

Introduction to This Edition

A little is known about Edward Chicken. He lived from 1698 to 1746, and worked as Parish Clerk at St John's, Newcastle, as well as giving private tuition. Beside *The Collier's Wedding*, he wrote *No, This is the Truth*, an election poem which reveals his Tory affiliation - that is to the party of Land and High Church, distrustful of radical Protestantism and Whig industry and trade.

The *Collier* poem was written in 1720 (not published till after his death); it looks back a decade or so to the days of pre-Hanoverian rule as though to a golden past (see e.g. text pp.4-5). This is the scene of his glorious, physically rich tale of how Tommy woes and marries Jenny, and though there is something political and potentially offensive in his portrayal of the new collier class as unruly and uncouth, yet he manages a warm sympathy with them too that balances this risk and extends even to poking fun at his own 'civilised' world.

Chicken is undoubtedly writing as part of the Standard English using elite, a city-dweller, both amazed and amused at the new rough working world emerging (by local immigration) on their very doorstep. His own pronunciation would have a Northern flavour (note rhyme of 'steeds' with 'heads', p.21, and 'house' with 'choose', p.15), and his language admitted the odd non-Standard term ('crecket', p.12, 'mense', p.15, 'rive', pp.19,25), but in general he makes a strong contrast between the 'pure' (if slightly fashionable) English of his narrative and the dialect speech of Tommy or Jenny's Mother, Bessy.

In short, this is the first written record of 'Geordie' - the prime industrial speech of the North-East. It has no one regional or historical source: it mixes Norse-based word ('cods', p.13, 'sark', p.13) with Medieval French-derivatives ('fash', p.13, 'bust', p.18) and relics of Old English ('thou', p.12, 'whe', p.13, 'tuing' p.7). It is a speech that had evaded or resisted the standardisation of 'modern' written and spoken English (rooted in the 15th century Midlands and London). By contrast, Geordie is rural-becoming-industrial, expressive, vulgar, exciting - not stoic, martial, or sacred - but the perfect un-expected element to involve us in this love adventure.

BG

T H E
COLLIER'S WEDDING.
A P O E M.

I SING not of great *Cæsar's* Might,
How brave he led his Men to fight;
Nor shew how haughty *Cato*¹ dy'd,
Or what cou'd make him fatiffy'd:
Nor do I here attempt to tell
How *Michael* fought, or *Satan* fell.²
I choofe to fing in Strains much lower,
Of COLLIER LADS, unfung before:
What Sport and Feasting do enfue,
When such-like Mortals buckle to.
In former Days when Trade was good,
And Men got Money, Cloaths and Food;
When Landlords were not too fevere,
And Tenants broke³ not ev'ry Year;
But liv'd in Plenty, knew no Need,
And had enough to do their Deed;

Then



1. The Roman, Cato Uticensis, ally of Pompey, who committed suicide rather than submit to Caesar. The reference here could be to Addison's play *Cato*.

2. *Revelations* 12:7.

3. i.e. defaulted on their rent.

Then Country Lads went neat and clean,
 And Lasses comely to be seen;
 Strove with each other ev'ry Day,
 Who shou'd excel at Work or Play;
 Were honest Servants, virtuous Wives,
 Led harmless, inoffensive Lives:
 Their greatest Pride was just to know
 When Corn was ripe, or Grass wou'd mow;
 How Cows, and Sheep, and Butter fold,
 Or who was wed when she was old.
 Then COLLIER LADS got Money fast;
 Had merry Days while it did last;
 Did feast, and drink, and game, and play,
 And swore when they had nought to say.
 They came to Church but very rare,
 But mis'd not when a Bride was there;
 Yet rested on the *Sabbath* Day
 From ev'ry Thing but Drink and Play,
 And slept that day, but not before
 Their Head and Tail cou'd hold no more;
 Then like true Cocks that love the Game,
 They'd rise and drink and sleep again.

Their Wives could drink, as People say,
 And hold as much, or more, than they;

Wou'd

Wou'd have their menfeul¹ Penny spent,
 With Goffips, at a Merriment:
 Thofe homely Females drank no Tea,
 Nor Chocolate, nor Ratifea;²
 They made no Vifits, fee no Play,
 But fpun their vacant Hours away.
 And thus the COLLIERS, and their WIVES,
 Liv'd drunken, honeft, working Lives;
 Were very fond of one another,
 And always marry'd one thro' other.

The Sons and Daughters of this Sort,
 Were always fond of Country Sport;
 And all the young unmarried Fry,³
 Did ftrive each other to outvy;
 And wou'd on Hopping-days⁴ be dreft
 Genteel, and in their very Bef;
 Look fmart, be clean from Top to Toe,
 As all that wou'd be marry'd do.

