**‘Piston, Pen & Press’: The Factory Muses**

**Transcriptions:**

**1. ‘Up Heeze Ma Heart’, by William Currie.**

Up heeze my heart wi’ might and main,

While true, ye needna fear folk;

Though some may at your lineage sneer,

Be prood; ye sprang frae puir folk.

Did oor first parents wear a croon,

Or were they titled gentry?

Or did they dwall in biggins braw,

Hedged roon’ wi’ mony a sentry?

Na, na, guid faith o’ nae sic graith

Hae we, sirce me! descended;

Oor forbears a’ were toilers leal,

Wha’s word could be depended.

Ne’er heed the mimpin’ loons o’ yirth,

Wha think us unco low folk;

Gin honest in our ways o’ life,

We’ll prove they canna know folk.

Ne’er hing your heid like weel thresh’d cur.

That looks askance and fears folk;

’Twas ae great Hand that moulded a’;

E’en be we rich or puir folk.

The heartless jeer the cooard sneer,

Spring frae the breists o’ dour folk,

Wha never felt love’s glowin’ lowes

That bless the sauls o’ puir folk.

Then thanks gie Him wha kens our hearts,

For blessin’s that can cheer folk;

And let Him ken we ken His worth,

E’en though we are but puir folk.

**2. ‘Shuttle-Kissin’** **(Matilda Curly-Topper), by Sam Fitton**

Matilda Curly Toppin’ wer a weighver, an’ a lass,

Who did her share o’ laughin’, an earned her share o’ brass;

Hoo kissed her share o’ shuttles, too, but if they’d nobbut ler her,

Hoo’d rather pass her time away i’ kissin’ summat better.

Matilda had a tackler who’d getten very free

Wi’ bonny Curly Toppin’, for he kept her in his e’e;

But th’ way this felly pestered her amounted to a craze,

An’ hoo’ wer’ getting’ wary of his spooney little ways.

Her couldna stir a peg but he wer ‘awlus at her heels,

He followed her i’ th’ factory, or gooin’ to her meals;

So once as hoo wer’ comin’ wi’ a shuttle fro’ his bench,

He blurted eawt, “Matilda, th’art a gradely pratty wench;

I dunno’ want to see thi kissin’ shuttles o’ thi life,

So if I wer’ to ax thi, wouldta come an’ be mi wife?

If tha’ll gi’ me thi kisses – for I think tha’s mony left –

I’ll mak a patent thingammy for suckin’ up thi weft.”

At that Matilda cocked her e’e, an’ shook her curly yed,

Then givin’ him a little smile hoo wagged her yed an’ said:

“I’m very much obliged for o’ thi’ promises, shuzsheaw,

An’ yet I conno’ marry thi, for th’art so very feaw,

I’m sick o’ bein’ single, an’ I’m sick o’ suckin’ weft,

Mi teeth are getting’ rotten, an’ I haven’t mony left,

I thank thi for thi offer, which I very much decline,

For I’d rayther kiss a shuttle than a face like thine!”

**3. ‘A Factory Holiday’, by Henry Syme.**

Will ye come through Comely Park,

Bonnie Lassie O,

When they close the factory wark,

Bonnie Lassie O,

There we’ll breathe the e’enin’ air,

While the summer’s young an’ fair,

An’ we’ll banish war’ly care,

Bonnie Lassie O.

Ye hae filled my heart an’ head,

Bonnie Lassie O,

Since our holiday parade,

Bonnie Lassie O,

It was there yer smiles tae me

Were sae kindly, frank, an’ free,

I can think o’ nocht but thee,

Bonnie Lassie O.

What altho’ we live by toil,

Bonnie Lassie O,

We can blythesome be the while,

Bonnie Lassie O;

When our daily task is dune,

We can lilt a lichtsome tune,

An’ we’ll hail oor “honeymune,”

Bonny Lassie O.

Let’s meet in Comely Park,

Bonnie Lassie O,

When ye leave yer factory wark,

Bonnie Lassie O;

If ye lay yer loof in mine,

As true lovers did langsyne,

I will be for ever thine,

Bonnie Lassie O.

**4. ‘The Poo’er-Lume Weaver’, by James Currie.**

I’ve ha’en sweet lassies twa or three,

An’ aft their charms ha’e sung wi’ glee,

But nane had e’er the look o’ thee

My han’some poo’er-lume weaver!

Mary is a blythesome queen—

Lovely Mary, dearest Mary!

Mary’s like was never seen—

Blythe and bonnie Mary!

A thrill o’ joy flash’d thro’ ilk vein

When first aw kenn’d thou wert my ain;

Sae weel it micht—like thee there’s nane,

My charmin’ poo’er-lume weaver!

Mary is a blythesome queen, &c.

Braw chiel’s are sighin’ late an’ ear’

For luve o’ thee, my jewel rare,

An’ vow, wi’ thee nane can compare,

My peerless poo’er-lume weaver!

Mary is a blythesome queen, &c.

But lads may sigh an’ rave their fill,

E’en try your heart wi’ subtle skill,

‘Twill be in vain for thou’lt be still

My faithfu’ poo’er-lume weaver!

Mary is a blythesome queen, &c.

Tho’ neibor lassies yin an’ a’

Noo toss their heids an’ thee misca’,

An’ whisper “Pride will get a fa’,”

My matchless poo’er-lume weaver!

Mary is a blythesome queen, &c.

Their spitefu’ darts can harmna thee,

My ain wee wifie sune tae be;

Secure in ither’s luve are we,

My darling poo’er-lume weaver!

Mary is a blythesome queen, &c.

**5. ‘Wayvin’ Mewsic’ (extract), by John Hartley.**

There’s mewsic i’th’shuttle, i’th’loom, an i’th’frame,

   There’s melody mingled i’th’noise,

For th’active ther’s praises, for the’idle ther’s blame,

   If they’d hearken to th’saand of its voice;

An’ when flaggin a bit, ha refreshin to feel

   As yo pause an luk rannd on the throng,

At the clank o’the tappet, the hum o’ the wheel,

   Sing this plain unmistakable song: -

Nick a ting, nock a ting;

Wages keep pocketing;

Workin for little is better nor laiking;

Twist an’ twine, reel an’ wind;

Keep a contented mind;

Troubles are oft ov a body’s own making.

To see workin fowk wi’ a smile o’ ther face

   As they labor thear day after day;

An’ hear ’th women’s voices float sweetly throo’ th place,

   As they join I’some favorite lay;

It saands amang th’din, as the violet seems

   ’At peeps aght th’green dockens among,

An’ spreading a charm over th’rest by its means.

   Thus it blends I’that steady old song;

Nick a ting, nock a ting;

Wages keep pocketing;

Working for little is better nor laiking;

Twist an’ twine, reel an’ wind;

Keep a contented mind;

Troubles are oft ov a body’s own making

**6. ‘Mule-Gate Musing, or Paradise as Pictured by a Piecer’, by Sam Fitton.**

“CANVAS SHOES HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED FOR SPINNERS.”

They’re bown to save eawr souls, lads, to

Prevent a cut or bruise,

There’s some’dy bin suggestin’ we

Should o’ wear canvas shoes.

They’n often thowt us wrong I’th’yed,

Becose we wore bare feet;

They seem quite anxious now to keep

Eawr understandin’s reet.

Wi’ th’ road we’n had to use eawr feet,

We met be wrong I’ th’ roof;

We’n never made mich money, but

We’n piled up lots o’ oof.

Eawr feet are rough an’ ready, an’

They met be noan so clen;

But when we get eawr canvas shoes

We’st o’ be gentlemen!

We han elastic bodies, we

Con spring o’er mule an’ creel;

But shan’t we do some bouncin’ when

We’n rubber soles as weel?

We’ll rub ‘em up wi’ pipe-clay, an’

By gum, we’ll make a show;

So come, let’s do it gradely, lads.

An’ wear clock socks an’ o;.

Then, when the bloomin’ summer comes,

We’st feel quite smart an’ faddy,

We’st fancy we’re on t’ golf-links, wi’

Eawr creeler for a caddy.

We’n filled eawr feet wi’ splinters for

A long spell neaw, I’m sure:

We’n piked eawr share o’ planks up if

We never kick no moor.

