**The Ruined Maid**

BY THOMAS HARDY

"O 'Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!

Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town?

And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?" —

"O didn't you know I'd been ruined?" said she.

— "You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,

Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks;

And now you've gay bracelets and bright feathers three!" —

"Yes: that's how we dress when we're ruined," said she.

— "At home in the barton you said thee' and thou,'

And thik oon,' and theäs oon,' and t'other'; but now

Your talking quite fits 'ee for high compa-ny!" —

"Some polish is gained with one's ruin," said she.

— "Your hands were like paws then, your face blue and bleak

But now I'm bewitched by your delicate cheek,

And your little gloves fit as on any la-dy!" —

"We never do work when we're ruined," said she.

— "You used to call home-life a hag-ridden dream,

And you'd sigh, and you'd sock; but at present you seem

To know not of megrims or melancho-ly!" —

"True. One's pretty lively when ruined," said she.

— "I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown,

And a delicate face, and could strut about Town!" —

"My dear — a raw country girl, such as you be,

Cannot quite expect that. You ain't ruined," said she.