

Various Poems

Sonnets to Sundry Notes of Music

15

It was a lording's daughter, the fairest one of three,
That like Ád of her master as well as well might be,
Till looking on an Englishman, the fairest that eye could
see,
Her fancy fell a-turning.

5 Long was the combat doubtful that love with love did
fight:
To leave the master loveless, or kill the gallant knight.
To put in practice either, alas, it was a spite
Unto the seely damsel.

10 But one must be refuse Ád, more mickle was the pain
That nothing could be use Ád to turn them both to gain.
For of the two the trusty knight was wounded with
disdain±±
Alas, she could not help it.

15 Thus art with arms contending was victor of the day,
Which by a gift of learning did bear the maid away.
Then lullaby, the learned man hath got the lady gay;
For now my song is ended.

17

My flocks feed not, my ewes breed not,
My rams speed not, all is amiss.
Love is dying, faith's defying,
Heart's denying causer of this.
5 All my merry jigs are quite forgot,
All my lady's love is lost, God wot.

Where her faith was firmly fixed in love,
 There a nay is placed without remove.
 One seely cross wrought all my loss±±
 10 O frowning fortune, curseÁd fickle dame!
 For now I see inconstancy
 More in women than in men remain.

In black mourn I, all fears scorn I,
 Love hath forlorn me, living in thrall.
 15 Heart is bleeding, all help needing±±
 O cruel speeding, freighted with gall.
 My shepherd's pipe can sound no deal,
 My wether's bell rings doleful knell,
 My curtal dog that wont to have played
 20 Plays not at all, but seems afraid,
 With sighs so deep procures to weep
 In howling wise to see my doleful plight.
 How sighs resound through heartless ground,
 Like a thousand vanquished men in bloody fight!

25 Clear wells spring not, sweet birds sing not,
 Green plants bring not forth their dye.
 Herd stands weeping, flocks all sleeping,
 Nymphs back peeping fearfully.
 All our pleasure known to us poor swains,
 30 All our merry meetings on the plains,
 All our evening sport from us is fled,
 All our love is lost, for love is dead.
 Farewell, sweet lass, thy like ne'er was
 For a sweet content, the cause of all my moan.
 35 Poor Corydon must live alone,
 Other help for him I see that there is none.

18

Whenas thine eye hath chose the dame
 And stalled the deer that thou shouldst strike,
 Let reason rule things worthy blame
 As well as fancy, partial might.

5 Take counsel of some wiser head,
 Neither too young nor yet unwed,

 And when thou com'st thy tale to tell,
 Smooth not thy tongue with flattery talk
 Lest she some subtle practice smell:
10 A cripple soon can find a halt.
 But plainly say thou lov'st her well,
 And set her person forth to sale,

 And to her will frame all thy ways.
 Spare not to spend, and chiefly there
15 Where thy desert may merit praise
 By ringing in thy lady's ear.
 The strongest castle, tower, and town,
 The golden bullet beats it down.

 Serve always with assured trust,
20 And in thy suit be humble-true;
 Unless thy lady prove unjust,
 Press never thou to choose anew.
 When time shall serve, be thou not slack
 To proffer, though she put thee back.

25 What though her frowning brows be bent,
 Her cloudy looks will calm ere night,
 And then too late she will repent
 That thus dissembled her delight,
 And twice desire, ere it be day,
30 That which with scorn she put away.

 What though she strive to try her strength,
 And ban, and brawl, and say thee nay,
 Her feeble force will yield at length
 When craft hath taught her thus to say:
35 `Had women been so strong as men,
 In faith you had not had it then.'

 The wiles and guiles that women work,
 Dissembled with an outward show,

The tricks and toys that in them lurk
40 The cock that treads them shall not know.
Have you not heard it said full oft
A woman's nay doth stand for nought?

Think women still to strive with men,
To sin and never for to saint.
45 There is no heaven; be holy then
When time with age shall them attain.
Were kisses all the joys in bed,
One woman would another wed.

But soft, enough±±too much, I fear,
50 Lest that my mistress hear my song
She will not stick to round me on th'ear
To teach my tongue to be so long.
Yet will she blush (here be it said)
To hear her secrets so bewrayed.