did not need, really, to skulk through a tunnel, any more than he needed ~~Vedius Rusco's~~ weapons or money. His safety, and the safety of Mary and the baby did not hang on such things. ~~His safety rested in the Lord.~~

~~I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in him will I trust.~~ <sup>Joseph</sup> He spoke the well-remembered words <sup>to himself</sup> ~~aloud, though softly,~~ and then went on in his own mind. He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. And <sup>then</sup> a little later came the words which Mary <sup>so much</sup> liked. He shall give his angels charge over thee....They shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

"I think," he said, smiling at Vedius Rusco, "that we'll just <sup>start off</sup> ~~be on our way~~ through the ~~main~~ gate. I don't want to go ~~hauling Mary and the baby through a black tunnel.~~"

"The ~~main~~ gate!" Vedius Rusco threw up his hands. "You certainly are sure of yourself. And Mary is even surer. ~~And I'll~~ tell you the truth, you've almost got me going along with you. Almost!"

Brain had dropped sleepily until  
he saw no one was missing.

The mood of the departure  
calm, serene, quiet, relaxed  
gills, easy - good going in  
with a laugh.

Joseph had nice  
said you were  
to

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But why not do it my way? Just say you're humoring me. We'll light Mary all the way through, as bright as day. And then you'll be, the three of you, going along ~~by yourselves~~ <sup>were</sup> just as you and Mary and ~~the donkey did~~ <sup>coming</sup> down from Nazareth."

"The gate will be ~~easier~~ <sup>best</sup>," Joseph said, ~~placidly~~ <sup>"And</sup>. "The quicker we're gone, the less likely we are to bring any trouble on you."

Trouble! Vedius Rusco bowed his neck and rubbed the back of it, as a man sometimes does <sup>in tired satisfaction after a day's work.</sup> When a man has finished <sup>has aimed aimed</sup> all he ~~tries~~ <sup>tries</sup> to finish, what does he care about any trouble, even the biggest?

For years ~~now~~ <sup>his</sup> Deborah had been ~~Vedius Rusco's~~ only concern and now that was taken from him. Lucianus was in charge.

From here on, what is left for me except repeating?  
And how long does a man want to go on, repeating over and over what he has already done the best he knows how? What if trouble ~~can~~ <sup>should</sup> come? What if...

He took the plunge and found, in strange, cold depths, a different elation. What if Joseph is right and those who live by, do die by the sword? So long as a man died for a good thing it did not matter when or how he died, ~~and especially it did not matter when he had already lived a good full life.~~

He looked at Mary, waiting beside Joseph in ~~an ease~~ <sup>a gentle ease</sup> of mind which could not have been greater if she had been holding ~~gentle~~ Ceres' comforting hand. He thought of Herod.

If this woman's child is truly the expected Messiah

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then Herod is plotting an unspeakable crime. He is forcing an ~~unforgivable~~ <sup>unforgivable</sup> manhunt which men will never forget nor forgive. He is hunting down a .. demigod.

All his life Rusco had used that word to describe the sometimes almost holy son of a mortal (which the woman, Mary, certainly was) and one of the gods (and certainly a god had to be involved in the birth of a Messiah). But it did not fit this case. Just as there were many gods, there had been many demigods, some not holy at all. ~~About the many gods he had learned in his years of going to Rome's wars the world over. But from Joseph he had lately learned that there was, or might be, not many gods but only one. And if this child, Jesus, was the son of the one god he was more than demigod. And certainly such an one was worth the risk of any trouble.~~

*TP it would take time to think this through. Vedius Rusco rubbed his neck and*  
~~It struck him next that just as certainly such an one scarcely needed the small protection of any tunnel and he shrugged and smiled at Joseph.~~

"All right!" he said. "You've beaten me down. ~~Have it your own way.~~ Right through the main gate. But at least do one thing for me. Get out of here while it is still ~~black~~ night."

Joseph smiled ~~back~~. He certainly would get out while night held. ~~Flee into Egypt was a command which did not encourage dawdling. And it didn't encourage much worry either, he thought stoutly. He was, he told himself, under constant care. He that keepeth Israel, shall neither slumber nor sleep.~~

~~They all went out of the villa and through the main gate. The others were excited, even anxious, but Vedius Rusco thought that Mary and Joseph ~~waxzlkaxaxshoxzxxx~~ were showing no more concern than if they had been starting to call in a Nazareth neighbor. Quiet! Serene! Untroubled! easy of mind! All fitted this bewildering pair ~~axzlkaxxxx~~ on the brink of a four hundred mile journey which~~



and me, I mean," Deborah said.

*Leony*

"And come to the villa too," Candace said, resting for a moment ~~against~~ <sup>on</sup> Mary's shoulder as though ~~for some~~ <sup>for</sup> comfort.

They all spoke in whispers. The men whispered, ~~to~~ giving Joseph fresh advice, and warning him not to lose the map and saying goodbye at last. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Rusco's hands ~~lingered on~~ <sup>gripped</sup> Joseph's ~~shoulder~~ <sup>arm</sup>.

"Peace on your journey," Joseph said.

~~"You've been good to us," said Joseph.~~ "Thank you!"

He bumped his staff ~~firmly~~ against Briar's ~~xxxxxx~~ rump. The donkey looked around to make sure his master was ~~serious~~ <sup>in earnest</sup>, and ~~then~~ <sup>then</sup> looked back to Mary as though to make sure she was firmly seated and the baby snug. And then he stepped out, although at a deliberate gait which told everyone concerned that he proposed to take his own sweet time.

Mary waved and Joseph lifted his staff in a gesture which said, "All is well!" His sandaled feet and Briar's delicate hooves made no sound, ~~at all~~. There was nothing to hear and indeed, you might have said, there was nothing ~~xxxxxx~~ to see because man and donkey and the donkey's riders melted almost at once into the night. ~~xxxxxx~~ watched over, Rusco felt, by those eyes ~~Joseph had mentioned which would neither slumber nor sleep.~~

Rusco remembered what Joseph had ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ quoted, ~~that~~ <sup>out of</sup> ~~from~~ his holy writings. It did seem as though ~~the three of them were watched by eyes which would neither slumber nor sleep.~~

*could not sleep or slumber x*

#

"Oh-h-h-h!" Zebedee said in pretended admiration and winked again at Joseph, but Joseph was soft-hearted.

"Our sacrifice is all arranged, friend," Joseph said. "We have no business for you."

Zebedee burst into jeering laughter, but before the Egyptian could retort he was brushed aside by the returning Levite. That official opponent ignored the tout's wail over having failed to make an honest penny.

"Joseph," Mary said, "We're starting home tomorrow, and we don't need much. Can't we spare a penny?"

"I was thinking the same thing," Joseph said and dipped into his girdle while Zebedee groaned in exasperation.

Again there were <sup>two</sup> three to shield Mary, this time on the walk toward the elevation from which the golden Sanctuary looked down on the great court. The Levite led the way but stopped to stare. A short distance off Salome, herself shielded by four slaves, was edging through the crowds.

"She never swings her dags in here unless Herod wants a thing," he scowled. "What is it now?" His scowl darkened at more shouting from the Tyropoeon Valley. Then he shrugged and led on to the massive balustrade guarding the Sanctuary elevation. Plaques at all thirteen entrances warned sternly in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Egyptian and Syrian:

LET NO ALIEN ENTER WITHIN THE BALUSTRAD E AND EMBANKMENT ABOUT THE SANCTUARY - WHOEVER IS CAUGHT MAKES HIMSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS DEATH WHICH WILL FOLLOW

and the Temple police were sharply questioning all who seemed

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*Herod*  
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*245A*

even remotely ineligible, even many who were Jews as plain as day. But none questioned Joseph and Mary. They had the Levite.

Within the balustrade they faced the Temple buildings, so elevated that from the Court of the Gentiles necks had to crane if eyes were to see well. A high wall offered a second barrier and it was by this wall's gates that worshippers reached the sanctuary proper. The Levite would have taken them around to the Gate of the First-born.

"We'll use the Beautiful Gate," Joseph said, "You must see it, Mary. Besides it lets directly into the Court of the Women and the trumpet-chest to catch your purification pennies is just inside and just behind is the gallery where you can wait while I fulfill the redemption."

They came to the Beautiful Gate -- two massive doors of shining brass, four or five times as high as Mary's home in Nazareth and three or four times as wide.

"It takes twenty men to swing those doors open in the morning and shut them at night," Joseph said.

~~The gate stood at the top of broad, alternately~~  
The gate stood at the top of broad, alternately white and blue marble steps. They took off their sandals, climbed, and passed through and Mary paused uncertainly because there were thirteen trumpet-shaped chests, each guarded by a severe, white-robed priest.

"What do I do now?" she whispered.

"Yours is the third one," Joseph said. "It's for purification fees only." He touched her cheek in encouragement.

menf\*

for Englishmen I see only." He looked out over the enclosure-

"Don't be the only one," I said. "If,

"What do I do now," she asked.

she said she would be glad.

There were fifteen children-ages of seven and eight and

others and I saw the children and the English people

and the other people who were there.

The first group of the top of the road, it was

in the morning and the first group of people."

"If you can find a man to work those roads open

some in the morning and some of the other people

and the other people who were there."

There were the English people -- the English

people I saw the English people."

It was the first and the first group of the English people

the English and the English people to see the English people

and the English people who were there."

"The English people who were there," I said. "Don't

forget to see the English people."

There were the English people who were there."

There were the English people who were there."

There were the English people who were there."

There were the English people who were there."

There were the English people who were there."

There were the English people who were there."

There were the English people who were there."

Twice a day the fees were divided, half to pay for sin-offerings, half for burnt offerings.

"I just drop my money in?" Mary whispered.

"Show it to the priest first," Joseph said.

"He may claim you could afford a lamb instead of just turtle <sup>And of course you know you'll hear SEE The Dove Zechariah has picked out</sup> doves but I don't think so; ~~the Levites signalled him.~~ Take the ticket he gives you and wait in the gallery. The redemption ceremony won't keep me very long. It's just two prayers and the payment. But it is performed in the Court of the Priests and women aren't permitted there <sup>so</sup> I'll have to take the baby. I give him to the priest and the priest gives him back when I pay."

"He nursed just a little while ago," Mary said. "He'll be as good as gold. <sup>(n)</sup> ~~He probably won't even wake up.~~"

"You'll be all right in the gallery," Joseph said. "It's a good place to watch. You can see over the men's court clear to the Altar of Burnt Offerings." ~~He looked at the lengthening shadows. "I've just about got time for the redemption before the evening incense burning. Hang onto the ticket the priest gives you. You'll need it."~~

~~"Why?"~~ <sup>hesitated</sup> Mary ~~whispered.~~ ~~They had talked this all over but she wanted his reassurance. Over by the third trumpet the priest was frowning in her direction. Joseph touched her cheek~~ *again.*

~~"When the incense is about to be lighted," Joseph said, "you cross the Court of the Women and climb the steps up to the men's court and the gate opens and you go in."~~

~~"Not into the men's court!"~~ Mary protested.

"Not exactly," Joseph smiled. "Just beyond the gate is a wicket. It stops you. But you are far enough. You're on the level of the Court of the Priests and close enough to see everything that happens at the Golden Altar."

"I think I have it right," Mary whispered. "I stand there with the baby and with all the other mothers and their babies. And the trumpets blow and the organ plays and the chorus sings and the priests chant and the incense is scattered on the Golden Altar."

"That's all," Joseph smiled. "And as soon as the incense cloud begins to rise you are all through."

"But my ticket!" Mary said. "I'll still have my ticket."

"No you won't," Joseph laughed. "A station man will take it from you as soon as you reach the wicket."

~~she touched her cheek.~~ TP "Now give me the boy. And don't let that sour-face over by the trumpet bother you."

"Will you watch until I'm in the gallery?" Mary whispered. "I'll need you if everything doesn't go all right."

"I'll be right on this spot," Joseph promised, ~~and touched her cheek again.~~

Mary walked to the trumpet. Her gaze met the gaze of the stern priest, and she saw that she had had no need to worry. He hadn't been frowning at her at all. It was something else, maybe just the sun in his eyes. She dropped her pennies, and the priest did not even hint that she could have afforded a lamb. He gave her a ticket and she walked, smiling, to the gallery and seated

*TP Mary gave a fat or two to the precious bundle and handed it over*  
*Joseph settled in both arms, fearful that one would not be safe enough*

herself behind the lattice and smiled more warmly as Joseph and her son went on their own errand, ~~accompanied by Zebedee.~~ The priest at trumpet Number Three caught her eye and raised an <sup>assuring</sup> ~~an~~ assuring hand, as though her smile had been for him, or as though he were giving a blessing.

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~~Let's go make~~  
~~more money~~  
Wynne

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

"I feel ever so much better than when I went to drop the pennies into the trumpet," Mary said. "I was bothered then because I thought the priest was angry with me. But I'm not going to feel bothered at all when I stand behind the wicket."

The organ was beginning the hymn which called women to prayer and purification and the trumpets were belling up into the late afternoon sky.

"Everyone in the Temple is scowling today," Joseph said. "I found out why from Zacariah."

"I'm glad I'm not why," Mary said.

"It's Herod!" Joseph said. "Listen!" Over the noise around them, even over the tumult in the Court of the Gentiles, they heard fresh shouting from the Tyropoeon Valley. It rose and fell, rose again and slowly died.

~~"This is a day for chariot races in Herod's amphitheatre," Joseph said. "The Sanhedrin and the High Priest, too, protested when Herod built the thing. They said that thousands betting, cursing and shouting over gladiators and runners and chariot <sup>SEES</sup> races so near the Temple would be sacrilige. They've been ~~saying~~ <sup>protesting</sup> it ever since. And whenever games are held all the priests scowl because they feel Herod is deliberately insulting~~

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A

patted her arm. "Now give me the boy," he said. "And don't let that sour-face over by the trumpet bother you."

"But you will watch until I'm in the gallery?" Mary whispered. "I'll need you if everything doesn't go all right."

"I'll be right here," Joseph promised and gave her another pat and a push.

Aglow from his encouragement Mary walked to the trumpet, her gaze meeting the gaze of the stern priest bravely. Her hand trembled only a little as she dropped her four pennies. Everything went entirely all right. The priest did not ask if she couldn't afford a lamb. He gave her her ticket and turned his suspicion upon the next woman and Mary walked firmly to the gallery and seated herself behind the lattice there and smiled, to send Joseph and her son and Zebedee on their way. The priest at trumpet Number Three caught her eye and to her surprise raised a friendly hand, in blessing, as though ~~herzznizskadz~~ he thought her smile had been for him.

---x---

the Temple. And who can blame them?"

*need not*  
"You told me once, that Herod ~~might~~ have been *so hated*

~~almost as loved in Israel as the Emperor is in Rome; that he~~ *might almost*  
~~would have needed only to be just and perhaps a little kind.~~  
*been loved if he had been just*

Who does Herod find it so hard to be kind?"

Joseph shook his head. He might have an answer, but it would be one involving ideas and the wording of ideas did not come easily. Ideas did. Often he was full of ideas, *about* of thoughts of goodness, kindness, mercy, love and the faith which Mary possessed in such abundance. But not the wording. He found himself hoping that Mary's son might have such ideas and *the words, too* be able to express them so that they would sway men. But as for himself! He flung out a hand.

"I remember a thing," he said haltingly. "Abigail said it. ~~She was David's wife.~~ *David's* She said it before she became ~~his~~ wife. It was when she fed and encouraged him. She said that the Lord would make him *a* sure house<sup>4</sup> because he fought for the Lord and because evil was not found in him. But some *are evil and* kings never have a sure house because they <sup>^</sup>never fight for the Lord. I think Herod is such a king."

"It shouldn't be so hard for him to be a little kind," Mary said.

~~The hymn was ending.~~

"You'd better hurry," Joseph said.

*hearble*  
Mary walked across the ~~marble~~, blue, rust-red and white floor of the Court of the Women. She held her son proudly among the other mothers, young and old, but not many

"It's almost time for you to go," Joseph said. The organ was beginning the hymn which called mothers to purification and trumpets were ~~xxxxxxx~~ calling through the late afternoon. "It's almost time for the incense to be lighted."

