

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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King Arthur and King Cornwall

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[SAIES, 'Come here, cuzen Gawaine so gay,]

My sisters sonne be yee;
for you shall see one of the fairest round tables
That euer you see with your eye.'

Then bespake Lady Queen Gueneuer,
And these were e words said shee:
'I know where a round table is, thou noble king,
Is worth thy round table and other such three

'The trestle that stands vnder this round table,' she said,
'Lowe downe to the mould,
It is worth thy round table, thou worthy king,
Thy halls, and all thy gold.

'The place where this round table stands in,

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It is worth thy castle, thy gold thy tee,
And all good Litle Britaine.'

'Where may that table be, lady?' quoth hee,
Or where may all that goodly building be?
You shall it seeke,' shee says, I till you it find,
For you shall neuer gett more of me.'

Then bespake him noble King Arthur,
These were the words said hee:
'Ile make mine avow to God,
And alsoe to the Trinity,

'Ile never sleepe one night there as I doe another,
Till that round table I see:
Sir Marramiles and Sir Tristeram,
Fellowes that ye shall bee.

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Our Lady was borne; then thought Cornewall King
These palmers had beene in Brittain.

Then bespake him Cornwall King,
These were the words he said there;
'Did you euer know a comely king,
His name was King Arthur?'

And then bespake him noble King Arthur,
These were the words said hee:
'I doe not know that comly king,
But once my selfe I did him see.'
Then bespake Cornwall King againe,
These were the words said he:

Sayes, 'Seuen Yeere I was clad and fed,
In Litle Brittain, in a bower;
I had a daughter by King Arthurs wife,
That now is called my flower;
For King Arthur, that kindly cockward,
Hath none such in his bower.

'For I durst sweare, and sane my othe,
That same lady soe bright,
That a man that were laid on his death bed
Wold open his eyes on her to hane sight.'
'Now, by my faith,' sayes noble King Arthur,
'And that's a full faire wight!'

And then bespake Cornewall [King] againe,
And these were the words he said:
'Come hither, fiue or three of my knights,
And feitch me downe my steed;
King Arthur, that foule cockeward,
Hath none such, if he had need.

'For I can ryde him as far on a day
As King Arthur can doe any of his on three;
And is it not a pleasure for a king
When he shall ryde forth on his iourney?

'For the eyes that beene in his head,
They glister as doth the gleed.'
'Now, by my faith,' says noble King Arthur,
'That is a well faire steed.'

These were the words sayd hee.
Befor I wold wrestle with yonder feend,
It is better be drowned in the sea.'

And then bespake Sir Bredbeddle,
And these were the words said he:
'Why, I will wrestle with yon lodly feend,
God, my gouernor thou wilt bee!'

Then bespake him noble Arthur,
And these were the words said he:
'What weapons wilt thou haue, thou gentle knight?
I pray thee tell to me.'

He sayes, 'Collen brand Ile haue in my hand,
And a Millaine knife fast by me knee,
And a Danish axe fast in my hands,
That a sure weapon I thinke wilbe.'

Then with his Collen brand that he had in his hand
The bunge of that rub-chandler he burst in three;
With that start out a lodly feend,
With seuen heads, and one body.

The fyer towards the element flew,
Out of his mouth, where was great plentie;
The knight stode in the middle and fought,
That it was great ioy to see.

Till his Collaine brand brake in his hand,
And his Millaine knife burst on his knee,
And then the Danish axe burst in his hand first,
That a sur weapon he thought shold be.

But now is the knight left without any weapons,
And alacke! it was the more pittie
But a surer weapon then he had one,
Had neuer lord in Christentye;
And all was but one litle booke,
He found it by the side of the sea.

He found it at the seaside,
Wrucked upp in a floode;
Our Lord had written it with his hands,
And sealed it with his bloode.

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'That thou doe not a ...

But ly still in that wall of stone,
Till I bane beene with noble King Arthur,
And told him what I haue done.'

And when he came to the kings chamber,
He cold of his curtesie:
Says, 'Sleepe you, wake you, noble King Arthur?
And euer Iesus waken yee!'

'Nay, I am not sleeping, I am waking,'
These were the words said hee;
'Ffor thee I haue card; how hast thou fared?
O gentle knight, let me see.'

The knight wrought the king his booke,
Bad him behold, reede and see;
And euer he found it on the backside of tbw leafe
As noble Arthur wold wish it to be.

And then bespake him King Arthur,
'Alas! thow gentle knight, how may this be,
That I might see him in the same licknesse
That he stood vnto, thee?'

And then bespake him the Greene Knight,
These were the words said hee:
'If youle stand stifly in the battell strong-,
For I haue won all the victory.'

Then bespake him the king againe,
And these were the words said hee:
'If wee stand not stifly in this battell strong.
Wee are worthy to be hanged all on a ttree.'

Then bespake him the Greene Knight,
These were the words said he:
Saies, 'I doe coniure thee, thou fowle feend,
In the same licknesse thou stood vnto mee.'

With that start out a lodly feend,
With seuen heads, and one body;
The fier towards the element flaugh,
Out of his mouth, where was great plenty

The knight stood in the middle p. * * *
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He laid vppon him with heele and hand,
With yard that was soe fell;
'Helpe! brother Bredbeddle,' says Marra, mile,
For I thinke he be the devill of hell.

'Helpe! brother Bredbeddle,' says Marramile,
'Helpe! for Christs pittye
for without thy help, brother Bredbeddle,
He will neuer be rydden for me.'

Then bespake him Sir Bredbeddle,
These were the words said he:
'I coniure thee, thou Burlow-beane,
Thou tell me how this steed was riddin in
his country.'

He saith, 'there is a gold wand
Stands in King Cornwalls study windowe
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...

'Let him take that wand in that window,
And strike three strokes on that steed;
And then he will spring forth of his hand
As sparke doth out of gleede.'

And then bespake him the Greene Knight,
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A lowd blast he may blow then.

And then bespake Sir Bredebeddle,
To the feend these words said bee
Says, 'I coniure thee, thou Burlow-beanie,
The powder-box thou feitch me.'

Then forth is gone Barlow-beanie,
As fast as he cold hie,
And feich he did the powder-box,
And came againe by and by.

Then Sir Tristeram tooke powder forth of that box,

And blent it with warme sweet milke,
And there put it vnto that horne,
And swilled it about in that ilke.

Then he tooke the horne in his hand,
And a lowd blast he blew;
He rent the horse vp to the midst,
All his fellowes this they knew.

Then bespake him the Greene Knight,
These were the words said he:
Saies, 'I coniure thee, thou Burlow-beanie,
That thou feitch me the sword that I see.'

Then forth is gone Burlow-beanie,
As fast as he cold hie,
And feitch he did that faire sword,
And came againe by and by.

Then bespake him Sir Bredbeddle,
To the king these words said he:
'Take this sword in thy hand, thou noble King Arthur,
For the vowes sake that thou made Ile giue it th[eej
And goe strike off King Cornwall's head,
In bed were he doth lye.'

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Version in Child from: Percy MS., p. 24.

Hales and Furnivall, 1, 61; Madden's Syr Gawayne, p. 275.

SOF