

BABETTE'S LOVE

by W. S. Gilbert

BABETTE she was a fisher gal,
With jupon striped and cap in crimps.
She passed her days inside the Halle,
Or catching little nimble shrimps.
Yet she was sweet as flowers in May,
With no professional bouquet.

JACOT was, of the Customs bold,
An officer, at gay Boulogne,
He loved BABETTE--his love he told,
And sighed, "Oh, soyez vous my own!"
But "Non!" said she, "JACOT, my pet,
Vous êtes trop scraggy pour BABETTE.



"Of one alone I nightly dream,
An able mariner is he,
And gaily serves the Gen'ral Steam-
Boat Navigation Companee.
I'll marry him, if he but will--
His name, I rather think, is BILL.

“I see him when he's not aware,
Upon our hospitable coast,
Reclining with an easy air
Upon the Port against a post,
A-thinking of, I'll dare to say,
His native Chelsea far away!”

“Oh, mon!” exclaimed the Customs bold,
“Mes yeux!” he said (which means “my
eye”).
“Oh, chere!” he also cried, I'm told,
“Par Jove,” he added, with a sigh.
“Oh, mon! oh, chère! Mes yeux! par Jove!
Je n'aime pas cet enticing cove!”

The Panther's captain stood hard by,
He was a man of morals strict
If e'er a sailor winked his eye,
Straight way he had that sailor licked,
Mast-headed all (such was his code)
Who dashed or jiggered, blessed or blowed.

He wept to think a tar of his
Should lean so gracefully on posts,
He sighed and sobbed to think of this,
On foreign, French, and friendly coasts.
“It's human natur', p'raps--if so,
Oh, isn't human natur' low!”

He called his BILL, who pulled his curl,
He said, “My BILL, I understand
You've captivated some young gurl
On this here French and foreign land.
Her tender heart your beauties jog--
They do, you know they do, you dog.

“You have a graceful way, I learn,
Of leaning airily on posts,
By which you've been and caused to burn
A tender flame on these here coasts.
A fisher gurl, I much regret,--
Her age, sixteen--her name, BABETTE.

“You'll marry her, you gentle tar--
Your union I myself will bless,
And when you matrimonied are,
I will appoint her stewardess.”
But WILLIAM hitched himself and sighed,
And cleared his throat, and thus replied:

“Not so: unless you're fond of strife,
You'd better mind your own affairs,
I have an able-bodied wife
Awaiting me at Wapping Stairs;
If all this here to her I tell,
She'll larrup you and me as well.



“Skin-deep, and valued at a pin,
Is beauty such as VENUS owns--
Her beauty is beneath her skin,
And lies in layers on her bones.
The other sailors of the crew
They always calls her ‘Whopping Sue!’”

“Oho!” the Captain said, “I see!
And is she then so very strong?”
“She'd take your honour's scruff,” said he
“And pitch you over to Bolong!”
“I pardon you,” the Captain said,
“The fair BABETTE you needn't wed.”

Perhaps the Customs had his will,
And coaxed the scornful girl to wed,
Perhaps the Captain and his BILL,
And WILLIAM'S little wife are dead;
Or p'raps they're all alive and well.
I cannot, cannot, cannot tell.