

Chapter Twenty Three - "30 Elizabethan Songs - With Documentation"

# The Maiden's Song

(The Fair Maid of Northumberland)

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## References:

### Words

Child, Francis James. The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, 5 Volumes (Dover Publications, 2003)

The collection was published as The English and Scottish Popular Ballads between 1882 and 1898 by Houghton Mifflin in 10 Volumes.

*The pleasant historie of John Winchcomb, in his yonger years called, Jack of Newberie, the famous & worthy clothier of England declaring his life and love, together with his charitable deeds and great hospitalities. And how hee set continually five hundred poor people at work, to the great benefit of the Commonwealth: worthy to be read and regarded.*

Deloney, Thomas, *The pleasant historie of John Winchcomb, etc.* London, 1655 : Printed by W. D. and are to be sold by Thomas Vere, at the sign of the Angel without Newgate, 1655, Bib Name / Number: Wing (2nd ed.) / D962A. These are reproductions of the original pages in the National Library of Scotland. UMI Collection / reel number: Early English Books, 1641-1700 / 2720:03

### Music

Bronson, Bertrand Harris. The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads, with Their Texts, According to the Extant Records of Great Britain and North America, 4 volumes (Princeton and Berkeley: Princeton University and University of California Presses, 1959, ff.)

### Commentary

According to Child the book was written as early as 1597. The earliest existing edition is dated 1619. The ballad is The Maiden's Song. Since Deloney died in 1600, the song must be within our period (if we accept the attribution to him as author, and 1597 would therefore make sense.) This is the earliest reproduction of the original printing I could find.

*The maidens Song.*

**I**T was a Knight in *Scotland* born,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
Was taken prisoner and left forlorn,  
even by the good Earl of *Northumberland*.

Then was hee cast in prison strong,  
follow my love, leap over the strand :  
Where hee could not walk nor lie along,  
even by the good Earl of *Northumberland*.

And as in sorrow thus hee lay,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
The Earl's sweet daughter walk't that way,

and shee the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

And passing by like an Angel bright,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
This prisoner had of her a sight,  
and shee the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

And aloud to her this Knight did crie  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
The salt teares standing in his eie,  
and shee the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

Fair Lady hee said take pittie on mee,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
And let mee not in prison die  
and you the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

Fair Sir how should I take pittie on thee,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
Thou beeing a Fo to our Country,  
and I the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

Fair Lady I am no Fo hee said,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
Through thy sweet love here was I stay'd  
for thee the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

Why shoulud'st thou com here for love of mee  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
Having wife and children in thy Country,  
and I the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

I swear by the blessed Trinitie,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
I have no wife nor children I  
nor dwelling at home in metry *Scotland*.

If courteously you will set mee free,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
I vow that I will marrie thee,  
so soon as I com in fair *Scotland*.

Thou shalt bee a Lady of Castles & towers,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
And sit like a Queen in princely bowers,  
When I am at home in fair *Scotland*.

Then parted hence this Lady gay,  
follow my love, com over the strand,  
And got her fathers ring away,  
to help this faine Knight into fair *Scotland*.

Likewise much gold shee got by sleight,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
And all to help this forlorne Knight,  
to wend from her father to fair *Scotland*.

Two gallant steeds both good and able,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
Shee likewise took out of the stable,  
to ride with the Knight into fair *Scotland*.

And to the Jailor shee sent this ring,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
The Knight from prison forth did bring,  
to wend with her into fair *Scotland*.

This token for the prisoner free,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
Who straight went to this fair Lady,  
to wend with her into fair *Scotland*.

A gallant steed hee did besetide,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
And with the Lady away did ride,  
and shee the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

They rode till they came to a water cleere,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
Good sir how should I follow you here,  
and I the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

Thee water is rough and wonderful deep,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
and on my saddle I shall not keep .  
and I the fair flow. of *Northumberland*.

Fear not the feard fair Lady, quoth hee,  
follow my love, com over the strand :  
For long I cannot stay for thee,  
and thou the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

The Lady prick't her wanton steed,  
follow my love, com over the strand :

And over the River swom with speed,  
and shee the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

From top to toe all wet was shee,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
This have I don for love of thee,  
and I the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

Thus rode shee all one winters night,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
Till *Edenborough* they saw in sight,  
the fairest town in all *Scotland*.

Now chuse quoth hee, thou wanton flower,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
Whe're thou wilt bee my paramor,  
or get the home to *Northumberland*.

For I have wife and children five,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
In *Edenborough* they bee alive,  
then get the home to fair *England*.

This favor thou shalt have to boot,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
I'll have thy horse, go thou on foot,  
go get thee home to *Northumberland*.