~~Mary stood ~~xxxxxxx~~ very straight in the blue dress embroidered in yellow. She softly smoothed down the baby's hair and straightened his robe. She stood very straight in her blue dress embroidered in yellow and ~~xxxx~~ pulled her veil across her ~~young~~ expectant face.~~

~~"You ~~xxxxxxx~~"~~

"Tell me again just what I do," she said. *Mary whispered.*

"~~xxxx~~ Well, you cross the Court of the Women and climb the steps up to the men's court and the gate opens and you go in."

"Not into the men's court!" Mary protested.

"Not exactly," Joseph smiled. "Just beyond the gate is a wicket. It stops you. But you <sup>will be</sup> far enough. You're on the level of the Court of the Priests and close enough to see everything that happens at the Golden Altar."

"I think I have it right," Mary whispered. "I stand there with the baby and with all the other mothers and their babies. And the trumpets blow and the organ plays and the chorus sings and the priests chant and the incense is scattered on the Golden Altar."

"That's all," Joseph smiled. "And as soon as the incense cloud begins to rise you are all through."

"But my ticket!" Mary said. "I'll still have my ticket."

"No you won't," Joseph laughed. "A station man will take it from you as soon as you reach the wicket."



252 B

The organ summoned loudly.

"You'd better hurry," Joseph said.

Mary drew her veil and walked across the blue, rust-red and white marble of the Court of the Women. She held her son proudly among the other mothers, young and old, ~~but not many as young as Mary~~, and as she walked her serenity grew because ~~she~~ had her son had been given to the Lord and received back from the Lord. She climbed to the Court of Israel, the other mothers with her, their naked feet whispering up the marble steps which now were cold in the sunset chill.

A priest behind the opened gate smiled, and a station man, one of the lay representatives of the people, smiled and gestured each woman to a place. Mary found she had a place in front and, just as Joseph had told her, a station man took her ticket although not as though it were important. He dropped it into his pouch without so much as a look.

Right up against the wicket Mary could see everything, could rejoice that she was sharing everything. And rejoice she did! In the trumpets, the organ, the singing Levites, the priestly benedictions and finally the incense floating above the Golden Altar. It was for her and the other mothers that prayers now were floating in a fragrant cloud upward to the Lord! ~~The benedictions pouring from the throats of the priests were especially for them!~~

*flaxen-haired young woman*  
As the cloud faded she smiled at the ~~one~~ who stood next.

"Wasn't it wonderful?"

"Wonderful!" The young woman said. She was hardly older than Mary. "It was worth the trip up from Bethlehem, *and ten times more*

*behaved beautifully*  
"Your baby ~~was very good~~, *was* Mary, *seed*

*They are retreated down to the Court of*

washing place behind the Altar of Burnt Offerings priests were beginning to scrub tired hands and aching feet and the clean-up crew was sloshing water over stained marble tables and ~~in~~ the floor.

Along with the other women Mary obeyed the gesturing station man and retreated with her son back down to the Court of the Women. Joseph was waiting, and <sup>their</sup> ~~the~~ Levite <sup>guide</sup> ~~sent by Zacharias~~.

"Simeon has sent for us," Joseph said, not trying to conceal gratification.

"Simeon!"

It was a thing to be called by Simeon, that just old man who worshipped and prayed so <sup>constantly</sup> ~~constantly~~ that for his worship and his waiting for the Messiah a cell had been set aside down in the bowels of the Temple!

Many cells, vaults and rooms had been chiseled out of rock deep in the Temple's <sup>3</sup> bowels. Safe ones for the treasure of gold and silver. Huge ones for the stores of wine, olive oil and grain. Dry ones for the making and repairing of furniture. Airy, warm ones for the Temple's library, five million scrolls, it was said, containing the wisdom of Judea from the beginning. There were scores of interlocking tunnels, one of which led even to Antonia.

Proud to be called by ~~one as devout as~~ Simeon,  
 Joseph and Mary followed the Levite down a stairway into the  
 murky underground and, feeling as though they had entered another  
 world, hurried along a tunnel dimly lit by occasional wall-lamps ~~and~~ <sup>It</sup>  
~~and~~ so narrow that Mary ~~anxiously~~ kept her elbows spread lest a  
 ragged finger of rock reach out from the wall and hurt the baby.  
 As they hurried they were brushed by a hurrying priest. Their  
 tunnel was the one leading to the Fortress. The return of the  
 priestly vestments was a shame which had to be kept from as many  
 as possible. <sup>P</sup> ~~The hearts stopped before a door~~ <sup>(A)</sup>

"Here is Simeon," ~~the Levite~~ <sup>he</sup> said and left them.

~~They went in diffidently, Mary first. As she~~  
~~entered the baby awoke in the stronger light and~~ <sup>stared</sup> ~~smiled~~ <sup>blinked</sup> at the  
 light, or at the ~~man~~ <sup>old</sup> who ~~awaited~~ <sup>waited for</sup> them across the cell.

It was a very small cell, lighted by ~~two~~ <sup>A</sup> lamps and  
 an overhead grating. It was furnished with a mattress and a  
 blanket. And Simeon was a very small, old man.

~~All men and women, if they live long enough, come~~  
~~finally to those years which erase sex, temperament, even humors.~~  
 They are not old people. They are merely old. <sup>On first sight</sup> They have no more  
 identity than crumpled papers left so long out in the weather  
 that all original markings are scoured off. They are only tracks  
 left in the dust by Time's trailing finger. Simeon was such a track.  
 His body seemed less than a dry, ~~discarded~~ stick. His face was ~~not~~ <sup>only</sup>  
~~even a caricature of a face, only~~ <sup>two bright buttons</sup> innumerable, <sup>taut</sup> impossible wrinkles, <sup>A bare</sup>  
~~an unbelievable nose, the merest ground-down suggestion of teeth~~  
~~and a mouth reduced to a scarcely perceptible slit.~~

254 A

J 000 E

They went in diffidently, Mary first. As she entered the cell the baby stirred and blinked.  
~~xx~~ It was a very small cell, lighted by a lamp and an overhead grating. It was furnished with a mattress and a blanket. And Simeon was a very small old man.

All men and women, if they live long enough, come finally to those years which erase sex, temperament, even humors. They are not old people. They are merely old. On first sight they have no more identity than crumpled papers left so long out in the weather that all original markings are scoured off. Simeon was ~~such a~~ <sup>such an</sup> ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup>. Above his dry thin body, his ~~xxx~~ face was only two bright buttons, among innumerable tangled wrinkles, a bare ~~xxxxx~~ suggestion of nose, ears worn almost to vanishing, and a mouth almost sunken out of sight.

And yet even on such crumpled papers, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ something may be read. There is that which, on second sight, reveals the true self, a



All men and women, if they live long enough, come finally to those years which erase sex, temperament, even humors. They are not old people. They are merely old. On first sight they have no more identity than crumpled papers left so long out in the weather that all original markings have been scoured off. They are only tracks left in the dust by Time's trailing finger. Simeon <sup>was such</sup> ~~was~~ such a track. <sup>above his dry thin body</sup> ~~His body seemed less than a dry stick~~. His face was only two, tiny bright buttons among tangled wrinkles, a bare suggestion of nose, ~~and ears worn almost to vanishing~~ <sup>almost</sup> and a mouth <sup>almost</sup> ~~reduced to a scarcely perceptible slit.~~ <sup>slit</sup> ~~on such crumpled papers, even~~

<sup>something may be ready</sup> And yet, even in the least of Time's trailing tracks, there is that which, on second sight, reveals the true self, a character which shines through. Looking closer we ~~say~~ do not say as we had said at first, "The poor, poor old!" With a sense of triumphant realization we say, "Why, here is virtue! ~~Here is~~ ~~virtue!~~ Here is goodness!" Or, sometimes, "Here is beauty!"

As Simeon took three short <sup>stiff</sup> stiff steps -- he needed no more to cross his cell -- Mary said to herself, This is truly a good man. And Joseph said, Isaiah must have looked like this when he called on our people to walk in the light of the Lord.

Simeon reached Mary and she gave the baby into his arms. He did not take, but only received, and holding the baby he turned his his eyes upward as though the grating had been a window facing Jerusalem, or even Heaven.

"Lord," he said, "now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."

He drew an old man's breath, inhaling in slow stages as though each was the last his strength could manage. ~~He looked~~

~~Simone reached~~ Mary ~~and she~~ gave the baby into ~~his~~ <sup>Simone's</sup> arms. ~~He~~ did not take but only received; and he looked down, ~~straining his faded eyes,~~ and the baby blinked ~~up~~ at him, ~~out of his tiny face.~~

*Simon*

Then ~~the old man~~ turned his eyes upward as though the grating had been a window facing Jerusalem, or even Heaven.

"Lord," he said, "now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." ~~and he~~ <sup>free</sup> ~~was~~ silent ~~for a long long time,~~ and so ~~did~~ Mary and Joseph, ~~but at last he~~

~~At last~~ ~~Simone~~ drew an old man's breath, inhaling in slow stages as though each was the last his strength could manage.

"According to thy word," he said, ~~and~~ <sup>he went on</sup> paused again.

"For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, <sup>which thou hast</sup> prepared before the ~~xxxx~~ face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel."

~~He turned his gaze upward again and managed another breath.~~ <sup>M</sup> Mary looked at Joseph who put his hand on her arm.

~~Simone~~ turned ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ toward ~~Mary~~

"Behold," he said, "this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel."

them and ~~raising~~ <sup>raised his</sup> wrinkled old hand, <sup>and</sup> gave them a blessing, <sup>and then he</sup> ~~he~~ said to Mary, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising <sup>again</sup> of many in Israel, <sup>which shall be</sup> and for a sign that is spoken against."

Mary was ~~very~~ still, and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the old man <sup>forward</sup> leaned ~~closer~~ looking at her closely with his bright ~~his~~ old eyes.

"And a sword ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ shall pierce through thy own soul also," he said.

I do not know, Mary thought, what he means. But if my soul really is pierced, ~~the Lord will help me.~~ ~~and~~ ~~is~~ Joseph will help me and if Joseph is not with me I'll just have to do the

*Simon*

always. ~~He~~

~~me~~  
~~best I can alone. And the Lord will help me. He has promised to help~~

Simeon's gaze seemed to help her. Although so ~~deceit~~ it  
was very kind. He said something more, about the thoughts out of  
many hearts being revealed, and he gave the baby back ~~to her~~.  
Mary pressed <sup>The</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>bundle</sup> ~~that~~ warm ~~against~~ against her heart.

Outside, in the tunnel, another step sounded and  
Anna came into the cell. At first Joseph saw only something like a  
crumpled paper, long out in the weather, but then he thought:

Here is beauty!

Anna had had great beauty and its ~~essence~~ <sup>halo</sup> remained. She was of the Tribe of Asher whose women always had been the most beautiful in Israel, the only ones entirely worthy to be the brides of kings, and among ~~the women of~~ her generation <sup>she</sup> Anna had been <sup>the</sup> most beautiful of all.

She looked at the child in Mary's arms and <sup>she too</sup> gave thanks, as Simeon had done, unto the Lord.

Another step grew plain. This was a strong, hurrying step.

~~Zacariah came in, a strapping man with a beard that seemed to have been heartily salted and peppered, he looked impressive in his ceremonial linen coat, girdle and cap.~~ <sup>he bustled in behind that</sup> "You have spoken with them?" he said to Simeon.

"And you?" he looked to Anna.

"Yes!" Anna said. Her voice was brittle, the snapping of a thin, dry reed.

"I.." Zacariah was apologetic, "I must ~~hurry~~ <sup>take</sup> them away."

"We have spoken with them," Simeon said, ~~his voice taking the words in brief, audible steps.~~ <sup>gone permissing</sup>

"Will you come?" Zacariah said to Joseph.

"Yes, but .."

"We must hurry," Zacariah said.

"I'll carry <sup>the boy</sup> ~~him~~," Joseph said to Mary, and took the baby.

<sup>Embarrassed</sup> Almost pushed by Zacariah they gave quick, regretful nods to the old pair, <sup>in apology for the precipitate departure, and leaning over one shoulder, added a smile</sup>

*toward*

*turned back*

Out in the tunnel Joseph would have ~~retraced his~~  
~~steps to~~ the stairway.

"Not that way!" Zacariah<sup>h</sup> said. He looked to  
Mary. "Do you think the baby can be kept from ~~rying~~?"

*P* "Of course," Mary said and gave him her breast.

~~"He never cries," Mary said indignantly.~~

"We ~~are~~ <sup>very</sup> must be quiet," Zacariah<sup>h</sup> said.

"What is this all about, Zacariah?" Joseph asked

~~softly.~~

"I'm not sure, not really. Except that Herod  
is behind it."

~~"Herod?"~~

Mary moved closer to Joseph until she could touch  
the rough sleeve around his ~~big~~, hard arm.

*"Herod?" Joseph said.*

"Well, his sister! He has <sup>his</sup> a hag of a sister,

*in stopping to talk with some of the mothers*  
Salome, ~~she and some slaves are trying to round up all mothers~~  
~~coming out of the Temple.~~ *"The Temple"*  
She says Herod wants to see them."

"You're not taking us ~~to~~ to her?"

"Of course not!" Zacariah<sup>h</sup> was indignant. ~~"But the~~  
~~High Priest is letting her round up two or three. The High Priest~~  
~~seems to know a thing no one else knows. But of course I'm not,~~  
~~going to let Mary be rounded up."~~ He checked a hoot of laughter.

"Imagine what Elizabeth would say if I did!"

"Where are we going?"

"A little ahead this tunnel branches off and the  
branch leads down to a house in the Street of the Candlemakers.  
You can leave <sup>that</sup> ~~it~~ after dark and be just a family going home  
like hundreds more."

They heard steps far behind them as they came to the entrance to the branch tunnel, then voices.

*P* "Keep going!" ~~"Get in!"~~ Zacariah whispered. "Hurry!" He looked back. "That was the hag's voice. I couldn't forget ~~it. It's~~ <sup>her voice.</sup> Does she dare ~~come down~~ <sup>come down here</sup> to trouble Simeon and Anna?" He urged them along the descending level.

*M* "Briar is still where the Levite stabled him," Mary <sup>whispered</sup> ~~said~~ to Joseph.

"Can you get us a donkey, Zacariah?" Joseph asked.

"I'll get your own animal," Zacariah said. "And you'll be ~~xxxx~~ out of Jerusalem in no time and Salome will never know. Nor Herod either. Him and his amphitheater! We'll see who makes a fool of who! The black heart!"

-----x-----

*Bec...*

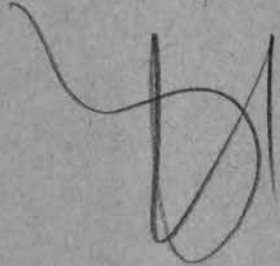
*in the Court of the Priests*

Above the long day of sacrifice was ending. At the washing place behind the Altar of Burnt Offerings priests were beginning to scrub tired hands and aching feet and the clean-up crew was sloshing water over stained marble tables and the floor.

the final contingent of worshippers began to drift back to the Court of the Gentiles, tired ~~notxxxxx~~ fathers, mothers, babies. The touts and ~~beggers~~ tried for no more profits but instead stood in nooks counting their day's gain. The money changers, each by his own column, ~~column~~, closed their coffers, and awaited the arrival of porters and guards. ~~Beggars too looked about,~~ sifted slowly ~~away~~ <sup>through the crowd.</sup>

*a white-cloth*

High ~~on~~ on the four hundred and fifty foot watch tower ~~a~~ Levite raised a ~~white-cloth~~ ~~arm~~ and on his golden trumpet ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> blew a lonely twilight note.



— 0 —

"Then people all knew  
as much as I do," Russo  
said to his visitors when  
Boat we came in with  
Boat. His fiance included  
pounded caudate looking  
in the doorway, "how what  
exactly, do you have to  
pull us?"

*Note special:*

ZACHARIAS.

