

- Meryll: *(going up to Phoebe)* Nay, lass, be of good cheer, we may save him yet.
- Phoebe: Oh! See, father—they bring the poor gentleman from the Beauchamp! Oh, father! His hour is not yet come?
- Meryll: No, no,—they lead him to the Cold Harbour Tower to await his end in solitude. But softly—the Lieutenant approaches! He should not see thee weep. *(He takes Phoebe down-stage L., as the Lieutenant enters, R., meeting Fairfax, who enters through archway, L., guarded by four Yeomen.)*
- Lieutenant: Halt! Colonel Fairfax, my old friend, we meet but sadly.
- Fairfax: *(coming to meet him, C.)* Sir, I greet you with all good will; and I thank you for the zealous care with which you have guarded me from the pestilent dangers which threaten human life outside. In this happy little community, Death, when he comes, doth so in punctual and business-like fashion; and, like a courtly gentleman, giveth due notice of his advent, that one may not be taken unawares.
- Lieutenant: Sir, you bear this bravely, as a brave man should.
- Fairfax: Why, sir, it is no light boon to die swiftly and surely at a given hour and in a given fashion! Truth to tell, I would gladly have my life; but if that may not be, I have the next best thing to it, which is death. Believe me, sir, my lot is not so much amiss!
- Phoebe: *(aside to Meryll)* Oh, father, father, I cannot bear it! *(She weeps on his shoulder.)*
- Meryll: My poor lass!
- Fairfax: Nay, pretty one, why weepest thou? Come, be comforted. Such a life as mine is not worth weeping for. *(Sees Meryll.)* Sergeant Meryll, is it not? *(to Lieutenant)* May I greet my old friend? *(Goes to Meryll, who is visibly moved, and shakes his hand.)* Why, man, what's all this? Thou and I have faced the grim old king a dozen times, and never has his majesty come to me in such goodly-fashion. Keep a stout heart, good fellow—we are soldiers, and we know how to die, thou and I. Take my word for it, it is easier to die well than to live well—for, in sooth, I have tried both.

1st Citizen: Well sung and well danced!

2nd Citizen: A kiss for that, pretty maid!

All: Aye, a kiss all 'round. *(They gather around her.)*

Elsie: *(drawing dagger)* Best beware! I am armed!

Point: Back, sirs, back! This is going too far.

2nd Citizen: Thou dost not see the humour of it, eh? Yet there is humour in all things—even in this. *(trying to kiss her)*

Elsie: Help! Help!

(Enter Lieutenant with Guard, R. Crowd falls back.)

Lieutenant: What is this pother?

Elsie: *(C.)* Sir, we sang to these folk, and they would have repaid us with gross courtesy, but for your honour's coming.

Lieutenant: *(to mob)* Away with ye! *(to Guard)* Clear the rabble. *(Guards push crowd off, and go off with them L.U.E.)* Now, my girl, who are you, and what do you here?

Elsie: May it please you, sir, we are two strolling players, Jack Point and I, Elsie Maynard, at your worship's service. We go from fair to fair, singing, and dancing, and playing brief interludes; and so we make a poor living.

Lieutenant: You two, eh? Are ye man and wife?

Point: *(L.C.)* No, sir; for though I am a fool, there is a limit to my folly. Her mother, old Bridget Maynard, travels with us *(for Elsie is a good girl)*, but the old woman is a-bed with fever, and we have come here to pick up some silver to buy an electuary for her.

Lieutenant: Hark ye, girl! Your mother is ill?

Elsie: Sorely ill, sir.

Lieutenant: And needs good food, and many things that thou canst not buy?

Elsie: Alas! sir, it is too true.

Lieutenant: Wouldst thou earn an hundred crowns?

Elsie: An hundred crowns! They might save her life!

Lieutenant: Then listen! A worthy but unhappy gentleman is to be beheaded in an hour on this very spot. For sufficient reasons, he desires to marry before he dies, and he hath asked me to find him a wife. Wilt thou be that wife?

Elsie: The wife of a man I have never seen?

Point: Why, sir, look you, I am concerned in this; for though I am not yet wedded to Elsie Maynard, time works wonders, and there's no knowing what may be in store for us. Have we your worship's word for it that this gentleman will die today?

Lieutenant: Nothing is more certain, I grieve to say.

Point: And that the maiden will be allowed to depart the very instant the ceremony is at an end?

Lieutenant: The very instant. I pledge my honour that it shall be so.

