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VNIVERSITAS
STVDII
SALAMANTINI

DORSET COUNTY CHRONICLE

6TH DECEMBER 1838

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE:

THE UNIONERS

[2]

THE UNIONERS.

JOHN AND TOM

[Some memoranda having been put into our hands, being the substance of a communication overheard between two agricultural labourers working together in a barn in this neighbourhood, on the subject of the Political Unions now forming, a friend has obligingly given the following poetical paraphrase, minutely faithful to the dialect of the speakers. And we trust that the plain good sense of John may be as usefully instructive to his fellow labourers, as we are sure the dialogue will prove amusing to our readers.—ED. D. C. C.]

John—Well Tom, how be'st? Zoo thee'st a got thy niame
Among the unioners as I've a hiard.

Tom—Ees John, I have, John: an' I be'nt afieard
To own it. Why who woulden do the siame?
We ben't guoin on lik' this long. I can tell ye.
Bread is so high, and wages be so low,
That a'ter worken lik' a hoss, ya know,
A man cān't yarn enough to vill his belly.

John—Ah: well: now there. Ef I wer sure
The unioners woo'd gi'e me work to do
Al drough the year; an' gi'e me muore
Than I be yarnen now, I'd jine 'em too.
Ef I wer sure tha'd bring down things so cheap
That what 'ell buy a poun' o' muton now
Would buy the hinder quarters, or the sheep:
Or what 'ell buy a pig woo'd buy a cow.
In shart, ef tha' cou'd miake a shillen goo

The Salamanca Corpus: "The Unioners" (1838)

In market jist so ver as two,
Why then, ya know, I'd be the'r man;
But D'hang it, Thomas, I don't think tha' can.

Tom—Why ees tha' wul ya know, but you don't know't.

Why Mr. Vincen miade it clear.
Why vust tha'd zend up members ev'ry year
To Parli'ment, an' ev'ry man 'o'd vote.
Though 'e mid be as poor as a church mouse
Still 'e'd be fit to vote, and fit to goo

To miake the la's at Lunnan too.
Var if a feller idden wo'th a louse
Why, why should he be kept out o' the house?

An' when the poor vo'ke got a shiare
In miaken o' the la's tha'll tiake good kiare
To miake some good oones var the poor.

Do stan' by reason, John, becaze
Thay that be zent to miake the la's
'Ell miake 'em var therzelves, ya mid be sure.

John—Ees, that tha' wull. The men that you mid trust
To help you, Tom, would help ther own zelves vust.

Tom—Aye, aye. But we would have a better plan,
O' voten than the oone we got. A man,
As things be now, cān't goo an' vote
Agen another man, but he must know't.
We'll have a box an' bals var voten men
To pop ther vists into, ya know, an' then
If tha' don't happen var to like a man,
Tha'll drap a little black bal from ther han'.

The Salamanca Corpus: "The Unioners" (1838)

John—But ef a man ya woulden like to ‘front
Should chānce to cal upon ye, Tom, zome dae,
An’ ax ye var yer vote, what could ye zae?
Why ef ya wou’den ānswer, or shou’d grunt
Or bark, he’d know ya mieran’d “I won’t.”
To promise oone a vote an’ not to gi’e’t
Is but to be a liar and a cheat.
An’ then bezides, when tha’ did count the bals
Ef the white promises wer hafe turn’d black,
‘Dhangye, ‘e’d think the voters al a pack
A rogues together—‘e’d think al’ o’m false.
An’ a’ter al’, so very thick my plate is
That I don’t understand how this is yable
To put a jinte o’ beef upon my tiable,
Or buy me flick to grease my tiaties.
The times be pinchen I, as well as you,
But I cān’t tell what ever tha’ can do.

Tom—Why miake the farmers gi’e ther liabourmen men
Muore wages, hafe or twice so much agen
As what tha’ got.

John—But Thomas you cānt miake
A man pāy muore away than ‘e can tiake.
Ef you do miake en gi’e to till a vield
Muore than the groun’ itself da yield
‘E’ll shut out farmen—are ‘e’ll be a goose—
An’ goo an’ put his money out to use.
Wages be low becaze the hands be plenty;
Tha’ would be higher if the hands wer’ skenty.
Liabour jist lik’ the produce o’ the vield
Do zell at market prize, jist what ’t’ell yield.

The Salamanca Corpus: "The Unioners" (1838)

Thee wou'dsten gie a zixpence, I da guess,
Vur zix hen's aggs, ef tha wer zwold var less.
Ef thiese here union vo'ke could miake muore lan's,
Ef tha' cou'd tiake wold Englan' in ther han's
And stratch it out jist twice so big agen,
Tha' mid be doen zome'hat var us then.

