A BIRD IN A GILDED CAGE

1900

Composer Harry Von Tilzer was born in Detroit, and by the year 1900 he had already run away to join a circus. Later he performed on the musical stage as a pianist and singer, in addition to composing several songs which achieved some popularity. But his musical setting of Arthur Lamb's words, "A Bird In A Gilded Cage," really started Von Tilzer on the road to fame and fortune as a songwriter. He had the good sense to start his own publishing company, which he headed for the rest of his life.

Arthur Lamb came from Somerset, England, was a minstrel show performer and wrote lyrics for several of the leading song composers of the time.

Although the words are sure to provoke a smile today, "A Bird In A Gilded Cage" tells a story whose message was one of the popular themes around the turn of the century. Other overly sentimental songs of the day included "The Mansion Of Aching Hearts," "She Is More To Be Pitied Than Censured" and "Take Back Your Gold." You'll want to put on your best striped vest and wax your handlebar mustache when you join voices on this old favorite.

Words by ARTHUR J. LAMB
(1870-1928)

Music by HARRY VON TILZER
(1872-1946)

VERSE:

The ball-room was filled with fashion's throng,
And there was a

shone with a thousand lights,
woman who passed along, The fairest of all the sights.

A girl to her lover then softly sighed, There's riches at her command; But she

married for wealth, not for love, he cried, Tho' she lives in a

CHORUS:

man-sion grand. She's only a bird in a
gilded cage, A beautiful sight to see;
You may think she's happy and free from care, She's
not, tho' she seems to be. 'Tis
sad when you think of her wasted life, For
youth cannot mate with age; And her
beauty was sold for an old man’s gold, She’s a bird in a
gilded cage. Her beauty was sold for an
she’s a bird in a
old man’s gold, She’s a bird in a
gilded cage.
gilded cage.

Additional verse:
I stood in a churchyard just at eve
When sunset adorned the west,
And looked at the people who’d come to grieve
For loved ones now laid at rest.
A tall marble monument marked the grave
Of one who’d been fashion’s queen,
And I thought she is happier here at rest,
Than to have people say when seen: