

'Chains, bolts, and bars . . .'

'Askest thou his tale
From the pale prisoner?' — *Maddison*

Chains, bolts, and bars, and massive doors,
Impervious walls, and roofs, and floors,
Gratings where daylight rarely pours
 A flickering ray
To disunite the lingering hours
 Of night and day:

A soul unstrung, a body worn,
A heart by painful feelings torn,
A mind incessantly o'erborne
 With sickening thought:
These constitute that lot forlorn,
 A prisoner's lot.

Oh! *state of suffering*, here below
Thrice wretched they condemned to know
How well thou aidest human woe
 By filling up,
Even until it overflow,
 Life's bitter cup!

The Howling Song of Al-Mohara

from the Arabic

My heart is as a House of Groans
From dusky eve to dawning grey;
Allah, Allah hu!
The glazed flesh on my staring bones
Grows black and blacker with decay;
Allah, Allah hu!
Yet am I none whom Death may slay;
I am spared to suffer and to warn;
Allah, Allah hu!
My lashless eyes are parched to horn
With weeping for my sin alway;
Allah, Allah hu!
For blood, hot blood that no man sees,
The blood of one I slew
Burns on my hands — I cry therefore,
All night long, on my knees,
Evermore,
Allah, Allah hu!
Because I slew him over wine,
Because I struck him down at night,
Allah, Allah hu!
Because he died and made no sign,
His blood is always in my sight;
Allah, Allah hu!
Because I raised my arm to smite
While the foul cup was at his lips,
Allah, Allah hu!
Because I wrought *his* soul's eclipse
He comes between me and the Light;
Allah, Allah hu!

His is the form my terror sees,
The sinner that I slew;
My rending cry is still therefore,
All night long, on my knees,
Evermore
Allah, Allah hu!

Under the all-just Heaven's expanse
There is for me no resting-spot;
Allah, Allah hu!

I dread Man's vengeful countenance,
The smiles of Woman win me not;
Allah, Allah hu!

I wander among graves where rot
The carcases of leprous men;
Allah, Allah hu!

I house me in the dragon's den
Till Evening darkens grove and grot'
Allah, Allah hu!

But bootless all! — who penance drees
Must dree it his life through;
My heartwring cry is still therefore,
All night long, on my knees,
Evermore,
Allah, Allah hu!

The silks that swathe my hall deewān
Are damasked with moons of gold:
Allah, Allah hu!
Musk-roses from my Gulistan
Fill vases of Egyptian mould;
Allah, Allah hu!

The Koran's treasures lie unrolled
Near where my radiant nightlamp burns;
Allah, Allah hu!

'There's not a bower in Eden . . .'

— *Lamecab*

There's not a bower in Eden but thy sofas have a place in,
And the moon and sun dance night and morning in thy
wash-hand basin.

Around me rows of silver urns
Perfume the air with odours old;

Allah, Allah hu!

But what avail these luxuries?

The blood of him I slew

Burns red on all — I cry therefore,

All night long, on my knees,

Evermore,

Allah, Allah hu!

Can Sultans, can the Guilty Rich

Purchase with mines and thrones a draught,

Allah, Allah hu!

From that Nutulian fount of which *Lamecab*

The Conscience-tortured whilome quaffed?

Allah, Allah hu!

Vain dream! Power, Glory, Riches, Craft,

Prove magnets for the Sword of Wrath;

Allah, Allah hu!

Thornplait Man's last and lampless path,

And barb the Slaying Angel's shaft;

Allah, Allah hu!

O! the Bloodguilty ever sees

But sights that make him rue,

As I do now, and cry therefore,

All night long, on my knees,

Evermore,

Allah, Allah hu!

Siberia

In Siberia's wastes
The Ice-wind's breath
Woundeth like the toothèd steel.
Lost Siberia doth reveal
Only blight and death.

Blight and death alone.
No Summer shines.
Night is interblent with Day.
In Siberia's wastes alway
The blood blackens, the heart pines.

In Siberia's wastes
No tears are shed,
For they freeze within the brain.
Nought is felt but dullest pain,
Pain acute, yet dead;

Pain as in a dream,
When years go by
Funeral-paced, yet fugitive,
When man lives, and doth not live,
Doth not live — nor die.

In Siberia's wastes
Are sands and rocks.
Nothing blooms of green or soft,
But the snowpeaks rise aloft
And the gaunt ice-blocks.

And the exile there
Is one with those;
They are part, and he is part,
For the sands are in his heart,
And the killing snows.

Therefore, in those wastes
None curse the Czar.
Each man's tongue is cloven by
The North Blast, who heweth nigh
With sharp scymitar.

And such doom each dreces,
Till, hunger-gnawn,
And cold-slain, he at length sinks there,
Yet scarce more a corpse than ere
His last breath was drawn.

A Vision of Connaught in the Thirteenth Century

'*Et moi, j'ai été aussi en Arcadie.*
— *Inscription on a painting by Poussin.*
And I, I too, have been a dreamer.

