

Adoration

POEMS

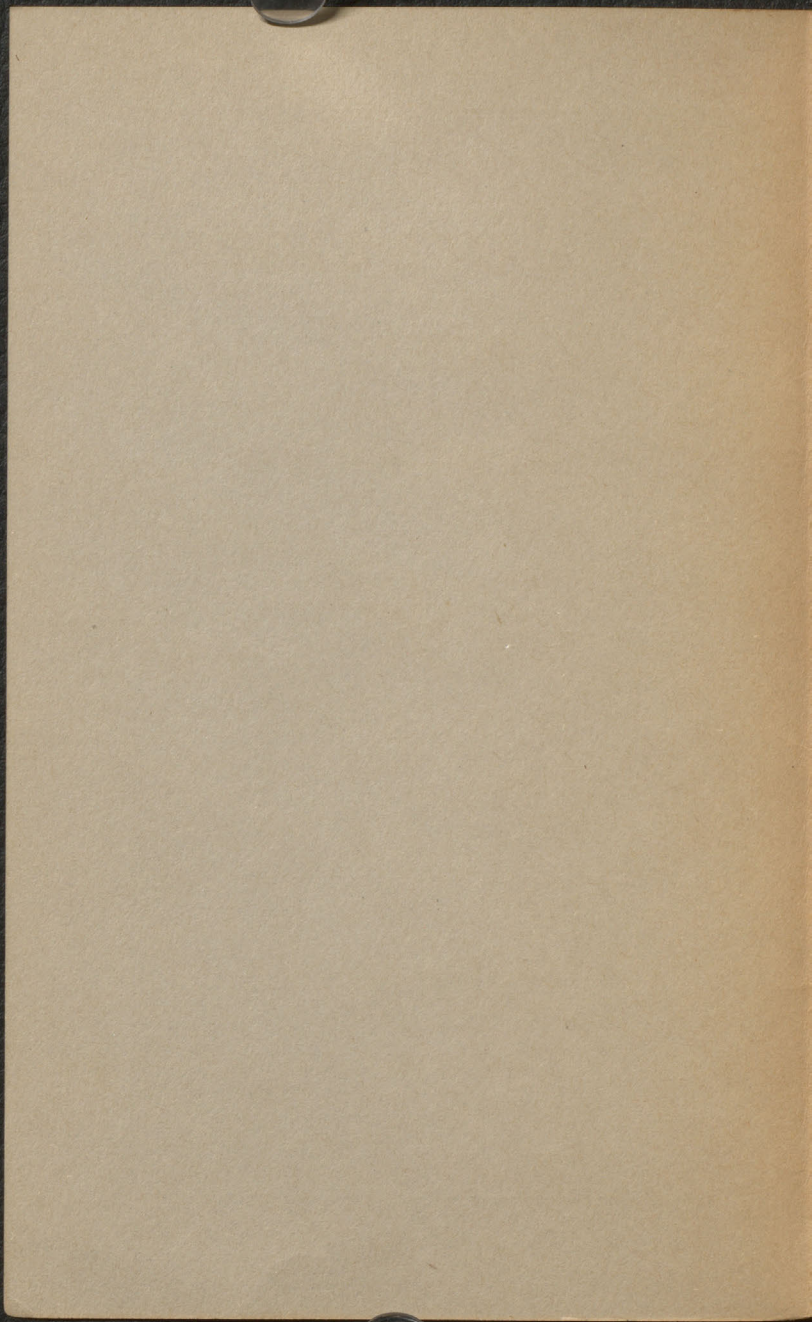
by

MINNIE HALLOWELL BOWEN



Little Grey Book No. 1

SHERBROOKE, QUE.



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Adoration

Incense arose from the hay lying deep in the stall:
Humble, the ox and the ass knelt in praise by the
 wall,
Breathing a worship that lay on the chilly night
 air
Over the heavenly Babe who was slumbering
 there.

Everything silent and still but the glorious throng
Bringing the message of peace, praising God with
 a song;
Mary, His Mother the Virgin so holy and mild,
Knelt and adored, as she gazed in the face of
 the Child.

There, by the Flower of the ages, all womanhood
 kneels,
Back to that cradle of purity, Magdalene steals,
Led by the guards of the weak and the light of a
 star,
Down to the lowly, still place, where the greatest
 things are.

Sleep little Baby of Bethlehem! Earth counts as
 loss
Love that bore agony, shame and the death of
 the Cross!
Yet shall it come, as the kings, and shall never
 be stayed;
Bringing the splendor of life, where the Christ
 Child is laid!

Bethlehem

When skies are dark with storm clouds,
Or tempests fill the air,
Come even unto Bethlehem,
The Lord of peace is there.

No mind of man could hold Him
In all His power and might—
And yet a helpless infant
He lived to human sight.

Pride cannot find the manger,
The Babe—the Mother mild—
He must, who would draw near Him,
Be as a little Child.

