

W. M. Thackeray (1811-63)

10 *Little Billee*

AIR — “Il y avait un petit navire.”

There were three sailors of Bristol city  
Who took a boat and went to sea.  
But first with beef and captain's biscuits  
And pickled pork they loaded she.

There was gorging Jack and guzzling Jimmy, 5  
And the youngest he was little Billee.  
Now when they got as far as the Equator  
They'd nothing left but one split pea.

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,  
“I am extremely hungaree.” 10  
To gorging Jack says guzzling Jimmy,  
“We've nothing left, us must eat we.”

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,  
“With one another we shouldn't agree!  
There's little Bill, he's young and tender, 15  
We're old and tough, so let's eat he.

“Oh! Billy, we're going to kill and eat you,  
So undo the button of your chemie.”  
When Bill received this information  
He used his pocket-handkerchie. 20

“First let me say my catechism,  
Which my poor mammy taught to me.”  
“Make haste, make haste,” says guzzling Jimmy,  
While Jack pulled out his snickersnee.

So Billy went up to the main-top gallant mast, 25  
And down he fell on his bended knee.  
He scarce had come to the twelfth commandment

When up he jumps, “There’s land I see:

“Jerusalem and Madagascar,  
And North and South Amerikee: 30  
There’s the British flag a-riding at anchor,  
With Admiral Napier, K.C.B.”

So when they got aboard of the Admiral’s  
He hanged fat Jack and flogged Jimmee;  
But as for little Bill he made him 35  
The Captain of a Seventy-three.

*1849*

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