So have I feen poor Fifhes caught,
 By curious Bait, which Men have wrought;
 And from their wat'ry Region bore,
 By fome fmall Hairs,⁵ to die on Shore:
 So Beauties, when they wou'd catch Man,
 Use ev'ry Bait that will trapan;⁶

And

~~~~~

1. in this context, generous, liberal
2. a kind of liqueur
3. i.e. small fish
4. local dances
5. fish-lures or perhaps the line itself
6. decoy, ensnare

And Women's Bait draw more than theirs,  
They've brighter Charms, and stronger  
Hairs.

A Collier's Daughter, brisk and clean,  
Once at a Country Wake was seen;  
The Maid was born in *Benwel* Town  
Was not too fair, nor yet too brown;  
Of Beauty she had got her Part,  
Enough to wound a Collier's Heart;  
And then her Name was up<sup>1</sup> for this,  
She lov'd to spin, but blush'd to kifs:  
Her pliant Limbs when Music play'd,  
Cou'd humour<sup>2</sup> ev'ry Thing it said;  
For when she tript it on the Plain,  
To *Jacky's* loft his Fellow Swain,  
Her easy Steps, and airy Wheels,  
Shew'd she had Music in her Heels:  
She danc'd so well, so very long,  
She won the Smock, and pleas'd the  
Throng.

A Collier Lad was standing by,  
And view'd her with a Lover's Eye;  
He scratch'd his Head, and then he swore,  
That none had danc'd so well before;  
Then made a Brush up<sup>3</sup> to the Maid,  
How do you Lafs, the Lover said;

I'm

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1. i.e. the better regarded  
2. agree with, express  
3. approached

I'm glad to see ye, by my Saul,  
 For *sink my Heart*, thou's beat them all;  
 Thou's warm'd their Stomachs for them  
 now,  
 By G---d thou is a tuing<sup>1</sup> Sow.  
 Zo'ons, Lafs, come go, I'll warr'nt thou's  
 dry;  
 Come, fool, what makes ye look so fhy:  
 Then seiz'd her Hand, and being strong,  
 He lugg'd the willing Maid along;  
 She had not many Words to say,  
 But hung an Arse the Country Way;  
 Then gave a modest Blush, and so  
 In Silence gave Consent to go.  
 He led her to an Inn hard by,  
 Where drink was good, if she was dry;  
 In private they were o'er a Pot,  
 With other Cheer the House had got.  
 The Lad must now declare his Mind,  
 And try to bring the Lafs in Kind;<sup>2</sup>  
 He gap'd, and stretch'd himself, and then  
 He rubb'd his Eyes, and stretch'd again,  
 And thus begun: "My comely *Jenny*,  
 "I love thee better far than any;  
 "If thou'll have me, Faith I'll have thee,  
 "And love thee till the Day I dee;<sup>3</sup>

"I'll

---

1. energetic; dialect *tew*, to tire  
 2. to the same opinion or feeling  
 3. die

"I'll work my Bones to make thee eafy,  
 "Do ev'ry Thing in Life to please thee;  
 "Both Day and Night I'll do my Duty;  
 "Come fpeak, I cannot live without thee."

She figh'd, and made him this Reply:

"Come, let me go, for Shame; O fy!  
 "So Lad, be quiet, pray give o'er,  
 "The Folks are peeping thro' the Door.  
 "I cannot bear, you fqueeze so hard;  
 "For Heaven's Sake have fome Regard:  
 "How can you ufe a Body fo;  
 "Take off your Hand, pray let me go.  
 "May you be happy in fome other,  
 "For I muft wed to please my Mother;  
 "But call if you fhould come our Way,  
 "And hear what the old Wife will fay:  
 "Farewel, and thank you for this Treat,  
 "I'll reft your Debtor till we meet."

He flew to catch her juft when rifing,  
 For he was keen and paff advifing;  
 He clasp'd her clofe, and held her faft,  
 And wonder'd at her mighty Hafte:  
 Then ftretch'd himfelf, and loll'd<sup>1</sup> upon  
 her,  
 And fwore like any man of Honour.

Thus