I could scale the blue air,
I could plough the high hills,
Oh, I could kneel all night in prayer,
To heal your many ills!
And one . . . beamy smile from you
Would float like light between
My toils and me, my own, my true,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My fond Rosaleen!
Would give me life and soul anew,
A second life, a soul anew,
My Dark Rosaleen!
O! the Erne shall run red
With redundancy of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,
And flames wrap hill and wood,
And gun-peal, and slogan cry,
Wake many a glen serene,
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
My Dark Rosaleen!
The Judgement Hour must first be nigh,
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,
My Dark Rosaleen!

I walked entranced
Through a land of Morn;
The sun, with wondrous excess of light,
Shone down and glanced
Over seas of corn
And lustrous gardens aleft and right.
Even in the clime
Of resplendent Spain
Beams no such sun upon such a land;
But it was the time,
'Twas in the reign,
Of Cálhal Mór of the Wine-red Hand.
Anon stood nigh
By my side a man
Of princely aspect and port sublime.
Him queried I,
'O, my Lord and Khan,
What clime is this, and what golden time?'
When he — 'The clime
Is a clime to praise,
The clime is Erin's, the green and bland;
And it is the time,
These be the days,
Of Cálhal Mór of the Wine-red Hand!
Then saw I thrones,
And circling fires,
And a Dome rose near me, as by a spell,

*Lament over the Ruins of the Abbey of
Teach Molaga*

*from the Irish of John O'Cullen
'Oidhche dhámb go doilig, dtúbach.'*

Whence flowed the tones
Of silver lyres
And many voices in wreathèd swell;
And their thrilling chime
Fell on mine ears
As the heavenly hymn of an angel-band —
'It is now the time,
These be the years,
Of Cáhal Mór of the Wine-red Hand!'

I sought the hall,
And, behold! . . . a change
From light to darkness, from joy to woe!
King, nobles, all,
Looked aghast and strange;
The minstrel-groupe sat in dumbest show!
Had some great crime
Wrought this dread amaze,
'Twas then the time,
We were in the days,
Of Cáhal Mór of the Wine-red Hand!

I again walked forth;
But lo! the sky
Showed flecked with blood, and an alien sun
Glared from the north,
And there stood on high,
Amid his shorn beams, A SKELETON!
It was by the stream
Of the castled Maine,
One Autumn eve, in the Teuton's land,
That I dreamed this dream
Of the time and reign
Of Cáhal Mór of the Wine-red Hand!

I wandered forth at night alone,
Along the dreary, shingly, billow-beaten shore.
Sadness that night was in my bosom's core.
My soul and strength lay prone.

The thin wan moon, half overveiled
By clouds, shed her funereal beams upon the scene;
While in low tones, with many a pause between,
The mournful night-wind wailed.

Musing of Life, and Death, and Fate,
I slowly paced along, heedless of aught around,
Till on the hill, now, alas! ruin-crowned,
Lo! the old Abbey-gate!

Dim in the pallid moonlight stood,
Crumbling to slow decay, the remnant of that pile
Within which dwelt so many saints erewhile
In loving brotherhood!

The memory of the men who slept
Under those desolate walls — the solitude — the hour —
Mine own lorn mood of mind — all joined to o'erpower
My spirit — and I wept!

In yonder Goshen once — I thought —
Reigned Piety and Peace: Virtue and Truth were there
With Charity and the blessed spirit of Prayer
Was each fleet moment fraught!

The Funerals

It was a vision of the night,
Ten years ago —
A vision of dim FUNERALS that passed
In troubled sleep before my sight,
With dirges and deep wails of woe,
That never died upon the blast!

Swiftly — not as with march that marks
The earthly hearse,
Each FUNERAL swept onward to its goal —
But, oh! no horror overdarks
The Stanzas of my gloomsome verse
Like that which then weighed down my soul!

It was as though my Life were gone
With what I saw!
Here were the FUNERALS of my thoughts as well!
The Dead and I at last were One!
An ecstasy of chilling awe
Mastered my spirit as a spell!

On, on, still on and on they swept,
Silently, save
When the long FUNERAL chant rose up to Heaven,
Or some wild mourner shrieked and wept —
Earth had become one groanful grave —
The isles and lands were left bereaven!

And on each hearse there sat enthroned
A skeleton!
The FUNERALS showed him by a lurid gleam,
And round each stood, as 'twere enzoned,
Others, the like, so many a one
They might have peopled worlds of Dream!

And towards the West at first they marched,
Then towards the South —
Those endless FUNERALS, till the sky o'erhead,
As one vast pall, seemed overarched
With blackness, and methought the mouth
Of Hades had cast up its Dead!

And one night passed, and there was day —
So dreamt I there!
The FUNERALS, then, had been but phantoms all —
How cheats Imagination's play!
Give her illusions, thou, no care,
O, Man! but hearken Reason's call!

But night fell dark on Earth once more,
And many a night,
And still the FUNERALS knew nor pause nor change;
And ever nightly, as before,
I again felt dead to mark a sight
So terrible, so dread, so strange!

What was this mystery? Years would seem
To have rolled away,
Before those FUNERALS halted on their path —
Were they but mockeries of a dream?
Or did the vision darkly say,
That here were signs of looming wrath?

I know not! but within the soul
I know there lives
A deep, a marvellous, a prophetic power,
Far beyond even its own control —
And why? Perchance, because it gives
Dread witness of a JUDGEMENT HOUR!