

Andrew Lang (1844-1912)

7 *The Young Ruthven*

The King has gi'en the Queen a gift,  
For her May-day's propine,  
He's gi'en her a band o' the diamond-stane,  
Set in the siller fine.

The Queen she walked in *Falkland* yaird, 5  
Beside the Hollans green,  
And there she saw the bonniest man  
That ever her eyes had seen.

His coat was the Ruthven white and red,  
Sae sound asleep was he 10  
The Queen she cried on May Beatrix,  
That seely lad to see.

“Oh! wha sleeps here, May Beatrix,  
Without the leave o' me?”  
“Oh! wha suld it be but my young brother 15  
Frae *Padua* ower the sea!

“My father was the Earl Gowrie,  
An Earl o' high degree,  
But they hae slain him by fause treason,  
And gar'd my brothers flee. 20

“At *Padua* hae they learned their leir  
In the fields o' *Italie*;  
And they hae crossed the saut sea-faem,  
And a' for love o' me!”

\* \* \* \*

The Queen has cuist her siller band 25  
About his craig o' snaw;  
But still he slept and naething kened,

Aneth the Hollans shaw.

The King he daundered thro' the yaird,  
He saw the siller shine; 30  
“And wha,” quoth he, “is this galliard  
That wears yon gift o' mine?”

The King has gane till the Queen's ain bower,  
An angry man that day;  
But bye there cam' May Beatrix 35  
And stole the band away.

And she's run in by the dern black yett,  
Straight till the Queen ran she:  
“Oh! tak ye back your siller band,  
Or it gar my brother dee!” 40

The Queen has linked her siller band  
About her middle sma';  
And then she heard her ain gudeman  
Come rowting through the ha'.

“Oh! whare,” he cried, “is the siller band 45  
I gied ye late yestreen?  
The knops was a' o' the diamond stane,  
Set in the siller sheen.”

“Ye hae camped birling at the wine,  
A' nicht till the day did daw; 50  
Or ye wad ken your siller band  
About my middle sma'!”

The King he stude, the King he glowered,  
Sae hard as a man nicht stare:  
“Deil hae me! Like is a richt ill mark, — 55  
Or I saw it itherwhere!

“I saw it round young Ruthven's neck  
As he lay sleeping still;  
And, faith, but the wine was wondrous guid,  
Or my wife is wondrous ill!” 60

\* \* \* \*

There was na gane a week, a week,  
A week but barely three;  
The King has hounded John Ramsay out,  
To gar young Ruthven dee!

They took him in his brother's house, 65  
Nae sword was in his hand,  
And they hae slain him, young Ruthven,  
The bonniest in the land!

And they hae slain his fair brother,  
And laid him on the green, 70  
And a' for a band o' the siller fine  
And a blink o' the eye o' the Queen!

Oh! had they set him man to man,  
Or even ae man to three,  
There was na a knight o' the Ramsay bluid 75  
Had gar'd Earl Gowrie dee!

*1902*

(From *New Collected Rhymes*. London: Longmans,  
Green, and Co., 1905)