~~~~~

1. rested casually or lazily

Thus Country 'Squires, and merry
 Blades,¹
 Hug fresh unopen'd Chamber-maids;
 Will kifs them till their Breath blow
 fhort,
 To make them eager of the Sport;
 Then fwear, and lie, and feldom part,
 Without a Maiden-head or Heart.
 Like them our furious Country Lover,
 Made Ufe of all his Tools to move her;
 He ply'ed her all the Afternoon,
 And kept her warm to melt her down;
 He ftrok'd her Neck, and squeez'd her
 Hand,
 And prefs'd her till fhe could not ftand:
 And then fhe ftruggl'd in his Arms,
 With fweet diforder'd homely Charms,
 Till Fear and Love with equal Grace,
 Did vary Colours in her Face:
 Her pulfe beat quick, and Breath went
 flow,
 She juft cou'd fay, Oh! - let me go;
 I'm fpent, undone, O lack-a-day!
 What can I either do or fay:
 Was ever Lafs in my Condition,
 for Heav'n's hear but my Petition;
 Unfold your Arms, and give me Air,
 And let me reft upon my Chair:

I

~~~~~

1. fashionable fellows

I faint, O! - *Tommy* cut my Lace,<sup>1</sup>  
And throw my Apron o'er my Face.  
As when in Wars great Gen'ral's fight,  
For Honour, Victory, or Right;  
When they storm Citadel or Town,  
And blow the Forts, and Bulwarks down;  
When those within can hold no longer,  
Because the Enemy is stronger,  
Make signal that they do surrender,  
By Colour<sup>2</sup> dropt, or some such Tender,<sup>3</sup>  
So now our conquer'd, yielding Maid,  
Drops both her Colour and her Head:<sup>4</sup>  
The Woman works in ev'ry Vein,  
And Life, not spent, returns again;  
A rising Blush attempts her Face,  
But Fear at first denies it Place:  
With languid Looks, and downcast Eyes,  
She sees her Lover in Surprise;  
Is griev'd to think she makes him smart,  
Yet fears to tell he's won her Heart;  
Her Cheeks with modest Blushes burn,  
And Smiles increase as Life return:  
Then struggling for to shew her Mind,  
Her Looks declare she wou'd be kind;

Yet



1. i.e. laces of stays? Her apron is then needed to preserve upper modesty.
2. flag
3. offer
4. no sexual victory is implied, merely the admission of the feeling of love.

Yet cou'd not speak to let him know,  
 Your modest Maids are always so.  
 With am'rous Looks he calls her Jewel,  
 And said, How can you be so cruel;  
 Come ease my Mind, and speak, my Life,  
 And give Consent to be my Wife;  
 For I can never love another,  
 Come, I'll go with you to your Mother;  
 Have her Consent, hear what she'll say,  
 And then we'll fix our Wedding-day.

Before she spoke, she look'd about,  
 For she cou'd hold no longer out;  
 And when she saw that none was nigh,  
 She thus broke out: I do comply;  
 You hug, and kifs, and squeeze me now,  
 But what will Wedding make you do?  
 I never thought to marry'd any;  
 But, *Tommy!* thou has conquer'd *Jenny*;  
 My Heart, and ev'ry Thing that's mine,  
 From henceforth, *Tommy*, shall be thine;  
 I'll love, and cherish, and obey,  
 And strive to please thee Night and Day.  
 He kifs'd, she leer'd<sup>1</sup> and seem'd fain,<sup>2</sup>  
 And rose and blush'd, and kifs'd again:

Then

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1. ?looked away (modestly)
 2. happy

Then Arm in Arm, away they went,
To try old *Beffy* for Consent;
For now they'd nothing more to do;
But make the Mother buckle to;
Which must be done, or else the Bargain
Wou'd not be worth a fingle Farthing.

They trudg'd along, got Home at last,
And found old Goody smoking fast;
Plac'd on a Creetet¹ near the Fire,
Her Spinning Wheel was standing by her.
