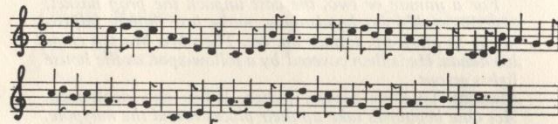


ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

THE VILLAGE GREEN AT POLSTEAD, SUFFOLK, IN THE 1820'S.
Late Afternoon. Stage Left is the exterior of Thomas Marten's cottage. To the right of the cottage door is a bench on which are seated MR. AND MRS. MARTEN. There is a tree right centre with a seat round it. Centre stage is a maypole around which are dancing MARIA MARTEN, ANNE MARTEN, TIM BOBBIN, MEG BOBBIN AND JOHNNY BADGER.

MAYPOLE SONG
(ALL)



The boys and girls of Polstead are as happy as can be.
The boys and girls of Polstead are all dancing merrily.
Around and round the maypole,
They dance their cares away.
The boys and girls of Polstead are all happy, blithe and gay.

REPEAT

At the end of the dance, the young people break away from the maypole, laughing.

Johnny (taking MARIA'S hand and leading her right): Come along, Maria, I've had enough dancing for one day. Let me sit down here for a minute or two. I've scarce any breath left in my body. (Pulls her to seat right where they sit).

Tim (putting one arm around ANNE and the other around MEG left of maypole. ANNE on his right): Dang me, I never felt as happy since the day I was breeched.

Anne (breaking away right): Shut thee mouth, fool!

Tim: I ain't no fool, I'll have 'ee know and that be the truth.

Anne: What say 'ee, Maria—don't 'ee think Tim Bobbin the greatest fool that ever drew breath?

Maria (kindly): Oh, leave him be, Anne. You are for ever teasing the poor boy. (Rising). Come now, Johnny—time for the next dance. Meg, Anne, Tim—are you ready?

Meg (running to left of maypole): Aye, that I be.

Anne (crossing MEG, to pull TIM with her to below maypole): And we—ain't we Tim?

Maria (taking JOHNNY'S hand): Come on, Johnny, the others are waiting.

Johnny: Let's rest awhile Maria. It's pleasant here under the cool shade of this tree.

Maria: Plenty of time for rest later on, Johnny.

Meg: Be 'ee coming, Johnny Badger?

Maria: He's coming (pulling him up from the seat) and when we've had but one more dance, then can he rest to his heart's content.

Johnny: Oh, very well—but once more then (Goes to right of maypole with MARIA and they take up their positions. They start to dance).

Music Cue 2—(Maypole Song Reprise)

Tim (calling out at top of his voice): Oh! Oh! Oh!

The dance ends in confusion.

Meg: What is it?

Anne: What be the matter?

Tim (to D.S.C. holding his stomach and groaning loudly): Oh, dear, Oh Lordy me!

The others crowd round him. MEG and ANNE on his left, MARIA and JOHNNY on his right.

Maria: Where's the pain, Tim?

Tim: Here in my stomach. It's rumbling like an old hurdy-gurdy. Oh! Oh!

Anne: Shall I run fetch the doctor, Tim?

Tim (straightening up): It ain't a doctor I be needing.

Meg: What be it then—an undertaker?

Tim: Food! Lots of lovely food. I be that hungry I reckons as how I could eat a whole horse all by myself.

Anne: Horse! Why you old fraud! You be a proper donkey.

Tim: Does call I a donkey?

Anne (running away left): Aye, that I do—a regular jackass.

Tim (to MR. MARTEN): I say, Mr. Marten, is there anything allowed to eat?

Marten (rising and throwing wide his arms in general welcome): Come in, young people, come in and enjoy yourselves with jolly old English cheer—roast beef and pudding and plenty of beer.