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Lahee, Margaret R. (1831-1895)

***Betty o' Yep's Laughable Tale of Jinny Cropper
at th' Halton Feast
(1865)***

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It wor Christmas toimes, an ir folk wor makin a dyel a do abeawt it, so o' mi mother's owd chums mut be ax'd to their baggin, an among th' lot wor owd Betty o' Yeps. "Hoo's a gradely cant owd lass an con tell some rum skits" ses my mother, "so hoo munnot be laft eawt. Run thee o'er to wheer hoo lives Johnty an tell her thi mother wants her o'er just neaw. Dunnot come beawt her, mi lad."

These instructions wor gan to me, so aw put on mi best cap, an peltert away across th' fyelt, an wor just i'th' nick o' toime to catch Betty settin off to th' Primitive Tea Party. "Howd on theer a bit owd woman" aw sed, dun yo know at mi mother wants yo o'er to ir heawse to yo' baggin, an hoo ses yo mun come just neaw. Eh mon we'n getton

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sich a stock o' curran loaf an cheese, backstone mouffins, an sick loike as yo nare seed afore."

"That's true, at anyheaw Johnty," hoo ses; aw hannot sin em aw yet for sure, but aw soon myen to do so. Come on maw lad."

An hoo cleek't howd o' mi hond an away we seet to ir heawse. Well when we geet theer, th' heawse wor rom'd jam full o' folk, o' neighbours, an Betty wor made some ov a fuss on aw'll assure yo. Mi Dad stick't her in his owd greyt cheer, an mi mother went an fotch'd her a pint pitcher full o' warm ale wi eggs in, an a gradely shive o' curran loaf an cheese.

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"Neaw, then, Betty be gettin that into thee till th' baggin's ready," ses mi mother, "aw'st have it on th' table in a crack."

"Well then" ses Betty "i that case aw think awd best wait, or happen yo'll be thinkin aw'm loike Tim Cropper, th' sondmon's daughter Jinny, at ey't so mich at Halton feast, that they stick'd her ith' Manchester Newspaper."

"They did the dule" ses mi fayther.

"Byth mon but they did" ses Betty, for aw've getton th' paper o' ir heawse just tis present toime, th' Manchester Mercery it wor code, an moor o'er it's gradely truth, for aw wor bye when hoo ate o' th' stuff, so that's nother he sed, nor hoo sed, for aw seed it wi mi own e'en, an to mi thinkin aw's't nare forget it. Eh, marcy heaw aw laugh't for sure, to see th' folk o' so taen on, but weel they met be, for hoo are em welly o' up."

"Whor!" ses my fayther "did hoo ey't o'th folk up?"

"Nay, nay", ses Betty "not th' folk mon, but every crumb o' mey't they'd getton i'th heawse, but see yo'r misses has th' tay ready neaw, so aw'll put this tother stuff sideways till after th' baggin, an then aw don't moind tellin yo abeawt Jinny Cropper at Halton feast."

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This intimation o' course received th' general sanction o' th party, who neaw gather'd reawnd th' tea table wheer Betty managed to keep their meawths at full stretch durin th' progress o' th' meal, till one o' th women coed eawt,

“Nay Betty do husht mon, aw cannot ey't mi baggin wi laughin at yo.”

“Humph” ses Betty “but yon plate o' moufflins at wor at yo'r elbow shows whether yo con ey't or not.”

“Eh dear Betty, yo mend none yet” ses mi fayther, crackin off gain.

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“Yigh” ses Betty, “aw recon to mend as aw goo on.”

An so hoo kept at it till th' baggin wor welly o'er; then takin a pipe, hoo sit deawn at th' hob end to smoke whol th' things wor being soided.

Well when they'd o' done an th' big table wor cleer't, maw mother brings eawt th' haue of a cheese, two curran loaves, a greyt pitcher full o' whome brew'd, pipes and bacco, tellin th' company to help theirsels when ever they'd a moind; this bein done to her satisfaction, hoo coom and sit her deawn o'erment, Betty sayin,

“Neaw then Betty tell us abeawt yon lass. Aw think aw seed her at yo'r Aint Ann's once.”

“Aye aw dar say yo did, but yo nare seed her twice, aw'll bet. Why mon yo'd nobbut to name her to my Aint An even to her deein day iv yo wanted to rise her temper, but o on yo draw yo'r cheers reawnd th' fire, an aw'll tell yo o abeawt it.”

They o' did so, an Betty begun

“Betty o Yep's Tale of Jinny Cropper.”

Well yo known owd Timothy Cropper an maw Aint Ann wor own brother's childer. Tim wed a Yorkshire woman named Tett Midgley, for his first woife; her fayther wor a weel to do sort o' chap, so Tim went o'er to live i' Yorkshire at a place code Moortown, near Leeds, but after awhoile his woife deed levin him wi nought but one choilt, a teeny bit ov o' lass code Jinny; well it worn't long after, afore Tim geet wed ogen, to a widow woman at went eawt o' sellin sond, a job Tim rayther loiked cose he could be at a lose

end, so he took his little lass away fro' th' owd folk, an his second woife brought her up till hoo wor owd enough to goo wi her dad a sellin sond; so wi one thing an

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another hoo grew up to be a greyt strappin wench, o'most as long as a lamp post! folk used to coo her greyt Jinny o' tims, th' sond wench.

Well as aw wor sayin, her fayther wor own Cousin to mi Aint Ann, as comical an owd woman as ony o' this soide o' Halton but it so happen'd i'th course o' toime her husband deed, levin her rayther weel to do, cose her childer wor grown up an wed i' good heawses o' their own, so when her husband deed Tim wor ax'd to th' berryin, but summat hindert him fro' comin hissel so behond yo he sent his greyt daughter Jinny i'stead. Yo o' know at that toime there'n no new fangled thinks code foire engins, an railway styemers scroikin away through th' country, enew to flay a buggart eawt o'th' greawnd; so mi brave Jinny had to foot it fro' Leeds to Halton, ut hoo'd pratty tidy stretchers ov her own, so hoo geet to Halton abeawt eight i'th' mornin an coom to ir heawse. Mi mother had th' greyt pon on th' foire hawve full o' ale an wor ogate o' cuttin up a hauce peck loaf to mak sops for mi fayther an ir lads' breykfast. There'n six on em wi my fayther, an they'd nobbut just gwon deawn to put mi Uncle Bob in his coffin, so we expected em back every minit.

