

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Hap and Rowe

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The wife put on the wee pan,
To boil the bairn's meatie, O;
Out fell a cinder,
And burnt a' its feetie, O.

Hap and row, hap and row,
Hap and row the feetie o't;
I never kent I had a bairn,
Until I heard the greetie o't.

Sandy's mother she came in,
When she heard the greetie o't;
She took the mutch frae her head,
And rowed about the feetie o't.

Hap and row, &c.

Chambers PRS (1847), 187; (1870), 24. Ford CR 133 (last line "rowed it round"); MacLennan SNR (1909), 35 (1.4 And burned its wee feetie, O. Cho.3 I never kent a bairnie yet 2,3 frae aff [etc.]. Montgomerie SNR (1946), 82 (no. 96).

Cf. a poem by William Creech (1745-1815), the Edinburgh publisher of Burns, here from Whitelaw, BSS, 440:

We'll hap and row, we'll hap and row,
We'll hap and row the feetie o't;

It is a wee bit weary thing,
I downa bide the greetie o't.

And we pat on the wee bit pan,
To boil the lick o' meatie o't;

A cinder fell and spoil'd the plan,
And burnt a' the feetie o't.

Fu' sair it grat, the puir wee brat,

And aye it kick'd the feetie o't,

Till, puir wee elf, it tired itself;
And then began the sleepie o't.

The skirling brat nae parritch gat,
When it gaed to the sleepie o't;

It's waesome true, instead o' 'ts mou',
They're round about the feetie o't.

Tune, The Reel o' Stumpie, found in the Scots Musical
Museum V (1796), no. 457, to the chorus and stanza 1 of a
traditional fragment revised (and amplified?) by Burns:

[Cho.] Wap and row, wap and row,
Wap and row the feetie o't;
I thought I was a maiden fair,
Till I heard the greetie o't.

My daddie was a fiddler fine,
My minnie she made mantie, O,

And I mysel a thumpin quean,
And try'd the reel of stumpie, O.
[Wap and row, &c.]

Lang kail, pease and leeks,
They were at the kirst'nin' o't,

Lang lads wantin' breeks,
They were at the getting o't.
Wap & row, &c.

The Bailie he gaed farthest ben,
Mess John was ripe and ready o't;

But the Sherra had a wanton fling,
The Sherra was the daddie o't.
Wap and row, &c.

(From MMC [1799], 26-7. Text omits chorus after st. 1, and
in 2.3 has wanton. Cf. Legman's note [1965 reprint of MMC,
156-7].)

Glen (ESM, 201-2) finds the music published first in Walsh's Caledonian Country Dances I (c. 1734) as Butter'd Pease. It is in the Drummond Castle MS. of 1734, and is probably at least a generation older. See Kinsley's note (Burns, III.1508-9). A holograph of the first stanza and chorus (with "try'd the rantie-tantie O" in 1.4) was in the Gribbel collection, "a set of collector's notes" as Kinsley says, suggesting that they are traditional, altered slightly "to tailor the song for the air"; while the MMC extra stanzas are probably folk bawdry, though obviously Burns may have done something with them. The stumpie, of course, = "penis".

WBO
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