*THE  
Blind BEGGAR  
OF  
BEDNAL-GREEN.*

IT was a blind Beggar that long lost his Sight,  
he had fair a Daughter most pleasant and bright,  
and many a gallant brave Suitor had she,  
for none was so comely as pretty Bessee.

And though she was of Favour most fair,  
yet seeing she was but a Beggar's Heir,  
of ancient House keepers dispised was she,  
who came as Suitors to pretty Bessee.

Wherefore in great Sorrow fair Bessee did say,  
good Father and Mother let me go my Way,  
to seek out my Fortune where ever it be,  
the Suit was then granted to pretty Bessee.

Thus Bessee, that was of Beauty most bright,  
then clad in grey Russet, and late in the Night,  
from Father and Mother alone parted she,  
who sighed and sobbed for pretty Bessee.

She went till she came to Stratford near Bow,  
then she knew not whither nor which Way to go,  
with Tears she lamented her hard Destiny,  
so sad and so heavy was pretty Bessee.

She kept on her Journey untill it was Day,  
and went unto Rumford along the Highway;  
and at the King's Arms entertained was she,  
so fair and well favour'd was pretty Bessee.

She had not been there one Month to an End,  
but Master and Mistress, and all was her Friend;  
and every brave Gallant that once did her see,  
where straitway in Love with pretty Bessee.

Great Gifts they did send her of Silver and Gold,  
and in her Songs daily her Love they extoll'd,  
her Beauty was blazed in every Degree,  
so fair and so comely was pretty Bessee.

The young Men in Rumford in her had their Joy:  
she shew'd herself courteous but never to coy;  
and at her Commandment still would they be,  
so fair and so comely was pretty Bessee.

Four Suitors at once unto her did go,  
they craved her Favour, but still she said no,  
I would not with Gentlemen to marry with me;  
yet ever they honoured pretty Bessee.

The one of them was a gallant young Knight,  
and he came to her disguis'd in the Night;  
the second a Gentleman of good Degree,  
who woed and sued to pretty Bessee.

A Merchant of London whose wealth was not small  
was then the third Suitor and proper withal;  
her Master's own Son the fourth Man must be,  
who swore he would die for pretty Bessee.

And if thou wilt marry with me quoth the Knight  
I'll make the a Lady with Joy and Delight;  
my Heart is inthrall'd by thy fair Beauty,  
then grant me thy Favour, my pretty Bessee.

The Gentleman said, come, marry with me,  
thou shalt live in London most gallant and gay,  
my Ships shall bring home rich Jewels to thee,  
and I will forever love pretty Bessee.

Then Bessee she sighed, and thus she did say,  
my Father and Mother I mean to obey,  
first get their good Will, and be faithful to me,  
and thou shalt enjoy your pretty Bessee.

To everyone this Answer she made,  
wherefore unto her they joyfully said,  
this Thing to fulfil we all do agree,  
but where dwell, thy Father my pretty Bessee.

My Father, quoth she, is plain to be seen,  
the silly blind Beggar of Rednal Green,  
that daily sits begging for Charity,  
he is the good Father of pretty Bessee.

His Marks and his Tokens are known full well,  
he always is led with a Dog and a Bell;  
a silly old Man God knoweth is he,  
yet he is the Father of pretty Bessee.

Nay, then quoth the Merchant thou art not for me,  
nor, quoth the Inholder, my Bride shall not be;  
I loath, quoth the Gentleman, a Beggar's Degree;  
and so fare you well my pretty Bessee.

Why then, quoth the Knight, hap better or worse,  
I weigh not true Love by the Weight of the Purse;  
and Beauty is Beauty in every Degree,  
then welcome to me my pretty Bessee.

With thee to thy Father forthwith will I go,  
nay soft, quoth his Kinsman, it must not be so,  
a Beggar's Daughter no Lady shall be,  
then take thy adieu of pretty Bessee.

And soon after this by break of the Day,  
the Knight had from Rumford stole Bessee away,  
the young Men of Rumford so sick as may be,  
rode after to fetch again pretty Bessee.

As swift as the Wind to ride the were seen,  
until they came near unto Bednal-Green;  
and as the Knight lighted most courteously,  
they fought against him for pretty Bessee.

But rescue came presently over the Plain,  
or else the Knight for his Love had been slain;  
the Fray being ended, then strait he did see,  
his Kinsman come railing at pretty Bessee.

Then speak the blind Beggar, altho' I be poor,  
rail not against my Child at my own Door;  
though she be not deck'd with Velvet and Pearl,  
yet will I drop Angels for thee with my Girl.

And then if my Gold will better her Birth,  
and equal the Gold that you lay on the Earth,  
then neither rail nor grudge you to see,  
the blind Beggar's Daughter a Lady to be.

But first I will hear and have it well known,  
the Gold that you drop shall be all your own;  
with that they reply'd contented we be,  
then there's, quoth the Beggar, for pretty Bessee.

With that an Angel he cast on the Ground,  
and dropped in Angels full three thousand Pound;  
and oftentimes it proved most plain,  
for the Gentleman's one, the Beggar dropt twain.

So as the Place where he did sit,  
with Gold was covered every Whit;  
the Gentleman having dropt all his Store,  
said, Beggar, hold, for I have no more.

Thou hast fulfilled thy Promise aright,  
then marry my Girl, quoth he to the Knight:  
and here, quoth he, I'll throw thee down,  
a hundred Pound more to buy her a Gown.

