

The Captain with his Whiskers (Thomas H. Bailey - 1830's)

*When the Warners collected this version from Lena B. Fish in NH in 1940, she told them, "...no man of this day and age could ever hope to find a girl to dance or keep company with him if his face was covered with whiskers. But in the good old days, whiskers were deemed to be an emblem of strength and manhood...". In the Warner's **Traditional American Folk Songs**.*

As they marched through the town with their banners so gay
I went to the window to hear the band play
And I peeped through the blinds very cautiously then,
Lest the neighbors should say I was looking at the men.
I heard the drum beat and the music so sweet,
But my eyes at that moment caught a much greater treat
For the troop was the first that ever I did see,
And the captain with his whiskers took a sly glance at me.

When we met at the ball, I of course thought it right
To pretend that we never had met until that night.
But he knew me at once, I perceived at a glance,
So I hung down my head when he asked me to dance.
He sat by my side at the end of the set,
And the sweet words he told me, I never shall forget.
For my heart was enlisted and could not get free
When the captain with his whiskers took a sly glance at me.

Though he marched from the town, and I saw him no more,
Yet I think of him still and the whiskers that he wore.
I dream all the night, and I talk all the day
Of the love of a captain who has gone far away.
I remember with superabundant delight
When we met in the street, and we danced through the night,
And I hold in my mind how my heart jumped with glee
When the captain with his whiskers took a sly glance at me.

But there's hope for a friend just ten minutes ago
Said the captain had returned from the war, and I know
He'll be looking for me with considerable zest,
And when he has found me, well you all know the rest.
Perhaps he is here, let me look 'round the house,
Keep still every one of you, as still as a mouse.
If that captain is here, he will probably be
With his whiskers a-taking a sly glance at me.

From Judy Cook's CD "If You Sing Songs..."

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