

Merrie England

Operetta in 2 acts

Libretto by Basil Hood

Music by Edward German

First performance : April 2, 1902. Savoy Theatre, London.

27th May 2018

Roles

The Earl Of Essex	(Mr. Henry A. Lytton.)	Baritone
Sir Walter Raleigh	(Mr. Robert Evett)	Tenor
Walter Wilkins, a Player in Shakespeare's Company	(Mr. Walter Passmore)	
Silas Simkins, another Player	(Mr. Mark Kinghorne)	
Royal Foresters :		
Long Tom	(Mr. C. Torrence) ;	
Big Ben	(Mr. R. Crompton)	
The Queen's Fool	(Mr. George Mudie, Jun.)	
A Butcher	(Mr. Powis Pinder)	
A Baker	(Mr. J. Boddy)	
A Tinker	(Mr. Rudolf Lewis)	
A Tailor	(Mr. Robert Rows)	
A Lord	(Mr. C. Childerstone)	
A Soldier	(Mr. Lewis Champion)	
First Royal Page	(Master Roy Lorraine)	
Second Royal Page	(Miss Ela Q. May)	
Queen Elizabeth	(Miss Rosina Brandram)	Contralto
Miss Bessie Throckmorton	(Miss Agnes Fraser)	Soprano
"Jill-All-Alone"	(Miss Louie Pounds)	
The May Queen	(Miss Joan Keddie)	
Marjory	(Miss W. Hart Dyke)	
Kate	(Miss Alice Coleman)	
Lady-in-Waiting	(Miss Rose Rosslyn)	
Lords, Ladies, Townsfolk, Soldiers, &c.		

Scenes :

- (Act I.)
- (Act II.)

Synopsis

Two versions of the plot exist: Hood's original from 1902 and a revised one by Dennis Arundell presented at Sadler's Wells in 1960. The opera is set in Windsor Town and makes frequent reference to mythology and folklore (Robin Hood, King Neptune, St. George and the Dragon and witchcraft).

Act One: The Bank of the Thames.s

The opera starts during the May Day festival with the crowning of the May Queen with "roses white and roses red ... the flowers of Merrie England". Her two guards are introduced - Long Tom and Big Ben - who are brothers identical in all but one thing. The "little difference between them" is that Big Ben (like the other men in Windsor) loves the May Queen, while Long Tom loves Jill (known as Jill-All-Alone). Jill is accused of being a witch by the jealous May Queen and is shunned by the townsfolk.

Bessie Throckmorton, one of Queen Elizabeth's Ladies in Waiting, and Sir Walter Raleigh are in love though they must keep their love a secret as the Queen is also in love with Raleigh. Bessie sings of how she carelessly lost a love letter from Raleigh in the beautiful aria She lost the letter from her love. She worries that the letter may have fallen into Queen Elizabeth's hands and thus reveal their secret love.

The Earl of Essex (Raleigh's rival for the affection of the Queen) is handed the love letter (an acrostic on the name Bessie) by Jill-All-Alone and plans to use it to dispose of Raleigh. Walter Wilkins, a travelling actor, appears and argues that any play can be vastly improved by the addition of song ("if it's played on a big brass

band”) and claims that “that’s where [he] and Shakespeare disagree.”

Queen Elizabeth then enters with much ceremony. Long Tom pleads for the Queen’s protection of Jill-All-Alone from the townsfolk’s persecution. Asking her whether she believes she is a witch, she replies with the paradox that if she were a witch she must know more than the townfolk, therefore she can’t be a witch as she would know (as the townsfolk seem to) that she is a witch if she were. She goes on to sing:

I know that love is far above all jewels that are seen,
And I do know that, being so, ‘tis wanted by a Queen;
But love, I we’ en, must pass her by

This insult angers the Queen, and she joins with the villagers in condemning Jill as a witch, locking her away in the Tower of London for witchcraft.

Essex hands the Queen Raleigh’s love letter which she initially mistakes to be meant for her. Raleigh gallantly admits that the letter is in fact meant for Bessie Throckmorton. The Queen is so incensed that she imprisons Raleigh in the Tower of London.

Act Two: Windsor Forest.

Jill has managed to escape with Raleigh using a secret passage out of the tower.

The majority of act two concerns the staging of a play for Queen Elizabeth. Wilkins works on a version of the story of St. George and the Dragon which does not go down well when presented to the Queen and Essex.

Eventually the Queen is convinced to allow Raleigh and Bessie to love each other, choosing Essex instead for herself.

The opera ends with everyone taking part in a reenactment of Robin Hood’s wedding to Maid Marian. Everyone takes roles closely related to their part in the opera (Raleigh becomes Robin to Bessie’s Marian).

ACT I.

SCENE. The Bank of the Thames, opposite Windsor.

Clowns enter.

Chorus

with May Queen and Butcher

Sing down, a down, a down,
Who comes this way?
The May Queen comes, let her path be spread
With roses white and with roses red,
The flowers of Merrie England!

Of what shall be the crown
For the Queen o’ May?
Of roses white and of roses red
Shall a crown be made for the May Queen’s head
The flowers of Merrie England!

And who shall guard the crown
Of the Queen o’ May?

Two men of Windsor born and bred
Who wear her badges of white and red,
The flowers of Merrie England.

(The May Queen has entered, attended, and takes her place on throne.)

May Queen

Now choose me two men,
Good men and true men,
Who’ll stoutly stand
On either hand
To guard my throne for me

Chorus

We’ll choose these two men,
Good men and true men,
Who’ll stoutly stand
On either hand
To guard thy throne for thee

May Queen

Let them be bow-men,
Freemen and yeomen,
Who were confess'd
To be the best
Before the butts to-day!

Chorus

They shall be bow-men,
Freemen and yeomen,
Who, 'tis confess'd,
Did shoot the best
Before the butts to-day!

Butcher

Come forth, stand forth, ye proper men!
Stand forth, Long Tom! Come forth, Big Ben!

All

Long Tom! Big Ben!

Enter Long Tom and Big Ben.

2

Duet Long Tom and Big Ben

Tom

We are two proper men,
Myself and Brother Ben;
We both are Royal keepers in the Forest!

Ben

We're ever hand in glove
Thou lovest what I love,
And I do ever hate what thou abhorrest!

Tom

We're very like each other,
Are myself and younger brother,
And consequently people who have seen us.

Ben

Have mentioned that it odd is
How in our minds and bodies
There's such a little difference between us

Both

But there is a little difference between us
We're as like as pot and kettle,
Being made of self-same metal

But there is a certain difference between us!

Ben

And in the days to be,
The simple historee
Of Brother Tom and me may point a moral!

Tom

That Cupid, when he comes
Between the best of chums,
Doth generally lead them to a quarrel!

Ben

We both do love a maiden,
Our hearts with love are laden,
For each doth think his lady-love a Venus!

Tom

And I do say that mine is
As good a maid as thine is.
And that's the little difference between us!

Both

Yes, that's the only difference between us!
And being men of mettle,
Our difference we'll settle,
Then there won't be any difference between us!
(They begin to fight with quarter-staves.)

May Queen

(coming down to them)

What now! How now! If I am Queen of Love to-day
I'll have no quarrellers in my court! Have-done have
done, I say! What's the bother? Do you both love the
same maid?

Ben

I love thee , while

Tailor

Look you, a Tailor is as big a man as a Forester in his
own way.

Butcher

Out of my way! A Butcher is a better man than a
Tailor.

Baker

And a Baker, too, may talk as loud as a Butcher, on
occasion.

Tinker

To say nought of a Tinker; and I say, "I love thee"

Others

And I! And I! And I!

May Queen

Peace! Cupid hath taught you to shoot your words straight. I will shoot as straight as you — I love you not!

(To Tom.)

Will you shoot a round with me? What say you?

Tom

I say you are indeed a fair maid, yet I love you not.

May Queen

That arrow wobbles. It is too long for the bow. Trim it of "You are a fair maid," and let fly. "I love you not"; 'tis enough to wound a woman with!

Tom

I would not wound thee, nor any woman.

May Queen

Oafish! Have no fear of wounding me, my man! I am heart-whole for all your "I love you not"!

Ben

He is bewitched!

May Queen

How?

Ben

Why, by witchcraft!

May Queen

Whose?

Ben

Why, a witch's! And they say, by the same token, that when you talk of the devil who is the father of witches

Enter Jill. (She carries a cat in her arms.)

May Queen

What's brought you here?

Jill

My two legs.

May Queen

Witch!

Jill

This and that!

May Queen

I say you are a witch!

Jill

Some say what they do not know, and some know what they cannot say. But I will say what I know listen!

I know that love

Is far above

All jewels that are seen,

And I do know

That being so

'Tis wanted by a queen!

But love I ween

May pass her by,

So I may laugh,

While she may sigh

I wonder why?

Butcher

Who do you dream would love you, you drab?

Jill

Why, first, my cat here, and second, a better man than you, or the dream would be a nightmare! And third...

(to May Queen)

...marry, a better man than you if love leads to marriage. But if not a cat or a man, why, the birds and the deer and such wild forest things. For I am one of them! I am one of them!

3**Song****Jill**

Oh, where the deer do lie
There dwell I!

Far in the forest shade,
Down in the dappled glade
Oh, what a life!

Throw her a bone!
Nobody's wife
Jill-all-alone!

Where Herne the Hunter rides
Jill abides;
I hear the ghostly sounds,
Herne 's phantom horn and hound
Oh, she 's a witch!
Pick up a stone!
Die in a ditch

But when the morning breaks
And awakes
All other forest things,
Jill too awakes and sings
Oh, the sweet day!
Queen on a throne!
Merry as May
Jill-all-alone!

May Queen

Now, what game shall we choose to suit May Day?

Jill

What shall you play? Why, the game of real life
real Queen with a real Court. Can anything be
merrier? My cat shall tell you how Queen Bess
fares.

(To cat.)

What do you say? Of a truth of a truth! My Lord of
Essex stands on one side of the throne so.

(To Ben)

Do you stand for the Earl of Essex. And Sir Walter
Raleigh on the other side so; the side of the
Queen's heart.

(To Tom, on left of May Queen.)

And Mistress Throckmorton, the maid of honour, is
somewhere wherever Sir Walter's thoughts are,
though the Queen knows it not. And so they play
"he loves me, he loves me not."

