

William Maginn (1793-1842)
(also attrib. David Macbeth Moir, 1798-1851)

3 *The Rime of the Auncient Waggonere*

In Four Parts.

Part First.

An auncient
waggonere stoppeth
ane tailore going to a
wedding, whereat he
hath been appointed
to be best manne,
and to take a hand
in the casting of the
slippere.
The waggonere in
mood for chat, and
admits of no excuse.

It is an auncient Waggonere,
And hee stoppeth one of nine:
“Now wherefore dost thou grip me soe
With that horny fist of thine? []

“The bridegroom’s doors are opened wide, 5
And thither I must walke;
Soe, by your leave, I must be gone,
I have noe time for talke!”

The tailore seized with
the ague.

Hee holds him with his horny fist –
“There was a wain,” quothe hee – 10
“Holde offe, thou raggamouffine tykke.”
Eftsoones his fist dropped hee.

He listeneth like a
three years and a half
child.

Hee sattu him down upon a stone,
With ruefulle looks of feare;
And thus began this tippyse manne, 15
The red-nosed waggonere.

The appetite of the
tailore whetted by the
smell of cabbage.

“The waine is fulle, the horses pulle,
Merrilye did we trotte
Alonge the bridge, alonge the road,
A jolly crewe, I wotte.” 20
And here the tailore smotte his breaste,
He smelte the cabbage potte!

The waggonere, in
talking anent
Boreas, maketh bad
orthographe.

“The nighte was darke, like Noe’s arke,
Oure waggone moved alonge;
The hail poured faste, loude roared the blaste, 25

Yet still we moved alonge;
And sung in chorus, 'Cease, loud Borus,'
A very charminge songe.

Their mirthe
interrupted.

"Bravoe, bravissimoe,' I cried,
The sounde was quite elatinge; 30
But, in a trice, upon the ice,
We hearde the horses skaitinge.

And the passengers
exercise themselves
in the pleasant art of
swimminge, as
doeth also their
prog, to witte, great
store of colde roasted
beef; item, ane
beef-stake pye; item,
viii choppines of
usque-baugh.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
It was a dismale mattere
To see the cargoe, one by one, 35
Flounderinge in the wattere!

"With rout and roare, we reached the shore,
And never a soul did sinke;
But in the rivere, gone for evere,
Swum our meate and drinke. 40

The waggonere
hailethe ane goose,
with ane novel
salutatione.

"At lengthe we spied a good grey goose,
Thorough the snow it came;
And with the butte ende of my whippe
I hailed it in Goddhis name.

"It staggered as it had been drunke, 45
So dexterous was it hitte;
Of brokene boughs we made a fire,
Thomme Loncheone roasted itte." —

The tailore
impatient to be
gone, but is forcibly
persuaded to
remain.

"Be done, thou tipsye waggonere,
To the feaste I must awaye." 50
The waggonere seized him bye the coatte,
And forced him there to staye,
Begginge, in gentlemanlie style,
Butte halfe-ane-hour's delaye.

Part Second.

The waggonere's
bowels yearn
towards the sunne.

"The crimson sunne was rising o'ere 55
The verge of the horizon;

Upon my worde, as faire a sunne
As ever I clapped eyes onne.

The passengers
throwe the blame of
the goose massacre
on the innocent
waggonere.

“Twill bee ane comfortable thinge,”
The mutinous crewe ’gan crye;
“Twill be an comfortable thinge
Within the jaile to lye;
Ah! execrable wretche,” saide they,
“Thatte caused the goose to die!”

60

The sunne sufferes
ane artificial eclipse,
and horror follows,
the same not being
mentioned in the
Belfaste Almanacke.

“The day was drawing near ittes close,
The sunne was well nighe settinge;
When lo! it seemed as iffe his face
Was veiled with fringe-warke-nettinge.”

65

Various hypotheses
on the subject,
frome which the
passengeres draw
wronge conclusions.

“Somme saide itte was ane apple tree,
Laden with goodlye fruite,
Somme swore itte was ane foreigne birde,
Some said it was ane brute;
Alas! it was ane bumbailiffe,
Riding in pursuite!”

70

Ane lovelye sound
ariseth; ittes effects
described.

“A hue and crye sterte uppe behind,
Whilke smote oure ears like thunder,
Within the waggone there was drede,
Astonishmente and wonder.”

