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You that in merriment delight,
Pray listen now to what I write,
So shall you satisfaction find,
Will cure a melancholy mind.

A damsel sweet in Colchester [1Colchester: A reference to Colchester, England] ,
And there a clothier [2clothier: middle English, a person that makes clothes ("Clothier," n.d.)] courted her,
For six months space, both night and day,
But yet the damsel still said nay [3nay: archaic, meaning no] .

She said, "Were I to love inclined,
Perhaps you soon might change your mind,
And court some other damsel fair,
For men are false, I do declare."

He many propositions made,
And like a loyal lover said,
"There's none but you shall be my wife,
The joy and comfort of my life."

At length this maid gave her consent
To marry him, and straight they went
Unto their parents then, and lo [4lo: archaic - calling attention to something, an expression wonder or surprise ("Lo," n.d.)] !
Both gave their leave and liking too.

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But see the cursed fruits of gold,
He left his loyal love behind,
With grief and love encompassed round,
Whilst he a greater fortune found.

A lawyer's daughter, fair and bright,
Her parents' joy and whole delight,
He was resolved to make his spouse,
Denying all his former vows.

And when poor Kate she came to hear
That she must lose her only dear,
All for the lawyer's daughter's sake,
Some sport of him, Kate thought she'd make.

Kate knew when every night he came
true
From his new love, Nancy by name,
Sometimes at ten o'clock or more.
Kate to a tanner went therefore,
And borrowed there an old cowhide,
With crooked horns both large and wide,
And when she wrapped herself therein,
Her new intrigue she did begin.

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Kate to a lonesome field did stray
At length the clothier came that way,
And he was sore a-scared at her
She looked so like old Lucifer [5Lucifer: a reference to the devil] .

A hairy hide, horns on her head,
At length two

Which near three feet asunder spread,
 At length
 With that he saw a long black tail.
 tried
 He strove to run, but his feet did fail.
 doleful
 And with a groan and mournful note,
 She quickly seized him by the throat,
 And said, "You have left poor Kate, I hear,
 And won a lawyer's daughter dear."
 "Now, since you've been so false to her,
 You perjured knave [6knave: a tricky, deceitful person ("Knave," n.d.)] of Colchester,
 You shall, whether you will or no,
 Into ray gloomy regions go."

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This voice did so affrighten him,
 He, kneeling on a trembling limb,
 Cried "Master Devil, spare me now,
 duty
 And I'll perform my former vow."
 "I'll make young Kate my lawful bride."
 "See that you do" the Devil cried.
 "If Kate again of you complain,
 You soon shall hear from me again."
 It's home he went though very late,
 He little thought that it was Kate,
 That put him into such a fright.
 Therefore next day, by morning light
 He went to Kate and married her,
 For fear of that old Lucifer.
 Kate's friends and parents thought it strange,
 That there was such a sudden change.
 Kate never let her parents know,
 Nor any other, friend or foe,
 Till they a year had married been,
 She told it at her lying in [7lying-in: referring to the old custom of lying in bed before or after birthing a child ("Lying-in," n.d.)] .

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It pleased the women to the heart.
 They said they'd fairly plead her part.
 Her husband laughed ae well as they.
 It was a joyful merry day.

Finis.

Ballad Theme: the Practical Joke

MacKenzie (1919) discussed "Kate and Her Horns" within a broader category of ballads that incorporate the motive of a practical joke to entertain and humour the audience, invoking sympathy with the contriver of the practical joke, often the victim of some romantic injustice, who is applauded for the cleverness with which the scheme is executed (pp. 145-146).



Clothier [Def. 1]. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster*. Retrieved November 12, 2014, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/clothier>

Knave [Def. 2]. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster*. Retrieved November 13, 2014, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/knave>

Lo [Def. 1]. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster*. Retrieved November 12, 2014, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lo>

Lying-in [Def. 1]. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster*. Retrieved November 13, 2014, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lying-in>

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MacKenzie, W. R. (1919). *The quest of the ballad*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/questofballad00mack>