*Sixteen*

CHAPTER ~~FIFTEEN~~

High across the city the sun's first rays, reaching over the Mount of Olives, struck golden fire from the Temple and in a watchtower four hundred and fifty feet above the still dark gorge of Kidron Valley the Levite lookout raised a white-clad arm and blew on a golden trumpet.

His signal alerted the hosts below to their sacred labors which Moses had first decreed, which David had set forth anew, which Solomon had elaborated, which Zerubbabai had reconstituted and which now were continued under the half-mad Idumaeian convert who sat on David's throne.

The ~~division~~ of priests assigned for duty on this day, as they would not be assigned again for six months, were already at their posts, bare-footed, white-robed and unblemished as the Law required. Their chief already had completed the torch-light inspection of the sanctified precincts denied to Gentiles and the captain of the Temple police had completed his own inspection of everything else within the four spiked walls <sup>that</sup> enclosing <sup>ed</sup> the entire temple ground, twice putting his torch to the tunic of a sleeping sentry, as was his right.

Now, in the Court of the Priests, the silver trumpets of three Levites echoed the golden warning and one

He would ~~not~~ when

~~"I thought we'd have some~~

~~① I planned to have some bread  
and cheese~~

~~② I'd planned that we'd have  
some bread and cheese before we  
W~~

priest crouched over the wood heaped on the Altar of Burnt Offerings and huffed and puffed at shavings stuffed down among yesterday's embers and a thin blaze licked upward and then a thin wisp of grey smoke. At the peak of sacrifice the wisp would grow to a thick, black, oily cloud.

The chief priest frowned. A red line divided the altar into halves, one for the burnt offerings which must be consumed entirely for the glory of the Lord, one for the sin-offering, the best of which, when well-scorched, might be hooked clear to satisfy mortal appetites. The line should have been fresh but it could barely be made out. There would be grumbling! The people complained that all too often greedy priests ignored the line; especially at the end of the long, hard day. Tired then, and hungry, they aimed their meat hook at the most succulent chunk, red line or no red line, lest they fail to provide a ration for their squad, and for themselves.

Strong attendants, who must keep clear the altar drain by which the hot blood spilled down to Kidron Valley, readied long pushers, already charred and darkly stained. More men of muscle inspected the big jars in which, as the day ran on, they would tote off ashes, <sup>entrails,</sup> and all other refuse. The priests who dressed the sacrifices honed their knives on marble butcher blocks. Other priests swung arms to loosen the muscles with which they would hang the washed meats on hooks set into boards fixed to eight short pillars and, later, transfer the meats to the fire.

Behind the altar <sup>at Burnt offerings</sup> stood a panel more than a hun-

dred feet high. Under a bordering vine and grapes of solid gold it bore a picture of Solomon's Temple. <sup>Behind</sup> ~~Behind~~ the panel, <sup>and the</sup> ~~guarded from profane gaze by a veil, was the Holy of Holies.~~ <sup>Between</sup> ~~Between~~ Altar and Holy of Holies stood the Holy Place with its Golden Altar flanked by the table of shew bread laid with a cloth of gold and the seven-branched candlestick. Reverent priests already had trimmed the candles and brushed the <sup>Golden</sup> ~~the~~ altar free of yesterday's incense ashes and spread hot coals on the newly cleaned surface ~~of gold~~. Now a third priest set about the rite which had fallen to him by heaven-guided lot and from which he would be barred all the rest of his life. This was the envied, holy task of spreading over the coals fresh incense <sup>to carry</sup> ~~to carry~~ sweetly up to the Lord prayers for all the people.

His <sup>priceless</sup> ~~golden~~ censor shining in the early light, this priest approached the <sup>golden</sup> ~~the~~ altar. Behind him lay silence. Priests and all others within sight and sound were prone, mutely praying with gratitude for past boons, with thanks for present blessings, and with hope for future mercies.

At the Altar, the chosen priest took care that his incense fell for the most part on the side nearest the Holy of Holies, that perfect cube <sup>behind the Altar and the vine-adorned panel</sup> which was empty of all save the Presence of the Lord, and as the cloud of fragrance drifted upward he withdrew, step by humble step, and the gold and silver trumpets blew again and the Temple organ played and the rich, united sound soared westward over Joppa Gate.

~~It's opening - p o -~~  
 In the thirty-fifth year of the reign of the

"It's opening!" Mary cried.

In the thirty-fifth year of the reign of the dying tyrant, Herod, and in the seven hundred forty-seventh year of the founding of Rome and a thousand years after David, <sup>she was going</sup> Mary went up to Jerusalem to regain the precious privilege of approach to the golden altar of the Temple.

~~She arrived within sight of the Joppa Gate at dawn.~~ <sup>P</sup> It was early in the harsh month of Shebat, forty-one days after the birth of the son who, the Law of Moses said, had made her unclean (a daughter would have made her unclean for eighty).

He was held tight in her arms as she looked around, wide-eyed, from the back of the donkey <sup>Briar</sup>, <sup>which</sup> ~~who~~ had carried her from Nazareth almost two months before. At her side Joseph struck his cinnamon-scented storax staff in marching rhythm. He

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ would have been at her side in any case, as long as he lived he would be, but he was Temple-bound on his own duty, to buy the release of <sup>her</sup> ~~their~~ child from sanctuary service. The necessary five shekels were carefully folded into his girdle, patted often to make sure they did not fall out unnoticed. ~~They~~ <sup>she</sup> had ~~brought them all the way from~~ <sup>brought them all the way from</sup> ~~been there ever since the start of the journey to Bethlehem.~~

<sup>P</sup> The morning was cold. The little snow which had fallen in the night ~~had not begun to melt except in the crowd outside the~~ <sup>around the market</sup> city wall at Joppa Gate, ~~there~~ <sup>arrivals</sup> early travellers were ~~churning~~ <sup>churning</sup> it <sup>in</sup> to a yellow mush in which Briar set his ~~slim~~ hooves with delicate disapproval. The big market ~~was~~ was beginning to bustle, ~~and~~ ~~although~~ ~~Mary~~ ~~had~~ ~~seen~~ ~~it~~ ~~before,~~ ~~when~~ ~~they~~ ~~passed~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~earlier~~ ~~journey,~~ ~~but~~ ~~she~~ ~~was~~ ~~accustomed~~ ~~as~~ ~~she~~ ~~was~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~scanty~~ ~~wares~~ ~~in~~ Galilean shops, <sup>how</sup> <sup>always</sup> she marvelled at the booths, ~~all~~ overflowing.

all overflowing. And not just with homemade stuffs! Here were rarities hurried in from every land by merchants eager to share in the prosperity which Herod, like the earlier despot, Solomon, had brought to Judea. Here was everything and on every hand and at every price. Here a mistress might, for three or four hundred pennies, clothe a slave for a whole year and then perhaps from the same dealer buy herself a dress costing enough to clothe a

hundred. Already market inspectors were on their rounds making sure that a merchant would abide by the approved profit of one sixth of his cost.... unless, of course, a little something was slipped under the table.

But even the market could not hold <sup>Mary's</sup> her eyes as the huge ~~gates~~ leaves of Joppa Gate swung wide <sup>(all)</sup>

Briar ambled through. Hundreds trying to be first inside bumped him fore and aft but his stubborn legs held a straight course beside Joseph while Mary turned this way and that to look ~~she thought~~ <sup>The</sup> at a golden and ivory city. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~

~~Only it wasn't! Not was of the splendor which she had~~

"That's the one."

"Going with him, Margaret?"

"Oh, of course!" Margaret lifted pointedly indifferent brows. "This pudding is delicious, Petsy. You ought to give the recipe to Anna."

"What," Joe could not resist inquiring, "are Bill and Bub going to do?"

"They're both," replied Louise, "going with me! One on either side of me in the sleigh! Won't that be jolly? Oh, I hope we'll have lots of snow a week from Friday! Do you suppose we will?"

At Christmas time, <sup>Anna had ill</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ with the grippe, and <sup>stuffed</sup> ~~xxxx~~ the turkey and her mother made the pie. Christmas at 7 Canoe Place this year wasn't just a reflection of 909. The

The family Christmas was held at 7 Canoe Place this year. Petsy proposed it, <sup>for</sup> ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Anna ~~xxxx~~ after having the ~~xxxx~~ with the grippe, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ went ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ rest to the farm.

At Christmas time, Anna had the grippe, and Petsy proposed Christmas at the Willards. Joe stuffed the turkey and her mother brought the pie. The holiday this year centered at 7 Canoe Place.

Not that much of the splendor which she had anticipated was evident. <sup>at first!</sup> Herod had made, on two hills, a city <sup>almost as magnificent as</sup> ~~second in magnificence only to Rome~~ on her seven but around Joppa Gate there was little proof. <sup>of this</sup> There was ~~chiefly~~ the gloomy citadel of David, an adjacent barrack, a huddle of laborers waiting to be hired, a dozen chained convicts ~~shambling off,~~ ~~to execution,~~ a narrow, cobbled street climbing up and up.

Mary yielded to the disillusionment which <sup>travel</sup> knowledge so often brings. "In Nazareth I couldn't wait to see this, but now it doesn't seem <sup>so much</sup> important."

~~Joseph's sober opinion was that she had lately shared an experience which dropped even Jerusalem back into unimportance. Only Scribes, however, had words to make this sort of thought plain and Joseph did not even try.~~

<sup>R</sup> "Wait till you see the Temple," <sup>Joseph</sup> he said, <sup>(1) Just you wait!</sup> ~~will seem important long after we are back in Nazareth.~~

<sup>I don't know if I can wait!</sup> "I can't wait to get back," Mary said. <sup>cried</sup> "And don't say that after I do I'll tell you that being back doesn't seem important either. Isn't it wonderful that we are starting tomorrow?" <sup>And she squeezed the baby as though to share with him, even at this age, her anticipation.</sup>

<sup>R</sup> Joseph looked down at her and marvelled. She hadn't a fear in the world even though she, also, had heard the warning which Vedius Rusco gave on returning from his stormy interview with Herod.

About the warning Joseph and Mary had agreed there was nothing to be done, although Joseph, of course, had seen at once how it tied in with the watch kept by Peleg and

the other beggars.

*won't come to any harm in the Temple*  
"We'll be home in hardly more than a week,"

~~had said serenely.~~

"It isn't as though anyone were looking for any particular baby," Joseph had said doubtfully.

*to Bethlehem x*  
"We came safely down from Nazareth," ~~Mary had said,~~ "And we'll go safely ~~back~~ *up to Jerusalem, W*

*Joseph had smiled, "you*  
"You make it sound as easy as driving a nail."

~~Joseph had smiled.~~

*curious,* But her serenity and faith ~~also~~ had made him *feel* easy, and he remained easy now, even though it wasn't with him as it was with her. Not exactly! Now and then *because of* what Vedius Rusco had said *she felt a touch of dread* ~~did somewhat cloud his thoughts.~~

They moved out from under the shadow of the five strong towers of the citadel which had defended Jerusalem for centuries. The cobbled street climbed and its shallow steps, which had saved camels many a slip, now saved Briar. At either curb lop-sided huts of the poorest of all the city held one another up.

*cut* The road forked. The right tine, less a street than a cramped slot, curved among lop-sided huts to connect after a quarter mile with the Street of the Candlemakers. Those who took it spoke chiefly in the affected accent of Jerusalem natives and often smirked over the harsher, ruder speech of Zebedee and Joseph.

*Joseph thought* "I could make a face, too, and for a better reason," Zebedee muttered. "Some of those women aren't hardly

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Mary rode along, smiling on everyone, and everyone smiled back. Or almost everyone. Hundreds

hundreds (walked before and behind them, some carrying pigeons and turtle doves and even sheep and lambs.

Joseph remarked, "The temple is tough about ~~letting~~ any sacrifice except the ones it sells. The Law says 'any unblemished sacrifice' but ~~people~~ <sup>people</sup> say ~~the priests~~ <sup>that</sup> the only unblemished ones are the ones they ~~make~~ <sup>make</sup> a profit on." (Mary's answer?)

The road forked. The right tine, less a street than a cramped slot, curved among the lop-sided huts to connect, after a quarter mile, with the <sup>crowded smally</sup> Street of the <sup>that ran through the Tyropoeon Valley</sup> andlesmakers. Joseph and Mary, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> the hundreds bearing sacrifices and hundreds more, took the left tine.

This climbed past Herod's palace. The mighty walls, slowly weathering to rose and ivory, and the hard, sharp-eyed mercenaries on guard before the gates, ~~branghixbask~~ <sup>revived</sup> ~~Joseph's~~ <sup>revived</sup> dread and Mary did not stop Briar for a better look. ~~see free sobered~~

Now why, ~~Mary~~ <sup>she</sup>, wondered, should a man who commanded all this, all this safety and luxury, and an army, too, be frightened because another baby, even a special baby, had come into the world? ~~Even~~ <sup>she</sup> though he was a king she pitied him, ~~even more than she had pitied the beggar, Peleg.~~

"Herod is sick to death, isn't he, poor man?" she ~~said~~ <sup>asked</sup>.

Joseph nodded, but said nothing.

The cobbled road continued to climb and sometimes, ahead, it seemed to narrow until Mary doubted they could get through before it closed up like a sewn seam. But it was still narrowly open at the summit of Jerusalem's western hill. It levelled off then and Mary could look across the wide bridge which spanned deep, steep Tyropoeon Valley to connect with Zion, the eastern hill, and with the street which

So Betsy went back <sup>to announce</sup> ~~with word that there was~~ a Crowd party that night.

"It's your chance, Cab, to introduce Jean to everyone."

"Who's giving it?" Cab asked.

"Oh, a New York millionaire who's in love with Tib!"

Jean hooked her arm in Cab's. "I hope," she said, "he's as nice as my struggling young man."

"Not struggling to get away from you, beautiful!"

For some reason this light-hearted exchange made Betsy

Joseph ~~pretended~~ <sup>pretended</sup> that ~~he~~ <sup>the people</sup> and  
 Zacharias should not ~~bother~~ <sup>bother</sup> bother.  
 "Zacharias sent some bread and  
 cheese and figs, just in case,"  
 the levite said.  
 "If I were you," the levite  
 said, "I'd eat something <sup>right here</sup> ~~right here~~  
 This business of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~place~~ <sup>place</sup> ~~than~~  
 the crowds will ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> the  
 temple."  
 So Mary got out bread and cheese  
 and figs and fed the baby, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> also.

ran on to the great spiked wall of the Temple rising defiantly under the gloomy fortress where the High Priest's vestments were under Roman lock and key. The crowd was thickening and Briar was increasingly stubborn against so much jostling. Joseph pulled the donkey to one side and stopped.

"Let's look around," he said. "And not just at the Temple, either, but around at the whole city."

To the north and south along the western hill there was now proof aplenty of the grandeur of Herod's Jerusalem. The new mansion of the High Priest! The Sanhedrin's impressive council chamber! The ornate homes of merchants waxing richer and richer and of Sadducees, Pharisees and Herodians, all new and almost all dwarfing the old, unkempt, abandoned palace of the Hasmonaean dynasty whose leaders Herod had executed.

Almost impregnable, Jerusalem lay on its two hills, lay balanced on two fingers of rock at the end of the great plateau which began within sight of Mary's own Nazareth. With so many new buildings shining now under the sun it was truly Jerusalem the golden.

"Think of it!" Joseph said. "This is a place that has stood against conquerors almost since Abraham. First it was little Uru-salem, the hill of safety, an outpost against the Pharaohs. Then it was the chief city and holy place of the Jebusites. Then David won it and Solomon adorned it. Nebuchadnezzar tore it down and Nehemiah rebuilt it. It and Babylon and the Greeks' chief city were great together. Now Babylon and Athens are gone. Today it is great with Rome and Alexandria." He looked to where Roman spears glinted above the impregnable ramparts of Antonia. Almost impregnable, said the spears, enjoying their moment as Babylon had enjoyed hers. "And it will still be great when Rome and Alexandria have fallen."

insert  
and

If Joseph protested that the Levites and Zacharias should not have bothered x

"If I were you" The Levites said "I'd set something up. This bread is a lot better place than the crowds will leave you anywhere in the Temple." (1)

"Of course," Mary said, and got out bread and cheese and figs, and fed the baby also while the Levites waited smilingly x



"Look!" Mary cried. "Is the Temple afire?"

