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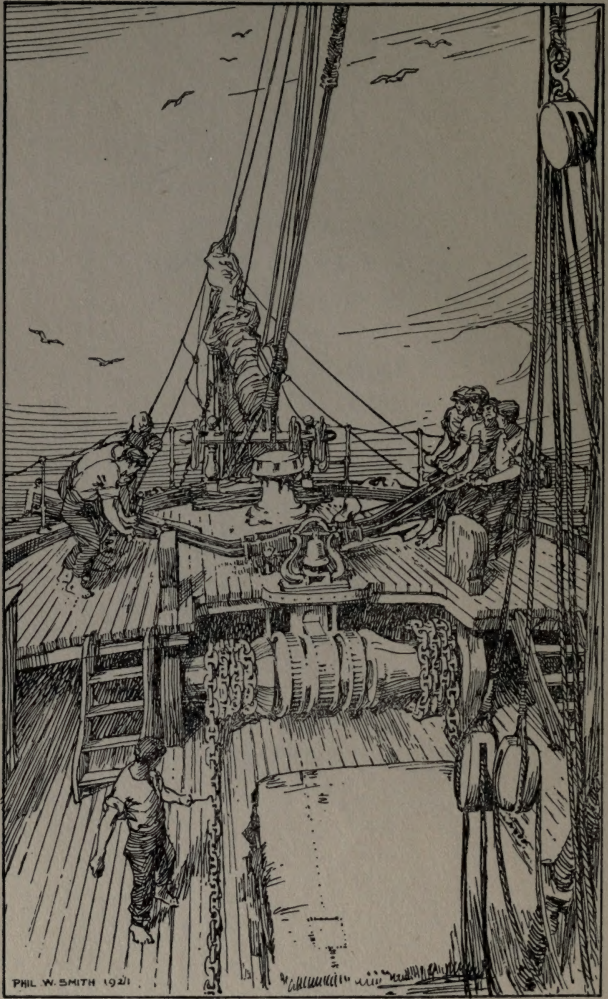
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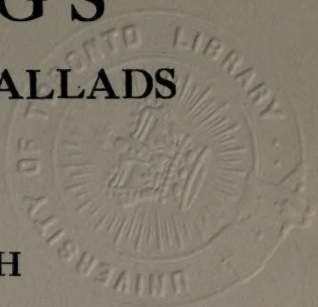
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ROVINGS

SEA SONGS AND BALLADS

BY
C. FOX SMITH

ILLUSTRATED BY
PHIL. W. SMITH



186919.
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LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS, CORK STREET
MCMXXI



NOTE

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LONDON DOCKS

Ghosts in Deptford

If ghosts should walk in Deptford, as very well they
may,
A man might find the night there more stirring
than the day,
Might meet a Russian Tsar there, or see in Spain's
despite
Queen Bess ride down to Deptford to dub Sir
Francis knight.

And loitering here and yonder, and jostling to and
fro,
In every street and alley the sailor-folk would go,
All colours, creeds, and nations, in fashion old and
new,
If ghosts should walk in Deptford, as like enough
they do.

And there'd be some with pigtails, and some with
buckled shoes,
And smocks and caps like pirates that sailors once
did use,
And high sea-boots and oilskins and tarry dungaree,
And shoddy suits men sold them when they came
fresh from sea.

And there'd be stout old skippers and mates of
mighty hand,
And Chinks and swarthy Dagoes, and Yankees lean
and tanned,
And many a hairy shellback burned black from
Southern skies,
And brassbound young apprentice with boyhood's
eager eyes.

And by the river reaches all silver to the moon
You'd hear the shipwrights' hammers beat out a
phantom tune,
The caulkers' ghostly mallets rub-dub their faint
tattoo—
If ghosts should walk in Deptford, as very like they
do.

If ghosts should walk in Deptford, and ships return
once more
To every well-known mooring and old familiar shore,
A sight it were to see there, of all fine sights there
be,
The shadowy ships of Deptford come crowding in
from sea.

Cog, carrack, buss and dromond—pink, pinnace,
snake and snow—
Queer rigs of antique fashion that vanished long
ago,
With tall and towering fo'c'sles and curving carven
prows,
And gilded great poop lanterns, and scrolled and
swelling bows.

The Baltic barque that foundered in last month's
North Sea gales,
And last year's lost Cape Horner with the wonder
on her sails,
Black tramp and stately liner should lie there side
by side—
Ay, all should berth together upon that silent tide.

In dock and pond and basin so close the keels
should lie
Their hulls should hide the water, their masts make
dark the sky,
And through their tangled rigging the netted stars
should gleam
Like gold and silver fishes from some celestial
stream.

