



LYRICS FOR THE CLERKENWELL BALLAD WALK PREPARED BY VIVIEN ELLIS
LIVE ZOOM EVENT Thursday 7 January 2021

POOR MAN'S COMPLAINT

Tune: 'Let Mary Live Long'

Printed for C. Bates at the White-Hart, in West-Smithfield in 1692-1693

see it here: <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/21962/image>

1. A Trend to the Moan
Of Honest Plain-Dealing,
A sensible feeling,
Of Sorrows alone,
I have I declare:
With watery Eyes,
I behold the Excise,
which Troubles me sore;
I weep when I think of
I weep when I think of
the Cry of the Poor.

2. The Times they are hard,
yet those that have Treasure,
and Wealth out of measure
They little regard
poor Labouring Men,
Who are out of Employ,
Whose Children cry;
which troubles them sore:
I weep when I think of
I weep when I think of
the Cry of the Poor.

3. The Tax must be paid
all over the Nation
without Disputation;
Yet where is the Trade?
that's clearly run down
By Strangers from France,
With others perchance;
this troubles me sore:
They run down all Labour,
They run down all Labour,
which pinches the Poor.

4. It once was Decreed,
to make a Collection,
for Strangers protection,
In order to feed,
and nourish them here:
Which encourag'd them so,

That from hence they'll not go,
but live on our shore;
And ruine all Labour,
And ruine all Labour,
which pinches the Poor.

5. In every Town,
sad Poverty's reigning,
the poor are complaining,
King Heavens look down
and pity this Land;
Give the Blessing of Peace,
That our Joys may encrease,
and flourish once more,
Defend us from Ruine,
Defend us from Ruine,
and pity the Poor.

A DROP OF GIN

Tune: 'Dog's Meat Man' or 'Buffalo Girls'

Printed between 1819 and 1844, see it here: <http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/edition/12502>

1. While some roar out the dogs meat man
And others chaunt sweet lovely Nan
In praise of Hodges best I sing
There's comfort in a drop of gin
A drop of gin, the girls they cry
A drop of gin the lads reply
And all who live to cry or grin
Find comfort in a drop of gin.

2. The grave, the gay, the rich, the poor
For sorrow find in it a cure
The stiff old maid with pious song
In private takes old jolly Tom
A drop of gin the old girl cries
Blue ruin sparkles in her eyes
And while she prays to keep from sin
Finds comfort in a drop of gin.

3. By many names dear gin is call'd
Strip me naked is by porter bawl'd
Flash of lighting the am'rous spark
The dandy asks for Nancy Clark
A yard of tape and many more which to repeat is quite a bore
Yet all who wake or cry or grin
Find comfort in a drop of gin.

4. Then while we live to laugh and sin,
Drink to our old friend in jolly gin
Care to the winds another glass
Success to trade and smiling lass
Let parsons preach and dotards scan
On all the worst of mortal man
Yet all who lose tae day or win
Find comfort in a drop of Gin.

THE DODGER

See it here: <http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/edition/5890>

Tune: 'Star of the County Down'/'Buffalo Gals'

1. Fare-ye-well, my Vitechapel boys, fare-ye-well for a-while,
For you see the bobbies and the beaks has tumbled to my style
Bet it's all wery vell when you're in luck, your friends will stand a cup,
But when you're down they keeps you down acause they turns you up.
CHORUS: So fare-ye-well, my Vitechapel boys, and you vot keeps a fence,
I'm going away to Australia, but not at my own expense.

2. I nailed this yellow vipe from a swell, whilst going up Drury-Lane;
And this bandanna from a bloke whilst drinking his champagne,
This from a foreigner I took whilst walking Leicester-square,
And this vone from another chap as grand as a Lord Mayor.
CHORUS: So fare-ye-well, my Vitechapel boys, and you vot keeps a fence,
I'm going away to Australia, but not at my own expense.

3. There's one or two more lately you see taken folks in quite unawares,
I should like to know the difference betvixt these vipes and the railway shares;
The Crystal Palace 'cotched it too, but they had themselves to thank,
But the biggest swindle of 'em all, was the Royal British Bank.
CHORUS: So fare-ye-well, my Vitechapel boys, and you vot keeps a fence,
I'm going away to Australia, but not at my own expense.