Above the spiked wall a black cloud was rising high.

"Micah told them it was enough to love mercy, to do justice, and to walk humbly," Joseph said. "But they still believed the Lord is pleased by the burning of rams and tens of thousands of rivers of oil."

A white-robed ~~Levite~~ <sup>Temple attendant</sup> came searching along the bridge. ~~He was one of the Levites, priestly aids since the year the wilderness where the whole tribe of Levi had been set aside~~

~~for this service.~~ "There can't be two like you," he laughed when he sighted Joseph. "Zachariah <sup>s</sup> told me how you'd look. I'm to ~~insert~~ take you where you must go."

~~And then~~ <sup>two</sup> Now there were ~~three~~ <sup>and the ~~young~~ baby</sup> to get Mary <sup>on</sup> Briar, through the pushing, shoving crowd and across the bridge. And glad to be across and beyond the ripe odors which were <sup>still</sup> heady even <sup>though</sup> after ~~their~~ <sup>waiting</sup> ~~seventy-foot climb~~ <sup>fast</sup> up from the clamorous ~~Street of~~ <sup>Tyropoeon</sup> ~~the Candelmakers.~~ <sup>Valley</sup>

They all came to the quiet, well-policed ~~priests' quarter.~~ They came to the Temple's main western gate and ~~among~~ <sup>the</sup> a noisy, grumbling but good-natured press of worshippers -- young and old, the poor in tatters of burlap, the rich in warm shawls and immaculate robes -- went into the bedlam of the huge outer court where Gentiles, also, might stand.

Mary slid to the rough pavement <sup>and smoothed down her blue robe</sup> and stood ~~between~~ <sup>close to</sup> Joseph and Zebedee. Behind, from outside the Temple wall, hoarse shouts rumbled out of the Tyropoeon Valley.

"I'll be back as soon as I've stabled the donkey," the Levite <sup>said</sup> and hauled Briar away.

<sup>Joseph</sup> "They say this place holds a hundred thousand," Zebedee said. <sup>but I think that is only</sup> "It doesn't get that many, except on the great

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feast days, ~~Joseph said.~~ "Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of the Tabernacle."

The great Court of the Gentiles was widest on the south, narrowest on the west. On the east stood Solomon's Porch. At least some said it was the proud monarch's very justice seat, although doubters insisted that in all Jerusalem nothing had survived the savage destruction of Nebuchadnezzar. The lofty Sanctuary blocked off the north side of the Court but on the other three colonnades shaded promenades for all who came, whether to meet friends or gossip or perform religious rites or admire or only satisfy idle curiosity. ~~On the west the colonnade roof provided an easy avenue along which the Legion could rush from the Fortress whenever trouble threatened.~~ The colonnade pillars, which three men with joined hands could scarcely encircle, provided shelter for money-changers now crying for the business of all within earshot.

Each money-changer sat against a pillar on a padded stool with a big money-box on either hand. One box held only shekels and half-shekels of Temple coinage. The other, in many compartments, held alien money, Greek, Roman, Tyrian, Persian, Egyptian, Syrian. The Temple rejected these because they were stamped with the likenesses of bulls, owls, hawks, horses, and kings and emperors and violated the commandment against graven images. Temple coins bore only the seven-branched candlestick or a palm branch, or a lily, or Solomon's Temple.

"And of course every time you make a swop you pay a fee," Zebedee said.

"This time it isn't the priests who get you going and coming," Mary smiled.

"Oh, no?" Zebedee boomed. "Do you think any money-changer stays here unless he splits with the Temple?"

"There isn't much to divide," Mary said.

"Isn't the fee just a couple of pennies?"

"But that's just for an even trade," Zebedee said. "If your coin is worth more than the Temple coin you want, the money-changer charges extra for making change. And he always charges for weighing. And if your money isn't well-known he gets a bonus just for taking it. And of course he'll nearly always short-change you. The fee is two pennies but if you pay six or eight you'll get off better than most."

242  
A curly-haired Syrian sidled up to Joseph. "I know the only honest money-changer in the Temple," he whispered.

"I got my Temple shekels long ago when a money-changer came to my village," Joseph explained.

The Syrian kicked in rage. Small dealers had cut into the Temple trade for years by setting up shop in big towns before important feast days, but lately they had been going to even small places, and all the year around.

A crafty man whose speech resembled that of Jerusalem except for a queer accent tugged at <sup>Joseph's</sup> Zebedee's sleeve.

"Have you got your ticket?" he asked confidentially.

~~"Do I have to have a ticket?" Zebedee winked at Joseph.~~

"I don't ~~xxxxxxx~~ need one," Joseph said.

"Ah! A Galilean! You're lucky I found you, my friend. Probably nobody else in all this place could understand the lingo you talk."

"I know I don't talk like a Jerusalemite," Joseph said meekly. ~~2x~~ "But ..."

"You think me a Jerusalemite!" The tout was delighted. "How my accent must be improving!" He dropped his voice to a whisper. "The fact is, I'm ~~just~~ a Jew from Egypt, Alexandria." His crafty look deepened and he waved toward Solomon's Porch where priests stood beside pens and cages which held sheep, cattle and birds all feeding in calm unawareness of imminent death by sacrifice. "Don't ~~'but'~~ me, my friend. <sup>(sorry poor friend)</sup> Of course you need a ticket." He waved again toward the porch. "Everybody who sacrifices should do it by ticket. You buy it from one of those. But you need me. I can tell you where you can get the best price."

"But ..." Joseph began again.

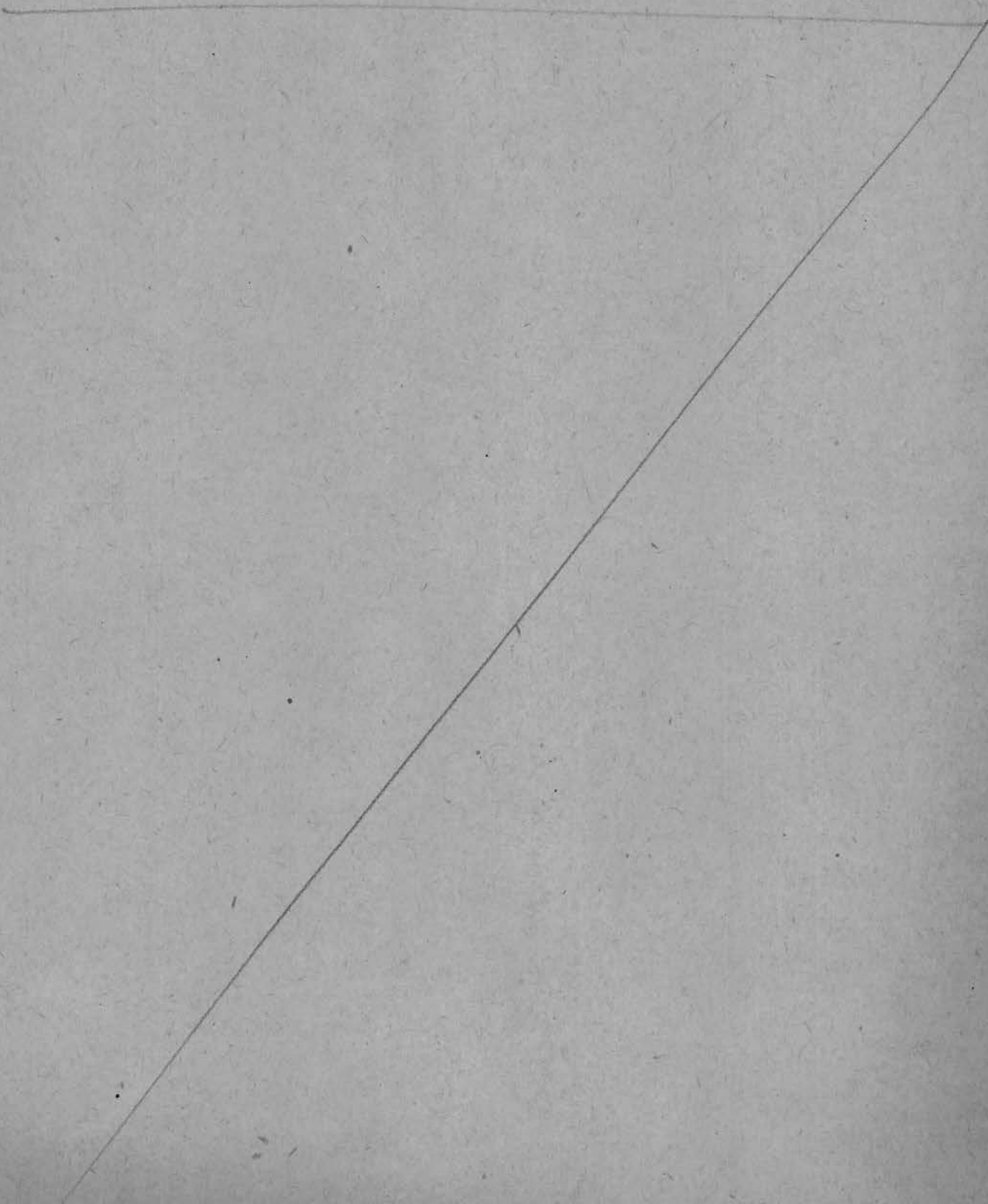
"Now don't try to tell me, <sup>(poor, poor)</sup> my friend, that you intend to bring your own sacrifice. Just imagine thousands of sacrifices being brought by thousands of worshippers and adding to the mob! The jam would be so thick nobody'd ever get up even to the Court of the Women, let alone higher. Nobody with sense brings his own sacrifice. He just chooses from the samples those priests are showing and buys a ticket and hands the ticket to the proper priest at the Altar and the priest makes a proper sacrifice from animals and birds that are waiting and are brought in as needed."

"I'm sorry," Joseph said, "but <sup>we</sup> I don't need any ticket.

"One of the Temple priests has already taken care of our sacrifice."

244-~~1~~

The tout began to wail over time wasted when he might have been elsewhere making an honest penny, but his complaint was cut short and he was brushed aside by the returning Levitt<sup>er</sup>.



Again there were two to shield Mary, this time on the walk toward the elevation from which the golden Sanctuary looked down on the great court. The Levite led the way, but after only a few steps he stopped to stare.

"She never ~~XXXXX~~ swings her dugs in here unless Herod wants a thing," he said under his breath to Joseph. "What is it now?"

"Who do you mean?" Joseph asked, and Mary, also, looked around curiously.

"Herod's sister!" the Levite said, <sup>scowling,</sup> and ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ concealing the movement in the folds of his robe waggled a cautious thumb.

A short distance off Salome, herself shielded by four anxious slaves, was flouncing through the crowds.

"So that," Joseph said, "Is the ~~first~~ princess of the Idumeans!" For all her silks and jangling gold necklaces and jeweled bracelets she looked more like a harridan up out of the gutter, but she was a harridan who made him remember Vedius Rusco's warning and he could not help a worried glance all around. *at Mary.*

~~"It isn't the poor <sup>old</sup> ~~old~~ thing's fault that she is so ~~sixant~~ scrawny,"~~ Mary said. *She was no more worried than ever* ~~but she did show some concern for Salome.~~ *of Mary was looking greatly at Salome* "I guess that even a princess can't escape some terrible trouble," she said. "Because <sup>like that</sup> only, trouble almost beyond bearing could make anyone look ~~so~~ pulled and hauled."

The Levite scowled more darkly ~~at more shouting~~ ~~from the Tyropoeon Valley,~~ and angling away to take his charges farther from Salome led on to the massive palustrade guarding the sanctuary elevation. <sup>Plagues</sup> Plazuges at all thirteen entrances warned sternly in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Egyptian and Syrian:

192  
A

~~Donkey description~~  
 on his left and a chunky hairy head all ears and ~~innocence~~ looked up from its stubborn foraging in the wintry underbrush. In the same moment a <sup>thin</sup> half-naked <sup>man</sup> ~~body~~ drifted behind a distant knoll. The donkey called loudly in recognition.

Somewhat against reason

~~of course~~  
 Peleg again! Briar would recognize him. With Mary on his back Briar had walked alongside Peleg for ~~many~~ miles. Com-<sup>forted</sup> ~~forted~~ by this evidence of <sup>faithful</sup> ~~unceasing~~ watch Joseph walked into the warm room full of new-baby odors and into the particular welcome of Mary's smile.

o--o--o--o--o--o

Mary sat ~~on her cushion~~ beside the shallow cradle-~~xxx~~ chest. She was nursing her son and his weight was relaxed against her and both small hands clutched as though to squeeze out the last ~~nourishing~~ sweet drop.

"We're ~~all~~ waiting for you," Mary said. She drew back her head to free her amber necklace entangled in ~~one of a~~ ~~the~~ clutching fingers, and the movement set up a faint tinkling among her anklets golden bells. "I'm keeping your supper hot."

Joseph smiled ~~his pleasure~~ at the delicate sound and looked around. ~~All,~~ was the right word. Welcoming him with various <sup>looks</sup> ~~various~~ smiles and nods were Zebedee, <sup>John</sup> ~~small~~ round James, ~~all~~ four shepherds of the birth-night - mystical Esrom, quiet Obed, excitable Zorobabal and Beer of the yellow beard - and finally Elizabeth, <sup>(and instantly Eligabath was hard after him)</sup>

"The way that boy takes his dinner," Elizabeth said, "he'll be a man before his mother." And then, while Joseph was framing a reply to her joke, ~~she~~ was hard after him in her hoarse, urgent voice. "Here we all are, ready to talk things over and you're an hour late."

especially if you like and don't talk to us too

*differing*

Welcoming him with very ~~differing~~ looks and nods were  
 Zacharias and Elizabeth. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ <sup>The priest</sup> ~~smiling~~ a large man in a warm  
 brown robe, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ with a beard that seemed to have been heartily  
 salted and peppered, ~~the priest~~ <sup>Elizabeth</sup> was all smiling approval. ~~Elizabeth~~ was  
 instantly reprimanding in that hoarse warm voice of hers.

"Well! Here we are, ready to talk everything over and  
 you're an hour late!"



in her hoarse, warm voice, "Here we ~~all~~ are, ready to talk things over and you're an hour late!"

"Well, you're ~~all~~ still here," Joseph said. He ~~was not sure~~ <sup>He never walk</sup> never quite knew whether Elizabeth was joking or scolding. ~~It was~~ her ~~hard~~ <sup>harshness</sup> surface manner which threw him off. He wondered--he had wondered before--whether she might have developed a softer manner if she had kept enough fat on her bones to look softer.

There are some girls who start out ~~like~~ bony little boys and end up looking like bony men, or almost. In between they have a ~~tender flowering~~ <sup>soft bloom</sup> and marry ~~and have babies,~~ but the struggle to complete this natural cycle seems to sweat away any briefly accumulated evidences of womanhood. Petallike skin roughens, inviting curves vanish, breasts which had been ample ~~for sons and daughters~~ all but vanish. The marvel was <sup>That</sup> in spite of such vanishings, ~~much more than mere~~ vestiges of charm remained in Elizabeth, <sup>in</sup> Her eyes were tender and melting, her thin face still had beauty and her gaunt figure was graceful still. But that manner!

"While we waited, we figured," Elizabeth said, "and ~~none of us could see why you and Mary shouldn't go, as soon as~~ you can, and that will be four days from now."

Joseph couldn't see, either. On the fourth day he and Mary would make the short walk, two or three miles, to Jerusalem, and the long wait <sup>in the garden temple</sup> for the rites at the sacrificial altar. <sup>Only</sup> those two hurdles were ahead. Once over them they could start for Nazareth just as well as not. He nodded approval.

"And then," Elizabeth said, "you can get to turning

none of us could see why you and Mary shouldn't go up to Jerusalem as soon as <sup>the Law allows</sup> you can, and that will be four days from now."

