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Poems

Poems on several occasions

Gay, John

Edinburgh, 1773

Tuesday; or, the ditty

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TUESDAY;

OR, THE

DITTY.

MARIAN.

YOung Colin Clout, a lad of peerleſs meed,
Full well could dance, and deftly tune the reed;
In ev'ry wood his carols ſweet were known,
At ev'ry wake his nimble feats were ſhown.
When in the ring the ruſtic routs he threw,
The damſels pleaſures with his conqueſts grew;
Or when aſlant the cudgel threats his head,
His danger ſmites the breaſt of ev'ry maid;
But chief of Marian. Marian lov'd the ſwain,
The parſon's maid, and neateſt of the plain.
Marian, that ſoft could ſtroak the udder'd cow,
Or leſſen with her ſieve the barley-mow;
Marbled with ſage the hard'ning cheeſe ſhe preſs'd,
And yellow butter Marian's ſkill confeſs'd.
But Marian, now devoid of country-cares,
Nor yellow butter, nor ſage-cheeſe prepares.
For yearning love the witleſs maid employs,
And love, ſay ſwains, *all buſy heed deſtroys.*

Colin makes mock at all her hideous ſmart,
A laſs that Cic'ly hight, had won his heart,
Cic'ly the weſtern laſs that tends the kee *,
The rival of the parſon's maid was ſhe.
In dreary ſhade now Marian lies along,
And mix'd with ſighs thus wails in plaining ſong.

Ah woful day! ah woful noon and morn!
When firſt by thee my younglings white were ſhorn:
Then firſt, I ween, I caſt a lover's eye,
My ſheep were ſilly, but more ſilly I.
Beneath the ſheers they felt no laſting ſmart;
They loſt but fleeces, while I loſt a heart.

Ah Colin! can'ſt thou leave thy ſweetheart true;
What I have done for thee will Cic'ly do?
Will ſhe thy linen waſh, or hoſen darn,
And knit thee gloves made of her own ſpun yarn?
Will ſhe with hufwife's hand provide thy meat,
And ev'ry Sunday morn thy neckcloth plait?
Which o'er thy kerſey doublet ſpreading wide,
In ſervice-time drew Cic'ly's eyes aſide.

Where'er I gad I cannot hide my care,
My new diſaſters in my look appear.
White as the curd my ruddy cheek is grown,
So thin my features that I'm hardly known;
Our neighbours tell me oft, in joking talk,
Of aſhes, leather, oatmeal, bran, and chalk;
Unwittingly of Marian they divine,
And wiſt not that with thoughtful love I pine.
Yet Colin Clout, untoward ſhepherd ſwain,
Walks whiſtling blithe, while pitiful I plain.

* Kee, a weſt-country word for kine or cows.

Whilom with thee 'twas Marian's dear delight,
To moil all day, and merry-make at night.
If in the ſoil you guide the crooked ſhare,
Your early breakfaſt is my conſtant care;
And when with even hand you ſtrow the grain,
I fright the thieviſh rooks from off the plain.
In miſling days when I my threſher heard,
With nappy bear I to the barn repair'd;
Loſt in the muſic of the whirling flail,
To gaze on thee I left the ſmoaking pale:
In harveſt when the ſun was mounted high,
My leathern bottle did thy drought ſupply;
Whene'er you mow'd I follow'd with the rake,
And have full oft been ſun-burnt for thy ſake:
When in the welkin gath'ring ſhow'rs were ſeen,
I lagg'd the laſt with Colin on the green;
And when at eve returning with thy car,
Awaiting heard the gingling bells from far;
Straight on the fire the ſooty pot I plac'd;
To warm thy broth I burnt my hands for haſte.
When hungry thou ſtood'ſt *ſtaring, like an oaf*,
I ſlic'd the luncheon from the barley loaf,
With crumbled bread I thicken'd well thy meſs;
Ah love me more, or love thy pottage leſs!

Laſt Friday's eve, when as the ſun was ſet,
I, near yon ſtile, three ſallow gypſies met.
Upon my hand they caſt a poring look,
Bid me beware, and thrice their heads they ſhook;
They ſaid that many croſſes I muſt prove,
Some in my worldly gain, but moſt in love.
Next morn I miſs'd three hens and our old cock,
And off the hedge two pinners and a ſmock.

I bore these losses with a Christian mind,
And no mishaps could feel, while thou wert kind.
But since, alas! I grew my Colin's scorn,
I've known no pleasure, night, or noon, or morn.
Help me, ye gypsies, bring him home again,
And to a constant lass give back her swain.

Have I not sat with thee full many a night,
When dying embers were our only light,
When ev'ry creature did in slumbers lie,
Besides our cat, my Colin Clout, and I?
No troublous thoughts the cat or Colin move,
While I alone am kept awake by love.

Remember, Colin, when at last year's wake,
I bought the costly present for thy sake:
Couldst thou spell o'er the posy on thy knife,
And with another change thy state of life?
If thou forget'st, I wot I can repeat,
My memory can tell the verse so sweet.
As this is grav'd upon this knife of thine,
So is thy image on this heart of mine.
But wo is me! such presents luckless prove,
For *knives*, they tell me, *always sever love.*

Thus Marian wail'd, her eyes with tears brimfull,
When Goody Dobins brought her cow to bull.
With apron blue to dry her tears she sought,
Then saw the cow well serv'd, and took a groat.

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