

WANTON
TOM:

OR, THE

Merry History

OF

TomStitch

The Tailor.

*Each'd with such pleasing pastimes of Delight,
That 'twould invite a Lady, Lord or Knight
To reas:—it is a Gem, a Mint of Treasure,
Whose Sport and Mirth beyond all measure.*



STIRLING :

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THE
MERRY HISTORY
OF
TOM STITCH THE TAILOR.

CHAP. I.
Of Tom Stitch's Birth and Parentage.

IN Thread-needle-street, at the upper end of Thimble Alley, lived one William Stitch, by profession a taylor, who was married to Nan Needle :

Whom many men did often thread
When they could gain her to their bed.

She keeping company with many men to gain custom, at length she gained the French distaste; which increasing, she burnt her husband's thread. This being known among their customers, they used to jeer her, and say, She was a hot Needle indeed to burn her husband's thread: And when her husband asked them for work, they answered No no ; Do you think we will let you be our taylor who sews with a hot needle and burning thread ?

In a short time after they were married there arose a great contention between him and his wife concerning their names ; she

would not have her's buried in forgetfulness and such a one as his flourish. Her husband, to save contention yielding to let her name be joined to his, and so called Stitch Needle

Soon after this she lived a more chaste life than heretofore so that she proved with child; but her husband in half a year after died. He being dead, and she very poor, could not tell where to go for relief, having scarcely any friend living that would regard her.

The time soon slipped away, and the day of her delivery drew nigh; but she not thinking it so near as it was, neglected the getting such necessaries as one in her condition required; so one day unexpectedly, she fell into travail, no body being with her but only a maid, who first ran to call the neighbours and then the midwife; but being delivered before she came, a poor neighbour had dressed the babe, which was a boy. Then a minister was sent for to baptize him, who having orders named him Thomas Stitch; and a while after, the woman asked the mother what she had got to give the child. She answered with a sigh, that she had nothing in the house but a porringer of butter'd cabbage which she had eat part of that day for her dinner,

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The child crying very much, the woman took the cabbage and warmed, and then fed the babe with, who ever since hath loved cabbage beyond measure.

CHAP. II.

Shewing in what manner Tom was brought up Of his being bound an apprentice How, by a mad prank, he lay with his mistress; How his master caught him in bed with her; Likewise how he had him before the chamberlain for it, and how by a jest he was freed.

IN a few years Tom's mother married again and lived very happy, put him to school, and there maintained him until he was big enough to be an apprentice; then his mother bade him make choice of what handicraft he would; Tom thought a better opportunity of choosing a trade, in which he could get plenty of his favourite dish of cabbage, never offered he therefore made choice of a tailor. His mother soon got him a master, whose name was Mr Deceitful, who had a severe wife to servants, and Tom being more addicted to waggery than ordinary, she was the more severe on him; for every morning, if he lay in bed after five o'clock she would go up, with a cudgel in her hand, and pull Tom out of bed, and beat him like a stock-fish. She

using him so once or twice a week," made him study how to prevent it: So one morning she coming up to his bed side in a great rage, fell upon him; but he leaped out of bed, crying, insomuch that the tears ran down his cheeks. Then she returning very eagerly to strike him again, he took up the forelappet of his shirt, and wiped his eyes, which when she beheld, she forbore to strike him, turning her back upon him and so departed out of the room blushing; and never after that would she call Tom up.

But he, not being contented with what he had already done, soon contrived a way to be revenged on her; for he imagined she kept company with young gallants, unknown to her husband; and therefore resolved to find her out, if possible. Tom watching an opportunity, one day, in the middle of the week, saw her warming a clean smock, which was not usual, he then began to apprehend she was to meet a gallant abroad. So after she had dressed herself, and gone out, Tom following her, till at length she entered into a noted school of Venus, where none but the sons of Venus were practitioners, who had each a rich wrought bed for a study and a daughter of Venus for a book: which is according to the poet, who saith,

A woman is a book, and often found
To prove far better in sheets than bound;

his then kind, though before cruel mistress, decked with all the tempting dresses art could produce: Her face looked like alabaster: a tower upon her head to conquer her lovers: nay, her smiles seemed as if they would have overcome her greatest enemies.

