

SIDNEY HOMER

# The Song of the Shirt

SONG

With Piano Accompaniment

Poem by THOMAS HOOD



High (*Original*) in A minor

Low in G minor

\$1.00

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## THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,  
Plying her needle and thread—  
Stitch! stitch! stitch!  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,  
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch  
She sang the "Song of the Shirt!"

"Work! work! work!  
While the cock is crowing aloof!  
And work—work—work,  
Till the stars shine thro' the roof!  
It's Oh! to be a slave  
Along with the barbarous Turk,  
Where woman has never a soul to save,  
If this is Christian work!

"Work—work—work  
Till the brain begins to swim;  
Work—work—work  
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!  
Seam, and gusset, and band,  
Band, and gusset, and seam,  
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,  
And sew them on in a dream!

"Oh, Men, with Sisters dear!  
Oh, Men, with Mothers and Wives!  
It is not linen you're wearing out,  
But human creatures' lives!  
Stitch—stitch—stitch,  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,  
Sewing at once, with a double thread,  
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

"But why do I talk of Death?  
That phantom of grisly bone,  
I hardly fear his terrible shape,  
It seems so like my own—  
It seems so like my own,  
Because of the fasts I keep;  
Oh, God! that bread should be so dear,  
And flesh and blood so cheap!

"Work—work—work,  
In the dull December light,  
And work—work—work,  
When the weather is warm and bright,—  
While underneath the eaves  
The brooding swallows cling  
As if to show me their sunny backs  
And twit me with the spring.

"Oh! but to breathe the breath  
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—  
With the sky above my head,  
And the grass beneath my feet!  
For only one short hour  
To feel as I used to feel,  
Before I knew the woes of want  
And the walk that costs a meal!

"Oh, but for one short hour!  
A respite, however brief!  
No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,  
But only time for Grief!  
A little weeping would ease my heart,  
But in their briny bed  
My tears must stop, for ev'ry drop  
Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,  
Plying her needle and thread—  
Stitch! stitch! stitch!  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,  
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,—  
Would that its tone could reach the Rich!—  
She sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

THOMAS HOOD

To my wife and children

# The Song of the Shirt

Thomas Hood

Sidney Homer. Op. 25

Andante (♩. = 68) \* *p with deepest compassion*

Voice

With fin - gers wear - y and worn, — With

Piano

*p*

eye - lids heav - y and red, — A wo - man sat in un - wo - man - ly rags,

Ply - ing her nee - dle and thread — Stitch! stitch! stitch! — In

\* All metronome-marks are merely approximate

*rit.* *più lento*

pov-er-ty, hun-ger, and dirt, — And still with a voice of do-lo-rous pitch She

*rit.* *più lento*

*rit.* *a tempo, cresc. e poco accel.*

sang the "Song of the Shirt!"

*rit.* *a tempo, cresc. e poco accel.*

**Allegro moderato** (♩. = 108)  
*f with desperation born of despair*

"Work! work! work! — While the cock is crow-ing a-loof! — And

*f*

*dim.*

work—work—work, — Till the stars shine thro' the roof! — It's

*dim.*

*mf*

Oh! to be a slave — A - long with the bar - ba - rous Turk, — Where

*mf*

*cresc.*

wo-man has nev-er a soul to save, If this is Chris-tian work!

*f*

*cresc.*

*ff*

Work— work— work — Till the brain be-gins to swim;

*ff*

*dim.*

Work— work— work — Till the eyes are heav-y and dim. —

*dim.*

*p* *wearily*

Seam, and gus-set, and band, Band, and gus-set, and seam,— Till

*rit.*

o - ver the but-tons I fall a - sleep, And sew them on in a dream!

*rit.*

*più lento*  
*appealingly*

Oh, Men, with Sis - ters dear! Oh, Men, with Moth - ers and Wives!— It

*più lento*

*cresc.* *rit.* *f*

is not lin-en you're wear-ing out, But hu - man crea-tures' lives!

