

# MATTHEW ALDERSON

HOW SHE FELT IN HER  
FIRST CORSET, AND  
OTHER POEMS

Matthew Alderson

**How She Felt in Her First  
Corset, and Other Poems**

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# How She Felt in Her First Corset, and Other Poems

## HOW SHE FELT IN HER FIRST CORSET

It occurred at Belgrade, where the genial Tom Quaw,  
Gave a party, the first that the town ever saw;  
The youth and the beauty, the tillers of soil,  
Attended that night, seeking surcease from toil.

There were farmers whose hair had a tinge of the gray;  
There were maidens than whom none were ever more gay;  
There were youths who could ride anything that wears hair,  
And matrons whose faces showed lines of dull care.

Of the ladies who on this occasion took part,  
Some were dressed in the nobbiest style of the art;  
And the others, unmindful of fashion's decrees,  
Were attired to have much more comfort and ease.

There was one blushing damsel, just budding sixteen,  
Whose waist by a corset ne'er encircled had been,  
But whose mother insisted that on such a night  
One should find a place there, and the lacing be tight.

So the girl was rigged out as the mother desired,  
But of dancing 'twas noticed the damsel soon tired.  
"What's the matter?" was asked by some one at her side.  
"I feel just like bucking," the maiden replied.

## A LOVER'S VALENTINE

Sweetheart of mine,  
A valentine,  
In duty bound, I send thee,  
And wish that joy,  
Free from alloy,  
May evermore attend thee.

Near, or apart,  
Still may thy heart  
To mine in friendship nestle;  
For strong and free,  
In love for thee,  
'Gainst countless foes I'd wrestle.

Since I am thine,  
Pray do be mine,  
My heart prompts me to ask thee;  
Thy charming face,  
And matchless grace,  
I own have quite possessed me.

## TO THOSE WHO HOLD THE GUIDING REINS

I have observed a steed, proud-spirited,  
Lashed by a cruel driver till the sweat  
Stood out in beaded drops upon his side;  
And, oftentimes, tears have welled up in my eyes  
As in my mind I've pictured human hearts  
Lashed thus by cruel words and goaded on.  
Then when, at other times, the same proud steed  
Has passed along the street with arched neck,  
With every motion breathing force and vim,  
I've noticed kindness held the guiding reins  
And kept in check the zealous prancer's power.  
My mind has pictured then, with kindlier glow,  
A heart ambitious, far too keen to go,  
Kept by sweet loving words in proper bounds;  
And deepest gratitude, at such a time,  
Wells up for those who hold the guiding reins.

## **HIS FACE IS HIS FORTUNE**

"His face is his fortune;"  
Yes, seldom we see  
One for "tick" importune,  
As boldly as he.

Like one who has riches  
Acquired by gift,  
He laughs at the stitches  
Of gainer by thrift,

For face is his treasure,  
And why keep in bank?  
One cannot find pleasure  
With pocket-book lank.

So credit he uses  
Where'er it will pass,  
And always abuses  
The laboring class.

But "cheek" is like iron  
That's coated with tin,  
It has a nice face on,  
But one rather thin.



## A LOVE LETTER AND ITS ANSWER

### A MONTANIAN TO HIS SWEETHEART

Darling, I love thee! Other words might tell  
A trifle of how dear thou art to me,  
But these tell all. Of thee I might have said,  
And said in truth, at that, that all thy ways,  
Thine every motion, look and glance, as well,  
Did charm the inmost recess of my soul:  
In words of praise, and those in justice due,  
I might the beauties of thy mind portray;  
For they outrival charms that in thy face  
I see, as elsewhere I have failed to find:  
Thy modesty, thy grace, thy love of all  
That tends to elevate, to purify,  
And make a fellow mortal happier,  
I might have dwelt on to a length that thou,  
And thou alone, deserves from one whose pen  
Is feeble in thy praise as is mine own.  
Still, had I done so, and withheld the words,  
"I love thee!" I had never told thee half.  
I love thee, darling! Ah! indeed, I do!  
Beyond the shadow of a doubt, I love,  
And such a one as any prince or king  
Might gladly love and proudly call his own.  
But, come to think, this love is all I have:  
No titled rank is mine – no Astor's wealth;  
And one you know, can't live on love alone;  
Ah, no! But better starve for lack of bread  
Than want of love; for when we starve for bread,  
And hunger knaws with all its well-known force,  
A day and all desire for food grows weak,  
And in its stead one craves but rest and sleep:  
These come, and few the days ere dreamless sleep  
Supplies the place of all desires and pains.  
But, starve for love, and when doth come relief?  
The weary soul still lives, or drags along —  
As pris'ner doomed for life goes to his work;  
Ambitionless it moves, its purpose dead,

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