And all their quivering royals and all their singing
spars
Should send a ghostly music a-shivering to the
stars—
A sound like Norway forests when wintry winds are
high,
Or old dead seamen's shanties from great old days
gone by,—

Till eastward over Limehouse, on river, dock and
slum,
All shot with pearl and crimson the London dawn
should come,
And fast at flash of sunrise, and swift at break of day,
The shadowy ships of Deptford should melt like
mist away.

John Company's Ships

(EAST INDIA DOCK)

JOHN COMPANY'S ships, they sailed the seas—
The *Merchant's Hope* and the *Trade's Increase*,
Globe and *Dragon* and *Hector* too,
Thames and *Canning* and *Waterloo*—
With gums and ingots and spice and silk,
Blood-red rubies and pearls like milk . . .
Idols of ivory, cups of jade,
Caskets of ebony gold-inlaid,
Lacquer and crystal, gifts for kings,
Brass and filigree, beads and rings,
Rugs like the sunset, madder and gold,
John Company's ships brought home of old.

John Company's ships, they were steady and slow,
Their tops'ls came in when it started to blow,
For their hulls were roomy and round and wide,
Bluff in the bows and big in the side,
And they loaded them deep and they crammed
 them full
With the cargoes they bought from the Great
 Mogul . . .
But they held their own when it came to a scrap
With a Barbary rover or any such chap,
And many a pirate or privateer
That had smacked his lips as the prize drew near



PHIL W. SMITH

JOHN COMPANY'S SHIPS

Limped home with his wounds at the last to tell
John Company's ships could fight as well.

John Company's ships, they went their way,
They cleared and they sailed for Dead Men's Bay,
With captains gallant in blue and gold,
And bawling bosuns and seamen bold,
Bows all splendid with gilt and glitter,
Pennants streaming and pipes a-twitter,
Carven stern-ports and guns arow,
Flashing brasses and decks like snow—
They went their way : and the gulls they call
On London's river, by old Blackwall,
And the winds they blow and the tides they run
The same to-day as they've always done :
But they are gone like a tale that's told—
John Company's ships of the days of old.

"Sold Foreign"

(LADY DOCK)

IN Lady Dock, in Lady Dock, the ships from far
and wide
Lay down their loads of fragrant deals the dusky
sheds beside,
And there come in, a dwindling few, the old ships
year by year
That bore the grain from Frisco Bay, the wool from
Geelong Pier—

Swift champions of the days of sail, whose old-time
far renown
Still lives in many a shellback's yarn and song of
Sailortown,
Sold foreign in their latter days to drudge the years
away
Till time or chance shall bring them all to berth in
Dead Man's Bay.

In Lady Dock, in Lady Dock, as I was strolling by,
Among the tramps and lighters there I saw an old
ship lie,
That still, for all her foreign name and foreign flag
beside,
A seaman's eye might surely know a daughter of
the Clyde.

The sunset light was on her spars; the sunset
splendour made
A glory in her ragged gear, her rigging slack and
frayed;
It fired her battered figurehead, and, passing, touched
with flame
Among her scrollwork's tarnished gold her new out-
landish name.

But little need had I to learn what name was hers
of old
From wheel or bell or pitted brass on capstan green
with mould,
Who knew it like my christened own, as any man
would know
The ship's that shared his goodliest years in days of
long ago.

Her mizen yards were gone, and lopped the tapering
boom that bore
The threshing of her mighty jibs in many a gale of
yore;
Her planking gaped at many a seam, her paint was
bleached and bare,
And dull was all her burnished brass, and rust was
everywhere.

But tender as a lad's first love, and brave as boy-
hood's dream,
Above the Deptford lumber sheds her shining spars
did gleam;

A light that was not sunset seemed about her yards
to glow,
And all her freight was golden years brought out of
long ago.

And there were shipmates of old time and folks that
well I knew,
That looked and laughed as I went by as once they
used to do ;
And up and down her rutted decks, the littered
gear among,
A lad went with me all the while I lost when I was
young.

And through the dusty Deptford streets and noisy
Rotherhithe,
With springing step and glancing eye and eager
heart and blithe,
A lad walked with me all the way I knew in years
gone by,
A lad I met by Lady Dock . . . and O! that lad
was I!

A Ship in a Bottle

IN a sailormen's restaurant Rotherhithe way,
Where the din of the docksides is loud all the day,
And the breezes come bringing off basin and pond
And all the piled acres of lumber beyond,
From the Oregon ranges the tang of the pine
And the breath of the Baltic as bracing as wine. . . .
Among the stale odours of hot food and cold,
In a fly-spotted window I there did behold
A ship in a bottle some sailor had made,
In watches below, swinging South with the Trade,
When the fellows were patching old dungaree suits,
Or mending up oilskins and leaky sea-boots,
Or whittling a model, or painting a chest,
Or smoking and yarning and watching the rest.

In fancy I saw him—all weathered and browned,
Deep crows'-feet and wrinkles his eyelids around;
A pipe in the teeth that seemed little the worse
For Liverpool pantiles and stringy salt horse. . . .
The hairy forearm with its gaudy tattoo
Of a bold-looking female in scarlet and blue. . . .
The fingers all roughened and toughened and
scarred,
With hauling and hoisting so calloused and hard,
So crooked and stiff you would wonder that still
They could handle with cunning and fashion with
skill

The tiny full-rigger predestined to ride
 To its cable of thread on its green-painted tide
 In its wine-bottle world while the old world went on,
 And the sailor who made it was long ago gone.

And still as he worked at the toy on his knee,
 He would spin his old yarns of the ships and the sea,
Thermopylae, *Lightning*, *Lothair* and *Red Jacket*,
 And many another such famous old packet—
 And many a tough bucko and daredevil skipper
 In Liverpool blood-boat and Colonies clipper—
 The sail that they carried aboard the Black Ball,
 Their skysails and stunsails and ringtail and all,
 And storms that they weathered, and races they
 won,
 And records they broke in the days that are done.

Or else he would sing you some droning old song,
 Some old sailor's ditty both mournful and long,
 With queer little curlycues, twiddles and quavers,
 Of smugglers and privateers, pirates and slavers,
 "The brave female smuggler," the "packet of fame
 That sails from New York, an' the *Dreadnought's* her
 name,"
 And "all on the coast of the High Barbabee,"
 And "the flash girls of London were the downfall
 of he."

In fancy I listened—in fancy could hear
 The thrum of the shrouds and the creak of the
 gear—
 The patter of reef-points on tops'ls a-shiver—
 The song of the jibs when they tauten and quiver—

The cry of the frigate-bird following after—
The bow-wave that broke with a gurgle like
 laughter—
And I looked on my youth with its pleasure and pain,
And the shipmate I loved was beside me again . . .
In a ship in a bottle a-sailing away
In the flying-fish weather through rainbows of spray,
Over oceans of wonder by headlands of gleam
To the harbours of youth on the wind of a dream !

Lavender Pond

(SURREY COMMERCIAL DOCKS)

NEVER a swallow wets his wing
In Lavender Pond from Spring to Spring ;
Never a lily, pure and chill,
Holds her cup for the dews to fill ;
Never a willow, gnarled and hoar,
Bends his boughs to a reedy shore ;
Never a fragrant flower-spike blows there,
Never a lordly king-staff grows there,
Slender and straight where sedges shiver
And glistening Mayflies glance and quiver,
In Lavender Pond by London River.

But the Baltic barques they come and go
With their old pump-windmills turning slow,
And the tall Cape Horners rest and ride
Like stately swans on the murky tide,
And the ocean tramps all red and rusted,
Worn and weathered and salt-encrusted,
Gather and cluster near and far,
Derrick and funnel, mast and spar,
From many a port of old renown,
And lonely wharf where the booms float down,
To Lavender Pond by London town.

And keen and strong is the wind that comes
To the dingy streets of the Deptford slums,



LAVENDER POND

Strong and keen with the scent it steals
Off piled-up acres of Kalmar deals,—
Spruce and cedar and baulks of pine,
Red with resin and drenched with brine,
Sawn from the boles that once did stand
Rank on rank in a virgin land,
Where the cougar prowls through the silent glades
In the forest depths of the far Cascades. . . .
And the gulls go flying, the gulls go crying,
And the wind's sob and the water's sighing
Croon to the ships an old sea ditty
In Lavender Pond by London city.

Anchors

IN a breaker's yard by the Millwall Docks,
With its piled-up litter of sheaveless blocks,
Stranded hawsers and links of cable,
A cabin lamp and a chartroom table,
Nail-sick timbers and heaps of metal
Rusty and red as an old tin kettle,
Scraps that were ships in the years gone by,
Fluke upon stock the anchors lie.

Every sort of a make of anchor
For trawler or tugboat, tramp or tanker,
Anchors little and anchors big
For every build and for every rig,
Old wooden-stocked ones fit for the Ark,
Stockless and squat ones, ugly and stark,
Anchors heavy and anchors small,
Mushroom and grapnel and kedge and all.

Mouldy old mudhooks, there they lie!
Have they ever a dream as the days go by
Of the tug of the tides on coasts afar,
A Northern light and a Southern star,
The mud and sand of a score of seas,
And the chuckling ebb of a hundred quays,
The harbour sights and the harbour smells,
The swarming junks and the temple bells?

