

The Death of Queen Jane

Queen Jane O! Queen Jane O! Wh-at a la-dy w-a-s she, a-n-d
she was i - n la-bour s-i-x weeks and - a - day, and a day

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody is simple and folk-like. The first staff contains the lyrics 'Queen Jane O! Queen Jane O! Wh-at a la-dy w-a-s she, a-n-d'. The second staff contains 'she was i - n la-bour s-i-x weeks and - a - day, and a day'. There are three triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a bracket) in the melody: one over the first 'O', one over 'she, a-n-d', and one over 'and a day'.

Queen Jane O! Queen Jane O! what a lady was she
And she was in labour six weeks and a day
Queen Jane was in labour for six weeks and more
Till the women grew weary and fain would give o'er
"O women! O women! good wives if ye be
Go send for King Henry and bring him to me"

King Henry was sent for, and to her he came
"Dear lady! Fair lady! your eyes look dim"
King Henry came to her he came in all speed
In a gown of red velvet from the heel to the head
"King Henry! King Henry! if kind you will be
Send for a good doctor and let him come to me"

The doctor was sent for he came with all speed
In a gown of black velvet from the heel to the head
The doctor was sent for and to her he came
"Dear lady! Fair lady! your labour's vain"
Dear Doctor! Dear Doctor! will you do this for me
O open up my right side and save my baby"

Then out spoke King Henry "That never can be
I'd rather lose the branches than the top of the tree"
The doctor gave a caudle - the death sleep slept she
Then her right side was opened and the babe was set free
The babe it was christened and put out and nursed
But the royal Queen Jane she lay cold in the dust

Taken down from Sam Fone 28th March 1893. He said that there were more verses but he could not remember them. SBG makes reference to Bell p113.

On a slip of paper inserted into this page is a note by Baring-Gould (probably a draft for a publication). "A story circulated through England and was credited by Sir John Hayward, that the physicians asked King Henry when the time approached for the birth of a child by Queen Jane the one or the other of the two lives must be sacrificed; whereupon the King said "Save the child, as for a wife I can get nay other that I like". The story, however is not true. Although Queen Jane did die a few days after the birth of Edward on October 12th, that is to say October 24th, this was not due to any operation. However the fancy that there was and that the queen's life was sacrificed was very prevalent and forms the subject of a ballad sung to this day among the peasantry."

