

SWEET WILLIAM'S FAREWELL TO BLACK-EY'D SUSAN: A BALLET

JOHN GAY

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All in the Downs the fleet was moor'd,
The streamers waving in the wind,
When black-ey'd 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,
Rock'd with the billow to and fro,
Soon as her well-known voice he heard,
He sigh'd, 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 pois'd 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 Afric's spicy gale,

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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 kiss'd, she sigh'd, he hung his head.
Her less'ning boat, unwilling rows to land:
"Adieu", she cries! and wav'd her lily hand.