Shanty Boy on the Big Eau Claire

Shanty Boy on the Big Eau Claire

Come all you jolly shanty-boys, come listen to my song
It's one I've just invented, it won't detain you long
It's about a pretty maiden, a damsel young and fair
Who dearly loved a shanty-boy upon the big Eau Claire

This young and artful maiden with a noble pedigree
Her mother she kept a milliner's shop 'way down in Mosinee
She sold waterfalls and ribbons and bonnets trimmed with lace
To all the high-toned people in this gay and festive place

This shanty-boy was handsome, there were none so gay as he
In the summer time he labored at the mills of Mosinee
Till stern keen winter came along with cool and blistering breeze
He went upon the Big Eau Claire to fee the big pine trees

He had a handsome black mustache and a curly head of hair
A finer lad than he was not upon the Big Eau Claire
He loved this milliner's daughter, he loved her long and well
Till circumstances happened and this is what I tell

The milliner swore her daughter the shanty-boy never to wed
But Sally, seeming not to care for what her mother said
So she packed down her waterfalls and bonnets by the stack
And started another milliner shop 'way down by Fond du Lac

It was in her occupation she found but little joy
Thoughts came rushing through her mind about the shanty-boy
Till one fine autumn came along to ripen all the crops
She then went down to Baraboo and went to picking hops

Sal is broken-hearted and tired of her life
She's thinking of the shanty-boy, and wished to be his wife
She caught the scarlet fever, was sick a week or two
Down in a shabby pest-house, 'way down in Baraboo

It was oftimes in her raving she tore her auburn hair
And talked about her shanty-boy upon the Big Eau Claire
The doctors tried, but all in vain, her life they could not save
And now this weeping willow stands drooping o'er her grave

When the shanty-boy heard this sad news, he became a lunatic

He acted just as others do when they become love-sick
He hid his saw in a hollow log and traded off his ax
And hired out to pull an oar a fleet for Sailor Jack

He fell off from a rapids-place at the falls of Mosinee
Which put an end to his career and all his misery
The bold Wisconsin River is waving o'er his bones
His friends and his companions are weeping for him at home

The milliner now is bankrupt; her shop is gone to wrack
She's thinking now of some fine day to move to Fond du Lac
Her pillow sobbed every night in spite of her daughter fair
And by the ghost of the shanty-boy upon the Big Eau Claire

Come all ye young and pretty fair maids, come take an advice of me
Not be too fast to fall in love with everyone you see
For the shanty-boys are rowdyish, which everybody knows
They dwell in the mighty pine woods where the mighty pine tree grows

Stealing logs or shingle brooms, telling each other lies
Playing cards, or swearing, is all their exercise
But if you want to marry for comfort or for joy
I advise you to get married to an honest farmer's boy

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