

HENRY VIII¹

PASTIME WITH GOOD COMPANY (The King's Ballad)

Pastime with good company
I love and shall until I die.
Grudge who likes, but none deny;²
So God be pleased, thus live will I.³
 For my pastance:⁴
 Hunt, sing, and dance.

5

¹ Henry's English lyrics of more than one line are here presented, slightly modernized and silently emended. All of Henry VIII's lyrics known to date are best found collected, with others, in the *Henry VIII Manuscript* (London, BL Add. MS 31.922), a document of ca. 1522 reflecting the lyrical tastes of Henry's early court. Fully edited texts of all the lyrics in the MS — those of Henry VIII and others — are available in *The Lyrics of the Henry VIII Manuscript*, ed. R. G. Siemens (currently being prepared for publication by the Renaissance English Text Society); transcriptions of and settings for the lyrics of this manuscript are also available in John Stevens' works, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (London: Methuen and Co., 1961) and *Music at the Court of Henry VIII* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1962).

² This line has been paraphrased as "let grudge whosoever will, none shall refuse (it to me)." Margaret of Austria, regent of the Netherlands, employed a motto containing a similar sentiment, "Groigne qui groigne et vive Burgoigne," as did Anne Boleyn ("Ainsi sera, groigne qui groigne"); a lyric attributed to Wyatt, "If yt ware not," has as the first line of its burden "Grudge on who liste, this ys my lott" (ca. 1530). For a discussion of the relationship among the three, see R. G. Siemens, "Thomas Wyatt, Anne Boleyn, and Henry VIII's Lyric," *Notes and Queries* n.s. 44 (1997): 26–27.

³ In two readings found in London BL Add. MS 5, 665 (141^v–142^r, voices 2 and 3), this phrase reads "this life."

⁴ Pastime.

My heart is set!
 All goodly sport
 For my comfort.
 Who shall me let?⁵ 10

Youth must have some dalliance,
 Of good or ill some pastance.
 Company I think then best —
 All thoughts and fancies to digest.
 For idleness 15
 Is chief mistress
 Of vices all.
 Then who can say
 But mirth and play
 Is best of all? 20

Company with honesty
 Is virtue — vices to flee.
 Company is good and ill,
 But every man has his free will.
 The best ensue. 25
 The worst eschew.
 My mind shall be.
 Virtue to use.
 Vice to refuse.
 Thus shall I use me! 30

ALAS, WHAT SHALL I DO FOR LOVE?

Alas, what shall I do for love?
 For love, alas, what shall I do,
 Since now so kind
 I do you find,
 To keep you me unto? 5
 Alas!

⁵ Hinder, prevent.

OH, MY HEART

Oh, my heart and, oh, my heart,
 My heart it is so sore,
 Since I must from my love depart,
 And know no cause wherefore.

THE TIME OF YOUTH IS TO BE SPENT

The time of youth is to be spent,
 But vice in it should be forfeit.⁶
 Pastimes there be I note truly
 Which one may use and vice deny.
 And they be⁷ pleasant to God and man: 5
 Those should we covet⁸ when we can —
 As feats of arms, and such other
 Whereby activeness one may utter.⁹
 Comparisons in them may lawfully be set,
 For, thereby, courage¹⁰ is surely out fet.¹¹ 10
 Virtue it is, then, youth for to spend
 In good disports which it does fend.¹²

⁶ Forbidden.

⁷ If they be.

⁸ Desire, be inclined or drawn to.

⁹ Vanquish, conquer, or overcome.

¹⁰ Spirit, vitality, vigour, lustiness, and so forth. It is used in two different, though related, senses in the lyrics of the Henry VIII MS: one — relating to confidence, boldness, bravery, and valour — is the dominant sense here; another — relating to sexual vigour and inclination, the desire to love, the amorous spirit — is found more prominently in Henry's "Though That Men Do Call it Dotage," where the two are set in close relation, via the practices of courtly love (ll. 2, 13).

¹¹ Fetched out of it, gained.

¹² Support.

ALAC! ALAC! WHAT SHALL I DO?¹³

(Henry VIII)

Alac! Alac! What shall I do?
 For care is cast in to my heart
 And true love locked thereto.

HEY NONNY NONNY, NONNY NONNY NO!

(Unattributed)

Hey nonny nonny, nonny nonny no!
 Hey nonny nonny, nonny nonny no!

This other day

I heard a maid
 Right piteously complain.

5

She said always,
 Without denay,¹⁴
 Her heart was full of pain.

She said, alas,
 Without trespass,
 Her dear heart was untrue.

10

In every place,
 I know he has
 Forsaken me for a new.

Since he, untrue,
 Has chosen a new
 And thinks with her to rest

15

¹³ Ringler suggests that the text of "Alac! Alac!" is probably incomplete and, as Stevens has noted, the peculiar layout in the manuscript suggests that this song and that which follows it in the manuscript, the unattributed "Hey Nonny Nonny, Nonny Nonny No!" (36), are quite closely related. The original numbering of "Hey Nonny" in the manuscript corresponds with the number given to "Alac! Alac!" in the table of contents (2^y). In consideration of this, and the fact that the matter of each song is complementary, the songs are here presented together. See William A. Ringler Jr., *Bibliography and Index of English Verse in Manuscript 1501-1558* (London: Mansell, 1992) 51.

¹⁴ Denying.

- And will not rue,
And I so true:
Wherefore, my heart will burst. 20
- And now I may,
In no manner away,
Obtain that I do sue.
So ever and aye
Without denay, 25
My own sweet heart, adieu.
- Adieu, darling.
Adieu, sweeting.
Adieu, all my welfare. 30
Adieu, all things
To good pertaining.
Christ keep you from care.
- Adieu, full sweet.
Adieu, right mate¹⁵
To be a lady's peer. 35
With tears wet,
And eyes replete,¹⁶
She said, adieu, my dear.
- Adieu, farewell.
Adieu, la belle. 40
Adieu, both friend and foe.
I cannot tell
Where I shall dwell,
My heart it greaves me so.
- She had not said 45
But, at abraid,¹⁷
Her dear heart was full near

¹⁵ Suitable companion.

¹⁶ Full of tears.

¹⁷ Suddenly, unaware, as if awakened.

And said good maid,
 Be not dismayed,
 My love, my darling dear. 50

In arms he hent¹⁸
 That lady gent
 In voiding¹⁹ care and moan.
 The day they spent
 To their intent 55
 In wilderness,²⁰ alone.

GREEN GROWS THE HOLLY

Green grows the holly.
 So does the ivy.
 Though winter's blasts blow ever so high,
 Green grows the holly.

As the holly grows green 5
 And never changes hue,
 So I am — ever have been —
 unto my lady true.

Ever the holly grows green
 With ivy all alone, 10
 When flowers cannot be seen
 And greenwood leaves be gone.

Now unto my lady
 Promise to her I make:
 From all other, only 15
 to her, I me betake.²¹

¹⁸ Held, took hold of.

¹⁹ Removing, eliminating.

²⁰ The countryside, but the term also has threatening connotations.

²¹ Entrust, commit, give in charge.

Adieu, my own lady.

Adieu, my special

Who has my heart truly,

Be sure, and ever shall.

20

WHOSO THAT WILL ALL FEATS OBTAIN

Whoso that will all feats obtain²²

In love he must be without disdain.

For love enforces all noble kind,²³

And disdain discourages all gentle²⁴ mind.

Wherefore, to love and be not loved

5

Is worse than death? Let it be proved!

Love encourages, and makes one bold;

Disdain abates and makes him cold.

Love is given to God and man —

To woman also, I think the same.

10

But disdain is vice, and should be refused,

Yet nevertheless it is too much used.

Great pity it were, love for to compel²⁵

With disdain, both false and subtle.

IF LOVE NOW REIGNED AS IT HAS BEEN

If love now reigned as it has been

And were rewarded as it has seen,²⁶

Noble men then would surely ensearch²⁷

All ways whereby they might it reach.

²² Whosoever will show himself fully valorous.

²³ Strengthens all those of a noble nature, as well as all those natures (i.e., people) that are noble; *kind*: Birth, origin, descent, but especially the character or quality derived from birth or native constitution.

²⁴ Of noble birth, blood, or family; also courteous, polite, but with a sense of belonging to the aristocracy.

²⁵ Be constrained.

²⁶ And were rewarded as it had been since; alternatively, and were rewarded as it is evident it should be.

²⁷ Search it out.

But envy reigns with such disdain 5
 And causes lovers outwardly to refrain,
 Which puts them to more and more
 Inwardly, most grievous and sore:
 The fault in whom I cannot set,
 But let them tell who love does get. 10
 To lovers I put now sure this case:
 Which of their loves does get them grace?²⁸
 And unto them which do it know
 Better than do I, I think it so.

WHERE TO SHOULD I EXPRESS

Whereto should I express
 My inward heaviness?
 No mirth can make me fain,²⁹
 'Till that we meet again.

Do way, dear heart, not so. 5
 Let no thought you dismay.
 Though you now part me from,
 We shall meet when we may.

When I remember me
 Of your most gentle mind, 10
 It may in no way agree
 That I should be unkind.

The daisy delectable,
 The violet waning and blue,
 You are not variable — 15
 I love you and no more.

²⁸ One answer to this riddle, if we acknowledge the very real world of the court in the courtly love tradition, is "the king."

²⁹ Glad, rejoiced, well-pleased, but there is also the common pun on "feign," meaning pretend. "Feign" is also a common verb for describing the act of writing fictions.

I make you fast and sure;
 It is to me great pain
 Thus long to endure
 'Till that we meet again. 20

THOUGH THAT MEN DO CALL IT DOTAGE

Though that men do call it dotage,
 Who loves not wants courage.³⁰
 And whosoever may love get
 From Venus surely he must it fetch,³¹ 5
 Or else from her which is her heir,
 And she to him must seem most fair.
 When eye and mind do both agree
 There is no help! — there must it be!
 The eye does look and represent,
 But mind affirms with full consent. 10
 Thus am I fixed without grudge:
 My eye with heart does me so judge.
 Love maintains all noble courage;
 Who love disdains is all of the village.³²
 Such lovers, though they take pain, 15
 It were pity they should obtain.
 For often times where they do sue
 They hinder lovers that would be true.
 For whoso loves should love but one.
 Change whoso will, I will be none. 20

³⁰ Sexual vigor and inclination, the desire to love, the amorous spirit.

³¹ From lines 4–10, Henry puts forward a neo-platonic theory of love's reception by the lover akin to that outlined by Cardinal Pietro Bembo in the fourth book of Baldasare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (trans. Charles Singleton [New York: Anchor, 1959], 337 ff.). According to Cardinal Bembo, love is received from Venus, or the woman who is heir to Venus, and the object of love is perceived to be fair by the lover both visually and mentally/emotionally — first appreciated by the eye, and then by the mind and heart.

³² Villainage, peasantry, not of courtly circles.

DEPARTURE IS MY CHIEF PAIN

Departure is my chief pain.
I trust right well to return again.

WITHOUT DISCORD

Without discord, And both accord, Now let us be. Both hearts alone To set in one,	5
Best seems me. For when one soul Is in the dole Of love's pain, Then help must have Himself to save And love to obtain.	10
Wherefore now we That lovers be Let us now pray: Once love sure For to procure Without deny. ³³ Where love so sues There no heart rues, But condescends. If contrary, What remedy? God it amend. ³⁴	15 20

³³ Deny.

³⁴ MS "amen"; amend, but also in the sense of "answer our prayer"; cf., in this context of prayer.

THOUGH SOME SAY THAT YOUTH RULES ME

Though some say that youth rules me,
 I trust in age to tarry.
 God and my right,³⁵ and my duty,
 From them shall I never vary,
 Though some say that youth rules me. 5

I pray you all that aged be
 How well did you your youth carry?
 I think some worse of each degree.
 Therein a wager lay dare I,
 Though some say that youth rules me. 10

Pastimes of youth some time among —³⁶
 None can say but necessary.
 I hurt no man, I do no wrong,
 I love true where I did marry,
 Though some say that youth rules me. 15

Then soon discuss that hence we must.³⁷
 Pray we to God and Saint Mary
 That all amend, and here an end.
 Thus says the king, the eighth Harry,
 Though some say that youth rules me. 20

WHOSO THAT WILL FOR GRACE SUE

Whoso that will for grace sue,
 His intent must needs be true,
 And love her in heart and deed,
 Else it were pity that he should speed.³⁸
 Many one says that love is ill,
 But those be they which know no skill. 5

³⁵ Henry's royal motto was "Dieu et mon droit."

³⁶ I.e., "to be sometimes engaged in pastimes of youth."

³⁷ Drive away, dispel, disperse, scatter; *that hence*: That which.

³⁸ Succeed.

Or else, because they may not obtain,
 They would that others should it disdain.
 But love is a thing given by God:
 In that, therefore, can be none odd, 10
 But perfect in deed, and between two.
 Wherefore, then, should we it eschew?

LUSTY YOUTH SHOULD US ENSUE

Lusty Youth should us ensue.³⁹
 His merry heart shall sure all rue.
 For whatsoever they do him tell
 It is not for him, we know it well.

For they would have him his liberty refrain, 5
 And all merry company for to disdain.
 But I will not do whatsoever they say,
 But follow his mind in all that we may.

How should Youth himself best use?
 But all disdainers for to refuse. 10
 Youth has as chief assurance
 Honest mirth with virtue's pastance.⁴⁰

For in them⁴¹ consists great honour,
 Though that disdainers would therein put error.
 For they do sue to get them grace, 15
 All only riches to purchase.

With good order, counsel, and equity,
 Good Lord grant us our mansion to be.
 For without their good guidance
 Youth should fall in great mischance. 20

³⁹ Imitate.

⁴⁰ Likely the pastimes noted in Henry's "The Time of Youth Is to Be Spent," the "feats of arms" (l. 7) and other "good disports" (l. 12); see also l. 24.

⁴¹ Honest mirth, etc.

For Youth is frail and prompt to do
As well vices as virtues to ensue.
Wherefore by these he must be guided,
And virtue's pastance must therein be used.

Now unto God this prayer we make,
That this rude play may well betake
And that we may our faults amend
And bliss obtain at our last end. Amen.

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