

Thomas Hood (1799-1845)

6 *Faithless Sally Brown*

An Old Ballad

Young Ben he was a nice young man,
A carpenter by trade;
And he fell in love with Sally Brown,
That was a lady's maid.

But as they fetch'd a walk one day, 5
They met a press-gang crew;
And Sally she did faint away,
Whilst Ben he was brought to.

The Boatswain swore with wicked words,
Enough to shock a saint, 10
That though she did seem in a fit,
'Twas nothing but a feint.

'Come, girl,' said he, 'hold up your head,
He'll be as good as me;
For when your swain is in our boat, 15
A boatswain he will be.'

So when they'd made their game of her,
And taken off her elf,
She roused, and found she only was
A coming to herself. 20

'And is he gone, and is he gone?'
She cried, and wept outright:
'Then I will to the water side,
And see him out of sight.'

A waterman came up to her, — 25
'Now, young woman,' said he,
'If you weep on so, you will make
Eye-water in the sea.'

'Alas! they've taken my beau Ben
To sail with old Benbow;' 30
And her woe began to run afresh,
As if she'd said Gee woe!

Says he, 'They've only taken him
To the Tender ship, you see;' 35
'The Tender-ship,' cried Sally Brown,
'What a hard-ship that must be!'

'O! would I were a mermaid now,
For then I'd follow him;
But Oh! — I'm not a fish-woman,
And so I cannot swim. 40

'Alas! I was not born beneath
The virgin and the scales,
So I must curse my cruel stars,
And walk about in Wales.'

Now Ben had sail'd to many a place 45
That's underneath the world;
But in two years the ship came home,
And all her sails were furl'd.

But when he call'd on Sally Brown,
To see how she went on, 50
He found she'd got another Ben,
Whose Christian-name was John.

'O Sally Brown, O Sally Brown,
How could you serve me so?
I've met with many a breeze before, 55
But never such a blow:'

Then reading on his 'bacco box
He heaved a bitter sigh,
And then began to eye his pipe,
And then to pipe his eye. 60

And then he tried to sing 'All's Well,'
But could not though he tried;
His head was turn'd, and he chew'd
His pigtail till he died.

His death, which happen'd in his berth, 65
At forty-odd befell:
They went and told the sexton, and
The sexton toll'd the bell.

1822

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