We hanno’ sipped much wine o’ life;

Too bitter’s bin eawr cup;

Wi’ puncin’ bits o’ screws an’ slips

We’n often felt cut up.

But when we get eawr canvas shoes

We’st happen feel new made;

We’st fancy we’re a lot o’ “nuts”

On th’ Blackpool promenade.

We’n had blue toes I’ th’ winter time,

They’n borne a nation’s scars;

We’n had a taste o’ trench feet, if

We hanno’ bin o’ th’ wars.

When th’ flure’s sparkled o’er wi’ frost

They don’t know heaw we feel;

If they could feel eawr ankles then

They’d give us spats as weel.

We’n had blue noses lots o’ times,

An chilblains quite a ream;

They’n blown a lot o’ gas off, if

They’n left us short o’ steam.

These canvas shoes will shift eawr blues;

We’st get ‘em – I don’t think!

I’st dye mine dolly crimson, too,

I’st then feel in the pink.

So cheer up, lads! There’ll come a time

As happy as con be,

They’ll cover t’flure wi’ carpet

We’ll nobbut wait an’ see!

**7. ‘The Powerloom Weaver’s Lament’ (undated and unsigned broadside)**

Ye Weavers all both old and young who work in mill and shed,

And toil among the noisy looms to earn your daily bread;

Allow a brother weaver now to place before your view,

A picture of the life we lead and what we now go through.

CHORUS

Then pity us poor weavers who are working at the loom,

And getting manufactured for the bastille and the tomb.

When steam looms first began, of course, we thought them very grand,

And soon we chopp’d in bits the ones with which we wrought by hand;

We flock’d in swarms like silly flies within the spiders bower,

While masters smiling said walk in, there’s nothing like the power

CHORUS

But soon employers all declar’d the game they would commence,

By pulling weavers wages down from shilling into pence

But that we would not feel the shock they’d do it by degrees

And turn the screw so very slow we’d scarcely feel the squeeze.

CHORUS

Said they the wages which we pay are yet so very high

We frighten all the foreigners who say they cannot buy;

To find you work and keep you on it therefore is decreed,

We pull you off a sixpence more and give you double speed

CHORUS

And then to make you do more work and have it first rate done,

We’ll have you mind two looms a piece where now you mind but one;

And should you still have time on hand, how little that may be,

We’ll clap you on another loom and make you manage three.

CHORUS

Besides they’ve found a plan of late of making warps too long,

And giving beams an extra twitch to make the pieces strong;

While weavers with surprise behold how fast the shuttle run,

And yet how long a time it takes before the piece is done.

CHORUS

But should we get bad warps and weft which often is our lot,

What toil we have from morn to night yet can’t get off the spot;

Our stopping looms and piecing ends we find is all in vain,

For faster than we take them up they tumble down again.

CHORUS

And when at half past five o’clock the bell begins its din,

To chime away its weary note “Come in you slaves, come in.”

We find within the penny-hold, a fellow with a slate

Who often chalks another fine for getting there too late.

CHORUS

So what with fines and pulling off, short time and none at all

Our wages as you may suppose, are often very small;

And should employers still go on in this most thievish way,

Instead of having wages due we’ll soon have some to pay.

CHORUS

And what is worse though wasting there the best part of our lives

We’re very lightly look’d upon by masters and their wives;

Who riding from their palaces like mighty dukes and earls,

Will scarcely look when passing by on factory boys and girls.

**8. ‘Th’ Short-Timer’, by John Hartley.**

Some poets sing o’ gipsy queens,

An’ some o’ ladies fine;

Aw’ll sing a song o’ other scenes,

A humbler muse is mine:

Jewels, an’ gold, an’ silken frills,

Are things too heigh for me,

But woll mi harp wi’ vigour thrills,

Aw’ll strike a chord for thee.

Poor lassie wan,

Do thi’ best tha can,

Although thi fate be hard;

A time ther’ll be

When sich as thee

Shall have yor full reward.

At hauf-past five tha leaves thi bed,

An’ off tha goas to wark;

An’ gropes thi way to mill or shed

Six months o’th’ year i’th’ dark.

Tha gets but little for thi pains,

But that’s noa fault o’ thine;

The maister reckons up *his* gains,

An’ ligs i’ bed till nine.

