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Text type: Verse, ballad

Date of print: 1671-1704

Editions: Unknown

Source text:

Anon. 1671-1704. *A Mad Marriage; Or, the Female Fancy of Debtford*.
[n.p.] Printed for J. Deacon. <<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ballads/>>.

e-text:

Access and transcription: February 2006

Number of words: 675

Dialect represented: Northern

Produced by Javier Ruano-García

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Anonymous

*A Mad Marriage; Or, the Female Fancy of
Debtford* (1671-1704)

Being an Account of one *Margaret* a Carpenters Wife, (who to salve up the Credit of a servant named *Mary*, who had been dabling with *Ch--- Parsons* a Seaman, who soon after left her and went to Sea) dressed her self in Mans Cloaths and was Married to the said *Mary*, to prevent the shame of a crackt Maiden-head.

To the Tune of, *Moggies Jealousie*

You Lasses of London attend me,
whilst I a true Project shall tell,
Which lately was acted in *Debtford*,
and known by the Neighbourhood well:
Such things were ne'r heard of before,
as will by my ditty be shown,
Nor Womens inventions no more
like to this will for ever be known.

A Maiden whose name it was *Mary*,

at the Sign of the Kings-Head did dwell,
Who lately we hear did miscarry,
for her belly began for to swell:
Her Mistris soon smelt out the matter,
and took her to task for the same,
When after some sullen denyals
she freely confessed her shame.

And said that *Ch--- Parsons* a Seaman,
had been with her something too bold,
Who Courted and promis'd her Marriage,
and by consent rummidg'd her hold:
And how he had left her dejected,
and unto the *Indies* was gone
And she by her Mistris neglected,
who gave her no ease to her moan.

She therefore repair'd to the Mother,
of him that had trust up her Wem,
And pray'd her to look up some Linnen,
to swaddle the Bantling in:
Her Son she protested was Father,
and married they were in the Church,
But since he is gone to the *Indies*,
and leaveth me here in the Lurch.

The Old woman hereat amazed,
to find a new Daughter-in-Law,
Desir'd to know when they marry'd,
whereby her affections to draw:
And also the Certificate
she then did desire to see,
For if that you tell a false Story,
you lodge not your Bastard with me.

These words did so nettle our *Mary*
she could not tell what to devise,
She saw the Old woman was careful
and would not be put off with lyes:
She on the Rack stretch'd her invention,
and unto a Neighbour did go,
And opened all her intention,
and pray'd her some favour to show.

Says she Neighbour *Marget*, assist me,

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and hear this my pittiful case,
I know that you may much befriend me,
and smother my woful disgrace:
If you in Mans habit will dress ye,
and take up *Ch--- Parsons* his name,
We then in the Church will be married
and neither of us shall have blame.

The Carpenters wife soon consented,
a Suit of her Husbands she got
The Wedding-day also appointed,
when she was to act in the Plot:
To Saint *Georges Church* they repaired,
and thereof the Clerk did inform
Who soon had procured the Parson,
that they might be married that morn.

So soon as these Females were wedded,
the Clerk he was called aside,
Then *Margaret* whisper'd unto him,
and said she had wrong'd the Bride:
By dabling with her before hand
and therefore the Certificate,
Abundance of kindness you'l do me
if that you will it Antedate.

What is it that money won't do,
soon answered was the request,
Then homeward they straight way did go,
a great deal of joy they exprest:
The Mother of *Parsons* was joyed,
a Daughter-in-Law for to find
The Certificate being produced,
the Mother was loving and kind.

Providing all things that were needful,
her Grand-child when't came to receive,
And thought her self blest in her Daughter,
and did all her stories believe:
Till on a time *Marget* and *Mary*
with some other Neighbours did meet,
Carrousing full Bumpers of Brandy,
themselves did discover the Cheat.

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The which being noised through *Debtford*
the Parson soon of it did hear,
Who straightway acquainted the Justice
and caused them both to appear:
Who having examin'd the matter,
and found in 'um nothing but lies,
He unto the *Round-House* did send 'um
to remain there till the next Assize.