

# THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH\*

opera in 3 Acts  
by Julian Sturgis  
Music by Alexander C. Mackenzie (op. 62)

## CHARACTERS

Dot	Mezzo soprano
Bertha	Soprano
May	Soprano
The Cricket Fairy	Soprano
Tilly Slowboy	Soprano
Edward	Tenor
John	Baritone
Caleb	Baritone
Tackleton	Baritone
[Cake boy	Silent role]

## ACT I

Scene. *The Carrier's parlour. Evening. Firelight only. Plain old-fashioned furniture. An old gun hangs over the chimney-piece. An old-fashioned clock. A baby's cot is near the fire. The stage appears empty and rather dark. Tilly is in a corner but unseen – or barely visible. Fairies are heard singing.*

---

\* The main source for the text is the typescript libretto with handwritten comments by Sturgis and Mackenzie held in the manuscript collection of the Royal Academy of Music, London as MS 1149. It is reproduced here with kind permission of the Royal Academy of Music. Reference has also been made to MS 1147, other typescript copies of the libretto in the reference collection of the RAM Library, and the vocal score published by Bosworth & Co. in 1901.  
Stage directions appear in italics; editorial additions appear in square brackets [ ].  
(Trascrizione curata da Duncan Barker, N.d.R.).

## [No. 1 Introduction]

## FAIRIES

We be silver-footed fays,  
 Minions of the silver Moon:  
 With galliards and with roundelays  
 We fleet the hours too soon.  
 When in gold and fading rose  
 The brief days close,  
 Then do we find delight  
 In the silver silent night.

*(Fairy-Cricket appears in the firelight of the hearth)*

## FAIRY-CRICKET

What brings you hither,  
 Far from fount and fairy glen,  
 And the charm of woodland weather  
 To the wintry roofs of men?

FAIRIES *(without)*

Something that was never found  
 In the glen's enchanted ground,  
 Elfin brook or lawn or tree –  
 What brings you hither?  
 The call of strange humanity.  
 Does all go well with Dot, the carrier's wife?

## FAIRY CRICKET

All's well, all's well! –

FAIRIES *(without)*

All's well with faithful womanhood.

*(Fairy Cricket vanishes. Enter Dot with a kettle, very brisk and lively. She puts the kettle on the fire. She lights a candle and stirs the fire. The stage grows bright. She puts tea-things etc., on the table.)*

## DOT

*[(spoken)]* There! There's the tea-pot ready; and there's the old knuckle of ham; and there's the butter, and there's the old crusty loaf, and there's everything – all ready for my old John when he comes home. (She goes from the table to the cot and peeps in.)

My little bud is laid asleep  
 That shall a pretty flower be  
 With Springtide and the silly sheep  
 And lambs upon the lea.

[Lullaby]  
 When baby is a man, he'll ride  
     A horse that's black and bold;  
 High in the air he'll sit astride,  
     Like knight in ballad old.  
     Ah, lullaby,  
     Ah, lullaby,  
 My bud in sheath, my little lamb in fold!

If baby be a sailor brave  
     He'll dare the milk-white foam,  
 Or soldier lad, where banners wave -  
     In savage lands he'll roam.  
     Ah, well-a-day,  
     Ah, well-a-day,  
 My bud in sheath, my baby safe in home!

Some day, a gallant lover, he  
     Will love one maid alone;  
 And then a lonely place for me  
     Beside a cold hearth-stone  
     Ah, lullaby,  
     Ah, lullaby,  
 My bud in sheath, my baby all my own!

*(She stoops over the cot and kisses the baby. Then she looks about her, and presently calls.)* TILLY! *(Tilly comes out of the corner, staring at Dot.)* TILLY!

TILLY  
 Yes, Mum!

DOT  
 Mind the baby till I come back, and be very careful.

TILLY  
 Yes, Mum!

*(Exit Dot. Tilly makes clumsy movements to and from the cot.)*

And did it give its mother a cold hearth-stone, the precious? And did it ride a black cock-horse across the seas and floodses? And did it love its little wives, the pet and precious? *(A bustle is heard without. Tilly stands gaping at the door. Enter John. He shuts the door, stamps his feet and unwraps himself, helped by Tilly. Exit Tilly with coat, etc., etc.)*

## [No. 2 The Carrier's Song]

JOHN

The stars above shine frosty bright,  
 Beneath the iron rings the road;  
 From dark to day, from day to night  
 I travel with my happy load:  
 I bring the furbelows and laces  
 And dainty caps for pretty faces,  
 A clouded cane for lady fine,  
 A chest of tea, a cask of wine;-  
     With a hey for the carrier's load  
             And a whip and away and a who-a!  
 And hey to be home from the life of the road  
     Like a dove to<sup>1</sup> the Ark of Noah!

And when the western sky grows red,  
 My thoughts run nimbly on before;  
 They know my little darling's tread,  
 And knock for entrance at her door:  
     The sweetest face of all the faces  
     Needs not their furbelows and laces;  
     I ask nor wine nor chest of tea  
     If my dear love will sup with me,  
             When I'm home with the carrier's load  
                     And a whip and away and a who-a!  
     When I'm home with a hey for the life of the road,  
     Like a dove to the ark of Noah.

*(Enter Dot. She goes to John, who hugs her.)*

JOHN

Ah, Dot! My little woman!

DOT *(Pouting)*

I wish you wouldn't call me Dot. It's such a silly little name.

JOHN

And what are you but a Dot? Eh? *(He hugs her. She frees herself and putting her finger to her lip leads him to the cot. He stoops over it, peeping in.)*

DOT

Ain't he beautiful, John? Don't he look precious in his sleep?

JOHN

Very precious, very much so. He generally is asleep, ain't he? *(He looks down on him, smiling, wondering.)*

<sup>1</sup> Vocal score has «from».

DOT

Good gracious, no! – John, you don't deserve to be a father.

*(He laughs, then stretches himself and yawns.)*

Oh, you poor old dear, you must be tired after your long day's work. There! Sit you down; and I'll wait upon you. *(She pushes him into his chair at the tea-table; he laughs and does not resist. She waits on him. After a minute he puts down his knife and fork.)*

JOHN

Mercy on me, Dot! – I've forgotten the old gentleman.

DOT *(Shocked)*

John! The old gentleman! *(she shakes a finger at him.)*

JOHN *(rising)*

Not *him*. It's the old gentleman I picked up on the road. He was to be left till called for. And now I've been and left him sitting in the cart. I must fetch him in. *(Exit. Dot is busy laying another place.)*

*(John returns bringing in the Stranger, who bows stiffly to Dot, opens a camp-stool and sits.)* There! That's the way I found him, sitting by the road-side. I pulls up; and «Carriage paid», says he; and he gives me eighteen-pence. Then in he climbs; and here he is; and a rum 'un he looks.

DOT *(rebuking)*

Oh John! Won't you have some tea, Sir? *(to the Stranger)*

JOHN *(laughing)*

It's no use talking to him. He's deaf. You've got to bellow.

STRANGER *(to John)*

Your daughter, my good friend?

JOHN *(loudly)*

Wife.

STRANGER

Niece?

JOHN *(shouting)*

Wife.

STRANGER

Ah! Surely very young.

*(John's smiling face clouds; he looks uneasily at Dot. She is inviting the Stranger in dumb show to the table; he courteously shakes his head. John shakes himself, as if to cast off uneasy thoughts.)*

JOHN

Well, I must go to the stable and see everything in order for the night; and then I'll bring in the small parcels here to you, and you shall help me sort 'em.

*(Exit. As soon as the door is shut, the Stranger jumps up, runs to the door and locks it. Dot stands looking with dumb amazement. The Stranger turns from the door to face her, pulls off his wig and spectacles, laughing. She gives a slight cry, but can't speak for wonder.)*

STRANGER

Don't you know me, Dot? Do you know this then?

[No. 3 Ballad: *Hawthorn of the May*]

They talk of orchid plants that glow  
 Beyond the Western sea  
 And garlands swinging to and fro  
 From giant tree to tree;  
 But of all the glories of the spring  
 That deck her mantle gay,  
 The sweetest bloom of all I sing  
 Is hawthorn of the May.

[spoken] Don't you remember, Dot? And this to end it!

In far Pacific isle a maid  
 May wreath her dusky hair  
 Or hang her hammock in the shade  
 And sway in scented air:  
 But of all the girls that up and down  
 Go laughing all the day,  
 The sweetest girl of English town  
 Is my own maiden May.

