

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Kyng Estmere

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Hearken to me, gentlemen,
Come and you shall heare;
Ile tell you of two of the boldest brether that ever borne were.

The tone of them was Adler younge, the tother was Kyng Estmere;
The were as bolde men in their deeds
As any were, farr and neare.

As they were drinKing ale and wine
Within his brother's hall,
When will ye marry a wyfe, brother,
A wyfe to glad us all

Then bespake him Kyng Estmere,
And answered him hartilye:
I know not that ladye in any land,
That's able to marrye with mee.

Kyng Adland hath a daughter, brother, men call her bright and sheene;
If I were Kyng here in your stead,
That ladye shold be my queene.

Saies, reade me, reade me, deare brother, throughout merry England,
Where we might find a messenger
Betwixt us towe to sende.

Saies, you shal ryde yourselfe, brother, ile beare you companye;
Many a man throughe fals messengers is deceived, and I feare lest soe shold wee.

Thus the renisht them to ryde,
Of twoe good renisht steeds,
And when the came to King Adlands halle, of redd gold shone their weeds.

And when the came to Kyng Adlands hall, before the goodlye gate,
There they found good Kyng Adland
Rearing himselfe theratt.

Now Christ thee save, good Kyng Adland; now Christ you save and see:
Sayd, you be welcome, King Estmere, right hartilye to mee.

You have a daughter, said Adler younge, men call her bright and sheene;
My brother wold marrye her to his wiffe, of Englande to be queene.

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Yesterday was att my deere daughter the King his sonne of Spayn,
And then she nicked him of naye,
And I doubt sheele do you the same.

The Kyng of Spayne is a foule paynim, and 'leeveth on Mahound,
And pitye it were that fayre ladye
Shold marrye a heathen hound.

But grant to me, sayes Kyng Estmere, for my love I you praye,
That I may see your daughter deere
Before I goe hence awaye.

Although itt is seven yeers and more since my daughter was in halle,
She shall come once downe for your sake, to glad my gwestes alle.

Downe then came that mayden fayre,
With ladyes laced in pall,
And halfe a hundred of bold knightes,
To bring her [from] bowre to hall,
And as many gentle squiers,
To tend upon them all.

The talents of golde were on her head sette hanged low downe to her knee,
And everye ring on her small finger
Shone of the chrystall free.

Saies, god you save, my deere madam, saies, god you save and see:
Said, you be welcome, Kyng Estmere, right welcome unto mee.

And, if you love me, as you saye,
Soe well and hartilee,
All that ever you are comen about
Soone sped now itt shal bee.

Then bespake her father deare:
My daughter, I saye naye;
Remember well the Kyng of Spayne,
What he sayd yesterdaye.

He wold pull downe my halles and castles, and reave me of my lyfe;
I cannot blame him if he doe,
If I reave him of his wyfe.

Your castles and your towres, father, are stronglye built aboute,
And therefore of the King his sonne of Spaine wee neede not stande in doubt.

Plight me your troth, nowe, Kyng Estmere, by heaven and your righte hand,
That you will marrye me to your wyfe,

And make me queene of your land.

Then Kyng Estmere he plight his troth, by heaven and his righte hand,
That he wolde marrye her to his wyfe,
And make her queene of his land.

And he tooke leave of that ladye fayre, to goe to his owne countree,
To fetche him dukes and lordes and knightes, that married the might bee.

They had not ridden scant a myle,
A myle forthe of the towne,
But in did come the Kyng of Spayne,
With kempes many one.

But in did come the Kyng of Spayne, with manye a bold barone,
Tone day to marrye Kyng Adlands daughter, tother daye to carrye her home.

Shee sent one after Kyng Estmere, in all the spede might bee,
That he must either turne againe and fighte, or goe home and loose his ladye.

One whyle then the page he went,
Another while he ranne;
Till he had oretaken King Estmere,
I-wis he never blanne.

Tydings, tydings, Kyng Estmere'
What tydinges nowe, my boye
O tydinges I can tell to you,
That will you sore annoye.

You had not ridden scant a mile,
A mile out of the towne,
But in did come the Kyng of Spayne,
With kempes many a one.

But in did come the Kyng of Spayne, with manye a bold barone,
Tone daye to marrye King Adlands daughter, tother daye to carry her home.

My ladye fayre she greetes you well, and ever-more well by mee;
You must either turne againe and fighte, or goe home and loose your ladye.

Saies, reade me, reade me, deere brother, my reade shall ryse at thee,
Whether it is better to turne and fighte, or goe home and loose my ladye.

Now hearken to me, sayes Adler yonge, and your reade must rise at me;
I quicklye will devise a waye
To sette thy ladye free.