O fall and faithles Knight, quoth shee,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
And canst thou deal so bad with mee,  
and I the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

Dishonor not a Ladie's name,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
But draw thy sword, and end my shame,  
and I the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

Hee took her from her stately steed,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
And left her there in extreme need  
and shee the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

Then fare shee down full heavily,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
At length two Knights came riding by,  
two gallant Knights of fair *England*.

Shee fell down humbly on her kneec,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
Saying courteous Knight take pite on mee,  
and I the fair flower of *Northumberland*.

I have offended my Father dear,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
And by a fall Knight that brought mee here,  
from the good Earl of *Northumberland*.

They took her up behinde them then,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
And brought her to her father again,  
and hee the good Earl of *Northumberland*.

All you fair maidens bee warned by mee,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
Scots never were true, nor never will bee,  
to Lord nor Ladie, nor fair *England*.

Francis J. Child's multi-volume work, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads (1882-1898)* has these 5 versions (A-E) of the song. None ring so authentic as Version A, which is the earliest extant version I could find.

**Version A (From an earlier printing of the Deloney version)**

*Names of this version:*

*a. 'Jack of Newbury'*

*b. The Ungrateful Knight and the Fair Flower of Northumberland'*

*Note: a. Deloney's Pleasant History of John Winchcomb 9th*

*ed., London, 1633, reprinted by Halliwell, p. 61. b. Ritson's*

*Ancient Songs, 1790, p. 169. (Note: add 2<sup>nd</sup> line in each of the verses)*

1 IT was a knight in Scotland borne Follow, my love, come over the strand Was taken prisoner, and left forlorne, Even by the good Earle of Northumberland.	7 'Faire Sir, how should I take pity on thee, Thou being a foe to our country, And I the faire flower of Northumberland.'
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2 Then was he cast in prison strong, Where he could not walke nor lie along, Even by the goode Earle of Northumberland.	8 'Faire lady, I am no foe,' he said, 'Through thy sweet love heere was I stayd, For thee, the faire flower of Northumberland.'
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3 And as in sorrow thus he lay, The Earle's sweete daughter walkt that way, And she the faire flower of Northumberland.	9 'Why shouldst thou come heere for love of me, Having wife and children in thy countrie? And I the faire flower of Northumberland.'
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4 And passing by, like an angell bright, The prisoner had of her a sight, And she the faire flower of Northumberland.	10 'I sweare by the blessed Trinitie, I have no wife nor children, I, Nor dwelling at home in merrie Scotland.
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5 And loud to her this knight did crie, The salt teares standing in his eye, And she the faire flower of Northumberland.	11 'If curteously you will set me free, I vow that I will marrie thee, So soone as I come in faire Scotland.
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6 'Faire lady,' he said, 'take pity on me, And let me not in prison dye, And you the faire flower of Northumberland.'	12 'Thou shalt be a lady of castles and towers, And sit like a queene in princely bowers, When I am at home in faire Scotland.'
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13 Then parted hence this lady gay,  
And got her father's ring away,  
To helpe this sad knight into faire  
Scotland.

14 Likewise much gold she got by  
sleight,  
And all to helpe this forlorne knight  
To wend from her father to faire  
Scotland.

15 Two gallant steedes, both good and  
able,  
She likewise tooke out of the stable,  
To ride with this knight into faire  
Scotland.

16 And to the jaylor she sent this ring,  
The knight from prison forth to bring,  
To wend with her into faire Scotland.

17 This token set the prisoner free,  
Who straight went to this faire lady,  
To wend with her into faire Scotland.

18 A gallant steede he did bestride,  
And with the lady away did ride,  
And she the faire flower of  
Northlumberland.

19 They rode till they came to a water  
cleare:  
How should I follow you heere,  
And I the faire flower of  
Northumberland?

20 'The water is rough and wonderfull  
deepe,  
An [d] on my saddle I shall not keepe,  
And I the faire flower of  
Northumberland.'

21 'Feare not the foord, faire lady,'  
quoth he,  
'For long I cannot stay for thee,  
And thou the faire flower of  
Northumberland.'

22 The lady prickt her wanton steed,  
And over the river swom with speede,  
And she the faire flower of  
Northumberland.

23 From top to toe all wet was shee:  
'This have I done for love of thee,  
And I the faire flower of  
Northumberland.'

24 Thus rode she all one winter's night,  
Till Edenborow they saw in sight,  
The chiefest towne in all Scotland.

25 'Now chuse,' quoth he, 'thou wanton  
flower,  
Whe'r thou wilt be my paramour,  
Or get thee home to Northumberland.'