In this dress she beholding his beautiful looks, which were scarcely to be equalled by any, thought him to be some high-born person, and herself very happy, though only to admire him. At length she broke silence and gave him this courteous salutation: Much honoured sir, your looks do presage you are of some noble extraction: your majestic presence forceth my tongue to express what my heart thinks: Yet I hope, noble sir, I shall not presume in to high a nature, but that you shall forgive. I shall think myself happy to be recorded among the number of your servants.

He hearing her salute him at his entrance with such inviting expressions, imagined what she would be at; so taking her by the hand desired her to be his pilot into some haven of felicity. She readily yielded to his request and conducted him up stairs into a chamber, he complimented

No wonder than why men take such delight,
Above all things to study in the night.

Tom seeing where she went in, returned
back to a broker's shop, and hired a very
rich suit, coat, sword and a peruke: In
this attire he walked much like a gentle-
man to that door where his mistress went



and enquired, whether that was not a
school of Venus where a gentleman might
have entertainment? To whom the ser-
vant replied, he might. To hearing this,
he entered in; and the first he met with was

her in this fort ; bright madam, your matchless beauty hath captivated my senses ; if you will vouchsafe to honor me with thy sweet and delightful company, I shall think myself more happy than Paris who enjoyed the Grecian queen. To which, she replied, Dear sir, command me as your own, while you remain here ; nay, your sweet looks have so charmed me, that I could die in your arms. She yielding herself so wholly to him. he entertained her with all the choice dainties the house could afford. But as he was taking his repose with her, he slipped a pair of scissars out of his pocket and cut off a piece of her best petticoat ; and after he enjoyed her he made what haste he could, and paid the reckoning and departed. At his departure, she hoped to have his company there again such a day of the following week, to which he consented, promising not to fail.

Tom made haste and shifted his clothes, and went home laughing, to think how he would have her at his beck.

Tom's mistress, after she had missed that piece of her petticoat, thought he had been some gentleman her husband had sent (fearing he had heard where she was) or purpose to betray her, never thinking it

was her man 'Tom. She was greatly vexed for a long time, and could not tell what she had best do, sometimes thinking one thing and sometimes another, In this perplexity, at last she pinned up her petticoat and resolved to venture home, let the event be what would. So home she went, and found her husband sitting by the fire (poor cuckold warming himself, not thinking where his wife had been, nor at whole fire she had been warmed.

When she perceived he was ignorant where she had been she thought he had made himself so, on purpose to hear what he would say. She sitting by the fire very melancholy, at length her husband asked her what made her so disconsolate? She answered she was not very well, The cuckold, being very kind, as most are, caused a cordial to be prepared for her; yet she could not be well for three or four days.

Tom took no notice of her for that time; but some short space thereafter, he spoke to her in this manner: Good mistrels, I see you have been very melancholy these three or four days, if you are any ways discontented, I will venture my life to purchase your content, or if any one hath done

you injury, I'll spend every drop of blood in my body to right you, if you will but let me know the cause of your being thus sad and sorrowful. She hearing him speak thus unto her which he never did before, checked him for his sauciness, by bidding him be gone, which he instantly did; but



said, as he was going out, Though I have offended you now, somebody will please you before night, that being the day he appointed to meet her.

She hearing him say so, mistrusted he knew, and having a guilty conscience, asked what it was he said! Tom replied suddenly to her again, I hope you'll be pleased before night; yet though you think I know nothing, you would be glad if I did not know what I do.

She being touch'd to the quick gave
 him half a crown to tell her what he meant:
 This is the thing that I mean, said he,
 and pulled the piece of her petticoat out of
 his pocket: She blushing gave him a piece
 of gold, begging of him not to tell her hus-
 band, hoping he did not know already. No
 said Tom, he does not know, nor will I e-
 ver let him know. When he had promis-
 ed to her not to tell, she asked him how he
 came by it? He answered, I am he that cut
 it off. Then she blushing more and more,
 said,

Dear Tom, if thou this secret will not
 impart,

A purse of gold I'll give thee with all
 my heart;

Nay, I'll kiss and love thee without mea-
 sure,

And study day and night to yield thee
 pleasure,

I have no power to frown or angry be,
 I'll not resist, do what you list with me.

