

Children Praying at the Crib.

Here in the quiet of the church all day,
The little children come, and kneel, and pray
With up-turned faces and wide-wondering eyes—,
Adoring round the manger where He lies,
An Infant in the hollow of the hay
New-born to men upon a Christmas Day.
Ragged and rich with reverent wonder stand
In sweet simplicity, hand clasped in hand,
And see the lowly stable crude and bare—
Mary the Mother—, and Joseph kneeling there.
See in the dusk the glowing Bethlehem Star
That led the Wise Men journeying from afar—,
The trembling shepherds worshipping around,
The mild-eyed cattle lying on the ground.
The swarthy Kings who richest offerings brought
Prostrate with awe at this strange wonder wrought.
Closely the children linger in the light.
Of white-winged angels shining down the Night.
And each child-heart with pitying love add care
Would gladly clothe Him from the chilly air.
Beyond the doors, the world goes hurrying on—
'Nor knows so near a Royal Child is born.
So—, few there came to Bethlehem's bleak hill-side ;
The world passed on in vanity and pride.
But in the silence of this dim retreat
Echoes the patter of little hastening feet,
Each generous child-heart seeking anxiously
The Lowly Christ to share its company.
No worldly wealth of coffers do they bring,
But richer far their gifts unto the King,
The gold and frankincense and myrrh of prayer gifts they
From sweet child-souls they offer there.
O! Lord, Who teacheth all of us to pray—
Make me a child again just for today—
That my poor prayers may mingle with their's here,
My gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

F. J. MacDonald