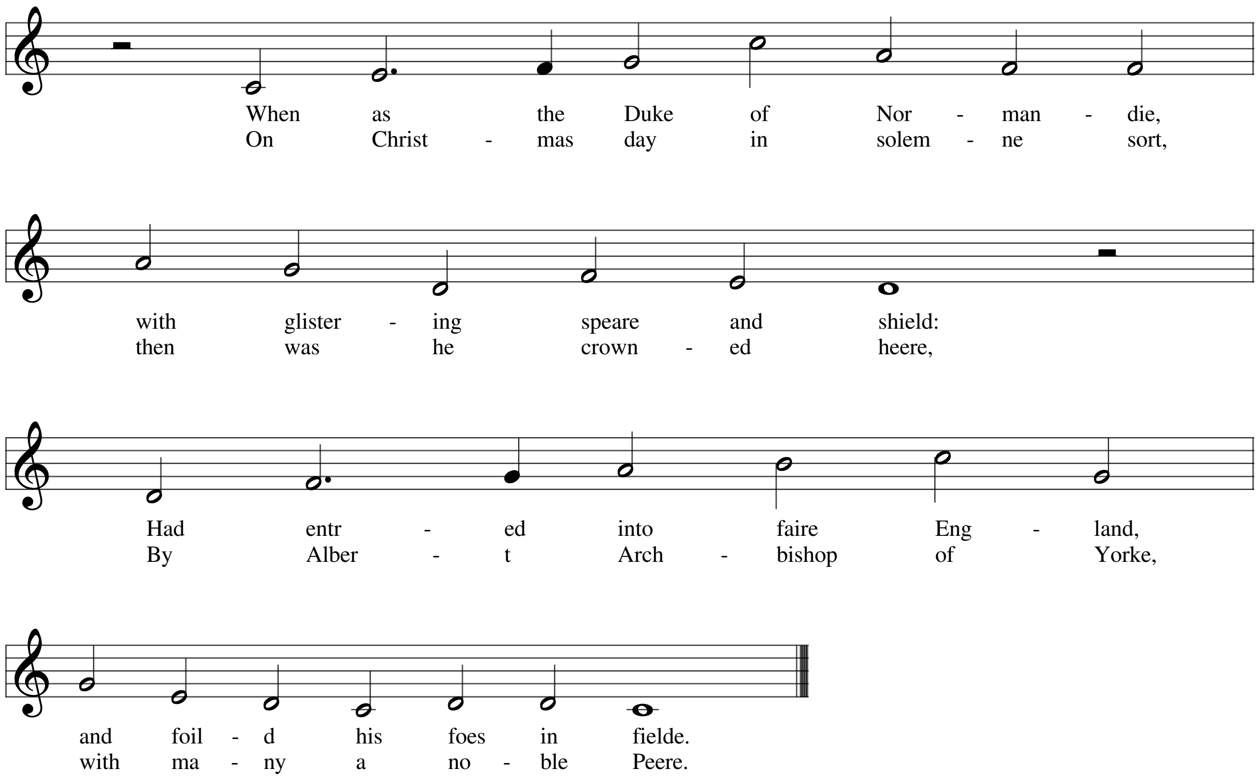
Cant 1
The Kentishmen with long tayles

The valiant courage and policie of the Kentishmen with long tayles, whereby they kept their ancient Lawes and Customes, which _William_ the Conquerer sought to take from them.

Or to the tune of Rogero.



When as the Duke of *Normandie*,
with glistering speare and shield:
Had entred into faire *England*,
and foild his foes in fielde.
On Christmas day in solemne sort,
then was he crowned heere,
By *Albert* Archbishop of *Yorke*,
with many a noble Peere.

Which being done he changed quite,
the customes of this land:
And punisht such as daily sought,
this statutes to withstand.
And many Citties he subdude,
faire *London* with the rest:
But *Kent* did still withstand his force,
which did his lawes detest.

To *Douer* then he tooke his way,
the Castle downe to fling:
Which *Aruiragus* builded there,
the noble Brutaine king:
Which when the braue Arch-Bishop bolde,
of *Canterburie* knew:
The Abbot of S. *Austines* eke,
with all their gallant crue.

They set themselues in armour bright
these mischiefes to preuent:
With all the yeomen braue and bold,
that wer in fruitfull Kent.
At Canterburie did they meete,
vpon a certaine day:
With sword and speare with bill and bowe,
and stopt the conquerers way.

Let vs not liue like bondmen poore,
to Frenchmen in their pride
But keepe our ancient liberties,
what chance so ear betide
And rather die in bloudie field
in manlike courage prest:
Then to endure the seruile yoake,
which we so much detest.

Thus did the Kentish Commons crie,
vnto their leaders still:
And so march foorth in warlike sort,
and stand at *Swanscombe* hill.
Where in the woods they hid themselues,
vnder the shadie greene,
Thereby to get them vantage good,
of all their foes vnseene.

And for the Conquerours comming there,
they priuily laid waite:
And thereby suddainely appald,
his loftie high conceipt.
For when they spied his approch,
in place as they did stand:
Then marched they to hem him in,
each on a bow in hand.

So that vnto the conquerers sight,
amazed as he stood
They seemd to be a walking groue,
or els a mouing wood.
The shape of men he could not see,
the bowes did hide them so:
And now his hart with feare did quake,
to see a forrest goe.

Before, behind, and on each side,
as he did cast his eye:
He spide these woods with sober pace,
approch to him full nye.
But when the kentishmen had thus,
inclos'd the conquerer round:
Most suddenly they drew their swords,
and threw the bowes to ground.

There banners they displaid in sight,
there Trumpets sound a charge.
There ratling Drummes strickes vp a larme,
there troopes stretch out at large.
The Conquerour with all his traine
were hereat sore agast:
And most in perill when he thought,
all perill had beene past.

Vnto the kentish men he sent,
the cause to vnderstand:
For what intent and for what cause,
they tooke this warre in hand.
To whom they made this short replye,
for libertie we fight:
And to enioy S. *Edwards* lawes,
the which we hold our right.

Then said the dreadfull conquerer,
you shall haue what you will:
Your ancient customes and your lawes,
so that you will be still:
And each thing els that you will craue,
with reason at my hand,
So you will but acknowledge me,
chiefe King of faire *England*.

The kentishmen agreed here on,
and laid their armes aside:
And by this meanes King *Edwards* lawes,
in Kent do still abide,
And in no place in *England* else,
those customes do remaine:
Which they by manly pollicie,
did of Duke *William* gaine.