O' course we worn rare an fain to see Jinny, an mi mother ses

“Eh, dear, lass, heaw is it tha'rt getton here so soon loike?”

“Whoy” ses Jinny “aw've bin comin ever sin last neet; but wheer's th' berryin to set off fro'?”

“Thy Aint Ann's to be sure” ses mi mother, “maw maister an ir lads seet off a whoile sin to put him in his coffin, but yo'r long traunce'll ha made yo i' rare fettle for yo'r breykfast, so yo munnot wait for theem but start and get some o' these sops into yo at once.” “Come Betty” hoo ses to me, “fot yon pie dish off th' shelf; dear a men, it gives me as mich as aw con do, to

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lift this pon full o' stuff off th' foire," hoo ses, heyvin th' sops off an teemin em into th' greyt dish.

"Neaw then, maw wench," hoo ses, "come o'er and get thi breykfast; nare moind ir folk. Betty an me con wait till they coom."

Well beawt moor a do Jinny pin'd up her dress and tuck in up her sleeves catch'd howd ov a spoon an too it hoo set i' good yearnest, whol mi mother ses to me,

"Neaw then, Betty, thee tidy up th' hartstone, whoil aw run deawn to yon dressmakers an see iv hoo's getton mi black geawn made, elsewise aw cannot goo to th' berryin."

An away peltert th' owd woman levin Jinny rappin at th' ale sops. Aw needn't tell yo at aw wanted maw breykfast too, cose aw'd bin wortchin some hard ever sin six o' clock, makin o' things i' order, so when aw'd soided th' pon an fettled up abeawt th' foire, aw turn't to see heaw Betty wor gettin on wi her sops, but behowd yo hoo'd ey'ton em o' up, yigh every smite on em. Aw could'ny believe mi own ee'n at first, so aw steert an steert loike one crazy, till aw could keep mi wonderment no longer, so aw ses,

"Whor! an han yo gwon an eyton up o' that yep o' stuff,"

"Aye" hoo ses, "it wir rare an good, an i yo believe me aw feel new made o'er ogen, for aw nare felt so done up never afore sin aw wor born. Aw could do neaw to lig me deawn a bit."

"Humph," aw ses, "by't mon aw shouldn't wonder iv that' lig'd deawn an brast, for aw nare seed a woman eyt so mich sin aw wor wick. Why mon Jinny, that's gwon an devour't every smoite o' stuff at wor to sarve o' ir folk."

"Eh, have aw!" hoo ses, "well aw didn't know but yo'r mam had ladled it o' eawt for me."

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“Nay,” aw ses, “tha know’d better, for didn’t hoo tell thee at it wor for o’ ir breyfkasts, but whol aw wor tellin her mi mother coom in, an seein th’ greyt dish empty, hoo ses “han they bin in them?”

“Nay, indeed em,” aw sed they’d no casion, for yon grey’t Yorkshre lass has gollop’d it o’ deawn her own guts.”

“Eh, never it o’ surely!” ses mi mother, starin at Jinny same as iv hoo wor some cur’osity, whol theer seet Jinny lookin as mute as ought, but mi mother wor loike me, hoo couldn’t believe her own e’en, so hoo went o’er an look’d into th’ dish but foindin it empty. Hoo crack’d off laughin, an ses,

“Eh, maw lass, wheer ever has ta putten it o’?”

“Aw didn’t know,” ses Jinny, neaw burstin eawt cryin “aw thought yo’d put it o’ eawt for me.”

“Nay nay,” ses mi mother “tha’ munnot scroike wench cose yo’r heartily welcome to ought we han i’th’ heawse, but aw didn’t know loike, so yo mun think nought at it.”

“no,” ses Jinny “aw waint, but yo seen aw’m a good eyton lass.”

“Aye” aw ses, “tha’ art that’s true, God knows.”

We that mi mother crack’d off ogen an ses to me, “do howd thi clack Betty, yon wench has bin on th’ road o’ neet welly, an recollect hoo’s loike to want her bally full.”

“Aye mother,” aw ses “an so do aw, but aw’ve getton mi bally full o’ Yorkshire shusheaw.” So wi that hoo cleek’d howd o’th’ long brush styel an run me eawt o’th’ heawse, an away aw beawted into one o’th’ neighbour women, an ses,

“Eh do come into ir heawse an see yon lass at’s eyton a whol hawve peck loaf made into sops.”

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“Ger off wi yo,” hoo ses, “the’r never wor a woman could do so,”

“Well but,” hoo has “aw tell thee, so come and look at her,”

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An wi that hoo woiped her honds eawt o'th wesh tub an went to tell a two-three moor ov her pals, an behowd yo o' on em coom straight to ir dur, an wor peepin in loike, when aw ses "come in, hoo's here, mother hasn't yon Jinny just eyton a whol"---

"Be off eawt o' mi seet that young meddlesome peawse" ses mi mother, stoppin me off in mi tale, "heaw dar tha' goo abeawt tellin ony sick loies, dear a me wimmen, yo mun tak no notice ov ir Betty cose hoo's as mischiefsome a wench as ever wor born."

An wi that, one oth' wimmen fot me a thungin rap between th' sheawlders whol they o seet up a sheawt o' laughin at me or Jinny, an off they went back, but as it happen'd Jinny had gwon to "lig her deawn" as hoo sed, an mi mother wor gettin some tea an toast ready for her own breykfast, so hoo leet me share wi her.

"Eh dear mother," aw sed, "whatever sort ov a bally has hoo to soide away o' that stuff, heaw long will hoo stop aw wonder."

"Nay, heaw con aw tell," ses mi mother; "happen a-week."

"Well then wis't be o clemm'd ov a rook," aw ses "for oth' myet wi'n getton i'th heawse winnot fit her two days."

