

Margaret Cavendish, “The Pastime and Recreation of the Queen of Fairies in Fairy-Land, the Center of the Earth”

**Description**

MARGARET CAVENDISH

**“The Pastime and Recreation of the Queen of Fairies in Fairy- Land, the Center of the Earth”**

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, 5  
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, 10  
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, 15  
To keep in order all the Rout;  
And with her Wings doth soundly pay  
Those that make Noise, and not Obey.  
A Dewy waving Leaf’s made fit  
For the *Queen’s Bathe*, where she doth sit, 20  
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, 25  
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. 30  
Her Stool is of a *Thistle-down*;  
And for her Cup, an *Acorn’s* Crown:  
Which of strong *Nectar*, full is fill’d,  
That from sweet Flowers is distill’d.  
*Flyes* of all sorts, both Fat and Good, 35  
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. 40  
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, 45  
Her well- skill'd Cook knows how to make.  
To sweeten them, the *Bee* doth bring  
Pure Honey, gather'd by her Sting.  
But for her Guard, serve grosser Meat;  
Of Stall-fed *Dormice* they do eat. 50  
When Din'd, she goes to take the Air  
In Coach, which is a Nut-shell fair:  
The Lining's Soft and Rich within,  
Made of a glistering *Adder's* Skin;  
And there six *Crickets* draw her fast, 55  
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: 60  
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, 65  
As her slow Coach cannot keep pace.  
Then on a *Grashopper* she'll ride,  
And gallop in the Forest wide.  
Her Bow is of a *Willow* Branch,  
To shoot the *Lizzard* on the Haunch. 70  
Her Arrow sharp, much like a Blade,  
Of a *Rosemary* Leaf is made.  
Then home she's called by the *Cock*,  
Who gives her warning what's the Clock.  
And when the Moon doth hide her Head, 75  
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 Tabl', while she doth Sup: 80  
And in her Chamber they are plac'd,  
Not fearing how the Tallow wast.

But *Women*, that Inconstant Kind,  
Can ne'er fix in one place their Mind:  
For she, impatient of long stay,  
Drives to the Upper-Earth away.

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**NOTES:**

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

**9** *Bower* “A pleasant shady place under trees or climbing plants in a garden or wood” (*OED*).

**16** *Rout* “a disorderly retreat of defeated troops” (*OED*).

**31** *Thistle-down* “The light parts of thistle flowers that contain the seeds and that blow away in the wind” (*Britannica*).

**54** *Adder* “A small venomous Eurasian snake” (*OED*).

**62** *Patridg* Variant of Partridge; “a short-tailed game bird with mainly brown plumage, native to Eurasia” (*OED*).

**70** *Haunch* “A buttock and thigh considered together, in a human or animal” (*OED*).

**80** *Sup* Eat.

**82** *Tallow* “A substance consisting of a somewhat hard animal fat; used for making candles” (*OED*).

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

*Edited by Kayla Tinkelenberg*