

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## The Weaver and the Factory Maid

The Weaver and the Factory Maid

Oh, when I was a tailor, I carried my bodkin and shears.  
When I was a weaver, I carried my rood and my gear.  
My temples also, my small clothes and reed in my hand.  
And wherever I go, there's the jolly bold weaver again.

I'm a hand weaver to me trade.  
I fell in love with a factory maid,  
And if I could but her favor win,  
I'd stand beside her and weave by steam.

My father to me scornful said,  
How could you fancy a factory maid?  
When you could have girls fine and gay  
Dressed like unto the queen of the May.

As for your fine girls I don't care,  
If I could but enjoy my dear,  
I'd stand in the factory all the day  
And she and I would beat our shuttles in play.

I went to my love's bedroom door  
Where I had often times been before,  
But I could not speak nor yet get in  
The pleasant bed where my love lay in.

How can you call it a pleasant bed,  
When nowt lies there but a factory maid?  
A factory maid although she be,  
Blessed is the man that enjoys she.

Pleasant thoughts run through my mind  
When I turn down her sheets so fine,  
And see her two breasts standing so,  
Like two white hills all covered with snow.

The loom goes click and the loom goes clack  
The shuttle flies forward and then flies back  
The weaver's so bent that he's like to crack  
Such a wearisome trade is the weaver's.

Now that it's made into cloth at last  
The ends of work they all make quite fast

The weaver's labors for now have passed  
Such a wearisome trade is the weaver's.

Where are the girls, I will tell you plain:  
The girls have all gone to weave by steam,  
And if you'd find them you must rise at dawn  
And trudge to the mill in the early morn.

One of the reasons I like this song so much is that I believe it marks an important point in the history of the Industrial Revolution. The technology of spinning thread was developed long before the invention of automatic looms, and for some decades machine spun thread was sent to professional (hand) weavers, usually men, who contracted with the spinning mills. But when textile mills began to weave as well as spin by machine, these artisans lost their profession to lower paid, less skilled factory workers, mostly women and children. I find it ironic that in this song the weaver is in love with the factory girl who has displaced him. DS

Recorded by Steeleye Span on Parcel of Rogues  
RG, DS