



May Wilson Preston

The Tearful Tale of Captain Dan

WITH PICTURES BY MAY WILSON PRESTON

A SINNER was old Captain Dan;
His wives giv him no rest:
He had one wife to East Skiddaw
And one to Skiddaw West.

Now Ann Eliza was the name
Of her at East Skiddaw;
She was the most cantankerous
Female you ever saw.

I don't know but one crosser-grained,
And of this Captain Dan
She was the wife at Skiddaw West—
She was Eliza Ann.

Well, this old skeesicks, Captain Dan,
He owned a ferry-boat;
From East Skiddaw to Skiddaw West
That vessel used to float.

She was as trim a ferry-craft
As ever I did see,
And on each end a p'inted bow
And pilot-house had she.

She had two bows that way, so when
She went across the sound
She could, to oncet, run back ag'in
Without a-turnin' round.

Now Captain Dan he sailed that boat
For nigh on twenty year
Across that sound and back ag'in,
Like I have stated here.

And never oncet in all them years
Had Ann Eliza guessed

That Dan he had another wife
So nigh as Skiddaw West.

Likewise, Eliza Ann was blind,
Howas she never saw
As Dan he had another wife
Across to East Skiddaw.

The way he fooled them female wives
Was by a simple plan
That come-into the artful brain
Of that there Captain Dan.

With paint upon that ferry-craft,
In letters plain to see,
Upon the bow—to wit, both ends—
Her name he painted she.

Upon the bow toward East Skiddaw
This sinful Captain Dan
He painted just one single word—
The same which it was "Ann";

And on the bow toward Skiddaw West
He likewise put one name,
And not no more; and I will state
"Eliza" was that same.

Thus, when she berthed to Skiddaw West
Eliza Ann could see
How Dan for love and gratitood
Had named her after she;

And likewise when to East Skiddaw
That boat bow-foremost came,
His Ann Eliza plain could see
The vessel bore *her* name.



Thuswise for nigh on twenty year,
As I remarked before,
Dan cumfused them two wives
And sailed from shore to shore.

I reckon he might, to this day,
Have kept his sinful ways
And fooled them trustin' female wives,
Except there come a haze:

It was a thick November haze
Accompanied by frost,
And Dan, in steerin' 'crost the sound,
He got his bearin's lost.

So Dan he cast his anchor out,
And anchored on the sound;
And when the haze riz some next day,
His boat had swung clean round.

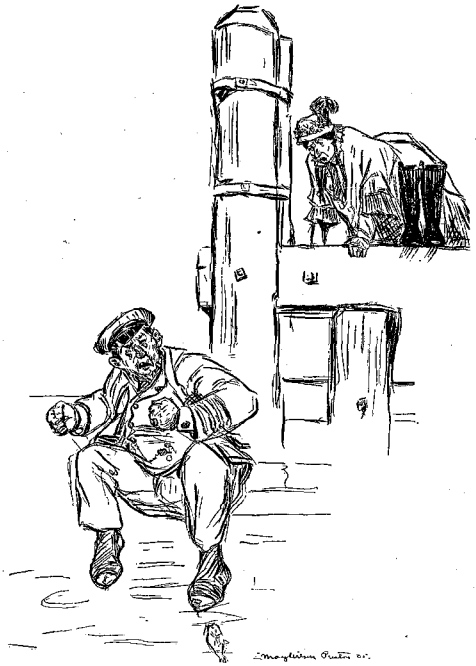
So, not bethinkin' how it was,
Dan steered for Skiddaw West;
For he had sot up all that night,
And shorely needed rest.

Well, when into his ferry-ship
His ferry-craft he ran,
Upon the shore he seen his wife:
To wit, Eliza Ann.



Says he, "I'll tie this vessel up
And rest about a week;
I need a rest," and 't was just then
He heard an awful shriek.

"O Villyun!" shrieked Eliza Ann.
"Oh! What—what do I see?
You don't not love me any more!
You 've done deserted me!"



She pointed to that ferry-craft
With one wild, vicious stare.
Dan looked and seen the telltale name
Of "Ann" a-painted there!

What could he do? He done his best!
"Lost! lost! Alas!" he cried;
And, kicking off his rubber boots,
Jumped overboard—and died!

Ellis Parker Butler.

Mandy's 'Cubatah

I WAS driving fast to avoid getting wet in a summer thunder-shower, when I heard a mellow negro voice call out:

"Drive right in heah, boss; dah 's plenty room fuh yo' hawse an' buggy undah dis shed."

I accepted the invitation and found that two colored men had already taken shelter there. As the shower passed over, one of the negroes left; he was a short man wearing a long ministerial coat. I remained, as I feared another shower any moment. The negro who still waited under the shed with me remarked:

"Mah ol' 'oman Mandy she sont me down heah to de stable to ketch huh some dem-late pulhits to sell to de huxtah-man dis evenin'."

"I hope it will soon clear off, and then you will have time before he comes by," I ventured.

"How 's I gwinetah ketch chickens w'en dat niggah stan' roun' heah wid one dese heah long draggely tail-coats on hisse'f?"