

The COURTSHIP of MISTER CLAY
an WIDDER RAY

Tom Clay he wur a publican,
An no dout a girt big zinner,
An he vill in love we Widder Ray,
An mead up his mine ta win her.

An strange ta zay thase Widder Ray,
Vor vive years had we stood,
Many attempts ta meak her drow
Away her widderhood.

Vor wen her lovers poured ther love,
A them she took no heed,
Bit twould em strait she never hood
Drow hoff her widders weed.

Because her leat good man he left,
Her means enuff vor life,
An mead her promise vore he died,
Ta be no other's wife.

“Vor wi,” zays he, “Becaus ya know,
Wen men their love provess,
Vor you, me dear, they'll ony want,
Yer money ta pozess.

Zo zingle keep me own, dear spouze,
Vor you med live in haze,
Not ony that if you keep zo,
Ya can do as ya plaze.”

Zo vrim that day thase Widder vair,
Her lovers kept at bay,
Till now her han wur wonce mwore zought,
Be ower vren Tom Clay.

Tom kep a Inn, tha Lion Rid,
Ael in tha verry street,
Wur Widder Ray wur zettled down,
An who oft he used ta meet.

Tom had a pony chaise, which he
Let to tha voke about,
An Widder Ray she oft did hire
An Tom's man drove her out.

An offen wen his pony chaise,
Stood by tha Widder's door
Tom wished he wur his man hiszelf,
Zo's he his love cud pour.

Bit one vine day this Widder Ray,
A note ta Tom zent down,
Ta zen at wonce his pony chaise,
Ta teak her inta town.

Tom's man was ill in bade thic day,
Therefore he cudden go,
Zays he, "I hood oblige, a courze,
Bit who ta zen dwoant know."

"A happy thought," zays he, "at las,
I be a lucky elf,
Here, sister Ann, you mine tha house,
I'll drave her in mezelf."

Zo Tom he rigged hiszelf aelout,
In his very baste attire,
An a choice vlower putt in his cwoat,
Var tha Widder to admire.

Wieout delay, then Mister Clay,
Drove off like won in steat,
An zoon tha pony chaise an he,
Stood avore tha widders geat.

“Good marnin, mam,” zays Mister Clay,
“Good morn,” zaid Widder Ray,
“My hostler, mam, is very ill,
Unvit ta drave ta day,

An as yer note expressed a wish
Ta goo at wonce ta town,
In order not ta disappoint,
I will mezelf drave down.”

Tha Widder wie a pleazin smile,
Zaid, “Tis very kind of you,
Tis urgent that I should be there,
Zom business I've to do.”

Then Widder Ray she took her seat,
An Tom arranged tha rug,
Zo that she med ride ael tha way,
Zo cozy like an snug.

An off thay went ael down tha street,
Thase two good voke together,
An Hinglish like tha zoon begun,
A takin bout tha weather.

Tom's ears wur charm'n we her zweet vaice,
His heart we love did glow,
Bit ow ta bring tha zubject up,
Heem dang if he did know.

Tho he ta draain well wur used,
In bottled yale ar stout,
Bit, ah, he voun twur defferent,
Ta draa a leady out.

An vor zom time upon tha road,
Tha zilence skierce wur broke,
Vor Tom wur studden in his mine,
Wen at las tha Widder spoke.

“I think this month the sweetest time,
Of any in the year,
Although it always brings to me
Full many a mournful tear.

For in September I remember,
My poor dear husban died.”
And she let a tear drop fall,
And gently she sighed.

“ And tho' tis pleasant now to look,
On things so green and gay,
Fast turning into hues of gold,
But soon to fade away.

Yes, everything in life so fair,
We know one day it must,
Like the green leaf, wither away,
An turn to clay or dust.”

Ah! Ah! Thought Tom we in hisself,
O anything I'd gie,
If Widder Ray ud turn ta *Clay*,
Ee'ce while alive she be.

“A ee'ce,” zaid Tom, “Tha vallin leaf,
No doubt da gie ee pain,
Bit tho thay vall an zoon decay,
They'll zoon bust out again.