Tom, hearing this, gave her a kiss.

But first he went to shut and lock the
 door,

Then did to her as he had done before:

The scene chang'd,—no more in awe
 he'll stand

For now the man the mistress doth com-
 mand.

Now Tom lived more like her husband than an apprentice, having store of choice dainties given him daily to eat, money enough, fine clothes, his bed warmed every night in the winter time, and when his mistress, but unknown to the maid, or his fellow-prentice.

Tom's mistress proving so kind, at length his master took notice of it, and grew jealous; yet he thought it was only a fancy of his, till at length it became so plain, that he could not but take notice of it, and therefore resolved, if possible, to find them out. So one day he feigned that a lord, who lived in the country, had sent for him to take measure for a suit of clothes, and that he was to lie there all night, but before he set out on his pretended journey, he acquainted the maid with his design, giving her a piece of gold, and charging her at twelve o'clock at night to open the door when he gave one knock, He hired a horse, and had brought to the door the better to blind his wife, then mounted and road away.

Tom and his mistress being glad of the opportunity, and thinking themselves safe, at night she went to bed, and he to her as soon as his fellow-prentice was asleep, and there they enjoyed their wished desires.

But what should prove their mishap! at twelve o'clock her husband knocked at the door, and he being let in by the maid; went directly up stairs to their bed-side, drew the curtain—and there beheld his wife and his man Tom encircled in one another's arms, both being fast asleep. When he beheld them lying so lovingly, he was scarce able to contain himself within the bounds of reason, but was ready to pull them out of bed, yet pausing a while upon it, resolved to make an example of them both and first of Tom.

When he had called the maid up to see and bear witness of it, he left the room, and them asleep, and between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, the next day, in order to Tom's punishment he had him warned before the chamberlain, which startled him and his mistress when they heard it; she wondered that she did not know it; neither of them mistrusting that it was for that, But she that morning he was to appear before the chamberlain, ask her husband what Tom had done that he should be brought before the chamberlain? to which he replied, You shall know before night.

When the time came that Tom appeared before the chamberlain, his master made this complaint of him:—Worshipful sir, I have brought my man before you to have him severely punished for being so impudent and saucy as to lie with my wife and to prove the truth of it I have brought my maid to witness it; Therefore I intreat your worship to punish him with all the severity the law can inflict.

The chamberlain hearing what a fool he was to proclaim himself a cuckold, smiled in conceit; then called Tom, and asked him, Whether that was true which his master said against him? To which he answered if it please your worship I cannot deny it. You are an impudent rogue, said the chamberlain. Not, said Tom, such an impudent rogue as your worship ——— akes me to be. Come, sirrah, said the chamberlain. I'll teach you to set your words closer together. He observing Tom to be very arch, reproved him, by telling him fly from the embraces of his mistress, as Joseph did. May it please your worship, said Tom, if his mistress had been so fair as mine, he would not have forsaken her. The chamberlain hearing this jest, fell into a great laughter, as likewise did all those that were then present and immediately dismissed him, without any punishment.

His master seeing him discharged so, and himself made the object of all his neighbours sport and laughter, made what haste he could home, and told his wife in a great rage, That, if ever she let Tom lie with her again, he would turn them both out of doors, and put them to seek for fresh quarters; but if she would promise never to lie with him again, all should be well, and he would forgive all whatever was past. She made a thousand protestations to obey his commands and never more to offend in the like manner: yet, notwithstanding all her promises, she made use of all opportunities to steal into the sweet embraces of her pretty Tom.

CHAP. III.

Shewing how Tom was revenged on the maid for nottelling him his Master's Design in taking him and his Mistress in Bed together Of his Mistress's Death; and of his being turned out of doors.

