

# The Lascar

By Mrs. Mary Robinson

## In Two Parts

### I.

“Another day, Ah! me, a day  
“Of dreary Sorrow is begun!  
“And still I loath the temper’d ray,  
“And still I hate the sickly Sun!  
“Far from my Native Indian shore,  
“I hear our wretched race deplore;  
“I mark the smile of taunting Scorn,  
“And curse the hour, when I was born!  
“I weep, but no one gently tries  
“To stop my tear, or check my sighs;  
“For, while my heart beats mournfully,  
“Dear Indian home, I sigh for Thee!

### II.

“Since, gaudy Sun! I see more  
“Thy hottest glory gild the day;  
“Since, sever’d from my burning shore,  
“I waste the vapid hours away;  
“O! darkness come! come, deepest gloom!  
“Shroud the young Summer’s op’ning bloom;  
“Burn, temper’d Orb, with fiercer beams  
“This northern world! and drink the streams  
“That thro’ the fertile vallies glide  
“To bathe the feasted Fiends of Pride!  
“Or, hence, broad Sun! extinguished be!  
“ For endless night encircles Me!

### III.

“What is, to me, the City gay?  
“And what, the board profusely spread?  
“I have no home, no rich array,  
“No spicy feast, no downy bed!  
“I, with the dogs am doom’d to eat,  
“To perish in the peopled street,  
“ To drink the tear of deep despair;

“The scoff and scorn of fools to bear!  
“I sleep upon a bed of stone,  
“I pace the meadows, wild—alone!  
“And if I curse my fate severe,  
“Some Christian Savage mocks my tear!

#### IV

“Shut out the Sun, O! pitying Night!  
“Make the wide world my silent tomb!  
“O’ershade this northern, sickly light,  
“And shroud me, in eternal gloom!  
“My Indian plains, now smiling glow,  
“There stands my Parent’s hovel low,  
“And there the tow’ring aloes rise  
“And fling their perfumes to the skies!  
“There the broad palm Trees covert lend,  
“There Sun and Shade delicious blend;  
“But here, amid the blunted ray,  
“Cold shadows hourly cross my way!

#### V.

“Was it for this, that on the main  
“I met the tempest fierce and strong,  
“And steering o’er the liquid plain,  
“Still onward, press’d the waves among?  
“Was it for this, the LASCAR brave  
“Toil’d, like a wretched Indian Slave;  
“Preserv’d your treasures by his toil,  
“And sigh’d to greet this fertile soil?  
“Was it for this, to beg, to die,  
“Where plenty smiles, and where the Sky  
“Sheds cooling airs; while fev’rish pain,  
“Maddens the famish’d LASCAR’S brain?

#### VI.

“Oft, I the stately Camel led,  
“And sung the short-hour’d night away;  
“And oft, upon the top-mast’s head,  
“Hail’d the red Eye of coming day.  
“The Tanyan’s back my mother bore;  
“And oft the wavy Ganges’ roar  
“Lull’d her to rest, as on she past—  
“Mid the hot sands and burning blast!

“And oft beneath the Banyan tree  
“She sate and fondly nourish’d me;  
“And while the noontide hour past slow,  
“I felt her breast with kindness glow.

VII.

“Where’er I turn my sleepless eyes.  
“No cheek so dark as mine, I see;  
“For Europe’s Suns, with softer dyes  
“Mark Europe’s favour’d progeny!  
“Low is my stature, black my hair,  
“The emblem of my Soul’s despair!  
“My voice no dulcet cadence flings,  
“To touch soft pity’s throbbing strings!  
“Then wherefore cruel Briton, pay,  
“Compel my aching heart to stay?  
“To-morrow’s Sun—may rise, to see—  
“The famish’d LASCAR, blest as thee!”

VIII.

The morn had scarcely shed its rays  
When, from the City’s din he ran;  
For he had fasted, four long days,  
And faint his Pilgrimage began!  
The LASCAR, now, without a friend,—  
Up the steep hill did slow ascend;  
Now o’er the flow’ry meadows stole,  
While pain, and hunger, pinch’d his Soul;  
And now his fev’rish lip was dried,  
And burning tears his thirst supply’d,  
And, ere he saw the Evning close,  
Far off, the City dimly rose!

IX.