Ta mwoun vor dear departed things,
Is well praps vor a sazon,
Bit ver won's life ta dwell on sich,
I dwont think there's much razon.

Specially voke skierce in ther prime,
Who med a lost those dear,
Atter a while shid reckinzile,
An brite agean appear.

Tom chuckled much wie in hisself,
Wat he hood gie ta know,
Tha Widders mine, heet still he guessed,
Wen she answered un, “Just so.”

Tis very plain she teaks tha hint,
Well that is a beginnin,
Bit I zee I mussen goo ta vast,
If her I hood be winnin.

No mwore wur zed upon that head
Var zoon they rach'd tha town,
An Tom, avore tha County Bank,
Did zet tha Widder down.

Then to tha Plough he quick drove back,
Ta zee his ole vren Able,
Likewise revesh hiszelf, an putt
His pony in tha steable.

“Hel-oh, me vren!” outspoke tha host,
“Wat brings ee in ta day?
Wur't you I zeed drave by jist now,
Along wie Widder Ray.”

“Why ee'ce,” zays Tom, “If you mist knaa,
My hostler's very queer
An zo I wur obliged ya zee,
Ta drave tha leady here.”

“Ah! Ah! I zee,” zed Able out,
“A pleazant job by jove,
I deer zay Tom, ya looks on it,
As a leabour of pure love.

I zays ta Caraline jist now,
Wen we zeed you drave past,
'Why zurly Tom hant nevir won.
Tha Widder's han at last',

Now look here Tom, I knaa quite well,
Tha Widder you adore,
Bit bere in mine she av bin zought,
Be nearly half a score.

Bit thats no razin why *your* love
She medden entertain,
Ael I can zay, I wish ee luck,
An hope her han ya'll gain.

But Widders, Tom, av deep, deep hearts,
Vor a man ta undermine,
Jist zee ow long it did teak I,
Ta win me Caraline.

Ver wen I used ta pawer me love,
She got za awfully down,
An used ta zi an cry “O dear,
My poor departed Brown.”

That zoon wore off, an now she is,
Tha happiest wife in town,
An nevir a wurd da she bring up,
Bout her departed Brown.

Teak my advice, me trusty vren,
If you want Widder Ray,
Wi tell her zo out bwold an strait,
An not an hour delay.

Vor widders, Tom, I dwont keer how,
Hi ar low ther station,
In love matters caant aber
Much equivercation.

Zo wen nex you av a chance,
Dwont be dum like a dunce,
Bit pluck up courage an begin,
Ta pawer it out at wonce.

Coose, praps a fusal on tha spur,
Wi verry like it may be,
Bit Tom, remember that vaint heart,
Nevir won vair leady.

Zo nevir mine, dwoant let that dant,
 Bit tha attack renew,
An I'll lay a guinea in tha en,
 She'll gie her hand ta you.

Zo mine thase nite ya'll av a chance,
 As you drave wom again,
Thervore meak up yer mine at wonce,
 Ax her tha question plain.”

Then to tha house thase chums repaired,
 Ta greet good Missus Able,
An there she wur like ael good wives,
 Layin out tha dinner table.

“Well, Tom, my bwoy, I wish ee joy,
 Var as I understan,
It is quite true that you at las,
 Av won tha Widders han.

I zays ta Able, that I did,
 Jist now wen you went bye;
I'm zartin zure it is ael rite,
 Ya bouth did look za shy.”

“Not yet, my dear,” zaid Able out,
 “Tom ant a won hur yet,
Bit that he do avore dree months,
 Any money I'll bet.”

“Zo I shid think,” zays she quite blunt,
 “Vor wat ooman cud wiestan,
Zich a hansim man as Tom,
 If he pressed vor her han.

Tis true that others vain av tried,
Ta urge on her ther views,
Bit wat wur they compar'd ta Tom,
Wi, regular dumpty screws.

Tis lucky too vor Widder Ray,
That ael on em she danted,
Vor tis quite plain tha mmost on em,
Ony her money wanted.

Bit Tom we know's too generous,
Ta av her vor her money,
Aelthough a vortunes well enuff,
An make things a leetle zunny.”

