

Unknown Artist "A Gentleman Of Exeter"

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A Gentleman of Exeter
A gentleman of Exeter,
He had but one only daughter dear.
When she was scarce sixteen years of age,
Was courted by young lords and squires.
But none of them her mind could move.
At length a sea captain, he did prove
To be the master of her heart.
She often says, "We will never part."
A piece of gold he broke in two
Saying, "Love, I'll give this to you.
May the Lord's revengeance from above
Light on the man that slights true love."
"I wish the very same," says she,
"And if I ever prove false to you,
My body never might find no grave,
My soul no resting place might have."
The day before he sailed to sea
Unto his love he this did say,
"Remember me whilst I am gone,
It will comfort me if I'm left alone."
He had scarce been gone one month to sea
When that wicked creature she
Was courted by another man
And yielded him her heart and hand.
When hearing how her mind was bent,
A letter then to her he sent,
She came to him with scornful frown
Saying, "What winds brought you to town? "
Tears choked his speech. Nothing could he say.
Then from his arms she flew away.
She left him there to mourn alone.
Her heart was colder than a stone.
Early next morning as soon as 'twas light,
Another letter he did write,
And straight directed to his dear
And these are the lines, which you shall hear.
"You wretched creature of womankind,
What peace or comfort can you find
That so unconstant you have been?
How can you answer for all your sin? "
She took the letter with a scoff

And read it through, profanely lost,
Then in her pocket put the same,
Back to her company again.
It was on the very day he died
That she was made another's bride;
With joy and mirth the day was passed
But mark what sorrow came at last!
Day being past, night coming on,
Says she, "My dear, 'tis first to bed let me prepare
And then if you do wish to come ,
My maid shall light you to the room.
As being said, it was agreed
And they had just got into bed.
The maid took leave and turned downstairs
'Twas just this moment, his ghost appears.
"Your purched creature of womankind,
'Twas for your very sake I died.
Not all the love that I could give
How can you now expect to live? "
"Not all your screeches can you save;
This mortal body I must have.
To sleep with me this night in clay."
So then he took her straight away.
Her father cries, "She is undone."
Her husband then distracted run.
Come all fair maids, both young and old,
Don't break your vows for the sake of gold.
From New Green Mountain Songster, Flanders et al.
(Odd words are as recorded. Your guess is as good as
mine --RG)
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