Enter Wilkins with Simkins.

Wilkins

And what would you have me play?

Jill

You? Do you play the fool, who laughs at love like
a wise man; because it is wiser to laugh at a thing
than to weep with it.

(Exit.)

Wilkins

True! Very true!

Simkins

But, the fool! You play the fool! Know you him! The
leading player in Shakespeare's company to whom I
play second, humbly nay, proudly!

(Aside.)

Flatter him so, and he'll wag his ass's ears to any tune
you pipe!

(Aloud.)

Prince of players! King of comedians! A fool indeed!

(Aside.)

A fool in very deed!

Wilkins

Hush, friend you are fulsome. I am indeed Master
Walter Wilkins, Poet and Chief Player in Will
Shakespeare's company; and for his profit I prophesy
that he hath a misconception of the part of a writer in
writing a part, in that he hath too little regard for the
matters of singing and dancing ; for a time will come
when all comedies shall be musical, or the public will
have none of them not even if I played the chief part,
and so made the part seem greater than the whole. It is
so I have counselled Will Shakespeare as I do you :
song and dance, my masters, song and dance or let the
drama die a dull dog that is hanged on its own tag!

Song

4

Wilkins

I do counsel that your playtime
be a jocund and a gay time,
And your player be as merry as he can ;
If a play be glum and gloomy
very tragical and " tomby"
I do act upon a very proper plan:
As a patriotic Briton
I have pondered on and written
A jolly sailor song, about the sea,
With a hornpipe (though perchance one be
incongruous) I dance one,
Whatever kind of character I be.
And the time will come
'Twill be seen by some
(Though not perchance by me)
When a dance will act like magic,
While five acts that are tragic

Well, that's where I and Shakespeare disagree

There's no character but marry!
'tis convenient to carry
At any time the burden of a song!
One word will introduce it,
and the public will excuse it,
And, oddsbodikins! applaud it,
loud and long!
Now in Hamlet's long soliloquy
he mentioneth the billow
Dost remember in "To be, or not to be"?
Come the words "a sea of trouble"
the applause, I trow, would double
If he forthwith sang a song about the sea!
And the time will come
Twill be seen by some
(Though not perchance by me)
When a lively Prince of Denmark
Will sing that song, and then mark
How entirely I and Shakespeare disagree!

(Dance)

(Exit)

Tom

Were I indeed Sir Walter Raleigh, and the Queen
loving me and I not loving the Queen, because of
my love for a maid of honour, I would, if I were a
man of honour and Sir Walter Raleigh

Enter Raleigh.

Raleigh

Well, friend; if you were I, what then?

Tom

Nay, sir; I was speaking my thoughts aloud.

Raleigh

'Tis a dangerous malady in these times. If it grow
upon you, let a leech look at your tongue to cut it
off. It may save your head.

Ben

Sir, do not be angry with my brother. He hath been
fearfully bewitched by a wild wench who dwells in
the forest. He claims her to be as sweet a maid as
our May Queen. I did set about cudgelling my
brains to find a cure for him, till he set about
cudgelling me.

May Queen

There are but two cures for witchcraft - to burn the
witch or drown her in a sack.

Raleigh

If she be a witch. They nearly burned me for a
wizard when I first burned tobacco! But who'll think
of witches on May Day? Better drown such thoughts
and here comes the sack to drown them in.

Enter a Vendor of wine and mead.

Vendor

Who'll buy my mead or sack?

Four gills to the pint, and a quart to a Black Jack!

Who'll drink my mead or sack?

Raleigh

Why, every Jack of us here at my expense. And see
that every Jack has his complement of Jills, as the
song goes.

(Taking a Black Jack.)

Marry, 'tis a very Falstaff of wine-cups!

5

Song and Chorus

Raleigh

That every Jack should have a Jill
Dame Nature always meant, sirs;
But where's the gill can hope to fill
This Jack to his content, sirs?
Since three or four of gills or more
Do make his proper measure,
Give Jack his mead, and Jack indeed
Will bubble high with pleasure!
Then here's a lack
Of care that kills,
When every Jack
Hath all his gills
Of what he wills,
Or mead or sack,
For they're the Jills
For fat Black Jack!

Now, Jack will lay you on the ground
If you stay long together,
For I'll be bound, though fat and round,
He is as tough as leather!
And who so wills to steal his Jills

Will find it is a tussle,
Till on his back he's laid by Jack,
For Jack's a man of muscle!
But here's a lack etc.

(Exit)

May Queen

Now listen to me! A witch is a witch, whether it be
May Day or Christmas.

Butcher

The same with a butcher 'tis a steady trade and a
sticking trade.

Tinker

The same with a ...

May Queen

Let such as wish my favour my wishes .A witch is
fair game and ever in season. And what's a fairer
game for a May Day than a witch hunt? Who says a
witch hunt?

Crowd

I! And I! And I!

Butcher

A hue and cry! A witch! A witch I

Ben

Hue! Hue! A witch hunt!

All

Hue! Hue 1 Hue! A witch! A witch! Hue! Hue!
(Exeunt all, except May Queen, Kate, and Tom.)

Tom

They'll not catch her, for she runs like a deer. But if
they do and do her harm well, I will not kill thee,
even then, for my brother's sake.

May Queen

Your brother's sake I What is your brother to me
or what are you?

Tom

I have thought that you liked me, a little, and I
would have liked you

May Queen

Yes?

Tom

To like my brother.

May Queen

Must it be always .you, or your brother? Now listen -
I hate big men. It is brain that women worship brain,
fool, not bulks as is shown by the way I am attracted
to to Master Wilkins.

Enter Wilkins.

Wilkins

Who speaks my name?

May Queen

Did I speak it aloud? I was thinking. It hath a sweet
sound "Walter Wilkins." Yes, it is a pretty name.

Wilkins

And famous.

(Enter Raleigh.)

May Queen

What think you, Master Wilkins, of love at first sight?

Wilkins

Why, love seems a merry thing at first sight and I
have never looked further.

Raleigh

Then sigh not for second sight or you may prophesy
differently .

Wilkins

I prophesy indifferently, sir; but if love come to me,
'twill find me merry, or not at all.

Raleigh

To laugh at love is fool's wisdom.

Wilkins

To weep with it is wise man's folly, sir.

Raleigh

Perhaps. I like your humour.

Wilkins

My humour is good humour, sir that is my rule of life, and I apply it to love.

6

Quintet

May Queen, Kate, Raleigh, Wilkins, and Tom

Love is meant to make us glad,
Hey, jolly, jolly little Cupid!
Fools do let him make them sad,
Hey, folly, folly, they are stupid!
Let's be wise
If we do meet him,
Heave no sighs
But gladly greet him!
And say to him " Good day " to him,
He'll treat us as we treat him!
Hey, jolly, jolly little Love!
Sorrow follows folly,
As the berries grow on holly,
And oh, 'tis folly
To be afraid of Love!
Love is but a butterfly,
Hey, jolly! What is there to match it?
Will you watch it flutter by?
Oh, folly, folly not to catch it!
Try to keep
It when you've caught it!
Wherefore weep
If you have sought it?
To sigh for it, and die for it,
Oh, wisdom never taught it!
Hey, jolly, jolly little Love!
Sorrow follows folly,
As the berries grow on holly,
And oh, 'tis folly
To run away from Love!

(Exeunt Tom and Kate.)

Wilkins

Ah, sir, 'tis in his treatment of lovers that I would read Shakespeare a lesson ; that it is pleasanter to make love go with laughter than with tears.

Raleigh

He has studied life.

Wilkins

No, sir, death. To live is not the fashion with his

lovers; they would sooner die than marry, so it seems. And to turn events the other way were as easy as the alphabet. Think of his Romeo and Juliet, and what it might have been had I written it! Now mark

A. was the Angel he met at the ball;
B. was her beauty apparent to all;
C. is for Capulet (name which she bore);
D. the disguise which young Borneo wore;
E. for the Ease of his elegant pose;
F. the Fandango they danced on their toes;
G. the Guitar which he played by and bye,
H. for her Handkerchief dropped in reply ;
(I am young Romeo, breathing his love;
J. is for Juliet sitting above!)
K. the last Kiss as apart they are torn
L. by the Lark who's the " herald of morn"
M. is the Moon that's preparing to set;
N. is the Nurse calling, " Come, Juliet!"
O is the ejaculation she sighed,
P. because promised ay Paris's bride;
Q. are the Quarrels that quickly ensued;
R. are the Rapiers drawn in the feud;
S. for the Sentence pronounced by the "Book "
T. for the Tragical Turn events took;
U. is the Unhappy end of the play;
V. is the Version which 7' 11 write some day:
W Shakespeare's an Xcellent writer,
But Wise Editors will say my version's brighter!
(Exit with May Queen.)

Enter Bessie. (She is gathering flowers, and sings.)

7

Song

Bessie

She had a letter from her love,
And on her heart she laid it:
'Twas all in rhyme, and Father Time
She vowed could never fade it!
Ah me! a lover's vow
She knoweth better now!
She lost the letter from her love,
Or somebody did steal it;
And oh, the smart in her poor heart,
She vowed that naught could heal it!
Ah me! a lover's vow
She knoweth better now!
She found the letter from her love,

§ Divine Natura agros dedit, ars humana a difcavit urbes. Varro : De Re Rustica.

When she had sorely missed it;
Despite the stain of mud and rain,
She fondled it and kissed it!
Ah me! a lover's vow
She knoweth better now!

Raleigh

Bessie, what do the words of that song mean?

Bessie

What do the words of a song matter, if the tune be
right? What matter if a girl's heart break, if her face
smile?

Raleigh

Are you going?

Bessie

Yes. By your leave, I will take mine.

Raleigh

Whither?

Bessie

Away — to change my gown, to attend the Queen.

Raleigh

I love you in a simple dress.

(Coming to her.)

Do you know what love is?

Bessie

I was taught once.

Raleigh

When?

Bessie

Why, when I learned my Latin grammar thus:

Love, which is masculine, should be declined in all
cases.

Raleigh

When its cases are plural. In my case, it is alone —
the one love of my life.

Bessie

Then it is singular.

Raleigh

Love may be a verb, conjugated thus: I love, thou
lovest, and that's enough; for it requires no third
person present.

Bessie

Ah! For the present. But how of other moods and
other tenses, the future and the past?

