

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Earl of Westmoreland

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`HOW long shall fortune faile me now,
And keepe me heare in deadlye dreade?
How long shall I in bale abide,
In misery my life to leade?

`To fall from my rose, it was my chance;
Such was the Queene of England free;
I tooke a lake, and turned my backe,
On Bramaball More shee caused my flye.

`One gentle Armstrong that I doe ken,
Alas, with thee I dare not mocke!
Thou dwellest soe far on the west border,
Thy name is called the Lord Iocke.'

Now hath Armstrong taken noble Nevill,
And as one Martinfield did Profecye;
He hath taken the Lord Dakers,
A lords sonne of great degree.

He hath taken old Master Nortton,
And sonnes four in his companye;
Hee hath taken another gentleman,
Called Iohn of Carnabie.

Then bespake him Charles Nevill;
To all his men, I wott, sayd hee,
Sayes, I must into Scotland fare;
Soe nie the borders is noe biding for me.

When he came to Humes Castle,
And all his noble companye;
The Lord Hume halched them right soone,
Saying, Banished men, welcome to mee!

They had not beene in Humes Castle
Not a month and dayes three,
But the regent of Scotland and he got witt
that banished men there shold be.

`I'le write a letter,' sayd the regent then,
`And send to Humes Castle hastilye,

To see whether Lord Hume wilbe soe good
To bring the banished men vnto mee.

`that lord and I haue beene att deadlye fuyde,
And hee and I cold neuer agree;
Writting a letter, that will not serue;
The banished men must not speake with me.

`But I will send for the garrison of Barwicke,
that they will come all with speede,
And with them will come a noble captaine,
Which is called Captain Reade.'

Then the Lord Hume he got witt
They wold seeke vnto Nevill, where he did lye;
He tooke them out of the castle of Hume,
And brought them into the castle of Camelye.

Then bespake him Charles Nevill,
To all his men, I wott, spoke hee,
Sayes, I must goe take a noble shippe,
And wee'le be mariners vpon the sea.

I'le seeke out fortune where it doth lye;
In Scotland there is noe byding for mee;
Then the tooke leaue with fayre Scotland,
For they are sealing vpon the sea.

They had not sayled vpon the sea
Not one day and monthes three,
But they were ware of a Noble shippe,
that fiue topps bare all soe hye.

Then Nevill called to Martinfeeld,
Sayd, Martinffeeld, come hither to mee;
Some good counsell, Martinfeeld,
I pray thee giue it vnto mee.

Thou told me when I was in England fayre,
Before that I did take the sea,
Thou neuer sawst noe banner borne
But thou wold ken it with thine eye.

Thou neuer saw noe man in the face,
Iff thou had seene before with thine eye,
But thou coldest haue kend the freind by thy foe,
And then haue told it vnto mee.

Thou neuer heard noe speche spoken,

Neither in Greeke nor Hebrewē,
But thou coldest haue answered them in any language,
And then haue told it vnto mee.

`Master, Master, see you yonder faire ancyent?
Yonder is the serpent and the serpents head,
The mould-warpe in the midst of itt,
And itt all shines with gold soe redde.

`Yonder is Duke Iohn of Austria,
A noble warryour on the sea,
Whose dwelling is in Ciuill land,
And many men, God wot, hath hee.'

Then bespake him Martinfeelde,
To all his fellowes, I wot, said hee,
Turne our noble shipp about,
And that's a token that wee will flee.

`Thy councell is not good, Martinfeeld;
Itt falleth not out fitting for mee;
I rue the last time I turnd my backe;
I did displease my prince and the countrye.'

Then bespake him noble Nevill,
To all his men, I wott, sayd hee,
Sett me vp my faire Dun Bull,
With gilden hornes hee beares all soe hye.

And I will passe yonder noble Duke,
By the leaue of mild Marye;
For Yonder is the Duke of Austria,
that trauels now vpon the sea.

And then bespake this noble Duke,
Vnto his men then sayd hee,
Yonder is sure some nobleman,
Or else some youth that will not flee.

I will put out a pinace fayre,
A harold of armes vpon the sea,
And goe thy way to yonder noble shippe,
And bring the Masters name to mee.

