

John Stuart Blackie (1809-95)

3 *The Two Meek Margarets*

It fell on a day in the blooming month of May,  
When the trees were greenly growing,  
That a captain grim went down to the brim  
O' the sea, when the tide was flowing.

Twa maidens he led, that captain grim, 5  
Wi' his red-coat loons behind him,  
Twa meek-faced maids, and he sware that he  
In the salt sea-swell should bind them.

And a' the burghers o' Wigton town  
Came down, full sad and cheerless, 10  
To see that ruthless captain drown  
These maidens meek, but fearless.

O what had they done, these maidens meek,  
What crime all crimes excelling,  
That they should be staked on the ribbed sea-sand, 15  
And drowned, where the tide was swelling?

O wae's me, wae! but the truth I maun say!  
Their crime was the crime of believing  
Not man, but God, when the last false Stuart  
His Popish plot was weaving. 20

O spare them! spare them! thou captain grim!  
No! no! — to a stake he hath bound them,  
Where the floods as they flow, and the waves as they grow,  
Shall soon be deepening round them.

The one had threescore years and three; 25  
Far out on the sand they bound her,  
Where the first dark flow of the waves as they grow  
Is quickly swirling round her.

The other was a maiden fresh and fair;  
More near to the land they bound her, 30

That she might see by slow degree  
The grim waves creeping round her.

O captain, spare that maiden grey,  
She's deep in the deepening water!  
No! no! — she's lifted her hands to pray, 35  
And the choking billow caught her!

See, see, young maid, cried the captain grim,  
The wave shall soon ride o'er thee!  
She's swamped in the brine whose sin was like thine;  
See that same fate before thee! 40

I see the Christ who hung on a tree  
When His life for sins He offered;  
In one of His members, even He  
With that meek maid hath suffered.

O captain, save that meek young maid; 45  
She's a loyal farmer's daughter!  
Well, well! let her swear to good King James,  
And I'll hale her out from the water!

I will not swear to Popish James,  
But I pray for the head of the nation, 50  
That he and all, both great and small,  
May know God's great salvation!

She spoke; and lifted her hands to pray,  
And felt the greedy water,  
Deep and more deep, around her creep, 55  
Till the choking billow caught her!

O Wigton, Wigton! I'm wae to sing  
The truth o' this waesome story;  
But God will sinners to judgment bring,  
And His saints shall reign in glory. 60

1860

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