Her Coats² lay up for Fear of Burning,
She lov'd all warm, but hated turning.
An Earthen Pot with humming³ Beer,
Stood on a Table very near;
For she wou'd funk,⁴ smoke, fart, and
drink,
And sometimes raise a hellish Stink.
Our old Wife turn'd her Head about,
And spy'd at last her Daughter out:
She cry'd, Lads, where De'il has thou
been;
I thought thou wou'd no more be seen:
You've got your Belly full of Play,
I'll warr'nt ye've had a merry Day;
For now it will be Twelve o'Clock,
And more, for I've spun off my Rock.⁵

Lads,

-
1. stool
 2. petticoats
 3. frothy, active
 4. create a smog
 5. finished spinning: the rock is a spindle for
the raw wool

If ye're fincere, as ye are warm,
 And means to do my Bairn¹ no Harm,
 Ye know my Daughter *Jane*'s but young,
 And may be eafy overcome;
 So court her firft, hear what fhe'll fay,
 We'll have a Drink and fix the Day.
 Her Daughter *Jane*, with modeft Grace,
 And Fingers fpread before her face,
 Cry'd, Mother, *Tommy*'s won my Heart,
 If ye'll confent we'll never part;
 I love him as I do my Life,
 And wou'd be glad to be his Wife.
 When *Beffy* heard her Daughter *Jane*
 Declare herfelf fo very plain,
 The Houfe was in an Instant rais'd,
 Grey-beard² was wash'd, the Fire blaz'd;
 Strong Beer was fetch'd, Tobacco too,
 Old *Beffy* drank till fhe was fow;³
 Then reel'd to *Tom* with her Confent,
 And fpew'd her Liquor as fhe went:
 Old *Jock* and *Doll* lay on the Floor,
 For they cou'd drink and fpew no more.
 Our Lovers now have all the Play,
 They bill,⁴ and fix their Wedding-day:
Things



1. child/daughter
2. a large jug for liquor
3. crazy
4. make an announcement (like a play-bill)

Things were concluded for the best,
And Drunk, and Sober, go to Rest.

Now all the Country Lads around,
That get their Living under Ground,
For to prepare Themselves are told
When *Tommy's* Wedding-day will hold:
The Maids have Warning, Friends beside,
Must all be there to menſe¹ the Bride;
At *Benwel*, at her Mother's Houſe,
For *Tommy* gave the Bride her Choofe,
The Wedding-dinner muſt be there,
Provided with the greateſt Care!
Now Joy in ev'ry Face is ſeen,
The Lads are pleas'd, the Laffes keen:
Old Men, and Wives, do all declare,
They'll come to taſte the Bridegroom's
Fare.

The Farmer waits not with more Pain,
For former or for latter Rain;²
Nor does the Miſer more deſire,
His Coffers full, or Int'reſt higher;
Or Landlords with the Quarter-day,
When Tenants are prepar'd to pay;
Nor thoſe that in Suspence do wait,
More anxious for the Birth of Fate;³

Or



1. honour

2. i.e. for rain to come or hold off

3. ?some decision affecting the future

Or longing Mothers Paffion more,
 For Child, or Joy unfelt before;
 Than are our Lovers for the Day,
 To sport it, and the Night away:
 Their Breafts are fir'd with equal Flame,
 They wifh for what they blufh to name;
 They long the balmy Joys to reap,
 And kifs each other in their Sleep:
 But O! alas, this does no Good,
 It only raifes Flefh and Blood;
 Creates Defire in ev'ry Vein,
 And makes Things rife and fall again.
 Long wifh'd-for now is come at laft,
 The Day appears, the Bride is drest;
 The Mufic makes the Village ring,
 The Children fhout, the old Wives fing.
Tom comes in Triumph o'er the Plain,
 With Collier Lads, a jolly Train;¹
 They fmoke along the dufty Way,
 Whips crack for Joy, the Horfes play.
 The bridegroom rides in State before,
 'Midft Clouds of Duft the Bagpipes roar;
 The Echo's borne on Wings of Air,
 Make all the *Benwel* Folk prepare:

Like