“Wi raaly, mam, ya vlatte me,”
At las zed Mister Clay,
“I dwont think I be worthy o,
Half tha good things ya zay.

I dwont wish tha Widder vor her goold,
Bit can a man be human,
Not to admire bove ael else,
Zo good an vair a ooman.”

An thus tha conversation run'd,
As they ael zat at dinner,
Tha Ables' bouth instructin Tom,
Ow he med ably win her.

“Wen do ya start ver wom,” zays they,
Zed Tom, “I skiercely know,
Tha leady zed she hood caal yer,
Wen she's prepared ta go.”

“O! if she do,” zays Missus A,
“Bit com inzide ower latch,
I'm bless'd if, Tom, avore she goes,
If I dwont meak tha match.”

Zoon atter vour then, at tha doer,
There stood tha Widder Ray,
She rang tha bell, an ax'd tha maid,
“Ta goo an tell Tom Clay.”

Then Missus A she quick run out,
Ta greet tha Widder there,
An implored her that she would,
Wak in an teak a chair.

Now Widder Ray, until that day,
Had ne'er bin to Tha Plough,
An nevir a wurd to Missus A,
Had spoken until now.

An as thay zat together there,
Waiten ver tha pony chaise,
Missus Able she begun ta prate,
Zo ably Tom's praise.

Thus she began, “Wat a nice man,
Now isn't Mister Clay,
Zo generous, young, an hansim too,
An aelways zeems zo gay,

Even gentlemin that coms ta dine,
I offen hear em zay,
'Wat a noble, jolly chap,
Is that young fellow, Clay,'

Yes, an offen in tha hunten vield,
He times av been mistook,
By his bearing dignified,
Vor zom noble Duke.”

“Well, certainly,” said Widder Ray,
“I really must allow,
He seems a little different,
To what most men are now.”

Wie that tha conversation closed,
Ver tha pony chaise came by,
An off she went with Mister Clay,
Whose heart wie hope beat hi.

Zaid Widder Ray to Mister Clay,
“I would a favour ask,
It is that you will drive me quick,
If not too great a task.

A wretched fellow of a man,
Since I've been in tha town,
Has been a dogging me about,
And following up and down.

He tries to press himself on me,
I may as well now state,
But I the fellow and his love,
Most detestably hate.”

“Indeed,” zays Tom, wie much zurprise,
“He zurely mam shill zee,
If he attempts ta voller you,
That I his voe will be.”

Tom urged his steed an on he went,
As vast as he cud go,
An twold tha Widder that she now,
Was clear a her dread voe.

Bit guess his roth wen at her geat,
Tha verry veller stood,
Zays Tom, "I'd like ta tan his hide,
Tid raaly do me good."

Tha Widder nearly swoon'd away,
Ta zee tha veller stand,
Bit Tom jump'd out an to un went,
His business to demand.

Tha veller wie a hideous scowl,
Zed, "wat is that ta you?
That leady is a vren a mine,
An I wants a interview."

"Tis valse," zays Tom, "Now look thee here,
If thee dwoant go away,
I'll tan thy hide true's I'm alive,
Ar my neam beant Tom Clay."

"Be hoff," zays he, "an neer let I,
Zet eyes on thee again,
Zure my neams Clay, thee rue tha day,
I dwoant promise, mine, in vain."

Tha veller turn'd an left tha pleace,
His fream ael auver shook,
An as a went, he glanced at Tom,
A mmost unearthly look,

Then Mister Clay sought Widder Ray,
Who in tha house had vled,
“Madam,” zays he, “I raaly think,
That veller's lost his yead.”

Zays he, “zim mischief he med do,
A courze I'm no director,
Bit raaly mam I gins ta think,
You require a protector.

Ta nite he med be here agean,
An his strange vrake begin,
If you'll accept my aid tis yours,
Wen I've putt tha pony in.”

“Tis verry kind of you,” says she,
“For I really dread the man,
And as you say, he really may,
Another visit plan.”

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That nite at haight before tha geat,
Stood Mister Thomas Clay,
An as he hoped, zoon voun hisself,
Aloane wie Widder Ray.