My mother was a westerne woman,
And learned in gramarye,
And when I learned at the schole,
Something shee taught itt mee.

There growes an hearbe within this field, and iff it were but knowne,
His color, which is whyte and redd,
It will make blacke and browne.

His color, which is browne and blacke, itt will make redd and whyte;
That sworde is not in all Englande
Upon his coate will byte.

And you shal be a harper, brother, out of the north countrye,
And ile be your boy, soo faine of fighte, and beare your harpe by your knee.

And you shal be the best harper
That ever tooke harpe in hand,
And I wil be the best singer
That ever sung in this lande.

Itt shal be written in our foreheads, all and in grammarye,
That we towe are the boldest men
That are in all christentye.

And thus they renisht them to ryde, of tow good renisht steedes,
And when they came to King Adlands hall, of redd gold shone their weedes.

And whan the came to Kyng Adlands hall untill the fayre hall-yate,
There they found a proud porter,
Rearing himselfe thereatt.

Sayes, Christ thee save, thou proud porter, sayes, Christ thee save and see:
Nowe you be welcome, sayd the porter, of what land soever ye bee.

Wee beene harpers, sayd Adler younge, come out of the northe countrye;
Wee beene come hither untill this place this proud weddinge for to see.

Sayd, and your color were white and redd, as it is blacke and browne,
I wolde saye King Estmere and his brother were comen untill this towne.

Then they pulled out a ryng of gold, layd itt on the porters arme:
And ever we will thee, proud porter,
Thow wilt saye us no harme.

Sore he looked on Kyng Estmere,
And sore he handled the ryng,
Then opened to them the fayre hall-yates, he lett for no kind of thyng.

Kyng Estmere he stabled his steede soe fayre att the hall-bord;
The froth that came from his brydle bitte light in Kyng bremors beard.

Saies, stable thy steed, thou proud harper, saies, stable him in the stalle;
It doth not beseeme a proud harper
To stable his steed in a Kyngs halle.

My ladde he is so lither, he said, he will doe nought that's meete;
And is there any man in this hall
Were able him to beate

Thou speakst proud words, sayes the King of Spaine, thou harper, here to mee;
There is a man within this halle
Will beate thy ladd and thee.

O let that man come downe, he said, a sight of him wold I see;
And when hee hath beaten well my ladd, then he shall beate of mee.

Downe then came the kemperye man,
And looked him in the eare;
For all the gold that was under heaven, he durst not neigh him neare.

And how nowe, kempe, said the Kyng of Spaine, and how, what aileth thee
He saies, it is writt in his forehead, all and in grammarye,
That for all the gold that is under heaven, I dare not neigh him nye.

Then Kyng Estmere pulld forth his harpe, and plaid a pretty thinge;
The ladye upstart from the borde,
And wold have gone from the King.

Stay thy harpe, thou proud harper, for gods love I pray thee;
For and thou playes as thou beginns,
Thou'lt till my bryde from mee.

He stroake upon his harpe againe,
And playd a pretty thinge;
The ladye lough a loud laughter,
As shee sate by the King.

Saies, sell me thy harpe, thou proud harper, and thy stringes all;
For as many gold nobles thou shalt have as heere bee ringes in the hall.

What wold ye doe with my harpe, he sayd, if I did sell itt yee
To playe my wiffe and me a fitt,
When abed together wee bee.

Now sell me, quoth hee, thy bryde soe gay, as shee sitts by thy knee;
And as many gold nobles I will give
As leaves been on a tree.

And what wold ye doe with my bryde soe gay, iff I did sell her thee
More seemelye it is for her fayre bodye to lye by mee then thee.

Hee played agayne both loud and shrille, and Adler he did syng,
O ladye, this is thy owne true love,
Noe harper, but a Kyng.

O ladye, this is thy owne true love, as playnlye thou mayest see,
And ile rid thee of that foule paynim who partes thy love and thee.

The ladye looked, the ladye blushte, and blushte and lookt agayne,
While Adler he hath drawne his brande, and hath the sowdan slayne.

Up then rose the kemperye men,
And loud they gan to crye:
Ah' traytors, yee have slayne our Kyng, and therefore yee shall dye.

Kyng Estmere threwe the harpe asyde, and swith he drew his brand,
And Estmere he and Adler yonge
Right stiffe in stour can stand.

And aye their swordes soe sore can byte, throughe help of gramarye,
That soone they have slayne the kemperye men, or forst them forth to flee.

Kyng Estmere tooke that fayre ladye, and marryed her to his wiffe,
And brought her home to merry England, with her to leade his life.

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