When the herald of armes came before noble Nevill,
He fell downe low vpon his knee:
`You must tell me true what is your name,
And in what countrye your dwelling may bee.'

`that will I not doe,' sayd noble Nevill,
`By Mary mild, that mayden free,
Except I first know the Masters name,
And in what country his dwelling may bee.'

Then bespake the herald of armes,
O that he spoke soe curteouslye!
Duke Iohn of Austria is my Masters name,
He will neuer lene it vpon the sea.

He hath beene in the citye of Rome,
His dwelling is in Ciuillee:
`Then wee are poore Brittons,' the Nevill can say,
`Where wee trauell vpon the sea.

`And Charles Nevill itt is my name,
I will neuer lene it vpon the sea;
When I was att home in England faire,
I was the Erle of Westmoreland,' sayd hee.

Then backe is gone this herald of armes
Whereas this noble duke did lye;
`Loe, yonder are poore Brittons,' can he say,
`Where the trauell vpon the sea.

`And Charles Nevill is thier Masters name,
He will neuer lene it vpon the sea;
When he was at home in England fayre,
He was the Erle of Westmoreland, said hee.'

Then bespake this noble duke,
And euer he spake soe hastilye,
And said, Goe backe to yonder noble-man,
And bid him come and speake with me.

For I haue read in the Booke of Mable,
There shold a Brittain come ouer the sea,
Charles Nevill with a childs voice:
I pray God that it may be hee.

When these two nobles they didden meete,
They halched eche other right curteouslye;
Yett Nevill halched Iohn the sooner
Because a banished man, alas! was hee.

`Call in your men,' sayd this noble duke,
`Faine your men that I wold see;'
`Euer alas!' said noble Nevill,
`They are but a litle small companye.'

First he called in Martinfield,
that Martinffeeld that cold prophecye;
He called in then Lord Dakers,
A lords sonne of high degree.

Then called he in old Master Nortton,
And sonnes four in his companye;
He called in one other gentleman,
Called Iohn of Carnabye.

`Loe! these be all my men,' said noble Nevill,
`And all that's in my companye;
When we were att home in England fayre,
Our prince and wee cold not agree.'

Then bespake this noble duke:
To try your manhood on the sea,
Old Master Nortton shall goe ouer into France,
And his sonnes four in his companye.

And my Lord Dakers shall goe over into france,
There a captaine for to bee;
And those two other gentlemen wold goe with him,
And for to fare in his companye.

And you your-selfe shall goe into Ciuill land,
And Marttinffeild that can prophecye;
`that will I not doe,' sayd noble Nevill,
`By Mary mild, that mayden free.

`For the haue knowen me in wele and woe,
In neede, scarsnesse and pouertye;
Before I'le part with the worst of them,
I'le rather part with my liffe,' sayd hee.

And then bespake this noble duke,
And euer he spake soe curteouslye;
Sayes, You shall part with none of them,
There is soe much manhood in your bodye.

Then these two noblemen labored together,
Pleasantlye vpon the sea;
Their landing was in Ciuill land,
In Ciuilee that faire citye.

Three nights att this dukes Nevill did lye,
And serued like a nobleman was hee;
Then the duke made a supplication,

And sent it to the queene of Ciuilee.

Saying, Such a man is your citye within,
I mett him pleasantly vpon the sea;
He seemes to be a noble man,
And captaine to your Grace he faine wold bee.

Then the queene sent for these noble men
For to come into her companye;
When Nevill came before the queene,
Hee kneeled downe vpon his knee.

Shee tooke him vp by the lilly-white hand,
Said, Welcome, my loirrd, hither to me;
You must first tell me your name,
And in what countrie thy dwelling may bee.

He said, Charles Nevill is my name;
I will neuer lene it in noe countrie;
When I was att home in England fayre,
I was the Erle of Westmoreland trulye.

The queene made him captaine ouirr forty thousand,
Watch and ward within Ciuill land to keepe,
And for to warr against the heathen soldan,
And for to helpe her in her neede.

When the heathen soldan he gott witt,
In Barbarye where he did lye,
Sainge, Such a man is in yonder citye within,
And a bold venturer by sea is hee,

Then the heathen soldan made a letter,
And sent it to the queene instantlye,
And all that heard this letter reade
Where it was rehersed in Ciuillee.

