

Synopsis

A navvy reflects on his working life and his encounters with women.

Text

I've Navvied here in Scotland; I've navvied in the south,
Without a drink to cheer me or a crust to cross me mouth,
I fed when I was workin' and starved when out on tramp,
And the stone has been me pillow and the moon above me lamp,

I've drunk me share and over, when I was flush with tin
For the drouth without was nothing to the drought that burnt within,
And whene'er I've filled me bill and whene'er I've drained me can
I've done it like a navvy, a bold navvy man
 A bold navvy man
 An old navvy man
And I've done me graft and stuck it like a bold navvy man.

I've met a lot of women and I liked 'em all a spell
They can drive some men to drinkin' and also some to hell,
But I've never met her yet, the woman cute who can
Learn a trick to Old Nick or the bold navvy man.

I do not care for ladies grand, who are of high degree,
A winsome wench and willing, she is just the one for me,
Drink and love are classed as sins, as mortal sins by some,
I'll drink and drink whene'r I can, the drouth is sure to come
And I will love till lusty life runs out its mortal span,
The end of which is in the ditch for many a navvy man.
 The bold navvy man
 The old navvy man
Safe in the ditch with heels cocked up, so dies the navvy man.

Glossary:

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| Tin | Cash |
| Drouth | Thirst |
| On tramp | Wandering in search of work |
| Old Nick | The devil |

Source of Text: Children of the Dead End: The Autobiography of A Navvy
Patrick McGill 1914. British Library General Reference Collection NN.1754

Music. No tune given.
McGill presents this as a poem but the structure suggests that it was intended to be sung.

Source of Music: No tune given

Printer: Herbert Jenkins

Where Printed: London

Author : Attributed by Patrick MacGill to a navy called Two-shift Mulholland

Variant Set: No Variants found.

Date: Published 1914

Notes of the Song and Its Historical Background None