

Fatherless, penniless—hard was my case,
 With a cruel world staring me right in the face.
 But I practised the rule, as the old Scotch folks say:
 Was to set a strong face to climb every steep brae;
 I made tiles all the summer, and in winter dug
 drains,
 Working hard all the day, and at night used my
 brains.
 Now, the duty it rested on me and my brother,
 To support a young sister, and kind widowed
 mother;
 To make both ends meet, often puzzled us sore,
 And keep debt and the sheriff away from the door.
 I wrote by the fire, though the light was not clear,
 The cents they were scarce, and the candles were
 dear;
 Adam Hall's pure coal oil lay a mystery, unsolved,
 Still the muse plodded on, though in darkness
 involved.

As time passed away, and as older I grew,
 The hairs on my chin, they began to peep through;
 So at last like my neighbors, it flashed o'er my mind,
 That the muse and the lasses were closely combined.
 There is not a man with a poetic turn,
 But his love for the lasses will ardently burn;
 They are linked with the muse, to his nature belong,
 They give power to his pen, as he paints them in
 song.

Yes, I oft met a lassie at market or kirk,
 When her looks pierced my heart, like a highland-
 man's dirk;
 I strove to forget her and love's power to subdue,
 But awake or asleep she rose fresh to my view.
 I loved; I have courted the young and the fair,
 Love's roses and thorns, both gave me there share;
 The sweet loving glance, or the scornful look,
 Met the praise of my pen or a sharpened rebuke.
 At times had the thought to be joined to a wife,
 To cheer my dark hours, and the sorrows of life;
 When I heard some poor children stand crying for
 bread,
 It drove thoughts of marriage clear out of my head.

With hard perseverance, my knowledge grew fast,
 I looked at the future—dark clouds overcast;
 Hard work and small wages was all I could see,
 And tyrannical masters, cruel ruling o'er me.
 But what wounded me more than my daily hard toil
 'Twas their hard overbearing, that made my blood
 boil;
 Right or wrong they found fault, and I dared not
 speak back,
 Or they pulled out my wages, and told me to walk.

My last winter at home, tried my patience severe,
 Work was scarce, and a job I could scarcely find
 near;

Every morning I travelled six miles to my work,
 And walked the same back every night in the dark.

I was poor and unlearned, but my spirit was brave,
 I resolved not to drudge through this life like a
 slave.

So I made up my mind the Atlantic to cross;
 If I nothing should gain, I had little to loss.
 I gathered my clothes, and packed up my chest;
 When I looked at my purse, o'er my eyes came a
 mist;

I fingered, I counted but ten sovereigns clear,
 And they dwindled to three when I landed out here.
 I soon found employment, and likewise a wife,
 Still I cherished the muse through the changes of
 life.

Though I sit like a night owl, or rise with the lark,
 With rhyming I never neglected my work.
 In the field, at the plough, or when swinging the axe,
 That's the time that my head flights of fancy it
 takes;

At night when my tools in their place I do lay,
 Then I write down the lines I composed through
 the day.

My wife and a family I have still to support,
 But the chain of my hardships is fast getting short,
 I don't write in darkness for my lamp burneth free,
 Yes, I purchase my oil at the large giant T.

I write just for pleasure, wealth is not my aim,
 Far less the bright laurels of honor or fame.
 It's a poor paying trade; instead of the cash
 Is a sneer at my lines or the critic's dread lash.
 Gentle reader, believe all I've penned is the truth,
 On the trials and the hardships endured through my
 youth,

If you think my productions are not worth one dol-
 lar,

Just remember the heading—I AM A POOR SCHOLAR.

A FEW LINES BORDERING ON LOVE.

While travelling around obtaining subscribers for this book I
 met with a young man suffering from the effects of love. He
 promised to buy a copy if I would consent to compose a few
 verses for him, appropriate to his condition of mind.

He promised me to buy a book,
 By granting him a favor,
 In taking Love to be my theme,
 And spice it with love's flavour.