DOT *(who has been staring, dumb and motionless, now speaks slowly, still in amazement.)*

Edward Plummer! Edward! Ned!

EDWARD

Edward Plummer! Edward! Ned – at your service. *(He bows low, laughing.)*

DOT

The boy from the Golden South Americas!

EDWARD

From the Golden South Americas.

DOT

Ned, I can't believe it – are you real?

EDWARD

Am I real! (*he kisses her*) Is that real?

DOT

Ned!

EDWARD

Oh, I forgot. We are on our dignity now. A married woman. (*he bows low*)

DOT

Oh, Ned, don't be silly; and oh, Ned, do tell me what it all means; and oh, Ned, why, why are you disguised?

EDWARD

Why not?

DOT (*very solemn*)

Ned, you haven't done anything very, very wicked?

EDWARD

No, I haven't done anything very wicked. Look here, Dot, I've come back from South America alive and well –

DOT

Alive? Are you *sure*?

EDWARD

Quite sure, thank you! I come back from South America with money in my purse and love in my heart; and the first thing I hear on the quay is that May Fielding, my May, for whom I made rhymes, is going to be married, and to be married to old Tackleton of all men, to old Gruff and Tackleton, the toy-merchant. So I pop on these (*showing beard and glasses*) and here I am; and here I stay, a deaf old man, till I see for myself if my girl is true or false to me.

DOT (*excited*)

Oh, she is true, or she will be true, or she shall be true; but oh, Ned, don't you see that you were dead and she was poor, poor dear, and that horrid old Tackleton is rich and so – and so –

EDWARD

And so she is going to marry him.

DOT

No! (*with decision*)

EDWARD

No?

DOT

We'll save her. She loves you Ned; she has always loved you; and now that you are alive – for you *are* alive?

EDWARD

Yes, I'm alive; and we will save her, Dot.

DOT

Oh, I am so happy! And think of your father, Ned, - of dear old Caleb Plummer, and of your poor blind sister Bertha!

EDWARD

Yes, thank God, there's a good time coming for them. But, Dot, you must not say a word to them or to anyone, till I give you leave. You won't betray me, Dot?

DOT

I'll tell nobody but John.

EDWARD (*firmly*)

You mustn't tell John.

DOT

Oh!

EDWARD

He couldn't keep a secret in a deaf and dumb Hospital.

DOT (*distressed*)

But I've never had a secret from John.

EDWARD

For my sake, Dot! For May's sake. Promise me, Dot, promise!

DOT

I promise. – Hark! Is that John?

*(Edward pops on his wig and glasses and sits stiffly as before. John shakes the door. Dot remembering runs and opens it. Enter John with arms full of parcels.)*

JOHN

The door was locked. (*He looks at her, surprised, puzzled.*)

DOT (*troubled*)

Yes, John, yes; it was baby –

JOHN

The baby locked the door?



DOT (*as she takes parcels from him*)

No, of course, not, John. The baby? The idea! You silly old John! It was the draught. It would blow open and I was afraid for baby and so I – I just locked it John.

JOHN (*still puzzled*)

I never knew that door blow open.

(*He goes to examine the door, and is stooping when the door opens, and Caleb coming quickly in nearly falls over him. John catches him and sets him firmly on his feet.*)

Caleb Plummer! You violent unruly fellow, what do you come knocking me down for? I am a peaceable man and unoffending.

(*Caleb stands smiling in a deprecating manner. He looks chilly, forlorn and weak.*)

CALEB

I humbly beg your pardon, John; and good evening to you, John (*He makes a little bow to John, then turning bows to Dot, and lastly to Edward.*) Good evening, John! Good evening, Mum! Good evening, Unbeknown!

(*Dot looks kindly from Edward to Caleb and goes and shakes hands warmly with Caleb. Edward continues to look fixedly at him through his glasses. John is searching among the parcels*)

JOHN

Here you are, Caleb! (*He hands him a small box, which Caleb examines helplessly.*)

CALEB (*reading*)

«Caleb Plummer – with cash.» I don't think this can be for me, John – with *cash*. It can't be me with *cash*.

JOHN (*reading*)

«With *care*.»

CALEB

Oh, to be sure. With *care*. Yes, it may be for me with care. It might have been with cash, if my boy in the Golden South Americas had lived.

(*Edward makes a sudden movement.*)

I beg your pardon, Unbeknown?

JOHN

It's no good, Caleb. You couldn't bellow loud enough. He's as deaf as Charity.

CALEB

Oh, but I've got my voice still, though it's not so strong as it was before my boy went to the Golden South Americas. But still I've got my voice. (*sings snatch of "For 'tis money makes the music of the day" his voice breaks*) I humbly beg your pardon, gentlemen all. I'll try again.

No. 4 Song. Caleb<sup>2</sup>.

'Tis money makes the mare to go:  
     But, if the cash go faster,  
 Then nimble care pops up, you know,  
     And rides behind the master.  
 If I were rich in honest store  
     And free from all vexation,  
 I'd sit at ease upon the shore,  
     And talk about the nation.  
 For 'tis money makes the music of the day,  
     And the leisure and the pleasure of the play:  
 You must make a little money,  
     As a bee that's after honey,  
 You must make your little harvest while you may.

I'd seize the happy hour that goes  
     And pick the winkle gaily,  
 Polonies prime and pettitoes  
     Should be my portion daily:  
 The jug of ale, or pint of wine  
     Should furnish forth my table,  
 And I would have a friend to dine  
     Whenever he was able.  
 For 'tis money makes the music of the day,  
     And the leisure and the pleasure of the play:  
 You must make a little money  
     For it's anything but funny  
 To be left without a penny for your pay<sup>3</sup>.

And I would have a little gig  
     To save the wear of leather,  
 And in a little garden dig  
     When it was pleasant weather:  
 But if it rained, I'd seek repose  
     And placid meditations

<sup>2</sup> Originally, Sturgis wrote an alternative set of verses for Caleb's song here which appears in the typescript libretto RAM MS 1149 («A man of old, as I've heard tell / Would pipe o'er hill and hollow»). This was crossed out by Mackenzie and a rough version of an alternative song provided («'Tis money makes the mare to go»). This second song was incorporated into later versions of the libretto, namely MS 1247 and other copies held in the general collection of the RAM Library.

<sup>3</sup> Alternative text published in vocal score:  
*Though you won't be greedy, Sonny*  
*You must make a little money,*  
*Or you'll find but little comfort on your way.*

And sit with spectacles on nose  
 And con the last "quotations".  
 For 'tis money makes the music of the day  
 And the leisure and the pleasure and the play:  
 Though you won't be greedy, sonny,  
 You must store a little money,  
 Or you'll find but little comfort on your way.

*(He begins to dance feebly. John and Dot applaud. Caleb stops, panting. His eyes go back to the box; he shakes his head sadly.)*

Yes; yes; these are doll's eyes for my poor Bertha, for my poor blind girl's work. I wish it was her sight in a box, John.

JOHN  
 And so do I, Caleb, with all my heart. –

CALEB  
 Thank-ye, kindly John! To think that she should never see the dolls she makes, and they all staring at her all day long! Ah, what a doll your sweet wife would make! And Unbeknown would make a beautiful nut-cracker with the top of his head opening on a hinge – no offence I humbly hope. What's the damage, John?

JOHN  
 I'll damage you, if you ask, Caleb.

CALEB  
 Thank-ye kindly, John! – And there was something else I had to fetch. My head ain't what it was before my boy went away to the Golden South Americas. I know I had something to fetch; for it was for my maser – for Mr Tackleton. And he was to meet me here, I think.

JOHN *(searching)*  
 For old Tackleton? *(He pulls out a large round box)* Here it is sure enough. Why, whatever is it?

DOT  
 Heart alive, John! Why, it is – it must be – *(She stops in wonder)*

JOHN  
 What?

DOT  
 A wedding-cake!! –  
*(They all gather round it with curiosity. Edward comes forward and looks at it. Enter Tackleton.)*

TACKLETON

John Peerybingle, how are you? And how's your pretty wife?

*(Dot takes no notice of him.)*

She grows prettier every day, and younger – and *younger* – that's the devil of it – *younger*. – What are you all gaping at?

JOHN

It's something for you, Mr Tackleton.

TACKLETON

Well, it won't bite you, I suppose.

JOHN

Bite us! No, it looks more like being bitten.

*(He laughs loudly at his own joke.)*

TACKLETON

What it is?

DOT *(very gravely)*

A wedding cake!

TACKLETON *(laughing)*

My wedding-cake! *(to Dot)* You wouldn't believe it, eh?

DOT *(drily)*

I've got myself to believe it somehow.

TACKLETON

After a hard struggle?

DOT

Very.

EDWARD *(to Tackleton)*

For your son's wedding, Sir? *(he points to cake.)*

TACKLETON

For me.

EDWARD

Eh? For your daughter's wedding?

JOHN

He's deaf, Mr Tackleton. You must bellow.

TACKLETON *(shouting)*

For *my* wedding! For *me*!

EDWARD (*with assumed wonder*)  
Oh! Are *you* going to be married? You?

TACKLETON  
In three days.  
(*Edward bows in silence and goes back to his seat. A pause, in which the cricket is heard*)  
Why don't you kill that cricket?

JOHN  
You kill your crickets, eh?

TACKLETON  
Scrunch 'em, scrunch 'em.

No. 5. Song, Tackleton.

I am not superstitious, I,  
Nor care a jot for Fortune's wheel,  
And if a cricket I espy,  
I scrunch him with my heel.

The little beast offends my ear;  
And, since I know that he can feel,  
I love to step on tiptoe near  
And scrunch him with my heel.  
That's what I do to crickets –  
I scrunch 'em with my heel.

I walk with all the care I may  
And do not step on orange-peel;  
But, if a man be in my way,  
I scrunch him with my heel.  
A wise self-help is all my plan<sup>4</sup>  
And certain gain has all my zeal:  
And so I step upon the man,  
And scrunch him with my heel.  
That's what I do with rivals:  
I scrunch 'em with my heel.

(*He dances fantastically as if in pursuit of crickets. Dot and John regard him with disfa-  
vour, and Caleb with timid expostulation. He draws John aside.*)

<sup>4</sup> MS 1249 has a shortened version of this verse as follows:

*A wise self-help is all my plan  
And so I step upon the man  
And scrunch him with my heel.*

Opposite the typescript version above, Sturgis has handwritten the verses which were incorporated into later librettos and the vocal score.

I say, John – you and I are in the same boat. Eh? Eh?  
*(He digs him in the side.)*

JOHN *(annoyed)*  
 What do you mean?

TACKLETON  
 Look there! *(He points at Dot who is lost in thought.)* What's she thinking about? Eh? Is she thinking of honouring and obeying? Honouring and obeying is enough for old flints like you and me. Of course there is not any *love* between you and her. What do *you* think[?] Eh?

JOHN  
 I think I should chuck any man out of the window who said there warnt.

TACKLETON  
*(moving nimbly aside)* Ah! Exactly! Goodbye! – Here, you, Caleb!

CALEB *(with a start)*  
 Ah!

TACKLETON  
 Come along and be extremely careful of that interesting cake! You will find it heavy. All sugar outside, but heavy as lead within. It is like marriage. *(Exit)*  
*(Caleb looks doubtfully at the cake-box, walks round it, lifts it with difficulty, and with difficulty balances it on his head. He smiles feebly round at his achievement. John pats him on the back, nearly upsets him, but sets him right again.)*

CALEB *(bowing with the box on his head)*  
 Good-evening, Dot! Good-evening, John! Good evening, Unbeknown! *(Exit)*  
*(Edward turns, courteous and smiling, to John and Dot.)*

#### No. 6 FINALE

EDWARD  
 I am a parcel; but you see  
     That nobody has called for me:  
 So I am left, and must entreat  
     Your roof as shelter from the street.

*(John rubs his head in perplexity, but Dot pushes him aside and answers for him eagerly.)*

DOT  
 Yes, yes – we beg that you will stay  
     Till your friends come, whene'er they may:  
 Of all good things my man loves best  
     Beneath his roof a kindly guest.

*(She takes up a candle and holds open the door. Edward is going but pauses and turns.)*

This way, this way! I'll light you to your room.

EDWARD

Peace to this house till dawn dispel the gloom!  
 Good night, and happy dreams attend  
 The folks that travellers befriend.  
 And may their day with joy begin  
 When morning light comes softly in!

DOT and JOHN

Good night, fair dreams and happy rest,  
 Health, peace and honour to our guest,  
 Good night till morning come again  
 To light the drowsy window-pane!

DOT (*at the door*)

This way, this way!

EDWARD

Goodnight, good friends again!

JOHN

Good night!

(*Exeunt Dot and Edward. John left alone, stands thinking gravely.*)

JOHN

What ails my little wife tonight?  
 Her words run wild, her eyes are bright. –  
 A child she is, a child in years,  
     And I perchance was wrong that day  
 To bring to woman's cares and fears  
     A child from childhood's play.

I doubt I am too old for my young wife,  
 My little wife who is so dear to me;  
 I doubt I should have borne my lonely life  
 And left her to her fancies fancy-free:  
 And yet I cannot bear to think 'tis so,  
 For all our lives together must we go.

(*Enter Dot. She has left the candle and now comes softly to John in the fire-light. She pushes him to his easy-chair.*)

DOT

Now, John, be good and sit you there  
 In comfort in your old armchair:  
     And I my man will wait upon  
 As when you came a-courting, John.

(*She goes to the mantelpiece for his pipe and matches.*)

JOHN (*in his chair*)

And I obeyed you then I vow  
My little Dot, as I do now:  
Small though you were, you had the art  
To sway a stupid giant's heart.  
Sit you beside me, little Dot!

(*Dot puts the pipe in his mouth and lights it. Then she fetches a little stool and sits by his knee.*)

DOT

Aye – always till you love me not.  
Hush! Do you hear the Cricket?  
Hush!

(*They listen; the chirp of the cricket is heard*)

The first time that I heard the tiny voice  
Was on the night you brought me home a bride;  
And I was frightened for your foolish choice  
Of such a child to journey at your side:  
And then I heard that voice so small and clear  
That said you would be kind and gentle, dear.

JOHN (*removing his pipe*)

When you lay ill before the baby came,  
And I sat here, and full of fears was I,  
That little voice before the dancing flame  
Chirped till I thought I heard our baby cry:  
It seemed to make me sure you would not go  
And leave me all alone who loved you so.

DOT

I think it is the fairy of our home.

JOHN

May they be kindly then, if fairies come!  
Fairy folk, as I've heard tell,  
Mid the homes of men may dwell;  
But we are too dull of ear  
Their fine melodies to hear.  
If unseen they near us move,  
May they bring us peace and love!

DOT

If our cricket here might stand  
Guest from far-off fairyland,  
I would pray that she might be  
Kind to my good man and me.  
Guarding us from woe and fear  
Till the happy day appear.



## FAIRIES (without)

Peace and rest to all the house,  
Rest and peace to weary head!  
May no evil dreams arouse  
Happy sleeper from his bed!  
Hither, thither, swift we move  
Weaving spells of peace and love.

## ACT II

Scene. (*Home of Caleb Plummer. A dilapidated room: through a window at the back is seen a warehouse. Caleb and Bertha are at work. Around them are many old-fashioned toys – among them a rabbit playing on a drum, a large Noah's Ark, a Jew's harp, pan-pipes, a fife, penny trumpets, a fluffy lamb, a lion and other beasts, and many dolls of various sorts. Caleb lifts and examines one toy after another. Bertha feels them delicately.*)

[No. 1 Toy Duet]

The martial drum goes rataplan  
 Beneath the rabbit's blows;  
 From Hebrew harp and pipe of Pan  
 Imperial music flows:  
 The drum goes rataplan,  
 To call you to the strife:  
 Squeak goes the pipe of Pan  
 And tootle-too the fife:  
 From clime to clime the Imperial music flows  
 And round the world the penny trumpet blows! –

From Noah's ark a fairy ear  
 The hum of many beasts may hear. –  
 Here is the small ingenious ant,  
 And here the monstrous elephant,  
 And each of these its trumpet-note can sound:  
 And here the scornful camel comes  
 Who knows the sound of British drums  
 That tap the world around.

Here is the lamb  
 Of Nottingham,  
 And here the modest lion goes:  
 Poor Wat the hare and Charles the Fox,  
 The good cat Balkins, and of cocks  
 The best that crows:  
 With cock-a-doo the Imperial music flows  
 And round the world the penny trumpet blows.

BERTHA

Behold the doll that I have dressed! (*She exhibits a wax doll in a fine costume of the period.*)

CALEB (*producing a composition doll of more modest attire*)

But mine's the best.

BERTHA (*laughing*)

No, mine's the best.

(*to her doll.*)

Good morning, lady, fine and fair,  
Of rosy wax<sup>5</sup> and flaxen hair,  
Your cold blue eyes and high propriety  
Proclaim you of the best society.

CALEB (*to his doll*)

Good madam, though not waxen fine  
Yet you shall be my Valentine:  
Your solid middle-class position  
Is patent from your composition.

CALEB & BERTHA (*catching up rag dolls*)

But O my friends, do not despise  
Rag dolls of any sort or size!  
Though common folk and free from vanity,  
Remember they are still Humanity!

CALEB (*returning to his beasts*)

I do wish I could get a little closer to nature. I *should* like more difference in size between the ant and the elephant. Then look at this lamb! He *will* come out so fierce and the lion so meek. I can't get the real old British lion into him. Look at him, Bertha! He might be a member of the Peace Society.

BERTHA

You must not worry yourself, father. No one expects toys to be *exactly* true to Nature – not *exactly* true.

CALEB

Well, you see, Bertha, I am a bit of an artist. I can't help being a bit of an artist, Bertha. There's this horse now! That's as near to Nature as I can get for sixpence! (*he takes up a wooden-horse with round spots of colour*) I should like to get a little dearer to the true colour; but it can't be done for sixpence.

BERTHA

Yes, you *are* an artist, father, a real true happy artist. I love to think of you sitting there among the toys, you make so well, keen alert, with bright eyes, an artist to the tips of your fingers.

CALEB

Hullo! Hullo! I shall be vain presently.

---

<sup>5</sup> 'face' in vocal score.

BERTHA

I think you are vain already. (*She points at him, laughing.*) There you sit with your merry eye, your smiling face and your dark hair.  
(*He looks ruefully at her.*)

There you sit in your easy old clothes, comfortable to work in. But I like best to think of you in your beautiful new great-coat.

CALEB (*cheerfully*)

Yes, yes, my new coat! (*He looks ruefully at the coat made from an old sack which hangs near him on a chair.*) It's too fine for me.

BERTHA

Nothing is too fine for you, father.

CALEB (*with gaiety*)

I'm half-ashamed to wear it though. When I hear the boys behind me say, 'Hullo! Here's a swell!' I don't know which way to look.

BERTHA

It's bright blue, isn't it, father?

CALEB

Yes, bright blue.

BERTHA

The colour which I can just remember in the blessed sky. A bright blue coat!

CALEB

Made loose to the figure!

BERTHA

Made loose to the figure! – Ah, what a lucky girl I am with such a father and such a home!

[No. 2 Blind Girl's Song]<sup>6</sup>

CALEB (*looking about him*)

[*spoken*] It's not quite a palace – not quite a palace.

BERTHA

[*spoken*] Who wants a palace? It's just a neat, trim, tidy, cosy home. How I wish I could see it!

<sup>6</sup> Mackenzie has written in MS 1249 at this point 'No. 2 Melodrama' in editorial blue pencil.

CALEB (*sadly*)

[*spoken*] My poor dear! My poor dear!

BERTHA

[*spoken*] No, father! You mustn't be sorry for me.

CALEB

[*spoken*] My poor love, day and night are the same to you.

BERTHA

No, dear! 'Tis at night I see;  
Night's the happy time for me:  
When I lay me down to sleep  
Into fairy land I peep.

Soft falls the rain at night  
Laving the dusty land,  
Cleansing from drought and blight,  
Till the old earth dry as sand  
Feels with deep joy as hidden fountains start,  
The stirring at her heart.

Lean out into the night  
When falls the cleansing rain;  
The darkness with delight  
Shall smooth thy face from pain,  
With joy of the air and smell of the fertile earth  
That brings the wheat to birth.

When morn at window pane<sup>7</sup>  
Bids happy children wake,  
They see the world again,  
And far from lawn and tangled brake  
Right glad of day their hearts to heaven sing  
Like birds on soaring wing.

But when soft night is here,  
The blind from slumber rise:  
They clasp the darkness near  
And see with sightless eyes:  
Their lamps are alight in the cool of the fragrant gloom  
Where unseen flowers bloom.

---

<sup>7</sup> The final two verses of this number were added by hand to the original libretto MS 1249 – it is unclear whether this was by Mackenzie or by Sturgis. Also, in MS 1247 the ordering of the verses is different with the final two verses appearing before the first two. The original order was reinstated by the time the words were set to music.

(*At the end of her song Bertha, remembering, turns towards Caleb.*) Father!

CALEB

Yes, Bertha?

BERTHA

How is my rose-tree?

CALEB (*looking towards a little flower-pot in the window*)

He is still quite well. Bertha, that's the twelfth time you've asked after that rose-tree this morning.

BERTHA (*with clasped hands*)

He gave it to me.

CALEB

Mr Tackleton? Oh yes, of course it was Mr Tackleton. He can't help giving presents. Presents seem to ooze out of him. But you mustn't thank him. If you thank him, he'll pretend he hasn't sent it.

BERTHA

Oh, I know; I know. It is his humour to seem rough and hard.

CALEB

Yes, that's his humour. Oh, he has such a peculiar taste in humour! (*He makes a wry face.*)

BERTHA

I have even heard him speak roughly to you.

CALEB

So have I, dear. – But all the time he'd be winking at me. I do wish you could see him wink. It's as if he said, «Keep it up, Caleb! Keep it up! And we'll tease Bertha finely.»

BERTHA (*gladly*)

Oh, I know; I know. A rough manner, but a heart of gold!

CALEB

A heart of gold! (*He lifts his hands, awestruck at his own mendacity.*)

BERTHA (*musings*)

I stood the little tree beside my bed last night; and I *saw* it, I saw it in my dreams. And when the sun – the red sun, father?

CALEB

Red at sunrise and at sunset, Bertha.

BERTHA

When the glorious great red sun flooded my little room with the light, which I almost fear to strike against in walking. I put my little tree in the full flood of light and thanked God for the sunshine and the rose and for all things beautiful. And I prayed for *him*, father.

CALEB

For Mr Tackleton? (*wondering, awestruck.*)

BERTHA

Yes, father; I prayed for him who had been so kind, so tender in his acts of love.

CALEB

His acts of love! (*He speaks vaguely, with wonder. Bertha turns towards him as if wondering at his tone. Then she resumes her gayer manner.*)

BERTHA

Isn't it time for John and Dot to come? Isn't it good of them to make their yearly picnic here with us – to celebrate their wedding day? See if they are coming, father. (*Caleb rises sadly and shuffles towards the window.*)  
Father!

CALEB (*stopping*)

What, Bertha?

BERTHA

Why do you walk like that? You are walking feebly – like a weak old man.

CALEB (*remembering and assuming a jaunty manner*)

You noticed it, you heard it? Ha, ha, what ears you have. I was imitating an old man, whom I saw yesterday on the road. He walked like this. (*He shuffles again; and then steps jauntily to the window.*) Yes, yes; here come John and Dot – yes, and Tilly and the baby too – yes, and a fine large hamper. Ah! (*He looks hungry – then remembering he says*) Not, but what we could give them a fine supper too. Eh, Bertha?

BERTHA (*busily clearing the table*)

I should think we could!

[No. 3 Duet]

[BERTHA]

[*spoken*] But they love to play the hosts, dear John and Dot! (*listening*) I hear them now. Now the cart stops, and now the dear footsteps on the stairs, and now! –

(*Enter Dot and John carrying a hamper, which they dump down on the floor. Tilly follows with the baby, whom she rocks in her arms as she moves round, gaping with wonder at the toys.*)

DOT and JOHN

Here we come with greeting gay  
 To celebrate our wedding day,  
     That shines so clear:  
 A portly hamper now we bring  
 And both together blythely sing –  
     Good folk, good cheer!

*(They busily unpack the hamper and spread the table.)*

On your tablecloth we spread  
 Beef and pie and home-made bread,  
     And amber beer,  
 And hail with happy songs of praise  
 This greatest day of all the days  
     That make the year.

Indeed it is a rare old plan,  
 This marriage of a maid and man.  
     Though fools may jeer –  
 Ye bachelors in bandbox go  
 To Bath or drink at Jericho  
     The smallest beer!

*(The table is laid. Dot pours the beer frothing into Caleb's jug. General greeting. Dot guides Bertha to Tilly; Bertha takes the baby, and guided by Dot, places the baby on a couch with a chair-back to prevent it from falling. Tilly meanwhile is enraptured by a mysterious box. She nervously touches it, and up leaps a Jack-in-a-box.)*

TILLY *(jumping)*

Oh-ah! – *(She retreats to a place of safety.)*

CALEB

Why, what a lot of places you are laying, Dot.

DOT *(again at the table)*

You will have more guests than you think for. – What say you to our lodger for one?

CALEB

The Unbeknown? Very happy, I'm sure.

DOT *(pausing)*

And that reminds me, John! What are you standing here for, with your great handles idle, and your great feet idle? And all the time our lodger is waiting for you at the Post Office!

JOHN

Why so he is. And I promised to fetch him in the cart. – He is an odd fish. But I don't believe there's any harm in him.



DOT (*quickly*)

No, no; no harm at all! Here, you be off and fetch him! (*She pushes John who laughs, and lets himself be pushed to the door.*)

(*Exit John.*)

CALEB (*who has been counting places silently*)

And who else is coming, Dot?

DOT

Mr Tackleton! – He asked himself.

CALEB

No? Here is an honour, Bertha!

(*Bertha leaves the baby and comes forward with clasped hands.*)

BERTHA

Mr Tackleton!

DOT (*looking at the table critically*)

And that's not all. Who, do you think, is coming with him? (*She looks at Caleb who shakes his head.*) Who, but May Fielding!

CALEB

May Fielding! (*He looks anxiously at Bertha.*)

BERTHA (*repeating low*)

May Fielding!

DOT (*still busy*)

Yes, and she can do no less, since she has made up her mind to swallow him as a husband.

BERTHA

A husband! Mr Tackleton – May Fielding.

DOT

Yes, to be sure, and they are to be married tomorrow. Why, Bertha! What's the matter? (*She runs to Bertha and is just in time to catch her before she falls. Caleb hurries also, and comes to the other side of Bertha, who is unconscious.*) She loves him.

CALEB

God forgive me!

DOT

This comes of your romances!

CALEB

Have I deceived her from the cradle but to break her heart at last?

*(Bertha begins to stir)*

DOT

Here, Caleb, help me, we'll take her into her room, and let her lie still for a little.  
*(To Bertha)* There, dear there! –

*(Exeunt Dot and Caleb supporting Bertha.)*

TILLY *(to the baby)*

Did its fathers deceive it from the cradles but to break its hearts at last? *(She gazes, lost in admiration at the baby; at last unable to resist further, she pounces on the baby and rocks it violently in her arms while she sings to it.)*

[No. 4. Tilly Slowboy's Lullaby.]<sup>8</sup>

And did'ums go riding, a duck and a dear  
    With a cantery, cantery, cantery.  
Did'ums!  
And live in a mansion with millions a year,  
    And a room, and a butterler's pantry!  
Did'ums!  
And was 'ums a sailor to sail on the sea  
    With a roll and a rollery rockery.  
Was'ums!  
Or to sit in his parlour and drink of his tea,  
    From the beautiful, breakable, crockery!  
Was'ums!  
Or would 'ums go carting along the high road  
    With a horse that goes lippety loppety  
And carry, the darling, his daddy's own load  
    Of the beautiful portable property.  
Oh, it was: indeed it was: Rrrrrr yes, it was a was 'ums!

*(Enter Tackleton and May Fielding; they stop at sight of Tilly.)*

TACKLETON

Miss Slowboy!

TILLY *(jumping and nearly dropping the baby)*

Oh-Ah!

<sup>8</sup> In MS 1249, Mackenzie has written a note by these verses to say «better in Act III immediately after *John's Exit* [...] of act 3 page 9». On the opposite (blank) page he has written, «better in Act 3[.] provides more comic work and the public would be surprised at the snatches of *song* of Tilly at the *End*».

(As Tackleton advances into the room looking grimly at Tilly, she retreats before him, shielding the baby.)

Oh, please, Mr Gruff and Tackleton! –

(Enter Dot, excited. She runs to May, shakes her and kisses her.)

DOT

May! May! to think of the days when we were girls at school together!

MAY (*sadly*)

Yes, Dot dear, how happy we were then!

DOT (*with growing excitement*)

Only to think how we talked at school about the husbands we would choose! I don't know how young and handsome and gallant and gay my husband was to be; and as for yours, May – do you remember, May?

[No. 5. Quartet.]

A shepherd piping on the hill  
     Whose sheep obey his guiding hand,  
 A miller's song beside the mill  
     That grinds the corn of Fairyland.

TACKLETON (*grimly*)

Where are your gay young lovers now?  
     They toil for pence or beg for bread;  
 And all forgot the lover's vow,  
     And some are lost and some are dead.

MAY (*dreamily*)

A soldier riding from the war  
     A lover dreaming by the brook,  
 A king of sunset realms afar  
     Or prince from out a fairy book!

EDWARD (*at the door*)

But prince or king or warrior bold  
     If long in foreign land he roam,  
 Be sure the girl, he loved of old,  
     Will find a nearer mate at home.

ALL

The visions of the golden prime  
     Are brief as dews on upland lawn;  
 The singer dies before his rhyme,  
     The lover fleets with flying dawn.

DOT (*eagerly*)

They were not *all* dream-lovers, not *all* dream-lovers, May. If *one* should come back now; if one should enter at that door – ah, John!

(*Enter John behind Edward and bringing him forward into the room.*)

TACKLETON

Come in good time, good carrier John! Your little wife has been going on finely about *young* lovers and *young* husbands, John. –

JOHN

Why Dot? Why, little woman! (*He would put his arm around her, but she breaks away in excitement.*)

DOT

Come, come – to supper, to supper! All take your places!

(*Enter Caleb and Bertha.*)

Here Caleb, and here Bertha! And Tilly! Tilly!

TILLY

Yes mum!

DOT

You must sit there and watch the precious baby. There! (*She puts her in a seat and puts a place full of food in her lap.*)

TILLY

Oh mum, it's beautiful. (*To the baby*) Did it ride its cock-horses with kings and carriers, and did its mothers bring its places and put it on its lapses, and all to break its precious hearts at last! (*She begins to eat.*)

[Finale]

(*Caleb has led Bertha to May. Bertha holds May's hands, speaking tenderly. All seat themselves at supper and fall to. John lays down his knife and fork and looks at Caleb.*)

JOHN

[*spoken*] Now, Caleb! No song, no supper! Sing first and sup after! That's the rule for you.

CALEB

[*spoken*] My voice ain't what it was, John.

JOHN

[*spoken*] We must have your song though. Why, our wedding-day supper wouldn't be right without old Caleb's song.

ALL

[*spoken*] The song, the song. "We'll drown it in the bowl!" Come, Caleb!

CALEB

In days of winter chill  
    When grief afflicts the soul  
We'll laugh away the ill  
    Or drown it in the bowl!  
We'll drown it in the bowl, my boys,  
We'll drown it in the bowl!

ALL

We'll drown it in the bowl, my boys,  
And still our carol troll my boys –  
We'll drown it in the bowl.

CALEB

In days of gallant fight  
    We'll dare the despots frown;  
For freedom and our right  
    We'll strike the tyrants down;  
We'll strike the tyrant down my boys,  
We'll strike the ty – ty – ty (*he breaks down.*)

TACKLETON (*mocking*)

Ty – ty – tumtidy – ty – ty –

ALL (*heartily*)

We'll strike the tyrant down my boys,  
We'll strike the tyrant down!

(*more heartily*)

And we'll drown him in the bowl my boys –  
We'll drown him in the bowl!

EDWARD

A right good song and sung right well.

CALEB

I thank you kindly, Unbeknown! Will you not sing?

EDWARD

Oh, if you wish – with pleasure!

TACKLETON

A miracle, a miracle! The deaf man hears! A miracle!

EDWARD

[*spoken*] Eh! What? (*with his hand to his ear.*)

Shall I sing of age and youth,  
 Of old man's art and young girl's truth,  
 A song that's ever new and old  
 Of love of maid and love of gold.  
 Her hair is of the yellow gold  
     And poets sing its golden glory;  
 But for a solid price 'tis sold  
 To merchant old and hoary.

