

1866

THE RUINED MAID

Thomas Hardy

Hardy, Thomas (1840-1928) - English novelist who initially wanted to be a poet but turned to novel writing when he could not get his poems published. Hardy, who wished to be remembered merely as "a good hand at a serial," returned to writing poetry after earning enough money to forego fiction. The Ruined Maid (1866) - This humorous ballad was collected in Hardy's "Poems of the Past and Present" (1901). Opening line: 'O 'Melia, my dear, this does everything crown! ...

THE RUINED MAID

'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 "theas oon", and "t'other"; but now Your talking quite fits 'ee for high compa-ny!' 'A 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.

Westbourne Park Villas, 1866

THE END