75

The passengers
throw somersets.

“One after one, the rascalls rann,
And from the carre did jump;
One after one, one after one,
They felle with heavy thump.”

80

“Six miles ane houre they offe did scoure,
Like shippes on ane stormye ocean,
Theire garments flappinge in the winde,
With ane shorte uneasy motion.”

85

The waggonere
complimenteth the
bumbailiffe with ane
Mendoza.

“Their bodies with their legs did flye,
Theye fled withe feare and glyffe;
Why star’st thoue soe? — With one goode blow,
I felled the bumbailiffe!”

90

Part Third.

- “I feare thee, auncient waggonere,
I feare thy hornye fiste,
For itte is stained with gooses gore,
And bailiff’s blood, I wist.
- The tailore meeteth
Corporal Feare[.] 95
- “I fear to gette ane fisticuffe
From thy leathern knuckles brown;[”]
With that the tailore strove to ryse —
The waggonere thrusts him down.
- ““Thou craven, if thou mov’st a limye,
I’ll give thee cause for feare;”
And thus went on, that tipsye man,
The red-billed waggoner. 100
- The bailiffe
complaineth of
considerable
derangement of his
animal economye. 105
- “The bumbailiffe so beautifull!
Declared itte was no joke,
For, to his knowledge, both his legs
And fifteen ribbes were broke.
- Policemen with their
lanthernes, pursue
the waggonere. 110
- “The lighte was gone, the nighte came on,
Ane hundrede lantherns’ sheen
Glimmerred upon the kinge’s highwaye —
Ane lovelye sighte, I ween.
- “Is it he,’ quoth one, ‘is this the manne?
I’ll laye the rascalle stiffe;’
With cruel stroke the beak he broke
Of the harmless bumbailiffe.
- Steppeth 20 feete in
imitatione of the
Admirable
Crichtoun. 115
- “The threatening of the saucye rogue
No more I coulde abide.
Advancing forthe my goode right legge,
Three paces and a stride,
I sent my lefte foot dexterously
Seven inches through his side. 120
- Complaineth of
foul play, and falleth
down in ane trance.
- “Up came the seconde from the vanne;

We had scarcely fought a round,
When some one smote me from behinde,
And I fell down in a swound:

One acteth the parte
of Job's comfortere.

“And when my head began to clear,
I heard the yemering crew —
Quoth one, ‘This man hath penance done,
And penance more shall do.’” 125

Part Fourth.

The waggonere
maketh ane shrewd
observation.

“O Freedom is a glorious thing!
And, tailore, by the by,
I'd rather in a halter swing
Than in a dungeon lie. 130

The waggonere
tickleth the spleen
of the jailer, who
daunces ane
Fadango.

“The jailere came to bring me foode,
Forget it will I never,
How he turned up the white o' his eye
When I stuck him in the liver. 135

Rejoiceth in the
fragrance of the aire.

“His threade of life was snapt: once more
I reached the open streete;
The people sung out ‘Gardyloo’
As I ran down the streete. 140
Methought the blessed air of heaven
Never smelte so sweete.

Dreadeth Shoan
Dhu, the corporal of
the garde.

“Once more upon the broad highwaye,
I walked with feare and drede;
And every fifteen stepes I tooke
I turned about my heade, 145
For feare the corporal of the garde
Might close behind me trede!

“Behold, upon the western wave
Setteth the broad bright sunne; 150
So I must onward, as I have
Full fifteen miles to runne.

The waggonere
taketh leave of the
tailore,

“And should the bailiffes hither come
To aske whilke waye I’ve gone,
Tell them I took the othere road, 155
Said hee, and trotted onne.”

to whome ane
small accidente
happeneth.
Whereupon
followeth the morale
very proper to be had
in minde by all
members of the
Dilettanti Society
when they come over
the bridge at these
houres. Wherefore
let them take heed
and not lay blame
where it lyeth nott.

The tailore rushed into the roome,
O’erturning three or foure;
Fractured his skulle against the walle,
And worde spake never more!! 160

Morale.

Such is the fate of foolish men,
The danger all may see
Or those who list to waggonere,
And keepe bad companye.

(From *Miscellanies: Prose and Verse*. Ed. R. W. Montagu. 2 vols. London, 1885)