26 'For I have wife, and children five,  
In Edenborow they be alive;  
Then get thee home to faire England.'

27 'This favour shalt thou have to boote,  
Be have thy horse, go thou on foote,  
Go, get thee home to Northumberland.'

28 'O false and faithlesse knight,' quoth  
shee,  
'And canst thou deale so bad with me,  
And I the faire flower of  
Northumberland?'

29 'Dishonour not a ladie's name,  
But draw thy sword and end my shame,  
And I the faire flower of  
Northumberland.'

30 He tooke her from her stately steed,  
And left her there in extreme need,  
And she the faire flower of  
Northumberland.

31 Then sate she downe full heavily;  
At length two knights canie riding by,  
Two gallant knights of faire England.

32 She fell downe humbly on her knee,  
Saying, 'Courteous knights, take pittie  
on me,  
And I the faire flower of  
Northumberland.

33 ' I have offended my father deere,  
And by a false knight that brought nie  
heere,  
From the good Earle of  
Northumberland.'

34 They tooke her up behind them then,  
And brought her to her father's againe,  
And he the good Earle of  
Northumberland.

35 All you faire maidens be warned by  
me,  
Scots were never true, nor never will he,  
To lord, nor lady, nor faire England.

## Version B

Name: b. 'The Provost's Daughter'

Note: a. Kinloch MSS, v, 49, in the handwriting of J. Beattie.

b. Kinloch's Ancient Scottish Ballads p. 134 from the recitation of Miss F. Beattie.

1 THE provost's daughter went out a walking,

A may's love whiles is easy won  
She heard a poor prisoner making his moan,  
And she was the fair flower of Northumberland.

7 'O pity on me, O pity,' said she,  
'O that my love was so easy won!  
Have pity on me as I had upon thee,  
When I loosd you out of the prison strong.'

2 'If any lady would borrow me  
Out into the prison strong,  
I would make her a lady of high degree,  
For I am a great lord in fair Scotland.'

8 'O how can I have pity on thee?  
O why was your love so easy won!  
When I have a wife and children three  
More worthy than a Northumberland.'

3 She's done her to her father's bed-stock,  
A may's love whiles is easy won  
She's stolen the keys o many braw lock,  
And she's loosd him out o the prison strong.

9 'Cook in your kitchen I will be,  
O that my love was so easy won!  
And serve your lady most reverently,  
For I darena go back to Northumberland.'

4 She's done her to her father's stable,  
A may's love whiles is easy won  
She's taen out a steed that was both swift and able,  
To carry them both to fair Scotland.

10 'Cook in my kitchen you shall not be,  
Why was your love so easy won!  
For I will have no such servants as thee,  
So get you back to Northumberland.'

5 O when they came to the Scottish cross,  
A may's love whiles is easy won  
'Ye brazen-faced whore, light off o my horse,  
And go get you back to Northumberland!'

11 But laith was he the lassie to tyne,  
A may's love whiles is easy won  
He 's hired an old horse and feed an old man,  
To carry her back to Northumberland.

6 O when they came to the Scottish moor,  
A may's love whiles is easy won  
'Get off o my horse, you 're a brazen-faced whore,  
So go get you back to Northumberland!'

12 O when she came her father before,  
A may's love whiles is easy won  
She fell down on her knees so low  
For she was the fair flower of Northumberland.

13 'O daughter, O daughter, why was ye  
so bold,  
Or why was your love so easy won,  
To be a Scottish whore in your fifteen  
year old?  
And you the fair flower of  
Northumberland!

14 Her mother she gently on her did  
smile,  
O that her love was so easy won!  
' She is not the first that the Scotts have  
beguild,  
But she 's still the fair flower of  
Northumberland.

15 'She shanna want gold, she shanna  
want fee,  
Altho that her love was so easy won,  
She shanna want gold to gain a man wi,  
And she 's still the fair flower of  
Northumberland.'

### Version C

Name: *'The Betrayed Lady'*

Note: a. Buchan's MSS, II, 166. b. Buchan's *Ballads of the North of Scotland*, II, 208.

1. AS I went by a jail-house door,  
Maid's love whiles is easy won  
I saw a prisoner standing there,  
'I wish I were home in fair Scotland.

2 'Fair maid, will you pity me?  
Ye'll steal the keys, let me gae free;  
I'll make you my lady in fair Scotland.

3 'I'm sure you have no need of me,  
For ye have a wife and bairns three,  
'That lives at home in fair Scotland.'

4 He swore by him that was crownd  
with thorn,  
That he never had a wife since the day  
he was born,  
But livd a free lord in fair Scotland.

