

One, Two, Tie My Shoe

Source:

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One, two, tie my shoe, three, four, shut the door,
Five, six, pick up sticks, se - ven, eight, lay them straight,
Nine, ten, a big fat hen, e - le - ven, twelve, dig and delve,
Thir - teen, four - teen, maids a court - ing, fif - teen, six - teen, maids in the kit - chen,
Se - ven - teen, eigh - teen, maids a - wait - ing, nine - teen, twen - ty, my plate's emp - ty.

Background Information

This rhyme is one of the English "Lace Tells," or short songs sung as a memory aid by child workers making bobbin lace in 19-century England.

An annotated version follows:

One, two, buckle [or tie] my shoe: The lacemaker is getting up in the morning.

Three, four, shut the door: Making the house or schoolroom quiet for work.

Five, six, pick up sticks: A direct reference to the wooden or bone bobbins used in lacemaking.

Seven, eight, lay them straight: A working direction to place the bobbins properly on the pillow before proceeding to the next movement.

Nine, ten, a big fat hen: The pillow stuffed with straw that holds the lace pattern. The bobbins are twisted and crossed, with the resulting stitch held in place with a pin stuck into the pattern.

Lacemakers often worked in groups in various places around the house or in the street. The 'maids' in the rest of the piece refer to the stands used to position the pillow comfortably on the lacemaker's knees.

Source: http://www.reference.com/browse/One%2C_Two%2C_Buckle_My_Shoe