

The Picture - song lyrics

American Old-time song lyrics from www.traditionalmusic.co.uk

THE PICTURE.

Composed by Hovey Cook.

Standing about a bar-room were a crowd of noisy men.
Chaffing a poor old beggar, us they "set 'em up again";
But he seemed a jovial fellow, and didn't mind their chaff;
And at every witty remark, he too joined in the laugh.

I admit, boys, I'm a filthy tramp-soaked, as you say, in rum.
Laugh at me if it please you, boys-ah, yes, I'm a dirty bum.
Maybe you will not believe it, but I tell you, boys, it's true-
I once had health and wealth, as, perhaps, have most of you.

Did you ever hear this saying, boys-no, it's not my own-
It is "Laugh, and the world laughs with you; but weep, and you weep alone"
And many the time have I laughed, and many the time I've wept -
And many the time on a bed of down and on a bed of board I've slept.

Do you want to hear a story, lads, of how a woman fell
From a life of virgin purity, and made one man's life a hell?
Well, listen and I'll tell you-'tis a portion of my life;
Of a daughter who brought disgrace upon a husband and a wife.

In a little country village I lived with my darling wife;
I toiled as a roller-mill hand, toiling for bread in life.
Ah, we lived so happy-to please her I hard did try;
Love was master in our cottage in those happy days gone by.

Well, there came a little baby to bless our humble lot;
I shall never forget how pleased I was to hold that cunning tot.
I 'd return from work each evening, my wife she'd meet me at the door;
Ah, boys, those were the happiest days that in life I ever saw.

I think I forgot to tell you-that baby was a girl-
Ah, many the happy hour she's been clasped in these hands of toil.
Well, years rolled quickly onward, and she grew to a lady fine;
And I was proud to say, lads, that she was a child of mine.

There was a lad who worked in the mill, boys, and a handsome lad was he;
He was welcome to my house then, I thought him a friend to me.
We'd smoke and we'd chat for hours-Joe Oleson was his name-
And I never once suspected that he'd lead my child to shame.

But such, indeed, was the case, boys, and then she ran away;
And never a tidings have I heard from my child since that day;
And my poor wife, God, bless her, for weeks And weeks she cried,
And one night she, heart-broken, fell at my feet And died.

And this wretch who wronged my daughter, I've heard it said, he'e dead;
Why, stranger, you are weeping-is it at what I have said?
Excuse me, good bartender-that picture behind the bar,
Would you please let me see it? it looks a bit like her.

Thank you, sir, may I place it on that table over there?
And I'll draw a picture from it-indeed I will, I swear!
Give me a piece of paper, please-yes, that's about the size.
Now I'll show you that I can draw a bit, and prove I've told no lies.

Where did you get this picture? why, it's the picture of my Nell-
The picture of my daughter. Come, don't be afraid to tell:
I think I've seen your face before-yes, you're Jack who led her astray!
You're the man I've wanted to meet for many and many a day.

Don't stand there laughing at me-you've changed, but I know you!
Come, speak up like a man if you are one! come, is not what I say true?
My God, boys, it's he; I know him! Stop! don't tell me I lie!
Nellie- mother-wife-my child-my God, boys, I die!

From the music archive at www.traditionalmusic.co.uk

All was silent as the tomb
In the hot and crowded room;
Not a word for minutes spoken,
As the man lay there heart-broken-dead.