Again the Summer Sun flam’d high  
The plains were golden, far and wide;  
And fervid was the cloudless sky,  
And slow the breezes seem’d to glide:  
The gossamer, on briar and spray,  
Shone silv’ry in the solar ray;  
And sparkling dew-drops, falling round  
Spangled the hot and thirsty ground;  
The insect myriads humm’d their tune

To greet the coming hour of noon,  
While the poor LASCAR Boy, in haste,  
Flew, frantic, o'er the sultry waste.

X.

And whither could the wand'rer go?  
Who would receive a stranger poor?  
Who, when the blasts of night should blow,  
Would ope to him the friendly door?  
Alone, amid the race of man,  
The sad, the fearful alien ran!  
None would an Indian wanderer bless;  
None greet him with the fond caress;  
None feed him, though with hunger keen  
He at the Lordly gate were seen,  
Prostrate, and humbly forc'd to crave  
A shelter, for an Indian Slave.

XI.

The noon-tide Sun, now flaming wide,  
No cloud its fierce beam shadow'd o'er,  
But what could worse to him betide  
Than begging, at the proud man's door?  
For clos'd and lofty was the gate,  
And there, in all the pride of State,  
A surly Porter turn'd the key,  
A man of sullen soul was he—  
His brow was fair; but in his eye  
Sat pamper'd scorn, and tyranny;  
And, near him, a fierce mastiff stood,  
Eager to bathe his fangs in blood.

XII.

The weary LASCAR turn'd away,  
For trembling fear his heart subdued,  
And down his cheek the tear would stray,  
Though burning anguish drank his blood!  
The angry Mastiff snarl'd, as he  
Turn'd from the house of luxury;  
The sultry hour was long, and high  
The broad-sun flamed athwart the sky—  
But still a throbbing hope possess'd  
The Indian wand'rer's fev'rish breast,

When from the distant dell a sound  
Of swelling music echo'd round.

XIII.

It was the church-bell's merry peal;  
And now a pleasant house he view'd:  
And now his heart began to feel  
As though, it were not quite subdu'd!  
No lofty dome, shew'd loftier state,  
No pamper'd Porter watch'd the gate,  
No Mastiff, like a tyrant stood,  
Eager to scatter human blood;  
Yet the poor Indian wand'rer found,  
E'en where Religion smil'd around—  
That tears had little pow'r to speak  
When trembling, on a sable cheek!

XIV.

With keen reproach, and menace rude,  
The LASCAR Boy away was sent;  
And now again he seem'd subdu'd,  
And his soul sicken'd, as he went.  
Now, on the river's bank he stood;  
Now, drank the cool refreshing flood;  
Again his fainting heart beat high;  
Again he rais'd his languid eye;  
Then, from the upland's sultry side,  
Look'd back, forgave the wretch, and sigh'd!  
While the proud PASTOR bent his way  
To preach of CHARITY— and PRAY!

PART SECOND.

I.

The LASCAR Boy still journey'd on,  
For the hot Sun, HE well could bear,  
And now the burning hour was gone,  
And Evening came, with softer air!  
The breezes kiss'd his sable breast,  
While his scorch'd feet the cold dew prest;  
The wav'ing flow'rs soft tears display'd,  
And songs of rapture fill'd the glade;  
The South-wind quiver'd, o'er the stream

Reflecting back the rosy beam,  
While, as the purpling twilight clos'd,  
On a turf bed—the Boy repos'd!

## II.

And now, in fancy's airy dream,  
The LASCAR Boy his Mother spied;  
And, from her breast, a crimson stream  
Slow trickled down her beating side:  
And now he heard her wild, complain,  
As loud she shriek'd—but shriek'd in vain!  
And now she sunk upon the ground,  
The red stream trickling from her wound,  
And near her feet a murd'rer stood,  
His glitt'ring poniard tipp'd with blood!  
And now, "farewell, my son!" she cried,  
Then clos'd her fainting eyes—and died!

## III.

The Indian Wand'rer, waking, gaz'd  
With grief, and pain, and horror wild;  
And tho' his fev'rish brain was craz'd,  
He rais'd his eyes to Heav'n, and smil'd!  
And now the stars were twinkling clear,  
And the blind Bat was whirling near;  
And the lone Owlet shriek'd, while He  
Still sate beneath a shelt'ring tree;  
And now the fierce-ton'd midnight blast  
Across the wide heath, howling past,  
When a long cavalcade he spied  
By torch-light near the river's side.