5 She went unto her father's bed-head,  
She's stown the key o mony a lock,  
She's let him out o prison strong.

6 She's went to her father's stable,  
She's stowe a steed baith wigh and able,  
To carry them on to fair Scotland.

7 They rode till they came to a muir,  
He bade her light aff, they 'd call her a  
whore,  
If she didna return to Northumberland.

8 They rode till they caine to a moss,  
He bade her light aff her father's best  
horse,  
And return her again to  
Northumberland.

9 'I'm sure I have no need of thee,  
When I have a wife and bairns three,  
That lives at home in fair Scotland.'

10 'I'll be cook in your kitchen,  
And serve your lady haudsomelie,  
For I darena gae back to  
Northumberland.'

11 'Ye cannot he cook in my kitchen,  
My lady cannot fa sic servants as thee,  
So ye'll return again to  
Northumberland.'

12 When she went thro her father's ha,  
Site looted her low amongst them a',  
She was the fair flower, etc...

13 Out spake her father, he spake bold,  
'How could ye be a whore in fifteen  
years old,  
And you the flower, etc...

14 Out spake her mother, she spake wi a  
smile,  
'Maid's love whiles is easy won  
'She's nae time first his coat did beguile,  
Ye're welcome again to  
Northumberland.'

**Version D**                      **Name: None**  
**Note: Motherwell's MS., p. 102.**

1 SHE's gane down to her father's  
stable,  
O my dear, and my love that she wan  
She's taen out a black steed baith sturdy  
and able,  
And she 's away to fair Scotland.

2 When they came to Scotland bridge,  
'Light off, you whore, from my black  
steed,  
And go your ways back to  
Northumberland.

3 'O take me by the body so meek,  
And throw me in the water so deep,  
For I dur na gae back to  
Northumberland.'

4 'I'll no take thee by the body so meek,  
Nor throw thee in the water so deep;  
Thou may go thy ways hack to  
Northumberland.'

5 'Take me by the body so small,  
And throw me in you bonny mill-dam,  
For I daurna gae back to  
Northumberland.'

**Version E**

**Name: 'The Flower of Northumberland'**

**Note: "written down from memory by Robert Hutton. Shepherd, Peel Liddesdale." Mr R. White's papers.**

1 A BAILIFF'S fair daughter, she lived  
by the Ala,  
A young maid's love is easily won  
She heard a poor prisoner making his  
moan,  
And she was the flower of  
Northumberland.

2 'If ye could love me, as I do love thee,  
A young maid's love is hard to win  
I'll make you a lady of high degree,  
When once we go down to fair  
Scotland.'

3 To think of the prisoner her heart was  
sore,  
A young maid's love is easily won  
Her love it was much, but her pity was  
more,  
And she, etc.

4 She stole from her father's pillow the  
key,  
A young maid's love is easily won  
And out of the dungeon she soon set  
him free,  
And she, etc.

5 She led him into her father's stable,  
A young maid's love is easily won  
And they've taken a steed both gallant  
and able,  
To carry them down to fair Scotland.

6 When they first took the way, it was  
darling and dear; A young maid's love

is easily won

As forward they fared, all changed was  
his cheer,  
And she, etc.

7 They rode till they came to a fair  
Scottish corse;  
A young maid's love is easily won  
Says he, 'Now, pray madam, dismount  
from my horse, and go get you back to  
Northumberland.

8 'It befits not to ride with a leman light,  
A young maid's love is easily won  
When awaits nuy returning my own  
lady bright,  
My own wedded wife in fair Scotland.'

9 The words that he said on her fond  
heart smote,  
A young maid's love is easily won  
She knew not in sooth if she lved or  
not,  
And she, etc.

10 She looked to his face, and it kythed  
so unkind  
A young maid's love is easily won  
That her fast coming tears soon  
rendered her blind,  
And she, etc.

11 'Have pity on nme as I had it on thee,  
O why was my love so easily won!  
A slave in your kitchen I 'in willing to  
be,  
But I may not go back to  
Northumberland.

12 'Or carry me up by the middle sae  
sma,  
O why was my love so easily won!  
And fling nue headlong from your high  
castle wa,  
For I dare not go back to  
Northumberland.'

13 Her wailing, her woe, for nothing      You shall not want gold for to gain a  
they went,      husband,  
A young maid's love is easily won      And ye're aye welcome back to  
His bosom was stone and he would not      Northumberland.'  
relent,  
And she, etc.

14 He turned him around and he  
thought of a plan,  
A young maid's love is easily won  
He bought an old horse and he hired an  
old man,  
To carry her back to Northumberland.