WHEN this quarrel was over and all things quiet, Tom studied how to be revenged on the maid for not acquainting him and his mistress of his master's plot, in catching him with his mistress. Tom at length imagined she and his fellow

prentice were married, sometimes missing him in the night, yet never suspected any thing, but only that he rose out of his bed; so now he resolved to watch him, and afterwards sleep as dogs sleep for three or four nights together, and observed him constantly to go to her; But one night when they were at supper, Tom put sleeping powder into his fellow 'prentice's drink, to make him sleep sound and about one o'clock the same hour he used to rise he jogged him, that he might know if he was asleep. Tom, perceiving he was asleep, arose, and went to his fellow 'prentice's wife, but resolved, if she spoke, only to whisper, she lying awake ready to receive him. When she heard him she desired him to drink that pint of sack, thinking Tom to be her husband: so when he had drank it, she received him into her arms, embracing him very lovingly, there remaining two hours, enjoying his heart's delight, then, with a parting kiss, he bade her adieu.

Tom coming to his own bed, he found his fellow 'prentice fast asleep as he left him. In the morning about six o'clock, Tom arose, leaving him asleep, and went down, the supposed maid being up, to thank her for the sack he drunk, and the

kind entertainment she gave him in her bed. O heavens, said she, was it you! I beg you on my knees never to reveal it; for if you do, I am undone; for I thought you to be your fellow-prentice, to whom I am married. No, said he, I'll be even with you now.

The more he threatened to tell, the more she persuaded him to keep it secret, offering him any thing he would desire. Since you are so willing to have it concealed, said, he, I will take some pity on you, though you would not for me; Bring me down half-a-year's wages. She yielding to give him the money, but not to lie with him, as he had further requested to her. When she found she could not prevail, she yielded to lie with him; but shortly after she proved with child, and left her service, desiring him never to reveal it, which he promised never to do.

In a month after she was gone, his mistress fell sick and died, and he out of his time within a fortnight thereafter. His master being still incensed against him, turned him out of doors that very day his time expired; so that Tom could not tell whether to go, nor what to do. Now his best friend, and loving mistress was dead being ashamed to go near any of his rela-

Let me no more upon the rock of fate be
toss'd,

Nor think of her whom I have lately lost.
My loving mistress, whom I made a slave,
Is fled from me, for to embrace the grave,
Triumphing grief! I fear my heart will
break;

My tears'gush forth, my tongue can scarce-
ly speak.

None ever yet did mourn and weep like me,
Nor none sure that had the like destiny.
But hold: in vain I grieve for her that's
gone,

I'll no more to the regardless air make moan;
If Fortune will but smile on me once again,
I'll quit myself from all this grief & pain.
Farewel rich London, and my mother too,
For unto both I now must bid adien.

Tom having eas'd his mind, rose up,
and went on till he came to Leeds, where
he was entertained very kindly by a rich
old woman, both for bed and board; for
he no sooner asked her, but she consented,
and was very glad when he sued her for
affection, whom she daily wished to enjoy,
yet kept off at a seeming distance for some
time, though not long.

tions, he having proved so very ungrateful to them in his apprenticeship.

CHAP. IV

Shewing how Tom forsook London ; his Lamentation at his departure ; of his being entertained by an old woman, who was very rich, in Leeds, in Yorkshire ; Likewise how he promised to marry her and sixteen maids in one Day, whom he got with child, in sixteen weeks ; Lastly how he appointed them all to meet him at a particular place ; and how he deceived them, and left the town.

SOON after Tom's dear mistress was dead being almost in despair, he resolved to take a ramble into the country, hoping to find some employment there. In order to which, he provided what necessaries he stood in need of, and then he set forward on his journey. And when he was about a mile from London, in a pleasant field, upon a green bank, on a bright sunshining day, he sat down and made this sad lamentation

O Fortune frown no more as thou hast done,
But let thy joys shine bright, as doth the sun,

This old woman doating on Lim, gave him any thing he desired: and Tom having her purse as well as her person at command, asked her one day when he had been very familiar with her, to lend him some money to set up; she not having the power to deny him, let him have some.

