

would have disgraced a heathen clime. Ancient paganism denounced intemperance, though it encouraged it by the example of the gods. Mahomedanism refuses the wine cup to its followers. Eastern idolatry reckons drunkenness one of the five enormous sins. And shall Christianity be less indignant in her denunciation of this offence, or less uncertain in the note of warning or alarm which she heralds forth? Surely the Christian pulpit and press must speak out.

Poetry.

THE BENIGHTED ANGEL.

BY MARY HOWITT.

A youthful angel lost her way
By chance from heaven's golden portal,
And just about the close of day
In London stood the young Immortal.

No eye might see the pinions white
That softly plumed her graceful shoulders;
Dimmed was her robe's celestial light
Before the eyes of all beholders.

She only seemed of earthly mould
Unto each passing man and woman;
And, shivering with the winter's cold,
Appeared a beggar poor and common.

Her heavenly birth was no avail;
None did with tender words accost her:
And when she told her piteous tale,
They said she was a young impostor.

And some they called to the police,
And swore that she deserved no pity,
And that the law must cause to cease
This begging nuisance in the city.

The angel turned her round and wept—
In heaven all strangers are befriended—
And, sighing mournfully, she crept
Through lordly streets, by mansions splendid.

The powdered lackeys, smooth and tall,
Looked forth into the streets gas lighted,
But none took pity, on the small,
Fair stranger, homeless and benighted.

In chariots made for pomp and ease,
Lolled many a jewelled youthful beauty;
The little angel thought that these
Were they who find delight in duty.

And hastening to the chariot's door,
She told her tale to many a peeress;—
They little thought that angel poor
Was richer than the richest heiress!

The pomp rolled by, it had no ears,
No eyes for anything so lowly;—
She turned and smiled, and dried her tears,
Remembering there were bishops holy.

The man of God is filled with love,
Even for the wretched outcast sinner;
—So may it be in realms above,
But here the bishops were at dinner.

The drenching clouds shut heaven from sight;
Her weary steps began to falter,
And now she sought to spend the night
Within some church beside the altar.

But each church door was strongly barred,
Alike by Churchman and Dissenter—
And headless' hearts as rock were hard!
The house of God she could not enter.

The rain peared down, the air was chill.
Of charity there was no giver;
The shops were closed, the wharves were still,
And midnight brooded on the river.

Along the black and homeless street
Reeled on the drunkard hoarsely brawling;
And wantons young with sauntering feet
To every passer-by was calling.

Drunkenness and sin were round about;
And a drear sense of coming danger—
A wildering sentiment of doubt—
Oppressed the youthful, heavenly stranger.

She turned a corner; bright with gas
Shone forth a house from roof to basement,
The front all chiselled stone and brass,
Blazing with light in every casement.

And through the burnished window pane
Gleamed crimson hangings' golden fringes;
And the large doors, from wind and rain,
Turned easily on polished hinges.

A miserable crowd rushed in—
The night it was so cold and dreary—
These doors alone; these halls of gin
Were open to the worn and weary!

Mothers, with babies lately born;
Grandsires, and wretched barefoot children;
Fathers and sons, and wives forlorn,
And every form of woe bewildering.

Here, here a ready entrance found;
And through the smoothly-turning portal,
As if she trod on heavenly ground,
Entered with joy the young Immortal.

The halls were all a-blaze with light,
Like festive halls where mirth carouses:
Without was all the dreary night,
The muddy streets, the tall, black houses.

A place of solace and repose,
The youthful angel thought to enter,
Where love and hope soothed human woes,
And where no evil thing could venture.

She looked at those who crowded in,
The man, the boy, the child, the mother;
And all were drinking—drinking gin—
And chiding, cursing, each the other!

The angel turned her round about,
And passed those shining portals thorough;
Into the wild, black night came out,
And wrung her hands in bitter sorrow.

And "Oh, thou London town!" she cried,
Spite of thy churches and thy preachers,
Thy Christian virtues vaunted wide,
Thy books, thy schools, thy many teachers,

Thus dost thou charter death and sin—
Thus of God's law art thou a scerner,
And plantest Hell—by licensed Gin,
To snare the poor at every corner!"

The weeping angel went her way,
The cutting night-wind made her shiver,
And till the early dawn she lay
Beneath the arches of the river!