~~Joseph, that widely travelled man, smiled faintly at her easy use of the phrase familiar to every Jew but always puzzling to every Gentile he had seen west in the travel to others. "Up to Jerusalem!" No matter from which direction a Jew went to Jerusalem, he always said he was going "up!" Men of other peoples, when they spoke of going "up" anywhere, usually meant they were going north. But the Jew, whether he approached Jerusalem from the north, south, east or west, always said "up!" because that is how he went. Up, and up, and up to the citadel, city and Temple standing high above all the surrounding country.~~

none of us could see why you and Mary shouldn't go up to Jerusalem as soon as the Law allows, and that will be only four days from now.

Joseph smiled faintly at her easy use of the phrase so familiar to every Jew but always puzzling to all the Gentiles he had met outside Judea, "Up to Jerusalem!" When your Gentile spoke of going "up" anywhere he meant going north. But your Jew, whether he approached Jerusalem from the south, north, east or west, always said "up!" because that was how he went. Up, up, up, by paths and roads sometimes ~~overly~~ steep for goats, to the citadel, city and Temple perched atop their <sup>two</sup> craggy mountains

"I can't see why we shouldn't, either," he agreed. On the fourth day he and Mary would make the two or three mile <sup>trip</sup> ~~way~~ to Jappa <sup>gate</sup> Jerusalem, the steep climb, and the long wait in the golden Temple for the rite at the sacrificial altar. Only those hurdles were ahead. ~~Once over them they could start for Nazareth, just as well as not.~~ He nodded approval.

"And then," Elizabeth said, "you can get to turning..."

"But leave all your gear here," Elizabeth went on. "And come back so Mary can rest a few days before you start out for Nazareth."

Joseph agreed that that was a good plan, too.

"And then," Elizabeth said, "you can get to turning

194-A

out sickles again and bragging they stay sharper ~~xxx~~ longer than any other sickles in all Galilee."

This time Joseph did not need to wonder whether Elizabeth was joking. He had never, in all his life, said his sickles were that good, although, <sup>if he did say so himself,</sup> ~~as a matter of fact,~~ they probably were.

"You'll get the first one I make," he grinned.

"That's what you're hinting for, I guess."

"We figured you could <sup>take care of the boy's</sup> ~~clean up the~~ redemption ~~business,~~ <sup>ness, too,</sup>" ~~Zacariah~~ said, "I mean on the same ~~same~~ trip." <sup>Joseph nodded.</sup>

~~Joseph had to laugh. He was a Galilean himself and he understood Galileans but he could imagine how a Pharisee or Sadducee would blow up at <sup>that</sup> "redemption business." And it was <sup>hardly</sup> ~~scarcely~~ the way to speak of the ceremony by which a father paid the Temple to forgive his first born the traditional years of sanctuary service. "Redemption business" certainly did not do justice to a rite ~~so~~ <sup>so</sup> hallowed through ~~more~~ <sup>fifteen hundred</sup> than a thousand years. Small wonder Galileans were called rough and rude, although it would only be fair to add that they were also usually ~~often~~ witty and gay.~~

"~~It would be a good thing to see about it while Mary is at the Temple,~~" he <sup>said</sup> ~~agreed.~~ <sup>Joseph's Van is for, thank</sup> ~~"I've got the five shekels, thank the Lord!"~~ ~~the but the Galilean's love of reality.~~

"Zacariah has saved two absolutely unblemished turtle doves for Mary," Elizabeth said proudly.

"If he says they're unblemished, they are," Joseph said. ~~A senior priest could manage such things.~~

"What I don't like," Elizabeth said, "is that Mary will have to wait and wait. Waiting tires you when you've just had a baby."

"Well, I can't do anything about that," Zacariah said regretfully. "With so many trooping to Jerusalem to pay this tax set by Quirinius, lots of people are killing two birds with one stone and are settling their Temple debts, too. The Temple is packed from dawn to dark -- Court of the Gentiles, Court of the Women, Court of Israel. The Holy place would be packed, too, if a double line of Levites didn't stand guard to keep people where they belong."

"And every last one barefooted," Elizabeth marvelled. "It's a wonder how they keep their toes safe."

Mary turned the baby over her shoulder and everyone ~~fell silent~~ and waited with tender concern until the proper bubble popped from his milky mouth.

"That's the good baby," Mary murmured and settled him into his chest-crib. He wiped his lips with a velvet tongue, popped another, tardy bubble, and blinked.

"Even if Zacariah were able to put me ahead," Mary ~~said~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

woolly

As he tried to say "Joe! Joe!" but she couldn't because he was kissing her and she was kissing him.

Joe held her off at arm's length. Under his blond pompadour and tufted golden brows, his eyes were blazingly bright. Blushing, Betsy rescued her hat, and Joe picked up her umbrella.

He took hold of her arm in a strong and purposeful grasp.

"Let's get this Customs business out of the way quick," he said. "And then we'll go to Tiffany's and get you a ring. And then --" he turned swiftly to look into her face -- "when can we get married?"

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I asked Zacariah if he could help, but with so many wanting to sacrifice everybody has to take his turn."

"Show me a rich Pharisee who takes his turn!"

Zebedee boomed.

30-05

The baby

<sup>feel silent and</sup> ~~The baby was full.~~ Mary turned ~~him~~ over her shoulder and everyone <sup>tender concern</sup> waited with interest until the proper bubble popped from his milky mouth.

"That's the good baby!" Mary murmured and <sup>settled</sup> put him to bed. His look circled ~~his~~ audience, then he wiped his lips with a <sup>velvet</sup> coral tongue, popped another bubble, and <sup>closed his eyes</sup> fell asleep.

"Even if Zacariah were able to put me ahead," Mary said, "I wouldn't want it. Taking someone else's place isn't the way to make a sacrifice. I'm just as able to wait as anyone."

"Even the anyones who haven't just had babies?"

Elizabeth snapped.

"Having a baby is good for me," Mary said, <sup>and smiled</sup> "I want

~~six or seven~~"

Zacariah

<sup>It looks like!</sup> "Hey!" ~~Zebedee~~ said. He had gone restlessly to the window. "What do <sup>all these</sup> beggars want around here? When we came <sup>in</sup> we saw a couple and now another has just gone by. <sup>(11)</sup> This is pretty poor picking." He looked at Mary. "They aren't bothering you, are they?"

"I see them, now and then," Mary said, "But not one has ever come to the house, or even near." <sup>Mary said</sup>

"Well, <sup>it looks like!</sup> they are certainly off the track," <sup>Zacariah</sup> said. "It's pretty funny-looking."

"A lot of things everywhere are funny-looking," Zebedee said. "Take yesterday, when I was paying my Temple tax!"

Even if they left them they still  
 had, Joseph reflected, one chore which  
 would tire Mary

280

241  
 280  
 ---  
 19280  
 482  
 ---  
 67480  
 891  
 ---  
 66589  
 2772  
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 63817  
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19  
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 2508

2508  
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 2772

and touched her son's cheek.

"Especially such a perfect one!" Elizabeth cried.

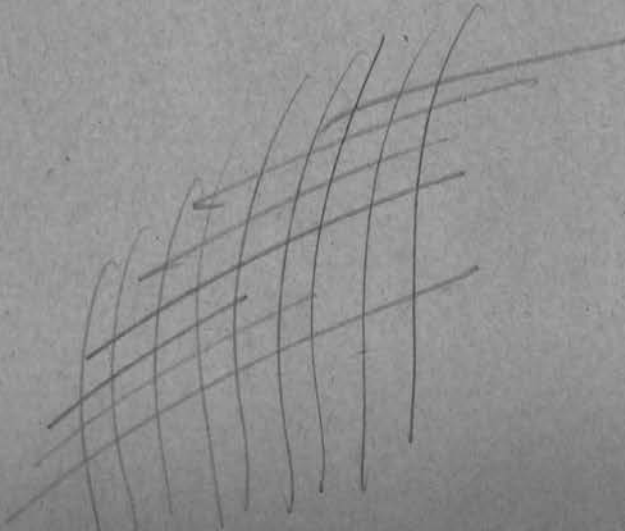
"Perfect baby, perfect husband!"

Mary laughed. "That's right! Don't worry about me, Elizabeth," she added. "I'm ready for the trip. And I'll be so glad to see the Temple!"

"We'll take things slow; you'll have plenty of time for everything," Joseph said.

"There are beautiful things to see," Zacharias said.

"And wonderful people. There are Simeon and Anna."



and touched her son's cheek.

~~Perfect~~ Elizabeth cried, "Especially such a ~~one~~ one." She touched his cheek.

Perfect baby, perfect husband." Elizabeth cried. Mary laughed. "That's right," Mary's eyes shone with mischief. "Don't worry about me, Elizabeth, I'm ~~ready~~ ready to make the trip.

I'll be so glad to see the temple. I've heard about it for so many years."

For everything you'll have plenty of time see it all," Joseph said. "We'll take things slow and look around, so you can

"I'll show you all I can," Zacharias said. "There

are beautiful things to see all right, and wonderful people, ~~like~~ like Simeon and Anna."

196B

"She is the prophetess, isn't she?" Mary asked. See)

"Yes," Zacharias answered. "She was widowed as a girl and has never departed from the Temple since although she is ~~an~~ old woman now. She fasts and prays day and night.

And there is Simeon, the holy man, who comes to the Temple every day, ~~he~~ declaring, you know, that he will not see death before he has seen the Messiah, the consolation of Israel."

Joseph and Mary were silent. "He probably will," Elizabeth said. ~~Babies are~~

being brought to the temple all the time." She stood up. "Well, we

must go home, ~~and~~ and let you give the perfect husband his supper."

"Unless you ~~take~~ take some with him?" Mary said, rising, ~~too~~

And when Elizabeth shook her head emphatically, Mary said, "Well, ~~it's~~ it's ~~all~~ decided! In four days Joseph and I go up to the Temple."

"And come back here to rest," Elizabeth said.

Henry Ford had sent a Peace Ship to get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas. But he hadn't succeeded. And no Allied offensive had been able to break the German line. U boats were still sinking neutral shipping. Americans grew less neutral all the time. Then some German plotting in the United States was exposed, and there was a rising suspicion of all German-Americans.

This was on Tib's mind when she came out ~~xxxx~~ to the Willards late one Sunday afternoon. She had been skating with her brother Fred.

"We had such fun!" she exclaimed, shaking out of her wraps and pinning up her loosened hair. Tib was as expert on the ice

back to  
"And then ~~start~~ for Nazareth," Joseph said, ~~the~~  
~~pleasure which that prospect gave him, sounded~~ in his voice.

When he and Mary were alone, he sat down by the  
cradles, ~~putting~~ <sup>laying</sup> his big finger, as he liked to do, along ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~feet~~ <sup>in</sup>  
baby's soft neck. Mary ~~put a hot bowl of soup on the table and brought~~  
flat loaves of bread, ~~and~~ <sup>the</sup> small golden bells of her anklets  
set up a faint tickling sound as she moved busily about. [Joseph liked

"Do you remember how you rolled the roof of the house  
to keep it from leaking while we were away?" she asked.

"I remember,"

"I'm sure it didn't leak."

"Elizabeth would say it didn't dare to."

He ate ~~his supper~~ with appetite and Mary sat down  
beside him, the lamplight shining on her thick brown braids  
to hear them and he liked to think about the return <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ Nazareth.

The memory of that ~~small~~ little home which Mary always kept so  
shining neat, their neighbors, the view of Mt ~~to~~ <sup>helped</sup> ~~to~~  
drive away his worries.

Mary ~~seemed~~ to understand, <sup>as always</sup>

"Do you remember," she said, as he started to eat.

"how you rolled the roof of <sup>our</sup> ~~the~~ house to keep it from leaking in  
the rain while we were away?"

"I remember."

"I'm sure it didn't leak."

"Elizabeth would say it didn't dare to."

She sat down beside him, <sup>The lamplight shining on her</sup> ~~the lamplight~~ <sup>dandelight</sup>  
shining on her thick brown braids.

"It ~~was~~ <sup>in</sup> the lamplight."

Miss K:  
Please try to get  
110, 111 and 112 into  
the same number of pages

Betsy enjoyed dressing up in her Paris suit and hat, adding her heavy coat, and taking the trolley. Nicollet Avenue was crowded, shop windows were exciting, and the new restaurant was gay.

Betsy arrived first, and heads turned when Tib came in, wearing a fur cap, and a dark coat which sprang out below her tiny waist in fur-edged tiers.

Tib affected a disdainful air which was confusing like so many things about her <sup>for she</sup> ~~she~~ was the soul of good nature. She always wanted to do what her friends wanted to do. She waited on them, admired them, loved them fondly.

"You'd never guess it!" Betsy thought as ~~Tib came toward~~ <sup>Tib walked</sup> ~~forward~~ haughtily on her very high heels. Betsy hailed her. "Mrs. ~~That~~ <sup>That</sup> ~~perching now~~ <sup>perching now</sup> Mrs. Vernon Castle in person!" ~~That~~ <sup>That</sup> goddess of the dance wore caps like the one ~~on~~ <sup>on</sup> Tib's sunrise hair.

Tib gave her tickled little laugh. "Well," she answered

"There never was such a comfortable house," she said.

"There certainly never was one more water tight."

"I like the view it gives us of Mount Labor."

"I wonder how our doves are getting on," Joseph said.

He confided suddenly. "I won't feel really easy until we're back there, safe and sound."

"Why, of course we'll get back safe and sound!" Mary cried.

He put out his hand and in silence smoothed the soft shining hair.

"You know the holy writings," Mary said. "You know them better than I do. You know the Lord says he is always with us."

"I do know!" Joseph said. "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in him will I trust."

"I must remember," he thought, "to say that to Vedius Rusco. He, putting his trust in weapons and secret tunnels! I will say it to him."

"I love that psalm," Mary said. "I love that other part ... 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in <sup>their</sup> ~~the~~ hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.'"

of mud. Gaspar shook his white robe so that it hung straight and beautiful. Belshazzar optimistically gave his wild beard a finger-combing. Only Esrom and Melchior did <sup>not try</sup> ~~nothing~~ to improve their appearance, but Esrom, like a host, <sup>gestured</sup> ~~held a hand~~ toward the door and Melchior, like a patriarch entering among his people, passed and knocked.

Joseph opened the door, his <sup>face</sup> ~~sun-blackened~~ <sup>body</sup> ~~legs~~ outlined ~~in gold~~ by the <sup>lamp</sup> light behind him.

"Where is he who was born king of the Jews?"

Melchior asked.

Joseph peered through the darkness <sup>to</sup> ~~the shadowy~~ <sup>group.</sup> ~~the speaker in~~ <sup>The dim light</sup>

"We have come to worship him," Melchior said.

"Come on," Joseph smiled and when the three Magi had passed and he saw who followed his smile turned to ~~pure~~ <sup>affection</sup> welcome.

"Why, it's Esrom and Zorobabal and Obed .."

"And Beor!" Beor said, clapping Joseph's shoulder.

"Come on, come in!" ~~Beor, Zebedee is away. He'll be sorry he missed you.~~

The camel driver tugged at his charges. By peaking through the window he saw <sup>so plainly, well, almost,</sup> ~~practically~~ as well as those who were really inside.

~~The soft light of the single lamp in the single-roomed house flowed over Mary and her son. She was sitting on a stool beside his cradle-chest. He lay swaddled and sleeping, his tender lips moving a little as though he were hungry, his long~~

~~recalling the sweetness of his mother's milk~~

had heard ~~a report~~ <sup>but then</sup> but...." She stopped and was as triumphant as she had been contrite. She was suddenly aware that along with all <sup>these</sup> the others she was present at a wonder. "So this is why I couldn't sleep!" she cried. "I must have had a message, as much as the rest of you."

"Of course, you did," Mary said lovingly. ~~"This~~  
~~wouldn't have been right without you."~~

The driver came in and went out and came in and went out and came in, placing the three packs before the Magi. ~~They~~~~themselves~~~~untied~~~~the~~~~packs~~ The Magi did not ask him to

lashes curving up from the pink slope of his cheeks. Mary wore her blue dress but she had the air of a bride who plucks a flower and wears it in her hair - a white narcissus, a waxy yellow crocus, a rose. She had no flower but ~~total happiness blossomed~~ <sup>Flowers in</sup> ~~around~~ her face as she smiled on the men who had entered.

