

## THE ANGEL'S STORY.

By Adelaide Proctor.

Through the blue and frosty heavens  
Christmas stars were shining bright;  
Glistening lamps throughout the City  
Almost matched their gleaming light;  
While the winter snow was lying,  
And the winter winds were sighing  
Long ago, one Christmas night.

While from every tower and steeple  
Pleading bells were sounding clear  
(Never with such tones of gladness  
Save when Christmas time is near)  
Many a one that night was merry  
Who had toiled through all the year.

That night saw old wrongs forgiven  
Friends, long parted, reconciled:  
Voices all unused to laughter,  
Mourful eyes that rarely smiled,  
Trembling hearts that feared the morrow  
From their anxious thoughts beguiled.

Rich and poor felt love and blessing  
From the gracious season fall;  
Joy and plenty in the cottage  
Peace and feasting in the hall;  
And, the voices of the children  
Ringing clear above it all!

Yet one house was dim and darkened;  
Gloom and sickness and despair,  
Dwelling in the gilded chambers,  
Creeping up the marble stair.  
Even still the voice of mourning—  
For a child lay dying there.

Silken curtains fell around him  
Velvet carpets hushed the tread  
Many costly toys were lying  
All unheeded by his bed,  
And his tangled golden ringlets  
Were on downy pillows spread.

The skill of that mighty City  
To save one little life was vain—  
One little thread from being broken,  
Nay his very mother's pain,  
And the mighty love within her  
Could not give him health again.

So she knelt there still beside him,  
She alone with strength to smile,  
Promising that he should suffer  
No more in a little while,  
Murmuring tender song and story  
Weary hours to beguile.

Suddenly an unseen Presence  
Checked those constant moaning cries,  
Stilled the little heart's quick fluttering,  
Raised those blue and wondering eyes,  
Fixed on some mysterious vision  
With a startled sweet surprise.

For a radiant angel hovered,  
Smiling o'er the little bed  
White his raiment, from his shoulders  
Snowy dove-like pinions spread,  
And a star like smile was shining  
In a Glory round his head.

While with tender love, the angel,  
Leaning o'er the little nest  
In his arms the sick child folding,  
Laid him gently on his breast,  
Sobs and wailings told the mother  
That her darling was at rest.

So the angel, slowly rising,  
Spread his wings, and through the air  
Bore the child, and, while he held him  
To his heart with loving care,  
Placed a branch of crimson roses  
Tenderly beside him there.

While the child thus clinging, floated  
Towards the mansions of the Blest  
Gazing from his shining guardian  
To the flowers upon his breast,  
Thus the angel spake, still smiling  
On the little heavenly guest.

"Know dear little one, that Heaven  
Does no earthly thing disdain,  
Man's poor joys find there an echo  
Just as surely as his pain:  
Love, on earth so feebly striving,  
Lives divine in Heaven again.

"Once in that great town below us  
In a poor and narrow street  
Dwelt a little sickly orphan;  
Gentle aid or pity sweet  
Never in life's rugged pathway  
Guided his poor tottering feet.

"All the striving anxious forthought,  
That should only come with age;  
Weighed upon his baby spirit  
Showed him soon life's sternest page;  
Grim want was his nurse, and sorrow  
Was his only heritage.

"All too weak for childish pastimes,  
Drearly the hours sped;  
On his hands so small and trembling  
Leaning his poor aching head,  
On through dark and painful hours  
Lying sleepless on his bed.

"Dreaming strange and longing fancies  
Of cool forests far away;  
And of rosy happy children,  
Laughing merrily at play,  
Coming home through green lands, bearing  
Trailing boughs of blooming May.

"Scarce a glimpse of azure heaven  
Gleamed above that narrow street,  
And the sultry air of summer  
(That you call so warm and sweet),  
Fevered the poor orphan, dwelling  
In the crowded alley's heat.

"One bright day with feeble footsteps  
Slowly forth he tried to crawl  
Through the crowded city pathways  
Till he reached a garden wall,  
Where mid princely halls and mansions  
Stood the lordliest of all.

