

FW 314.30 – 315.08

Shufflebotham, whoever he is

by
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Disclaimer

These are tentative annotations, liable to be adjusted, modified or discarded. Many of them are highly questionable, definitely far-fetched and a few on the verge of insanity. So use them at your own risk. My aim is trying to put together controversial data in order to build a possible system. The results may not be satisfactory, but I am convinced that the strategy is the right one. McHugh's Annotations and Fweet should be always at hand.

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The general meaning of this passage is relatively easy to get: some customers are more interested in the tailor's daughter than in the tailor himself and ask Porter to tell more about her love affair with the Norwegian Captain. But if, instead of just feeding ourselves, we choose to relish and savour the taste of the food, the passage becomes somewhat spicier.

- 314.30: --That's all murtagh purtagh but whad ababs his dopter?**
314.31: sissed they who were onetime ungerls themselves, (when the
314.32: youthel of his yorn shook the bouchal in his bed) twilled along-
314.33: side in wiping the rice assatiated with their wetting.

First of all: those who ask about the tailor's daughter (**ababs his dopter**) seem to be old men, who were once (**onetime**) young fellows (German *Kerl* and Danish **ungkerl**: bachelor), at the time when his (the Father's) yawn (**yorn**) sounded like a “yodel” (**youthel**) and frightened any young boy (son) in his bed (**shook the bouchal in his bed**). Or (doubtful, with the help of French pronunciation) : when his young and strong (**youthel**) phallus (horn: **yorn**) used to give good shakes to the “*bushel*”



(French “*bouche*” : mouth → “*bush*” + “*shell*” = pussy) in his bed. But the allusions seem to anticipate the Mark/Isolde episode, since “**dopter**” hints at “adopted daughter” (the young bride could be indeed a daughter to Mark) and “**ababs**” at Italian “*babbo*: dad”.

The fact that the customers, presumably the trio that has just performed “*Finnegan's Fall*”, are old men is important, since it underlines the “theatrical setting” of the episode. They are not the three (young) soldiers, they just play their roles (and, in my opinion, will play Butt, Taff and the “*stage direction*” in the next to be performed “*How Buckley shot the Russian General*”). Their intention is to add more “oblique” threads (**twilled** : twill : a fabric with *diagonal* parallel ribs) to the story (**along-side**) they just heard, so funny that they spilled tears from laughing (Italian “*piangere dal ridere*” : to cry from laughing) and in fact they wipe their eyes (**the rice** - “rice” is Italian “*riso*”(plant), but “riso” is also “*laugh*”). And “**wetting**” is both referred to “tears” and to “piss”: they pissed themselves laughing, saturated (**assatiated**) by it. And their “hisses” (**sis**) are not only those of toothless and drunk old men, but also snake's hisses, that express their saucy comments.

314.33: The lappel

314.34: of his size?

The girl is the tailor's treasure, the apple of his eye. A little ALP (**lappel**) whom he displays like a gardenia in his “*lapel*”.

314.34: His *ros in sola velnere* and he sicckumed of homnis
314.35: terrars.

This hides a lot of cross references. The first one is the biblical passage of Judges 6:37 [*si ros in solo vellere fuerit, et in omni terra siccitas*: if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside it] . Gideon has asked God to give him a sign in order to be sure that he be the one who shall save Israel. So the tailor must be the guardian and the saviour of his daughter. *ros in sola velnere* probably hints at the girl's pussy. If we put together “fleece” (vellus/vellere), wound/cut (vulnus/vulnere) and Venus (Italian *Venere*) we get an obvious “pussy”,



a “wet” one (**ros**: dew) – with a possible hint at “incest” if “**velnere**” is the wounded Venus into whom he sinfully wishes to ejaculate (*sick cum*), succumbing (**sicckumed**) to the material, earthly (**terrars**) drives all men (**homnis** : *omnis homines*) are slaves of. He himself just like (Italian

“*siccome*”) every other man. And he is terrorized (**terrars**) of men's (**homnis**) judgements (*Bible*– the *Judges* passage). But it could be only a much simpler fear he has of any man who could violate his daughter's pussy, his treasure.

314.35 She wends to scoulas in her slalpers. There were no peanats in her famalgia so no wumble she tumbled for his famas
314.36: nats in her famalgia so no wumble she tumbled for his famas
315.1: roalls davors. Don't him forget! A butcheler artsed out of Cullege
315.2: Trainity. Diddled he daddle a drop of the cradler on delight
315.3: mebold laddy was stetched? Knit wear?

Now the gossips touch the girl. What must be taken into account is the use of *Rhaeto-Romanic* language. Why? Because it introduces the Romantic touch: the “Romance” language, in our case the one spoken in Switzerland, in the south-eastern Swiss canton of Graubünden (Grisons) of which Davos (**davors**) is a famous town. Now German “*Grau*” and Italian “*griso/grigio*” mean “grey”. Thus, the romantic touch in the mouth of the “grey” old men, the *Grisons*. The girl has no shoes. We can hear the angry “slaps” of the hidden little ALP's (sl-**alp**-ers) slippers while she goes to school; we can see her frowns (**scoulas** : scowls). She is discontent of her family (**famalgia**) situation. She is hungry (Italian “*fame*” : hunger – Greek “*algia*” : pain - **famalgia** → pain from hunger) : no peanuts (**peanats**) to chew. So no wonder (**wumble** → *wamble* : her upset stomach) she accepts “rolls: **roalls**” (meat rolls) from a “bachelor” (**butcheler**). By force of circumstance, perforce (**davors**): her “tour (roll) de force”.

