

10 THE DAGONET BALLADS

"Whose victims cry for vengeance
From their dank, unhallowed graves."

"He's drunk!" said the workhouse master.

"Or else he's mad, and raves."

"Not drunk or mad," cried the pauper,

"But only a hunted beast,

Who, torn by the hounds and mangled,

Declines the vulture's feast.

"I care not a curse for the guardians,

And I won't be dragged away."

Just let me have the fit out,

It's only on Christmas Day

That the black past comes to goad me,

And prey on my burning brain;

I'll tell you the rest in a whisper,—

I swear I won't shout again.

"Keep your hands off me, curse you!

Hear me right out to the end.

You come here to see how paupers

The season of Christmas spend.

You come here to watch us feeding,

As they watch the captured beast.

Hear why a penniless pauper

Spits on your paltry feast.