

MORNING'S SECRETS

How devoutly quiet! how silently still
Is this little vale on this fair morn,
Though fog hang from the sky forlorn
And blanket the sight of the silent mill.
Listening, I hear the sweet gurgling rill
As it wanders among the sleeping reeds,
Whirling incessantly—a stranger to ease.
Now hark! There is the Robin's opening trill.
How peaceful now seems the virgin air;
How beautiful are the pearly trees
In their easeful slumber—heavenly fair!
But the plundering sun soon will seize
From earth these nocturnal beings so rare,
And form a kingdom with a wasting breeze.

—G. L. KEEFE '51.

A VILLAGE NEAR JERUSALEM

The twilight was disappearing from the tops of the surrounding mountains; shadows were coming down the hills and spreading themselves over the valley. One could hear the buzz of the bees returning to their hives. It was a quiet evening in spring, so quiet that this small village near Jerusalem seemed like a lost or forgotten part of the earth. Old Abacum was seated on a stone bench in his garden, inhaling the perfume of the flowers—there were many in his garden—and looking at the nearby Mount of Olives and at the small houses of Bethany which seemed to melt in the hazy atmosphere of the far-stretching valley. His wife and his two daughters, Esther and Agar, had gone with their donkey to the "big well" for the daily supply of water for the household.

Alone as he was, old Abacum was reviewing all the memories and happenings of his life as they paraded one by one before him. Among these events, the most unforgettable was his affair with the new Prophet.

Having been deprived of his sight for many years and being unemployed and weak, old Abacum used to carry his blindness and his rags, on tired and exhausted limbs, from door to door of the rich. At first he had been accompanied by his two daughters, but, when the girls grew up, they became ashamed of touring the streets with their blind father. Then old Abacum continued alone—his only companion being his cane—begging and singing in a hoarse voice and a sad tone, the psalms of Israel.

A hope, which became more and more constant as time went by, was established in his mind when he heard of Jesus, of his miracles and of paralyzed people who walked again. He went to meet Him.

"Lord," said he, "if You are He whom people speak of, You will have mercy on my two daughters, who live like orphans, myself being a blind man for many years. You'll bless a religious man: I pray to the name of Jehova, I keep His rules and I fast." Jesus put some mud on Abacum's face and said: "Now you can see."

Old Abacum would never forget that moment, when suddenly it was as if an Archangel tore away with his sword the black veil that was covering his sight. Abacum looked around, saw the daylight, and thought that it was the first day of creation. Surprised and overjoyed, he fell down and there he remained with his forehead touching the ground, praying and thanking the man called Jesus. . .

You can imagine old Abacum's sorrow when he heard that this man who had cured him had been arrested, condemned to death, and crucified between two thieves. Tears were rolling down his wrinkled and longsuffering face. One hope remained: that this he had heard was only a false report.

Night had come over the valley. Without knowing why, Abacum followed the road to Jerusalem as his ancestors had followed the manna. It was mid-night when he climbed over the fence into Joseph's garden, which was shown to him by a woman. Pain seized his heart and the silence was heavy. The lights of the city were blinking in the distance. Suddenly, he resolved to go to the assembly of the high priests and tell them that the man they had crucified was sent into this world by God and that he had cured him. But a smile appeared on Abacum's face; a simple and practical thought had crossed his mind: Jesus raised others from the grave, cured others; could He not save Himself from the martyrdom of the cross? And thinking thus, Abacum automatically started to doubt whether he could really see or whether he had been dreaming. And again, as if love had sent a light into his soul, the answer to his doubt appeared very simple: the miracles that Jesus had accomplished were not for him alone but for all of us. He had accomplished these miracles to defeat our infidelity, and to place us on the straight road that leads to God and our eternal reward.

Old Abacum now felt ashamed of the doubting thoughts he had a while ago. "My Lord, My Lord," he murmured in the silence of the night, "could we not believe You without miracles? How much greater is the darkness of our mind than that of our eyes . . . " Sadly he started back towards the village . . .

A few days later, old Abacum was seated in his garden, his daughters and his wife having gone again to the well. It was evening and Abacum had given himself up to his thoughts.

Suddenly a bright light appeared behind the fence at the other end of the garden and Agar came running to him, her face white, breathing with difficulty. "Father, father," she said, "Jesus is alive! He came out of the grave and now He is here along with eleven other men and wants to see you." Old Abacum's face became white, and as he stared at Jesus he stretched out his arms and said with a trembling but strong voice: "The eyes You gave me were anxious to see You, Son of the Father who is in Heaven. I will always follow the way You have opened before me."

Slowly Jesus and his eleven Apostles walked away, and as they went out of sight, the light behind the fence went out . . . To the day that he died . . . old Abacum remembered the smile he had seen on the face of Jesus. Abacum's wife and daughters had just returned from the well with a supply of water, and as he was lingering over these last memories of Jesus, twilight gave place to night. . .

—GREGORY A. LAMBROS '51

REVIVAL OF SOCIABILITY

It is generally agreed that within the past few years there has been a remarkable decline of sociable entertainment among the people of this province. This lack of sociability is notable not only in farming districts, but also in the towns. Some people blame the cars, others the movies, still others the war, but very few blame themselves.

Some may say that there is ample opportunity for social entertainment in the town: movies, games and dancing. This argument may have a certain amount of force, but such things do not make for a truly "sociable" life, or create sociability, which demands a free and intimate intermingling of people. This free mixing of people usually is not found in the types of entertainment mentioned above: couples, for example, or small groups, spend an evening at the movies, after which they disperse to their respective homes. They probably enjoy the evening, but there has been little, if any, sociability displayed. This is equally true of attendance at athletic games, where people pass the entire game without speaking to anyone, except perhaps to tell someone that he is standing in the way. The same is true for dances, where many individuals forego association with acquaintances and even close friends in preference to the company and diversion of one individual. If both of these individuals are in a position to retain this aloofness, very well; but it is a rare case when such dissociation can be perpetually maintained.