"Yigh but it will too," ses mi mother, "cose aw myen to bring her deawn to thi Aint Ann's to her dinner."

"Eh, dear, then God help th' berrying' folk," aw ses, "hoo'll worry every boite o' myet on th' premises."

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We that mi mother crack'd off ogen, for hoo wor a rare woman for a spree, wor mi mother; but to mak' a short tale on it, ir folk had stopped for their breykfast at my Aint Ann's, an didn't come back till abeawt one ith' afternoon a donnin theirsels for th' berryin. Mi mother's geawn hadn't com'd, so hoo couldn't goo wi em, but hoo towd mi fayther hoo'd be at th' heawse afore they geet back, so aw started o tellin em o'er Jinny eytin th' hauve peck loaf, an had mi fayther an ir lads laughin for to brast their soides; but th' din wak'n'd Jinny, so hoo coom deawn stairs, an mi fayther ses just same as iv nought wor.

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“Good lad, Jinny, th’art worth thi weight i gows for gettin her so soon ith’ mornin, but has maw owd lass gan thee ought to eyt loike!”

“Aye,” ses Jinny, “aw’ve had what aw wanted, but yo munnot think it wor for th’ sake o eytin at aw coom.”

“Naw, naw lass, o’ course not,” ses mi fayther, but yo know, Jinny, it’s Halton feast to-day, so aw hope yo waint clem yo’rsel.”

“Nay, iv there’s ought to eyt, aws’t ha mi share,” ses Jinny.

“Good lass thee,” ses mi fayther, “but we’st be loike to lev yo neaw, as we’n a good two-three moiles to carry th’ corps, so yo’ll excuse us aw hope; but be sure thae comes o’er to ir Nan’s wo maw misses. Th’ owd woman’ll be weel pleast to see thee. Naw deawt.”

An away went ir folk.

Well, in a bit, th’ geawn coom, and mi mother set ogate o’ dressin hersel. Jinny an me wor trick’t eawt in ir best; an when mi mother wor ready, we o’ three seet off for March lane.

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wheer mi Aint Ann lived. Well, when we geet theer, we fun everything as cleyn as honds could mak it. Th’ heawse wor sceawerd as white as drip, an o’th’ things shon ogen for breet. The berryin had gwon long afore we geet theer, an mi poor owd Aint Ann wor sittin afore a greyt roarin foire, rockin hersel ith’ yeasy cheer. Hoo wor meetly weel plest to see Jinny an us, but hoo ax’d Jinny heaw it wor loike ‘at her Dad hadn’t com’d too.”

“Why,” ses Jinny, “he towd me to tell yo ‘at he thought one ov us ud be enough at a toime.”

“Bi mons he thought true for once, shusheaw,” aw sed in a whisper to mi mother ‘at made her yaup reet eawt, whol mi owd Aint steert at us bwoth, and ses ‘What’s up wi yo two?”

“It’s nought but ir Betty here ‘at’s ogate wi her marlocks,” ses mi mother.

“Hot on thee for a young peawse, connot ta keep dacent even ith’ heawse o’ dyeth,” ses mi Aint, shaken her crutch at me whol aw hud me behoind mi mother, till th’ owd lass bid us goo up stairs an tay off ir things.

So we went, and when we coom deawn hoo ses, “Neaw then lasses, had yo not better set th’ table. Yo seen aw con do nought misel wi this leg o’ moine bein so badly, an aw expect em o’ back soon; so set ogate. Yo con do that, Jinny, connot yo; yo’ll foind th’ table cloth i yon top drawer o’th’ dresser, an th’ plates are i’th’ pot shelf; an here Martha,” hoo ses to mi mother, “come thee o’er an look after this myet i’th’ oo’n; aw’m feert it’ll be poin’d away i-neaw.”

So mi mother went to t’ oo’n an poo’d eawt a greyt lump o beef, an a foine apple-pie, welly as big as an opun umbrell.

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“Bwoth th’ myet an t’ pie are done enough, Aint,” hoo ses.

“Aye, aw thought they would; an yo seen they hannot getton back yet, though th’ clock’s welly on th’ point o’ strikin; but aw tell thee what to do. Yo’d best get yo’r dinners whol it’s warm an there’ll be moor reawm for yon tothers when they com’n.”

“Naw,” ses mi mother, “aw’d liefer wait till they com’n, Aint.”

Aw could see at mi mother wor feert o’th’ myet gooin loike th’ sops; but th’ owd woman would have her way; so th’ dish wi th’ greyt pie wor hov’n on t’ table, an th’ lump o’ beef at tother soide on’t, wi a loaf o’ bread an a two-three potatos.

“Neaw then,” sed mi Aunt Ann, come draw up to th’ table an get yo’r dinners, an be sharp abeawt it, or you tother’ll happen be in on yo afore yo’n finished. Come, Jinny, sit deawn maw wench, an get thi bally full.”

“aye do, Jinny,” ses mi mother, “an aw’ll wait on thee, cose aw donnot feel hungry. Aw’d a saup o’ tea an toast just afore aw seet off, an so had ir Betty; but aw dar say yo con do wi yo’r dinner.”

“Aye,” aw ses to misel, “hoo eyt sich a teeny bit to her breykfast.”

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“So behowd yo, deawn sit Jinny at th’ table, an hoo ses to me, “Come, Betty, get thi dinner wi me.”

“Nay, bemacks, aw nother Jinny. Aw’v rayther moor white i’ mi ee’n nor that,” aw sed, whol mi mother fairly scroiked wi laughin; but mi poor owd Aint couldn’t for th’ heart on her think what wor up, but hoo kept sayin,

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“Neaw, then, wench, fill thu bally. Get soe o’ that beef an apple-pie into thee.”

An for sure hoo did. As aw stood behoint her, watchin slice after slice o’th’ beef an pie disappearin loike th’ picters in a Pannaramo, till aw’ll goo to sae iv there wor a smoite ov other laft.

“Theer, owd lass,” aw thought, “tha’ll do neaw for a bit, shusheaw.”