“Good evenin, mam, you zee I am,
Com up as you requested,
An much I trust, that crazy chap,
As not agean molested.”

“Not he,” said she, “for much I think,
Your presence frightened him,
I trust tis so, and hope twill cure,

His verry silly whim.”

“Ah! Madam dear,” zaid Mister Clay,

“Tis a curious thing, by jove,
Wat power a ooman has on man,
Wen he's desperately in love.

Ee'ce anything, nay everything,

Mwost zurely he'll do,
Wen he got love, heart burnin love,
Zuch as I got vor you.”

“O, Mister Clay,” said Widder Ray,

“What are you saying now?
Really Sir, such importunateness,
I never can allow.”

“Madam.” zed Tom, “jist list a wile,

Wile I ta you da spake,
Ver I declare, an if need be, sware,
Mine is no zilly frake.

I like you mam, ee'ce mam I do,

Mwore then ael on this earth,
Tho I adore, let I implore,
Dwont think it of small worth,

Ya av my heart, gie I yer han,

An dwont ee zay me nay,
Ver if ya do, zoon zoon ull toll,
Tha bell ver poor Tom Clay.”

Bit while poor Tom upon his knees,

His ardent love did pour,
He jump'd uprite, wie sheer avrite,

Be a loud rap at tha door,

An Widder Ray gean swoon'd away,

An cried, "tis he! tis he!"

An Tom a swore, "if twur tha bore,

His death he zure hood be."

Then to tha door a rush'd wie speed,

Demanding who was there,

"It's I! It's I!" zed a crazy vaice,

"Com ta zee me leady vair."

"Hang me," zays Tom, "and zo it be,

By thic squeamish beller,"

An quiet a opened wide tha door,

An look'd apon tha veller.

"Now look ee veller," zed Tom Clay,

"Thee hast bin yer avore,"

An straithe his back he gun ta whack,

Wile mainly he did roar.

"A purty lout ta dog about,

Another good man's wife,

Com swear ta I, thee't let her be,

If the hoost av thee life."

"Marcy," cried he, "marcy var I,"

He piteously did whine,

"Ver I declare I diden knaa,

Tha leady she wur thine.

Ee'ce, ee'ce, I'll promise anything,

If thou hoot let me go,

Ver now she's thine, I'll drown mezelf,

In the pond that's down below.”

Tom loosened un an hoff a went,
As vast as he cud limp,
Zays Tom, “I think that medicine,
U'll cure tha crazy imp.”

Poor Widder Ray zat as won dade,
Tha shock did zo avrite her,
Bit wen Tom Clay com back agean,
She got a leetle briter.

Zays Tom, “I think tha veller ne'er,
U'll visit yer agean,
Var the tannen he've a ad ta nite,
Wunt be received in vain.”

“An now dear mam,” zays Tom wonce mwore,
“Now that the coast is cleer,
O med I hope won day ta av,
That wat I prize za dear.”

Tha Widder she hung down her hade,
Then heavily she sighed,
“O Mister Clay, i must zay nay,
Vor when my husband died.-

He wished me to keep single, yes,
As long as I did live,
Therefore, you see it cannot be,
My hand I dare not give.”

“O Missus Ray,” zaid Mister Clay,
“Long years, it be now vive,
Zince your good usbin, Mister Ray,

Was here on earth alive,

An you av wore those widder's weeds,
Ael droo that dreary time,
An zay you must until tha las,
An you not in yer prime.

O Missus Ray, now will it, pray,
Do your leat usbin good,
If you yer days mane to live out,
Ael in dull widderhood.

Your veelins much I do admire,
Ver shows I verry clearly,
That yer leat usbin in his day,
Ya loved mmost zincerely.

Ther if yer wedded lives wur bliss,
Tha time ya liv'd tagether,
Zay, madam zay, mite we not av,
Zim mwore zich blissvull weather,

You've zed ya do respect me, mam,
Mwore then ael men bezide,
Then wi, mam, wi, shud you refuse,
Ta becom agean a bride.

