

Now look on her where she crouches,  
Close beside the friendly door,  
While she counts the dancing footsteps  
As they clatter o'er the floor;  
They are singing Christmas-carols,  
Singing till their hearts brim o'er!

And she watches through the window,  
Little faces like her own,  
Beaming with celestial pleasure—  
Glossy ringlets backward thrown;  
As the father clasps his darlings,  
With sweet words she too has known.

Flowery wreaths that deck the mantel  
Frame this picture, as she peers,  
Holly twined with buds and roses,  
Types of happy by-gone years—  
For her, too, they wove gay garlands,  
In the happy by-gone years.

O, dear father! O, sweet mother!  
Where are you who loved me so?  
And her little heart outbursting,  
Wails aloud its wordless woe;  
For alas! they sleep together,  
This wild night, beneath the snow.

Tap! upon the heavy casement,  
Tap! her hands would make a sign,  
"Take me in, kind Christian people!  
All these joys, they once were mine!  
Here I die of cold and hunger—"  
Heeds her but the Ear Divine!

Now the curtain drawn more closely,  
And the splendor fading too,  
Drowsy bells in hidden steeples  
Toll the heavy midnight through;  
All is hushed save distant revel,  
And the Storm-King's noisy crew!

Now, the bride dreams of her bridegroom,  
And the bridegroom, too, is blest;  
Now, the mother hugs her bantling  
Where it nestles on her breast;  
Age and childhood both are happy  
In that heavenly Christmas rest.

But no home receives the lone one,  
And no mother's fond address  
Smooths her pillow in the snow drift,  
And no father's hand may bless  
That lost fledgling on the doorstep,  
Yielding there to Death's caress!

Lo! behold a sudden glory!  
List! soft music in the air!  
And she rises radiant, lovely,  
Clasps her hands and kneels in prayer.  
See! an infant form resplendent  
Standing right before her there!

On its head a crown of starlight,  
Shedding lustre o'er its face!  
Heavenly mildness every feature;  
All its bearing sweetest grace;  
White robes, pure and bright as silver,  
Lighting up that gloomy place!

From its brow the tresses parted,  
Float aside in sunny sheen,  
And its eyes—the deepest, clearest  
That our mortal sight hath seen,  
Full of tenderest lovelight, beaming  
Summer o'er the wintry scene.

Hark! it speaks! its arms extended  
Beckon to that lonely one:  
"Come to me, poor little stranger,  
For thy pilgrimage is done!"  
Tones of heaven! can she linger  
When the threshold thus is won?

"My Father's house has many mansions,  
Far more beautiful than these;  
Pastures green by quiet waters,  
Flowers of glory, living trees.  
No more winter, only summer,  
Where His children rest at ease.

"There, on golden harps, the seraphs  
Sound eternal anthems high,  
And the songs of angel-miads  
Echo all along the sky;  
Blessed hosts are there forever,  
Souls redeemed that cannot die!

There comes neither care nor sorrow  
In that glad, unending day;  
But the hand of love undying,  
Wipes the tear of grief away.  
Though the dark world here reject thee,  
There, poor wand'rer, shalt thou stay.

"I am He who, in a manger,  
Lay a helpless little child;  
Swaddled there in rags and tatters,  
While the heathen lands reviled;  
Yet the after-ages hailed me,  
Lamb of God, the Undeiled!

"I, too, wandered poor and lowly,  
Not a roof to shield my head;  
Homeless, hungry, lost and weary,  
Often forced to beg my bread;  
While around, unseen, the angels  
Hovered ever near my head.

"Mine the words so oft repeated,  
'Little children come to me,'  
Mine the prayer for stricken mortals,  
Mine the Passion on the tree!  
By my blood I made the purchase—  
There, the home prepared for thee!"

He points, and now her gaze, in brightning,  
Sees the Cross shine forth afar,  
And above it, in the heavens,  
Bethlehem's hallowed morning star!  
While, beneath, two dearest faces  
Woo her where the cherubs are.

Hallelujah! strains celestial,  
Such the shepherds heard of old,  
When the choirs on high, exulting,  
Joyous tidings there foretold,  
And the scroll of our salvation  
O'er the earth for aye unroll'd.

Thus they found her in the daydawn  
Kneeling with uplifted eyes,  
And her hands outstretched and open,  
As with glad and sweet surprise.  
While the roseate glow was rising  
In the blushing Orient skies.

And the sleet had bound her ringlets,  
With a coronal that shone  
Like to diamonds, in the sunlight  
As its beams aslant were thrown,  
And the drift enwrapt her shoulders  
With white wings—the angel's own!

Thus, the rays that wrought her shadow  
Made a holy, strange device,  
Flinging it athwart the doorway,  
Like a cross upon the ice!  
And a crown of thorny snowflakes  
Topped the cross upon the ice!

Cheery Christmas-bells were chiming,  
And the merry crowd swept past,  
There it lay like God's own blessing,  
On that happy doorsill cast;  
Where the little barefoot pilgrim  
Found her Heaven and Home at last!