

Come all my jolly seamen, likewise you landsmen too
The Cumberland and the Merrimac

Come all my jolly seamen,
Likewise you landsmen too.
It is a dreadful story
I will unfold to you.
It's all about the Cumberland,
The ship so true and brave
And it's many the loyal seamen
That met a wat'ry grave.

2. It was early in the morning,
Just at the break of day,
When our good ship the Cumberland
Lay anchored in the bay,
When the man from on the lookout
Down to the rest did say:
"There is something like a housetop,
To the larboard she does lay."

3. Then our captain took his telescope,
And he gazed far o'er the blue.
Turning 'round he said as follows
To his brave and loyal crew:
"That thing you see over yonder
Just like a turtle's back,
Is that cursed Rebel steamer
They call the Merrimac!"

4. Then our decks were cleared for action,
Each gun was pointed true,
But still that Rebel steamer
Came steaming o'er the blue;
And on she kept a-coming
Till no distance did us part,
When she sent a ball a-humming
That stilled the beat of many's the heart.

5. In vain we poured our broadsides
Into her ribs of steel,
But still no breach was in her,
No damage did she feel.
Up stepped the Rebel commander,
In a voice of thunder spoke,
"Pull down your flying colors,
Or I'll sink your Yankee boat!"

6. Then our captain's eyes did glisten,
His face grew pale with rage,
And in a voice of thunder
To the Rebel commander said,
"My crew is brave and loyal,
And by me they will stand,
And before I'll strike my colors
You can sink me an be damned!"

7. Then this ironclad she left us
A hundred yards or more,
The screeching and screaming of her balls
Our wooden sides she tore.
She struck us right amidships,
Her ram went crashing through,
And the waters they came pouring in
On the brave and loyal crew.

8. Then our captain turned unto his men
And unto them did say,
"I'll not leave the Cumberland
While she does ride the wave,
It's you, my loyal comrades,
May seek your lives to save,
But I'll go down with my gallant ship
For to meet a watery grave.

9. They swore that they'd not leave her,
And manned the guns afresh,
And broadside after broadside poured,
Till the waters reached their breasts.
And as they down went sinking,
Down in the briny deep,
The Stars and Stripes still floated
From the maintop's highest peak!