Raleigh

I vow

Bessie

I trow your vows are good vows as lovers' vows go.

They have served for the Queen before me, so I
should not complain.

Raleigh

You speak bitterly.

Bessie

But I smile sweetly?

Raleigh

In very truth.

Bessie

And in very truth the words of my song were true, and
mean much to both of us. "She lost the letter from her
love." And so have I! Oh, if your letter be found and
brought to the Queen!

Raleigh.

What then?

Bessie

Why, then, the air of Court would be bad for both of
us 1

Raleigh

Let's have done with it now, you and I! What is it
they sing in the Tales of Robin Hood, in their Morris
Danoe to-day?

"Then who would not be out of Court

As Robin Hood befell,

To fare as Love may bid him fare

And bid all else farewell?

If Love follow him

Beneath the greenwood tree."

Aye! It is when a man's in love that the quiet of

country calls him loudest. Is it so with a maid?
Would you give up your life in Court for me?

Bessie

In Court, or elsewhere, I would give up my life for thee!

8

Duet

Raleigh and Bessie

Raleigh

When true love hath found a man,
He will hear the pipe of Pan;
Pan, the god of open country,
Oh, his tunes are pretty!

Nature bids you bring your sweet one
Where no other soul may meet one;

“Nature made the country side,
And man did make the city.” §

Come, come to Arcadie!
Bring your Phyllis, happy Corydon!
Learn together, if you can,
The simple tunes of Piper Pan!

Bess

When a maid doth love a man,
She will hear the pipe of Pan;
Pan will call her, call her, call her,
With a magic ditty!

Better far a country cottage
If your true love share your pottage,
Than to dwell in Castle Pride,
As some do more's the pity!

Come, come to Arcadie!
I'll be Phyllis, you be Corydon!
Happy maid and happy man,
To dance all day for Piper Pan!

(Dance. Exeunt

(Enter Essex, with a Lord.)

Essex

There goes a lesson in love and the madness of lovers! For there goes one who prefers the good looks of Bessie Throckmorton to the good books of Bessie of England!

Lord

'Twould ruin Raleigh if the news could be brought to the Queen's ears!

Essex

It can if it be carried cautiously. Yet not too cautiously, but so that the news may fall opportunely, and seem to get broken unawares. For the Queen hates the bearer of bad tidings only less than the tidings itself.

Lord

What did he once say, “Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall!”

Essex

And I say now, “Love lies in ambush where Ambition climbs!”

Love lets one arrow fly

Tipped with a glance and feathered with a sigh,

And Pride will lay him down and die

At the first blow

Take care!

Marry, love is a foolish thing!

(Enter Simkins with Wilkins.)

Simkins

Nay, sir, love is a very serious thing, as my friend here has only learned in the last half hour.

Wilkins.

It is like the plague a man may take it lightly till it take him. And if it overtake him it will undertake him; for Love is a very undertaker to bury the gay in the grave.

Simkins

He talks like a book.

Essex

In a shabby cover.

Wilkins

And without a title, my lords. But judge not a book by its cover, nor a man by his title or lack of one. For Love, sirs, in this last half hour, has made me one of Nature's noblemen.

Essex

That's against Nature.

Wilkins

Sir, King Cupid can confer nobility on all men in half an hour.

Essex

'Tis the way of all new nobility. It grows rank, like a mushroom bed.

Wilkins

Love, sir, can alter a man's habits quicker than he can change his clothes

(Enter Tom, who stands silent at back.)

9

Trio.

Wilkins, Essex, and Simkins.

Wilkins

When a man is a lover, he's bound to discover
A fact of which I'm an informant:
His nature will change, or at least rearrange
Some points which were formerly dormant.

Simkins

Perhaps more or less, in the matter of dress,
He was careless or shabby or shady;
But love Will change that he will buy a new hat,
When he's fallen in love with a lady!

Essex

For the love of a lady's a curious fact,
On a slovenly person it's certain to act;
If his coat is well brushed and his boots are well
blackened,
You may know he's in love with a lady!
Though a small man by nature, your love will
inflate your
Proud heart to a size which is grander;
You'll feel you might rank (though a clerk in a
bank)
With a hero as brave as Lysander.
You'll be bursting with pluck, and will curse your
ill-luck
That while peacefully tied to a desk, you
Are longing to meet a mad dog in the street
With some one or other to rescue!

Wilkins

Oh, the love of a lady has such an effect
Upon me, that I beg if you ever detect
A house that's on fire, or a ship that is wrecked,

You'll allow me to fly to the rescue!

Simkins

Then to live in an attic (on this be emphatic),
An attic some lodging-house drab lets,
Is far happier if you share it with her,
Than a palace. Put that on your tablets.

Wilkins

For your thoughts at all times you'll be breathing in
rhymes,
Though your friends never thought you a poet;
But if love blow its nose, it can't do it in prose,
It must have a poet to blow it.
So the love of a lady's a curious thing,
A poetical fancy it's certain to bring,
And the present poetical song which we sing
Is expressly intended to show it!
(Dance, and exeunt.)
(Enter May Queen.)

May Queen

Well, where 's your witch?

Tom

I know not that she is a witch.

May Queen

I know she is. Contradiction is unmannerly.

Tom

But not unwomanly, so it seems.

May Queen

Let me pass.

Tom

Am I in thy way?

May Queen

Aye. I seem ever falling in with thee, for some reason.

Tom

And falling out, for none. I'll go.

May Queen

Stay, as thou art here. What character do you play in the Morris Dance?

Tom

I'm put down for Robin Hood, your champion.

May Queen

Nav: Robin Hood should be a man of quality, not quantity.

(Enter Wilkins)

Master Wilkins, will you play my Robin Hood today? And take this man's part?

Wilkins

Aye, if he care not to tight for it.

Tom

Not I!

(Exit.)

Wilkins

I hate a coward! Ah I would that I could prove myself the hero love hath made me I If fierce fire would on a sudden leap from yonder castle, single handed I would scale the walls, and tearing down the burning masonry with frenzied fingers, fling the flaming fragments fling the flaming fragments. Where would I fling the fragments?

(Enter Simkins)

Simkins

Upon the heads of the applauding crowd.

Wilkins

Aye.

Simkins

Or if a mad bull, bursting from its barriers, bounded bellowing in our midst, with superhuman strength wouldst seize the snorting brute by head or tail and give him vigorous battle, though final victory

Wilkins

Were I

Simkins

Or if some gentle maid, a stranger, but a female in distress, flying from a murderous mob.

Wilkins

Would I protect her? Marry, that would I!

(Enter Jill, running. She clings to Wilkins)

Jill

Save me!

Simkins

This is your scene! I am in the audience.

(Enter crowd, led by Butcher. He seizes Jill and drags her to centre.)

Jill

Are you all cowards here?

Wilkins

No, not all, though I only answer for myself.

(Threatening the Butcher.)

Stand back!

Butcher

Stand back thyself!

(Boxes his ear.)

Wilkins

Well, I will stand back; that's only fair.

(Retreating.)

A brave man cannot ask another to do what he dare not do himself. But fear not, gentle maid, I will protect thee from all harm.

May Queen

She is a witch! Drown her!

All

Aye, a witch! A witch!

(They bind her arms.)

Wilkins

A witch? Now that alters the complexion of the matter.

Simkins

Your own altered somewhat. You grew very pale.

Wilkins

With anger. 'Tis the way of brave men. Oddsfish! if I stay here I shall fight the lot. I'd best away.

Simkins

'Tis the safest plan!

(Exeunt.)

(Tom enters and Ben)

Jill

I claim a hearing and fair trial!

Tom

And I claim that for her!

May Queen

What right have you to speak for her?

Tom

The free right of a free man.

(Essex has entered.)

Essex

That's right enough. And I warrant these people say
the same or they wrong their own rights!

Soldier.

Aye I Ayel Fair trial and no favour!

Essex

Untie her.

Jill

(to Essex)

I thank you, sir.

Essex

Thank your champion here.

(To Tom)

I do but say what the Queen would say—for she
would love thy stock of courage as she loves the
courage of thy stock. The Yeomen of England I
She says they built her throne!

All

God save the Queen!

10

Song

Essex

Who were the Yeomen, the Yeomen of England?
The free men were the Yeomen, the free men of
England.

Stout were the bows they bore

When they went out to war.

Stouter their courage for the honour of England!

And nations to Eastward,

And nations to Westward,
As foemen did curse them,
The bowmen of England!
No other land could nurse them,
But their motherland, Old England!
And on her broad bosom did they ever thrive!

Where are the Yeomen, the Yeomen of England?
In homestead and cottage they still dwell in England!

Stained with the ruddy tan

God's air doth give a man,

Free as the winds that fan the broad breast of
England!

And nations to Eastward,

And nations to Westward,

As foemen may curse them,

The Yeomen of England!

No other land can nurse them,

But their motherland, Old England!

And on her broad bosom shall they ever thrive!

(Enter Wilktns.)

Wilkins

Is the fighting finished?

Simkins

It has not begun yet. Stay, you'll have your chance

May Queen

Let the witch have a trial a witch's trial. Into the river
with her! In with her!

Tom

Stay! I am a man of few words, but I would say as
prettily as may be, if you will bear with my lack of
fine language, that the first who lays finger on her I
will kill.

May Queen

So? Now, who's my champion?

Simkins

(to Wilkins)

Your chance at last!

Wilkins

I will wait till last 'tis more modest. And modesty
doth become a brave man.

Simkins

I never saw a brave man become more modest!

Ben

I'll not fight my brother again. And besides and beyond and above, a Tailor is as big a man as a Forester in his own way, so I've heard.

(Puts Tailor in his place.)

Tailor

And a Butcher is as good a man as a Tailor sometimes.

(Exit)

Butcher

And a Baker may talk louder than a Butcher on occasion.

(Exit)

Baker

To say nothing of a Tinker.

(Exit)

Tinker

Who hath nothing to say at the moment.

(Exit)

May Queen

So much for my lovers!

(Exit.)

Ben

If it come to that I'll fight. Though he pound me to a pudding.

Wilkins

And afterwards, afterwards, mind, when a pudding, you fight with me!

Ben

Who are you, small man?

Wilkins

The May Queen's champion, silkworm her Robin Hood to-day! And through fire and water will I go for her to smile at me!