At this portion o’ Betty’s story, ir folk could ston it no longer, an they o’ crack’d off laughin till some on em had to howd their jaws bwons to keep th’ hinges fro’ strainin, but mi fayther wor th’ worst o’th’ lot, for he actilly scroiked ogen whol Btty kept sayin,

“Hush’t, mon, donnot yo know heaw undacent it is to laugh so when folks are tawkin an tellin ought.”

“Eh, dear! eh, dear, Betty, an done yo myen to say at it’s o’ true?”

“Howd on a bit, yo hannot yerd tone hawve on it yet, for whol Jinny wor helpin hersel, mi Aint couldn’t see her, cose aw stood between em; but when hoo’d cleert th’ dishes, an drunk aboon a quart pitcher o’ ale, hoo stretch’d hersel and ses,

“Heypus! aw’m frade aw’ve eyt’n rayther to mich; but mi dad olez tells me it’s undacent to lev ought at yon getton to eyt.”

“So wi that, hoo started o’ stretchin hersel ogen.

“Neaw, Jinny,” says mi Aint Ann, “aw hope yo’re had enough to eyt; has ta, lass?”

“Yigh, aw’st do neaw, aw think,” hoo ses.

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“That’s reet,” th’ owd woman sed, “for yo’r heartily welcome to ought we han.” Neaw, then, Martha, put that myet an pie on th’ oon top to keep warm for thoose at’s to come.”

Wi that, mi mother geet up fro’ t’ foire, an coom o’er to t’ table; but hoo naw sanner seed th’ dishes empty nor hoo brasted reet eawt laughin, an ses, “Eh, dear! eh, dear, Jinny, tha’rt capper ov o’.”

“Whoy, there’s none to bring,” ses mi mother.

“Whor!” seys th’ owd woman, neaw riskin on her legs, and skennin on th’ table, we o’ her e’en, “Whoy, wheer’s t’ beef an t’ pie?”

“It’s eyton to be sure,” ses mi mother.

“Eyton,” ses mi Aunt, “eyton, Martha, dun yo myen to say at o’ maw myet an pie at aw’d getton for th’ funeral folk is eyton; heaw, where, when?”

“Whoy wi Jinny, who else Aint, but come mon, sit yo deawn, and donnot be so flutter’d, aw be on yo.”

“Nay aw’st never sit me deawn wi sich wark whol aw live heaw dar tha ax me to sit me deawn after sich a dirty nasty thing bein done to me bi yon greyt heawnt, or heaw dar tha hause to bring her here to eyt me up i’ that shameful fashion, but as for thee tha audacious huzzy--heaw could tha for shame o’ thi faze come eawt o’ thi own country wi sich a gut long enough byt mon to deveawver a whol teawn, wh dear iv ’oth’ Yorkshire folk be loike thee they may weel be code Yorkshire bites, but

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tay thi bonnet and cloak this minit and away wi thee. Come be off wi thee afore aw start on thee wi maw crutch.”

“Dear a e Aint, do hush, an dunnot be so harsh wi th’ poor wench, yo mun recollect it’s Halton feast to-day, and hoo’s loike to have her fill.”

“Byt macks and hoo’s getton it or aw’m chetted but wheer i’th’ world has tha larn’t to eyt so mich, for to maw thinkin’ tha’rt nobbut fit to be stick’d in a show box for folk to look at when tha’rt feedin, loike a wild byest.”

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Well when hoo sed so, nother mi mother nor me could ston it no longer, and we yaup'd reet eawt whol theer sit Jinny starin' at the ow'd lass loike one dateless, and hoo whisper'd to mi mother.

"Aint Martha, heaw long has shoo been crazy?"

Marcy, o' me, what a sheawt mother did but set up then whol mi Aint nip'd up her crutch, and iv it hadn't bin for the berryin folk comin in just at th' toime aw'm sure hoo'd ha welly mischievd'd us o; hoo wor i' sich a passion, but th' first word hoo sed to mi fayther wor.

"Sitho Tummas goo fot th' soldiers to tay yon greyt sond woman up for hoo does'nt desarve to live."

"Hellow," ses mi fayther, "what's up neaw?"

"Tha may weel ax lad."

"Whoy, what is there to do loike?"

"Do! does ta say? theer's a greyt dyel to do, just look at yon strollops aw declare iv hoo has'nt gwon an eyton up o'th' myet at aw'd cook'd for yo."

"Has hoo for sure," ses mi fayther. "Well it doesn't matter

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as we'n getton plenty oppo th' road, wi havin to wait so long for t' parson, we laft the corps 'ith church and went into t' gowden fleece wheer we geet first-rate dinner; but heaw con yo for shame o' your faze be sa nattle wi th' wench after her comin o' this road to yo'r husband's berryin?"

"Aye, but aw wish fro' mi heart hoo'd tarried a whome," ses my Aint--so mi fayther went o'er an ses to Jinny,

"Tay no notice on her lass for byt mon hoo's crazy."

"Aye, aw see shoo is," ses Jinny, "poor owd creat'r, aw feel suerry for her."

"Well, i' th' meantoime, mi mother wor settin' eawt th' long table wi' curran loaf, cheese an ale for th' fellows, whol aw wur tentin th' foire to get th' kettle to boil so as to get th' baggin ready for th' wimmen, but in a bit mi mother coes eawt.

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“Neaw then, lads, come o’er an help uo’rsels to sich loike as it is.”

But thee sit th’ owd woman chummez in to hersel till their Bob goes o’er and ses to her,

“Come, mother, dunnot be so deawn hearted mon, moor leeker; yo ought to thank God yo’r none so badly laft, hannot yo plenty an to spare?” naw deawt but yo’ll miss mi fayther, it’s so loikely, but yo mun recollect he’s bin weel done to here, and let’s trust he’s gwon neaw to that good place wheer he’ll foind peace and rest.”

“Aye, aw hope so mi lad, but still aw know he’d ha bin deawn reet ill potter’d, iv he could think heaw yon great rapskallion coom an’ eyt up o’ at wor for his berryin, but hoo’s done wi me whol hoo lives.”

