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THE DEATH OF

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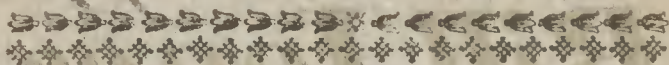
Bill Jones

A Tale of Terror.



GLASGOW:

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Bill Jones.

Now, well-a-day! the sailor said,
Some danger must impend;
Three Ravens sit in yonder glade,
Some evil will happen I'm sore afraid,
E'er we reach our journey's end.

And what has the Ravens with us to do do,
Does their sight then bode us evil?
Why to meet with one Raven is lucky its true,
But 'tis certain misfortune to light upon two,
And meeting with three is the devil!

I have known full threecore years go by,
And only twice before
I've seen three Ravens near me fly,
And twice good cause to wish had I
That I never might see them more.

The first time I was wreck'd at sea,
The second time by fire
I lost my wife and children three
That self-same night, and woe is me
That I did not then expire.

Still do I hear their screams for aid,
 Which to give was past man's power,
 I saw in the earth their coffins laid,
 Well! my heart of marble must be made,
 That it did not break that hour.

Poor soul, your tale of many woes
 Brings tears into my eyes;
 But think you that such ills arose,
 Because you saw your fancied foes,
 Three Ravens by you fly.

No doubt since these fantastic fears
 Has thus possess'd your head,
 You firmly believe that Ghosts appear,
 And that dead men leave the blood-stain'd bier,
 To haunt the Murderer's bed.

Believe it! Master, well I may;—
 Now mark what I relate,
 For gospel-true are the words I say,
 When I swear that for three weeks and a day
 A Ghost was my own shipmate.

My cash run low, no flesh, no flip,
 And the times were hard to live,
 So I e'en resolv'd to make a trip
 For slaves on board a Guinea Ship,
 Which crime may heav'n forgive.

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O! tis a sad, sad thing to hear
The Negroes scream and groan,
And curse the billows that bear them near,
To the tyrant white man's land of fear,
Far, far away from their own.

But soon the sailor found his part
Scarce better than the slave's;
For our Captain had a Tyger's heart,
He plagu'd his crew with such barbarous art,
We all wish'd in our graves.

We scarce were two days sail'd from port,
When many a back was flay'd,
He plagued us oft in wanton sport,
His heart was of stone, not flesh, in short
He was fit for such a trade. 5

Though each in turn was treated ill,
'Mongst all the crew alone,
Bill Jones oppos'd our tyrant's will,
For Bill was old, and 'cross, and still
Bill gave him back his own.

And many a brutal harsh command
Old Bill had grumbled at,
Till once he was ordered a sail to hand,
When Bill was so weak he scarce could stand,
But the Captain scoff'd at that.

For a lazy old dog poor Bill he abus'd,
 And he forc'd him aloft to go,
 When their duty to do his limbs they refus'd,
 And at length from the ropes his hands he loos'd,
 And he fell on the deck below.

Towards him straight the Captain flew,
 Crying, Dog dost thou use me so:
 And with dev'lish spite his sword he drew,
 And he cut Bill Jones quite through and through,
 And the blow was a mortal blow.

At the point of death poor Bill now lies,
 And he stains the deck with gore,
 And fixing his own on his murderer's eyes,
 Captain, dead or alive, he cries,
 I never will leave you more.

You wont, saith the Captain, time will show,
 If you keep your word or not,
 Meantime in the Negroes' kettle below.
 Old dog your rascally bones I will throw
 And see what fat you have got.

So he ordered the cook to make water hot,
 And the corps both flesh and bones
 The Captain boil'd in the Negroes' pot
 To see what fat Bill Jones had got,
 But there was not much fat on Jones.

If well his word the Captain kept,
 Bill Jones kept his as well;
 For just at midnight all that slept,
 With an accord from their hammocks leapt,
 Rous'd by a dreadful yell!

Never was heard such a terrible sound,
 And fast to the deck each hied,
 When by the moon-light beams we found,
 The murder'd man in spite of his wound,
 Sit close by the steerman's side.

And from that hour among the rest,
 Bill serv'd, nor left us more,
 With bloody trowsers, bloody vest,
 And bloody shirt, and bloody breast,
 Still he stood our eyes before.

And he'd clean the deck, and fill the pail,
 And work with right good will,
 To stop a leak, or draw a nail,
 But when the business was handing a sail,
 Then specially ready was Bill.

And to share in all things with the crew
 Did the spectre never miss,
 And when to the cook for his portion due
 Each sailor went, Bill Jones went too,
 And tendered his platter for his.

His face look'd pale, his limbs seem'd weak,
And his footsteps fell so still,
That to hear them sound you'd vainly seek,
And to none of the crew did Bill ere speak,
And none of us spokē to Bill.

But when three weeks had pass'd away,
Just as you now have heard,
The Captain came on deck one day,
Quoth he, My lads, I've something to say,
Bill Jones is as good as his word.

He never leaves me day nor night,
But haunts me, haunts me still,
At midnight hour I see the sprite,
And the morning sky grows light,
The first sun-beam shows me Bill.

At meal, his pale lips speak the grace,
His cold hands gives the wine,
At every hour, in every place,
Which ever side I turn my face,
Bill's eyes are fixt on mine.

Now lads, my resolution's made,
One means shall set me free,
And Bill's pursuits for ever evade—
He comes! He comes! away, he said,
And plung'd into the sea.

None mov'd a joint the wretch to save,
 ;All stood with staring eyes;
 Each clasp'd his hands, a groan each gave,
 When on a sudden upon a wave,
 The Captain once more did rise.

Fearful and terrible was his eyes,
 And pale as death was his brow,
 And we saw him clasp his hands on high,
 And we heard him scream with a terrible cry,
 By G-d, Bill's got me now.

Then down he sunk through the foaming flood,
 To hell that worst of havens;
 So heaven preserve you, Master good,
 From raging storms, and innocent blood,
 And meeting with three Ravens.

FINIS.