Point: An hundred crowns?

Lieutenant: An hundred crowns!

Point: For my part, I consent. It is for Elsie to speak.

No. 8. How say you, maiden, will you wed

Trio

Elsie, Point, and Lieutenant

Allegro vivace ♩ = 132

(A)

Lieutenant (R.C.)

How say you,

f *p*

maid - en, will you wed A man a - bout to lose his head?

For half an hour You'll be a wife, And then the dower Is

yours for life. A head - less bride-groom why re - fuse?

If truth the po - ets_ tell, Most bride - grooms,

'ere they mar - ry, lose Both head and heart as well!

B Elsie (c.)

A strange pro - po - sal you re - veal, It al-most makes my

Lieutenant: And how came you to leave your last employ?

Point: Why, sir, it was in this wise. My Lord was the Archbishop of Canterbury, and it was considered that one of my jokes was unsuited to His Grace's family circle. In truth, I ventured to ask a poor riddle, sir—Wherein lay the difference between His Grace and poor Jack Point? His Grace was pleased to give it up, sir. And thereupon I told him that whereas His Grace was paid 10,000 a year for being good, poor Jack Point was good—for nothing. 'Twas but a harmless jest, but it offended His Grace, who whipped me and set me in the stocks for a scurril rogue, and so we parted. I had as lief not take post again with the dignified clergy.

Lieutenant: But I trust you are very careful not to give offence. I have daughters.

Point: Sir, my jests are most carefully selected, and anything objectionable is expunged. If your honour pleases, I will try them first on your honour's chaplain.

Lieutenant: Can you give me an example? Say that I had sat me down hurriedly on something sharp?

Point: Sir, I should say that you had sat down on the spur of the moment.

Lieutenant: Humph! I don't think much of that. Is that the best you can do?

Point: It has always been much admired, sir, but we will try again.

Lieutenant: Well, then, I am at dinner, and the joint of meat is but half cooked.

Point: Why then, sir, I should say that what is *underdone* cannot be helped.

Lieutenant: I see. I think that manner of thing would be somewhat irritating.

Point: At first, sir, perhaps; but use is everything, and you would come in time to like it.

Lieutenant: We will suppose that I caught you kissing the kitchen wench under my very nose.

Point: Under *her* very nose, good sir—not under yours! *That* is where I would kiss her. Do you take me? Oh, sir, a pretty wit—a pretty, pretty wit!

Lieutenant: (*rising, and looking off R.*) The maiden comes. Follow me, friend, and we will discuss this matter at length in my library.

Point: I am your worship's servant. That is to say, I trust I soon shall be. But, before proceeding to a more serious topic, can you tell me, sir, why a cook's brain-pan is like an overwound clock?

Lieutenant: A truce to this fooling—follow me. (*Exit, R.*)

Point: Just my luck; my best conundrum wasted! (*He follows the Lieutenant.*)

(*Enter Elsie from Tower, R., led by Wilfred, who removes the handkerchief from her eyes, and then exits, R.*)

a tempo

loyed!

loyed!

loyed! (*Meryll and Wilfred enter, L., and cross to R.*)

a tempo

Chorus Yes, yes, With hap-pi-ness her soul is cloyed, — This is her joy-day un - al -

Yes, yes, With hap-pi-ness her soul is cloyed, This is her joy-day un - al -

a tempo

Moderato marziale ♩ = 126 (*The Yeomen mix with the Women's Chorus.*)

loyed!

loyed!

Moderato marziale ♩ = 126

(*The Lieutenant enters from house, R.*) **(C)** Lieut.

Hold, pret-ty one! I bring to thee news— good or

ill, it is for thee to say. Thy hus-band lives—

and he is free, And comes to claim his bride this ver - y

Un poco meno mosso ed agitato $\text{♩} = 108$

Elsie

day! No! no! re-call those words - it cannot be!

(general consternation)

p *cresc. molto*

(D) *f* **Phoebe & Dame Carruthers**

Oh, day of ter - - - ror! Oh, day of ter - - - ror!

f **Lieut. Meryll & Wilfred**

Come, dry these un-be-com-ing tears, Most joy - ful ti-dings greet thine ears.

f **Kate & 1st & 2nd SOPRANOS**

Oh, day of ter - - - ror! Oh, day of ter - - - ror!

TENORS & BASSES

Oh, day of ter - - - ror! Oh, day of ter - - - ror!

(D) $\text{♩} = 8$