

Wealthy London Prentice

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It's of a wealthy London prentice my purpose is to speak
And tell his bold adventures done for his country's sake
Search all the world around and you will hardly find
A man in valor to exceed this gallant prentice mine

He was born in Cheshire, the chief of men was he
From thence brought up in London a prentice for to be
A merchant on the bridge did like his service so
For three long years a factor to Turkey he should go

At length in that same country one year he had not been
'Ere he by the maintenance the honor of the queen
Elizabeth the princess he nobly did make known
To be the phoenix of the world and non but her alone

In armour rich glided he mounted on a steed
A score of knights most hardy one day he made to bleed,
And brought them all unto the ground who proudly did deny
Elizabeth to be the girl of princely- majesty.

The king of that same country at length began to frown,
And willed his son great presents to pull this youngster down,
While at their father's words these boasting speeches said,
"Thou art a traitor, English boy and hast a traitor played."

"I am no boy nor traitor, thy speeches I defy,
For which I'll be revenged upon them bye and bye,
A London prentice still shall prove as good a man
As any of your Turkish knights, do all the best you can."

And there was all he gave him a box unto the ear,
That broke his neck asunder as plainly you shall hear.
" Now, know proud Turk" quoth he. "I am no English boy
That with one small box o'er the ear the prince of Turks destroy

Oh, when the king perceived his son so strangely slain
His soul was sore afflicted with more than mortal pain,
And in revenge they all he swore that he could die
The cruellest death that ever man beheld with mortal eve.

Two lions he prepared this prentice to devour,

Near famished up with hunger ten days within the tower,
To make them far more fierce and eager for their prey,
To glut themselves in human gore upon that fatal day.

The appointed day of torment at length drew near at hand
When all the noble ladies and gallants of the land
Attended on the king to see the prentice slain
And buried in the hungry maws of those fierce lions twain.

Then in a shirt of cambric with silk so richly wrought,
This wealthy London prentice was from his prison brought,
And to the lions given to snatch their hunger great
That eat in ten days space not one small bit of meat.

Oh when the hungry lions did cast on him their eyes
The elements like thunder did echo to their cries,
And running all amain his body to devour
Into their throats he thrust his arms with all his might and power

And thus by manly valour their hearts he tore asunder,
And at the king he threw them to all the people's wonder,
"This I have done," quoth he, "for lovely England's sake,
And for my country's maiden queen much more I'll undertake."

When the king perceived his grateful lions' hearts;
Afflicted with much terror his vigours soon pervert,
And turning all his hate unto remorse of love
He said it was an angel sent down from heaven above.

"Oh no, I am no angel," the courteous young man said
"I was born in famous England where God's word is obeyed
Assisted by the heavens who did me thus befriend
Or else they had most cruelly brought here my life to end."

The king in all amaze lifted up his eyes to heaven
And for his soul's offense did crave to be forgiven
Believing that no land like England might be seen
No people better governed by the virtue of the Queen

So taking up this young man he granted him his life
And gave his daughter to him to be his wedded wife
Where they do now remain in love and quiet peace
A-spending all their happy days in joy and love increase

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From Creighton and Senior, collected from Ben Henneberry of Devil's Island

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