

THE CHRISTMAS ICE MAID



Upon the mountains, high above the snow,
Too steep for holly or for mistletoe,
Where cruel winds forever round i' blow,
There dwells a plant the angels know.

Upon the earth its timid leaf-stalks lie,
Stark, bare and shivery underneath the sky,
For sun and warmth and heat in vain they sigh;
Under its icy blasts they die.

But once a twelvemonth—on the frozen steep—
From out their stalks the timid leaflets creep;
And from their leaves, as though waked from a sleep,
The white wax flowers softly peep.

The ice maid gently touches them, they say,
A maid who Christmas day passes that way;
And whispering to the frozen, dead old sward,
Tells flower and leaf to greet its Lord.