4. When Mr Dickens wrote his vork, he drew my character so well
Betvixt the artful dodger and me none could the difference tell.
Mr. Cruckedshanks vot drink nogin – in his picture you may see
The very dodger vhat I mean – all of a tvist like me.
CHORUS: So fare-ye-well, my Vitechapel boys, and you vot keeps a fence,
I'm going away to Australia, but not at my own expense.

5. Now fare ye well, my Vitechapel boys, to part with you I grieve,
But I'll return to you vonce more, when I've vorked the ticket of leave,
Here's one dodge that keeps up my pluck, and does my spirits cheer,
That is ven I return again, you'll welcome the Dodger here.
CHORUS: So fare-ye-well, my Vitechapel boys, and you vot keeps a fence,
I'm going away to Australia, but not at my own expense.

NO MASTER

Tune: 'The Hardy Norseman'

PUBLISHED IN: Chants for Socialists, by William Morris LONDON: Socialist League Office, 13
FARRINGDON ROAD, HOLBORN VIADUCT, E.C.1885. Price One Penny

See it here: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3170/3170-h/3170-h.htm>

1. Saith man to man, We've heard and known
That we no master need
To live upon this earth, our own,
In fair and manly deed.
The grief of slaves long passed away
For us hath forged the chain,
Till now each worker's patient day
Builds up the House of Pain.

2. And we, shall we too, crouch and quail,
Ashamed, afraid of strife,

And lest our lives untimely fail
Embrace the Death in Life?
Nay, cry aloud, and have no fear,
We few against the world;
Awake, arise! the hope we bear
Against the curse is hurled.

3. It grows and grows—are we the same,
The feeble band, the few?
Or what are these with eyes aflame,
And hands to deal and do?
This is the host that bears the word,
“No Master high or low”—
A lightning flame, a shearing sword,
A storm to overthrow.

THE FRIGHTNED PEOPLE OF CLARKENWEL

Being an Account how a COW Ran into the Church at Clarkenwel in Sermon time, on Sun-day the
18th of this Instant August, 1689,

To the Tune of, In Rome there is a most fearful Rout.

See it here: <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/22006/image>

From Nannicoock my poor Cow, poor Cow,
From Nannicoock, etc.

1. In Clerkenwell-Church there was a Rout,
Last Sunday the People like Bedlams run out,
And what shou'd this fearful stir be about,
But Nannicoock my poor Cow, poor Cow;
But Nannicoock my poor Cow.

2. Surprize and astonishment seiz'd ev'ry man,
The Rabble took arms and Tom fool let the Dan
'Gainst Nannicoock my poor Cow, poor Cow,
'Gainst, etc.

3. Poor Cow she thought no body there any harm,
But mistook the old Church for a Country Farm,
Cou'd so silly a Creature these Blockheads alarm?
As Nannicoock my poor Cow, poor Cow,
As Nannicoock, etc.

4. The Women did squeak and the Men run about,
The Clerk half asleep put forth his old snout,
While the Boys and the Girls did hallow and hout,
At Nannicoock my poor Cow, poor Cow,
At Nannicoock, etc.

5. Some Sparks of more wit then the rest of the crew,
Observing the tumult burst open their Pew,
And in a great fury their Rapiers they drew,
At Nannicoock my poor Cow, poor Cow,
At Nannicoock my poor Cow.

6. Some said 'twas the Devil and some said [not],
Some bellow'd out fire and the Lord knows [wot],

When in the mean while t'was nothing God wot,
But Nannicock my poor Cow, poor Cow,
But Nannicock, etc.

7. I'm sure they were more affrighted by much,
Then when we expected the coming o'th Dutch,
There's nothing cou'd give so unlucky a Touch,
As Nannicock my poor Cow, poor Cow,
As Nannicock, etc.

8. Perhaps there were some did not care for the horns,
'Tis a swinging pair that her forehead adorns,
And none has a better cure for the corns,
Then Nannicock my poor Cow, poor Cow,
Then Nannicock, etc.

