The Girl I Left Behind 6

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My parents reared me tenderly, had ne'er a child but me,
My mind being bent for rambling, with them would not agree,
So I became a courtier, it often grieved me sore
I left my aged parents and never saw them more.

The first time I left Ireland, for Scotland I was bound,
And sailing up to Glasgow, we viewed that pleasant town;
Where trade and money was plenty and the girls to me proved kind,
But the chiefest object of my heart was the girl I left behind.

One evening when my work was done I walked by George's Square,
The mail coach it arrived and the postboy met me there,
He handed me a letter which let me understan'
That the girl I left behind me had wed another man.

If this be true you tell me, I wouldn't believe the fair,
For oftentimes she told me that she would prove sincere:
The Sunday before we parted, it was on the book she swore
That she would wed no one but me, and she vowed it o'er and o'er.

But as I perused it further I found the news too true,
I stood and looked all round me, I knew not what to do,
Said I,"Hard labour I'll give o'er, to rambling I'll incline,
I'll think no more on the last farewell and the girl I left behind."

I then set off for New York town, strange faces for to see,
Where handsome Peggy Walker fell deep in love with me,
My pocket it was empty and I thought it was full time
To stop with her and think no more on the girl I left behind.

One day as I sat condoling, she says," Don't grieve, my boy,
For I have money plenty to support both you and I.
Your pocket shall be loadened and hard labour you'll give o'er
If you consent to wed with me and you will rove no more."

"If I would consent to wed with you, I would be much to blame.
My friends and my relations would look on me with shame;
I mean to see my parents before that they'll resign,
And to bid adieu and a last farewell to the girl I left behind.

"If all that you reveal be true, our friends's at an end.

Since first you came to this country I always proved your friend,
You had my money at your command, when fortune seemed to frown,
And my boy's cause I still maintained when others run you down."

It's then my heart it did relent, for what she said was true.
I promised for to marry her, what the d--l more could I do ?
Now Peggy's mistress of my heart, she's loving and she's kind,
But the perjured vows I'll never forget of the girl I left behind.

From Songs of the People, Henry
Collected from G. B. Newe, 1927

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