

## Poetry.

### A MOTHER'S WAIL.

#### AN EPISODE OF LANCASHIRE DISTRESS.

Dead—dead—dead !

Far better it should be so ;—  
To lie in a pauper's coffin there,  
Than sin's temptation to know,  
For O ! my girl was bonny and fair,  
But beauty's a curse you see,  
When hunger and want, disease and care,  
Such merciless fiends can be.  
It was for her sake that, day by day,  
My heart grew heavy and sore ;  
Till hope itself seemed ebbing away  
From my life's dark sunless shore.

Dead—dead—dead !

She was starved to death, I say !  
Because of the fierce and cruel strife  
'Mid our kinsmen far away.  
Man, look on her face, so worn and pale,  
On her hands, so white and thin ;  
Hers was a spirit that would not quail  
From striving her bread to win !  
But, yonder, closed is the factory gate,  
The engine is red with rust ;  
And what could we do but starve, and wait  
Till peace should bring us a crust ?

Dead—dead—dead !

With her brother lying ill,  
And her father shivering on the step  
That leads to the silent mill !  
Alone I kneel in my blinding tears—  
Alone in my black despair—  
My heart o'erburdened with gloomy fears,  
Yet far too bitter for prayer !  
Why do you prate how the world still grows  
More kind and more wise each day ?  
War's bloody flame still glitters and glows ;  
The clives of peace decay !

Dead—dead—dead !

O God, that my curse could fall  
On the heads of those whose selfish aims  
Have worked such woe for us all !  
Man, blame me not for my burning words,  
Nor bid me these thoughts disclaim ;  
For death has riven the silvery chords  
That swelled through my anguished frame.  
True I'm only a woman, whose heart  
Lies struck by a mortal blow ;  
But, God ! how keen is the bleeding smart  
A mother alone may know !

*British Ensign.*