~~~~~

1. procession



Like Streamers in the painted Sky,  
At ev'ry Breast the Favours<sup>1</sup> fly.  
The blithfome, buckfome, Country Maids,  
With Knots of Ribbons at their Heads,  
And Pinner<sup>2</sup>s flutt'ring in the Wind,  
That fan before, and tofs behind,  
Came there from each adjacent Place,  
Strength in their Limbs, Health in their  
Face,  
To do their Honours to the Bride,  
And eat and drink, and dance beside.  
Now all prepar'd, and ready stand,  
With Fans and Posies in their Hand.  
But hark! a distant Noise they hear,  
And some Fore-riders do appear,  
Proclaim with an exalted Voice,  
The Bridegroom near, they all rejoice:  
Loud Shouts and Acclamations rise,  
And Sounds of Joy in Echo dies.  
The Bridegroom now appears in Sight,  
They all receive him with Delight;  
Clap Hands, and bid him welcome there,  
And place him in the Elbow Chair,  
Old *Betty* glad at his Approach,  
Brings on the Cakes, and Barrels broach;  
Then

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1. decorations  
2. headdress with attached streamers

Then *Tommy* goes and kisses *Jenny*,  
 And says to her, How do you, *Hinny*?<sup>1</sup>  
 Pluck up your Heart, and never fear;  
 What makes you be so sad, my Dear?  
 The Priest will tell us what to say,  
 'Tis nothing but a perfect Play:  
 I have the Ring, and all Things ready,  
 And faith thou's bust<sup>2</sup> like any Lady:  
 Thou looks so brisk, it does me Good;  
 Be quiet, *Tom*, thou'll cramp my Hood,  
 Come let us rise and go away,  
 Perhaps we make the Parson stay;<sup>3</sup>  
 And that ye know's not fit to be,  
 Because we are not Quality.  
 They all rise up, and think it Time  
 To haste for Church, the Clock's struck  
 Nine.  
 Two lusty Lads, well dress'd and strong,  
 Stept out to lead the Bride along;  
 And two young Maids of equal Size,  
 As soon the Bridegroom's Hands surprize:  
 The Pipers<sup>4</sup> wind, and take their Post,  
 And go before to clear the Coast:  
 Then all the vast promiscuous Crowd,  
 With thund'ring Tongues, and Feet as  
 loud,

Tofs

- 
1. standard term of endearment, 'Honey'
  2. dressed up
  3. wait
  4. in this context, always bagpipers

Tofs up their Hats, clap Hands, and  
hollow,<sup>1</sup>  
And mad with Joy, like *Bedlam* follow:  
Some shout the Bride, and some the  
Groom,  
Till just as Mad, to Church they come;  
Knock, swear, and rattle at the Gate,  
And vow to break the Beadle's Pate;<sup>2</sup>  
And calls his Wife a Bitch and Whore,  
They will be in, or break the Door;  
There rive<sup>3</sup>, and tear, and make a Noise,  
Like rude, distracted Fools, or Boys.  
Now some flip out as sure as Fate,  
To tell the Priest the People wait:  
He picks,<sup>4</sup> and comes when he does know,  
For at the best he's very slow.  
The Gates fly open, all rush in,  
The Church is full with Folks and Din;  
And all the Crew, both great and small,  
Behave as in a common Hall:<sup>5</sup>  
For some perhaps that were Threescore,<sup>6</sup>  
Was never twice in Church before,  
They scamper, climb and break the Pews,  
To see the Couple make their Vows.  
With solemn Face the Priest draws near,  
Poor *Tom* and *Jenny* quake for Fear;

Are



1. cheer
2. head
3. claw at
4. ?makes himself neat
5. an ordinary house
6. i.e. years of age

Are fingl'd out from all the Band  
That round about them gaping stand!

In decent Order when they're got,  
The Priest proceeds to tie the Knot;  
Then Hands are join'd, and loos'd again,  
And *Tommy* says, I take thee, *Jane*;  
Then *Jenny* looks a little shy,  
And kneels, and says, I take *Tommy*,  
But here's the Blessing, or the Curse,  
'Tis done for Better, or for Worse:  
For now they're fairly in for Life;  
The Priest declares them Man and Wife.

Our Couple now kneel down to pray,  
Much unacquainted with the Way:  
Whole Troops of COLLIERS swarm around,  
And seize poor *Jenny* on the Ground;  
Put up their Hands to loose her Garters,  
And work for Pluck<sup>1</sup> about her Quarters;  
Till Ribbons from her Legs are torn,  
And round the Church in Triumph borne.

As when a Conquest great was won  
By *Cæsar*, or by *Philip's* Son;<sup>2</sup>  
They had the Honour of the Prize,  
And all the Shouts that did arise:

So



1. ?a prize

2. Alexander the Great

So now the Fame and Praise attend  
 The Garters, and the Bridegroom's Friend.  
 The Wedding now is fairly o'er,  
 The Fees are paid, but nothing more.  
 The Bridegroom he comes foremost out,  
 He cocks his Hat and look about;  
 The Pipers play for Victory,  
*I'll make thee fain<sup>1</sup> to follow Me.*  
 Four rustic Fellows wait the While,  
 To kiss the Bride at the Church Style;  
 Then vig'rous mount their felter'd<sup>2</sup> Steeds,  
 With heavy Heels, and clumsy Heads;  
 So scourge them going Head and Tail,  
 To win what Country call the Kail,<sup>3</sup>  
 Spruce *Tommy* now leads first away,  
 For *Jenny's* bound and must obey:  
 But most Wives think't a sad Disaster,  
 To have the Man be one Day Master;  
 And must be rid,<sup>4</sup> or<sup>5</sup> they submit,  
 With Whip and Spur, and temper'd Bit;  
 Must taste the Sweets, and Plagues of  
 Marriage,  
 Before they have an easy Garriage.<sup>6</sup>  
 Yet here our Bride must have her Due,  
 She stuck as close to *Tom* as Glue;

Tuck'd

- 
1. glad; the line is the title of a song.  
 2. of matted or shaggy coat  
 3. "This was nothing more than a race - the  
 prize, a kiss from the bride." Here, more of a  
 contest between the newly-weds.  
 4. ?ridden  
 5. ?for *ere* i.e. before  
 6. berth, home, shelter. Not otherwise recorded  
 prior to 1900.

