

# THE CHRISTMAS OF THE STRANGER CHILD.

FROM THE GERMAN.

Amid a spacious town

The Christmas lights are blazing  
Beneath the cold night's frown

A foreign child is gazing  
Sadly up and down :

In every house he sees

Fond fingers intertwining,  
Through lamp-illumin'd trees  
The bright warm rooms are shining,  
Ah ! bitter sights are these !

He weeping speaks : " To-night,  
To every child is given  
A Christmas tree and light,  
But I by earth and heaven  
Am now deserted quite :

" A sister's gentle hand  
Had given me all I needed,  
If I at home did stand ;  
But here I am unheeded,  
In this cold foreign land.

" Will none the orphan see,  
And let him in for pity !  
Oh, God ! and can it be,  
That in this crowded city  
There is no place for me !

" Will no kind hand relieve  
The orphan's deep dejection !  
Alas ! I must receive  
But only the reflection  
Of this strange Christmas Eve !"

He taps with fingers thin  
On window and on shutter,  
They hear not for the din,  
The weak words he doth utter,  
Nor let the orphan in.

The father's lessons mild  
The listening boy's ear drinketh—  
The Christmas gifts are piled  
By mother's hands. None thinketh  
Of that poor orphan child.

" Oh ! Christ, my Saviour dear,  
No father and no mother  
Have I my heart to cheer,  
Be all to me—no other  
Consoler, have I here."

Cold, cold his small hand grows,

He rubs his frozen fingers—  
He shivers in his clothes ;  
And in the white street lingers  
With eyes that will not close.

There cometh with a light,  
Which through the dark street breaketh,  
In robes of simple white,  
Another child—who speaketh  
These sweet words of delight :

" Behold thy Christ in me,  
Again a child's form taking—  
A little child like thee—  
Though all are thee forsaking,  
By me thou shalt not be :

" My word's impartial boon  
I waft o'er hill and valley,  
I send my aid as soon  
To this poor wretched alley,  
As to yon gay saloon ;

" My hands, with light divine,  
Thy Christmas tree shall kindle,  
Thou'lt see, compared with thine,  
All other trees shall dwindle,  
How beautiful they shine."

To Heaven his little hand  
The infant Saviour raiseth—  
There doth a great tree stand,  
Whose star-lit branch out-blazeth  
All o'er the azure land :

The child's heart bounds with glee,  
At all the starry tapers—  
His eyes grow bright to see,  
Through Heaven's transparent vapours  
That glorious Christmas tree !

Before his wondering eyes  
A glorious vision shifted—  
A dream of Paradise !  
For Angel hands uplifted  
The orphan to the skies.

Within that blessed sphere  
A home he now hath gotten—  
Even with his Saviour dear :  
There soon is all forgotten  
That he hath suffered here.