

W. M. Thackeray (1811-63)

2 *The Ballad of Eliza Davis*

Galliant gents and lovely ladies,  
List a tail vich late befel,  
Vich I heard it, bein on duty,  
At the Pleace Hoffice, Clerkenwell.

Praps you know the Fondling Chapel, 5  
Vere the little children sings:  
(Lor! I likes to hear on Sundies  
Them there pooty little things!)

In this street there lived a housemaid,  
If you particklarly ask me where — 10  
Vy, it vas at four-and-tventy  
Guilford Street, by Brunsvick Square.

Vich her name was Eliza Davis,  
And she went to fetch the beer:  
In the street she met a party 15  
As was quite surprized to see her.

Vich he vas a British Sailor,  
For to judge him by his look:  
Tarry jacket, canvass trowsies,  
Ha-la Mr. T. P. Cooke. 20

Presently this Mann accostes  
Of this hinnocent young gal —  
“Pray,” saysee, “excuse my freedom,  
You’re so like my Sister Sal!

“You’re so like my Sister Sally, 25  
Both in valk and face and size,  
Miss, that — dang my old lee scuppers,  
It brings tears into my heyes!

“I’m a mate on board a wessel,  
I’m a sailor bold and true; 30  
Shiver up my poor old timbers,  
Let me be a mate for you!

“What’s your name, my beauty, tell me;”  
And she faintly hangers, “Lore,  
Sir, my name’s Eliza Davis, 35  
And I live at twenty-four.”

Hofttimes came this British seaman,  
This deluded gal to meet;  
And at twenty-four was welcome,  
Twenty-four in Guilford Street. 40

And Eliza told her Master  
(Kinder they than Missuses are),  
How in marridge he had ast her,  
Like a galliant British Tar.

And he brought his landlady vith him 45  
(Vich vas all his hartful plan),  
And she told how Charley Thompson  
Reely vas a good young man;

And how she herself had lived in  
Many years of union sweet 50  
Vith a gent she met promiskous,  
Valkin in the public street.

And Eliza listened to them,  
And she thought that soon their bands  
Would be published at the Fondlin, 55  
Hand the clergyman jine their ands.

And he ast about the lodgers  
(Vich her master let some rooms),  
Likevise vere they kep their things, and  
Vere her master kep his spoons. 60

Hand this vicked Charley Thompson

Came on Sundy veek to see her;  
And he sent Eliza Davis  
Hout to fetch a pint of beer.

Hand while pore Eliza vent to 65  
Fetch the beer, dewoid of sin,  
This etrocious Charley Thompson  
Let his wile accomplish hin.

To the lodgers, their apartments, 70  
This abandingd female goes,  
Prigs their shirts and umberellas;  
Prigs their boots, and hats, and clothes.

Vile the scoundrle Charley Thompson,  
Lest his wictim should escape,  
Hocust her with rum and vater, 75  
Like a fiend in huming shape.

But a hi was fixt upon 'em  
Vich these raskles little sore;  
Namely, Mr. Hide, the landlord 80  
Of the house at twenty-four.

He vas valking in his garden,  
Just afore he vent to sup;  
And on looking up he sor the  
Lodgers' vinders lighted hup.

Hup the stairs the landlord tumbled; 85  
"Something's going wrong," he said;  
And he caught the vicked voman  
Underneath the lodgers' bed.

And he called a brother Pleaseman, 90  
Vich vas passing on his beat,  
Like a true and galliant feller,  
Hup and down in Guilford Street.

And that Pleaseman able-bodied  
Took this voman to the cell;

To the cell vere she was quodded, 95  
In the Close of Clerkenwell.

And though vicked Charley Thompson  
Boulted like a miscrant base,  
Presently another Pleaseman  
Took him to the self-same place. 100

And this precious pair of raskles  
Tuesday last came up for doom;  
By the beak they was committed,  
Vich his name was Mr. Combe.

Has for poor Eliza Davis, 105  
Simple gurl of tventy-four,  
*She*, I ope, vill never listen  
In the streets to sailors moar.

But if she must ave a sweet-art  
(Vich most every gurl expex), 110  
Let her take a jolly pleaseman;  
Vich his name peraps is — X.

*1850*

(From *The Works of William Makepeace Thackeray*. Vol. 13.  
London: Smith, Elder, & C., 1899)