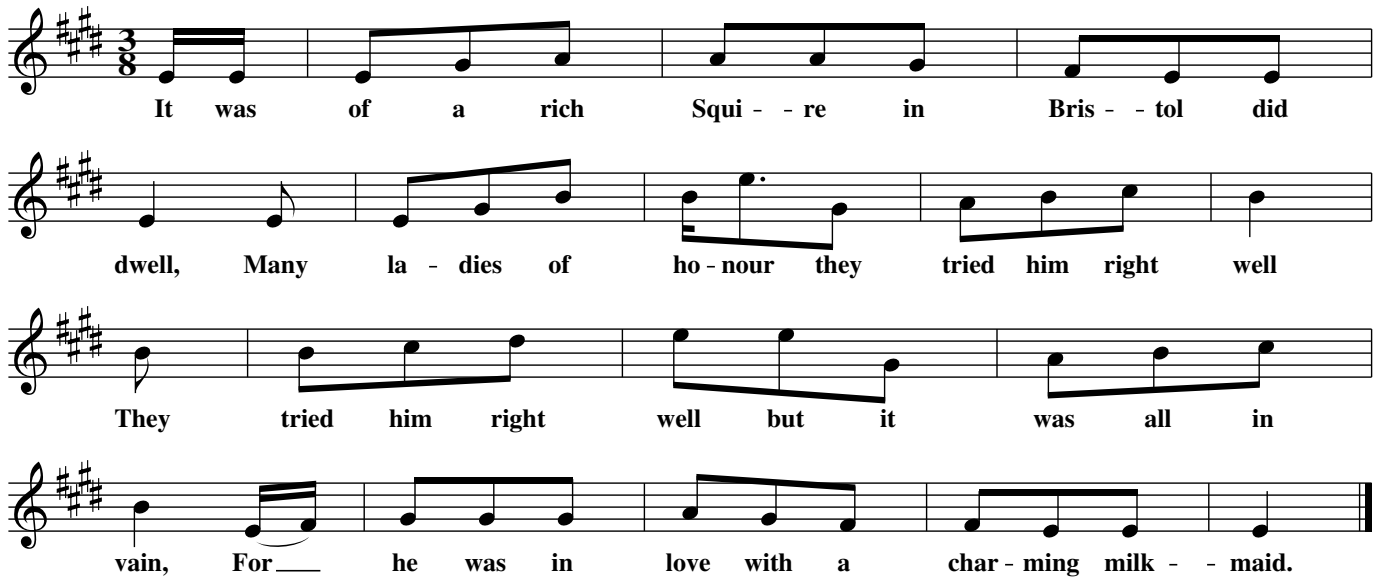


The Rich Bristol Squire



It was of a rich Squire in Bristol did
dwell, Many ladies of honour they tried him right well
They tried him right well but it was all in
vain, For he was in love with a charming milkmaid.

2. 'Does you want any milk?' pretty Betsey she says,
'Oh yes,' says the Squire, 'Step in, pretty maid.
But it's your fair body that I do adore
Was there ever a lover so wounded before?'
3. 'Oh hold your tongue, Squire, and let me go free,
And don't make your games at my poverty.
There are ladies of honour more fitting for you
Than me, a poor milkmaid bred up to my cow.'
4. Then a ring from his finger he instantly drew
And right in the middle he broke it in two
And half he gave to her as I have been told
They both went a-walking to Blackberry Fold.
5. 'Oh now pretty Betsey, let me have my will
And a constantly Squire I'll prove to you still,
And if you deny me in this open field
Then I will force you and make you to yield.'
6. With hugging and struggling poor Betsey got free
And with her own weapons she pierced his body
She pierced his body till the blood it run down
Then home to her master like lightning she flew.
7. She went home to her master with tears in her eyes,
'I've wounded the Squire till I'm afraid that he'll die.
But now my fair body begins to grow bold
And I left him a-bleeding in Blackberry Fold.'

8. Then the coach it was sent for, the Squire fetched home,
Likewise a doctor to heal up his wounds.
Pretty Betsy was sent for, this gay lady
That had wounded the Squire bought his heart in a [snare?]

9. And the parson was sent for this couple to wed
And now she enjoys her sweet marriage bed.
It's better to be honest if you are ever so poor
For he made her his lady instead of his whore.*

*Eliza Wedgwood had noted this line as "For he made her his wife for evermore."

Source: Mary Anne Roberts, Winchcombe workhouse. Collected by Eliza Wedgwood
and Percy Grainger 24th April 1908

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