*cresc.* *rit.* *f*

*ff a tempo*

Stitch—stitch—stitch, \_\_\_\_\_ In pov-er-ty, hun-ger, and dirt,

*ff a tempo*

*più lento* *rit.*

Sew - ing at once, with a dou - ble thread, A Shroud as well as a

*più lento* *rit.*

*p a tempo* *pp with suppressed horror*

Shirt. But why do I talk of Death, That phan-tom of gris-ly bone? I

*p a tempo* *pp*

hard - ly fear his ter - ri - ble shape, It seems so like my own. — It

*cresc.* *f rit.*

seems so like my own, — Be - cause of the fasts I keep; — Oh,

*cresc.* *f rit.* *ff*

*ff molto lento* *rit.* *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

God! that bread should be so dear, And flesh and blood so cheap!

*ff molto lento* *rit.* *p a tempo*

*p wearily*

Work—work—work, — In the dull De - cem - ber light, — And

*p*

*rit.*

work—work—work, — When the weath-er is warm and bright! — While

*rit.*



*piu lento*  
*pp wistfully*

un - der-neath the eaves — The brood - ing swal - lows cling, — As

*piu lento*  
*pp cantabile*

*rit.*

if to show me their sun-ny backs, — And twit me with the spring.

*rit.*

*Andante con moto* (♩. = 72)  
*p with intense longing*

Oh! but to breathe the breath — Of the cow-slip and prim-rose sweet, — With the

*p*

*rit.*

sky a - bove my head, — And the grass be - neath my feet! — For

*rit.*

*più lento*  
*pp*

on - ly one short hour — To feel as I used to feel, — Be -

*più lento*  
*pp cantabile*

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a 12/8 time signature. It begins with the lyrics 'on - ly one short hour' followed by a long dash, then 'To feel as I used to feel,' followed by another long dash, and ends with 'Be -'. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef, starting with a 12/8 time signature. It features a series of chords and moving lines in both hands, with a '7' marking above the first few notes. The tempo and dynamics are marked as 'più lento' and 'pp'.

*cresc.*

fore I knew the woes of want And the walk that costs a meall

*cresc.*

Detailed description: This system contains the second two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a 12/8 time signature. It begins with the lyrics 'fore I knew the woes of want' followed by a long dash, then 'And the walk that costs a meall'. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef, continuing from the previous system. It features a series of chords and moving lines in both hands, with a '7' marking above the first few notes. The tempo and dynamics are marked as 'cresc.' and 'f'.

*f a tempo*

Oh, but for one short hour! — A res - pite, how - ev - er brief! — No

*f a tempo*

*dim.*

Detailed description: This system contains the third two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a 12/8 time signature. It begins with the lyrics 'Oh, but for one short hour!' followed by a long dash, then 'A res - pite, how - ev - er brief!' followed by another long dash, and ends with 'No'. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef, continuing from the previous system. It features a series of chords and moving lines in both hands, with a '7' marking above the first few notes. The tempo and dynamics are marked as 'f a tempo' and 'dim.'.

bless-ed lei-sure for Love and Hope, — But on - ly time for Grief! — A

*Adagio* ( $\text{♩} = 48$ )  
*p* *cresc.* *f molto cresc.* *rit.*  
 lit - tle weep-ing would ease my heart, But in their bri - ny bed — My

*molto cantabile*  
*p* *cresc.* *f molto cresc.* *ff* *rit.*

*molto lento*  
*ff with despair* *cresc.*  
 tears — must stop, — for ev - - 'ry drop

*molto lento*  
*fff* *cresc.*

*fff rit.* Adagio non troppo (♩ = 56)

Hin - - - ders nee - - - dle and thread!"

*fff rit.* *ff impressively*

Andante quasi adagio (♩ = 60)

*pp*  
With

*dim.*

*with infinite tenderness*

fin - gers wear - y and worn, — With eye - lids heav - y and red, — A

*pp*

*rit.*

wo - man sat in un - wo - man - ly rags, Ply - ing her nee - dle and thread -

*rit.*

*più lento* *rit.* *ppp*

Stitch! stitch! stitch!— In pov - er - ty, hun - ger, and dirt, — And

*Adagio* *molto cresc. with passion* *ff* 2

still with a voice of do - lo - rous pitch— Would that its tone— could reach— the Rich!— She

*ppp* *molto cresc.* *ff*

*fff* *molto lento* *rit.* *Allegro* (♩.=120)

sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

*fff* *molto lento* *rit.* *fff* *relentlessly*

*rit.*

SONGS BY SIDNEY HOMER  
PUBLISHED BY G. SCHIRMER, NEW YORK

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