

The World Turned Upside Down

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John Renfro Davis

Information	Lyrics
<p>Tradition has it that when Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown (1781) the British played this tune. There is some debate as to whether that is myth or fact.</p> <p>The ballad was first published on a broadside in 1643 to be sung to the tune When the King Enjoys His Own Again. It was a protest against the ending of all the favorite English Christmas traditions which he feels were destroyed by Cromwell's victory at the Battle of Naseby (1645) (see link to blackletter ballads for lyrics from 1646). In America the tune was also known as <i>Derry Down</i> and <i>The Old Women Taught Wisdom</i>.</p> <p>I have included two versions here (because one is only one verse). In the second version, the mother is England, the daughter is the colonies and the farmer who tries to make peace is William Pitt, former Prime Minister and a prominent member of Parliament at the time.</p> <p>For more information on the tune, another version and When the King Enjoys His Own Again see the links to Bruce Olsen's website below.</p>	<p>Version 1</p> <p>If buttercups buzz'd after the bee, If boats were on land, churches on sea, If ponies rode men and if grass ate the cows, And cats should be chased into holes by the mouse, If the mamas sold their babies To the gypsies for half a crown; If summer were spring and the other way round, Then all the world would be upside down.</p> <p>Version 2</p> <p>Goody Bull and her daughter together fell out, Both squabbled and wrangled and made a great rout. But the cause of the quarrel remains to be told, Then lend both your ears and a tale I'll unfold. Derry down, down, hey derry down, Then lend both your ears and a tale I'll unfold.</p> <p>The old lady, it seems, took a freak in her head, That her daughter, grown woman, might earn her own bread, Self-applauding her scheme, she was ready to dance, But we're often too sanguine in what we advance. Derry down, down, hey derry down, But we're often too sanguine in what we advance.</p> <p>For mark the event, thus for fortune we're cross, Nor should people reckon without their good host, The daughter was sulky and wouldn't come to, And pray what in this case could the old woman do? Derry down, down, hey derry down, And pray what in this case could the old woman do?</p> <p>Zounds, neighbor, quoth pitt, what the devil's the matter? A man cannot rest in his home for your clatter Alas, cries the daughter, Here's dainty fine work, The old woman grows harder than Jew or than Turk Derry down, down, hey derry down, The old woman grows harder than Jew or than Turk.</p> <p>She be damned, says the farmer, and do her he goes First roars in her ears, then tweaks her old nose, Hello Goody, what ails you? Wake woman, I say, I am come to make peace in this desperate fray. Derry down, down, hey derry down, I am come to make peace in this desperate fray.</p> <p>Alas, cries the old woman, And must I comply? I'd rather submit than the hussy should die. Pooh, prithee, be quiet, be friends and agree, You must surely be right if you're guided by me, Derry down, down, hey derry down, You must surely be right if you're guided by me.</p>
<p>Related Links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The World Turned Upside Down Words from an early black letter ballad with some explanation.• William Pitt	

Excellent information with black and white portrait

- [Archiving America](#)
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1st Version From *Burl Ives Songbook*

Second Version from:

Colonial and Revolution Songbook

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