

Thomas Campbell (1777-1844)

2 *The Brave Roland*

The brave Roland! — the brave Roland!
False tidings reached the Rhenish strand
That he had fallen in fight;
And thy faithful bosom swooned with pain,
O loveliest maid of Allémayne! 5
For the loss of thine own true knight.

But why so rash has she ta'en the veil
In yon Nonnenwerder's cloisters pale?
For her vow had scarce been sworn,
And the fatal mantle o'er her flung, 10
When the Drachenfels to a trumpet rung —
'T was her own dear warrior's horn!

Woe! woe! each heart shall bleed — shall break!
She would have hung upon his neck,
Had he come but yester-even! 15
And he had clasped those peerless charms,
That shall never, never fill his arms,
Or meet him but in heaven.

Yet Roland the brave — Roland the true —
He could not bid that spot adieu; 20
It was dear still midst his woes;
For he loved to breathe the neighboring air,
And to think she blessed him in her prayer,
When the Hallelujah rose.

There 's yet one window of that pile, 25
Which he built above the Nun's green isle;
Thence sad and oft looked he
(When the chant and organ sounded slow)
On the mansion of his love below,
For herself he might not see. 30

She died! — he sought the battle-plain;
Her image filled his dying brain,
 When he fell and wished to fall:
And her name was in his latest sigh,
When Roland, the flower of chivalry,
 Expired at Roncevall.

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1820

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