

Herb Kynor photo.



Brasswork or The Lighthouse Keeper's Lament

by Fred Morong

*Oh what is the bane of a lightkeeper's life
That causes him worry, struggle and strife,
That makes him use cuss words, and beat at his wife?
It's Brasswork.*

*What makes him look ghastly consumptive and thin,
What robs him of health, of vigor and vim,
And cause despair and drives him to sin?
It's Brasswork.*

*The devil himself could never invent,
A material causing more world wide lament,
And in Uncle Sam's service about ninety per cent,
Is Brasswork.*

*The lamp in the tower, reflector and shade,
The tools and accessories pass in parade
As a matter of fact the whole outfit is made
Of Brasswork.*

*The oil containers I polish until,
My poor back is broken, aching; and still
Each gallon and quart, each pint and each gill
Is Brasswork.*

*I lay down to slumber all weary and sore,
I walk in my sleep, I awake with a snore
And I'm shining the knob on my bedchamber door.
That's Brasswork.*

*From pillar to post, rags and polish I tote
I'm never without them, for you will please note
That even the buttons I wear on my coat
Are Brasswork.*

*The machinery clockwork, and fog-signal bell
The coal hods, the dustpans, the pump in the well
Now I'll leave it to you mates, if this isn't—well
Brasswork.*

*I dig, scrub and polish, and work with a might,
And just when I get it all shining and bright,
In comes the fog like a thief in the night:
Good-by Brasswork.*

*I start the next day and when noontime draws near
A boatload of Summer visitors appear,
For no other purpose, than to smooch and besmear
My Brasswork.*

*So it goes all the Summer, and along in the Fall,
Comes the district machinist to overhaul
And rub dirty and greasy paws over all
My Brasswork.*

*And again in the Spring, if perchance it may be,
An efficiency star is awarded to me
I open the package and what do I see?
More Brasswork.*

*Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud,
In the short span of life that he is allowed
If all the lining in every dark cloud
Is Brasswork?*

*And when I have polished until I am cold
And I'm taken aloft to the Heavenly fold
Will my harp and my crown be made of pure gold?
No, Brasswork.*