

Mantle So Green

F C F C F A

As I was walking one morning in June.

F C F C

To view the gay fields and meadows in bloom,

F C F C

I espied a young female, she appeared like a queen,

Am G F G Am

With costly fine robes, and a mantle so green.

I stood in amazement and was struck with surprise,

I thought her an angel that fell from the skies,

Her eyes were like diamonds, her cheeks like the rose,

She is one of the fairest that nature composed.

I said, "My pretty fair maid, if you will come with me,

We both join in wedlock, and married we will be;

I'll dress you in rich vesture, and you'll appear like a queen,

With costly fine robes and your mantle so green.

She answered me, "Young man, you must me excuse,

For I'll wed with no man, you must be refused;

To the woods I will wander, to shun all men's view,

For the lad that I love was at famed Waterloo.

"Oh then, if you won't marry, tell me your love's name,
For I being in battle, I might know the same."

"Draw near to my garment and there will be seen
His name is embroidered on my mantle of green."

In the raising of her mantle, there I did behold,

His name and his surname were in letters of gold;

Young William O'Reilly appeared to my view,

He was my chief comrade in famed Waterloo.

"We fought so victorious where bullets did fly

In the far field of honour your true love does lie,

We fought for three days, until the fourth afternoon,

He received his death summons on the 16th of June.

But when he was dying I heard his last cry,

'If you were you here, lovely Nancy, contented I'd die;'

Now Peace is proclaimed, and the truth I declare,

Here is your love token, the gold ring I wear."

The longer she viewed it the paler she grow,

She flew into his arms, with a heart full of woe ;

To the green woods I'll wander, for the boy that I love,

Rise up, lovely Nancy, your grief I'll remove.

Oh Nancy, dear Nancy,, 'tis I won your heart

In your father's garden the day we did part.

Now the wars are all over, no trouble is seen

And I'll wed with my true love in her mantle so green.

This couple got married, I heard people say,

They had nobles attending on their wedding day ;

Peace is proclaimed, and the war is all o'er,

You are welcome to my arms Nancy, for evermore.

The Mantle So Green, which has been recorded by Sinead O'Connor, is from a long tradition of early 19th century songs about women remaining constant to lovers who had gone abroad to fight in British wars.

This song is slightly different though because it can be interpreted in different ways and may have echoes of the supernatural.

It is certainly more intriguing than more straightforward songs about separated lovers such as A Lady Fair and Fair Maid Walking. For more information about A Mantle So Green, visit <http://www.irishmusicforever.com/mantle-so-green>

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