



Mother Watkins Ale

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1. There was a maid this other day
 And she must needs go forth to play.
 And as she walked, she sighed and said
 "I am afraid to die a maid."
 When that he heard a lad, what talk this maiden had,
 Where of he was full glad and did not spare
 To say "Fair maid, I pray, wither go to today?"
 "Good sir," then did she say, "What do you care?"
 "For I will, without fail,
 Maiden give to you Watkins ale."
 "Watkins ale, sir," quoth she,
 What is that, I pray you tell me?"

2. 'Tis sweeter far than sugar fine
 And pleasanter than Muscadine.
 And if you please fair maid to stay
 A little while to sport and play
 I will give you the same, Watkins ale called by name,
 Or else I were to blame, in truth fair maid.
 "Good sir," quoth she again, "If you will take the pain,
 I shall it not refrain, nor be dismayed."
 He took this maiden then aside
 And led her where she was not spied
 And told her many a pretty tale,
 And gave her well of Watkins ale.

3. When he had done to her his will,
 They talked but what I shall not skill
 At last she said, "Spare your tale,
 Give me some more of Watkins ale
 Or else I will not stay, for I must needs away,
 My mother bade me play, the time is past.
 Therefore, good sir," quoth she, "if you have done with
 me."
 "Nay soft, fair maid," quoth he again at last.
 Let us talk a little while."
 With that the maiden began to smile.
 And said, "Good sir, full well I know,
 Your ale I see runs very low."

4. This young man then, begin so blamed,
 Did blush as one being ashamed.
 He took her by the middle small,
 And gave her more of Watkins ale
 And said, "Fair maid I pray, when you go forth to play,
 Remember what I say, walk not alone."
 "Nay soft," said she again. "I thank you for your pain,
 For fear of further stain, I must be gone."
 "Farewell maiden," then quoth he;
 "Adieu good sir," again quoth she
 Thus they parted then at last,
 Till thrice three months were gone and passed.

5. This maiden then fell very sick.
 Her maidenhead began to kick.
 Her colour waxed wan and pale,
 With taking much of Watkins ale.
 I wish all maidens coy, that hear this pretty toy,
 Wherein most women's joy, how they do sport.
 For surely Watkins ale, and if it be not stale,
 Will bring them to some bale, as hath report.
 New ale will make their bellies bowne,
 As trial by this same has shown.
 This proverb hath been taught in schools,
 It is no jesting with edged tools.

6. Good maids and wives, I pardon crave,
 And lack not that which you would have.
 To blush it is a woman's grace,
 And well becometh a maiden's face.
 For women will refuse the thing that they would choose,
 So men should them excuse of thinking ill.
 Cat will after kind, all winkers are not blind,
 You maidens know my mind, say what you will.
 When you drink ale, beware the toast,
 For therein lies the danger most.
 If any here offended be,
 Then blame the author, blame not me.

Tune is from Queen Elizabeth's Virginal Book. Words earlier than 1592.