

Faith's Lesson Learned

Words and Music: Conn MacNiell

The musical score is written on three staves in 7/8 time. The melody is simple and folk-like. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first line of music ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign, with two endings marked '1.' and '2.'. The second and third lines of music continue the melody and lyrics.

With fresh horse and har-ness, My ar-mour bright bur-nished, Our ships tossed by tem-pest, Made sa - il for the East.
The Cross I had tak - en, And all else for - sak - en, To win from the Pay-nim, The places most ho - ly.

Our priests said the foe - men were de - mons, de - mons, That we fought at God's right hand,
That Jer - u - sa - lem flowed with milk and hon - ey, With prayers and e - la - tion the jour - ney be - gan.

With fresh horse and harness,
My armour bright bunished,
Our ships tossed by tempest,
Made sail for the East.
The Cross I had taken,
And all else forsaken,
To win from the Paynim,
The places most holy.
Our priests said the foemen were demons, demons,
That we fought at God's right hand,
That Jerusalem flowed with milk and honey,
With prayers and elation
the journey began.

In Sicily Tancred,
By greed was enchanted,
Anon he recanted
Compelled by armored might.
The usurper Comnenus,
Brought armed men against us,
So losing fair Cyprus,
In silver chains he died.
The men of the islands are Christians, Christians,
Now I've their blood on my hands,
In repentance I lie at the foot of the altar,
I am torn between god's laws
and my captain's commands.

The arrows of Seljuks,
And blades of the Mameluks,
Did fall on my hauberk,
Like icy winter rain.
Yet proof was my armour,
My sword arm the stronger,
Full bested in barter,
In wounds and souls they paid.
Wearily riding through fire and slaughter,
The bodies lie strewn on the sand,
This day we're the victors, tomorrow the vanquished,
For we look not to God's Grace,
but the blades in our hands.

Now lord of a manor,
Rich lands 'neath my banner,
The harvest I gather,
The warlike host I lead.
I see from my castle,
Men I met in battle,
Who now my sworn vassals,
Serve well and faithfully.
I find that these men live with honour, honour,
There is strength in their minds and their hands,
Brave and true whether plowing or slaying,
They are steady and stalwart
as any from France.

As one day I rode hunting,
My leopards swift running,
An ambushade cunning,
By rival lord was laid.
As we stood surrounded,
A Paynim horn sounded,
The hound now was hounded,
My rival's hunt was stayed.
My life was redeemed by a Paynim, Paynim,
My death by a Christian was planned,
Now I judge a man by his worth and his honour,
Though a lesson long learning,
I now understand.