

WRITTEN FROM NEWMARKET UNION,

TO MY SISTER AT CAMBRIDGE, 1846.

Since I cannot, dear sister, with you hold communion,
I'll give you a sketch of our life in the Union.
But how to begin I don't know, I declare:
Let me see; well, the first is our grand bill of fare.
We've skilley for breakfast; at night bread and cheese,
And we eat it, and then go to bed if we please.
Two days in the week we've puddings for dinner,
And two we have broth so like water, but thinner;
Two meat and potatoes, of this none to spare;
One day bread and cheese—and this is our fare.

And now then my clothes I will try to pourtray:
They're made of coarse cloth, and the colour is grey;
My jacket and waistcoat don't fit me at all;
My shirt is too short, or else I am too tall;

My shoes are not pairs, though of course I have two,
They are down at the heel, and my stockings are blue.

But what shall I say of the things they call breeches?
Why mine are so large they'd have fitted John Fitches.
John Fitches, you'll say, well, pray who was he?
Why one of the fattest men I ever did see.
To be well understood, dear, they ought to be seen;
Neither breeches nor trowsers, but something between;
And though they're so large, you'll remember, I beg,
That they're low on the waist and high on the leg.

And no braces allowed me—oh dear, oh dear!
We are each other's glass, so I know I look queer.
A sort of Scotch bonnet we wear on our heads;
And I sleep in a room where there 're just fourteen beds:
Some are sleeping, some snoring, some talking, some playing,
Some fighting, some swearing, but very few praying.

Here are nine at a time who work on the mill;
We take it by turns, so it never stands still:
A half hour each gang, 'tis not very hard,
And when we are off we can walk in the yard.

We have nurseries here, where the children are crying ;
And hospitals too for the sick and the dying.

But I must not forget to record in my verse,
All who die here are honor'd to ride in a hearse.
I sometimes look up to the bit of blue sky
High over my head, with a tear in my eye,
Surrounded by walls that are too high to climb,
Confin'd as a felon without any crime ;
Not a field, not a house, not a hedge can I see—
Not a plant, not a flower, not a brush nor a tree,
Except a geranium or two that appear
At the governor's window, to smile even here.

But I find I am got too pathetic by half,
And my object was only to cause you to laugh ;
So my love to yourself, your husband and daughter,
I'll drink to your health in a tin of cold water :
Of course, we've no wine, no porter nor beer,
So you see that we all are teetotallers here.