Tuck'd up her Coats to mend her Pace,  
And walk'd till Sweat ran down her Face;  
Sturdy she rak'd along the Plain,  
To keep in View her Fellow Swain;  
And kindly follows *Tommy's* Lead,  
That she at night on Joys may feed.

If he prepares when Things are drest,<sup>1</sup>  
I'll pawn my Life she'll be his Guest;  
Stick close, and fuck, and round him  
twine,

Till *Phæbus*<sup>2</sup> thro' the Curtains shine,  
Surround their Pillows with bright Rays,  
And wish them many happy Days.

Now they arrive all in a Foam,  
The old Wife bids them welcome Home;  
Salutes her Daughter and her Son,  
So now begins the merry Fun.

The greasy Cook at once appears,  
And thunders Mischief in their Ears;  
She scolds and brawls, and makes a Noise,  
And throws her Fat among the Boys;  
Now runs to see the Kettle boil,  
Mean while she lets the Butter oil;  
Then boxes her who turns the Spit,  
And cries, You Jade, you'll burn the Meat:  
Fire,



1. ?the image is of a dinner invitation; two lines  
lower, of a climbing plant, perhaps  
2. the Sun

Fire, Smoke, and Fury round her goes,  
 She's burnt her Apron, sing'd her Clothes:  
 The Dinner will be spoil'd she cries;  
 Good God ! the Baker's burnt the Pies.  
 That Goose will not be half enough;  
 The Beef is old, and will eat tough:  
 Here, Lads, some Flour to dredge<sup>1</sup> the  
 Veal;

I wish your Dinner at the De'il:  
 Come take your Seats, and stand away,  
 My Laddle has not Room to play:  
 The Hens and Cocks are just laid down;  
 I never thought you'd come so soon:  
 And thus with such-like Noise and Din,  
 The Wedding Banquet does begin.  
 Impatient for the Want of Meat,  
 They feak,<sup>2</sup> and cannot keep their Seat;  
 Play with the Plates, drum on the Table,  
 And fast as long as they are able;  
 Then count the Number of their Knives,  
 And who is there that has not Wives;<sup>3</sup>  
 Unfold the Napkins, lay them down,  
 Then tell the Letters of a Spoon:  
 Some eat the Bread, some lick the Salt;  
 Some drink, and other some find Fault.

Dif-

---

1. dredge  
 2. twitch, fidget  
 3. games with knives and (next couplet) spoons,  
 of a fortune-telling nature?

Disorder is in ev'ry Place,  
And hungry Looks in ev'ry Face;  
In short they cou'd no longer put,<sup>1</sup>  
For Belly thinks the Throat is cut:  
They damn, and sink,<sup>2</sup> and curse the Cook,  
And gives her many a frightful Look:  
They call her Bitch, and Jade, and Sow:  
She says she does what Fire can do:  
And thus their Guts disturb and vex 'em,  
For Want of Patience doth perplex 'em.

Thus<sup>3</sup> hungry, raw, unthinking Youth,  
Run Home from School with open Mouth;  
Are mad for Meat, and wild for Play,  
Impatient at the Maid's Delay;  
Will dip their Bread in Dripping-pan,  
With all the Eagerness they can;  
Disturb the House, and tease their Mother,  
And fight with Sister, or with Brother;  
Roar, punch, and kick, and play the Fool,  
And cry they'll be too long for School;  
Bum<sup>4</sup> Plates, and discompose the Table,  
Do all the Mischief they are able;  
Abuse the Maid, climb on the Chairs,  
And dirty all the new-clean'd Stairs:

Till



1. i.e. put up with (the waiting)
2. damn (sink to Hell)
3. Here starts a simile, the colliers being compared to restless school children home for lunch.
4. spin (like a humming-top)



Till *Tray* from his Machine<sup>1</sup> descends,  
And *Peggy* draws to make all Friends;  
Then Dinner comes, they eat, are pleas'd,  
March off to School, the House is eas'd.

