

My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border, O
Melody - "The weaver and his shuttle, O"
Robert Burns, 1784, from Commonplace Book

My father was a farmer
Upon the Carrick border, O,
And carefully he bred me
In decency and order, O;
He bade me act a manly part,
Tho' I had ne'er a farthing, O,
For without an honest, manly heart,
No man was worth regarding, O.

2. Then out into the world
My course I did determine, O;
Tho' to be rich was not my wish,
Yet to be great was charming, O:
My talents they were not the worst,
Nor yet my education, O;
Resolved was I at least to try
To mend my situation, O.

3. In many a way, and vain essay
I courted Fortune's favour, O;
Some cause unseen still stept between
To frustrate each endeavour, O:
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpowered,
Sometimes by friends forsaken, O,
And when my hope was at the top,
I still was worst mistaken, O.

4. Then sore harass'd, and tir'd at last
With Fortune's vain delusion, O,
I dropt my schemes like idle dreams,
And came to this conclusion, O:-
The past was bad, and the future hid;
It's good or ill untried, O;
But the present hour was in my power,
And so I would enjoy it, O.

5. No help, nor hope, nor view had I,
Nor person to befriend me, O;
So I must toil, and sweat, and broil,
And labor to sustain me, O:
To plough and sow, to reap and mow,
My father bred me early, O;
For one, he said, to labour bred,
Was a match for Fortune fairly, O.

6. Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor,
Thro' life I'm doom'd to wander, O,
Till down my weary bones I lay
In everlasting slumber, O;
No view nor care, but shun whate'er
Might breed me pain or sorrow, O;
I live to-day as well's I may,
Regardless of to-morrow, O.

7. But, cheerful still, I am as well
As a monarch in a palace, O,
Tho' Fortune's frown still hunts me down,
With all her wonted malice, O:
I make indeed my daily bread,
But ne'er can make it farther, O;
But, as daily bread is all I need,
I do not much regard her, O.

8. When sometimes by my labour
I earn a little money, O,
Some unforeseen misfortune
Comes gen'rally upon me, O:
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect,
Or my good-natur'd folly, O;
But, come what will, I've sworn it still,
I'll ne'er be melancholy, O.

9. All you who follow wealth and power
With unremitting ardour, O,
The more in this you look for bliss,
You leave your view the farther, O.
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts,
Or nations to adore you, O,
A cheerful, honest-hearted clown
I will prefer before you, O!