Ben

Into water shall you go forthwith for her to laugh at you! Come, coxcomb!

(He throws Wilkins into river, and exit.)

Essex

(to Jill)

Why do you venture here if they hunt you as a witch?

Jill

'Twas to carry this to a lady of the Court, whom I saw drop it in the forest.

(Showing paper.)

Essex

This?

(Taking it.)

Jill

Maybe she'll give me a soft word for it.

Tom

You would give your life for a soft word?

Jill

Perhaps, and get the best of the bargain.

Tom

Witch or no witch, and what you are I know not.

Essex

The Queen shall decide that Queen Bess; I will bring you before her for judgment.

Tom

God save the Queen!

Jill

And me!

Essex

(to Lord.)

We are in luck's way! This is Baleigh's writing a love-letter to Bessie Throckmorton! 'Tis an acrostic, hiding the name Bessie Look

(Reading:)

"Blessed the pen that writes my lady's name,

"E'en tho' my pen do halt for very shame!

"Shame at its own unworthiness to write

"So sweet a name"

And so forth. Now mark how this will fall out for Raleigh.

(To Tom)

This paper may be what she says, or it may be some witchcraft of her own; I know not some love charm.

Jill

Sir, I declare

Essex

The Queen shall judge.

(To Tom)

Keep the girl in charge, and ask the Queen to judge her once for All The Queen can do no wrong.

Tom

God save the Queen and (to Jill) thee!

(Exeunt.)

Essex

And Kaleigh. He'll need all our prayers when the Queen reads this!

(A March. The Crowd gathers. Then the Royal Barge approaches at back. Queen Elizabeth enters from Barge, with Bessie, and Ladies and Gentlemen of the Court. The Queen's Fool follows.)

11

Chorus

God save Elizabeth!
Sing with united breath
God save Elizabeth, and England bless!
May heaven prosper her!
May she our land prefer!
St. George for Merrie England and England's
Queen Bess!

Long live Elizabeth!
Loyal and true till death
Unto Elizabeth shall England be!
Held high thy sceptre is
Over thine enemies!
Elizabeth for England, and England for thee!

Song

Elizabeth

O peaceful England!
While I my watch am keeping,
Thou, like Minerva,
Weary of war, art sleeping!
Sleep on a little while,
And in thy slumber smile;

While thou art sleeping, I'll
Be wakeful, ever wakeful!

Sword and buckler by thy side,
Best on the shore of battle-tide,
Which, like the ever-hungry sea,
Boars round this Isle;
Sleep till I awaken thee, smile;

England, fair England,
Well hast thou earned thy slumber;
Yet, though thy bosom
No breastplate now encumber,
Let not thy fingers yield
Grasp of thy sword and shield;
Thou shalt awake and wield
Destruction when I call thee!

Sword and buckler by my side,
Best on the shore of battle-tide,
Which, like the ever hungry sea,
Boars round this Isle;
Sleep till I awaken thee,
And in thy slumber smile!

Elizabeth

Where is Sir Walter Raleigh?

Essex

Where is Mistress Throckmorton?

Bessie

Why question me, my lord?

Raleigh

(entering)

Because he would sooner question a woman than answer to a man. Cross swords and not questions, and I'll point my answers, I promise you!

(They draw.)

Elizabeth

Put up your swords! What does this mean?

Bess

(to Elizabeth)

Why, Sir Walter loves you, madam, and the other is jealous.

Elizabeth

Put up your swords, gentlemen!

Raleigh

As I am a man, madam, I'll speak openly now of the love I have.

Elizabeth

(aside.)

As I am your Queen, be silent. I know of your love. Bessie has told me.

Raleigh

Bessie has told you?

Elizabeth

Yes, and, I am not angry.

Bessie

(to Raleigh)

I have been falsely true and truly false, to save your life.

Elizabeth

I'm in a merry mood. Where are the May Games? Let's see a Morris Dance! Who plays Robin Hood to-day?

Simkins

Master Wilkins, your Grace, an actor of infinite dignity.

Elizabeth

Well, where is he?

Simkins

Madam, he comes.

(Enter Wilkins, from river, a miserable object.)

Elizabeth

What's this? A joke at my expense?

(Ben enters.)

Wilkins

No, madam, at mine. Yet I count the cost nothing if it please you.

(To Ben.)

But you shall pay for it.

Ben

For his conceit I threw him.

Wilkins

As he says, madam, 'twas a quaint conceit of mine to be thrown into the river, that I might afterwards emerge in the character of Father Thames, whom I now represent. As Father Thames I stand before you as Ambassador for King Neptune, to offer unto Beauteous England the dignity and title of Mistress of the Sea!

Elizabeth

A pretty conceit.

Simkins

(to Ben.)

Marry, his conceit carries him further than you could throw him into the Queen's favour.

12**Song****Wilkins, with Chorus**

King Neptune sat on his lonely throne,
On his lonely throne sat he;
King Neptune sat there all alone,
As lonely as could be.
And he said, "Now who do you think would do
To share my throne with me?"
And every fish, according to his wish,
At once went out to see!

At a nod
From the god,
All the Salmon and the Cod,
And all the fish there be
The Sturgeon and the Stickleback,
The Porpoise and the Conger Eel,
The Whitebait and the Octopus,
The Shark, the Mullet, and the Smelt,
The Brill, Anchovy, Sprat, and Plaice.
The Whale, the Winkle, and the Whelk,
The fish that coil and fish that fly,
The fish you boil and fish you fry,
The Lobster in the lobster-shell,
The Sole, the Whiting, and the Jelly-fish,
and more than I can tell
Whose names I cannot speak or spell
In fact, all fish fishmongers sell,
And all they do not sell as well
In short, all fishes that do dwell

Where Neptune bids them be,
Away did swim
To find for him
A Mistress of the Sea!

King Neptune sat on his throne once more.
On his throne once more sat he,
When the fish came back from England's shore
And clapped their fins with glee.
For they said, "We've seen the fairest Queen
That in the world can be!"
And Neptune saith, "That's Queen Elizabeth!
And she's the Queen for me!"

Is it odd
That the god
Told the Salmon and the Cod
To publish this decree?
The Sturgeon and the Stickleback,
The Porpoise and the Conger Eel,
The Whitebait and the Octopus,
The Shark, the Mullet, and the Smelt,
The Brill, Anchovy, Sprat, and Plaice,
The Whale, the Winkle, and the Whelk,
The fish that coil and fish that fly,
The fish you boil and fish you fry,
The Lobster in the lobster-shell,
The Sole, the Whiting, and the Jell-
Y-fish, and more than I can tell
Whose names I cannot speak or spell
In fact, all fish fishmongers sell,
And all they do not sell as well
All such as in the sea do dwell,
Did publish this decree,
That Beauteous Bess
All men address
As Mistress of the Sea!

Elizabeth

'Tis a quaint conceit!

Wilkins

Anon I play Robin Hood in the Morris Dance; and
later I would provide for your delight a certain
Masque of St. George and the Dragon, in which I
play St. George, and my friend here the Dragon,
whom I beat unmercifully and finally slay
(*indicating Ben*)

...if it be your pleasure?

Elizabeth

We'll see it. Bring your May Queen now, with her

Court of Robin Hood, Tom the Piper, Friar Tuck, and
All. Ho, a Morris Dance!

Wilkins

As your Grace commands.

(*Exit.*)

Elizabeth

I love the old tales of Eobin Hood. Bessie, do you
remember how the song gees Maid Marion sings?

Bessie

Yes, madam, I was reminded of it to-day.

Elizabeth

Let's hear it.

13

Finale

Bessie

It is a tale of Robin Hood,
Of Tuck and Little John,
And all of those who followed him,
With his Maid Marion.
For she followed him
Beneath the greenwood tree,
As Love may follow thee!
Though Fortune frown,
Thou 'It wear a crown
A king may never see!
With a hey, Jolly Robin!

Then who would not be out of Court,
As Robin Hood befell,
To fare as Love may bid him fare,
And bid all else farewell?
If Love follow him
Beneath the greenwood tree,
As Love may follow thee,
Though Fortune frown,
Thou 'It wear a crown
A king may never see!
With a hey, Jolly Robin!

Elizabeth

Would queens could love as Marion did! Heigho!

Essex

Would I were Robin Hood if that were so!

Tom enters, bringing on Jill

Tom

Madam, I ask a favour! I plead the cause
Of a poor sorely-stricken girl, whom folk
Do call Jill-all-alone

May Queen

She is a witch!

Townspeople

Aye! Aye! A witch! She is a witch! A witch!
A witch! A witch!

Elizabeth

Who speak against her?

May Queen

These
Four worthy citizens of Windsor Town!
(The Butcher, Baker, Tinker, and Tailor advance.)

Quartet

We are four men of Windsor
A Butcher of Windsor,
And a Baker of Windsor,
And a Tinker of Windsor,
And a Tailor of Windsor.
And good meat I sell,
And good bread I bake,
And my tin is good tin,
And good clothes I make!
So we all ply a good trade in Windsor,
And cry
Who'll buy? Who'll buy? Who'll buy, buy, buy
From the four men of Windsor?

Elizabeth

(to Jill)
What say you, girl?
They say you are a witch!

Jill

A witch is wise:
So if a witch I should know more than they;
But if I am a witch I know much less,
Because I do not know I am a witch;
But I do know what I do know! Now, hark!
I know that love
Is far above
All other pretty things:

And I do know
That being so
'Tis coveted by kings.
But love hath wings
And passeth by
A king sometimes for such as I!
I wonder why?

Concerted Piece.

May Queen

By those words I accuse her
Of drawing by her magic
The love of faithful lovers
Unto herself by witchcraft!

Essex

She had this piece of writing,
Which I did find upon her
Perhaps it is a love charm,
A thing of evil purpose.
(He hands Raleigh's verses to Elizabeth)
(Enter Raleigh)

Elizabeth

The verse is an acrostic,
And its initial letters
Do make the name of "Bessie,"
And I do know the writing.

Essex

Why, 'tis Sir Walter Raleigh's!

Elizabeth

Yes; is it not thy writing?
And my name that is written?

Raleigh

The writing is my writing,
And I give back the letter
To her for whom I wrote it.
(He gives the paper to Bessie Throckmorton.)

All

Bessie Throckmorton!

