

DICK AND SAL

AT CANTERBURY FAIR.

1. THE bailiff's boy had overslept,
The cows were not put in;
But rosy Mary cheerly stept,
To milk them on the green.
2. Dick staggered with a carf of hay,
To feed the bleating sheep;
Proud thus to usher in the day,
While half the world's asleep.
3. And meeting Mary with her pail,
He said, " If you wull stay,
I'll tell ya jest a funny tale,
About my holerday."
4. 'Twas then by some auspicious hap,
That I was passing near 'im,
And as he seem'd a likely chap,
Thinks I, I'll stop and hear 'im.
5. Now, Mary broke her steady pace,
And down she set her pail;
Dick brush'd the hay seeds off his face,
And thus began his tale :
6. "Ya see when Michaelmas come roun,
I thought dat Sal and I,
Ud go to Canterbury town,
To see what we cud buy.
7. For when I lived at Challock Lees,
Our second-man had bin;
And wonce when he was carring peas,
He told me what he'd sin.
8. He sed dare was a teejus fair,
Dat lasted for a wick;
And all de ploughmen dat went dare,
Must car dair shining-stick.
9. An how dat dare was nable rigs,
An merriander's jokes;
Snuff-boxes, shows, and whirligigs,
An houghed sight o' folks.

10. But what queer'd me, he sed, 'twas kep
All round about de Church;
And how dey had him up de steps,
And left him in de lurch.

11. At last he got into de street,
An den he lost his road;
And Bet and he come to a geate,
Whar all de soagers stud.

12. Den she ketcht fast hold av his han',
For she was reythur scar'd;
Tom sed when fust he see 'em stan',
He thought she'd be afared.

13. But one dat had a great broad soord,
Did ' left wheel ' loudly cry;
And all de men scared at his word,
Flew roun ta let dem by.

14. And den de drums dey beat ya know,
De soagers dey was prancin;
Tom told me dat it pleased 'em so,
They coud'n kip from dancin.

15. So I told feyther what I thought
'Bout gooing to de fair;
An den he told me what he bought,
When moder and he was dare.

16. He bought our Jack a leather cap,
An Sal a money-puss;
An Tom an Jem a spinnin tap,
An me a little hoss.

17. Den moder drummin in my ear,
Told all dat she had done;
For doe she liv'd for fifty year,
She'd never sin such fun.

18. So Sal and I was mighty glad,
Ta hear sudge news as dat;
An I set off ta neighbour Head,
Ta get a new straa hat.

19. An Thursday mornin Sal an I,
Set out ta goo ta fair;
An moder an day wish't us good bye,
An told Sal ta taak care.

20. But jest as o'er the stile we got,
She call'd har back agin,
An sed, ' Ya taak yer milkin coat,
Fer I're afared 'twull rain.'
21. Sal got de coat, an we agin,
Did both an us set sail;
An she sed, ' Was she sure 'too'd rain,
She never oo'd turn tail.'
22. De clover was granable wet,
Sa when we crast de medder,
We both upan de hardle set,
An den begun concedir.
23. De Folkston gals looked houghed black,
Old Waller'd roar'd about:
Ses I ta Sal, ' Shall we go back!'
'Na, na,' says she, 'kip out.'
24. 'Ya see the lark is mountain high,
De clouds ta undermine;
I lay a graat he clears de sky,
And den it wull be fine.'
25. An sure enough old Sal was right,
De Folkston gals was missin;
De sun and sky begun look bright,
An Waller'd stopt his hissin.
26. An so we sasselsail'd along,
An crass de fields we stiver'd,
While dickey lark kep up his song
An at de clouds conniver'd.
27. De rain an wind we left behind,
De clouds was scar'd away;
Bright Pebus he shut-fisted shin'd,
And 'twas a lightful day.
28. We tore like mad through Perry 'ood,
An jest beyand Stone Stile,
We got inta de turnpik road,
An kep it all de while.
29. An den we went through Shanford Street,
An over Chartham Down;
My wig ! how many we did meet,
A coming from de town.

30. An some sung out, ' Dare's Moll and Jan,'
But we ne'er cared for it;
Through thick an thin we blunder'd an,
An got ta Wincheap Street.
31. I sed, 'We'r got here sure enough,
We'll kip upon de causeway';
But Sal sed, ' 'Tis sa plagued rough,
Less get inta de hossway.'
32. And so we slagger'd den ya know,
And gaap't and stared about;
Ta see de houses all a row,
An signs a hanging out.
33. An when a goodish bit we'd bin,
We turn'd to de right han';
An den we turned about agin,
An see an alus stan.
34. Sal thought it was de Goat or Hine -
I didn' know for my part;
But when we look't apan de sign,
De reading was de 'White Hart.'
35. Den we went through a geat ya see,
An down a gravel walk:
An's we stood unnerneath a tree,
We heard de people talk.
36. So Sal, ya know, heav'd up her face,
Ad see 'em al stan roun,
Upon a gurt high bank an pleace,
An we apan de groun.
37. Den I gaapt up and see 'em all,
An wonder'd what could be
Sa I turns round an says to Sal,
' Less clamber up an see.'
38. But she was rather scared at fust
Fer fear a tumblin down;
An dey at tap made game an us,
An told us ta goo roun.
39. Jigger! I wooden give it up,
So took her roun de nick,
An holl'd her pattens ta de top,
An dragged her through de quick.