Roar of the surf on coral beaches,
Rose-red sunsets on landlocked reaches,
Strange gay fishes in cool lagoons,
And palm-thatched cities in tropic noons ;
Song of the pine and sigh of the palm,
River and roadstead, storm and calm—
Do they dream of them all now their work is done,
And the neaps and the springs at the last are one ?

And only the tides of London flow,
Restless and ceaseless, to and fro ;
Only the traffic's rush and roar
Seems a breaking wave on a far-off shore,
And the wind that wanders the sheds among
The ghost of an old-time anchor song :—

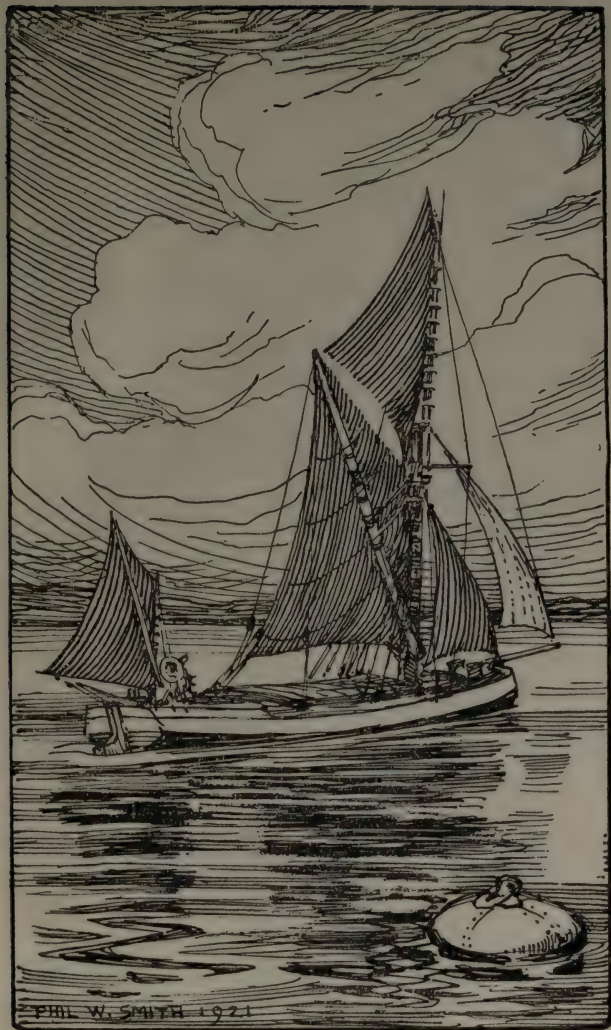
*“ Bright plates and pannikins
To sail the seas around,
And a new donkey's breakfast
For the outward bound ! ”*

Coastwise

THE ships that trade foreign, to London they bear
Their cargoes unnumbered both common and rare,
Their bales and their gunny-sacks, tea-chests and
cases,
From all kinds of countries and all sorts of places,
Their copra and teakwood, their rum and their
bacca,
Their rice and their spice from Rangoon and Malacca,
Their sugar and sago from far Singapore,
And lumber, and logwood, and manganese ore.

But they that trade coastwise unceasing do ply
On lawful occasions to Ramsgate and Rye,
To Lowestoft and Lymington, Padstow and Poole,
And Falmouth and Fowey and Gorleston and
Goole,
The North-country colliers, smutty and small,
The barges and bawleys and schooners and all,
The *Janes* and *Elizas* and *Belles* and the rest,
Two Brothers, *Trafalgar*, and *Pride of the West*.

The ships that trade foreign, wide oceans they know,
Far down to the South'ard they see the whales
blow,
Great bergs like cathedrals they likewise behold,
And flying fish shining all silver and gold :



COASTWISE

They know the far islets of pearl and of pine,
The Trades and the tempests from Leeuwin to Line,
From the Horn to the Hooghly their smoke-trail is
 curled,
And their bow-wave is white on the seas of the
 world.

But they that trade coastwise, they know the salt
 seas
That surge evermore round the grey mother's knees,
The tide-rips and swatchways, the deeps and the
 shoals,
Each eddy that dimples, each current that rolls
By Longships and Lizard, by Bishop and Clerk,
And the fangs of the Manacles, deadly and dark,
By reef and by sandbank, by headland and holm,
And Scilly's lone outposts of thunder and foam.

The ships that trade foreign see cities afar,
Where the black and the brown and the yellow
 folk are,
The tin towns and timber towns, mud towns and all,
From the Straits of Le Mair to the Bay of Bengal.
Of Rio and Sydney the charms they compare,
And others name Frisco than either more fair,
The lordly St Lawrence they mark in his flow,
And Fraser and Hudson and mighty Hwang-ho.