Her eyes are of the heaven's blue  
     And bright with dreams that angels taught her;  
 The wrinkled merchant buys the two  
     For gems of purest water.

O foolish boy, who would'st begin  
     To fill thy days with idle dreaming,  
 Put money in thy purse and win  
     The maid for all her seeming.

For she will give thee look for look  
     For thy bright eyes her own grow brighter;  
 But if she wed a banker's book  
     Will more delight her.

*(Applause – rapping on the table. Bertha, who has listened with growing wonder, rises.)*

BERTHA

Whose voice is that? Who sang that song? 'Twas like my brother Edward's voice.

DOT *(forcing her to her place, and quickly answering)*

Why 'tis our lodger, our old guest. There, there! – More singing! More!

*(Bertha accepts the answer with a sigh. She sits quietly while Dot goes on more quickly.)*

Come let us sing  
 Of bird on wing,  
     The song of merry heart.

JOHN

Aye, the good song,  
 And, right or wrong,  
     Let each one take his part.  
 A fair start and no favour! So!  
 Three raps and let the singer go!

*(John raps three times with his knife upon the table.)*

DOT

The lark on his breast takes the glory of the morning,  
 When he leaps to the cloud from his nest on the lea:  
 The sun wakes again to his task of adorning  
 The peaks of the mountain, the plains of the sea.

EDWARD

On the waste of the water the sea gull is crying  
 As he slants a white wing to the crest of the foam:  
 And the wind in the ropes of the vessel is sighing  
 That wafts the poor sailor from England and home.

[JOHN]

Then here's to the birds of the mountain and meadow  
 And to those who fly high when the morning is fair,  
 For, when we are down in the depths of the shadow,  
 They lift us on wings to the heights of the air.

[BERTHA]<sup>9</sup>

The nightingale sings in the dusk of the garden  
 Of the glory of love and the passing of wrong;  
 And hearts, that in work-a-day trouble we harden,  
 Grow soft at the passionate sound of the song.

ALL

Let friend drink to friend till our hearts are all glowing,  
 And thoughts all are winged like a bird that is free!  
 O friend I will pledge thee, o love there's no knowing,  
 How glad in a moment we mortals may be.

*(John rises slowly, and with rather a forlorn air.)*

JOHN

And now, my friends, one task remains,  
 Which must be done whate'er betide.  
 I charge you, raise your glasses, to the health  
 Of bridegroom and of bride!

ALL *(raising their glasses, but with marked lack of cordiality)*  
 Bridegroom and Bride!

TACKLETON *(grimly)*

I thank you, friends, for this most cordial greeting.  
 I drink in turn to our next happy meeting –  
 Tomorrow in the Church! My wedding day!

<sup>9</sup> Bertha's verse originally appeared before John's in this section. In MS 1249 Mac-kenzie has made a note to say, «These two *voices* must be reversed on *account* of the *music*. And the *verses transposed*».

ALL

Tomorrow! Tomorrow!

EDWARD

Tomorrow! Tomorrow!  
I drink the morrow, glorious day,  
For us and all old men, I say.  
A health! A health! December and sweet May.

And a cheer for the cheerless December,  
And a health to the bloom of the May,  
To the fire that awakes in the ember  
And glows at the close of the day.  
Here's a rouse and a rousing cheer,  
For the pride of the happy year,  
For the charm<sup>10</sup> of May!

To the lover who's old as his story  
But woos a young maid with the best  
To the dotard who sits in his glory,  
And glows with a rose on his breast!  
Here's a rouse and a rousing cheer,  
For the grim old end of the year,  
And his maiden May!

*(He empties his glass and falls a'laughing)*

TACKLETON *(fiercely)*

What do you mean?

EDWARD

December and sweet May!

*(A general movement of uneasiness. May is crying and Bertha comforting her. Dot comes close to Edward.)*

DOT *(to Edward)*

How can you be so cruel?

EDWARD *(to Dot)*

I can stand this no longer: Follow me out, for I must speak with you. *(Exit)*

*(Dot, after a moment's doubt and a quick glance at John, slips out after Edward. Tackleton rises and goes quickly and softly to the window at back and peeps into the warehouse. Then he returns and lays his hand on John's arm. John starts at the touch;*

<sup>10</sup> MS 1249 has 'bloom'.



*looks round and notices the empty places; then rises and is led by Tackleton to the window.)*<sup>11</sup>

TACKLETON (*at back, to John*)

Look well! Is that your *deaf old man*? Is that your *ancient guest*?

CALEB (*at table*)

In days of winter chill,  
When grief afflicts the soul  
We'll laugh away the ill  
And drown it in the bowl!

*(As Caleb sings, the figures of Dot and Edward are seen through the window at back, very lover-like, and Edward without disguise. John draws back from the window; Tackleton keeps a hand on his arm. Edward and Dot pass out of sight.)*

TACKLETON

[*spoken*] Look there!

JOHN (*shaking off Tackleton*)

[*spoken*] Don't speak to me! Leave me alone, I tell you! I must have time to think. God help me!

CALEB (*at table*)

We'll drown it in the bowl, my boys,  
We'll drown it in the bowl,  
And still our carol troll my boys –  
We'll drown it in the bowl, my boys  
We'll drown it in the bowl.

*(He sings and becomes uncertain, still rapping on the table. Bertha has turned from May as if conscious of some trouble in the air which she cannot see. May is still crying quietly. John sinks into a chair, very grave and stern. Tackleton stands watching him.)*

---

<sup>11</sup> MS 1249 has spoken section of text for Caleb at this point which has been crossed out and does not appear in subsequent versions:

CALEB (*raping on the table*)  
[*spoken*] Come back! Come back!  
Then cling to the table, ho!  
And make no haste to go!  
Be merry, be merry and drink we fair!  
And a rap rap rap with a ho heave ho  
And the king of the tapers shall homeward go  
With the moon for his lantern rare.  
With a heave heave ho, and a heave heave ho  
And the moon for his lantern rare.

## ACT III

Scene. (*The same as in Act I. But it is almost dark. The fire burns low. The stage is empty; but voices of Fairies are heard singing. The Cricket Fairy is sitting by the hearth.*)<sup>12</sup>

[No. 1. Introduction]

FAIRIES

Come away, fairy fair,  
     For life is full of chances,  
 Come to the moonlit air  
     And airy dances,  
     And charm the listening night  
     With echoes of delight  
     From old romances.

CRICKET FAIRY<sup>13</sup>

Come away, fairy fair!  
  
 This is the night of all the year:  
 And music faint and rare invites the ear,  
 And music faint and rare  
 Invites the ear.

A FAIRY

Nay, I must linger here  
     To teach man's heart  
     By love and fear,  
     Ere I depart  
 To the dances of delight,  
 And the most mysterious night  
     Of the fairy year.

(*Cricket vanishes*)<sup>14</sup>

(*After a short silence, the door is pushed open, and John enters. He is wrapped in a big coat and his face almost hidden by a big comforter and a hat pulled low on his forehead. He carries a lantern which gives a mere flicker of light. Enter behind him Edward and Dot who takes off her cloak and bonnet at back.*)

[Melodrama]

EDWARD (*pausing a moment*)

Good night! Good night, and for us all good morrow! (Exit into his room)

<sup>12</sup> Last sentence of stage direction added by hand in MS 1249.

<sup>13</sup> Verses for the Cricket Fairy added by hand in MS 1249.

<sup>14</sup> Stage direction added by hand in MS 1249.

*(John who is standing and looking down at the dull hearth, takes no notice of Edward's words.)*

DOT *(low and fervently)*

And for us all good morrow! *(She moves towards John, but stops as he makes no sign. After a moment's doubt she impulsively kisses both hands to him, as he stands with his back to her and goes into her room. Exit.)*

*(John turns at the sound of the closing door. He takes off his coat and scarf. He gropes for his pipe on the mantelpiece. He strikes a match but his hand is seen to shake; the match falls on to the hearth and he stamps upon it. He puts back the pipe on the mantelpiece. As he does this, his eyes are drawn to the old gun, which hangs close to him. The sight seems to fascinate him; he stands still staring at the gun. Presently his hand goes softly out to it; he takes it down, weighs it in his hands and in a moment is moving quickly but without a sound towards Edward's door. He turns the gun in his hands and raises it as if with the but he would dash in Edward's door.*

*As he stands thus, motionless, in doubt, there is complete silence: then is heard the note of the cricket. John lowers the gun to the floor. He listens, and the cricket is heard again. He puts back the gun in its place; then he sits and lets his head fall forward on his arms upon the table. After a minute the light of the fire begins to burn more brightly, and presently in the glow is seen the cricket in fairy shape. She touches the wall above the hearth and there appears a vision of Dot as a young girl, while the Fairy sings.)*

FAIRY

Sleep, sleep and dream, and dreaming see  
 The girl thou lovedst years ago!  
 Has she been false, and false to thee?  
 Ah no, ah no,  
 Be sure it is not so.

