

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Lord Delamere

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1 Good people give attention to a story you shall hear:
Between the king and my lord Delamere,
A quarrel arose in the Parliament House,
Concerning the taxes to be put in force.
 With my fal de ral de ra.

2 I wonder, I wonder that James, our good king,
So many hard taxes upon the poor should bring;
So many hard taxes, as I have heard them say
Makes many a good farmer to break and run away.

3 Such a rout has been in the parliament, as I hear,
Betwixt a Dutch lord and my lord Delamere.
He said to the king, as he sat on the throne,
'If it please you, my liege, to grant me a boon.'

4 'O what is thy boon? Come, let me understand.'
'It's to give me all the poor you have in the land;
I'll take them down to Cheshire, and there I will sow
Both hemp-seed and flax-seed, and hang them in a row.'

5 'It's better, my liege, they should die a shorter death
Than for your Majesty to starve them on earth.'
With that up starts a Dutch lord, as we hear,
And he says, 'Thou proud Jack,' to my lord Delamere,

6 'Thou ought to be stabbed,' and he turned him about,
'For affronting the king in the Parliament House.'
Then up got a brave duke, the Duke of Devonshire,
Who said, I will fight for my lord Delamere.

7 'He is under age, as I'll make it appear,
So I'll stand in defence of my lord Delamere.'
A stage then was built, and to battle they went,
To kill or be killed it was their intent.

8 The very first blow, as we understand,
Devonshire's rapier went back to his hand;
Then he mused awhile, but not a word spoke,
When against the king's armour his rapier he broke.

9 O then he stept backward, and backward stept he,

And then stept forward my lord Willoughby;
He gave him a rapier, and thus he did say;
Play low, Devonshire, there's treachery, I see.

10 He knelt on his knee, and he gave him the wound,
With that the Dutch lord fell dead on the ground:
The king calld his soldiers, and thus he did say:
Call Devonshire down, take the dead man away.

11 He answered, My liege, I've killed him like a man,
And it is my intent to see what clothing he's got on.
O treachery! O treachery! as I well may say,
It was your intent, O king, to take my life away.

12 'He fought in your armour, while I fought him bare,
And thou, king, shalt win it before thou dost it wear;
I neither do curse king, parliament, or throne,
But I wish every honest man may enjoy his own.

13 'The rich men do flourish with silver and gold,
While poor men are starving with hunger and cold;
And if they hold on as they have begun,
They'll make little England pay dear for a king.

Child #207

Child's version B, from Llewellynn Jewitt, *Ballads and Songs of Derbyshire*, 1867
Not historically accurate, according to Child, May refer to event of 1687 between
the Earl of Devonshire and Colonel Colepepper, which was not in Parliament and
did not involve swords.

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