At last the Beef appears in Sight,  
The Groom moves slow the pond'rous  
Weight;

Then Haste is made, the Table clad,  
No Patience till the Grace is said:  
Swift to the smoking Beef they fly;  
Some cut their Passage thro' a Pye:  
Out streams the Gravy on the Cloth;  
Some burn their Tongue with scalding  
Broth:

But rolling<sup>2</sup> Spices make them fain,  
They shake their Heads, and sup again:  
Cut up that Goose, cries one below;  
And send us down a Leg, or so:  
An honest Neighbour tries the Point,<sup>3</sup>  
Works hard, but cannot hit a Joint:  
The Bride fat nigh, she rose in Prim,<sup>4</sup>  
And cut, and tore her Limb from Limb.  
Now Geese, Cocks, Hens, their Fury feel,  
Extended Jaws devour the Veal:  
Each rives,<sup>5</sup> and eats what he can get;  
And all is Fish that comes to Net:

No



1. The image seems to be of children playing with a toy - a rocking horse? - and taking turns to ride or pull ('draw'). 2. either rolling = boiling, or perhaps the eaters are 'rolling' the spices about their mouths i.e. chewing, savouring  
3. presumably of the knife, and attempts to carve  
4. either *im primis* 'among the foremost', or *im-prime* 'to single out the prey' (a hunting term)  
5. tears

No qualmish Appetites here fit,  
None curious for a dainty Bit.<sup>1</sup>

The Bridegroom waits with active  
Force,  
And brings them Drink 'twixt ev'ry  
Course,  
With Napkin round his Body girt,  
To keep his Cloaths from Grease and Dirt;  
With busy Face he runs about,  
To fill the Pots which are drunk out.

Old *Bessy* drefs'd in all her Airs,  
Gives her Attendance in the Stairs;  
There she receives the broken Meat,  
Just when it is not fit to eat:  
Plates, Knives, and Spoons, about are  
toft;

The old Wife's Care's that nought be loft:  
By her the borrow'd Things are known,  
She wishes Folk may get their own.<sup>2</sup>

Now all are full, the Meat away,  
The Table drawn, the Music play;  
The Bridegroom first assumes the Floor,  
And dances all the Maidens o'er;<sup>3</sup>  
Then rubs his Face, and makes a Bow,  
So marches off, what<sup>4</sup> he can do:  
He must not tire himself outright,  
The Bride expects a Dance at Night.

In

---

1. titbit  
2. i.e. their own cutlery back again.  
3. i.e. with all the girls in turn  
4. what else

In ev'ry Room, both high and low,  
 The Fiddlers play, the Bagpipes blow;  
 Some shout<sup>1</sup> the Bride, and some the  
 Groom,  
 They roar the very Music dumb;  
 Hand over Head, and one thro' other,  
 They dance with Sister and with Brother:  
 Their common Tune is *Get her Bo*,<sup>2</sup>  
 The weary Lads cries, Music fo;  
 Till tir'd in circling round they wheel,  
 And beat the Ground with Toe and Heel.

A Collier Lad of taller Size,  
 With Rings of Duft about his Eyes,  
 Laid down his Pipe, rose from the Table,  
 And swore he'd dance while he was able:  
 He catch'd a Partner by the Hand,  
 And kiss'd her for to make her stand;  
 And then he bid the Music play,  
 And said, now Lads, come dance away:  
 He led her off; just when begun,  
 She stopt, and cry'd, some other Tune;  
 Then whisper'd in the Piper's Ear,  
 So loud, that ev'ry one might hear,  
 I'd have you play me *Jumping John*,  
 He turn'd his Reed, and try'd his Drone.

The

---

1. i.e. toast?  
 2. ?beau, boyfriend

The Pipes scream out her fav'rite Jig,  
Then knock'd<sup>1</sup> her Thumbs and food her  
Trig;<sup>2</sup>

Then cock'd her Belly up a little,  
Then wet her Fingers with her Spittle:  
So off she goes; the Collier Lad  
Sprung from the Floor, and danc'd like  
mad:

They sweep each Corner of the Room,  
And all stand clear where e'er they come:  
They dance, and tire the Piper out,  
And all's concluded with a Shout.

Old *Bessy* next was taken in,  
She curl'd her Nose, and cock'd her Chin;  
Then held her Coats on either Side,  
And kneel'd, and cry'd, up with the Bride:  
Come, Piper, says the good old Woman,  
Play me the *Joyful Days are coming*;  
I'll dance for Joy, upon my Life,  
For now my Daughter's made a Wife.  
The Old Wife did what Limbs cou'd do;  
Well danc'd, old *Bessy*, cry'd the Crew:  
The Goody laugh'd, and shew'd her Teeth,  
And said, ah! Sirs, I have no Breath;  
I once was thought right good at this,  
So kneel'd, and mumbl'd up his Kifs.