But they that trade coastwise know little stone
 quays
With old salts a-smoking and taking their ease,

The smell of the seaweed, the nets in the sun,
The snug little tavern where old yarns are spun,
The coastguard, the flagstaff, the boats in the bight,
The herring gulls mewing by day and by night,
The flash of the lighthouse that flings forth its ray
To ships trading foreign that pass on their way.

Lumber

IF I'd got to choose alone
One of all the freights I've known—
All my cargoes live and dead,
Bacon pigs and pigs of lead,
Cattle, copra, rice and rails,
Pilgrims, coolies, nitrates, nails,
Lima beans and China tea—
What do you think my pick would be?

If I'd got to name the best—
Take just one and leave the rest
Out of all the ports I've known—
Coral beaches white as bone,
All the hot lands and the cold,
Nights of stars and moons like gold,
Tropic smells and Spanish wine,
Whispering palm and singing pine,
All the isles of all the sea—
Where do you think I'd want to be?

Loading lumber long ago
In a ship I used to know,
With the bow-ports open wide
In her stained and rusted side,
And the saws a-screaming shrill
At the Steveston lumber-mill;
Where the Fraser floods and flows
Green and cold with melting snows,

And the tow-boats' wailing din,
As the booms come crawling in,
Fills the echoing creeks with sound,
And there's sawdust all around,
Deep and soft like drifted snow ;
Nowhere much a man can go,
Nothing much to see or do,
Mouldiest burg you ever knew. . . .

But I'd give the years between—
All I've done and all I've seen,
All the fooling and the fun,
All the chances lost and won,
All the good times and the bad,
All the memories sweet and sad,
Far and near, by shore and sea,
I would give them all to be
Loading lumber years ago
With the lads I used to know—
Loading lumber all day long
Stacks of scented deals among—
Loading lumber at the mill
Till the screaming saws were still,
And the rose-red sunset died
From the mountains and the tide,
And the night brought out its stars,
And the wind's song in the spars
Of that ship I used to know—
Loading lumber, long ago.

Old Stormy

“STORMY’s dead,” I heard them say, “he’s dead and gone to rest” ;

Of all the skippers I have known old Stormy was the best,

His name was known on every sea, his fame on many a shore,

And Stormy’s dead, that good old man, he’ll sail the sea no more.

A rough old, tough old nut of an old-style hard-case skipper

As ever cracked on sail in a racing Melbourne clipper,

And hung on to his topsails in bad weather off the Horn,

And made a crew of deadbeats wish they never had been born.

In the Western Ocean packets had old Stormy served his time,

He had known the Blackwall frigates and the tea-fleet in its prime,

In the days of single topsails, stunsails, Jamie Greens and all,

Stormy’d sailed for Hell or Melbourne in the ships of the Black Ball.

He was skipper of the *Sheba*—she was one of
Farlane's best,
Sister ship to *Eldorado* and *Golconda* and the rest,
"Farlane's yachts" they always called them from
Blackwall to Sandridge Pier,
Slashing ships and smart as frigates—skysail yards
and lots o' sheer.

"*Sheba's* luck" they used to talk of in the ports
both near and far,
For he drove her like a demon, but she never lost
a spar,
Roaring westward in the forties with her maindeck
white with foam,
Flying light with Gippsland fleeces on the long sea
road for home.

Twenty years old Stormy had her, and he loved her
like his own,
But the day of steam was coming and the day of
sail had flown,
And the times they kept on changing, and the
freights they fell away,
And they sold the *Sheba* foreign, for they said she
didn't pay.

And old Stormy heard the tidings with a sad and
sorry heart,
"Twenty years," he said, "I've had her, and it's
bitter hard to part,

Twenty years we've been together, but I'm getting
old, I know,
And they've sold the *Sheba* foreign, and it's time for
me to go."

So he left the little *Sheba* for to start her life anew,
With a whiskered Dago captain and a greasy Dago
crew,
And a brand-new Dago ensign where the Duster
used to be. . . .
But the *Sheba's* luck had left her when old Stormy
left the sea.

And she barged away down Channel in the
equinoctial gales,
With a black nor'-easter blowing, and she loaded
down with rails,
And the seas they pooped her cruel, and a big one
broached her to,
And she couldn't seem to right herself, for all that
they could do,
And the water came aboard her, and her masts went
overside,
And she took and drowned herself at last, the night
old Stormy died.

