

A Rock & a wi pickle Tow

Air

Slow

0. *tr.*

5. *tr.*

10. *tr.* *tr.*

15. *tr.*

19. *tr.* *tr.* *tr.*

ABC source: McGibbon - Scots Tunes, book II, p. 55 (c. 1746)

Transcribed by: AK/Fiddler's Companion

A Rock and a wi Pickle Tow

Air

1. *tr*

6 *tr* *tr*

11 *tr*

16 *tr*

21 *tr*

26

31 *tr*

36 *tr*

40 *tr*

44 *tr*

48 Gig *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr*

51 *tr* *tr*



Book: James Oswald - Caledonian Pocket Companion Book 1 (1760, p. 8)

Transcribed by: AK/Fiddler's Companion

The Rock and wee pickle Tow



ABC source: Gow - 4th Repository (1817)

Transcribed by: AK/Fiddler's Companion

ROCK AND WEE PICKLE TOW

3. 

There was an auld wife had a wee pick - le

4 

tow, And she wad gae try the spin - ning

8 

o't; But loot - - ing her down, her rock took a

12 

low, And that was an ill be - - gin - ning o't.

16 

She spat on't, she flet on't, and trampt on its

20 

pow, But a' that she did on - ly blew up the

24 

low; She curs'd baith the rock and the wee pick - - le

28 

tow, A - - lack! for the drea - - ry spin - ning o't.

2. I've wanted a sark for these eight years and ten,
 And this was to be the beginning o't;
 But I vow I shall want it for as lang again,
 Or ever I try the spinning o't.
 For never, since ever they ca'd me's they ca' me,
 Did sic a mishap and mishanter befa' me;
 Ye shall hae leave baith to hang me and draw me,
 If ever I try the spinning o't.

3. I hae kept a house for these threescore o' years,
 And never did try the spinning o't;
 But how I was sacked, fowl fa' them that spiers,
 It minds me upo' the beginning o't.
 But women are now-a-days turned sae braw,
 That ilk ane maun hae a sark, some maun hae twa,
 The world was better when the fient ane ava,
 To hinder the first beginning o't.

4. Foul fa' them that ever advis'd me to spin,
That had been sae lang o' beginning o't;
I weel might hae ended as I did begin,
Nor got sic a fear wi' the spinning o't:
But they say she's a wise wife wha kens her ain weird;
I thought ance on a day it wad never been spier'd,
How loot ye the low tak the rock by the beard,
When ye gade to try the spinning o't?
5. The spinning, the spinning, it gars my heart sab,
When I think upon the beginning o't;
I thought ere I died to have made me a wab,
But still I had weirs o' the spinning o't.
But had I nine daughters, as I hae but three,
The safest and soundest advice I wad gie,
Is that they frae spinning wad keep their hands free,
For fear of a bad beginning o't.
6. Yet in spite of my counsel, if they will needs run
The drearysome task o' the spinning o't,
Let them seek a lown place in the heat o' the sun,
And there venture on the beginning o't.
But to do as I did, alas and avow!
To busk up my rock by the cheek o' the low,
Some may say that I had little wit in my pow,
And as little to do wi' the spinning o't.
7. But yet, after a', there is ae thing that grieves
My heart, to think on the beginning o't;
Had I won but the length o' ae pair o' sleeves,
Then there wad been word o' the spinning o't:
Then I'd hae twa washin' and bleached like snaw.
And on my twa gardies like muggons to draw,
And then fouk wad say that auld Grizzly was braw,
And a' was upon her ain spinning o't.
8. But gin I wad shog about till a new spring,
I should yet hae a bout o' the spinning o't;
A mutchkin o' lintseed I'd in the yird fling,
For a' the wanchancie beginning o't.
I'll gar my ain Tammie gang down to the howe,
And cut me a rock o' the withershins grow,
O' gude rantry-tree, for to carry my tow,
And a spindle o' the same for the twining o't.
9. For now when I mind me, I met Maggy Grim,
That morning, just at the beginning o't;
She was ne'er ca'd chancy, but unlucky and slim,
And sae it has far'd o' my spinning o't.
But gin my new rock were ance cutted and dry,
Ise a' Maggy's can and her cantrips defy,
And, but ony soothing, the spinning I'll try,
And yese a' hear o' the beginning o't.

