

Author: Anonymous

Text type: Prose, verse

Date of composition: n.d.

Editions: Unknown

Source text:

Anon. *The Famine Fast Day*. In *Curiosities of Street Literature*. 1871.
London: Reeves and Turner. 74.

e-text:

Access and transcription: July 2011

Number of words: 845

Dialect represented: Lancashire

Produced by Javier Ruano-García

Copyright © 2011- DING, The Salamanca Corpus, Universidad de Salamanca

STVDII
SALAMANTINI

Anonymous

The Famine Fast Day (n.d.)

Sam. Well Tum, how did tha get on th' Fast day.

Tom. Ta' Fas Day! bye gum awe think nowt oth' fast day, for its a fast day every day wi' us.

Sam. Nay mon, not every day, awe shud think yo've summat to eat sum time.

Tom. Aye, we have summat to eat, but it's very lettle tha may depend on't, thick porrich un' sour milk for brekfast, un' potatos and suit, un sum toime a red yarrin un brown bread for dinner, an we go to bed awebewt supper, un if that's feasting aw dunna know what you cawn fasting.

Sam. Well but Tum, con yor tell me what this fast day wur kept for.

Tom. Aye by gum con aw, they sen it's to drive famine away.

The Salamanca Corpus: The Famine Fast Day (n.d.)

Sam. Famine, wot dost mean mon, why all this clemming eh England, Ireland, an' Scotland.

Tom. Aw con there be a famine ith' land, un th' warehouses an' th' tommy shops aw breaking down wi' stuff.

Sam. Aw think eth' Lords un Bishops, un Parsons an such like folks had ony goodness in um, they'd gie poor folks a feast day, instead of a fast day.

Tom. Now do you think that these Parsons and Bishops kept th' fast day.

Sam. Not they mon, they an fish, eggs, turtle soup, and such like, but if th' poor could live as they done, thy might fast for one day.

Tom. I'll tell thee how aw did, aw sent ovr Nell th' day afore to borrow some brass, un hoo geet sixpence, an' hoo went to Shade Hill, un hoo bought a sheep's pluck, but it had no heart toot, un hoo geet a penoth o'th balcon, un hoo stew'd it aw together, un it wur rare un good, aw dunna think th' queen had such a dinner, it's the best flesh meat dinner I've had this six months.

Sam. Aw reckon yo stuff'd yore guts so full, you'd no more to eat that day.

Tom. Why we wur hungry ageen next morning, un had to fall to our thick porrich an' sour milk, but if fasting will drive famine away, I should like it to drive poverty away so that poor folk could geet plenty of plum pudding and dumplings, an' sich like, but stop, I've bowt a song about it, un you shall hear it:--

Ye working men both far and near,
Unto my song pray lend an ear,
While I the wonders so declare,
About this famine fasting day,
The Bishop of London that godly saint,
Who preaches in the Parliament,
He said it was their full intent
For to have a fast day,
He told the Parliament he'd a call,
For to come and tell them all,
The Devil would fetch them great and small,



The Salamanca Corpus: *The Famine Fast Day* (n.d.)

Unless they kept a fast day.

CHORUS

Singing hightly picklety fast who will,
I wish poor folk it's had their fill,
Good beef and pudding the famine to kill,
Much better than a fast day.

Some of them laugh'd, some fell asleep,
And out of the house some did creep;
To please the Bishops and black sheep,
They did appoint a fast day,
The twenty-fourth of March it was the day
That some did fast and some did pray,
Some made a feast as I've heard say,
To drive this famine far away,
I sent our Nell as I'm a sinner,
To get some liver and bacon for dinner,
We fasted so long we are quite thinner,
We thought we'd have a feast day.
To walk about that day in the street,
Thousands of poor folk I did meet,
Because they had got nothing to eat,
And so they kept the fast day.
Some who had money spent it free,
While others had a jovial spree,
Some pawned off their smocks they say,
All for to get a dinner that day,
Some went to the alehouse it is true,
Got drunk and fought till all was blue;
On Saturday night thousands will rue



The Salamanca Corpus: *The Famine Fast Day* (n.d.)

The general famine fast day.

The Bishops and the Parsons too,
They seldom fast I tell you,
Their paunches they well stuff it's true,
Yet preach about a fast day,
With fish and eggs, and Rhenish wine,
On turtle soup each day they dine,
Till their guts are poking out like swine,
As though it was their last day.
But if poor folks like them could live,
Or if good wages they did receive,
The storms of life they then could brave
Without this famine fast day.

So to conclude may fats day song,
Pray do not think I've kept you long,
But whether it be right or wrong
I'd rather have a feast day,
But if a fast would drive this famine away,
I've only got one thing to say,
I wish it would drive poverty
Into the middle of the sea,
The Parsons and Bishops are afraid,
Church and tithes cannot be paid,
And except they learn some other trade
They will have many a fast day.