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“Nay, neaw mother donnot be so rash, aw beg on yo, whoy o’ th’ folk i’ th’ teawn ud cry oppun shame on us, iv they know’d heaw hoo’s getton used for nobbut eytin her bally full after comin o’ these moiles, to ir fayther’s funeral.”

“Well happen so Bob, but aw’m done wi her aw tell thee.”

“Well, Bob, aw donnot care so at tha taks her eawt o’ maw seet for iv aw may tell t’ truth aw olez despised a glutton an hoo’s a capper o’ one, an’ aw know yo’r Mally, is’nt one o’ thoose sort o’ folk, ‘at loikes bein’ eyton up naw moor nor me.”

“Say nought no moor, mother, aw’ll bring her to ir heawse after hoo gets her baggin.”

“Oh, tha may tak her afore t’ baggin’ iv tha loikes Bob, or aw deawt ther’ll be nought laft o’ th’ baggin’ for t’ other wimmen.”

“So bob crack’d off laighin,--”

Aw stood just aside on him, not to harken to what they wor sayin’ o’ course. Nay, goodness knows aw wur nare gan to that low-lived trick o’ listnin, but aw wur watchin’ for th’ kettle to boyl as aw’ve sed afore, so when aw’d put th’ tea tp brew, an’ getton th’ tray set aw code o’ th’ wimmen o’er to th’ table, mi mother had filled th’ plates wi’ curran loaf, mouffins, and crampets, an’ mi fayther had gwon an’ fotch’d a two-three

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peawnd o' boylt ham fro' th' tone o'th' cookshops. Jinny havin' eyton th' beef 'at wor intended t' come in for o'. Heawever they seet deawn to a stunnin' tea. Mi fayther put Jinny at th' yed o'th' table, an' yo'd ha' split yo'r sides wi' laughin' to watch mi owd Aint

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skennin at her fro' tother soide as th' owd lass wouldn't sit wi' us, but geet her baggin at th' hob end.

“Well, in a bit mi fayther code eawt.”

“Neaw, then, Jinny, tak some o' that ham, tha'rt th' only stranger among us, so aw hope tha waint be bashful, look after thisel, maw lass.”

“Husht Tom, aw tell thee or hoo'll eyt every boite on t' table,” ses mi Aint, but not leawd enough for Jinny to yer. Well aw nobbut wish yo could ha yerd th' sheawts o' laughin' 'at wor seet up i' that hole then, whol Jinny steer't first at one an' then at another, lost to know th' reyson o' their merrymment, but thinking it wor summat abeawt mi owd Aint, hoo look'd at her wi sich pity, an' whispered tone o'th' wimmen,

“Eh, aw do feel suerry ovver th' poor owd thing bein' a bit crazed, don't ye?”

But th' women steer't at Jinny an' then at mi owd Aint, not knowin heaw it wor loike whol mi bowd Jinny kept swoipin' off th' tea i' proime order, but hoo wor rayther moderate this toime, for hoo nobbut drunk ten cup fulls a tea, ans eyt only four greyt toasted mouffins.

“Aye, an' enough too,” says mi fayther to Betty.

“Well, rayther, for some folk, but nought loike for Jinny, aw wur a bit ta'en on at her loosin her appetite so soon. But when th' baggin' wor o'er, an' they'd o sit tawkin' an' some on em smookin' for a whoile, Bob ses,

“Well folk what think'n yo iv we o' gwon o'er to ir heawse to finish up wi' aw recon Mally'll ha getton summat for t' supper as aw towd her.”

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So o' bein agreeable off we seet, that is o' but mi' mother, hoo tarried wi th' owd woman, but Jinny, mi fayther, me, ir lads an o' tother folk beawted o'er to Bob's.--

When we geet theer we seed plenty o' myet cook'd for sure, as Bob kept a butcher's shop, so behowd yo ther'n a whol leg o' mutton, some roast beef, potatos, turmits, an sich loike, not to speyk o'th' greyt potato pie, at stood on th' oon top, whol t' table wor spread wi plates, dishes, knives, forks, o' laid eawt on a snow whoite diaper cloth.--

Th' seet o'th' stuff rayther surprised me cose Mally wor a deawn reet greedy woman; but when we geet into th' heawse, Bob ses.

“Neaw then maw wench aw'm bringin thee a rook o' folk to their supper, has tha' done as aw towd thee?”

“Yigh,” ses Mally, “but same for that it's rayther curious loike at we mun foind t' supper an it none ir own berryin.”

“Husht,” ses Bob, donnot thee say so mich abeawt that, are not they o' ir own folk, an see thee this here lass is a Cousin o' moine, hoo's code Jinny Cropper fro' tother soide o' Leeds, yon yerd tell ov her fayther Tim Cropper.”

So wi that, an owd chap at wor sit ceawerin at th' hob end code eawt.

“Aw say stop a bit maw wench, art tha' ought akin to Tim O' Croppers, at used to live at Heaton Norris, abeawt twenty yer sin?”

“Ay,” ses Jinny “he recons to be mi fayther.”

“Well then iv tha taks after him, tha con do wi a boitin on, for aw nare seed th' marrer to thi fayther for that sort ov a job

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sin aw wor wick. “Has he nare towd thee abeawt bein taen up afore th' Justice i' Manchester once for eytin aboon his share.”

“Eh dear” ses Mally “an did he do for sure!”

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“Aye he did no aw’s’t nare forget it, cose aw wor wi him at toime, it wor on Saint Matthew’s eve, an i’ theem days th’ fare wor held ith’ Acres fielt, theer wheer St. Ann’s Church neaw stons.

Tim an me wor bwoth young then, so we started off for Manchester an geet in just abeawt noon; but Tim ses to me.

“Aw say Billy what thinks ta’ iv we goo deawn to Ben o’ Batty’s eytin heawse an getton ir dinners afore we gwon into th’ fare.”

“Well” aw ses “but wheer does he live?”

“Whoy deawn i’ Deansgate yonder, but stop a bit; tha’d best goo in bi thi’sel an co’ for thi dinner first, but dunnot recon to know me, an aw’ll howd thee twopence, aw’ll ha Ben gradely on.”