Yarns

WHEN the docks are all deserted, and the derricks
all are still,
And the wind across the anchorage comes singing
sad and shrill,
And the lighted lanthorns gleaming where the ships
at anchor ride
Cast their quivering long reflections down the ripple
of the tide,

Then the ships they start a-yarning, just the same
as sailors do,
In a hundred docks and harbours from Port Talbot
to Chefoo—
Just the same as deep-sea sailormen a-meeting up
and down
In the bars and boarding-houses and the streets of
sailortown.

Just the same old sort of ship-talk sailors always
like to hear—
Just the same old harbour gossip gathered in both
far and near—
In the same salt-water lingo sailors use the wide
world round
From the shores of London River to the wharves of
Puget Sound,—

With a gruff and knowing chuckle at a spicy yarn
or so,
And a sigh for some old shipmate gone the way that
all men go,
And there's little need for wonder at a grumble now
and then,
For the ships must have their growl out, just the
same as sailormen.

And they yarn along together just as jolly as you
please,
Lordly liner, dingy freighter rusty-red from all the
seas,
Of their cargoes and their charters and their
harbours east and west,
And the coal-hulk at her moorings she is yarning
with the best—

Telling all the same tales over many and many a
time she's told,
In a voice that's something creaky now, because
she's got so old,
Like some old broken sailorman when drink has
loosed his tongue,
And his ancient heart keeps turning to the days
when he was young.

Is it but the chuckling mutter of the tide along the
buoys,
But the creak of straining cables, but the night-
wind's mournful noise,

Sighing with a rising murmur in among the ropes
and spars,
Setting every shroud and backstay singing chanties
to the stars?

No, the ships they all are yarning, just the same as
sailors do,
Just the same as deep sea sailors from Port Talbot
to Chefoo,
Yarning through the hours of darkness till the day-
light comes again . . .
But oh! the things they speak of, no one knows but
sailormen.

Retrospect

“AIN’T it rum?” said Dan one day,
Yarning while he worked away
At his model, all but done,
Of the clipper ship *Keemun*—
Fully rigged and all to scale,
Shroud and backstay, spar and sail,
Tiny blocks and tackles fine,
Tacks and sheets of Hambro line,
Dainty skysails fairy-small,
Stunsails, Jamie Green and all—
“Ain’t it sort o’ rum,” said he,
“Human natur, seems to be—
How a feller never knows
What he likes best—till it goes?”

“Take the ports I used to know—
How I cussed ’em years ago,
Cussed the insecks an’ the stinks,
Cussed the lingo an’ the drinks,
Cussed the blacks for bein’ black,
Cussed the lot to—Hull an’ back!
Never thought how some fine day
I’d sit yarnin’ here an’ say
What I’d give to see again
Just them things I hated then—

Talk and tell how nothin' else
 Smells just like them Eastern smells—
 Finish up with 'Seems to me
 Ports ain't what they used to be !'

"Take this ship, the old *Keemun*,
 Names I've called 'er, many a one ;
 Called 'er cranky, stubborn, slow,
 Bad aloft an' worse below,
 Worst darned ship I'd set my eyes on,
 Pikin' pay and grub like pison,—
 Never thought I'd come to spend
 All the time I've spent on end
 ('Alf a year's dog-watches good)
 Carvin' of 'er out o' wood—
 Fight a feller in a pub
 Cos he called 'er 'blinkin' tub' . . .
 Funny, ain't it ? . . . seems to me
 Ships ain't what they used to be.

"Chaps I've sailed with—thought per'aps
 Pretty much like other chaps,
 Maybe liked an' maybe not,
 Drunk with, scrapped with, half forgot—
 Never thought I'd come to say,
 Thinkin' of 'em far away,
 'Them was fellers, them was men,
 Shipmates they was shipmates then,
 Lookin' back, why, seems to me
 Chaps ain't what they used to be.'

“ That’s the way I’ve always found
Things turn out, the whole world round ;
If it’s gals or ships or beer
Don’t much matter, ain’t it queer
(Human natur, I suppose)
How a feller never knows
What he likes best—till it goes ? ”

Bill's Choice

“ ALL that sort o' guff,” said Bill, “ they may keep
About 'ow nice it is bein' buried at sea,
For I don't want no rest in the rollin' deep,
Nor yet no blinkin' fishes a-nibblin' me.

“ I never could see no sense in slingin' a rhyme
Over a bolt o' sail an' a dollop o' lead,
An' sailormen get salt water enough in their
time
Not to be wantin' the taste of it after they're
dead.

“ An' if I was goin' to be buried, the place for me
'Ud be some snug port or other, I don't mind
where,
Somewhere within the sound an' smell o' the sea,
East or West or South—well, I won't much
care,

“ So long's I can lay quiet an' hear the ships
Goin' an' comin' . . . an' sailormen 'avin' their
fun . . .
A song an' a laugh an' a drink an' a girl's red
lips . . .
An' a bit of a shellback's yarn when the long
day's done.”