The shepherds, ~~smiling back like old friends,~~ <sup>beamed and</sup> moved <sup>to one side</sup> of the room where Beor took a last furtive wipe at his <sup>damp</sup> dripping chest.

The Magi fell down and, as they had come so far to do, worshipped at the feet of the child.

"We have brought many gifts," Melchior said. He ~~rose and, looking singularly tall, went to the door.~~

The driver came in and went out and came in and <sup>three</sup> went out and came in with the <sup>three</sup> packs. The Magi did not ask him to do more than carry them in. <sup>They</sup> The Magi, themselves, untied the packs and moving <sup>softly</sup> carefully not to waken the sleeping child <sup>opened them and</sup> presented the gifts which they had prepared with such thought and brought with such hardship over so long a road.

"This is gold," Gaspar said, "for a mighty ruler."

"This is myrrh," Belshazzar said, "for a great healer."

"This is frankincense," Melchior murmured, "for the true Messiah whose name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." He did not add a thing which ~~in his heart he feared was true. It was a thing which~~ had been a cloud the whole way from Persia. He had been warned back there that frankincense pre-figured <sup>tragic</sup> death.

drifted

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A

*[Faint handwritten notes and scribbles at the bottom of the page]*



"Gold and ~~myrrh~~ frankincense, and myrrh!  
It's

like a song," ~~she said~~ <sup>Mary said,</sup> Her ~~eyes~~ <sup>eyes</sup> ~~shining~~ <sup>shining</sup> ~~xxxxxxx~~  
Magus

smiled at each/in turn and then at Joseph. Always, always, ~~she~~ <sup>she</sup>  
looked last at Joseph, ~~who~~ <sup>he was standing</sup> stood over with the shepherds, a  
a quiet ~~oaken~~ unfailing pillar, of oaken strength.

~~Mary~~ <sup>Mary</sup> she lay the baby in his cradle as the ~~xxx~~ three  
laid down their gifts. These were not <sup>just</sup> ~~simply~~ gold

X <sup>over</sup>  
Mary lay the baby in the cradle and bent ~~to examine~~  
the gifts. These were not just gold

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150

He had tried to put this out of his mind and now he did not speak of it. But years later others finally said it, and it continued to be said sadly through the centuries.

*see three layed down their gifts and*  
~~When Melchior had said as much as he was willing to say the kneeling Magi, looked humbly at Mary. They might well have looked proudly, because their gifts were not simply gold~~

and myrrh and frankincense. That is, the gold was not simply gold pieces, *or gold* dust or bars or coins; and the myrrh was not simply so and so much pungent amber stuff darkly glowing with so and so much rock rose resin; and the frankincense was not simply a fragrant solid crushed from the winged seeds and the three-celled fruit of this or that shrub and enriched by its own lightly rising oil.

The gold was, ~~of course, pure gold but it was in~~ ornaments which, *if only* because of the time and skill required for their making, were priceless. ~~There was~~ gold thread miraculously woven through garments which, even without the thread, would have been priceless, and amulets whose history would have made them, *too* priceless, *and bracelets, necklaces, and many ornaments* if they had been made of roadside stone. And the myrrh and frankincense were in jars and vases on which master workmen had labored a ~~whole~~ lifetime, and their perfume poured also from linen and silk so fine that you touched it again to make sure it was there.

Mary did not thank the Magi. These were not gifts for which thanks were offered or expected. But she did heighten her smile and, as always, last of all, she smiled at Joseph, ~~sharing her pleasure with him. Always, always, Mary looked last~~



Mary did not thank the Magi. These were not gifts for which thanks were offered or expected, but her ~~eyes~~ face was glowing now, full of ~~wonder, joy~~, thankfulness, *joy, wonder...*

"Full of grace," Gaspar thought, and almost spoke aloud.

She dropped her head on her son's cradle.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord," she whispered.

"An *I*omy spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour..."

~~"For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.~~

"For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name..."

~~As~~ *As* the Magi, ~~hearing~~, sank to their knees again, then they rose and went *gravely* ~~softly~~ out of doors, followed by the shepherds ~~who tiptoed awkwardly.~~ *The shepherds tiptoed*

Joseph went with them, silent but helpful as they climbed aboard their beasts.

The snow had ended and Melchior tested the warming wind with a wet finger and nodded and would not put on the red-dyed sheepskin again.

"I can spare it," he said.

"The air is as soft now as Savan's," Melchior murmured. From his high perch he held out a white-draped arm, in good *ly* or blessing or perhaps to tell Joseph to take good care of the two who had been put under his charge.

"We'll be getting back to our sheep," Esrom said, and the shepherds went away.

The riders, four grey clouds drifting through a now

Musing and half smiling, and as relaxed as Joseph, Mary walked last, her swaddled mite of a son now resting his round bottom in the crook of her arm, now jouncing in a pleasant, total lack of dignity, over her shoulder, drowsing sometimes and sometimes <sup>watching</sup> ~~lying~~ the way he had been brought with wide-eyed, all-inclusive curiosity.

~~whatnot~~ was a single small room, too small even to offer the decent elevated section of dirt floor which kept human occupants a few inches higher than their animals. Small triar, Mary's mount all the way from Nazareth, had stood that morning as high as his mistress until Joseph hauled him outside to forage.

The small flat-roofed house, of limestone ~~and yellowing plaster~~, ~~(SEE EPIGRAM)~~ did have one distinction. It blended so inconspicuously <sup>into</sup> the countryside that passersby scarcely saw it, and <sup>certainly</sup> forgot it as soon as they got out of sight. ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ And there were few passersby <sup>for</sup> ~~no~~ road passed it, only the byway on which Elizabeth had noticed the loitering beggar,

A gentle knock fell on the door.

"If it's that beggar," Elizabeth said, "He'll get a piece of my mind."

"And bread and cheese, too," Mary said with soft laughter.

"I'll bread and cheese him!" Elizabeth promised and jerked the door open with her most forbidding headshake.

A reverent "Shaddai!" sounded. A brown hand lifted from the doorpost box with its twenty-two sacred lines, and a tall shepherd entered, <sup>passing the surprised Elizabeth</sup> as confidently as though he had been invited.

He should have seemed ferocious, like most shepherds. He had the usual, alarmingly tousled, head of hair, and carried a staff with a crook big enough <sup>to</sup> hook a leopard. Draped over a shoulder he wore the usual villainous red-dyed sheepskin, and at his belt swung the usual pouch crammed, as though to mock the ~~dark~~ daintier ~~rank~~ <sup>rank</sup> ~~cheese, rye, olives, dried figs and stale bread~~ diet of townsfolk, with ~~rank food~~ mixed in with stones for his sling.

But ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~only~~ ~~kind~~ in spite of all this he seemed only kind,  
and his set of <sup>pipes, with</sup> ~~pipes, with~~ their promise of gentle music,  
~~made~~ ~~xxxxx~~ him seem kinder. *made him seem kinder.*

"We thought there might be something we could do,"  
he murmured to Mary. His brown hand waved vaguely to explain both  
how uncertain 'they' were of what might be needed and how willing,  
no matter what. ~~"You know! Anything!"~~

Mary's greeting was grateful. "This is one of the  
four who came to the stable that first night, Elizabeth," she said.  
"And the day before they were in Jericho and saw the Wise Men I  
told you about."

"The Wise Men are still in Jericho," the shepherd  
murmured.

~~He was leaning over the chest where the baby lay,  
leaned too and  
and Mary ~~xxxx~~ proudly turned back the blanket and Elizabeth tiptoed  
near to join in the gazing.~~

~~Incredibly tiny ~~red~~ wrinkles, *he lay. His*  
Lashes made small arcs on <sup>softly crumpled</sup> ~~tiny~~ cheeks. ~~From~~~~

~~Mary turned back the blanket a bit. From the neck  
down, of course, he ~~xxxxixx~~swaddled, in a neat white criss cross.  
"arms and legs tied tight to side.~~

~~The room was silent except for the fire's crackling in  
the fireplace and young John's sat sflid crowing and rattle.~~

~~"How tiny they are!" Elizabeth said.~~

~~The shepherd touched his hand to  
~~minikin, elfin, crumpled chest.~~~~

He was leaning over the chest where the baby slept, and Mary leaned, too, and proudly turned back the cover a bit, and Elizabeth tiptoed to join in the gazing. Incredibly tiny and still, he lay in the warm nest. His lashes made feathery arcs on small feather-soft cheeks. From the neck down, of course, he was swaddled, small arms and legs bound firmly in a <sup>perfect</sup> ~~neat~~ snowy criss-cross.

The room was silent except for the fire's murmur. Silently, the shepherd touched his hand to head and heart.

Young John with a triumphant gurgle threw his rattle across the room again, and his mother seemed glad of a chance to vent her feelings in speech and action.

"What a boy!" she cried, and ran to chase the toy and began to poke and pat her son. But pats and pokes found nothing amiss. Her John was as dry as a bone.

One of the lambs gave a broken "Baa-a!" and scrambled out of the blanket. His stiltlike legs buckled, bent and sidestepped but he staggered half across the room before collapsing.

The shepherd stooped to the slack woolly parcel, lifted it in his arms, sniffed, and looked up in amazement.

"This lamb is tipsy!" he cried.

"It's just had a few sucks from a rag teat," Elizabeth declared in indignant denial.

"You have the lamb wine?"

"They both got lost last night in the snowstorm. I found them stone cold under a bush. They looked as though they'd never pull through, so I gave them what Zachariah always takes to warm ~~his~~ himself."

"You gave the lambs WINE?"

~~"What's wrong with that?"~~

"Now see here! What's wrong with that? It always helps Zachariah."

~~Grinning,~~ the shepherd put the lamb down. It balanced doggedly. Then, drawn by the scent of its kind, it staggered back to the blanket and "Baa-aaed" again at not finding the expected natural substitute ~~of the~~ for the rag teat. The shepherd wrapped it in the blanket, felt the <sup>twin</sup> brother, looked into their <sup>of both</sup> eyes, and turned back to Elizabeth.

"I guess it's all right," he said. "I mean, such stuff for lambs. <sup>He laughed.</sup> A man certainly does live and learn. You can give the pair back to their mother."

"I knew Elizabeth would never let a little snow get the best of her," Mary cried merrily. "But where," she added, to the shepherd, "are the rest of you? The three you brought ~~with you that first night?~~ before?"

"Well, of course, somebody has to stay with the sheep."

<sup>she</sup> "I don't even remember your names," Mary said <sup>apologetically</sup>. "There was so much on all our minds that night."

"I'm Esrom and the others were Obed and Zorobabal and Beor."

"I'm sure that the great one with the yellow, half-moon beard was Beor," Mary smiled, "That beard belonged to a Beor."

"That was Beor all right," ~~Esrom said~~. "And the quiet one was Obed and the excited one was Zorobabal."

Elizabeth <sup>stet</sup> threw a ~~question~~ question like a sharp stick.

"See here! We didn't <sup>say</sup> ~~tell anyone~~ at the inn where we were going, and on the way we met, I'll swear, not a soul. So how did you know where to come?"

"Where else could I have come?" Esrom ~~asked~~ <sup>asked</sup> mildly.

*a large...  
and with a crisp black beard*

The door opened ~~and~~ and Joseph, lean and sun-blackened, <sup>and</sup> stooped <sup>up</sup> clear the lintel and entered <sup>on strong</sup> long legs.

"Elizabeth!" he cried. "Do we run to a little <sup>spare</sup> ~~extra~~ bread and cheese? <sup>A lesson</sup> ~~I just~~ can't turn <sup>his</sup> back on beggars strayed into such an out-of-the-way spot as this. And there are two outside." Tardily, he noticed the shepherd, "Hey, <sup>hey</sup> good morning, Esrom."

Esrom put hand to head and heart.

"Two beggars?" Elizabeth protested. "You mean one!" She rushed to the window, ~~but looked back at once~~. "There are three!" she cried, ~~"There is no more than a boy!"~~ Her ready suspicion darted at ~~Esrom~~ Joseph and Esrom as though they had to be responsible for this trio since she was not. "What under high heaven brought them here," she puzzled, "unless they <sup>were</sup> ~~were~~ to starve ~~themselves~~ themselves!"

*the...  
the...*

CHAPTER ONE.

At intervals while the bold sun climbed above the horizon Elizabeth had been dosing the wobbly, new lambs hoping in spite of much discouraging evidence that she had rescued them in time. Now she pulled the rag teat from Number One and tucked him close against Number Two, both bundled up in the same blanket. He drowsed off and his twin drowsed, or at any rate certainly seemed to.

<sup>in her deep vigorous voice</sup>  
"Well!" she said ~~shaking her magnificently red~~ <sup>head,</sup> "If this doesn't do it, nothing will except a miracle. And I can't count on that. I've had one already. It was nothing less than a miracle that I could find the little sillies, ~~dusted with snow and freezing~~ under that bush nearly a quarter of a mile from the fold."

~~She walked to the window shaking her head at the floor as a sandal <sup>had</sup> snagged on one of the limestone chips which had been hammered into the well-pounded earth to make it harder. Always sure that she could improve any state of affairs, she was forever giving something or someone a rebuking, corrective headshake.~~

~~"A pity," she said and shook her head at the sun, warm now so that the brown hills were beginning to push through the scanty night fall of snow, "that you couldn't have helped a few hours~~


On the journey down nothing much happened, nothing important, nothing at any rate which seemed important. There was, true enough, one event profoundly shocking and full of dark omen and an earlier wicked, bloody one but after Bethlehem neither <sup>was able</sup> ~~to hold Mary's thoughts because of the later, much greater event &~~ ~~room in Mary's mind because a greater event filled it.~~ Joseph, understandably, quickly forgot both. A master carpenter, journeying everywhere, often saw many far worse ~~in those times.~~

All other incidents ~~seemed~~ <sup>in those times:</sup> ~~only what were to be~~ <sup>accepted their part and</sup> expected in any seven days of travel ~~then.~~ A skinny beggar <sup>hungry</sup> walked with them part of the way; his name was Peleg. A wordly Sadducee, Tibni-ben-Ginath, took a worrisky interest in Mary so plainly near her time. Joseph met his patron and friend, Vedius Rusco Philippicus, and was offered work. Mary's brother-in-law, Zebedee, a great barrel of a man toting on his shoulder a copy of himself, <sup>his son</sup> small, round, six-year-old James, came hurrying to <sup>share</sup> ~~join~~ <sup>journey and</sup> the party <sup>with wherever he could</sup> as Joseph had been sure Zebedee, or Zebedee's wife, Salome, or Mary's cousin, Elizabeth or someone else of Mary's staunch kinsfolk would. At Sebaste trouble was almost forced by a centurion named Panthera but Vedius Rusco came to the rescue before Mary had any inkling of her danger. South of Jerusalem four shepherds came full of gossip about Wise Men looking for a great thing but not yet sure where to look.

She walked to the window and shook her <sup>red</sup> head at the floor as a sandal caught on one of the limestone chips which had been ~~now~~ hammered into the well-pounded earth to make it harder. ~~Elizabethxxxx~~ Always sure that she could improve any state of affairs, Elizabeth was forever giving something or someone a rebuking corrective headshake. Pulling open the shutters, she shook her head now at the sun. It was growing warmer ~~xxx~~ so that the brown hills were beginning to push through a scanty night fall of snow.

"A pity," she said, "that you couldn't have helped a few hours earlier!"

A third headshake disapproved a beggar slouching along the unfrequented by-way which passed the house. "A beggar outside the humblest house in Ain-Karin!" she exclaimed. "He must expect to get blood from a stone."



Mary smiled. Seated on a cushion and leaning against the shallow chest which had been pressed into service as her son's cradle, she smiled and worked away.

The brown brook of her hair flowed over her blue dress embroidered from throat to girdle in mellow yellow. Her left arm hugged a big wad of wool against her side and the spindle which had twirled through most of the journey to Bethlehem was busy again. She still felt a little breathless at the haste with which she and the baby had been transported from the inn stable before sun-up on Elizabeth's triumphant order and now she was additionally breathless, and amused, too, by <sup>her cousins</sup> Elizabeth's unheard of experiment with the lambs.