No mortal heart uplifted
Made Christmas anthems ring,
Men did not choose nor own Him,
They sought an earthly King.

In place of mighty kingdoms,
God gave a Mother mild!
Instead of conquering armies
There came a little Child!

Bloom lovely flowers of patience,
Of purity and love,
Since God this holy Presence
Has sent us from above.

And he who walketh humbly
Shall see, although afar,
The Baby and the manger—
The angels and the star!

Singing to the King

Golden bells, silver bells!
Bells for you and me,
Chiming out a happy song,
Christmas glad and free,
Ringing through the frosty air
Over all the wild,
For the birthday of a King—
For a little child.

Chorus:—Joy bells, golden bells!
Hear the carols ring!
Let the children's voices rise
Singing to the King!

Golden lights, shining lights!
Drifts of sparkling snow,
Little candles burning clear
With a steady glow;
White souls coming near to see!
Souls as black as night!
Pray God take the dark ones up
And make them very white.

Chorus:—Bright lights, golden lights!
Offerings we bring,
Children giving love to God—
Praises to the King!

Children come and worship here!
Be a Christmas light—
Be a little candle flame
Rising pure and bright!—
Be a bell and ring a song
To the Baby King—
“Glory be to God on High!”
With the angels sing.

Chorus:—Joy bells, golden bells!
Let the carols ring!
Hear the children's voices rise
Singing to the King!

Wanderers

Two wanderers pressed across the night;
Said one,

 "I see a growing light!
It rises lovely and afar!"

His friend replied,
 "There is no star."

The one exclaimed,
 "Across the waste
I see great wings that pass in haste,
The hosts of heaven downward go!"

The friend—
 "Grey clouds hang dim and low."

One cried,
 "A glorious anthem swells
And love and peace to earth it tells.
Of God made flesh, the angels sing
And hail the coming of the King!"

"A dream!"—his friend replied—"No birth
Can bring God down from heaven to earth."
Cried one—

 "If God is love—not power
And majesty alone, an hour
Must dawn when all that love can be
Shall be expressed eternally
In life—that men may understand
That wondrous thing in every land
And kneel before the Saviour's feet—
For love made clear—is life made sweet.
To eyes that see and ears that hear,
The glory burns—the song draws near;
Therefore, in faith I take the quest.
Rejoice! for God is manifest!"

He went across the spaces dim
And all the angels companied him.

No sound the ages all along,
Uplifts men like the angels' song!
No star in all the world-filled sky
Sheds such a light to journey by!
No throne of earth can ever give
The manger's power that souls may live!
The night is filled with lovely things,
With star-like hopes and thoughts with wings!
Come ye! who wander in the wild!
Behold the star—the song—the Child!

The Coming of the Christ Child

The winter snows lay cold and white,
(It was the Holy Christmas time:)
The trees against the darker heavens
Stood crowned and gemmed with sparkling rime,
While low within the violet depths,
A crystal amulet of light—
The silver moon a crescent hung
Upon the heaving breast of night.
The heaven was all ashine with stars
While silence held created things,
The hushed earth in her spotless robes
Was listening for the angel wings.
In holy silence—filled with light,
In shining stillness—thrilled and sweet
With rapture from the seraphs' song—
It waited for the Christ Child's feet.

The Christ Child came across the snow!
No chant arose from earthly thing,
The silent worship of the fields
Alone acclaimed the passing King;
The living creatures of the wood
Adored Him in the frost-bound ways,
While through the forest nature joined
In voiceless antiphons of praise.
In humble love the fir tree laid
Its sweeping boughs where He should tread—
With wondering awe the lofty pines

Spread sheltering arms above His head—
And shrub and plant and fern bowed down
Their frosted wreaths' ethereal grace,
Each little white soul of the woods
Adored its maker, from its place.
There was no sound—there was no voice,
As earth received the Presence mild—
Yet all the wilderness rejoiced
And hailed the coming of the Child!

He turned to seek the ways of men!
(It was the Happy Christmas time:)
In silver peals from every tower
Rang out the merry Christmas chime.
The fireside glow in many a home
Shed ruddy light along the street,
While from the Church's portal swept
The anthem music grand and sweet.
Through chancel arch and vaulted nave
The organ notes in triumph rolled,
Where scarlet-berried garlands wreathed
Each carven scroll and pillar old;
In notes of colour and of song
Joy filled the dim and stately pile,
Where diamond windows coldly gave
A frosted moonlight to the aisle.
The bells within the hoary tower
Sent out their carols o'er the snow,
Amid the ringing peals, none heard
The little steps that passed below!
A sob was in the Christ Child's voice—
"They do not hear me call"! He said;
And still the anthem rang above
The resting places of the dead.
The Christmas joy was in the air—
Its message echoed pure and sweet,
Yet hearts that heard its notes had missed
The passing of the Christ Child's feet!