Ensemble

Ral

My troth is plighted
To this gentle maid;
Tn secret I have paid
My past addresses!
Blow high, blew low!
Now coram publico ,
I let the whole world know
My heart is Bessie's!

Bessie

Though I'm affrighted,
And sore afraid,
Though dread of her tirade
My soul possesses!
Blow high, blow low!
However fortune blow,
I'll let the whole world go
For thy caresses!

Elizabeth

Now I am slighted
For another maid!
Love's like a falcon strayed
With broken jesses!
Fly high, fly low,
Wherever love may go,
What lure can woman throw
For lost caresses!

Chorus

In love united
They are not afraid!
In secret has he paid
His past addresses!
Blow high, blow low,
However fortune blow,
He'll let the whole world go
For her caresses!

Solom Jill

Jill

I know that love
Is far above
All jewels that are seen;
And I do know
That being so
'Tis wanted by a Queen.
But Love, I ween,

May pass her by
So I may laugh,

Elizabeth

No! Thou shalt die!
(A Soldier seizes Jill.)
Go lodge this witch within the Castle walls;
I'll see her burn there! Thou, Sir Walter,
Go to thy country house and banishment.

(To Bessie)

Go to the Castle, thou a prisoner!
(Exit Elizabeth, in a rage, with Essex and Ladies Jill is dragged off by Soldier.)

Duet. Raleigh and Bessie

Raleigh

Be not affrighted!
Sweet, be not afraid!
Although the Queen's tirade
Thy soul oppresses!
Blow high, blow low,
However fortune blow,
I'll let the whole world go
For thy caresses!

Bessie

Though I'm affrighted,
And sore afraid!
Though dread of her tirade
My soul possesses!
Blow high, blow low,
However fortune blow,
I'll let the whole world go
For thy caresses!
(As the lovers are parting, the Morris Dancers are heard approaching. The Queen's Fool runs across to Raleigh and Bessie, and bids them listen to:

The Song of the Morris Dancers.

If Love follow thee
Beneath the greenwood tree,
Though Fortune frown,
Thou'll wear a crown
A king may never see!
With a hey, Jolly Robin!

The Morris Dancers enter to the refrain of their song, led by Wilkins in the character of Robin Hood.

Raleigh embraces Bessie, and exit. Queen Elizabeth re-enters with Essex and others. As she is passing up to her barge, she sees Bessie, who is standing looking after her lover. Essex beckons a Man-at-arms, who goes to Bessie The Queen goes up to the barge, and is standing on it looking back at Bessie, who is escorted up as the Morris Dancers form their group on “ Robin Hood’s Wedding,” and the curtain falls

CD2

ACT II.

*Scene. A glade in Windsor Forest. "Herne's Oak"
Jill is discovered tending a small fire of sticks, over
which hangs a cooking-pot. She listens to voices*

1 *heard singing in the distance.*

Chorus

(heard in distance off.)

The month o' May has come to-day,
And who will wear a frown-a?
For where's the knave
Who'll not be merry?
We'll dig his grave,
With a derry down derry,
A down, a down, a down-a!

Solo

Jill

Cat, cat, where have you been?
I've been to the Castle to look at the Queen
Cat, cat, did she sit on a throne?
Verily, yes, like a Jill-all-alone.

Cat, cat, what do you mean?
A Queen is a woman, a woman a Queen!
Cat, cat, shall I sit on a throne?
Verily, yes, when a lover you own.

Chorus

(heard off stage).

The Queen o' May is crowned to-day
With a crown, a crown, a crown-a!
Then where's the knave
Who'll not be merry?
And join the stave,
With 'a derry down derry,
A down, a down, a down-a!

*(Jill listens, then removes tripod, treads out the fire,
and hides in the hollow oak.)*

(Enter Tom and Ben.)

Ben

What did you find at the Castle?

Tom

Sentries on every gate to keep Raleigh out, and his
lady in.

Ben

And your witch?

Tom

She is to burn at sunset.

(Jill comes from oak.)

Ben

Look!

Tom

(to Jill)

How did you escape?

Jill

By witchcraft- if I'm a witch!

Ben

So I thought we'll take her back; 'tis the Queen's
service.

(Takes Jill by the wrist.)

Tom

If she confess herself a witch

(Enter Bessie from oak.)

Bessie

(entering.)

Stay I She has saved my life!

Ben

By witchcraft?

Bessie

No, by her knowledge of a certain passage from the
Castle which leads by a secret trap-door out of
Herne's Oak there. She is no witch.

Jill

I prayed you keep in hiding, and have a care.

Bessie

I have cares enough, without caring to see care come
to others for want of a little understanding.

Jill

(to Tom)

Well, it's true enough. You know now why Herne's

Oak is haunted. I had the secret from my grandfather. He guarded the passage for King Harry, who sometimes used it. Within there still hang the hunting horn and the deerskin with antlers with which he sometimes raised the appearance of Herne the Hunter. It kept gossips from the place, as it might do again.

Ben

Why did King Harry want a secret passage?

Jill

I know not but England's a free country.

Bessie

And Harry was a free liver.

Tom

Not to say a free lover.

2

Jill

Yet he was married in his time, they tell me.

Quartet

Bessie, Jill, Tom, and Ben.

In England, merrie England,
There lived a king upon a time
To tell his name might be a crime
In England, merrie England!
But he sometimes did doff his crown,
And walk abroad like any clown,
In England, merrie England!
And if he met a pretty wench,
And maids are fairer than the French,
In England, merrie England,
He'd kiss her, as an Englishman
Should kiss a maiden when he can,
In England, merrie England!
So let us sing,
God save the King
Of England, merrie England!
With fal la lal,
For bluff King Hal
Of England, merrie England!
(Exeunt Tom and Ben, R. Bessie to Oak, with Jill)
Enter Chorus of Men, with Simkins, the Butcher,
and the Tailor, singing:

Trio and Chorus

Tailor

The sun in the heaven is high!
No clouds do bespeckle the sky!
And a man and a maid
Do kiss in the shade
And so shall my bottle and I!
With a hey, and a ho,
And a hey nonny no,
A fig for the weather, say I!

Chorus

For in summer or winter,
In autumn or spring,
Whatever betide me
Whatever they bring,
With my bottle beside me
I'm able to sing
My hey nonny, hey nonny no!

Simkins

The clouds they may come in the sky!
The rain it may fall by-and-bye!
And the water may drench
The man and the wench
A fig for cold water, say I!
With a hey, and a ho,
And a hey nonny no,
Whatever the weather, I'm dry!

Chorus

For in summer or winter,
In autumn or spring, etc .

Butcher

The snow it may cover the ground!
The river with ice may be bound!
But when maidens grow old,
And love groweth cold,
My bottle and I shall be found!
With a hey, and a ho,
And a hey nonny no,
However the seasons come round!

Chorus

For in summer or winter,
In autumn or spring, etc .

Enter Wilkins, with the Tinker and the BAKER.

Wilkins

Now the business of the day stands thus. First, we meet here, by Herne's Oak, and arrange the music play of Robin Hood's meeting with Little John very proper to be played in the May Games, in which I play Robin Hood.

Simkins

And I, the Friar.

Wilkins

Then having perfected ourselves in our parts, we proceed to the Castle to play before the Queen's servants. But and mark this "but" if we do meet the Queen by the way, we forthwith commence my Masque of St. George and the Dragon.
(*Showing manuscript.*)

Simkins

In which I play the part of the Dragon.

Wilkins

The hind part of the Dragon.

Tinker

And what do I play?

Butcher

And I?

Baker

And I?

Tailor

And I?

Wilkins

You play the music.

Simkins

Is the masque musical?

Wilkins

Yes. It hath parts in it for the drum, tabor, sackbut, Jew's harp, and voice. Of these, the drum sets the time, the sackbut sets the tune.

Simkins

Will you give me the sackbut, to set the tune?

Wilkins

I would give you the sackbut you set the scenes.

Simkins

How many kinds of music are there?

Wilkins

Why, two kinds. Instrumental, when there are no words; and vocal, or singing, when there is language applied.

Simkins

If I sing, what language will be applied to the music?

Wilkins

I know not. But be advised, and sing only to the deaf and dumb, for a charity.

Simkins

Why should I sing for a charity?

Wilkins

Because charity suffereth long. And they who suffer long muzzle their dogs, so that they cannot howl. Which is sound sense, though it sounds nonsense. For music is, in a sense, a sense of sound. And if your senses be sound, you will make music which bath tunes in it, and so give airs to your listeners, as is proper. But if your senses be not sound, you will make music which hath no tune in it, and give yourself airs, and call it opera, which is properer. But for myself, give me a tune which a man may hum an he please, or whistle an he please, or step to an he please, and straightforward withal, not sideways or round the corner like a bumble-bee in a bottle-neck—

Simkins

I know such a tune. One that long ago took root in my mind. I'll uproot it.

Wilkins

Nay. Let it stay there, lest some of the soil come with it. If you have an ear for fine music, listen to me.

3 Duet. Wilkins and Simkins**Wilkins**

I may be wrong,
But I long for a song
With a tune that a man may march to!

That will make you shout
When you feel “washed out,”
And your courage will lend some starch to!
Of course I know
Such a taste is low,
But there’s many a mind may plumb it,
But what on Earth
Can be the worth
Of a tune if a man can’t hum it?

Then, come, come,
Follow the drum,
Tho’ its music mayn’t be grand!
Tho’ the words be Dutch
Let the tune be such
As a Briton can understand!
And whether it be
A song of the sea,
Or a lay of the good dry land,
Let Art go hang,
If the tune go “bang!”
When it’s played on a big brass band!

Simkins

So nowadays
Our musical plays
Should be very peculiar salads
Of simple sounds
From “merry-go-rounds,”
With occasional third-rate ballads!
And if these you mix
With big dram sticks
(And serve with a big brass ladle),
Little critical boys
Will applaud your noise
As soon as they leave the cradle!
Singing, Come, come,
Follow the drum,
Tho’ the music mayn’t be grand!
Tho’ the words be Dutch
Let the tune be such
As a baby can understand!
And whether it be
A song of the sea,
Or a lay of the good dry land,
Let Art go hang,
If the tune go “bang!”
When it’s played on a big brass band!
(Enter Page, with the Fool, who is disguised as an
Apothecary.)

Page

Out of the way, clowns! The Queen comes!

Wilkins

The Queen, sir?