He being set up, though in her house, made himself acquainted with all the maids he could, who thought themselves never so happy as when they were in Tom's company, and brought him all the work they possibly could. Tom seeing them so loving and kind to him, tickled their fancies with pretty love stories; and one above the rest, named pretty Betty, imagined Tom loved her, never having a sweetheart before, therefore every day she would carry him a leg of a goose or of a turkey, or some other of her choice dainties. Then seeing how kind and loving she was, made her think he loved her, but resolved never to marry her.

There were many other maids he pretended the like kindness for, which his old landlady perceiving, grew jealous of him. So one day, after Tom had been kissing one of the maids before her, she

quarrelled with him threatening to turn him to the door, and also to arrest him for what money he owed her. Tom soon quelled her passion with some sweet loving words, and was received into favour again but resolved never to kiss any of the maids before her face, but went home unto their houses there being sixteen of them whom he got all with child in sixteen weeks, and promised to marry them all.

Sometimes one would come urging him to marry, and sometimes another; but he pretended several things to be in his way, so that he could not marry yet. However one day to blindfold them, he bought himself a gold ring, and first he told his landlady, if she would lend him five pounds, he would marry her with that ring; to which she agreed, for then she thought herself sure of him.

When he had got the five pounds, he appointed her to meet him at such a style, about half a mile from Leeds, at eight o'clock precisely. In like manner he went on with all the sixteen maids whom he had got with child, shewing them the ring that he should marry them with, who rejoiced as much to see it as if they were already married, and gave to each of them

a yard of scarlet ribbon to wear under the chin that day, desiring every one in particular to meet him the next morning, at eight o'clock exactly, and then to go and be married, to which they all agreed : But yet he requested one thing of every one of them, and that was, to send him all the money they could ; for he had, as he feigned, laid all his money out to buy a bargain of clothes with. They believed him ; so one lent him five pounds, some more, some less, according as they had ; and when he had got all the money he could he returned to bed.

The next morning, rising very early, he desired his landlady to dress herself to be married, which she did, and went directly to the place appointed. After she was gone, Tom rode out of town in great haste ; but not to meet his landlady and the rest of his mistresses, as he had promised : but before he went, he wrote these following lines, and left them under his landlady's pillow.

Farewel, old hostess, my smooth flattering
tongue,
Hath prov'd too old for you, tho' I am but
young ;
You thought you had me sure, and that this
night,

I should, with licence, yield you much delight-

You that of times claim'd doubts of me must stay.

For I'm resolv'd myself to double pay,
 Could you so much a fool think me to be,
 To take one that's so old and cold as thee?
 No, the case is far more just as it doth stand.

For you too oft had me at your command.

Before his landlady was arrived at the place appointed there overtook her first one supposed maid, with a red ribbon under her chin, then another and another; until eleven pass'd by. The old woman seeing so many pass by with ribbons under their chins, wondered very much: till at length she came unto the stile, where she saw all those that had pass'd by her; and five more, all sighing and wondering at each other.

At length they espied a man coming towards them and made what haste they could to meet him, But when they saw it was not him, none broke silence, for fear of betraying themselves. The man speaking to them, said, I have a message to deliver to you, but was charged not to declare it, till I approach the stile. And

as soon as he was thither, they being gathered round about him, he pulled the following lines out of his pocket, they being sent by wanton Tom to be read to them.

To you, poor lasses, I these lines do send,
 Confessing each of you has been my friend
 Some brought me work, some dainties for
 to eat,

Not thinking ever I should prove a cheat.
 'Tis true your hearts and minds they now
 are pierc'd,

But who will laugh, you're all alike dis-
 tress'd,

Now I your money will as freely spend,
 As ye your maidenheads to me did lend.
 Now for your maidenheads you may com-
 plain.

Your hearts and money to return again,
 Sigh and lament, but 'twill be all in vain,
 Then fare you well, from Leeds I now am
 gone,

And not contracted unto any one.

FINIS