The Hall was gay with festal cheer,
All bright with fire and rosy light;
From many a gleaming lattice pane
The mellow radiance lit the night;
It fell on holly berries red,
On silver cup and shining floor;
With weary feet the child pressed on
And paused beside the open door.
All smiling from the merry dance,
In rich array—in dainty dress—
The revellers passed on to greet
Their kin with Christmas kindness.
The Christ Child touched the open door
With trembling hands so cold the air—
He shivered in the piercing frost,
The little feet were chill and bare!
“Ah! let me in”! the Christ Child cried,
“Is there no room for me?” He said.
Unheeding the throng moved on—
With eager steps the dancers sped.
He turned away—Alas! the hour!
Though friendship glowed and fortune smiled,
No hand was stretched—no door flung wide
To welcome in the Holy Child!

Alone, within a cottage old
That stood beside the darkening way,
A woman, desolate and sad,
Was resting from the cares of day.
There was no light in heart or mind
Except the light of duty done;
There was no triumph-song of joy,
But many a silent victory won.
With tenderness for all the world,
With love for God and man below,
She opened wide the cottage door
To hear the bells across the snow.
From out the darkness and the cold,

There came to her a little child
With wistful eyes and waving hair
And tender lips that gently smiled:
The snow was on the clinging robe,
The trembling hands were white and chill,
And where the weary feet had pressed
A crimson stain lay on the sill.
She waited not for pleading word,
But welcomed him with tender care;
She knelt to tend the wounded feet—
And ah, the Child was strangely fair!
With loving eyes divinely sweet
He looked upon her face and smiled—
In wonder and in awe she gazed,
And knew it was the Holy Child!
A perfume as of flowers arose—
It seemed the Spring had come again!
And where His head had touched her breast
There ceased at last the weary pain.
A heavenly radiance filled the room—
She knew the peace that Christ bestows—
And where the Bleeding Feet had pressed
There bloomed that night a crimson rose!

So came the Christ Child long ago!
So comes He—at the Christmas time:
Then listen when across the snow
Rings out again the happy chime—
Lest in the careless mirth and joy
We miss the Presence pure and sweet,
Or fail amid the songs to hear
The passing of the Christ Child's feet.
The splendid offering of praise
In vain before his throne we bring—
Unless uplifted in His sight—
Are hearts that love—and souls that sing!

The Bride and the Angels

"She only seems a child to us!
She's very young to wed,
We fear she'll have a struggle too!"
The house angels said.
But the little white angel
Of the green Christmas tree
Said: "She will not have to be dismayed,
She'll always have me."

"But you, yourself, are small and young,"
The house angels said.
"How can you teach her how to cook
And sew and bake the bread?"
"I cannot teach these things at all,"
The happy voice replied.
"I just can show her how to laugh
When she, perhaps, had cried."

"I just can go from room to room,
Bring hope to banish care;
The Christmas loveliness and peace
I shall leave everywhere,
For these will teach her how to work
And make her brave and strong,
While I shall watch her growing soul
And hear it in her song."

"I trust she will remember me,
Until, some wonder day,
Our Lord may send a little child
To teach her how to pray!"
The dear house angels listening then
In wonder and amaze,
Said: "Surely she need have no fear
Through all her wedded days."

"It is the truth she speaks to us!
Our little sister knows!
For one who sees the Christmas joy
Shall bear it where she goes.
Who-so beholds that love and peace,
Though kings and star depart,
Shall ever make the heavenly song
A cradle in her heart."

The Child

When God made a little Child,
All the angels tried to see,
Bending down on lowly knee
When the new-born wonder smiled;
Heaven rejoiced that there should be
Just a Child for you and me.
Angels from the highest places,
Veiling feet and hands and faces
From the splendour infinite,
Down to earth with ardour sped;
Each some baby's footsteps led
Ever upward to the light—
With great joy that this should be
Their work for humanity.

Only angels do these things!
It is strange that man forgets,
For God in His garden sets
Each child,—His "Forget-me-not;"
Those who aid the children's lot
Have the angels' sheltering wings;
And this work that had its birth
When the first dear baby smiled,
Is the greatest thing on earth—
Just to help a little child.

God's Gift

Out of the unknown dark, there came
A little Soul to me,
A spirit sent at God's command
From far eternity.

It nestled in its house of life—
The waiting angels smiled
As tenderly within my arms
They laid the little child.

Such wonder filled my heart and mind—
Such holy joy and fear—
That sin and care together passed
And only heaven seemed near.

Then, in my deep unworthiness,
I prayed, "O Saviour mild!
Help me to guard from deadly stain
Thy gift—this little child.

And bid thine angels succor it,
And teach it to endure,
That it may stand amid the strife
Thy servant, strong and pure.

Grant it to raise with tender hands
The slaves of want and sin,
And living thus, to have from heaven
The peace which dwells within;

That when the glorious angel, Death!
Shall summon it to thee—
White and triumphant it may pass
To thine eternity."

*PS8503
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1930Z
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Page Printing &
Binding Company
Sherbrooke Que.