40. An den she turn'd erself about,
An sed 'twas rather rough;
But when we found de futway out,
We went up safe enough.
41. An when we got to de tip top,
We see a marble mountain
A gurt high stone thing histed up,
Jest like a steeple countin.
42. An dare we see, ah ! all de town,
Houses, an winmills grindin;
An gospels feeding on de groun,
An boys de dunnocks mindin.
43. How we was scared why, darn my skin !
I lay dat dare was more
Houses an churches den we'd sin
In all 'ur lives afore.
44. An when we'd stared and gaap'd all roun,
And thought we'd sin 'em all;
We turned about for ta come down,
But got apan a wall.
45. An Sal look't over as we past,
Ta see de ivy stick,
An if I had'en held her fast,
She would a brok 'er nick.
46. Den on we went, an soon we see
A brick place, where instead,
A being at top, as't ought to be,
De road ran unnernead.
47. An dare we pook't and peek'd about,
Ta see what made it stick up;
But narn o' us cou'den' find it out,
What kep the middle brick up.
48. An Sal sung out, 'Why dis here wall,
It looks sa old an hagged;
I'm mortally afared 'twill fall' :
And I was deadly shagged.
49. An when we got into de street,
A coach dat come from Dover,
Did gran nigh tread us under feet,
An Sal was 'most run over.

50. And so we stiver'd right across,
And went up by a mason's;
An come down to a gurt big house
I lay it was de Pason's !
51. And den we turn'd to de left ban,
An down into de street,
An see a gurt fat butcher stan,
Wid shop chuck full o' meat.
52. Den all at once we made a stop,
I thought Sal would a fainted;
When lookin in a barber's shop,
Sa fine de dolls was painted.
53. And dare was one an 'em I'll swear
Jest like de Pason's wife;
Wid nose, an eyes, an teeth, an hair,
As nat'ral as life.
54. So dare we stopt a little space,
An sed 'How queer it looks';
But soon we see anudder place,
And dat was crammed wid books.
55. I sed ta her 'What books dare be,
Dare's supm ta be sin';
Den she turn'd round, and sed to me,
'Suppose we do go in.'
56. Now, Sal, ye see, had bin ta school -
She went to old aunt Kite;
An so she was'en quite a fool,
But cud read purty tight.
57. She larnt her A B C, ya know,
Wid D for dunce and dame,
An all dat's in de criss-crass row,
An how to spell her name.
58. Sa in we went an down we squot,
An look't in every earner;
Den ax't de ooman if she'd got
De book about Tom Harner.
59. It put Sal almost out a breath,
When fust we went in dare;
De ooman was sa plaguey death,
She cou'den mak 'ar hear.

60. At last de man he hard us bawl,
So out ya know he coom;
An braught de book, an gin't ta Sal,
An sa we carr'd it hoom.
61. An Sal 'as red it throo and throo,
An lint it to 'er brudder;
An feyther loike to have it too,
An wisht we'd bought anudder.
62. Den we came to anudder street,
Where all was butcher's shops;
Dare was a tarnal sight of meat,
An steeks, an mutton-chops.
63. An dare was aluses by swarms
I lay dare was a duzen!
An he dat kep de Butcher's Arms,
Was old Jan Hillses cousin.
64. And so as Sal lookt purtty fine,
We thoft we'd goo in dare;
An hav a sup a beer ar two,
Afore we went ta fair.
65. De landlord he lookt moighty brave,
Wid his gurt rosy cheeks;
An axt us if we loike to have
A pound ar two a steeks.
66. Sa when we lickt de platters out,
An yoffled down de beer,
I sed ta Sal, ' Less walk about,
An try an find de fair.'
67. An's we went prowling down de street,
We met old Simon Cole;
He claa'd hold on her round de nick,
An 'gun to suck har jole.
68. Now, dash my wig ! dat put me out,
For dare was Sal a squallin;
I fedge him sich a tarnal clout,
Dat down I knockt him spraalin.
69. Dare he lay grumblin in de gutter,
De folks day gather'd roun' us,
An crowded in wid such a clutter,
De same as if dey'd poun' us.

70. An dis was jist aside de shop,
Where all de picters hung;
An books an sich like mabbled up,
An now an tan a song.

71. An dare we strain'd, an stared, an blous'd,
An' tried ta get away;
But more we strain'd, de more they scroug'd,
An sung out, ' Giv 'em play.'