And



1. she cracked or clicked...  
2. starting-line

And thus the Day in Pleasure flies,  
 Till shining *Phoebus* quits the Skies:  
 The gladfome Night doth now approach;  
 The Barrels found,<sup>1</sup> no more's to broach:  
 There's but a Pipe for ev'ry one,  
 The dear Tobacco's almost gone:  
 The Candles in their Sockets wink,  
 Now fweal,<sup>2</sup> now drop, then die and stink:  
 Intoxicating Fumes arise,  
 They reel and rub their drowfy Eyes;  
 Dead drunk some tumble on the Floor,  
 And swim in what they drank before:  
 Hick-up, cries one, reach me your Hand,  
 The House turns round, I cannot stand:  
 So now the drunken, senseless Crew,  
 Break Pipes, spill Drink, piss, shit, and  
 spew:  
 The sleepy Hens now mount their Balk,<sup>3</sup>  
 Ducks quack, flap wings, and homewards  
 walk;  
 The lab'ring Peasants<sup>4</sup> weary grown,  
 Embraces Night, and trudges Home.  
 The Poffet<sup>5</sup> made, the Bride is led,  
 In great Procession, to her Bed:  
 The Females with an Edict come,  
 That all the Men depart the Room,

On

- 
1. i.e. sound empty when struck  
 2. flare or gutter  
 3. wooden perch or beam  
 4. for *Peasant's*, or *Peasant*  
 5. a sort of punch, with milk curds, ale, treacle,  
 spices etc., here with bits of bread or cake  
 bobbing in it.

On Pain of Scandal and Difgrace,  
 If any one stay in the Place:  
 Their Proclamation is obey'd,  
 The Men walk out till she be laid;  
 But with this cautious Reprimand,  
 The Posset thou'd have Leave to stand,  
 Be unmolested, feel no Lip,<sup>1</sup>  
 Nor any one attempt to sip;  
 They all declare they'll be accurst,  
 If Bride and Bridegroom drink not first:  
 When Young and Old, and all are out,  
 They shut the Doors, and spy about;  
 A gen'ral Search is quickly made,  
 Left any lie in Ambuscade:  
 So when they thought all Places sure,  
 And Holes and Corners all secure,  
 That none cou'd see, nor none cou'd hear,  
 Nor none rush in to make them fear:  
 Then one far wiser than the Rest,  
 Who knew their Way of Bedding best,  
 Steps up to *Jenny* bath'd in Tears,  
 And thus with Council fills her Ears;  
 Come, wipe your Face, for Shame don't  
 cry,  
 We all were made with Men to lie;

And

~~~~~

1. posset or bride?

And *Tommy*, if I guefs but right,
Will make you have a merry Night;
Be courteous, kind, lie in his Arms,
And let him rifle all your Charms:
If he shou'd rife, do you lie ftill,
He'll fall again, give him his Will;
Lie clofe, and keep your Husband warm;
And as I live you'll get no Harm;
Be mannerly in ev'ry Pofiture,
Take this Advice from *Nanny Forfter*.

Thus fpoke, fhe ran, and catch'd the
Bowl,
Where Currant-cakes in Ale did roll;
Then with a Smile, faid, *Jenny*, Lafs,
Come here's they Health without a Glafs:
Her Arm fupports it to her Head,
She drinks, and gobbles up the Bread;
So ev'ry one their Courfes took,
Some watch for Fear the Men shou'd look:
Their hafty Promise¹ foon was broke,
For they muft either drink or choke.

Now fome prepare t'undrefs the Bride,
While others tame the Poffet's Pride;
Some loofe her Head, and fome her Stays,
And fo undrefs her fundry² Ways;
Then quickly lay the Bride in Bed,
And bind a Ribbon round her Head:

Her



1. i.e. not to drink
2. different, various

Her Neck and Breasts are both display'd,
 And ev'ry Charm in Order laid.
 Now all being ready for *Tom's* Coming,
 The Doors are open'd by the Women;
 Impatient *Tommy* rushes in,
 And thinks that they have longsome been:
 The Maids¹ unwilling to withdraw,
 They must go out, for that's the Law.
 Now *Tommy* must next be undrest,
 But which of them can do it best?
 It is no Matter, all assit;
 Some at his Feet, some at his Breast:
 Soon they undrest the Jolly Blade,
 And into Bed he's fairly laid.

Between the Sheets now view this Pair,
 And think what merry Work was there;
 The Stocking thrown, the Company gone,
 And *Tom* and *Jenny* both alone:
 No Light was there but *Jenny's* Charms,
 And *Tom*² all those in his own Arms.

Now he is Master of his Wishes,
 And treats her with a thousand Kisses:
 Young *Tommy* cock'd, and *Jenny* spread,
 So here I leave them both in Bed.

F I N I S



1. A verb, *are*, needs to be supplied. *Maids* perhaps refers specifically to unmarried girls here.
2. Again, a verb seems missing - *held?* *has?* *'s?*