Back to Hilo

THERE'S a dark an' dirty wineshop on a waterfront
I know,
An' a cross-eyed Dago keeps it—or he kep' it years
ago—

Where the sailormen an' greasers sit them down to
dice and dine—

An' I wish I was back again in Hilo—

In Hilo—

Drinkin' old Jacinto's wine!

There's the blessed Andes standin' up behind it like
a wall,

An' there's dust, an' stinks, an' insecks, an' there
ain't much else at all,

An' them sulky Dago wenches, they was never
much my line—

But I wish I was back again in Hilo—

In Hilo—

Drinkin' old Jacinto's wine.

For my mind it keeps on turnin'—an' I ask you,
ain't it queer,

When the stuff we used to get there warn't a
bloomin' patch on beer?—

To that dirty Dago's wineshop an' them old-time
pals o' mine—

An' I wish I was back again in Hilo—

In Hilo—

Drinkin' old Jacinto's wine.

A Job o' Work

“ I AIN'T no glutton for work,” said Bill, “ though I
done my whack in my day,
An' I'd never say No to a boss's job if such was
to come my way ;
But many's the time I've proved this true since
first I followed the sea—
A job o' work's a wonderful thing, an' you can
take it from me.

“ When your nine months' pay is a song that's sung
an' your gear's a yarn that's spun,
An' your girl's took up with a steamboatman as
soon's your cash was done,
An' you're back to the sea as plenty o' chaps 'ave
been since the world began—
Both ends an' the bight of a bloomin' fool of a
dead-broke sailorman ;

“ An' you've shipped aboard of an outward-bound,
but you can't remember when,
An' you're sick an' sorry an' ready to swear as
you won't touch liquor again,
An' you've got a head like a lump o' lead an' a
throat as dry as a bone,
An' you don't much care if she sinks or swims so
long's they leave you alone ;



A JOB O' WORK

“An’ a hard-case mate comes waltzin’ around as
ugly as he can be,
And yanks you out by the slack o’ your pants, an’
cusses frequent an’ free—
Just bear in mind as you’ve come to a place where
back-chat isn’t allowed,
An’ ketch a holt o’ the tackle-fall an’ tally on
with the crowd!

“An’ afore the tugboat’s dropping astern you’ll be
singin’ out like the rest,
An’ afore the pilot’s over the side you’ll pull your
weight with the best,
An’ afore the old dead ’orse is out an’ ’oisted over
the rail,
You’ll be scoffin’ pantiles an’ ’arness-beef as if
they was cakes an’ ale.

“For whether it’s trampin’ the capstan round or
whether it’s shiftin’ sail,
Or whether it’s hangin’ on by your teeth in the
thick of a Cape ’Orn gale,
Or sweatin’ up a t’gal’n yard, or tackin’ ship with
the watch,
Or sittin’ makin’ rovin’s, maybe, in the sun on the
after-hatch,
Or scrapin’ cables or tarrin’ down all day in the
blue Trade weather,
A job o’ work’s a wonderful thing for pullin’ a
man together!”

Old Fastnet

THE ships to the westward, by night and by day,
In storm and in sunshine go forth on their way,
The big ships and little ships, swift ships and slow . . .
And Fastnet—old Fastnet—he watches 'em go.

Hull down to the westward they vanish afar,
Like the waft of a wing or the flash of a star,
A feather of smoke on the rim of the sky . . .
And Fastnet—old Fastnet—he waves 'em good-bye.

Strange stars will behold them, strange harbours
will know,
Strange lights for their guiding will beacon and glow,
And they'll maybe remember and maybe forget
That Fastnet—old Fastnet—he's waiting there yet.

A-waiting the day, be it distant or soon,
When the ships from the westward, by night or by
noon,
In storm or in sunshine rejoicing will come . . .
And Fastnet—old Fastnet—he'll welcome them
home!

All Sorts

“It takes all sorts to make a world, an’ the same to
make a crew;

It takes the good an’ middlin’ an’ the rotten bad
uns too;

The same’s there are on land,” says Bill, “you meet
’em all at sea . . .

The freaks an’ fads an’ crooks an’ cads an’ ornery
folks like me.

“It takes a man for every job—the skippers an’ the
mates,

The chap as gives the orders an’ the chap as chips
the plates—

It takes the brass-bound ’prentices (an’ ruddy plagues
they be)

An’ chaps as shirk an’ chaps as work—just ornery
chaps like me.