"If you hadn't taken so much time from your own affairs to fetch us," she said, "you would have been on hand to <sup>find</sup> ~~xxxx~~ the lambs before they nearly froze."

4  
"Hush, hush, hush! What you should say is that lambs, even when they are only three days old, ought to have sense enough to stay with their mothers."

Elizabeth six-months-old  
She whirled as her own/son threw the toy he had been playing with, a stoppered bottle with three beads inside. He had reddish hair like his mother's and the build of an infant Samson and sat staunchly on a sheepskin in the center of the room. Retrieving the toy, Elizabeth shook her head at him, but as always her warm blue gaze defeated her. Young John only crowed.

At first blush she was---she seemed --- a tyrant, but closer acquaintance revealed that she was in reality not at all formidable. Tall, spare and gaunt, she was graceful as well; her thin wind-roughened cheeks had a sculptured charm; and her eyes always betrayed that, however duty-bound she felt to correct things and people, she understood and forgave the worst of both.

Elizabeth always ended by forgiving. Her time, her strength and ---often to her husband's mild dismay ---the family goods belonged to anyone. No friend was ever refused aid; no beggars ever turned from her home empty handed.

Her home was not the one in which she and Mary now talked. Hers was half a mile away, an ampler house to do credit to a temple priest of consequence but, because of that fact, too full of bustle for Mary, Joseph had decided. Zacharias, as Elizabeth always managed to make new acquaintances aware, was not merely one of the

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

High across the city the sun's first rays, reaching over the Mount of Olives, struck golden fire from the Temple and in a watchtower four hundred and fifty feet above the still dark gorge of Kidron Valley the Levite lookout raised a white-clad arm and blew on a golden trumpet.

His signal alerted the hosts below to their sacred labors which Moses had first decreed, which David had set forth anew, which Solomon had elaborated, which Zerubbabai had reconstituted and which now were continued under the half-mad Idumaeian convert who sat on David's throne.

The division of priests assigned for duty on this day, as they would not be assigned again for six months, were already at their posts, barefooted, white-robed and unblemished as the Law required. Their chief already had completed the torchlight inspection of the sanctified precincts denied to Gentiles and the captain of the Temple police had completed his own inspection of everything else within the four spiked walls that enclosed the entire Temple ground, twice putting his torch to the tunic of a sleeping sentry, as was his right.

Now, in the Court of the Priests, the silver trumpets of three Levites echoed the golden warning and one priest crouched over the wood heaped on the Altar of Burnt Offerings and huffed and puffed at shavings stuffed down among yesterday's embers and a thin blaze licked upward and then a thin wisp of grey smoke. At the peak of sacrifice the wisp would grow to a thick, black, oily cloud.

The Chief Priest frowned. A red line divided the altar into halves, one for the burnt offerings which must be consumed entirely for the glory of the Lord, one for the sin-offering, the best of which, when well-scorched, might be hooked clear, to satisfy mortal appetites. The line should have been fresh but it could barely be made out. There would be grumbling! The people complained that all too often greedy priests ignored the line; especially at the end of the long, hard day. Tired then, and hungry, they aimed their meat hooks at the most succulent chunks; red line or no red line, lest they fail to provide a ration for their squad, and for themselves.

Strong attendants, who must keep clear the altar drain by which the hot blood spilled down to Kidron Valley, readied long pushers, already charred and darkly stained. More men of muscle inspected the big jars in which, as the day ran on, they would tote off ashes, entrails, and other refuse. The priests who dressed the sacrifices honed their knives on marble butcher blocks. Other priests swung arms to loosen the muscles with which they would hang the washed meats on hooks set into boards fixed to eight short pillars and, later, trans-

fer the meats to the fire.

Behind the Altar of Burnt Offerings stood a panel more than a hundred feet high. Under a bordering vine and grapes of solid gold it bore a picture of Solomon's Temple. Between the panel and the Altar stood the Holy Place with its Golden Altar flanked by the table of shew bread laid with a cloth of gold and the seven-branched candlestick. Reverent priests already had trimmed the candles and brushed the Golden Altar free of yesterday's incense ashes and spread hot coals on the newly cleaned surface. Now a third priest set about the rite which had fallen to him by heaven-guided lot and from which he would be barred all the rest of his life. This was the envied, holy task of spreading over the coals fresh incense to carry prayers for all the people sweetly up to the Lord.

His priceless censor shining in the early light, this priest approached the Golden Altar. Behind him lay silence. Priests and all others within sight and sound were <sup>now</sup> prone, mutely praying with gratitude for past boons, with thanks for present blessings, and with hope for future mercies.

The chosen priest took care that his incense fell for the most part on the side nearest the Holy of Holies, that perfect cube behind the Altars and the vine-adorned panel which was empty of all save the Presence of the Lord, and as the cloud of fragrance drifted upward he withdrew, step by humble step, and the gold and silver trumpets blew again and the Temple organ played and the rich, united sound soared westward over Joppa Gate.

"It's opening!" Mary cried.

In the thirty-fifth year of the reign of the dying tyrant, Herod, and in the seven hundred forty-seventh year of the founding of Rome and a thousand years after David, Mary was going up to Jerusalem to regain the precious privilege of approach to the Golden Altar of the Temple.

It was early in the harsh month of Shebat, forty-one days after the birth of the son who, the Law of Moses said, had made her unclean (a daughter would have made her unclean for eighty.) He was held tight in her arms as she looked around, wide-eyed, from the back of the donkey Briar, which had carried her from Nazareth almost two months before. At her side Joseph struck his cinnamon-scented storax staff in marching rhythm. He would have been at her side in any case, as long as he lived he would be, but he was Temple-bound on his own duty, to buy the release of her child from sanctuary service. The necessary five shekels were carefully folded into his girdle, patted often to make sure they did not fall out unnoticed. He had brought them all the way from Bethlehem.

The morning was cold. The little snow which had fallen in the night had not begun to melt except around the market outside the city wall at Joppa Gate. Here early arrivals were churning it into a yellow mush in which Briar set his hooves with delicate disapproval. The big market was beginning to bustle. Accustomed as she was to the scanty wares

in Galilean shops, Mary always marvelled at the booths, all overflowing. And not just with homemade stuffs! Here were rarities hurried in from every land by merchants eager to share in the prosperity which Herod, like the earlier despot, Solomon, had brought to Judea. Here was everything and on every hand and at every price. Here a mistress might, for three or four hundred pennies, clothe a slave for a whole year and then perhaps from the same dealer buy herself a dress costing enough to clothe a hundred. Already market inspectors were on their rounds making sure that <sup>each</sup> merchant would abide by the approved profit of one sixth of his cost ... unless, of course, a little something was slipped under the table.

But even the market could not hold Mary's eyes as the huge leaves of Joppa Gate swung wide and Briar ambled through. Hundreds trying to be first inside bumped him fore and aft but his stubborn legs held a straight course beside Joseph while Mary turned this way and that to look at the golden and ivory city.

Not that much of the splendor which she had anticipated was evident at first! Herod had made, on two hills, a city almost as magnificent as Rome on her seven but around Joppa Gate there was little proof of this. There was the gloomy citadel of David, an adjacent barrack, a huddle of laborers waiting to be hired, a dozen chained convicts shambling off, a narrow, cobbled street climbing up and up.

Mary yielded to the disillusionment which travel so often brings. "In Nazareth I couldn't wait to see this,

but now it doesn't seem so much."

"Wait till you see the Temple," Joseph said.  
"Just you wait!"

"I don't know if I can wait!" Mary cried, and she squeezed the baby as though to share with him, even at his age, her anticipation.

Joseph looked down at her and marvelled. She hadn't a fear in the world even though she, also, had heard the warning which Vedius Rusco gave on returning from his stormy interview with Herod. About the warning Joseph and Mary had agreed there was nothing to be done, although Joseph, of course, had seen at once how it tied in with the watch kept by Peleg and the other beggars.

"We won't come to any harm in the Temple!" Mary had said.

"It isn't as though anyone were looking for any particular baby," Joseph had said doubtfully.

"We came safely down to Bethlehem. And we'll go safely up to Jerusalem."

Joseph had smiled. "You make it sound as easy as driving a nail."

But her serenity and faith had made him feel easier, and he remained easy now, even though it wasn't with him as it was with her. Not exactly! Now and then, because of what Vedius Rusco had said, he did feel a touch of dread.

They moved out from under the shadow of the five strong towers of the citadel which had defended Jerusalem for centuries. The cobbled street climbed and its shal-

low steps, which had saved camels many a slip, now saved Briar. At either curb lop-sided huts of the poorest of all the city held one another up.

Mary rode along, smiling on everyone, and everyone smiled back. Or almost everyone. Hundreds walked before and behind them, some carrying pigeons and turtle doves and even sheep and lambs.

"The Temple is tough," Joseph remarked, "about accepting any sacrifice except the ones it sells. The Law says 'any unblemished sacrifice,' but people say that the only unblemished ones the priests approve are the ones they make a profit on."

The road forked. The right tine, less a street than a cramped slot, curved among the lop-sided huts to connect, after a quarter mile, with the crowded, smelly street of the Candlemakers that ran through the Tyropoeon Valley. Joseph and Mary and the hundreds bearing sacrifices and hundreds more, took the left tine.

This climbed past Herod's palace. The mighty walls, slowly weathering to rose and ivory, and the hard, sharp-eyed mercenaries on guard before the gates, revived Joseph's dread and Mary did not stop Briar for a better look. Her face sobered.

Now why, she wondered, should a man who commanded all this, all this safety and luxury, and an army, too, be frightened because another baby, even a special baby, had come into the world? Although he was a king she pitied him.

"Herod is sick to death, isn't he, poor man?" she asked.

Joseph nodded, but said nothing.

The cobbled road continued to climb and sometimes, ahead, it seemed to narrow until Mary doubted they could get through before it closed up like a sewn seam. But it was still narrowly open at the summit of Jerusalem's western hill. It levelled off then and Mary could look across the wide bridge which spanned deep, steep Tyropoeon Valley to connect with Zion, the eastern hill, and with the street which ran on to the great spiked wall of the Temple rising defiantly under the gloomy fortress where the High Priest's vestments were under Roman lock and key.

To the north and south along the western hill there was now proof aplenty of the grandeur of Herod's Jerusalem. The new mansion of the High Priest. The Sanhedrin's impressive council chamber! The ornate homes of merchants waxing richer and richer and of Sadducees, Pharisees and Herodians, all new and almost all dwarfing the old, abandoned palace of the <sup>a</sup>Hasmonaean dynasty whose leaders Herod had executed.

The crowd was thickening and Briar was increasingly stubborn against so much jostling. Joseph pulled the donkey to one side and stopped.

"Let's look around," he said. "And not just at the Temple, either, but around at the whole city."

Almost impregnable, Jerusalem lay on its two

" 'He that keepeth Israel, shall neither slumber nor sleep!'"

Joseph thought the words had only been forming in his mind until he heard his own voice.

They all went out of the villa together, all except Deborah, Candace and Bria who went to fetch Mary.

The moon was low now and the stars were pallid and there was an empty silence under the arching sky. The dog did not bark and the watchman opened the gate without a word and the little donkey, when Bracae brought him, did not bray but sidled up to Joseph.

Peleg and Crookback, who had escorted Joseph's family hours earlier and since then had had time to travel many safe miles, emerged soundlessly out of the vast darkness and Deborah, Candace and Bria came, Mary and her baby among them.

The night enveloped the women so completely that Vedius Rusco, not a great distance away, could not be sure whether they were three or four. Peleg and Crookback were sure, however. They went close. Joseph had said they might look at the child all they liked.

Alongside Rusco and Bracae Joseph finished his last chores. He rolled blankets <sup>make</sup> to ~~Erinx~~ a seat on Briar. He hung expertly a small brazier which Bria had contributed for making cooking fires and for giving Mary a little warmth at night. He got a big pack of food up onto his own back. He did all this with a quiet assurance, which excited Vedius Rusco's admiring approval. The man could have been merely preparing to visit a near Nazareth neighbor. He did not act at all like one on the brink of a journey at which seasoned so diers might have balked.

*who had brought Joseph's family  
earlier and since then had had time to  
put safe miles between them and Herod's pursuit*

"He that keepeth Israel, shall neither slumber nor sleep," Joseph thought he had been forming the words in his mind, until he heard his own voice saying them.

They ~~all~~ went out of the villax together, all except Deborah and Candace and Bria who went to fetch Mary.

Night still held although the moon was low now and the stars were pallid. There was a great emptiness beneath the arch of sky, and silence also. The dog did not bark and the watchman opened the gate without a word and the little donkey, when Bracae fetched him, did not bray but sidled close to Joseph, *touching his toes*.

Peleg and Crookback, as though they had been signalled, arrived ~~and~~ ~~came~~ ~~with~~ ~~Mary~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~baby~~ ~~and~~ ~~Peleg~~ ~~and~~ ~~Crook~~ ~~looked~~ ~~at~~ ~~Mary's~~ ~~baby~~ ~~as~~ ~~Joseph~~ ~~had~~ ~~promised~~ ~~they~~ ~~might~~.  
*along with*

Crookback took a deep breath when he had looked, and went to Joseph.

"You will make Egypt almost before you know it," he said.

Joseph nodded comfortably, then walked ~~over~~ ~~to~~ ~~Mary~~, ~~and~~ ~~they~~ ~~were~~ ~~both~~, as were all the others, almost invisible in the surrounding greyness.

Over where the women stood, and Peleg and Crookback were looking their fill, voices rose in the darkness interrupted by the brief soft silences which women fall into when kissing each other. All the women were kissing Mary, and saying farewells.

"Woden keep you in his care."

"Don't you return through Judea without visiting Lucianus and me."

"Or the villa. The master will be watching for you, and so will the rest of us."

Around Joseph the men were saying farewells, and warning him. Not to lose the map. Not to travel by day this side of Jericho. Not to miss water signs.

"You can count on that map."

"Bria put enough food in that pack to last a week."

"You'll make it and not half try," Rusco's hands closed on Joseph's arms.

"Peace to your house," Joseph said, "and to all your houses."

He bumped his staff against Briar's rump. The donkey looked to make sure the blow was in earnest, then ambled through the darkness toward the women's voices. He moved obediently but his gait told everyone that he was going to take his own sweet time.

There was nothing to hear except the breathing of the ones left behind and Joseph's sandalled feet and Briar's delicate hooves. ~~xxxxx~~ There was almost nothing to see because the surrounding grey-ness made everything nearly invisible. Joseph, the donkey, and the riders placed on the donkey's back merely melted away.

Rusco remembered what Joseph had quoted from his holy writings. It did seem that the departing three were watched by eyes which would not sleep or slumber.

Sub for lost two leaves of 156, all of 257, find a indicated  
of 258  
She all gone going out every water me,

Candace brought food for everyone. Eria went to pack provisions for  
the journey. Deborah, with the <sup>lavish</sup> generosity of her <sup>young</sup> years, offered

everything she owned and most of what her father owned. <sup>Then</sup> and Joseph  
mentioned that he had told ~~everything~~ to Mary. And that moved Deborah  
~~to mourn her absence, and to praise her more.~~ <sup>with words</sup>

but

"I dropped by her room, <sup>but</sup> and she was still sleepy, ~~although~~  
she was swaddling the baby and <sup>was feeding</sup> making ready to feed him. ~~But~~ she  
wasn't upset at all. A husband who woke her in the dead of night  
to say strange messages had come <sup>was no more than a wife</sup> to him <sup>should expect</sup> was quite all right."

"She won't mind the trip at all," Joseph boasted. "And no  
more will the baby. He'll never know whether it's me or Brian bouncing  
him."

"I told her how sorry I was that she must miss the wedding,"  
De orah said, "But she said it couldn't be helped since you said  
she must, no matter how much she would <sup>have liked seeing</sup> like to see me in a crown  
of myrtle blossoms and Lucianius and me breaking the goblet."

She glanced delightedly at Lucianius who looked up from  
the map long enough to return the look.

