The Cumberland's Crew - song lyrics

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The Cumberland's Crew.

Oh! shipmates, come, gather, and join in my ditty.
It's of a terrible battle that happened of late;
Let each good Union-Tar shed a sad tear of pity,
When he thinks of the once gallant Cumberland's fate.
The Eighth day of March told a terrible story.
And many a brave tar to this world bid adieu!
Yet our flag it was wrapt in a mantle of glory,
By the heroic deeds of the Cumberlands crew.

On that ill-fated day about ten in the morning,
The sky it was clear, and bright shone the sun;
The drums of the Cumberland sounded a warning,
That told every seaman to stand by his gun.
An iron-clad frigate down on us came bearing.
And high in the air the rebel flag flew;
The pennant of treason she proudly was waving.
Determined to conquer the Cumberland's crew.

Then up spoke our captain with stern resolution,
Saying: My boys, of this monster now don't be dismayed!
We swore to maintain our beloved Constitution,
And to die for our country we are not afraid!
We fight for the Union, our cause it is glorious,
To the stars and the stripes we will stand ever true.
We'll sink at our quarters, or conquer victorious!
Was answered with cheers from the Cumberland's crew.

Now our gallant ship fired her guns' dreadful thunder.
Her broad-side, like hail, on the Rebel did pour;
The people gazed on, struck with terror and wonder-
The shots struck her sides and glanced harmless o'er-
But the pride of our navy could never be daunted,
Tho' the dead and the wounded her deck they did strew;
And the flag of our Union how proudly it flaunted.
Sustained by the blood of the Cumberland's crew.

Slowly they sunk beneath Virginia's waters,
Their voices on earth will ne'er be heard more-
They'll be wept by Columbia's brave sons and fair daughters!
May their blood be avenged on Virginia's shore!-
In that battle-stained grave they are silently lying-
Their souls have forever to earth bid adieu!
But the star-spangled banner above them is flying;
It was nailed to the mast by the Cumberland's crew.

They fought us three hours with stern resolution,
Till those rebels found cannon would never avail them;
For the flag of secession has no power to gall them,
Tho' the blood from their scuppers it crimson'd the tide,
She struck us amidst-ship, our planks she did sever,
Her sharp iron prong pierced our noble ship through:
And still, as she sank on that dark rolling river,
We'll die at our guns! cried the Cumberland's crew.

Columbia's sweet birth-right of freedom's communion.
Thy flag never floated so proudly before;
For the spirits of those that died for our Union,
Above its broad folds now exaltingly soar!-
And when our sailors in battle assemble,
God bless our dear banner, the red, white and blue!
Beneath its bright stars we'll cause tyrants to tremble,
Or sink at our guns like the Cumberland's crew.