9. The Clerk all this while sat as one in a dream,
You could not have drawn him out with a Team,
Not knowing the jest had borrow'd its Cream,
From Nannicock my poor Cow, poor Cow,
From Nannicock, etc.

10. But Lord what a Racket and laughter arose,
When the folks came out into Clerkenwel Close,
At what it should be there is no body knows,
But Nannicock my poor Cow, poor Cow,
But Nannicock, etc.

11. The Story by this is all over the Town,
But had you been there when the people run down,
You'd have given me full five pound and a Crown,
For Nannicock my poor Cow, poor Cow,
For Nannicock my poor Cow.

ANNE WALLEN'S LAMENTATION

*For the Murthering of her husband **John Wallen** a Turner in
Cow-lane neere Smith-field; done by his owne wife, on
satterday the 22 of June. 1616 who was burnt in Smithfield
the first of July following.*

To the tune of Fortune my foe.

1. In London neere to Smithfield did I dwell,
And mongst my neighbours was beloved well:
Till that the Devill wrought me this same spight,
That all their loves are turnd to hatred quight.

2. John Wallen was my loving husbands name,
Which long hath liv'd in London in good fame.
His trade a Turner, as was knowne full well,
My name An Wallen, dolefull tale to tell.

3. My husband having beene about the towne,
And comming home, he on his bed lay down:
To rest himselfe, which when I did espie,
I fell to rayling most outrageously.

4. I cald him Rogue, and slave, and all to naught,
Repeating the worst language might be thought
Thou drunken knave I said, and arrant sot,
Thy minde is set on nothing but the pot.

5. He then arose and strooke me on the eare,
I did at him begin to curse and sweare:
Then presently one of his tooles I got,
And on his body gave a wicked stroake.

6. Amongst his intrailles I this Chissell threw,
Where as his Caule came out, for which I rue,
What hast thou don, I prethee looke quoth he,
Thou hast thy wish, for thou hast killed me.

7. No sooner was his breath from body fled,
But unto Newgate straight way they me led:
Where I did lie untill the Sizes came,
Which was before I there three daies had laine.

8. My judgement then it was pronounced plaine,
Because my dearest husband I had slaine:
In burning flames of fire I should fry,
Receive my soule sweet Jesus now I die.

A CAVEAT AGAINST CUTPURSES

See Bartholomew Fair here:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/49461/49461-h/49461-h.htm>

Tune: 'Packington's Pound'

1. My masters, and friends, and good people draw near,
And look to your purses for that I do say;
And though little money in them you do bear
it costs more to get than to lose in a day.
You've often been told,
Both the young and the old,
And bidden beware of the cutpurse so bold;
Then if you take heed not, free me from the curse,
Who both give you warning, for, and the cut-purse.
Youth, youth, thou hadst't better been starved by thy nurse
Than lived to be hanged for cutting a purse.

2. It hat been upbraided to men of my trade,
That oftentimes we are the cause of this crime;
Alack and for pity, why should it be said?
And if they regarded or places or time!
Examples have been
Of some that were seen
In Westminster-hall, yea the pleaders between;
Then why should judges be free from this curse,
More than my poor self, for cutting a purse
Youth, youth, thou hadst't better been starved by thy nurse,
Than live to be hanged for cutting a purse.

3. At plays, and at sermons, and at the sessions,
'Tis daily their practice such booty to make.
Yea under the gallows at executions,
They stick not the stare-about's purses to take.
Nay one without grace,
At a [far] better place,
At court, and in Christmas, before the king's face.
Alack then for pity must I bear the curse,
That only belongs to the cunning cut-purse?
Youth, youth, thou had'st better been starv'd by thy nurse,
Than live to be hang'd for cutting a purse.

4. But O, you vile nation of cut-purses all,
Relent and repent, and amend and be sound,
And know that you ought not, by honest men's fall,
Advance your own fortunes, to die above ground;
And though you go gay
In silks, as you may,
It is not the highway to heaven (as they say).
Repent then, repent you, for better, for worse,
And kiss not the gallows for cutting a purse.
Youth, youth, thou had'st better been starv'd by thy nurse,
Than live to be hang'd for cutting a purse.

All arrangements and compiled by Vivien Ellis
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