(Opening manuscript of *Masque*.)

Page

Aye! Begone!

(To Apothecary.)

Wait there!

Wilkins

Out of sight! But be ready to spring out upon the
Queen with the Prologue of the Seven Champions of
Christendom when I give the cue.

Simkins

What’s the cue?

Wilkins

“God save the Queen!” Begone! I’ll wait here.

(*Exeunt others*)

Page

Why do you loiter?

Wilkins

Why, sir

Page

Dost ask me why? Because I prefer thy
disappearance to thine appearance, and I like not thy
proximity.

Wilkins

Judge not a man by the outward appearance of his
proximity, young sir. As for my proximity, ‘tis a
flesh and blood proximity, with two eyes, a nose,
and a mouth the same as thine own. And when next
you find fault with a man’s face, call it a face and
not a proximity; for some men understand not the
French language as I do!

(Enter Queen Elizabeth, with Lady-in-Waiting, and
second Page, and a Lord.)

Elizabeth

Where’s Essex? I said I’d meet him here.

Page

Here's the apothecary, madam, of whom he told you.

Elizabeth

Ah!

(To others.)

Go, and wait near. I'll talk to this apothecary alone. They tell me he is cunning with his drugs, and my physicians cannot comprehend what ails me today.

Lord

I can. 'Tis an affection of the heart.

Lady

Complicated with the black humour of jealousy. There's nought more dangerous.

Lord

To others! Bessie Throckmorton is like to die of it.
(Exeunt.)

Elizabeth

(to Fool.)

Come hither!

(To Pages.)

Go!

Second Page

I like not to leave your Grace with this knave.

Elizabeth

You are a grave boy, and a brave boy, and a pretty boy, and...

(she kisses him)

...a faithful sweetheart. Now go!

Second Page

If I were ten years older I'd marry her.

First Page

If she were ten years younger, I'd do it.

Elizabeth

Now. You looked starved, Apothecary!

(Exeunt.)

Fool

Yes, madam. 'Tis a poor life to live on drugs.

Enter Wilkins, with others.

Wilkins

God save the Queen!

Elizabeth

Who are you, fellow?

Wilkins

St. George of England, madam! And I have with me St. Denis of France, St. James of Spain, St. Anthony of Italy.

Elizabeth

Enough!

Wilkins

Then there are more than enough, for there are three more. St. Patrick of Ireland, St. Andrew of

Elizabeth

Peace, fool! I'm in no mood for fooling. I'll listen to thee anon perhaps.

Wilkins

Anon!

Butcher

(and others.)

Anon! Anon!

(Exeunt.)

Elizabeth

(to Fool.)

So you live a poor life? What would you give for an hundred crowns?

Fool

Why, madam, my poor life if it were worth the money, which it cannot be, seeing that if I give up living 'twill not be for money, but the want of it.

Elizabeth

Listen! I need a drug that deals death, not life. A drug that's swift and secret. One that counterfeits some natural disease in Nature's armoury. A drug that strikes like a dagger, but leaves no pommel in the wound, to point suspicion. Know you such a drug?

Fool

I could concoct it. Is it for a man or a woman?

Elizabeth

Give me enough for a man.

Fool

'Twill be less than for a woman.

Elizabeth

How so?

Fool

Why, thus the first and last effect of such a drug is loss of breath. And the first and last effect of loss of breath is loss of speech. And 'tis easier to stay a man's speech than a woman's.

Elizabeth

Stay thine, and bring me the drug.

Fool

In an hour, madam.

Elizabeth

Here!

(Exit.)

Enter Raleigh, dressed as a Forester, and with his beard shaved.

Raleigh

Listen, knave! Deliver not that drug to the Queen, as you value your own life I I am Sir Walter Raleigh

Fool

Then you are a bare-faced jmpostor, and I a bearded one! Look!

(He takes off his false beard and opens his cloak, showing his motley.)

Raleigh

The Queen's Fool!

Fool

Aye more fool than knave; and not the first fool that disguised his folly to some good purpose. Fear not, Walter! Your sweetheart shall live to die of worse medicine than mine! You have a fool for a

friend, which is better than a wise man for an enemy. Therefore rejoice, if for nought else. Anon, gossip!

(Exit.)

(Raleigh turns and sees Jill, who has entered.)

Raleigh

(to Jill)

Tell me, girl do you know where the Morris dancers are?

Jill

On their way to the Castle, to play before the Royal servants.

Raleigh

And I would join them 'tis my way into the Castle.

Jill

Then you'll be of Robin Hood's merry men and your looks belie you, for you do not look merry.

Raleigh

I am the most miserable of men ; for I am in love and outlaw!

Jill

Then you are in the best and out of the worst in the world Love and the Law I So you should be merry, like Robin Hood.

Raleigh

But "Love followed him."

Jill

"As love may follow thee" it may, sir, it may. Is not this the month of May? Come, let your brown thoughts take a lesson from the bees. Look! They do not loiter where there are no sweets, but suck honey where they can. 'Tis the wise way, or I'm no witch!

4**Duet****Jill and Raleigh**

It is the merry month of May.

The bees do hum a roundelay,

And all the world is sunny.

So let your brown thoughts hie away,

And search the world for honey.

Oh, love, it is a happy thing,
It cometh unto clown or king,
As any one may see.
And of all places where it flies,
There is no place beneath the skies
More fair than where the bracken grows,
The honeysuckle and the rose,
Beneath the greenwood tree.
While bees do hum their roundelay,
'Tis there I'll dream that Love some day
May even come to me.
(*Exeunt*)
(*Enter Chorus, with Queen Of The May, etc.*)

5

Chorus

The Queen o' May is crowned to-day
With a crown, a crown, a crown-a!
Then where's the knave
Who'll not be merry?
We'll dig his grave,
With a derry down derry,
A down, a down, a down-a.

May Queen

Now what is a good thing
For Jack and for Jill?

Chorus

A song is a good thing!

May Queen

Who'll sing one?

Chorus

I will!

May Queen

Then sing it, sing it, sing it,
When it's the Queen's will!
But what is a good thing
For Jack and for Jill?

Chorus

A kiss is a good thing!
May Queen
Who'll kiss me?

Chorus

I will!

May Queen

Then kiss me, kiss me, kiss me,
When it is the Queen's will!
But what is a good thing
For Jack and for Jill?

Chorus

A dance is a good thing!

May Queen

Who'll dance one?

Chorus

I will!

May Queen

Then trip it, trip it, trip it,
For it is the Queen's will!
(*Dance.*)

Enter Raleigh;

Raleigh

Queen of the May, I ask a favour of you.

Tinker

How now! Do you think she will favour strangers
when there are men of Windsor.

May Queen

Ask on.

Raleigh

It is that I may join your Morris dancers when they
enter the Castle, and so enter it with them.

May Queen

We go there anon to play Robin Hood.

Raleigh

Let me play a character I know all the old games,
words and music. Let me go too.

Tailor

Aye, go to! go to! Look you

May Queen

You shall go. In what character?

Raleigh

'Twill be in the character of a lover, however you

care to call me.

Butcher

Who are you who talk so loud of lover? There are enough men in Windsor to make her a husband, if she would but take one of us.

Raleigh

Good sooth, sir, I am no lover of this maid; but there is a sweet maid in the Castle.

May Queen

So? There is a sweet maid in the Castle and am I so sour?

Raleigh

Nay, I doubt not you are fair and sweet as you are sweetly fair a very English rose. There is no sweeter flower in all Cupid's garden.

6

Song

Raleigh

Dan Cupid hath a garden
Where women are the flow'rs;
And lovers' laughs and lovers' tears
The sunshine and the show'rs.
And oh, the sweetest blossom
That in his garden grows,
The fairest queen, it is, I ween,
The perfect English rose!

Let others make a garland
Of every flow'r that blows,
But I will wait till I may pluck
My dainty English rose!
In perfume, grace, and beauty
The rose doth stand apart
God grant that I, before I die,
May wear one on my heart!
(Enter Wilkins)

Wilkins

Harkee, sirrah do you sing the praises of this maid? Or do you prefer another maid above this maid?

Raleigh

Why?

Wilkins

Why I am her Robin Hood. And if you prefer this maid to another, I beat you on my own account for your offence. But if you prefer another maid to this maid, I beat you on her account for her defence. Which you will, so we fight.

Raleigh

Give me a quarter-staff!

Wilkins

Nay! I spoke but to prove your courage! I like a man who'll take a broken head for the sake of his lady. You are welcome to your own opinion I will not take it from you.

Raleigh

Thanks, friend!
Enter Tom

Tom

Hearken to me! I love the maid they call Jill-all-alone, I say she is no witch, and I would have had her chosen Queen of the May for Windsor.

May Queen

(to Wilkins)

You heard that?

Wilkins

No. I am a thought deaf in the right ear.

Tom

I love Jill-All-Along. She is no witch, and I would she had been chosen Queen of the May for Windsor.

May Queen

Will you let him say that?

Wilkins

He has said it, and that can't be helped. But I assuredly shall not let him say it again.

Tom

I love Jill-all-alone. I would she had been chosen Queen of the May for Windsor.

May Queen

He hath said it again.

Wilkins

He hath.

Raleigh

A direct challenge, friend.

Wilkins

Yes; I must beat him.

(Preparing to fight, then hesitating.)

Stay! This Jill-all-alone is a witch, therefore he is bewitched. Therefore it is not his fault, and a man must not be punished for what is not a fault.

Therefore go your ways, and take a treacle posset; I'll not harm thee.

Tom

Do you forget we are to play the first meeting of Robin Hood and Little John where they fight; and I play Little John, who thrashes Robin Hood?

Wilkins

I did not remember at the moment that you played Little John.

Raleigh.

(to Wilkins)

Let me play your part!

Wilkins

You? Why, sir, why? Can you give me any reason that you should?

(Aside.)

Try to think, sir, and I'll owe you a new crown for the cracked one you'll get.

(Aloud.)

Is there any reason why I should give up my place to you?

Raleigh

Only this: I am Sir Walter Raleigh.

All

Sir Walter!

Raleigh.

And I would take any part which will take me into the Castle to take the part of my lady, who is in sore distress.

Wilkins

Say no more, sir, say no more! There's reason enough. The part is yours. You shall play Robin Hood and be thrashed by Little John, while I play the Friar.

