

Literature Relevant to the Art and Historical Period

Tinsmith's Song

What though our bench labor rob us
of the favor
Enjoyed by the farmer, 'midst fair
Country scenes;
What though 'tis confining to make up
tins shining,
There's naught in the trade which our
conduct demeans,
Then ply the shears, since it appears
That our calling is honest and fair;
Yet take good heed, lest, in our speed,
We should send from our hands leaky ware!
In using the folder we then may grow bolder,
And form and groove pans with our
consciences clear;
Drive each of the turners with skill
beyond learners,
And put in stout wire with our hearts
full of cheer.
Then take a burr and make it whirr,
As the bottoms spin round like a "top,"
And fit these tight, which is but right
If we wish a good name for the shop.
In this case the setter will do the work better,
And strong double seams will repay
all our pains;
But slight not the soldering, or
customers ordering
Their work at our hands will begrudge
us our gains.
This we can do and yet push through
Quite a good share of labor each day,
And in our sales of pans or pails
Boldly ask those who buy for our pay.
We thus may be working, no selfishness lurking
Within, though the weather be cloudy or cold;
And lawfully striving our trade still be driving
From far better motives than mere thirst
for gold.
Then we may serve and never swerve
From strict duty's plain, straightforward path,



Tin Smith, (Kasher)

Our country's weal with fervid zeal
By skill which each artisan hath.
O! then our bench labor may bring us the favor
Of a jaunt now and then midst the forests
and fields,
Which pleasure so joyous can never annoy us,
If health and contentment it constantly yields.
Then ply the shears, since it appears
That our calling is honest and fair;
Yet take good heed lest in our speed.
We should send from our hands leaky ware.

— *Thomas Cowherd*



18th Century line art drawing