72. Den Simon swore by all dats good,
He'd knock me inta tinder;
An blow'd if I did'en think he ood,
Fer'e knockt me throught de winder.

73. An tore my chops most cruelly,
De blood begun ta trickle;
You wou'den a know'd it had bin me,
I was in such a pickle.

74. Now jigger me tight ! dat rais'd my fluff,
I claw'd hold av his mane;
An' mint ta fetch his head a cuff,
But brok anudder pane.

75. Den I was up, den I gun swear,
De chaps dey did jist laugh,
An Sal she stompt, an tore har hair,
An beller'd like a calf.

76. I thoft I'd fetch him one more pounce,
So heav'd my stick an meant it,
Jist to a' broke his precious sconce,
But through de winder sent it.

77. De books and ballets flew about,
Like thatch from off de barn;
Or like de stra dat clutters out
De 'sheen a thrashing carn.

78. An den de chaps dey laugh'd agin,
As if old Nick had seiz'd 'em;
An burn my skin ! if I did'en grin,
A'cause I seed it pleased 'em.

79. But paid gran dearly far my fun,
An dat ya knows de wust an't;
I sed old Simon right ta pay,
A'cause he was de fust an't.

80. But when de master coom hisself,
He 'gun to say 'is prayers;
"Twas ya' said he, ' ya stupid elf,
I'll ha' ya ta de Mayer's.

81. Yees, ya shall pay, ya trucklebed,
Ya buffle-headed ass;
I know 'twas ya grate pumpin 'ead,
First blunnered thro de glass.'

82. So den I dobb'd him down the stuff,
A plaguey sight ta pay;
An Sal an I was glad enuff,
At last ta git away.

83. But when we got ta de Church-yard,
In hopes ta fine' de Fair;
Ya can't think how we both was scared
A'cause it was'n dare !

84. So we was cruelly put out;
An den de head pidjector
Av some fine shop, axt what we thoft
About his purty pictur.

85. Sal said she cou'den roightly tell,
An as you're there alive;
Doe unnernead dey wrote it Peel,
I're sure it was a hive.

86. I cou'd a gin de man a smack,
He thought we cou'den tell;
Sa often as ya know we baak,
A beehive from a peel.

87. So den we stiver'd up de town,
An found de merry fair;
Jest at de place dat we coom down,
When fust we did git dare.

88. Den I took Sarer by de han',
An wou'den treat her scanty;
An holl'd down sixpence to de man,
An gin her nuts a plenty.

89. An den, ya know, we seed de show,
An when we'd done and tarn'd about,
Sal sed to me, 'I think I see
Old Glover wid his round-about;

90. An dat noo boat dat Akuss made,
And snuff-boxes beside';
So den we went to him an sed
We'd loike to have a ride.
91. An up we got inta de boat,
But Sal began to maunder;
For fare de string, when we'd gun swing,
Shud brake an cum asunder.
92. But Glover sed 'It is sa tuff,
'Tud bear a duzn men';
An when he thoft we'd swung enuff,
He tuk us down agin.
93. An den he lookt at me and sed,
'It seems to please your wife';
Sal grinn'd, and sed 'She never had
Sudge fun in all her life.'
94. De snuff-boxes dey did jest fly,
And sunder cum de rem;
Dangle de skin an't ! sed I
I'll have a rap at dem.
95. My nable! there was lots of fun,
An sich hubbub an hollar;
De donkeys dey for cheeses run,
An I grinn'd through a collar.
96. Den Sal she run for half-a-crown,
An I jumpt in a sack,
An shou'd a won, but I fell down,
An gran nigh brok my back.
97. Den we went out inta de town,
An had some gin an stuff;
An Sal bought her a bran noo gown,
An sed she'd sin enuff.
98. Jigger! I wou'd buy har a ribb'n;
So when we'd bin and got it,
I told 'er dat 'twas almost sebb'm,
An thoft we'd better fut it.
99. An somehow we mistook the road,
But axt till we got right,
So foun our way throo Perry 'ood,
An got home safe at night,"

100. Thus Dick his canister unpack'd
I heard his oratory;
And my poor sides were almost crack'd,
With laughing at his story.

As printed in *A Dictionary of Kentish Dialect and Provincialisms: in use in the county of Kent* W.D.Parish and W.F.Shaw (Lewes: Farncombe,1888), with this supporting text;

The following was written by the late Mr. John White Masters, who was brought up in the neighbourhood of Faversham, under circumstances which gave him special facilities for making notes upon the Kentish Dialect as it was spoken in the early part of the present century. There seems to be internal evidence that the hero and heroine of the tale started from the village of Sheldwick (with which Mr. Masters was connected). The Verses were first published before 1821, but the exact date is unknown.