Simkins

And what of me?

Wilkins

You shall content yourself with the hind legs of the Dragon. But now for Robin Hood and Little John, and to see what shape we make.

The Play of Robin Hood and Little John.

7

Wilkins

Two merry men a-drinking, a-drinking!

Raleigh.

Before the moon was sinking, a-sinking!

Tom

A Stranger he did pass that way,

And he did listen to their lay.

Whoever he be.

I'll crack his crown

Or drink him down

Before the grey of morning.

All

Then all did sit a-drinking, a-drinking,

Until the moon was sinking, a-sinking,

For Little John did with them stay,

So all did sing this roundelay

On many a summer's night!

Who dares to drink, etc .

Wilkins

(to Raleigh.)

Well, sir, you shall play the part, and as for me, I'll content myself with the two characters of St. George and the King of Egypt which I play in my Masque.

Now to the Castle, unless we meet the Queen by the way, when she may insist upon my Masque immediately.

All

To the Castle!

Raleigh.

To my lady!

(Exeunt all to reprise)

Enter Jill, followed by Bessie, from Herne's Oak.

Jill

Wait here, lady. I'll run and bring your lover.

Bessie.

I am afraid I thought I heard footsteps in the passage, following.

Jill

The echo. I'll bring your lover he'll kiss your colour back, I warrant.

Bessie.

Thou art a kind girl!

Jill

Nay! But we are two of a kind. For we both carry our lives in our hands, and love in our hearts.

Bessie

A double burden.

Jill

Aye I But what's one without the other? I have heard it said

"Life's a chime, and Love the ringer;

Life's a lute, and Love the singer;

Though he choose a song of sadness,

'Tis a song to heed."

Anon, lady I'll run!

(Exit.)

Bessie

Aye! 'Tis a song to heed!

Song

Bessie

Who shall say that Love is cruel?

I do guard it as a jewel,

Counting it the single flower

In a world of weed!

What if Love do bring me sorrow?

Love to-day and die to-morrow

Loveless life is lifeless living

That were death indeed!

Life is sweet, but Love is sweeter;

Life is prose but Love a metre,

Throbbing with the pulse of music

All that lovers need.

Life's a chime, and Love the ringer;

Life's a lute, and Love the singer;

Though he choose a song of sadness,

'Tis a song to heed.

Loveless life is lifeless living,

Only Love hath power of giving

Unto life its breath and beauty

Love is all divine.

Life's the canvas nought is duller,

Till it gloweth gay with colour,

'Neath the hand of Love the painter,

Master of Design!

Life's the parchment but the sonnot

Only Love can' write upon it.

Life is but an empty goblet,

Love's the rosy wine.

Life's a chime, and Love the ringer:

Life's a lute, and Love the singer;

Though he sing a song of sadness.

I will not repine.

(Enter Jill, followed by Raleigh.)

Jill

(to Bessie.)

Mistress, look up it is your lover

Raleigh.

Love has followed me

Bessie

Beneath the greenwood tree!

Enter Essex from Herne's Oak.

Essex

And so have!

Raleigh

You!

Bessie

You followed me

Essex

Being free, and you a prisoner, I took that liberty.

Raleigh

(clapping his hand to his hip.)

I have no sword! I'd give my right hand for a sword.

Essex

A bargain! Take mine, and I take your hand! For we are friends by circumstance.

Bessie

I do not understand.

Raleigh

Nor I!

Essex

You understand the game of chess—I have often seen you play with the Queen.

(To Bessie.)

Do not sigh, that is over; and it is I who am playing now.

Raleigh

A crooked game?

Essex

A knight's move. And the stake is—a golden crown. Now, watch the board. I have a mind to take - the queen she is guarded by another knight you! But a pawn may take a knight a pretty pawn in petticoats. And if you be taken, I may take the queen The pawn moves, is then stopped by a castle, then breaks out, and the knight is taken; he is off the board, and out of my way. I take the queen, a bishop comes up, and mate! I've won a crown.

Raleigh

In other words

Essex

In plain words, I would have you married to any one but the Queen. I followed this lady's escape with interest; and if you will follow my advice, I'll wager a crown on two things that you marry the sweetest maid in England and I marry Elizabeth

Raleigh

Then we are friends by circumstance. What would you have us do?

Essex

Watch me I meet the Queen here anon. Leave projects to me, and me to this project that a crown weighs more than Cupid, nowadays.

Bessie

Not always. There are still love matches in the world.

Essex

They're matches that will never set the Thames a-fire Love's no longer a baby; he has grown up and turned shopkeeper

9**Song****Essex, with Bessie, Jill, and Raleigh.**

When Cupid first this old world trod,
He was, you know, a baby god;
And old Dame Nature nursed the lad,
But let him run about unclad.
One day my Lady Fashion came,
And blushed beneath her rouge with shame
To see the pretty innocent
Unclothed, in Gipsy Nature's tent.

And, heedless of Dame Nature's curse,
She took him from his gipsy nurse,
And set him in her chariot,
Determined to improve his lot.

Beneath my Lady Fashion's rule,
Poor Cupid then was sent to school,
And learned the laws of common-sense,
And how to value pounds and pence.
She dressed him up from toe to top,
And put him in a London shop,
Where Cupid, at the counter, sells
New tunes for modern marriage bells.

For Love no longer baits his hooks
With gentle sighs and tender looks,
But nowadays poor lovers get
Entangled by a million (nett!).

So Cupid seldom comes to us
In puris naturalibus ,

For such extremely simple guise
Would shock the modern worldly wise.
Yet even now sometimes, they say,
He takes a little holiday;
And every now and then returns
Where old Dame Nature waits, and yearns!

For Love's a gipsy still at heart,
Though fashion makes him look so smart;
And I, for one, would not complain
Were he a naked child again!
(*Exeunt Bessie and Raleigh.*)

Jill

Sir, you have learnt the secret way by which to
escape from the Castle. You will tell no one, not
even the Queen?

Essex

As I mean to be her husband, I swear it I Now
listen, a Roland for an Oliver; do you help me in a
plan to work upon the Queen's tears for her benefit
and theirs and thine own. Let thy long lover don
the deer-skin dress which hangs in the passage if
he would save thy life and we'll prick the Queen's
conscience to pity, with an apparition of Herne the
Hunter! Sound the hunting horn twice or thrice,
and hush!

Jill

I'll see to it!
(*Exit to oak.*)
Enter Wilkins

Wilkins

Pray, sir, does the Queen come this way?

Essex

What matter is it of yours?

Wilkins

The small matter of the matter of a Masque of St.
George and the Dragon, which I have prepared for
the Queen's pleasure, if it please her, and fall in
with her plans.

Essex

It may fall in with mine. I'll see she sees it. Is it a
good Masque?

Wilkins

Sir, Shakespeare never wrote anything quite like it.

Essex

Good!

Wilkins

Very good, sir!

Enter Jill.

Essex

(*to Jill*)

Come with me, and lend me your aid, and you

(*to Wilkins*)

see that you arrange this with the players.

(*He whispers.*)

Wilkins

(*his expression changes.*)

And you say that if we play such a prank upon the
Queen we shall be playing for the Queen's benefit?

Essex

Yes.

Wilkins

I'd rather the Queen played for mine. But I'll see to
it.

Essex

(*to Jill.*)

Come!

(*To Wilkins*)

Anon!

Wilkins

Anon, sir, anon!

Enter Ben and Simkins.

Simkins

Concerning the Dragon which we play.

Wilkins

You understand the purport of the Masque. The
King of Egypt hath a daughter who is to be
sacrificed to the Dragon.

Ben

And I play the legs of the Dragon.

Wilkins

The forelegs. And you (*to Simkins*) the hind part.
So!

(Putting them in position)

Simkins

Why should I suffer myself to play the tail to his head?

Wilkins

To save thyself suffering. The front part is the part I beat in the fight.

Ben

Why should I play the part you beat?

Wilkins

Why, man, 'tis the better part the head part the thinking part -the part of intellect.

Ben

Doth a Dragon think with his intellect?

Wilkins

More than with his tail. Now, the Dragon comes after the Princess to devour her.

Simkins

And do you come after the Dragon?

Wilkins

No. I come first, and challenge Dragons, all and sundry. And then this Dragon comes forth.

Simkins

And do other Dragons come second and third?

Wil

There are no other Dragons.

Ben

And what am I?

Wilkins

The forelegs of the Dragon.

Simkins

How many legs hath a Dragon?

Wilkins

A Dragon hath four legs, the same as any other centipede.

Ben

Then I am all its legs?

Wilkins

No, no! 'Tis clear enough! It hath four legs, and two legs are forelegs, so with its hind legs it is four-legged; and it comes forth before me after I come, as I have come after it, being forewarned, and therefore forearmed.

Simkins

Then it is four-armed as well as four-legged?

Wilkins

It is I who am forearmed. It hath no arms but its teeth.

Ben

Where does such a beast really live?

Wilkins

Such a beast does not really live at All

Simkins

Then how can it be slain?

Wilkins

Have you no imagination?

Simkins

I cannot picture this foolish beast at all, that comes forth on four legs which are two legs, to be slain when it is not really alive.

Wilkins

Such things live in the world of imagination.

Ben

Where in the world is that?

Wilkins

Why, everywhere in the world. For no one could imagine the world without imagination.

Song

This song is usually omitted.

Wilkins

Perhaps you don't imagine how important
nowadays
Is the part (outside a theatre) imagination plays;
For our life is like a playhouse, where the livers
wouldn't act,
If our facts were never fancy, and our fancies
always fact!
From the Laureate, who fancies that in any grassy
prose
(Which is turned out in a metre) a poetic fancy
glows,
To the Youth of one-and-twenty, who imagines
when he dines
That he doesn't fancy any but the most expensive
wines!
He will take a glass of sherry.
And imagine it is nice
(Though it's only elderberry),
If he pay a fancy price.
(But the elderberry, nowadays, is going out of use,
And the younger current fancy is the berry of the
goose!)

There's the Boy who fancies smoking is a pleasure
so profound
That he'll very soon imagine that it makes the
world go round;
And the Law-Case, where you fancy there is
money to be got,
But the Law is such a lottery and Lawyers draw
the lot!
The imaginary Invalid, who fancies she is ill,
After reading the advertisement of some one's
patent pill,
Will hurry to her doctor, whom she counts a
"perfect dear"
(For his practice makes him perfect, and I don't
know what a year).
For the doctor is in luck, and
Heavy fees will never lack,
Whom the ladies call "a duck" (and
Other doctors call a quack).