*(The vision fades and in its place appears a vision of Dot beside the cradle.)*

Lullaby, ah, lullaby!  
 The pebbles move upon the shore,  
 The hairbells ring upon the lea;  
 There's mother's love and fairy lore,  
 My little babe for thee.  
 Little mother, little wife!  
 Is hers a tainted life?  
 Ah no, Ah no,  
 Be sure it is not so.

*(The vision fades. The chorus of Fairies is heard again, as the Fairy on the hearth also vanishes.)*

## FAIRIES

Come away fairy fair!  
 This is the night of all the year:  
 And music faint and rare  
 Invites the ear.  
 Away! Away!  
 For now indeed I hear  
 That spurrier bold, renowned Chanticleer  
 Salute the day.

*(The first faint light of dawn. JOHN stirs. He rises and stands quiet, with bowed head.)*

[Morning Hymn *(during which the light grows)*]

JOHN *(simply and with reverence)*

I thank thee, God, that thou hast made  
 The heart of man not more afraid,  
 And that, the veil of Night withdrawn,  
 Thy messengers bring in the dawn.

Thy messengers at thy command  
 At dawn upon the mountains stand.  
 And over field and down the glen  
 Breathe peace upon the souls of men.

God cleanse us all from wrath and sin  
 That that high peace may enter in<sup>15</sup>,  
 And make us by thy morning light  
 Like little children in thy sight.

*(Exit John)*<sup>16</sup>

*(A pause, in which the light grows stronger. Then enter Tilly, stumbling with haste. She knocks at Edward's door and waits listening. She knocks louder, but still there is no answer.)*

TILLY *(with awe)*

Oh-ah!

*(She bangs lustily on the door. Enter behind her Tackleton. He has on his wedding-clothes. Tilly does not see him, but still bangs on the door.)*

Oh-ah, Oh-ah!

TACKLETON

Stop that racket, Miss Slowboy! Stop it, I tell you!

<sup>15</sup> In vocal score: 'venture in'.

<sup>16</sup> MS 1249: suggestion added by hand, 'Tilly lullaby here(?) breaks the sadness'.

TILLY (*jumping*)

Oh-ah! Oh Mr Gruff and Tackleton! Oh! I can't make nobody hear, if you please. Oh, I do hope nobody ain't gone and been and died, if you please.

TACKLETON

Be off! I'll see to this.

(*Tilly goes near to the door, but there stops, nervous, undecided, curious. Tackleton turns upon her suddenly.*)

Shoo!!

(*Exit Tilly hastily with a cry. Tackleton stoops near the door, listening. Then he peeps at the key-hole. Then he tries the door and goes in. He comes out again at once and meets John who enters from the other side. John has made himself tidy. He is grave and quiet.*)

John Peerybingle, I hope there has been nothing – nothing rash in the night.

JOHN

What do you mean?

TACKLETON

He's gone. (*he jerks his head towards Edward's room*) He's gone and the window's open. I didn't see any marks; but I was afraid there might have been some – some scuffle. Eh? (*He comes close to John, peering at him.*)

JOHN

Make your mind easy! If he has gone, he has gone without hurt from me.

TACKLETON (*with a sneer*)

Oh! Well, I think he has got off pretty easy.

JOHN

I thought too much of my own happiness. I did not consider her.

TACKLETON

To be sure! You did not consider her giddiness, frivolity, fickleness.

JOHN (*sternly*)

You be careful! If yesterday I'd have struck down the man who said a word against her, today I'd set my foot upon his face, if he were my brother – Do I speak plainly?

TACKLETON

Very plainly indeed. (*He moves nervously further away.*)

JOHN

Then hear me out. She tried hard to do her duty by me. I only now begin to know how hard she tried. Well, there comes back someone who loved her before I loved her, someone nearer to her own age.

TACKLETON (*eagerly*)

Yes, that's it – someone younger.

(*Dot enters at back, stops and stands listening, unseen.*)

JOHN

She feels for him, maybe, as she cannot feel for me.

TACKLETON (*emphatically*)

Yes, that's the devil of it.

JOHN (*makes a gesture to stop him. Then after a pause he speaks slowly, with conviction – low music<sup>17</sup>, as from unseen Fairies, is heard through his speech.*)

I sat upon that hearth last night, where she so often sat beside me, her sweat face looking into mine. I saw her as if with eyes. I had her dear self before me. I recalled her life of every day; and she is innocent if there be One to judge the innocent and the guilty.

TACKLETON (*with a shrug of the shoulders*)

If that is your opinion –

JOHN (*stopping him with a gesture*)

She shall go back to her parents, to the home from which I took her. She leaves me without blame; and she will live without blame. I am sure of that. And when I die, she will find that I loved her, loved her to the last.

TACKLETON (*after a pause of wonder*)

Well, I must be off. I must be upon my way to church.

JOHN

I give you joy.

TACKLETON

Thankye, thankye.

JOHN

I'll see you out.

(*Exeunt John and Tackleton. Dot comes forward, excited, radiant, dancing for joy.*)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> MS 1249: handwritten comment, «Add here low music, try letter H Vocal Score 177». This comment is obviously dates from after the publication of the vocal score and may have been added during the 1914 production at the RAM.

<sup>18</sup> MS 1249: handwritten suggestion here, «or Tilly's lullaby here *before* wedding song».

## [No. 2. Wedding Bell Song]

DOT

Now let the wedding bells ring out  
 For our dear maiden May,  
 With laughter light and merry shout  
 Proclaim the wedding day!  
 With peals of bells and laughter light,  
 And hopes and fears for maiden bright,  
 Who treads the rosy way.

*(Enter Tilly. Dot runs on into laughter almost hysterical.)*

TILLY

*[(spoken)]* Ow, if you please, don't! It's enough to dead and bury the baby, so it is, if you please, mum.

DOT

Bring tear-drops from the fount of tears  
 For our dear maiden May,  
 And rosy hopes and bashful fears  
 And lilt and roundelay!  
 But best of all, bring laughter light  
 To greet the girl who shines so bright  
 Upon her wedding day.

The ice that gleams on dripping eaves  
 The hoar frost by the way  
 Are lovely as the pomp of leaves  
 And Summer's proud<sup>19</sup> array:  
 Old winter brings a new delight  
 And spreads a carpet purely white  
 For our dear maiden May<sup>20</sup>.

*(Dot seizes Tilly and forces her to dance. She lets her go; Tilly whirls across the room and stops panting.)*

TILLY (*panting*)

Oh-ah! Oh-ah! Oh if you please, mum! It's Bedlams broke loose; it is, if you please, mum.

DOT

Everything's broke loose; I've broke loose; you've broke loose.

<sup>19</sup> In vocal score: «bright».

<sup>20</sup> MS 1249 Final verse added by hand.

TILLY

Oh, where, mum? (*turning round anxiously*) Oh, if you please, mum!

DOT

The baby's broke loose!

Tilly

Ow, if you please, mum – oh! Not the precious baby if you please mum.

DOT (*making her dance again*)

Baby and all, baby and all!

(*Enter Bertha and Caleb. Dot lets Tilly go again; Tilly spins across the room again and falls breathless into a chair. Bertha comes to Dot with outstretched hands. Dot, suddenly grave, takes her hands, looking into her face.*)

BERTHA

He has told me; I know all; my father has told me all.

(*Dot holds Bertha in her arms and looks at Caleb, who nods ruefully.*)

CALEB

And she forgives me. You know I meant well; but I deceived her; I deceived her. God forgive me! I made her think that we worked for a noble generous master, and he was stern and hard –

BERTHA

Don't, don't! I can't bear it. I can't bear it!

(*Caleb stops, dejected; he sits in a chair.*)

DOT (*to Bertha*)

And did he tell you of your home, the poor home which he worked so hard to keep for you?