Poor lassie wan, &c.

He’s little childer ov his own

‘Ats quite as old as thee;

They ride i’ cushioned carriages

‘Ats beautiful to see;

They’d fear to spoil ther little hand,

To touch thy greasy brat.

It’s wark like thine ’at maks ’em grand—

They niver think o’ that.

Poor lassie wan, &c.

I’ summer time they romp an’ play

Where flowers grow wild and sweet;

Their bodies strong, ther spirits gay,

They strive throv morn to neet.

But tha’s a cough aw hear tha has,

An’ oft awve known thi sick;

But tha mun wark, poor little lass,

For hauf-a-craan a wick.

Poor lassie wan, &c.

Aw envy not fowks’ better lot,

Aw shouldn’t like to swap,

Awm quite contented wi’ mi cot,

Awm but a working chap.

But if aw had a lot o’ brass

Aw’d think o’ them ’ats poor,

Aw’d have yo’ childer workin’ less,

An’ mak yor’ wages moor.

Poor lassie wan, &c.

“There is a land of pure delight

Where saints immortal reign,

Infinite day excludes the night,

And pleasures banish pain.”

Noa fact’ry bell shall greet thi ear,

I’ that sweet home ov love,

An’ those ’at scorn thi suffering here

May envy thee above.

Poor lassie wan, &c.

**9. ‘Fast Loom Weyver’s Rhyme’, by Ben Turner**

Oh, ay, it’s a fact I’m a weyver,

Aw’m on a fast loom dahn at th’ mill,

It’s true ’at aw wod just as leiver

Bi weyvin an’ owd slow loom still.

But th’times keep on movin’ soa fast, mun,

An’ t’looms are sped up sich a speed,

That slow looms are nah nearly all dun,

An’ t’fast ’uns are all t’goa indeed.

Aw thowt when they turned aht mooar cloth, it

’Ud mean a bit mooar brass as well;

But aw’m sewer ’at aw’m loath to admit

At fast looms for us weyver’s a sell.

They put us some speed on in quicksteps,

They took us some wage off as sharp;

We’n less for moor wark an’ it fair licks

Owd Nick havin’ less for t’same wark.

Mooar wark an less wage—that’s bin t’ rule, lad;

Mooar speed, mooar production, less tin;

That’s game t’ maisters played, an it’s fair sad

To think we’n allaahed ’em to win,

It’s time wi’ stuck up for ahr trade, an

Just made it a livin’ for men;

Wi could do it bi true combination—

In fact it just rests wi oursen.

It’s tighten your belt fer the worker,

It’s buy a new carriage for t’ boss;

It’s gooid clooas and food for t’ shirker,

An t’ weyver mun put up wi t’ loss.

It’s bun to be soa till we startun

A trustin’ wer own class once mooar;

When that’s case it’s easy to streighten

Th’ world up for all t’ haad workin’ pooar.

**10. ‘Our Poor Little Factory Girls’, by William Wright (‘Bill o’t Hoylus End’)**

They are up in the morning right early,

They are up sometimes afore leet;

I hear their clogs they are clamping,

As t’little things go dahn the street.

They are off in the morning right early,

With their baskets o’ jock on their arm;

The bell is ting-tonging, ting-tonging,

As they enter the mill in a swarm.

They are kapering backward and forward,

Their ends to keep up if they can;

They are doing their utmost endeavours,

For fears o’ the frown o’ man.

Wi’ fingers so nimble and supple,

The twist, an’ they twine, an’ they twirl,

Such walking, an’ running, an’ kneeling,

Does the wee little factory girl.

They are bouncing about like a shuttle,

They are kneeling an’ rubbing the floor;

While their wee little mates they are doffing,

Preparing the spindles for more.

Them two little things they are t’thickest,

They help one another ’tis plain;

They try to be t’best and t’quickest,

The smiles o’ their master to gain.

And now from her ten hours’ labour,

Back to her cottage shoo shogs;

Aw hear by the tramping an’ singing,

’Tis the factory girl in her clogs.

And at night when shoo’s folded i’ slumber,

Shoo’s dreaming o’ noises and drawls:

Of all human toil under-rated,

’Tis our poor little factory girl’s.