

Andrew Lang (1844-1912)

10 *A Lady of High Degree*

I be pareld most of prise,
I ride after the wild fee.

Will ye that I should sing
Of the love of a goodly thing,
Was no vilein's may?
'Tis sung of a knight so free,
Under the olive tree, 5
Singing this lay.

Her weed was of samite fine,
Her mantle of white ermine,
Green silk her hose;
Her shoon with silver gay, 10
Her sandals flowers of May,
Laced small and close.

Her belt was of fresh spring buds,
Set with gold clasps and studs,
Fine linen her shift; 15
Her purse it was of love,
Her chain was the flower thereof,
And love's gift.

Upon a mule she rode,
The selle was of brent gold, 20
The bits of silver made;
Three red rose trees there were
That overshadowed her,
For a sun shade.

She riding on a day, 25
Knights met her by the way,
They did her grace;
'Fair lady, whence be ye?'

‘France it is my countrie,
I come of a high race. 30

‘My sire is the nightingale,
That sings, making his wail,
In the wild wood, clear;
The mermaid is mother to me,
That sings in the salt sea, 35
In the ocean mere.’

‘Ye come of a right good race,
And are born of a high place,
And of high degree;
Would to God that ye were 40
Given unto me, being fair,
My lady and love to be.’

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