

William Allingham (1824-89)

1 *The Faithless Knight*

It is a careless pretty may, down by yon river-side;
Her face, the whole world's pleasure, she gladly hath espied;
And tossing back her golden hair, her singing echoes wide;
When gaily to the grassy shore a youthful knight doth ride.

And vaulting from his courser, that stoops the head to drink, 5
And greeting well the Maiden fair, by running water's brink,
He throws about her slender neck a chain of costly link:
Too courteous he for glamourie, as any may might think.

All through the flowery meadows, in the summer evening warm,
The rippling river murmurs low, the dancing midges swarm; 10
But far away the pretty may, nor makes the least alarm,
Sits firm on lofty saddle-bow, within the young knight's arm.

Now months are come, and months are gone, with sunshine, breeze, and rain;
The song on grassy river-shore you shall not hear again;
The proud knight spurs at tournament, in Germany or Spain, 15
Or sues in silken bow'r to melt some lady's high disdain.

And thus in idle hour he dreams — "I've wander'd east and west;
I've whisper'd love in many an ear, in earnest or in jest;
That summer day — that pretty may — perhaps she loved me best?
I recollect her face, methinks, more often than the rest." 20

1877

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