Margaret Cavendish, â??The Pastime and Recreation of the Queen of Fairies in Fairy-Land, the Center of the Earthâ?•

Description

MARGARET CAVENDISH

â??*The* Pastime *and* Recreation *of the* Queen *of* Fairies *in* Fairy- Land, *the* Center *of the* Earthâ?•

Queen *Mab*, and all her Company,
Dance on a pleasant *Mole- hill* high,
To small Straw-Pipes, wherein great Pleasure
They take, and keep just Time and Measure.
All Hand in Hand; around, around,
They Dance upon this *Fairy-ground.*
And when she leaves her Dancing- Ball,
She doth for her Attendants call,
To wait upon Her to a Bower,
Where she doth sit under a Flower,
To shade her from the Moon-shine bright,
Where *Gnats* do sing for her Delight;
Some High, some Low, some Middle strain,
Making a Consort very plain:
The whilst the *Batt* doth flye about,
To keep in order all the Rout;
And with her Wings doth soundly pay
Those that make Noise, and not Obey.
A Dewy waving Leafâ??s made fit
For the *Queenâ??s Bathe*, where she doth sit,
And her white Limbs in Beauty shew,
Like a new-fallen Flake of Snow.
Her Maids do put her Garments on,
Made of the pure Light from the Sun;
Which do so many Colours take,
As various Objects Shadows make.
Then to her Dinner she goes straight,
Where all *Fairies* in order wait.
A Cover, of a *Cob-web* made,
Is there upon a *Mushroom* laid.
Her Stool is of a *Thistle*-down;
And for her Cup, an *Acornâ??s* Crown:
Which of strong *Nectar*, full is fillâ??d,
That from sweet Flowers is distillâ??d.
Flyes of all sorts, both Fat and Good,
As *Quails*, *Snipes*, *Patridg*, are her Food.

Pheasants, *Larks*, *Cocks*, and any Kind,
Both Wild and Tame, you there may find:
And *Amelets* made of *Ants* Eggs new;
Of these high Meats she eats but few.
The *Dormouse* yeelds her Milk good store,
For Butter, Cheese, and many more.
This Milk makes many a fine Knack,
When they fresh *Ants* Eggs therein crack.
Pudding, and Custard, and Seed-Cake,
Her well- skillâ??d Cook knows how to make.
To sweeten them, the *Bee* doth bring
Pure Honey, gatherâ??d by her Sting.
But for her Guard, serve grosser Meat;
Of Stall-fed *Dormice* they do eat.
When Dinâ??d, she goes to take the Air
In Coach, which is a Nut-shell fair:
The Liningâ??s Soft and Rich within,
Made of a glistering *Adderâ??s* Skin;
And there six *Crickets* draw her fast,
When she a Journey takes in hast:
Or else two serve to pace a Round,
And trample on the *Fairy-Ground*,
In *Hawks*, sometimes, she takes delight;
Which *Hornets* are, most swift in flight:
Whose Horns, instead of Talons, will
A *Flye*, as *Hawks* a *Patridg*, kill.
But if she will a Hunting go,
Then she the *Lizzard*, makes the *Doe*;
Which is so swift and fleet in Chase,
As her slow Coach cannot keep pace.
Then on a *Grashopper* sheâ??ll ride,
And gallop in the Forest wide.
Her Bow is of a *Willow* Branch,
To shoot the *Lizzard* on the Haunch.
Her Arrow sharp, much like a Blade,
Of a *Rosemary* Leaf is made.
Then home sheâ??s called by the *Cock*,
Who gives her warning whatâ??s the Clock.
And when the Moon doth hide her Head,
Their Day is done, she goes to bed.
Meteors do serve, when they are bright,
As *Torches* do, to give her light.
Glow-worms, for *Candles*, lighted up,
Stand on her Tablâ??, while she doth Sup:
And in her Chamber they are placâ??d,
Not fearing how the Tallow wast.
But *Women*, that Inconstant Kind,
Can neâ??re fix in one place their Mind:

For she, impatient of long stay, 85
Drives to the Upper-Earth away.

NOTES:

1 *Queen Mab* Queen of the Fairies in English folklore (*Britannica*).

9 *Bower* â??A pleasant shady place under trees or climbing plants in a garden or woodâ?• (*OED*).

16 *Rout* â??a disorderly retreat of defeated troopsâ?• (*OED*).

31 *Thistle-down* â??The light parts of thistle flowers that contain the seeds and that blow away in the windâ?• (*Britannica*).

54 *Adder* â??A small venomous Eurasian snakeâ?• (*OED*).

62 *Patridg* Variant of Partridge; â??a short-tailed game bird with mainly brown plumage, native to Eurasiaâ?• (*OED*).

70 *Haunch* â??A buttock and thigh considered together, in a human or animalâ?• (*OED*).

80 *Sup* Eat.

82 *Tallow* â??A substance consisting of a somewhat hard animal fat; used for making candlesâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: *Poems. Or, Several Fancies in Verse*. The Third Edition (London, 1668), pp. 253-256 [Google Books]

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