

Sweet William's Farewell to Black-Eyed Susan

by *John Gray*

All in the Downs the fleet was moored,
The streamers waving in the wind,
When black-eyed Susan came aboard.
"Oh! where shall I my true love find?
Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true,
If my sweet William sails among the crew."

William, who, high upon the yard,
Rocked with the billow to and fro,
Soon as her well-known voice he heard,
He sighed and cast his eyes below:
The cord slides swiftly through his glowing
hands,
And (quick as lightning) on the deck he
stands.

So the sweet lark, high-poised in air,
Shuts close his pinions to his breast
(If, chance, his mate's shrill call he hear)
And drops at once into her nest.
The noblest captain in the British fleet
Might envy William's lip those kisses sweet.

"O Susan, Susan, lovely dear,
My vows shall ever true remain;
Let me kiss off that falling tear,
We only part to meet again.
Change, as ye list, ye winds; my heart shall
be
The faithful compass that still points to thee.

"Believe not what the landmen say,
Who tempt with doubts thy constant mind:
They'll tell thee, sailors, when away,
In ev'ry port a mistress find.
Yes, yes, believe them when they tell thee
so,

For thou art present wheresoe'er I go.
"If to far India's coast we sail,
Thy eyes are seen in di'monds bright,
Thy breath is Africk's spicy gale,
Thy skin is ivory, so white.
Thus ev'ry beauteous object that I view
Wakes in my soul some charm of lovely Sue.

"Though battle call me from thy arms,
Let not my pretty Susan mourn;
Though cannons roar, yet safe from harms
William shall to his dear return.
Love turns aside the balls that round me fly,
Lest precious tears should drop from
Susan's eye.

The boatswain gave the dreadful word,
The sails their swelling bosom spread,
No longer must she stay aboard:
They kissed, she sighed, he hung his head.
Her less'ning boat unwilling rows to land:
"Adieu!" she cries; and waves her lily hand.