“Well beawt moor a do deawn we went an aw beawted into th’ little reawm an code for mi dinner ov roast mutton, an whol aw wor waitin for him to bring it me, in coom Tim, an ses.

“Con aw get mi dinner here thinks ta?”

“Ay,” ses Ben, “what will you have?”

“Whoy roast beef an puddin,” ses Tim, “but stop a bit, yo mun first tell me what th’ cost ull be, aw deawt Manchester chaps knows heaw to may us poor Country folk some weel for ought we han.”

“Oh no Sir,” ses Ben, “we recon a dinner to be a shillin, an give a man as much as he can eat, that is of plan beef an puddin.”

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“Well,” ses Tim, “that’ll shute me, so let’s have it at once iv yo plessun maister.”

“All right,” ses Ben, gooin eawt an comin back in a crack, wi a greyt dish o’ roast beef for Tim, an some mutton for me.

“Now then my man,” he ses to Tim, “here’s the beef, potatos and pudding serve directly,” an so it wor, but let me tell yo Tim set reet at it an aw’ll goo to sae iv he didn’t eyt every smoite o’ that stuff i’ under twenty minits.”

"He did the dule ats loike," ses Bob.

"Well, but he did though."

"Byt mon he shap't that shus-heaw," ses Bob.

"Nay not quite so weel as yo think'n on, for just as he wor finishin t' fag end on't, Ben coom bustlin forrud an ses.

"Done with the beef, Sir?"

"Aye," ses Tim, "aw'm done wi t' beef, an aw'll thank yo for another plate o' puddin; it is some good."

"Well, Sir," ses Ben, please where's the beef as there's gentlemen waiting to have their dinners off it."

"Whoy, what the ferrups don yo myen felley surely yo'r none axin after that beef yo fot me for maw dinner," ses Tim.

"What," ses Ben, neaw starin first at tone an then at tother, "come, come gentlemen please let me have the beef."

"Nay nay," aw ses, "yo'n no casion to look at me, aw've had nought to do wi th' beef, cose aw haven't eyton mi own share yet," aw sed pointin to th' shilder o' mutton he'd fot me.

"No," ses Ben, "and I'll take right good care you never shall

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finish it neither; but as for you my man, I'll show you up before th' Justices I will."

"Aw nother care for thee nor o' th' Justices i' Englun," ses Tim, "cose aw've nobbut eyton what aw bargain'd for mi dinner as mich as aw could eyt for a shillin, but aw hannot getton it eawt yet, so aw'll thanks yo for another lump o' that puddin iv yo plessun."

"Oh you audacious impudent glutton," neaw sheawted Ben "how dare you come into any man's place to rob and plunder him so? but byth' laws Harry, it's the last beef or puddin yo'll ever taste in this ife, for I'll shoot you dead I will."

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An eawt o' th' reawm Ben dash'd for his gun in a teawerin passion, whol a rook o' Country Chaps gethered into th' place; an Tim started o' tellin em heaw it wor loike, so they shut th' reawm dur to keep Ben eawt for he'd fotch'd his gun, and wor for makin a hole i' poor Tims indyruber stomach, but some o' Ben's friends persuaded him to spare Tim's loife, an moor leeker to tak him afore t' Justice Butterworth Bayley, Esq., then th' yed mon i' Manchester.

Well yo known i' them days Manchester wornot greyt mornderin place it is neaw, nother wor there sich hee notions abeawt tryin folk bi Jury men, neaw Justice Bayley could rattle a case striaght off hond, he wor i' general to be fund i' th' owd coffee reawm, at stood o' ernent th' Exchange, an underneath this same reawm wor a ginnel code the dark entry, tone o' th' main roads to St. Anns Square Market Place, and so on, th' rayson aw'm so particler abeawt this place is becose there's an owd pump at top end o' th' dark entry, and dark it wor sure enough.

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But as aw wor sayin Ben's friends advised him to bring Tim off, so away they lurried him deawn Exchange Street an reet to th' coffee shop; th' Justice wur i' th' reawm an yerin th' din he pop'd his yed through th' oppun window an code eawt.

"Now then what's up? eh! has that scamp been fighting?"

"Eh dear that's nought your worship," ses Ben, "but if you can believe me he's after worryin all th' beef at was cooked for my customers."

"Worry your beef, I don't understand you" ses t' justice. "Well but" ses Tim, if yo plessun Mr. Justice, to harken maw tale, yo' seem aw'm nobbut a roughish sort ov a Country Chap, an' so aw ax'd yon Ben o' Batty's, what he'd gie me mi dinner ov beef an' puddin for--an' he towd me he recon'd to give a mon his bally full o' plain beef an' puddin for a shillin, an' behowd yo' he's none satisfied wi' his own price, though he hasn't stuck to his word, cose aw could ha' eyton moor puddin, but when aw ax'd for it, he wor gooin to shout me, worn't he Billy?" he ses neaw, turnin to me.

"Aye for sure wor he" aw ses

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"Humph" ses th' Justice to me, "were you present my man?"

"Aw wor," aw ses.

"Well and how much meat has he eaten do you think?"

"Whoy not o'er ten or twelve peawnds," aw sed.

"Ah! indeed, and had he nothing to drink at dinner?"

"Naw not a tooth full yo'r worship", ses Tim neaw breetnin up.

"Then by George yo shall have", ses t' Justice.

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"Come my lads, drag him down yon entry, an' let him sup from the old pump; surely after eating so much he deserves a good drink."

An' th' owd scamp laugh'd an' wink'd at th' set o' rapskallions, an' they nipp'd howd o' poor Tim, an' i' spoite ov o' his kickin an' sheawtin, they carried him to th' Pump wheer they held him whoile a whol rook on 'em started o' pumpin th' cowl waiter on him an' o' t'other foos begun o' sheawtin an' laughin loike crazy nowmons, as they worn.

Well yo' may be sure aw felt gradely ill troubled for Tim, an' aw couldn't tell what to do, till aw bethought me to beawt deawn to t' fare an' see iv ony ot'h Heaton Norris lads wor theer, so away aw peltert, an wern't long afore aw'd gether'd a good two-three ov ir Country Chaps reawnd me, 'at wor olez ripe for ony mak o' spree, so beawt loss o' toime, when aw towd em heaw th' place, wi me at their yed sheawtin,

"Neaw then for it, clear th' road."

An' i' this fashion we reych'd Exchange street, wheer ther'n aboon thee hunder't folk a stonin, so to it we fell i' gradely Lancashire style, an didn't we clear that hole in a crack, begoes th' owd steps leadin up to th' coffee reawm wor filled wi' folk watchin t' spree, but we no--sanner geet theer, nor they coom tumblin deawn on their yeds, whol th' windows flew in o' directions, an th' scamps at wor pumpin on Tim beawted eawt o' th' dark entry loike bees eawt ov a hive.

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There wor plenty o' black ee'n an crack'd yeds theer, aw warrant yo; but at last we yerd th' Soldiers wor co'd eawt, so think-

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ing discretion th' best soide o' vallour, o' on us turned reawnd an' beat a retreat to Acres fielt, wheer th' feytin wor renew'd till us Heaton Norris lads, had made Manchester too hot to howd us, an fearin we should be o' taen up, we poiked ir bwons off as weel as we could, an geet back whome safe.--

That wor th' last toime at ever aw wor wi' thi fayther Jinny, for soon after that, he went off to live i' Yorkshire, but worn't he a stunner o' one?"

"Eh dear me" ses Mally "aw think he wor a quare chap to do so."

"Aye but he did," ses Billy, an bemaks aw dar say he could eyt just as mich neaw."

"Well," ses Jinny, "aw dar say he could."

"Humph," ses Mally in a whisper to me, "then aw'm fain at he didn't come here."

So aw laughed to misel, thinkin heaw hoo'd stare loike, when Jinny ud begin on her performance i' th' eytin way."

But whol owd Billy wor tellin us abeawt Tim's carryins on, Mally had gotten t' supper on t' table an then hoo code eawt.

"Neaw then yo folks, com sit o'er an tal it as it comes here, Jinny sit yo deawn aside o' Bob, Betty maw wench, come thee o'er to maw side, Jinny what will tha have, beef or mutton?"

"Aw donnah mind, but aw think mutton this time," ses Jinny

"Very good," ses Bob squarin off a whoppin collop, "neaw then, be gettin that into thee lass.--Mally some potatos, an' onion sauce for Jinny, will tha have some brade Jinny?"

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"Aye, aw donnat mind Bob," ses Jinny.

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Well help thisel, there's plenty at soide on thee."

We that hoo started i' good yearnest; an iv aw hadn't sin what hoo'd done afore, aw couldn't ha' believe't as hoo'd eyton ought for that whol day, nay moor loike me ha sed for that whol week.--but Bob an mi fayther wor up to th' owd lass, not so t'other folk, an iv yo'd nobbut watch'd em skennin at Jinny, yo'd a' fair brasted wi' laughin, whol theer hoo sit as solid as an owd maid at a weddin,--hoo didn't seem to tak ony gawm ov ought but th' mutton, an that hoo kept crammin deawn her throat wi' a vengeance, takin each neaw an' then a swoipe ov ale, to bawn it deawn, at last Bob wor cuttin her off another lump, when Mally ses,

"Here Bob, give her some o' this potato pie mon, will ta?"

"Naw, naw, ses Bob," let her a be, hoo'd leifer ha' th' mutton wouldn't tha Jinny?"

"Well, aw'm not tedious," ses Jinny clearin her plate for th' fourth toime, whol o' t'other folk, ay even owd Billy, crack'd off laughin an ses,

By' th' mons, hoo's her fayther's wench, aw see."

"Sure hoo is," ses mi fayther.

"Come Jinny, howd thi plate for another bit," ses Bob shoivin off aboon two peawnds moor o'th' mutton.

"Theer lass, get it into thee--neaw then good folks, what the hangments are yo o' doin, at yo donnot eyt?" ses Bob.

But they worn too busy watchin Jinny, to do mich theirsels t'one o' th' wimmen sed in a whisper,

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"Eh marcy o' me, wheer ever has yon las sbin reyard?"

"Nay," ses another, "God knows, but hoo caps o' th' gluttons at ever aw yerd on, why mon hoo fairly worries th' myet."

Poor Mally seemed deawn reet ill potter't, but it wor to no use as Jinny kept on a' th' owd bat, an quite unconscious at hoo wor doin ought at hoo shouldn't do.-- But what made me laugh most wor th' road Mally kept lookin every neaw an' then, turnin th'

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whites of her e'en up to th' top o' th' heawse, an' shakin her yed as iv pityin wonderment at Jinny's stomach.

Well in a twothree minits moor, Jinny's plate wanted fillin ogen, an Bob wor beawn to cut another wedge off th' mutton, when ma bowd Mally nips up th' whol potato pie, an settin it deawn afore Jinny, hoo ses,

"Neaw then try this for a change."

Well when hoo'd done so, ther'n a reglar crack o' laughin, an owd Billy ses,

"Bravo Jinny, byt mon, tha'rt a chip off th' owd block."

"Nay" ses Mally, "hoo's th' owd block hissel."

Eh marcy, what a sheawt they seet up i' that hole then but Bib ses,

Happen Jinny doesn't loike potato pie, does tha Jinny?"

"Nay aw'm no wise partic'lar as aw've said afore, but aw don't want no more neaw," ses Jinny.

"Tut nonsense mon," sed Bob, "that hasn't had hawve a supper yet."

"Eh dear Bob heaw can ta say so," ses Mally, "when hoo's after swallowin very nee a whol dourteen peawned leg o' mutton."

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"Well that ses nought so long as hoo con do wi moor," ses Bob.

"Aye aw dar say hoo con but aw'd ha bwoth yo an her to know at there's other folk here besoider her, an to maw thinkin hoo ought to be satisfied wi eytin, aboon three quarters on it, unless loike her fayther i' Manchester, hoo wants to finish it off reet eawt."

"Nay aw cant say at aw do," ses Jinny pushin her cheer fro' t' table.