## IV.

He rose, and hast'ning swiftly on,  
Call'd loudly to the Sumptuous train,—  
But soon the cavalcade was gone—  
And darkness wrapp'd the scene again.  
He follow'd still the distant sound;  
He saw the lightning flashing round;  
He heard the crashing thunder roar;  
He felt the whelming torrents pour;  
And, now beneath a shelt'ring wood  
He listen'd to the tumbling flood—

And now, with falt'ring, feeble breath,  
The famish'd LASCAR, prayd for Death.

V.

And now the flood began to rise  
And foaming rush'd along the tale;  
The LASCAR watch'd, with stedfast eyes,  
The flash descending quick and pale;  
And now again the cavalcade  
Pass'd slowly near the upland glade;—  
But HE was dark, and dark the scene,  
The torches long extinct had been;  
He call'd, but, in the stormy hour,  
His feeble voice had lost its pow'r,  
'Till, near a tree, beside the flood,  
A night-bewilder'd Trav'ler stood.

VI.

The LASCAR now with transport ran  
"Stop! stop!" he cried —with accents bold;  
The Trav'ler was a fearful man—  
And next his life he priz'd his gold!—  
He heard the wand'rer madly cry;  
He heard his footsteps following nigh;  
He nothing saw, while onward prest,  
Black as the sky, the Indian's breast;  
Till his firm grasp he felt, while cold  
Down his pale cheek the big drop roll'd;  
Then, struggling to be free, he gave—  
A deep wound to the LASCAR Slave.

VII.

And now he groan'd, by pain opprest,  
And now crept onward, sad and slow:  
And while he held his bleeding breast,  
He feebly pour'd the plaint of woe!  
"What have I done?" the LASCAR cried—  
"That Heaven to me the pow'r denied  
"To touch the soul of man, and share  
"A brother's love, a brother's care;  
"Why is this dingy form decreed  
"To bear oppression's scourge and bleed?—  
"Is there a GOD, in yon dark Heav'n,

“And shall such monsters be forgiv’n?”

VIII.

“Here, in this smiling land we find  
“Neglect and mis’ry sting our race;  
“And still, whate’er the LASCAR’S mind,  
“The stamp of sorrow marks his face!”  
He ceas’d to speak; while from his side  
Fast roll’d life’s swiftly-ebbing tide,  
And now, though sick and faint was he;  
He slowly climb’d a tall Elm tree,  
To watch, if, near his lonely way,  
Some friendly Cottage lent a ray,  
A little ray of chearful light,  
To gild the LASCAR’S long, long night!

IX.

And now he hears a distant bell,  
His heart is almost rent with joy!  
And who, hut such a wretch can tell,  
The transports of the Indian boy?  
And higher now he climbs the tree,  
And hopes some shelt’ring Cot to see;-  
Again he listens, while the peal  
Seems up the woodland vale to steal;  
The twinkling stars begin to fade,  
And dawnlight purples o’er the glade—  
And while the sev’ring vapours flee,  
The LASCAR boy looks chearfully!

X.

And now the Sun begins to rise  
Above the Eastern summit blue;  
And o’er the plain the day-breeze flies,  
And sweetly bloom the fields of dew!  
The wand’ring wretch was chill’d, for he  
Sate, shiv’ring in the tall Elm tree;  
And he was faint, and sick, and dry,  
And bloodshot was his fev’rish eye;  
And livid was his lip, while he  
Sate silent in the tall Elm tree—  
And parch’d his tongue; and quick his breath,  
And his dark cheek, was cold as Death!

XI.

And now a Cottage low he sees,  
The chimney smoke, ascending grey,  
Floats lightly on the morning breeze  
And o'er the mountain glides away.  
And now the Lark, on flutt'ring wings,  
Its early Song, delighted sings;  
And now, across the upland mead,  
The Swains their flocks to shelter lead;  
The shelt'ring woods, wave to and fro;  
The yellow plains, far distant, glow;  
And all things wake to life and joy,  
All! but the famish'd Indian Boy!

XII.

And now the village throngs are seen,  
Each lane is peopled, and the glen  
From ev'ry op'ning path-way green,  
Sends forth the busy hum of men.  
They cross the meads, still, all alone,  
They hear the wounded LASCAR groan!  
Far off they mark the wretch, as he  
Falls, senseless, from the tall Elm tree!  
Swiftly they cross the river wide  
And soon they reach the Elm tree's side,  
But, ere the sufferer they behold,  
*His wither'd Heart, is DEAD,—and COLD!*