BERTHA

Yes, yes. (*She draws Dot further away.*) He has told me of everything but of himself. Dot, you won't deceive me? (*with anxiety*)

DOT

No.

BERTHA

Look at my father. Tell me what you see. (*She listens anxiously. As she hears, her face grows brighter.*)

DOT

I see an old man, sitting, his face resting on his hand. He is old and worn with care and work; and his clothes are old and worn too. I see him now despondent and bowed



down. But Bertha, I have seen him many times before, always striving, always thinking and always for one end – that his poor blind girl might have no part or lot in the sorrow and the poverty and the grinding labour of his life. And seeing him I honour his grey head and bless him.

BERTHA (*with enthusiasm*)

It is my sight restored. To think I might have died and never truly seen my father. Father!<sup>21</sup>. (*She holds out her hands to Caleb. He takes her from Dot. She rests his grey head on her shoulder, stroking him, like a mother.*) And now there shall be no more changes.

DOT (*listening*)

Don't be too sure of that! Changes! Changes! Are there no changes for the better? Are there wheels coming? Bertha you have quick ears – are there wheels? I know you have quick ears, because they were so quick last night; you remember how you heard a strange step, a strange voice; well – yes, there are wheels and coming, coming fast; and now they stop, and now the step, and now the voice. Hush!

(*The voice of Edward is heard singing outside. Dot can scarcely restrain her excitement. Caleb and Bertha listen with growing interest and wonder.*)

[No. 3. Melodrama and Ballad]

EDWARD (*without*)

O green and pleasant England  
My heart goes out to thee  
From dwellings of the outland men  
And lands beyond the sea.

CALEB (*trembling*)

[(*spoken*)] It's my boy's song – my boy's song.

EDWARD (*without*)

There's golden light and golden ore  
Beyond the Spanish main:  
But, oh, it is the Surrey wold  
That I would see again!

(*As the door opens, Caleb would go to it; but Dot holds him; she claps her hands over his eyes, as Edward appears in the doorway. The sightless eyes of Bertha are turned towards the door.*)

EDWARD (*at the door*)

In heather sweet or bracken deep  
I'd dream the hours away  
And hear the fir-trees' crooning song  
Where summer breezes play.

<sup>21</sup> MS 1249 handwritten cue here, «Music No. 3».

The cows go heavy home at eve,  
 The mist is on the lee,  
 And 'tis home in happy England  
 That I this night would be!

CALEB<sup>22</sup>

[(*spoken*)] If my boy from the golden South Americas – if my boy were alive – (*He stops, trembling.*)

DOT (*in great excitement*)

[(*spoken*)] He is alive: he is alive: And he's here! (*She takes her hands from Caleb's eyes and pushes him into Edward's arms.*)

CALEB (*sobbing*)

[(*spoken*)] My boy from the Golden South Americas!

BERTHA

[(*spoken*)] Edward! (*She holds out her hands. Edward takes her hand and, still holding his father, draws her to him and kisses her.*)

DOT (*quickly, almost breathlessly*)

[(*spoken*)] And that's not all! He has got something more for you – Oh money and that? I don't mean that. I mean a new daughter for Caleb and a sweet sister for Bertha. Where is she, Edward? Where is she?

EDWARD (*laughing*)

[(*spoken*)] She's close at hand. You bring here in! (*He nods towards the door, and Dot runs and opens it; and there is May smiling and blushing, dressed simply, but as a bride. She comes forward timidly; Edward meets her and brings her to his father.*)

MAY (*to Caleb*)<sup>23</sup>

'Tis full! The cup of happiness,  
 And turned ill-fortune's cruel tide.  
 Now to your kindly bosom press  
 A loving daughter, Edward's bride.

(*Indicating Edward. The three embrace.*)

(*to Bertha*)

O Bertha! Let me lend you light  
 And willing arms to be your guide,  
 So shall our tender clasp unite  
 A sister, brother and his bride.

<sup>22</sup> MS 1249: «All melodrama».

<sup>23</sup> MS 1249: May's words here added in Sturgis's hand with minor amendments by Mackenzie.

*(Brings Edward to her. The three embrace.)  
(She kisses Caleb and goes from him to Bertha, who embraces her. Bertha and May draw aside, Bertha questioning, May explaining. Enter John, followed by Tilly who remains in the background by the cradle. John stops, amazed.)*

CALEB

Look John! My own boy from the Golden South Americas! My own son!

JOHN

Edward! It was you then?

*(Edward goes to John and rings his hand)*

But I don't understand.

DOT *(quickly)*

Of course you don't understand, you stupid John! Edward came back to marry May; and he heard she was to marry somebody else; and so he disguised himself to see if she were false or true; and she is true, John; and they were married an hour ago, John; and Tackleton may die a bachelor, John, and now, now, now, *(laughing and crying)* you may kiss me, John.

*(John hugs Dot, who almost disappears in his arms. Tilly, who has been looking from one to another and trying to understand, now on a sudden executes a dance of joy. All are talking, laughing, in great glee, when enter Tackleton.)*

TACKLETON *(grimly)*

I hope I don't intrude.

*(There is an awkward silence. Edward with his arm round May holds out her left hand and shows the ring on the third finger.)*

Exactly! I have an article of the same sort myself. Miss Slowboy!

TILLY *(starting)*

Oh-ah!

TACKLETON

Will you have the kindness to throw this in the fire? *(he hands her a ring.)*

TILLY

Oh, it would be a pity! Oh-ah! *(She looks longingly on the ring.)*

TACKLETON

Or keep it till you find an eccentric person of a suitable age. Be sure of his age – or rather be sure of his youth<sup>24</sup>.

TILLY

Oh-ah! Oh, thank you Mr Gruff and Tackleton.

<sup>24</sup> MS 1249: «- or rather be sure of his youth.» added by hand.

TACKLETON (*at the door*)

Tommy!

(*A small boy enters, bearing a wedding cake*)

As this article also is of no use to me, I ask leave to present it to the present company. And now I will take my leave. (*He bows and is going, when May leaves Edward and goes to him.*)

MAY

You will forgive me? I thought him dead; I loved him long ago. Forgive me –

TACKLETON

Certainly I forgive you. He is a young and, in the opinion of some people, a handsomer man. It is only natural. Goodbye!

JOHN

But you shan't go. (*with decision*)

TACKLETON

I must. You are a good man, John; and I wish you well, and there's my hand, if you'll take it.

JOHN

I'll take it and keep it. You don't go. You stay and dine with us.

DOT

Do, Mr Tackleton.

TACKLETON

Have it your own way then. (*John wrings his hand till he squeals, and lets him go.*)

[Finale]

JOHN

Now one and all  
Both great and small,  
Come listen to our lay!  
Though things go wrong  
And night be long,  
Yet surely comes the day.

DOT

Dan Cupid came  
And touched with flame  
All hearts from pole to pole:  
Let kings contend  
Where kingdoms end,  
But Cupid takes the whole.

EDWARD

The boy may leap  
From happy sleep  
    In distant lands to roam;  
But some fine day  
He finds his way  
    Back to his father's home.

MAY

And happy she  
Who wept, when he  
    Went forth across the main,  
If from dark night  
The old love light  
    Dawn in his eyes again!

CALEB

So banish woe  
To Jericho,  
    But welcome all the joys;  
Be children still  
And think no ill  
    To find a world of toys!

BERTHA

And oh be sure  
That fairies cure  
    All ills with secret boon,  
Who likewise sing  
In magic ring  
    Beneath the elfin moon.

TACKLETON

If cricket shrill  
Beheld an ill,  
    Yet suffer and be wise;  
The beast may prove  
To win your love  
    A fairy in disguise.

ALL

So fairy fair  
Be it thy care  
    To keep all ills away,  
And fill the night  
With dreams of light,  
    Till dawns the happy day.

DOT

Come along, John! *(She seizes John by the hand and forces him to dance. Edward gives his hand to May and follows John and Dot. Tackleton glares around him; his eyes fasten on Tilly, who is fascinated with terror; he seizes her and whirls her into the dance.)*

TILLY

Oh! Ah! Oh, Mr Gruff and Tackleton, if you please! Ow!

*(They all dance with ardour. The cake-boy dances around the cake. Caleb, who has drawn Bertha aside, pats her hand in time as he watches the dancers.)*