"Nay nay," ses Bob smiling, "yo'r none done yet Jinny."

"Yigh aw think it o'most time to be done when folks starts of upbraidin one o'er th' bit they'n eyton."

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“Eh bless us yo'n no casion to be so comical owd lass, for there's no body here upbraided yo, naw but aw thought i' o' reyson yo'd eyton yo'r share on it, so aw wanted some o' tothers to taste, but here mon tak it an eyt th' bwon an o' iv tha's a moind.”

An mally nip'd up an pop't it on Jinny's plate, but Jinny neaw begun for t' first time to think at folks had bin laughin at her, an hoo geet rayther nattle an wouldn't eyt no moor till Mally fot her some mince pie an tow'd her to tay no notice o' what hoo'd sed, cose hoo wor heartily welcome to ought theer, o'ther myet or drink, donnot yo see, Mally dar but say so, fretend Bob met flite her for stoppin Jinny off in her feed, but be that as it may, in a whoile Jinny geet as good temper'd as ever, an acknowledged at hoo'd bin very weel sarved wi o' her friends an at hoo wouldnt forget to come o'er ogen some toime soon; a promise hoo'd a kept no deawt, but for one o' th' men at wor

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present, named John Harrop fro' Manchester, sendin th' whol acceawnt to th' Mercury.

So behowd yo th' very next week deawn coom th' Manchester Mercury to mi fayther, an when he wor lookin o'er it, what does he see but this acceawnt abeawt Jinny.

“Sunday being Halton feast the daughter of a Sandman at Moortown, near Leeds, came to see a friend in March Lane, and ate a half peck loaf made into sops, at dinner, seven pounds of beef and a large apple pie, and drunk a gallon of ale. At tea she was quite moderate only drinking ten cup fulls and eating four muffins, and at supper her stomach seemed to fail her, as she only ate three quarters of a leg of mutton, and drunk two quarts of beer, but was seemingly in good spirits.”

Manchester Mercury, September 10th, 1782.

Well to finish mi tale, afore that day wor eawt, o' th' folk i' Halton seem'd to know o'er Jinny, an they kept comin to ir heawse wantin us to land th' paper, to let em see iv it wor true, till at last mi mother geet so wary wi em botherin, at hoo hud th' paper in a hole at there wor i' one o' th' byems o' th top o' th' heawse, an leypn'd to know nought abeawt it; an theer it tarried for mony a long yer till mi fayther an mother bwoth deed, an o' ir lads geet wed, levin me same as aw am neaw bi misel, but it so happen'd at aw

bethought me last Kessmass to whitewesh th' top o' th' heawse, so aw set ogate an wor stonin on th' long table dustin when aw spoide th' owd paper thrust into th' byem reawlt up in wisp, so aw poo'd it eawt, an to mi greyt surprise fund it wor the very one ir folk had sich spree o'er when aw wor a little wench.

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“So neaw awve towd yo mi tale abeawt Jinny at Halton feast heaw done yo loike it,” ses Betty.

“Well” ses mi fayther, “it’s a stunner o’ one for sure Betty, but aw rayly think it’s o’ true loike, neaw con yo good folk?”

“Well aw dont know” ses mi mother, “but surely Betty could never mak sich a story as that!”

“Eh dear, say nought abeawt what Betty could do, for to maw thinkin hoo’s getton a yed piece as fause as a Turney’s.”

“Well, well, say nought no more,” ses Betty, “but happen yo waint miss-deawt yo’r own ee’n neet iv aw goo an fotch th’ paper o’er to show yo at it?”

“Good owd lass, that’s reet, fot em t’ paper to look at, an’ surely seeins believin”, ses mi mother.

So beawt moor a do, away went Betty to their heawse, an wornot long afore hoo coom back wi th’ owd paper in her hond lookin as deet an yollow as one o’ theem foreign felleys wi long blue geawns an yollow treshers, cram’d deawn ath’ heels at aw’ve sin i’ Manchester so oft.

But when hoo geet into th’ heawse ogen hoo ses.

“Neaw then con ta believe me?”

Wi that mi fayther took it fro’ her, but when he started a readin o’er Jinny’s dooment, aw nare yerd sich laughin nor sich rum tawk as tehy o’ tawk’d, one on em ses.

“Good lass Jinny, tha’d mak a stunnin Alderman.”

“Nay,” ses another, hoo’d do th’ best for t’ maister ov a poor heawse there wouldn’t be mich laft for th’ paupers to nibble at shusheaw.”

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Well there's a regler sheawt o' laughin seet up then, an mi dad ses.

"But stop a bit Betty tha' hasn't towd us yet what becom on her after, did hoo get wed, dee, or what?"

"Why hoo geet wed to be sure, an a rum weddin it wor, th' chap wur code Jimmy Gee, a joiner bi trade, fro' greyt Heaton, but begoes hoo eyt so mich at th' poor chap thought hoo'd getton th' hungry diabations, so he wor for stickin her into th' Manchester Infirmary; but howd off, Jinny had moor wit nor lettin em do so by her, an behowd yo hoo wor missin one foine mornin, an couldn't be fun hee nor low, so poor Jimmy thought hoo'd made away wi hersel, but he wor mistaen, as th' owd lass had gwon back to Moortown, wheer hoo tarried to be a good reawnd age, an when hoo deed aw went to her berryin, wheer they wor moor laughin nor cryin when aw towd th' tale of her visit to Halton.

An neaw yo seen aw've towd bwoth th' hare an th' hare gate, so it's toime to be trottin back whome, an aw con but thank yo for mi baggin," ses Betty, but ir folk wouldn't yer of her gooin so soon, an they ses.

"Nay nay", yo'r surely not beawn yet Betty, see thee mon donnot be t' first to breyk up th' party, come sit yo deawn ogen an let's have another skit or two."

Being thus pressed Betty sit her deawn ogen at th' hob end, an they o' kept tawkin an tellen o' sorts a rum tales till nigh on midneet, when aw wor made poike mi bwons off to bed, but aws't never forget nother Betty nor her tale whol aw live."