10. Quo' Tibby her daughter, tak tent what ye say,
 The never a rag we'll be seeking o't;
 Gin ye ance begin, ye'll traverse night and day,
 Sae it's vain ony mair to be speaking o't.
 Since Lammas I'm now gane thirty and twa,
 And ne'er a dud sark had I yet, great or sma',
 And what waur am I? I'm as warm and as braw
 As thrummy-tail'd Meg, that's a spinner o't.
11. To labour lint land, and then buy the seed,
 And then to yoke me to the harrowing o't,
 And syne hobble amang't, and pick out ilka weed,
 Like a swine in a sty, at the farrowing o't:
 Syne bowing, and rippling, and steeping, and then
 To gar's gae and spread it upon the cauld plain;
 And then, after a', maybe labour in vain,
 When the wind and the weat gets the fushon o't.
12. But though it should happen the weather to bide,
 Wi' beetles we're set to the drubbing o't;
 And then frae our fingers to gudge a' the hide,
 Wi' the wearisome wark o' the spinning o't.
 And syne ilka tait maun be heckled out-through,
 The lint putten ae gate, anither the tow,
 Sjne on a rock with it, and it taks a low:
 The back o' my hand to the spinning o't.
13. Quo' Jenny, I think, woman, ye're in the right,
 Set your feet a-spar to the spinning o't;
 We may tak our advice frae our ain mither's fright,
 That she gat when she tried the spinning o't.
 But they'll say that auld fouk are twice bairns indeed,
 And sae has she kyth'd it, but there is nae need,
 To sic an amshah that we drive out o' head,
 As lang's we're sae scar'd frae the spinning o't,
14. Quo' Nancy the youngest, I've now heard you a
 And dowy's your doom o' the spinning o't;
 Gin ye fan, the cow flings, the cog's cast awa,
 Ye may see where ye'll lick up your winning o't.
 But I see that by spinning ye'll never be braw.
 But gae by the name o' a dilp or a daw;
 But lick where ye like, I shall ance shake a fa',
 Afore I be dung wi' the spinning o't.
15. For weel can I mind me, when black Willie Bell
 Had Tibbie there, just at the winning o't,
 What blew up the bargain, she kens weel hersel,
 Was the want o' the knack o' the spinning o't,
 And now, poor woman, for ought that I ken,
 She never may get sic an offer again,
 But pine awa, bit and bit, like Jenkin's hen,
 And naething to wyte but the spinning o't.

16. But were it for naething but just that alane,
 I shall yet hae a bout at the spinning o't;
 They may cast me, and e'en ca' me black at the bane,
 But no 'cause I shunn'd the beginning o't.
 But be that as it happens, I carena a strae,
 For nane o' the lads e'er shall hae it to say,
 When he comes to woo, she kens naething ava,
 Nor has ony can at the spinning o't.

17. It's needless for us to tak our remarks
 Frae our mither's miscooking the spinning o't;
 She never kend ought o' the gude o' the sarks,
 Frae this, a' back to the spinning o't.
 Three ell o' plaiding was a' that was sought
 By our auld waly bodies, and that boot be bought,
 For in ilka town sickan things were na wrought,
 Sae little they kend o' the spinning o't.

Book: "Caledonian Musical Repository", 1806, p.138-146

Transcribed by: 2013 John Chambers <jc:trillian.mit.edu>

Origins: 1806

Rock and we pickle Tow

Jig

ABC source: The Buttery Manuscript (c. 1784-1820, No. 952)

Notes: John Buttery (1784-1854) joined the 34th Regiment in Lincoln, Lincolnshire, England, in 1797 and served as a fifer until discharged in 1814. His large ms. contains marches, duty calls, dance tunes and airs. EASMES identifies this as the Fife MS. and suggests a date of 1780, see <https://www.cdss.org/elibrary/Easmes/Index.htm>

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A Rock and wee pickle tow

Musical score for 'A Rock and wee pickle tow' in G major, 6/8 time. The score consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a measure number '5'. The second staff begins with a measure number '5'. The third staff begins with a measure number '8' and includes a trill (tr) in the final measure. The fourth staff begins with a measure number '13'. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8.

ABC source: John Rook music manuscript collection (1840, p. 25)

Notes: Rook was a multi-instrumentalist from Waverton, near Wigton, Cumbria

Transcribed by: AK/Fiddler's Companion

The Rock and a wee pickle tow

Air

Musical score for 'The Rock and a wee pickle tow' in G major, 6/8 time. The score consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a measure number '6'. The second staff begins with a measure number '5'. The third staff begins with a measure number '9'. The fourth staff begins with a measure number '13'. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8.

ABC source: John Rook music manuscript collection (Waverton, Cumbria, 1840, p. 207)

Transcribed by: AK/Fiddler's Companion

The Wee Pickle Tow

Jig

7. 

5 

8 

12 



The Traditional Tune Archive

Book: Padraig Mac Aodh O'Neill - Songs of Uladh (1904, p. 15)

ABC source: I got this tune from Proinseas mac Suibhne, who learned to play it from hearing his father whistle it. The tune is not well known in Tearmann now, except by the older people."

Transcribed by: AK/Fiddler's Companion