And the honour of the medical profession, as
you'll see,
With imaginative patients is a matter of degree!
To those about to marry, don't imagine you are
doves

Who can bill and coo for ever and be happy with
your loves.

Imagine you can bill and coo for ever if you will,
But don't imagine turtle doves can coo without a
bill;

Don't imagine that a cottage loaf is ever fancy
bread,

And don't imagine everything is butter that is
spread;

Don't imagine, if your grocer is particularly bland,
That you need not take your sugar with a grain or
two of sand!

And if the kitchen boiler
Should induce you to employ
That contemplative toiler,

A plumber with his boy,

When at last he takes his coat off, don't imagine he
will plumb—

That's the moment he'll imagine that his dinner hour
has come!

(Exit with Simkins and Ben.)

Enter Jill with Tom She gives him the deer-skin.

Enter the Pages.

Jill

You'll do this?

Tom

For thy sake.

(Exit.)

First Page

Come here, girl! I understand not this plot of Essex
very clearly.

Jill

Why, 'tis clearer than the Queen's conscience, which
it is planned to clear. It is to prevent her vengeance
pursuing Bessie Throckmorton, so that Bessie may
marry Raleigh. So Raleigh will be out of the way of
Essex in the Queen's favour when he is married,
which some call marred.

Second Page

Well?

Jill

Well, to this end, find for the purpose of startling the
Queen, the big Forester will appear to her anon in
the guise of Elerne the Hunter, and all of you here

will pretend you see him not. So the Queen will think he appears to her alone, for a warning — if you tell your falsehoods fearlessly. Essex has arranged it with the common folk.

First Page

The jest likes me well!

Second Page

Oddsfish! I like it not. I like not the thought of frightening a woman, be she Queen or common.

First Page

Thou art frightened thyself!

Second Page

Nay. But it lies against my conscience to lie against my conscience, and I'll not lie to the Queen, who is my conscience. I'll have none of it.

Page

Then go and pay thy taxes!

Enter Essex and Elizabeth

Essex

I pray you rest here, madam, a little, by Herne's Oak

Elizabeth

"Twill soon be dusk.

Essex

Yes, madam. But there is nothing to fear from Herne. He only appears, they say, when the Sovereign contemplates

Elizabeth

What?

Essex

A crime, madam!

Elizabeth

Ah!

Essex

Which is the same as if they said not at All For the Queen can do no wrong.

Wilkins

God save the Queen.

Elizabeth

What's this?

Enter others.

Essex

'Tis a Masque, madam, which they have prepared for your pleasure. I pray you listen to it if.

Elizabeth

It may distract me. We will listen to it but see that it is short. I'll not stay here till the sun set. What character do you play, knave?

Wilkins

Apart from the Prologue, I play two characters, madam. First, the King of Egypt, whose daughter is to be sacrificed to the Dragon, and then St. George himself, who rescues the lady.

Essex

Proceed with the action of the play.

(Those impersonating the Seven Champions commence to sing)

"We are Seven Champions of Christendom."

Essex

(stopping them.)

Omit the Prologue.

(Wilkins puts up a sign on which is written "This is a Palace.")

Wilkins

I am the King of Egypt yet I frown!

My heart, once light as a feather, now is down!

Essex

Stay! The Queen cares not for the humour which is mere juggling with words, such as "My heart, once light as a feather, now is down." There is a play on the words "down" and "feather," and if a play hang only on a play of words, the play may go hang for a play of words only. See to it!

Wilkins

Sir, I am no servile imitator of Shakespeare, but he hath his good points, and he hath sometimes made a point with a play of words.

Elizabeth

Shakespeare is a writer I am a critic!

Wilkins

God save the Queen!

Essex

Proceed with the action.

(Wilkins changes scene to "Another Part of the Palace.")

Wilkins

Enter several female attendants, singing and dancing.

Elizabeth

Why are the attendants dancing?

Wilkins

Because, madam, they are dancing attendance on the King.

Enter Dancing Girls.

(Wilkins changes scene to "A Garden with Fountains.")

Wilkins

O happy maids, why do ye dance and sing?

Mar

Because it is our nature to, O King!

Wilkins

Nature! I gaze around, and it appears

All nature smiles, while I alone shed tears!

O cruel Nature, mother of us all,

Yet of all mothers most unnatural!

To-day at dawn the joyful sun did rise.

Elizabeth

'Tis the way of the world and it will soon set!

Essex

Of your good nature leave the ill-nature of nature, and proceed with the action. The Queen is impatient.

Wilkins

(after changing scene to "A Rocky Desert".)

Ye do not know what duty brings me here?

It is to sacrifice my daughter dear

Unto the Dragon, which, 'tis understood,

Lies lurking near us! She must be his food.

Mar

Why must you sacrifice our fair Princess

Unto the Dragon?

Wilkins

Shall I tell you?

Mar

Yes!

Elizabeth

No! It is enough that the Princess consents to be sacrificed. Doubtless she has good reason.

Wilkins

Her reason hath left her, for dread of the Dragon.

Essex

Well, well, let her enter without her reason, so she enters quickly.

Wilkins

"Enter the Princess Sabra with no reason. Music."

The Princess enters, impersonated by the May Queen.

Princess

Oh, father, father, father, father, dust

Thou say that I must die to-day?

Wilkins

I dust

Essex

Nay, "I do!" "I do!" Though you be King of Egypt, yet speak the Queen's English.

Wilkins

"Dust" is the right word, my lord.

Elizabeth

Argue not, but say "I do!"

Princess

Oh, father, father, father, father, dust

Thou say that I must die to-day?

Wilkins

I do. My hetid, and answer

Essex

What is it you do to your head?

Wilkins

I put dust upon it, sir as a sign of sorrow. 'Tis an Oriental custom

Elizabeth

Then suit the action to the words, and the words to the action.

Princess.

Oh, father, father, father, father dost
Thou say that I must die to-day?

Wilkins

I dust
My head, and answer, "Yes, my child, thou must!"

Det.

Wilkins and Princess.

10

Princess

Oh, here's a to-do to die to-day
At a minute or two to two,
A thing distinctly hard to say,
But a harder thing to do.
For they'll beat a tattoo at two to two,
A rat-a-tattoo at two Boohoo!
And the Dragon will come
When it hears the drum
At a minute or two to two to-day,
At a minute or two to two!

Wilkins

Why hullabaloo? You die to-day
At a minute or two to two,
A thing distinctly hard to say
But an easy thing to do!
For they'll beat a tattoo at two to two,
A rat-a-tat-tat tattoo for you!
And the Dragon will come
When he hears the drum;
There's nothing for you to do but stay,
And the Dragon will do for you!

Elizabeth

Stop I Enough!

(To Essex)

Do you hear that?

(A hunting horn is heard.)

Essex

I hear nothing.

Elizabeth

A hunting horn faint and ghostly! Look!

(She points to back, where Tom rises from the bracken, dressed as Herne the Hunter, against the red of the sunset.)

Essex

I see nothing!

(To others)

Do you?

Ben

No!

Simkins

Nor I!

Wilkins

Nor I!

(Giving broad wink at Essex)

But if it were Herne the Hunter himself.

Elizabeth

Peace, I say!

(To Essex)

You see nothing there?

Essex

Nothing but a gnarled tree against the sun.

Elizabeth

Then the sun has blinded me. I see red all red. Give me your hand, Essex.

Essex

With all my heart.

(Aside)

'Tis what we played for.

(As Essex is leading off Elizabeth the Fool, disguised at Apothecary, enters and approaches.)

Fool

The drug, madam!

Elizabeth

I have changed my mind.

(Alarm bell heard in distance. A Messenger enters breathlessly.)

Ben

The prisoners have escaped, madam Mistress Throckmorton and the witch girl.

Elizabeth

Let them go! They are pardoned!

Jill.

God save the Queen!

Elizabeth

Ah!

The witch!

(Jill runs off)

All

The witch! She's a witch!

Essex

The Queen has pronounced her innocent. She is pardoned once for all, like the other. Who'll go back on the Queen's word?

(Exit with Elizabeth)

(Jill brings on Bessie and Raleigh)

Jill

Come you are safe.

Bessie

Safe?

Raleigh

They are ringing the alarm.

Bessie.

'Tis our death bell!

Wilkins

Nay, nay your wedding bell. The Queen has pardoned you, as I planned as I planned! Take your Maid Marion, sir, and we'll play a Robin Hood's Wedding, in which I'll play King Richard the Lionheart. What say you?

Raleigh

With all my heart!

All

Aye! At Robin Hood's Wedding!

11**Finale****Raleigh**

Who'll come, said Robin Hood,
Who'll come to my wedding?

Jill

All those who love
The blue sky above,
And the green grass to lie upon
'Tis better than bedding!

All

All such are welcome
At Robin Hood's wedding.

Raleigh.

Who'll tie the lovers' knot
At Robin Hood's wedding?

Sim

I, said the Friar,
And I'll lead the choir,
Quoth Friar Tuck to Robin Hood,
At Robin Hood's wedding.

Raleigh.

Who'll be the groom, his man,
At Robin Hood's wedding?

Tom

I, said Big John.
My Lincoln I'll don,
Quoth Little John to Robin Hood,
At Robin Hood's wedding.

Raleigh

Who'll give the bride away
At Robin Hood's wedding?

Wilkins

I, said the King,
My Queen too I bring,
Quoth Richard unto Robin Hood,

At Robin Hood's wedding.

Raleigh

Who'll dance with Robin Hood
At Robin Hood's wedding?

Bessie

I, said his bride,
I'll dance by thy side,
Quoth Marion to Robin Hood,
At Robin Hood's wedding.

All

Then God save the King!
And God save the Queen!
And let us all sing
And dance on the green
In memory of Robin Hood,
In memory of Marion,
Who danced at their wedding.

With a hey, jolly Robin, etc.

(A dance. Queen Elizabeth and Essex enter on high ground at back, led on by the Fool. He points out to the Queen the group of "Robin Hood's Wedding," similar to that formed by the Morris Dancers in Act 1, in which Raleigh and Bessie are now the central figures.)

Curtain