"I wish we were going home," Joseph said. "She has been  
talking of nothing <sup>else</sup> lately ~~except going home~~. And what <sup>places</sup> ~~excites~~ I am  
taking her into. <sup>He</sup> He recalled the <sup>report</sup> ~~journies~~ he had <sup>had</sup> ~~already taken~~ <sup>had</sup> ~~through~~  
the rude Moabite country and <sup>new scene</sup> pictured Mary riding deeper  
and deeper into shaggy hills, ~~and~~ rocky canyons and barren desert.

Around Nazareth the countryside would soon be blooming  
with flowers of more <sup>he could name but</sup> colors than Mary could name. <sup>Even one</sup> The streams, in  
springtime abundance, would be giving drink to fig, pomegranite,  
olive, apricot, date and walnut trees. Grapevines would be clothing  
their black stumps in rich leafage. Life and beauty would burgeon  
on the folding hills. How the larks would sing! Winging up into the  
sky. How the bluebirds, lighter than feathers, would perch on the  
greening branches, ~~and how the doves would coo. And all the while~~

fication and trumpets were calling through the late afternoon. "It's almost time for the incense to be lighted."

"Tell me again just what I do," Mary whispered.

"Well, you cross the Court of the Women, and climb the steps up to the men's court and the gate opens and you go in."

"Not into the men's court!" Mary protested.

P "Not exactly," Joseph smiled. "Just beyond the gate is a wicket. It stops you. But you'll be close enough to see everything that happens at the Golden Altar."

"I think I have it right," Mary whispered.

"I stand there with the baby and with all the other mothers and their babies. And the trumpets blow and the organ plays and the chorus sings and the priests chant and the incense is scattered on the Golden Altar."

"That's all!" Joseph smiled. "And when the incense cloud is risen you are all through."

"But my ticket!" Mary said. "I'll still have my ticket."

"No you won't," Joseph laughed. "A station man will take it from you as soon as you reach the wicket."

Mary smoothed down the baby's hair and smoothed her own braids and stood straight in her blue dress embroidered in yellow.

The organ summoned loudly.

"You'd better hurry," Joseph said.

Mary drew her veil and walked across the blue, rust-red and white marble of the Court of the Women. She held her son proudly among the other mothers, young and old, and as she walked her serenity grew because her son had been given to the Lord and received back from the Lord. She climbed to the Court of Israel, the other mothers with her, their naked feet whispering up the marble steps which now were cold in the sunset chill.

A priest behind the opened gate smiled and a station man, one of the lay representatives of the people, gestured each woman to a place. Mary found she had a place in front and, just as Joseph had told her, a station man took her ticket although not as though it were important. He dropped it into his pouch without so much as a look.

Right up against the wicket Mary could see everything, could rejoice that she was sharing everything. And rejoice she did! In the trumpets, the organ, the singing, the priestly benedictions and finally the incense floating above the Golden Altar! It was for her and the other mothers that prayers now were floating in a fragrant cloud upward to the Lord.

As the cloud faded she smiled at the flax-haired young mother who stood next.

"Wasn't it wonderful?"

"Wonderful!" the young woman said. She was hardly older than Mary. "It was worth the trip up from Bethlehem and ten times more."

o-o

It was impossible to wake Bracae without waking Bria. They slept in a fond tangle of legs and arms. Bracae tried quietly to work free but she opened an eye and shortly followed after him to Vedius Rusco's study. And so much stirring in the quiet of night aroused Deborah and she came with Candace, and Lucianius was filled with bliss at the unexpected vision, rosy, drowsy-eyed, exhaling promises of delight.

Rusco told them what had happened and Deborah, Candace and Bria gazed at Joseph with awed interest. Bracae muttered enviously, "Those angels of yours are certainly a help!"

Mary came in, the baby in her arms. Not quite awake herself, although she had been up long enough to swaddle and nurse the boy, she was serene. A husband who woke her in the dead of night with a message from an angel was in no way upsetting.

There had already been considerable discussion and Lucianius, proud of his skill, had guaranteed any road map that Joseph might desire.

"On the way up from Egypt," he said, "I learned the country like the palm of my hand. And now I've learned the lay of the land all around here. Any map you need, I can draw."

Rusco had proposed a route and Lucianius began to draw it while Bracae nodded approval. He usually nodded approval when Vedius Rusco planned.

Candace brought food for everyone. Bria went out to pack provisions for the journey. Deborah had offered

Well  
all

everything she owned and most of what her father owned, and kept taking anxious peeks at the baby.

"He won't mind the trip at all," Mary said.

"He'll never know whether it's me or Briar bouncing him."

"I'm sorry to have you miss the wedding,"

Deborah said.

"I'm sorry too," Mary said. "But Joseph says we mustn't stay. Much as I'd like to see you in a crown of myrtle blossoms and the two of you breaking the goblet."

Deborah glanced delightedly at Lucianus, bowed over the map.

"I know you're disappointed," she said to Mary, "not to be going back to Nazareth. Joseph told us you'd been talking of nothing but going home."

The baby stirred and Mary stroked him and looked down with a thoughtful face.

She recalled Joseph's accounts of the rude Moabite country toward Egypt and pictured herself riding deeper and deeper into repelling hills and canyons and barren desert.

Around Nazareth the countryside would soon be blooming with flowers of more colors than she could name. The streams in springtime abundance would be giving drink to fig, pomegranite, olive, apricot, date and walnut trees. Grapevines would be clothing their black stumps in rich leafage. Life and beauty would burgeon on the folding hills. How the larks would sing, winging up to the sky, and how the bluebirds, lighter than feathers, would perch on the greening branches, and how

the doves on her own roof would coo, while she rode into the sterile south!

Mary shook her head in self-reproof.

"But I've never been to Egypt," she said, more to herself than to Deborah. "I've never been farther from Nazareth than Bethlehem. I'll like a longer journey."

Joseph overheard. "It'll be a lot longer," he said soberly.

"Briar can take his time."

"As if he ever did anything else!"

"That donkey!" Mary said.

Lucianius handed his map over to Rusco and the latter approved and handed it to Joseph.

"There's your road," he said. "Read the thing just the way you would a building plan. It takes you the long way but I think it's the right one."

"It'll be a rough way," Lucianius said. Like most young men he was doubtful that anyone older than himself had the strength for a rough road. "The country east of the Dead Sea is rugged."

"Below the Dead Sea," Bracae said, "he can just angle west, keeping clear of the main highway until he reaches the border of Egypt."

"The nearest border town is Rinocolura and Herod's power ends there," Rusco said.

"There'll be hills nearly as tough as mountains," Lucianius said.

Candace brought food for everyone. Bria went to pack provisions for the journey. Deborah, with the generosity of youth, offered everything that she owned and most of what her father owned. Then Joseph mentioned that he had told Mary, and that moved Deborah to mourn Mary's absence and to praise her with wonder.

"I dropped by her room after all your going and coming waked me," She was still sleepy, but she had already swaddled the baby and was nursing him. She wasn't upset at all. A husband who woke her in the dead of night to tell of strange messages seemed to be just what she thought every wife ought to expect."

"She won't mind the trip at all," Joseph boasted. "And no more will the boy. He'll never even let on whether it is me or Briar bouncing him."

"She said she was sorry to miss the wedding," Deborah said. "But she said it couldn't be helped, no matter how much she would have liked seeing me in a crown of myrtle blossoms and Lucianus and me breaking the goblet." She glanced delightedly at Lucianus who forgot his map-making long enough to return the look.

"I wish we were going home," Joseph said. "She has been talking of nothing else lately. What now what places I'll be taking her into!" He grew sober as he pictured Mary in the rude Moabite country, sliding deeper and deeper into shaggy hills, rocky canyons and barren desert.

Around Nazareth the countryside would be blooming with flowers of more colors than he could name. But Mary would be able to name everyone. The streams in springtime abundance would be giving drink to fig, pomegranate, olive, apricot, date and walnut trees.

217  
Joseph looked from Peleg to Crookback to Bracae to Vadius Rusco, his mouth puzzled.

"I'm told not to go home," he said. "I'm told ~~not~~ come here. What is this all about?"

"It won't be more than a couple of days, I ~~suppose.~~"  
Peleg said.

"It'll be just for tonight," Joseph said solidly. "I told Mary we would be off to Nazareth tomorrow."

"If you ~~stay~~ through the day after," Deborah cried, "You will be here for the wedding. I told Mary before she fell asleep."

*She was delighted.* *She asked me to tell you. She says she would like to stay.* *Let her wedded.*  
~~"A wedding," Mary had exclaimed, "Ah, tell Joseph. Perhaps we might stay."~~

Peleg looked at Crookback and the ~~two~~ two ~~silently~~ silently shared their conviction that after all Mary had endured she ought to be allowed to join in a wedding if ~~that~~ <sup>it</sup> would please her so much. Crookback looked at Vadius Rusco. Persuade Joseph to stay. You can make sure the wrong guests do not see them.

"I'm sure it would be safe," Rusco said.

"Safe?" Joseph ~~shrugged~~ <sup>said</sup> restlessly. "Safe is what everyone has been saying for the past five hours. Why are we not safe?"

He looked at his Roman friend. "Well, if Mary wants to stay for the wedding, we will."

"Good," Rusco said. "There is no need to rush off. But now, Joseph, you ought to get some rest yourself, and a good bath before you start it."

"I'll see about the bath," Bracae said.

Joseph turned to Peleg. "Thank you for what you've done," he said, and the beggar touched hand to head and heart as though he could not hear such praise too often.

Joseph thanked Crookback and the latter bowed like a courtier

Grapevines would be clothing their black stumps in rich leafage. Life and beauty would burgeon on the folding hills. How the larks would sing! winging up into the sky. How the bluebirds, lighter than feathers, would perch on the greening boughs. How the doves would coo.

Vedius Rusco read his distress.

"It will be all right," Rusco said. "Didn't you tell me Mary has never been farther from Nazareth than Bethlehem and that she likes long journeys?"

"This one will be too long," Joseph said.

"You can take your time. You don't need to make it hard as well as long."

"No, Briar can amble at any pace that suits him."

"That Briar!" Deborah said. "He was so tired last night that his ears were down to his elbows."

Lucianus handed his map over to Rusco and the latter handed it to Joseph.

"There's your road," he said. "Read the thing just as you would a building plan. It takes you the long way, but this time the long way is the right way."

"The Tribes climbed them," Joseph said and Mary nodded. "When they came out of Egypt they climbed them by thousands! And hundreds of thousands!"

"Hundreds of thousands?" Rusco said. "I know that country clear to the Wilderness of Zin and Paran. I know it clear to Goshen. Maybe thousands climbed, but hundreds of thousands? Never!"

"I have my own notions about those hundreds of thousands," Joseph chuckled. "I think that since it all happened a cipher or two got tucked on."

"Amateurs never make accurate reports," Tribune Marcus Seclator Lucianius said profoundly and Deborah beamed admiring agreement.

"It's all desert now," Rusco said, "east of Zin, and south, and for that matter north." He nodded. "That's quite a well one of your people built, Joseph, at Beersheba."

"Abraham built it," Joseph said. "Right down through rock."

"It certainly comes in handy these days," Rusco said. "The whole region is parched and tormented. It's flat sometimes, rolling sometimes, and sometimes just a wind-blown litter of bits of dull purple stone, but always desert. And hot! You'll need to be careful of water."

"Along the dead sea it's even worse," Lucianius said. "Nothing grows. A few flies, if they can feed on carrion, but everything else is dead and the gashes in the earth are big

enough to swallow a cohort."

If the threat of so much hardship bothered Mary she did not show it.

"Where do you think you'll go in Egypt?" Rusco asked.

"Wherever I go I'll find some of our people," Joseph said. "Since the Exile, they're spread all over. Alexandria, Memphis, Leontopolis, On! And every city has its synagogue, or a dozen! I'll probably try On first."

"On?" Rusco puzzled. "Oh, that's your name for Heliopolis, isn't it?"

"That's right!" Joseph said. "And of all the places in Egypt that I know I can do well in, it's the nearest. And of course I don't want to take Mary any farther than I have to."

"On could be our city of refuge," Mary said, pleased with the thought.

"City of refuge?" Rusco repeated

"In the old days," Joseph said, "some of our cities were set apart as places of asylum. If an enemy sought vengeance and you escaped into one, you were safe until you'd had a fair trial. The cities were so close that one of them was always within a day's journey."

"On your journey you'll be days and days," Lucianus said.

"I'll make it," Joseph said.

"Now how about money?" Rusco said.

4 "Egypt needs carpenters. A carpenter can earn all he needs in Egypt."

"Especially a good carpenter," Mary said.

"Just the same," Rusco said, "a little backlog won't hurt," and he tried to push a purse into Joseph's hand.

"I'd take it if I needed it," Joseph said, pushing it back. "Thanks just the same."

"And you won't let me give you a sword and shield, or a spear, or even a dagger?"

"I have my staff," Joseph said. And at that Rusco shook his head in such long-suffering exasperation that Joseph had to smile, even while his heart filled toward this big, ardent Roman. Among his very own people there were not many who would have been as quick to offer aid so freely!

"All right," Rusco said. "Have it your own way. No weapons. After all, you'll soon pick up a travelling party so large that not even a big robber band will think of attacking it. You'll be all right, once you're through the tunnel."

Joseph was caught up short by the "tunnel." He retreated from it. Tracing back over the warning which had broken his sleep, he felt that he did not need, really, to skulk through a tunnel, any more than he needed weapons or money. His safety, and the safety of Mary and the baby did not hang on such things.

I will say of the Lord. He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in him will I trust. Joseph, as he had resolved, once had repeated the well-remembered words to Vedius Rusco but now he said them only to himself. He shall cover thee with his

feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. And then came the words which Mary so much liked. He shall give his angels charge over thee ... They shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

"I think," he said, smiling at Vedius Rusco, "that we'll just start off through the gate."

"The gate!" Rusco threw up his hands. "You certainly are sure of yourself. And Mary is even surer. But why not do it my way? Just say you're humoring me. We'll light Mary all the way through the tunnel as bright as day. And then you'll be, the three of you, going along just as you were coming down from Nazareth."

"The gate will be best," Joseph said. "And the quicker we're gone, the less likely we are to bring any trouble on you."

Trouble! Vedius Rusco bowed his neck and rubbed the back of it, as a man does sometimes in tired satisfaction after a day's work. When a man has finished all he has aimed to finish, what does he care about any trouble?

For years Deborah had been his only concern and now that was taken from him. Lucianus was in charge.

From here on, what is left for me except repeating? And how long does a man want to go on, repeating over and over what he has already done the best he knows how? What if trouble should come? What if ...

He took the plunge and found, in strange, cold

our God."

Rusco nodded. When he was quartered in the Fortress of Antonia he had often marked the enormous waste. The fortress overlooked the Temple and a colonnade ran from it to the Court of the Gentiles. It provided a quick avenue for legionnaires into the great court in time of trouble. And when a hundred thousand Jews and Gentiles packed it on feast days trouble could flare in seconds. A single complaint against a cheating money changer could start it.

It had been Rusco's practice to go a little way along the roof-walk of the colonnade to keep an eye on things. And when only a little way along he could see plainly what went on around the Altar of Sacrifice.

He could see the whole Temple plain. By day its sun-bright gold and pure white marble climbed terrace upon terrace. By night its dim pile bulked dark and thick and high while its illumination threw wild shadows across the whole city. Vedius Rusco had never been sure when it was more beautiful.

Every stranger beheld it with amazement. Every Jew was filled with pride. "He that hath not seen the Temple of Herod has not seen beauty," men said.

The golden trumpet of its look-out priest woke the city to prayer at ever dawn, and every day the smoke of its endless sacrifices made Jews wonder if this might not be another cloud to conceal a new appearance of Jehovah, as a cloud had concealed the devouring flame of his presence from Moses on Sinai.

People watching from the lower levels of the Temple were not able to see what was sacrificed on the High Court of the Priests. They could not tell whether the beast or bird being ritually slaughtered was unblemished, as the Law required, or just an old scrub

First add, lead Page 66.

slipped in so that greedy priests could sell each perfect creature over and over. But Rusco had been able to see, as plain as day.

"A lot of the time it's just a plain swindle," he said.