But there is in fact a further and more romantic perspective. There is no male figure in her family who has “*nuts*”, so she looks for a real man, who has strength and authority. “**roalls**” hints at “*Roall*”, which is a variant spelling of “*Roald*”, meaning “Famous Ruler”, justifying “**famas roalls**”.

But of course **roalls davors** points to W.G. Wills': *A Royal Divorce*, a play (so often cited in FW) dealing with Napoleon's life. The allusion to “**a butcheler artsed out of Cullege Trainity**” is tricky. It seems a clear reference to Joyce, but in our case a student would be out of context. (Unless interpreted as an analogy : the girl follows Nora's example). In fact the sentence may be a further reference to Napoleon. He was a sort of “*butcher*”, since he called his soldiers “*cannon-fodder*”.

Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837), one of the most famous Italian poets, whom Joyce certainly knew, wrote (Thoughts, VXXIV):

Towards great men and particularly towards those who glow with an unusual virility, the world is like a woman. It does not merely admire them, it loves them, because of their vigour. Often, as with women, the love for such men is greater because of and in proportion to the disdain which they show and the ill treatment which they inflict and the very fear which they inspire in them. Thus Napoleon was much loved in France and became a cult, as it were, for the soldiers, whom he called cannon-fodder and treated as such.

[translation by J. G. Nichols]

In Italian a variant of cannon-fodder is “*carne da macello*” (meat for butchering). **Cullege Trainity** would be then not only Dublin's Trinity College, but a military **train**-ing school, from which Napoleon was “shat out” (**artsed out**), and where he learned artillery [farts: **cul-lege** : read (Latin *lege*) : *cul* (French: arse)]. The Scandinavian “Roall” is then, for the girl, her “Emperor”. With his “**roalls davors**” which do certainly have sexual allusions: strong (de force) rolling, his own tour-de-force.

315.2: Diddled he daddle a drop of the cradler on delight

315.3: mebold laddy was stetched? Knit wear?

Here we might have another trick: a shift of character. Apparently the sentence should logically refer to the girl's *beau*. In his lascivious (**diddle** : to fuck) pastime (**diddle-daddle** : to waste time), in the delightful night (**delight**) when he “pierced” (**stetched** : stitched) the “bold lady” (**mebold laddy**), did he make her pregnant (**cradler** : cradle → baby)?

“Cradle” is in fact linked with “seed/grain”, since it is “*a frame projecting above a scythe, used to catch grain as it is cut so that it can be laid flat.*”



Thus he is a “reaper”, a “ripper” who causes the girl to be “reap-aired” (stitched).

But the sentence could refer also to the tailor. In the first draft it follows directly “**the lappel of his size**” and there is no explicit *beau* involved. In this case it would be a sarcastic accusation against the tailor who didn't do anything the night her daughter was *stitched*. Since “**diddle**” is also “to masturbate” the allusion might be: while his daughter was losing her virginity (**ros in sola vulnere**) he was just spending idly his time (diddle-diddle) masturbating (diddle), like Onan who “spilled his seed (cradler) on the ground” (**he sicckumed of homnis terrars.**) Probably dead drunk, if **cradler** is read “*craythur*”, whiskey, of which he didn't waste a drop. But there is also another perspective if in “**mibold laddy**” we recognize the Norwegian Captain and his suit (**peer of trouders under the pattern of a cassack – 311.29**) for “**his lady her master - 311.28** → lad → lady”. Thus the tailor was dead drunk while he “stitched” the suit.

A final, although very doubtful, reading could see in “**mibold laddy**” the fallen Finnegan (the **lad** on top of the **ladder**). Again the dead drunk tailor during the wake (**on delight mebold laddy was stetched**). The common trait of all these readings being the tailor's drunkenness and his neglectful mismanagement. And this could help to shed light on a very enigmatic character of the last part of the passage, namely **Shufflebotham**.

315.3: And they addled, (or

315.4: ere the cry of their tongues would be uptied dead) Shufflebotham

315.5: asidled, plus his ducks fore his drills, an inlay of a liddle more
315.6: lining maught be licensed all at ones, be these same tokens, for-
315.7: giving a brass rap, sneither a whole length nor a short shift so
315.8: full as all were concerned.

Shufflebotham: who is he?

That is the name of a location in Lancashire and the surname of some noble families. But I don't think it has nothing to share with us, were it not for the fact that it was spelled in several ways, one of which being “*Shufflebottom*”, that lets us pick up “*shuffle*” and “*bottom*”. In this we may detect someone who “*moves his ass slowly*”, very similar to the negligent tailor we have just talked about. “*Shufflebottom*” would then be his nickname, like the “**Mengarments**” we found in **311.30**.

In conclusion, the customers don't want to hear anything more about that uninteresting tailor, so they shuffle him aside (**Shufflebotham asidled**) together (**plus**) with his fabrics (*plus-four, ducks, drills* : **plus his ducks fore his drills**). Confused as they are (**addled**), but their tongues not yet paralysed by drunkenness (**ere the cry of their tongues would be uptied dead**), they ask for a new fabric, a new “textile” (**lining**), a new “text” and a new “style”, a new “*inlaid*” story talking about the “**liddle**” girl (Alice P. Liddell).



And in the meantime they expect a second round of drinks (**maught**), which they pay with the change (**be these same tokens**) they had in 313.24 (**take your tyon coppels token**). And, although it seems there is a fake coin (**rap**) or a worthless coin (**brass rap**) missing, they hope in the publican's

indulgence (**forgiving a brass rap**) and ask him to “cut” (**sneither** : German *Schneider* – tailor; and “*schneiden*” - to cut) a long story (**a whole length**) not too short (**nor a short shift**), but of the right length to fill them up with what they are interested in (**so full as all were concerned**) : *a concern of the Guinnesses*.

