

The "Bride" O' Leith

By Cicely Fox Smith

The "Bride" o' Leith swings out to sea,
Breasting the snow-white foam,
And the pier is thronged with waving hands,
For she has far to roam;
Her sails are white in the morning light:
God send her safely home!

The captain's wife is lone at home,
She spins full wearily,
And night and morn she knells and prays,
(So slow the moments flee),
"God prosper all good mariners
That sail upon the sea!"

The "Bride" o' Leith steers home again,
Not lightly does she ride,
There's goodly cargo in her hold,
There's blood upon her side:
In the trough of the sea her laden keel
Rolls in the plunging tide.

There are folks who watch for a ship that ne'er
Comes up within their ken,
Who watch for a goodly merchantman
That shall ne'er come home again:
There are maids in Portsmouth town to-day
That weep for murdered men.

The night was dark and the waves ran high,
And loud the storm-wind's roar,
And white and aghast, with one accord
The frightened seamen swore
They saw thro' the mist-rack and the rain
A ship that went before.

No lights shone out from her looming side,
No lamp at her masthead;
No hail came over the boiling surf
From the vessel of the dead;
And a dead man stood at the helm and steered,
And the waves in her wake were red.

And, cowering down on the wave-swept decks,
Betwixt the night and morn,
They saw the hull of a drifting ship
Close on them swiftly borne,
That the "Bride" o' Leith robbed days ago,
And left to sink forlorn.

The "Bride" o' Leith lies sunken deep,
The avenger lieth nigh,
Thro' rotting spar and sail and rope
The shuddering tides drive by,
And none shall know till the judgment day
Where those who manned her lie.