I swear be ael that's good and true,
If you will bit konzent,
I never will gie you a caus,
Ta zay ya do repent.”

“O Mister Clay,” zaid Widder Ray,
While tears her eyes did vill,
“Such love sincere, to me seems dear,

And so I think I will!

But this I say, dear Mister Clay,
If you are to be mine,
Its on condition that you will,
Give up tha Public line.”

“Me love,” zays Tom, “now you zays ee'ce,
Anything ya med deman,
Ya know it's true, anything I'll do,
Ta win yer heart an han.”

“O tis zweet bliss, a nower like this,”
Zaid Mister Thomas Clay,
As he quite vree did press tha han
Of tha buxom Widder Ray.

“Wen shill it be, me love,” zed he,
“That happy, happy day,
That day, I mean, me lovely queen,
Wen you'll be Missus Clay?”

She took Tom's han, an as tha clock,
Tha hour a twelve did strike,
“My dear,” said she, “I leave you free,
To fix it when you like.”

Tom Clay that nite, we heart za lite,
Lay on his downy bed,
Bit ver zweet joy about his love,
Ael sleep away had vled.

An on tha morn we zister Ann,
He taked tha matter auver,
Zays he, “Ya zee ya now be vree,

Ta marry Harry Mauver.

Tha business now I shill gie you,
Ver we've no lack a wealth,
Nothun ta dant, ael we da want,
Is long life an good health.”

An then Tom Clay weout delay,
Tha happy day did vix,
An on that day there went away,
A pearty countin zix.

Twur Zister Ann an her young man,
Tom Clay an Widder Ray,
An bouth the Ables vrim tha Plough,
Ta gie tha bride away.

An by tha train they went ta town,
An to a zartin square,
Wur Mister Clay zoon mead a bride,
of tha buxom Widder vair.

An at a tip top gran hotel,
Thay ael zat down ta table,
An purty well tha jokes went on,
Tween Mister an Missus Able.

An zoon came noon, an hoff thay went,
Tha usbin an his bride,
Ta spen tha happy honymoon,
At Brighton's vaim'd zay zide.

An there they liv'd like turtle doves,
Enjoyin every pleasure,
An Tom declared “his bride she wur,

A raaly parfict treasure.”

Bit, O! won nite, his much ador'd,
As in her bade she lay,
Had a strange drame in which she thought,
She zeed her leat spouze Ray.

“O Missus Clay! wonce Missus Ray!
I caant raste in me bed,
Till I've a had a wurd wie you,”
An this is wat he zed.--

“Ya promised I avore I died,
That you ud zingle keep,
Bit ah! I vind ya've chang'd yer mind,
An now in wedlock sleep.

O Missus Clay! O Missus Clay!
Although it be no crime,
I diden think ya'd turn ta *Clay*
Za long avore yer time.

I beant com now ta blow ee up,
Vor you were kine to I,
Bit a it do zeem ard ta zee,
Another man there lie.

Then malice I wont bear ta you,
Wen underneath my lid,
I ony hope your new spouze will,
Adore ee as I did.

Varewell, varewell, I mist away,
Inta my cell za deep,
Think not a me, vor now you'm vree,

An zo can goo ta sleep.”

Now Missus Clay a this strange drame,
Did not let out a wurd,
Becaws ya know Clay ud veel it zo,
An think it quite abzurd.

Zo wen tha honeymoon wur up,
Ver wom thay did repair,
An ael tha village voke turn'd out,
Ta welcom thic ar pair.

“Hurray! Hurray! Ver Mister Clay
An hurray ver his bride!”
Zed leetle bwoys wie ael thur naise,
As thay ran by their zide.

An Tom nex day gied ael a trate,
A good roast beef an beer,
An long an loud tha village voke,
Tom an his bride did cheer.

* * * * *

MORAL

Now wealthy usbins wen ya laves,
A young buxom wife behine,
Dwont bind her down we cruel vows,
Bit let her plaize her mine.

Ver as ya zees, this Widder Ray,
Refused ael lovers strong,
An did zay “nay,” ta ael a they,
Till tha right un com'd along.