Tom—But ef we wer a zent to Parli'ment

To miake the la's ya know, as I've a zaid,
We'd knock the carn la's in the head,
An' then the lan'lards must let down ther rent,
An' we shou'd very soon have some cheaper bread.
Farmers wou'd gi'e less money var ther lands.

John—Aye zoo tha' wou'd, 'an git a low'r

Prize var the produce o'm, an' zoo ther hands
Wou'd be jist wher tha' wer avore.
The carn is very dear, but then the reason
Is mainly that we've had a bad wheat season,
An' ef the unioners do hold together
'Dhangye tha' cān't miake la's to channge the weather!
Tha' ben't so mighty as to think o' frightenen
The vrost and rāin, the thunder and the lightenen!
An' as var I, I don't know what to think
O' tha' there fine big ta'ken, cunnen
Men that do come vrom Bāth an' Lunnen:
Tha' de live well therzelves an' eat an' drink
The best at public house wher' tha' do stāy:
Tha' don't work gratis, tha' do git their pāy:
Tha' wou'den pinch therzelves to do we good,
Nar gi'e their money var to buy us food.
D'ye think ef we shou'd meet'em in the street

The Salamanca Corpus: "The Unioners" (1838)

At Bath ar Lunen, that tha'd stan' a treat?

Tom—Ees, tha' be paid becaze tha' be a zent
Here by the unioners, the poor man's frien's,
To tell us al' how we mid gâin our en's,
And zend our charter up to Parli'ment.

John—'Tis very odd ther idden any friend
To poor vo'ke hereabout, but men mus' come
To do us good, away vrom t'other end
O' Englan'. Hânt us got noo fren's near huome?
I mus' zay Thomas that tis rather odd
That stranngers shou'd become so very civil:
That al' our vo'kes be childern o' the Divil,
And Lunnen vo'kes be al' th' vo'kes o' God;
Ef we got any fren's at al'
Why who can tell—I'm sure thee cassen—
But that the squier ar the pa'son
Mid be our frend, Tom, ā'ter al'
Var thee dost know the pa'son and the squier
Do git us coals to miake a bit o' vire,
An' gi'e us many a meaty buone to pick,
An' zend us medicine when we be zick,
An' then ther liadies, bless ther lives,
Do come an' gi'e things to our wives.
The squier's wife do often zend us down
A cuoat, or blanket, or a shift or gown.

Tom—Aye, let 'em zend their dry buones to the mill:
We woon't pick buones, we'll zee ef we cān't vill
Our bellies wi' fat beef, an' have a pint
O' beer at dinner to wash down the jinte.

John—I wish we mid, Tom; but, ef we do trust

These men to git it, 'twull be zome time vust.
That there's what I do zay, an' zoo thee't vine it
If thee dost waît till tha' be yable
To put thee jintes o' beef upon thy tiable,
I fear thee wooten have noo teeth to grine it:
I think that thee midst larn a lesson
Vrom Mr. Piers's book o' Preson.

The times be hard, God knows, an' tha' that got

His blessens shou'den let therzelves vorgit
How tis var he that never got a bit
O' meat a buoilen in his rusty pot.

He that can zit down in his easy chair
To flesh, an' vowl, an' vish, should try to spiare
The poor, thiese times, a little vrom his store;
An' if 'e don't, why sin is at his door.

Tom—Ah! we woont look to that, we'll have our right,
Ef not by fiair mieans, then we wull by might:
We'll miake times better var us, we'll be free
Ov other vo'kes and others charity.

John—Ah, I do think ya mid as well be quiet;
You'll miake things woose, I' ma'be, by a riot;
You'll git into a mess Tom, I'm afieard;
You'll goo var wool an' come huome shear'd;
You'll blunder out o' water into mud;
A civil war wo'd be noo benefit
To noobody, an' ef a man can't git
Good bread by zweet, 'e woont, I think, by blood.
Why I do mind we had a bad wheat year

The Salamanca Corpus: "The Unioners" (1838)

Now thirty zeven year agoo, ar muore,
An' bread, ya know, wer then so dear,
'Twer quite beyand the yarnens o' the poor;
Var one an' ten pence wer a gied
Vor ev'ry luof o' bread a' body zeed;
But yeet we rubb'd along the winter then
An' I do hope we sholl to year agen.

Tom—Well John, I'm sure I hope we shal;
But ev'ry oone is var hizzelf, mind, John.

John—Zoo be the men that ya da 'pend upon;
But God ya know is var us al'.