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ST. FRANCIS was a born mystic who was never mysterious. There was nothing gloomy about this mystic, nor was there anything in his mysticism that could not be understood. To Francis God was everywhere present. He was capable of seeing his Saviour in every detail of the landscape. He saw God not as being present in the vagueness of abstract nature, but rather he saw the handiwork of God in every particular created creature and thing. With the wisdom of a mystic he could see and understand what the learned men of the universities could not fathom.

*"St. Francis was a wiser man
Than all the clerks of Oxenford;
St. Francis was more lettered than
The learned schoolmen of the Lord.
His lore from Nature's book he spelt,
A lettered man was he,
And in his house of studies worked
Beneath the greenwood tree."*

There was no puzzle of the universe for him since he understood so well the plan of creation. Every creature had been given his place by the Creator. Francis not only understood creatures, but he also recognized them as part of God's scheme. He called them his brothers and sisters and did not hesitate to address them as such. He called the birds "little sisters"; the wolf was his "brother wolf"; the fire he called his "brother fire, fierce and gay and strong." He was always happy for God was everywhere evident to him. To the world it seemed that he possessed nothing, yet with his irresistible Lady Poverty he was ever joyful for he knew that having nothing he possessed all things. All Nature was his and in every creature he saw the reflection of the Creator who is the source of all love. Hence, he was unspeakably happy.

*"St. Francis was a merrier man
Than all the jesters up at Court;
St. Francis was a merrier man
Than those who at the play disport.
For since so goodly a thing as mirth
Therein all men agree,
He sought it where all good finds birth,
In God's infinity."*

The wisdom and joy of St. Francis has appealed to all men in all ages. He was a mystic who preached his message in a way that none could gainsay or misunderstand. St. Francis showed men how to rejoice in the realization that all are brothers in creation and all are children of God. His message will continue to resound in the ears and the hearts of men till the end of time.