

Gilbert and Sullivan Archive



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No. 16: SONG (Don Alhambra) "There lived a King"



MIDI File [24KB, 3' 13 "]



Marco (Charles Goulding), Don Alhambra (Leo Sheffield) & Giuseppe (Geoffrey Stroud) 1926

Don Alhambra.

There lived a King, as I've been told,
In the wonder-working days of old,
When hearts were twice as good as gold,
And twenty times as mellow.
Good-temper triumphed in his face,
And in his heart he found a place
For all the erring human race
And every wretched fellow.
When he had Rhenish wine to drink
It made him very sad to think
That some, at junket or at jink,
Must be content with toddy.

Marco & Giuseppe.

With toddy, must be content with toddy.

Don Alhambra.

He wished all men as rich as he
(And he was rich as rich could be),
So to the top of every tree
Promoted everybody.

Marco & Giuseppe.

Now, that's the kind of King for me.
He wished all men as rich as he,
So to the top of every tree
Promoted everybody!

Don Alhambra.

Lord Chancellors were cheap as sprats,
And Bishops in their shovel hats
Were plentiful as tabby cats--
In point of fact, too many.
Ambassadors cropped up like hay,
Prime Ministers and such as they
Grew like asparagus in May,
And Dukes were three a penny.
On every side Field-Marsals gleamed,
Small beer were Lords-Lieutenant deemed,

With Admirals the ocean teemed
All round his wide dominions.

Marco & Giuseppe.

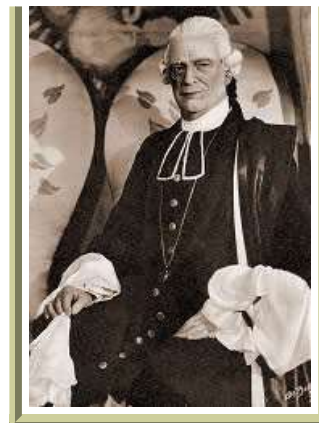
With Admirals around his wide dominions.

Don Alhambra.

And Party Leaders you might meet
In twos and threes in every street
Maintaining, with no little heat,
Their various opinions.

Marco & Giuseppe.

Now that's a sight you couldn't beat —
Two Party Leaders in each street
Maintaining, with no little heat,
Their various opinions.



Sidney Granville as Don Alhambra, 1939

Don Alhambra.

That King, although no one denies
His heart was of abnormal size,
Yet he'd have acted otherwise
If he had been acuter.
The end is easily foretold,
When every blessed thing you hold
Is made of silver, or of gold,
You long for simple pewter.
When you have nothing else to wear
But cloth of gold and satins rare,
For cloth of gold you cease to care —
Up goes the price of shoddy.

Marco & Giuseppe.

Of shoddy, up goes the price of shoddy.

Don Alhambra.

In short, whoever you may be,
To this conclusion you'll agree,
When every one is somebody,
Then no one's anybody!

Marco & Giuseppe.

Now that's as plain as plain can be,
To this conclusion we agree —

All.

When every one is somebody,
Then no one's anybody!



1906 Revival