The Gentlemen all that this Treasure had seen,  
admir'd the Beggar of Bednal Green;  
and those that were her Suitors before,  
their Flesh for very Anger they tore.

Thus was their Bessee a Match for a Knight,  
and made a Lady in others Despight;  
a fairer Lady there never was seen,  
than the Beggar's Daughter of Bednal Green.

But of her sumptuous Marriage and Feast,  
and what brave Lords and Knights theither were,  
the second Part shall set forth to your Sight,  
with marvelous Pleasure and wished Delight.

*The Second PART.*

WIthin a gallant Palace most brave,  
adorn'd with all the Cost they could have,  
this Wedding was kept most sumptuously,  
and all for the Love of pretty Bessee.

All kind of Dainties most dilicate sweet,  
were brought to their Banquet as was thought meet;  
Patridge, Plover, and Veneson most free,  
against the brave Wedding of pretty Bessee.

This Wedding thro' England was spread by report,  
so that great Numbers did thither resort;  
of Nobles and Gentles of every Degree,  
and all for the Fame of pretty Bessee.

To Church then went this gallant young Knight,  
his Bride follow'd after like a Lady most bright,  
with Troops of Ladies, the like was ne'er seen,  
as went wirh sweet Bessee to Bednal-Green.

This Wedding being solemnized then,  
with Musick performed by skilful Men;  
the Nobles and Gentles sate down at that Tide,  
each one beholding the beautiful Bride.

But after the sumptuous Dinner was done,  
to talk and to reason a Number begun;  
of the blind Beggar's Daughter most bright,  
and what his Daughter he gave to the Knight.

Then spake the Nobles much marvel have we,  
the jolly blind Beggar we cannot here see;  
my Lords, quoth the Bride, my Father's so base,  
he's loath with his Presence these States to disgrace.

The Praise of a Woman in question to bring,  
before her own Face were a flattering thing;  
we think thy Father's baseness (quoth they)  
might by thy beauty be clean put away.

They had no sooner these pleasant Words spoke,  
but in comes the Beggar with a Silken Cloak;  
a Velvet Cap and a Feather had he,  
and now a Musician forsooth he would be.

And being led in from catching of Harm,  
he touch'd his Strings which made such a Charm,  
said, please you to hear any Musick of me,  
a Song I'll sing of pretty Bessee.

With that his Lute he twang'd straitway,  
and thereon began most sweetly to play,  
and after a Lesson was play'd two or three,  
he strain'd out his Song most delicately.

A Beggar's Daughter did dwell on the Green,  
who for her Beauty might well be a Queen;  
a blith bonny Lass and dainty was she,  
and many one call'd her pretty Bessee.

Her Father had no Goods nor Lands,  
but begg'd for a Penny all Day with his Hands;  
and yet in Marriage gave thousands three,  
yet still he has something for pretty Bessee.

And if anyone her Birth do disdain,  
her Father is ready with Might and with Main,  
to prove she is come of a noble Degree,  
therefore let none flout my pretty Bessee.

With that the Lords and Company round,  
with hearty Laughter were ready to sound;  
at last said the Lords full well may we see,  
the Bride and the Beggar's beholden to thee.

With that the Bride all blushing did rise,  
with the fair Water all in her bright Eyes.  
Pardon my Father brave Nobles (quoth she)  
who through blind Affection thus doteth on me.

If this be thy Father the Nobles did say,  
then may he be proud of this happy Day;  
Yet by his Countenance well may we see,  
his Birth with his Fortune did never agree.

And therefore blind Beggar we pray the bewray,  
and look that the Truth to us thou dost say,  
thy birth and thy Parentage what it might be,  
even for the Love thou bearest to pretty Bessee.

Then give me Leave, you Gentles each one,  
a Song for to sing and then I'll begone;  
and if that I do not win good Report,  
then do not give me a Groat for my Sport.

When first our King his Fame did advance,  
and fought for his Title in delicate France;  
in many Places great Perils past he,  
but then was not born my pretty Bessee.

And in those Wars went over to fight,  
many a brave Duke, a Lord and a Knight;  
and with them young Monford of Courage so free,  
but then was not born my pretty Bessee.

And there did young Monford with a Blow o' th' Face,  
lose both his Eyes in a very short Space;  
his Life had also been gone with his Sight,  
had not a young Woman come forth in the Night.

Amongst the slain Men her Fancy doth move,  
to search and to seek for her own true Love;  
who seeing young Monford there gasping to die,  
she saved his Life through her Charity.

And then all our Victuals in Beggar's Attire,  
at the Hands of good People we then did require;  
at last unto England. as now it seen.  
we came and remained at Bednal-Green.

And thus we have lived in Fortune's Despight,  
though poor yet contented with humble Delight:  
and in my old Age a Comfort to be,  
God sent me a Daughter call'd pretty Bessee.

And thus you, my Nobles my Song I do end,  
hopeing the same doth no Man offend;  
full forty long Winners thus I have been,  
a silly blind Beggar of Bednal-Green.

Now when the Company had every one,  
heard the strange Tale in the Song he had shown,  
they were all amazed, as well they might be,  
both at the blind Beggar and pretty Bessee.

With that the fair Bride they then did embrace,  
saying, your come of an honourable Race;  
thy Father likewise of high Degree,  
and thou art worthy a Lady to be.

Thus was the Feast ended with Joy and Delight,  
a happy Bridegroom was made the young Knight;  
who lived in Joy and Felicity,  
with his fair Lady pretty Bessee.

*Sold by* ***W. Evans****, on* ***St. James's Back, Bristol.***