

## 14 THE DAGONET BALLADS

"Back, through the filthy by-lanes !

Back, through the trampled slush !

Up to the crazy garret,

Wrapped in an awful hush.

My heart sank down at the threshold,

And I paused with a sudden thrill,

For there in the silv'ry moonlight

My Nance lay, cold and still.

"Up to the blackened ceiling

The sunken eyes were cast—

I knew on those lips all bloodless

My name had been the last ;

She'd called for her absent husband—

O God ! had I but known !—

Had called in vain, and in anguish

Had died in that den—*alone*.

"Yes, there, in a land of plenty,

Lay a loving woman dead,

Cruelly starved and murdered

For a loaf of the parish bread.

At yonder gate, last Christmas,

I craved for a human life.

You, who would feast us paupers,

*What of my murdered wife ?*