“It takes the stiffs an’ deadbeats an’ the decent
shellbacks too,

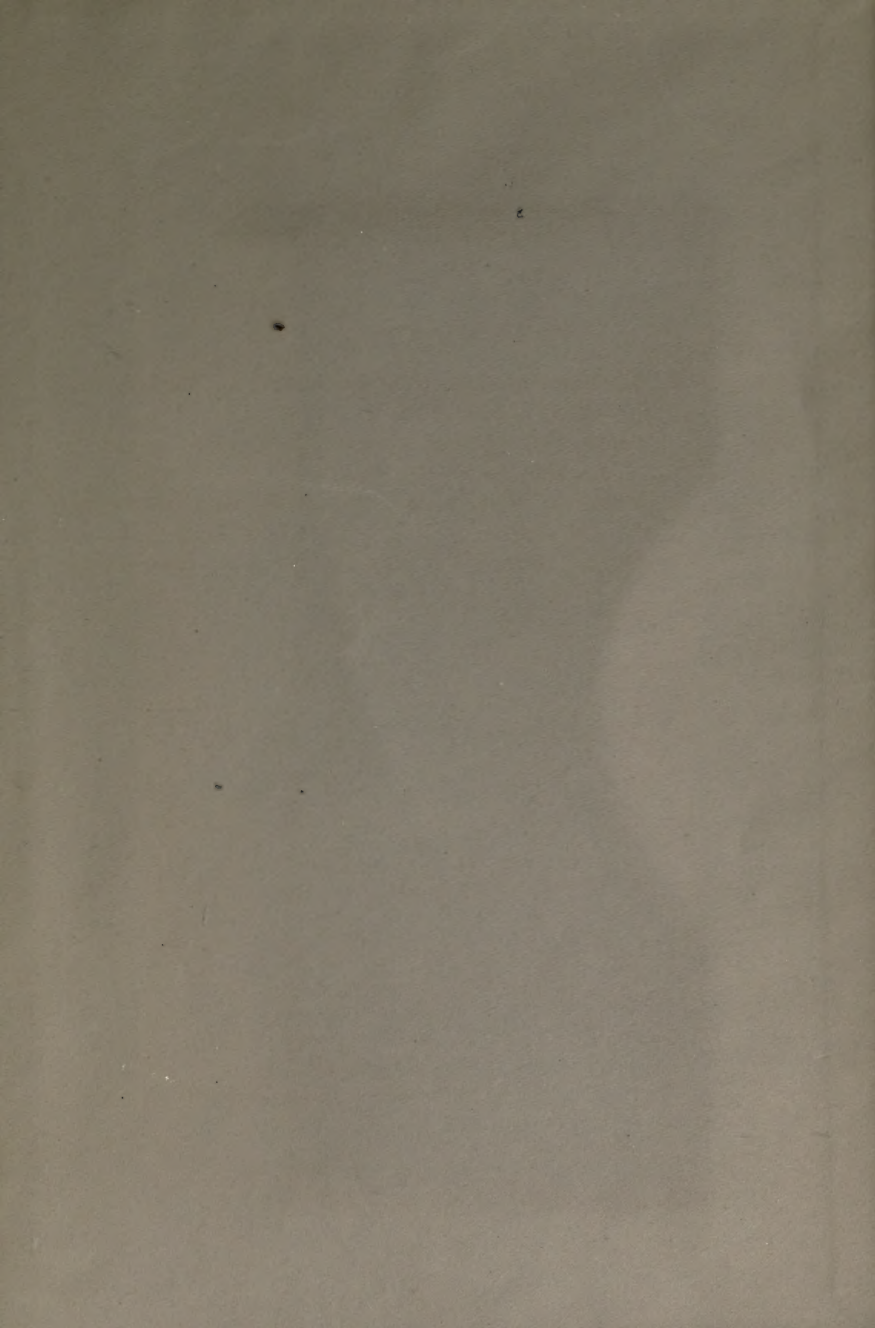
The chaps as always pull their weight an’ them as
never do,

The sort the Lord as made ’em knows what bloomin’
use they be,

An’ crazy folks, an’ musical blokes . . . an’ ornery
chaps like me

“It takes a deal o’ fancy breeds—the Dagoes an’
the Dutch,
The Lascars an’ calashees an’ the seedyboys an’ such ;
It takes the greasers an’ the Chinks, the Jap an’
Portugee,
The blacks an’ yellers an’ ’arf-bred fellers . . . an’
ornery folks like me.

“It takes all sorts to make a world an’ the same to
make a crew,
It takes more kinds o’ people than there’s creeters
in the Zoo ;
You meet ’em all ashore,” says Bill, “an’ you find ’em
all at sea . . .
But do me proud if most of the crowd ain’t ornery
chaps like me !”



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Author Smith, Cicely Fox

Title Rovings, sea songs and ballads.

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