15 A heavy heart makes a weary way,  
A young maid's love is easily won  
She reached her home in the evening  
gray,  
And she, etc.

16 And all as she stood at her father's  
tower-gate,  
A young maid's love is easily won  
More loud beat her heart than her knock  
thereat,  
And she, etc.

17 Down came her step-dame, so  
rugged and dure, O why was your love  
so easily won!  
'In Scotland go back to your false  
paramour,  
For you shall not stay here in  
Northumberland.'

18 Down canue her father, he saw her  
and smiled,  
A young maid's love is easily won  
'You are not the first that false Scots  
have beguiled,  
And ye're aye welcome back to  
Northumberland.

19 'You shall not want houses, you shall  
not want land, A young maid's love is  
easily won

**This is the version known as the Maiden's Song**

C Am F G C  
It was a Knight in Scotland born,  
C Am G C  
Follow my love, com over the strand:  
Then was he cast in prison strong,  
follow my love, leap over the strand:  
Where hee could not walk nor lie along,  
even by the good Earl of  
Northumberland.

And as in sorrow thus hee lay,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
The Earl's sweet daughter walk't that  
way,  
and shee the fair flower of  
Northumberland.

And passing by like an Angel bright,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
This prisoner had of her a sight,  
and shee the fair flower of  
Northumberland.

And aloud to her this Knight did crie  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
The salt tears standing in his eie,  
and shee the fair flower of  
Northumberland.

Fair Lady, hee said take pitie on mee,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
And let me not in prison die  
and you the fair flower of  
Northumberland

Fair Sir, how should I take pitie on thee,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
Thou beeing a Fo to our Country,  
and I the fair flower of Northumberland.

Fair Lady I am no Fo hee said,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
Through thy sweet love here was I  
stay'd

F C G Am  
Was taken prisoner and left forlorn,  
C G C  
even by the good Earl of  
Northumberland

for thee the fair flower, etc...  
Why shoulud'st thou com here for love  
of mee?  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
Having wife and children in thy  
Country,  
and I the fair flower of Northumberland.

I swear by the blessed Trinitie  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
I have no wife nor children I  
nor dwelling at home in merry Scotland.

If courteously you will set mee free,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
I vow that I will marrie thee,  
so soon as I com in fair Scotland.

Thou shalt bee a Lady of Castles and  
towers,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
And sit like a Queen in princely bowers,  
When I am at home in fair Scotland.

Then parted hence this Lady gay,  
follow my love, com over the strand,  
And got her father's ring away,  
to help this said Knight into fair  
Scotland.

Likewise much gold shee got by sleight,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
And all to help this forlorn Knight,  
to wend from her father to fair Scotland.

Two gallant steeds both good and able,  
follow my love, com over the strand:

Shee likewise took out of the stable,  
to ride with the Knight into fair  
Scotland.

Till Edenborough they saw in sight,  
the fairest town in all Scotland.

And to the Jailor shee sent this ring,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
The Knight from prison forth did bring,  
to wend with her into fair Scotland.

Now chuse quoth hee, thou wanton  
flower,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
Whe're thou wilt bee my paramor,  
or get the home to Northumberland.

This token set the prisoner free,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
Who streight went to this fair Lady,  
to wend with her into fair Scotland.

For I have wife and children five,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
In Edenborough they bee alive,  
then get the home to fair England.

A gallant steed hee did bestride,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
And with the Lady away did ride,  
And shee the fair flower of  
Northumberland.

This favor thou shalt have to boot,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
I'll have thy hors, go thou on foot,  
go get thee home to Northumberland.

They rode till they came to a water  
cleer,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
Good Sir how should I follow you here,  
and I the fair flower of Northumberland.

O fals and faithless Knight, quoth shee,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
And canst thou deal so bad with mee,  
and I the fair flower of Northumberland.

Thee water is rough and wonderful  
deep,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
and on my saddle I shall not keep,  
and I the fair flower of Northumberland.

Dishonor not a Ladie's name,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
But draw they sword, and end my  
shame,  
and I the fair flower of Northumberland.

Fear not the foard fair Lady, quoth hee,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
For long I cannot stay for thee,  
and thou the fair flower of  
Northumberland.

Hee took her from her stately steed,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
And left her there in extreme need  
and shee the fair flower of  
Northumberland.

The Lady prick't her wanton steed,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
And over the River swom with speed  
and she the fair flower of  
Northumberland.

Then sate shee down full heavily,  
follow my love, com over the strand:  
At length two Knights came riding by,  
two gallant Knights of fair England.

Thus rode shee all one winter's night,  
follow my love, com over the strand:

Shee fell down humbly on her knee,  
follow my love, com over the strand:

