

The Good Ship, Cumberland - song lyrics

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THE GOOD SHIP, CUMBERLAND.

Come all ye merry sailors, and all ye landsmen too,
Come listen to a story that I will unfold to you;
It's all about the Cumberland, the ship so true and brave,
And of her bold and loyal crew, who met a watery grave.

It was early in the morning, just at the break of day,
That the good ship Cumberland at anchor safe did lay;
Then the man upon the lookout to those below did cry,
"I see something like a housetop-to the larboard it doth lie."

The Captain seized his telescope and gazed far o'er the blue.
Then turning, spoke as follows, to his brave and hearty crew :
"That thing that's floating yonder, just like a turtle back,
Is that infernal rebel steamer that they call the Merrimac."

The deck was cleared for action, every gun was pointed true.
While the Merrimac came steaming across the watery blue;
On, on, she kept coming till no distance did us part,
Then she sent a ball a-humming that stilled the beat of many a heart.

In vain we poured our broadside Into her ribs of steel,
Yet still no breach made in her, or damage did she feel;
Then to our bold Commander the rebel captain spoke-
"Haul down your flying colors, or I'll sink your Yankee boat."

Our Captain's eyes did glisten and his cheeks grew white with rage.
And to the rebel pirate in a voice of thunder said:
"My men are brave and loyal, my flag shall ever stand,
Before I strike my colors you shall sink us and be d---d! "

Then the Iron-clad monster left us some hundred yards or more.
And with her whistle screaming at our wooden sides she bore;
She struck us right amidship, and her ram went crashing through,
And the waters came rushing in upon our gallant crew.

Then turning to his gallant crew that bold Commander said:
"I will never strike the colors while the vessel rides the wave;
I'll go down with the flag a-flying Into a watery grave,
But you, my gallant comrades, may seek your life to save."

They swore they'd never leave him, and manned their guns a fresh,
And poured broadside after broadside, till the water reached their breasts;
And she sunk far down, far down in the briny deep.
And the stars and stripes were flying from the main top's highest peak.