Saying, Haue you any man your land within
Man to man dare fight with mee?
And both our lands shalbe ioyned in one,
And cristened lands they both shalbe.

Shee said, I haue noe man my land within
Man to man dare fight with thee;
But euery day thou shalt haue a battell,
If it be for these weekes three.

All beheard him Charles Nevill,
In his bedd where he did lye,

And when he came the queene before,
He fell downe low vpon his knee.

`Grant me a boone, my noble dame,
For Chrissts loue that dyed on tree;
for I will goe fight with yond heathen soldan,
If you will bestowe the manhood on mee.'

Then bespake this curteous queene,
And euierr shee spoke soe curteouslye:
Though you be a banished man out of your realme,
It is great pitye that thou shold dye.

Then bespake this noble duke,
As hee stood hard by the queenes knee:
As I haue read in the Booke of Mable,
There shall a Brittone come ouer the sea,

And Charles Nevill shold be his name;
But a childes voyce, I wott, hath hee,
And if he be in Christendome;
For hart and hand this man hath hee.

Then the queenes councell cast their heads together,

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that Nevill shold fight with the heathen soldan
that dwelt in the citye of Barbarye.

The battell and place appointed was
In a fayre greene, hard by the sea,
And they shood meete att the Headless Crosse,
And there to fight right manfullye.

Then Nevill cald for the queenes ancient,
And faine that ancient he wold see;
The brought him forth the broken sword,
With bloodye hands therein trulye.

The brought him forth the headless crosse,
In that ancyent it was seene;
'O this is a token,' sayd Martinfeeld,
'that sore ouerthrowen this prince hath beene.

'O sett me vp my fayre Dun Bull,
And trumpetts blow me farr and nee,
Vntill I come within a mile of the Headlesse Crosse,
that the Headlesse Crosse I may see.'

Then lighted downe noble Nevill,

And sayd, Marttinffeeld, come hither to me;
Heere I make thee choice captain over my host
Vntill againe I may thee see.

Then Nevill rode to the Headlesse Crosse,
Wihirch stands soe fayre vpon the sea;
There was he ware of the heathen soldan,
Both fowle and vglye for to see.

Then the soldan began for to call;
Twise he called lowd and hye,
And sayd, What is this? Some kitchin boy
that comes hither to fight with mee?

Then bespake him Charles Nevill,
But a childs voice, I wott, had hee:
'Thou spekest soe litle of Gods might,
Much more lesse I doe care for thee.'

Att the first meeting that these two mett,
The heathen soldan and the christen man,
The broke their speares quite in sunder,
And after that on foote did stand.

The next meeting that these two mett,
The swapt together with swords soe fine;
The fought together till they both swett,
Of blowes that were both derf and dire.

They fought an houre in battell strong;
The soldan marked Nevill with his eye;
'There shall neuer man me ouercome
Except it be Charles Nevill,' sayd hee.

Then Nevill he waxed bold,
And cunning in fight, I wott, was hee;
Euen att the gorgett of the soldans iacke
He stroke his head of presentlye.

Then kneeled downe noble Nevill,
And thanked God for his great grace,
that he shold come soe farr into a strange land,
To ouercome the soldan in place.

Hee tooke the head vpon his sword-poynt,
And carryed it amongst his host soe fayre;
When the saw the soldans head,
They thanked God on their knees there.

Seuen miles from the citye the queene him mett,
With procession that was soe fayre;
Shee tooke the crowne beside her heade,
And wold haue crowned him king there.

`Now nay! Now nay! my noble dame,
For soe, I wott, itt cannott bee;
I haue a ladye in England fayre,
And wedded againe I wold not bee.'

The queene shee called for her penman,
I wot shee called him lowd and hye,
Saying, Write him downe a hundred pound a day,
To keepe his men more merrylye.

`I thanke your Grace,' sayd noble Nevill,
`For this worthy gift you haue giuen to me;
If euer your Grace doe stand in neede,
Champion to your Highnesse again I'le bee.'

Child #177

version from Child, from Percy

LMP

oct00