

Gethsemani

'How still the village sleeps.

Along the naked street gaunt shadows fall
From huddled houses leaning wall to wall.
No sound save for small voices of the night,
The rustling grass, or birds in muffled flight
High-winging 'gainst the deep star-broidered sky,
Or breath of Day winds faintly passing by.
The shallow waters murmuring in Cedron's brook,
The lazy flitting of some startled rook.
Far down the lane dusk-deepened, quietly
The Christ-Man passes to Gethsemani,
And passing, pauses on his way to hear—
The little sounds across the stillness clear,—
The little sounds, and gentle whisperings—
Companion to His wonted Sheperdings.
Sorrowful, He seeks with heavy Heart
The low-walled olive garden set apart.
And in dim blackness of the trees spread 'round
He casts Himself full flat upon the ground,
Near the drear wine-press, where His agony
Falls bloody from His brow. How tenderly
The garden flowers lone vigil with Him keep
And wonder at the cold world's heavy sleep.
The saddened night draws on. Now thru the gloom
Strange sounds float up from some dim-lanterned room
Where,—visioning the morrow He must see
The hidden building of the Gibbet-tree;
Must see the scoffer in his hardened pride,
The scornful rabble, and the stinging jibe;
The darkness and the shadows,—darker still
The purpling round of Calvary's distant Hill,
Watching and wearying not, till pale and cold
The mists of morning rise above the wold,—
In His far sight, against the dawn-arched sky
The shadows of three crosses hang on high.
In suppliance, grief-shaken,—yet Alas!
He knows His chalice may not from Him pass.
"Father," He prays, "Thy will, not Mine be done,
Grant strength of heart to Thy forsaken Son."
The hour is past. In slumbering Bethany
Christ passed alone thru His Gethsemani.

F. J. MacDonald.