"There were trees with giant branches  
Velvet glades whose shadows hid;  
There were sparkling fountains glancing,  
Flowers, which in luxuriant pride  
Even wafted breaths of perfume  
To the child who stood outside.

"He against the gate of iron  
Pressed his wan and wistful face,  
Gazing with an awe-struck pleasure  
At the glories of the place;  
Never had his brightest day dream  
Shone with half such wondrous grace.

"You were playing in the garden,  
Throwing blossoms in the air,  
Laughing when the petals floated  
Downwards on your golden hair;  
And the fond eyes watching o'er you  
Told a House's Hope was there.

"When your servants tired of seeing  
Such a face of want and woe,  
Turning to the ragged orphan,  
Gave him coin and bade him go,  
Down his cheeks so thin and wasted  
Bitter tears began to flow.

"But that look of childish sorrow  
On your tender child heart fell  
And you plucked the reddest roses  
From the tree you loved so well  
Passed them through the storm cold  
grating  
Gently bidding him "Farewell!"

Dazzled by the fragrant treasure  
And the gentle voice he heard,  
In the poor forlorn boy's spirit,  
Joy, the sleeping Seraph stirred;  
In his hand he took the flowers,  
In his heart the loving word.

"So he crept to his poor garret;  
Poor no more, but rich and bright—  
For the holy dreams of childhood—  
Love, and Rest, and Hope and Light—  
Floated round the orphan's pillow  
Through the starry summer night.

"Day dawned, yet the visions lasted,  
All too weak to rise he lay;  
Did he dream that none spoke harshly,—  
All were strangely kind that day?  
Surely then his treasured roses  
Must have charmed all ills away,

"And he smiled, though they were fading  
One by one their leaves were shed;  
Such bright things could never perish,  
They would bloom again he said.  
When the next day's sun had risen  
Child and flowers both were dead!

"Know dear little one! our Father  
Will no gentle deed disdain;  
Love on the cold earth beginning  
Lives divine in Heaven again,  
While the angel hearts that beat there  
Still all tender thoughts retain."

So the angel ceased and gently  
O'er his little burthen lean't,  
While the child gazed from the shining  
Loving eyes that o'er him bent  
To the blooming roses by him  
Wondering what that mystery meant.

Thus the radiant angel answered,  
And with tender meaning smiled:  
"Ere your childlike loving spirit  
Sin and the hard world defiled,  
God has given me leave to seek you—  
I was once that little child!"

In the churchyard of that city  
Rose a tomb of marble rare,  
Decked, as soon as Spring awakened,  
With the buds and blossoms fair,  
And a humble grave beside it,—  
No one knew who rested there.

## THREE CHRISTMAS ANGELS.

When God created man He com-  
manded His angels to visit him on  
earth and guide him in his ways, so  
that he might have a foretaste of the  
bliss of the life to come. But man  
sought after sensual joys in the place  
of those in heaven, and growing greedy  
of worldly fruits, began to quarrel with  
his neighbors for the possession of  
them; and the guardian angels wept  
among themselves. But when the  
strong oppressed the weak and took  
from them by force the product of their  
toil, Justice rose up sorrowing, and,  
leaving earth, flew back to heaven.  
And when the weak overcame the  
strong with treachery and deceit, and  
got from them by cunning what they  
feared to take by force, Truth rose up  
sorrowing, and, leaving earth, flew  
back to heaven. And when the in-  
jured went forth to slay their injurers,  
and crimsoned the plain with their  
brothers' blood, Peace rose up sorrow-  
ing, and, leaving earth, flew back  
to heaven.

Thus each bad act scared some good  
angel from the world, until Forgiveness,  
the most beautiful of all, alone  
remained behind. And when she  
heard Anger and Revenge whispering  
dark deeds in men's ears, and counsel  
them to repeat what had been done to  
them, she rose up sorrowing and  
said:

"I will not leave the earth. While  
my sister angels were here I might  
have rested in my Father's bosom, for  
man needed me not; but now that they  
have fled, I will seek to make man  
listen to my voice, telling him that  
as he cherished forgiveness here, so  
that forgiveness will cherish him here-  
after."

At that moment a new and most  
beautiful star blazed in the heavens,  
It was the star of Bethlehem. Point-