

Unknown Artist, Adam Gorman

ADAM GORMAN

'Twas 'round about the Martin-mass,
When north winds froze the lake,
Said Adam Gorman to his men,
"We must some castle take!"
"And what brave castle shall we take,
My merry men and me?
We will go strait to Towie House,
And see that fair ladee."
The lady from her castle wall
Looked o'er both dale and down,
When she beheld a troop of men,
Fast riding through the town.
"O see you not, my merry men all,
See you not what I see?
Methinks I see a troop of men;
I wonder who they be?"
She thought it was her loving lord,
Who homeward riding came.
It was the traitor, Adam,
Who feared not sin nor shame.
She had no sooner decked herself
In silken scarf and gown,
Than Adam Gorman, and his men,
Had close beset the town.
The lady went to her tow'r so high,
For she was in deep dismay;
To see if by fair speech she could
The traitor's purpose stay.
But when he saw the lady safe,
The gates and windows fast,
He fell into a deadly rage
And stormed at her aghast;
"Come down to me, thou lady gay,
Come down, come down to me;
This night thou shalt be in my arms,
Tomorrow my bride shalt be."
"I'll not come down, thou false Gorman
I'll not come down to thee;
I'll not forsake my own dear lord,
Tho' he is far from me."
"Give up thy house, thou lady fair,
Give up thy house to me!
Or I shall burn thysself therein,
With thy dear babies three."-
"I'll not give up, thou false Gorman.
Thy threatenings I deny.
If thou dost burn my babes and me,
Then, thou my lord, shall die."
"But reach and give me my pistol,
And charge with speed my gun,
For I must pierce that savage dog
Or we shall be undone."
She from the battlements took aim
As true as she could see;
Two bullets missed the traitor's heart,
One only grazed his knee.
"Now fire the house," cried false Gorman
Enraged with vengeful ire;
False lady thou shalt rue this deed,
When shrieking in the fire."
"Woe unto thee, woe unto thee,
I paid thee well thy fee;
Why then pull out the ground wall stone

That lets in smoke to me?"
"That thou didst pay my fee and hire,
Full well, I can't deny;
Yet now I'm Adam Gorman's man
I must obey or die."-
O then did speak her little son,
Upon his nurse's knee,
"O mother, dear, give up this house,
The smoke it smothers me."
"I would give all my gold, my child,
And likewise all my fee
For one blast of the western wind,
To blow the smoke from thee"
O then bespoke her daughter dear,
So slender, fair, and small,
"O roll me in a pair of sheets
And throw me o'er the wall."
They rolled her in a pair of sheets
And threw her o'er the wall,
But on the point of Gorman's spear
She got a deadly fall.
O lovely, lovely was her mouth:
Her cheeks were like the rose
And clear, clear was her yellow hair,
Whereon the red blood flows.
Then with his spear he turned her o'er
O how her face was wan!
"I might have spared that lovely face
To be some man's delight."
"Prepare, prepare, my merry men all,
Ill tidings I do guess:
I cannot see that lovely face
So pale upon the grass."
"Who looks for grief, my master, dear,
Grief still will follow them :
Shall it be said that Gorman bold
Was daunted by this dame?"
But when the lady saw the fire
Come flaming o'er her head,
She wept, and kissed her children dear;
"My babes will soon be dead."-
Then Gorman did his bugle blow
And said, "Away, away!
Since Towie House is all in flames,
We must no longer stay."
And then looked up her own dear lord,
As he came o'er the lea;
He saw his castle in a blaze
As far as he could see.
Then sorely did his mind misgave,
And his heart was full of woe:
"Put on, put on, my trusty men
As fast as you can go!"
"For life and death, my trusty men,
Put on, put on, amain !
For he that doth the hindmost lag
Shall ne'er my favor gain."
Then some did ride, and some did run
No swifter flew the wind;
For each cried, "Woe upon the head
Of him who lags behind."-
But e'er the foremost could come up,
The flames had spread so wide,
The tender babes were burnt alive.
Their mother with them died.

Her lord did wildly rent his hair
And wept in woeful mood :
"Ah, traitors, for this cruel deed
You shall weep tears of blood."-
Full fast false Gorman he pursu'd
With many a bitter tear,
And in his cowardly own heart's blood
Revenged his lady dear.

Child #178

From Ballads Migrant in New England, Flanders

Collected from Lily DeLorme, Cadyville, NY 1943

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