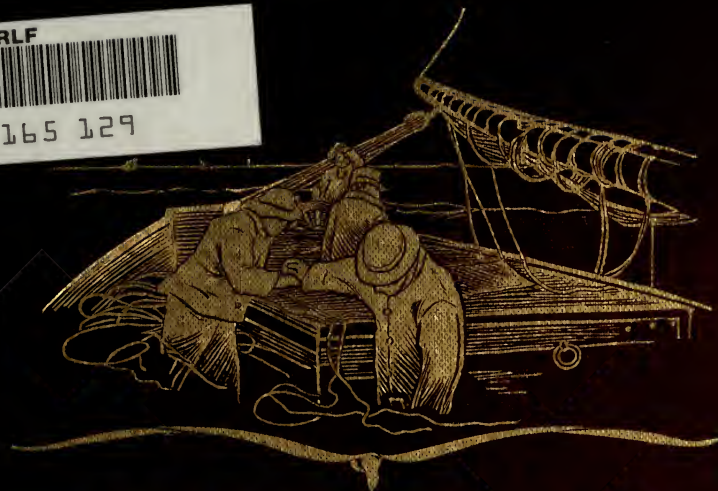


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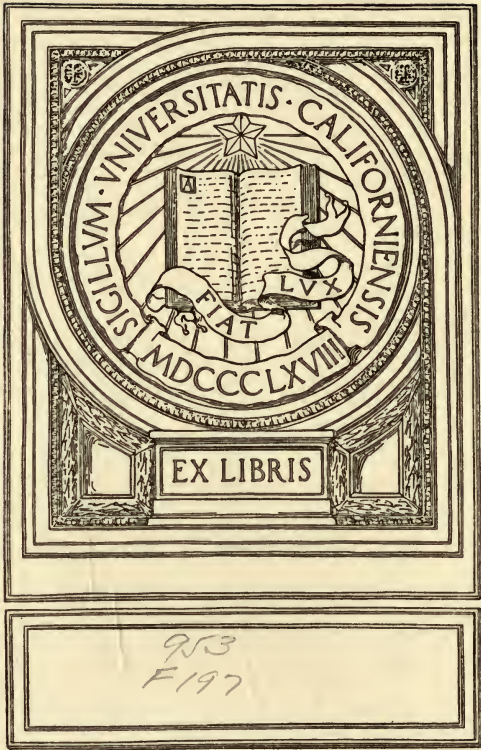


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# WHARF AND FLEET

BALLADS OF  
THE FISHERMEN  
OF  
GLOUCESTER



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## Wharf and Fleet









# Wharf and Fleet

## Ballads of the Fishermen of Gloucester

By

Clarence Manning Falt

//

With Illustrations from Original Photographs



Boston

Little, Brown, and Company

1902



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By **CLARENCE M. FALT.**

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Published June, 1902.

TO  
WINTHROP L. MARVIN

859233



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## INTRODUCTION

**I**N presenting this volume to the reading public, it has been my object to perpetuate as far as possible some of the leading phases and characters of wharf and fleet. No life offers to the reader more absorbing diversification than does that of Gloucester in the study of its great fishing-industry, so replete with tragedy, grim humor, heroism, thrift, and progression; also its physical and historical environments.

Gloucester, in Essex County, has a beautiful situation on Cape Ann, that most prominent point of land on the northeastern coast of Massachusetts, which extends inland in the shape of a horse-shoe, forming a natural break-water for the inner harbor. The waters of the Atlantic and those of Massachusetts Bay wash its coast. Its broad harbor is one of the best along the seaboard. It is gay with smartly rigged fishing-craft, tramp steamers, salt ships from the Old World, etc.

## INTRODUCTION

Gloucester's settlement dates back to 1623, but even as early as 1605 the adventurous Norsemen visited its shores. Later on came the daring Champlain, the gallant Captain John Smith, and the Pilgrim heroes — Standish, Conant, and Robinson. The object of the visitation of these three Pilgrims was the establishment of fishing-plants, the inception of which has resulted in this great industry.

Its incorporation as a town occurred in 1642.

Its population at the writing of this work is about 29,000.

As a fishing-port, it is the largest in the world. Here can marine life be studied in all its phases. Here, lying at their moorings, will be found the up-to-date Gloucester fishing-vessels, for the modern type of fishing-vessel is the pride and delight of a Gloucester skipper's heart. He considers his stanch craft his ocean home. Indeed, these handsome vessels are as fine as the stately yachts that daily grace the harbor, for one would immediately note their fine sheer, perfectly fitting sails, clean decks, trim rig, and crews of able-bodied seamen, marking a wonderful and almost

## INTRODUCTION

magical development from the primitive types of the quaint shallows, pinnaces, and pinkies of the olden days.

Gloucester harbor, like some mighty arena of old, is terraced with impregnable bastions of rugged hills and seared and time-furrowed cliffs, land-locked with its columning wharves of massive piling, its picturesque self looming above the mast-heads of the fleet, like the faded glories of Patmos of old.

At night its beauty is unrivalled. Seaward its light-towers flash and gleam like barbaric Ko-hi-nurs, above the signals of the fleets glowing to port and windward, vying landward with the city's brilliant reflections, sparkling with the shimmering glows of the wharf lights, the anchored fleets, and the inverted spangles of the stars of heaven.

There are two distinct populations, the native and the floating; the latter manning the fleets, coming from almost every clime to engage in the various branches of its industry, — men virile, hardy, patriotic, and courageous; many of them eventually developing into the honored and influential citizen, into the laurel-wreathed hero.

The wharf life has also developed marvel-

## INTRODUCTION

lously. Every up-to-date method of prosecuting this industry is employed. This development has brought about many new occupations and newer characteristics of the life.

There is no distinct vernacular used, for the nationalities represented in this fishing-port are so complex as to render that impossible, but there are many phrases in general use which I have endeavoured to bring forth in these ballads.

Born in this seaport city, with blood of seafaring people in my veins, the grandeur and pathos of this variable life have ever enthralled me.

May these ballads bring the reader into closer touch with this hazardous and heroic life!


March 17, 1902.

Clarence Manning Falt's father  
Captain Walter Manning Falt  
was born 1823 (Apr. 7) and died  
March 12, 1904. xiv He was a  
well known and respected fishing  
fleet skipper out of Gloucester.

WHARF AND FLEET







## SOME SUMMER NIGHT

**W**'EN eve an' sea begin ter kiss,  
Oh, luv'in', like er youth an' miss  
With fancies, dreamin' that an' this,  
Then git yer seats,  
Jest hus'le down ter Neptune's box,  
An' strike an orkstray fer th' docks,  
Way down ter ware th' home fleet flocks,  
An' give th' greets.

Then let th' ushers take yer in,  
An' creep th' aisles, an' crawl, an' shin,  
Until yer 'ware th' flakin' fin  
Th' awnin's blow.  
Then, 'mid th' singin' uv th' blocks,  
Unbut' yer ves' an' loose yer frocks,  
An' let th' wind jest own yer locks,  
Howe'er they go.

WHARF AND FLEET

Then seat yerself, th' program gage,

With wit, buffoon, an' tragic sage

Go lose yerself, an' live an age, —

Take in th' show.

Take in th' actors an' th' play,

Th' passions an' th' roundelay;

Too soon will come some yesterday,

So list my blow.

# Wharf and Fleet



## STAGING SALT

**H**ISS of the hydra, belch of the dragon—  
Gur—cah!

The white steams fierce spring, ghost wreathe,  
and upwing —

Gur—cah!

Lifeing each side as the great lighters glide —

Gur—cah!

Hiss of the hydra, belch of the dragon —

Sc—scth!

Swirls the gray tide, grim, with a sleek sly  
swim —

Sc—scth!

Drowning each breath with a mad lunge of  
death —

Sc—scth!

WHARF AND FLEET

Crick of the tackle, crock of the haly'ds,—

Aye — Aye —

The stevedores sing, the great tubs up-  
spring, —

Aye — Aye.

High up where the gear on the platform's  
tier —

Aye — Aye.

Rush of the wheelers, straining and dumping ;

Quick'ning the shoveller's clank —

Down in the hold, with its damp and its  
mould, —

Down deep, where the white salts bank, —

Down deep, where ghost toil hugs the pit-  
tance spoil

With quavering voice and thank.

Scream of the siren, joying the ending,

Trilling its magical note ;

Stilling the bending, stilling the tending,

While sweetly the six chimes float

STAGING SALT

Over the masts and the shrouds and the  
stream —

Dear, like a mother, to rest and to dream —  
And the drowsy sleep-oars boat.

“Staging Salt”: see “Stevedore.”

“Siren”: the steam-lighter's whistle.

“Halyards”: ropes or tackle to hoist.

“Down in the hold”: the salt is picked and loosened from its solid mass by the use of pickaxes and then shovelled into the tubs.

## TH' RIGGER

**Y**ER may blow erbout th' cirkis, th' man  
on th' trapeeze,  
Yer may pant yer breath erbout th' "Humin  
Fly,"  
But if yer want th' dizzy that will infant-like  
yer knees,  
Let yer opticks quizz th' rigger, flyin' high.

Oh, he 's nuthin' in pertickler, er brave heart  
out on pay,  
Oh, er feller that goes hus'lin' roun' with  
Time,  
Jest er nervy that goes soarin' w'are th' gulls  
play tag all day  
An' th' shrouds ring all th' wind bells  
chime on chime.

With his kit erpon his back  
An' er plenty give an' slack,  
An' his fists er huggin' tight th' tackle's loop,  
Ter th' gray blocks creak an' crack  
He will swing up lof' an' tack,  
Oh, th' dizziest ole chickin in th' coop.



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## T H' R I G G E R

On th' spring-stay, up th' ball,  
Down th' jib-stay, roun' th' fall,  
He will do each turn or ever miss'n ac',  
Wile th' winds an' gulls will call  
Like as if they hollered, "Gall!"  
"Jest look out, ole man, some day yer'll git  
th' sac!"

But he'll anti all th' more,  
An' will swing his legs galore,  
An' go friskin' with th' winds as limp as eels,  
W'ile th' gulls will farther soar,  
Though maddened ter th' core  
That er humin should so dare ter tag th'  
heels.

But th' sight is sad ter me,  
Oh, this darin' by th' sea,  
This primpin' uv th' lingerie uv th' fleets,  
Oh, this dev'lin wild an' free  
In th' vast infinitee,  
This tigt'nin' uv th' black shroud's laddery  
cleats.

## WHARF AND FLEET

Fer it w'ispers all th' more  
Th' goin' ter leave th' shore,  
Goin' ter deserlate th' h'arth an' cry th'  
home, —  
Some ter come back laughin'-eyed  
Ter th' kind, ole harber tide;  
Some ter be jest g'osts ferever in th' foam.

“Th' Rigger” : he is the man who puts the riggings of the fleets into shape; most active in the early springtime and in the fall of the year. He is the tarer, the hanger of the sails, the scraper of the masts, the slusher, etc.

“Humin Fly” : term once given to a trapeze performer whose specialty was to walk head downward the ceiling of a theatre by catching his toes into iron hooks suspended from the ceiling.

“Kit” : work-box.

“Tackle's loop” : a pulley or system of pulleys in the rigging.

“Spring-stay” : the connecting rigging between the mainmast and the foremast.

“Jib-stay” : the rigging that runs from the foremast top to the end of the bowsprit.

“Ball” : the gilt figurehead that caps the topmast.

“Laddery cleats” : they are the ratlines or the small lines of the riggings used as the rounds of a ladder for climbing the masts, etc.

## MY HEROES

**T**HE night signals stab all the ocean  
dark, —

With quivering thrusts at the swells that  
flow,

They wound the foam with a telling mark,  
And crimson the night birds that trembling  
go.

The wind to the storm sprites whistles and  
whines,

They scream to their goblins promise of fun;  
The frightened moon hides a lone star that  
shines,

While o'er them wander the clouds, one by  
one.

Like Death commanding bright souls to the  
grave, —

Filing in, filing in to the dirge of the wind,  
In pity a moment some mercy they crave;

The dark anchors strain, and the wet haw-  
sers bind.

## WHARF AND FLEET

Wild in the whirl of the night-tortured air,  
Like thrusting of swords in wounds that  
are burning,  
Or wild beasts of prey fiercely seeking their  
lair,  
One lists to the topsails twisting and  
churning.

With tippetts of foam the bowsprits are  
muffled,  
Like brides of betrothal the creaking sails  
lean;  
Like glittering veils all spangled and ruffled,  
The cold sprays glide o'er the rails damp  
and green.

But one man at the wheel!—what wonderful  
pluck!

Was ever a battle with hero like this?  
One's given God's light till the heart is  
o'er-struck,  
E'en Death on his forehead lays cold a  
last kiss —

In war. But when one pair of cold, stiffened  
hands,  
Two eyes, and a body that's not over-  
strong,

MY HEROES

Backed up, it may be, with a frail little  
band, —

Ten to half when compared to an army's  
wild throng, —

On a sea in a night that with horror is crazed,  
With the torture and passion and fury of  
storms,

On an old fishing-craft that is beaten and  
dazed, —

My heroes are there, and my soul for them  
warms!

## LOW TIDE AT NIGHT

**I**N th' gold halls uv th' spiles,  
W'en th' great w'arf-lamps are lit,  
Laughin', bowin', full uv smiles,  
Strange th' wigly people flit, —  
All th' wigly people queer  
In th' gold hall's pier on pier.

An' they shin, an' shin, an' shin,  
An' they leap, an' leap, an' leap,  
An' they grin, an' grin, an' grin,  
An' they creep, an' creep, an' creep,  
An' they leer, an' leer, an' leer, —  
All these wigly people queer.

W'ile th' mad ole mussels snap,  
An' th' gray ole barn'cles spit,  
An' th' cross ole starfish yap,  
An' th' ugly red crabs hit,  
W'en they dare ter venture near  
All these wigly people queer.

LOW TIDE AT NIGHT

An' th' dady sculpins hide  
Farther, farther in th' deep,  
An' th' great, w'ite flounders glide  
Through th' mud-eels fast er sleep  
W'ile th' snorin' munk-fish yawn,  
Thinkin' strange how quick th' dawn.

W'ile th' minnies an' th' smelt  
Dart themselves an' leave th' scene,  
Till one great, long silver belt  
Girdles all th' cabbige green,  
All th' rufflin's uv th' kelp  
Def'ly sown by Neptune's help.

Yet they are er merry set,  
Frolickin' ermong themselves,  
Ne'er er care or e'er er fret,  
Phanth'm sprites an' phanth'm elves,  
Luvin' w'ile th' great lights glare  
Sprites uv naught ter fade no ware.

Wigly people uv th' night,  
Wigly people strange an' queer,  
W'en th' gold halls are erlight,  
One there is who loves you, dear,  
One who sen's you love an' smiles,  
As you flit ermong th' spiles.

## WHARF AND FLEET

As you flit an' fade erway  
Inter nothin' out uv naught,  
W'en th' great lamps blur th' gray  
An' th' day th' night has caught,  
Wigly people strange an' queer,  
One there is who loves you, dear.

One of the most beautiful pictures of the harbor is the wharves lighted at night ; most beautiful reflections and fancies imaginable are wrought.

Third verse : the shellfish that cling to the piles.

"Dady sculpin" : a hideous-shaped fish that glides on the bottom of the deep.

"Monkfish" : a huge-mouthed fish that swims up to the dock and dies at the receding of the tide.



TO A WOUNDED SEA-GULL

**S**PIRIT-LIKE thing above the foam,  
Where is your home?  
All day I've watched you breast the wind,  
Like some harsh voice, oh, so unkind,  
Where'er you roam.

Pleading-like, fair, I watch you near,  
Tenderly, dear,  
Out from the gray air's wild unrest,  
Down to the mad sea's tortured breast,  
Trembling with fear.

Like to my soul's strange being, thou,  
Sweet bird, somehow,  
Battered and tossed with crying soul  
Misunderstood by seas that roll  
Life's undertow.

WHARF AND FLEET

Pure, with a heart of gentlest thought,  
Now bruised, unsought,  
Hurled on the waves of darkest strife,  
With course unknown to shape my life  
For deeds untaught.

Blend with thy faith, O bird, my moan;  
Then silent, lone,  
We'll take our bleeding souls afar,  
For, oh, sweet bird, I know a star  
For us has shone!





## TH' FISH-SKINNER

**I**T 's er sighkick eddicashun, it 's er phizzie  
kultur treat

Tew erlight upon er skinner w'en ole Phoebis  
halves his beat.

His flips er flappin' like er seal's, oh, his  
chist actif an' out,

An' his head all inspiratid with th' topicks  
he 's erbout.

He 's an' essay high an' learned on th' lim-  
berness o' things,

Oh, er rekumposin', deikumposin' exercise  
thet rings.

He 's er humin figger-ater, er Delsater uv th'  
best,

He 's er jisture indicative thet th's no sich  
thing as rest.

## WHARF AND FLEET

He's er ripper strong an' mighty, he's er  
cutter keen an' sharp,  
He's er blocker tew th' pashuns uv th' cod-  
fish tew th' carp,  
He's an' attitudick poser frum th' comick  
tew th' trag',  
He's er bird that jis can hustle 'twix an'  
invice an' er lag.

He's er trotter, he's er dancer, he's er rigger  
uv th' best,  
Frum th' threadin' uv er top-lif' tew th'  
hangin' uv his vest;  
Fer er topick high an' learned on th' limber-  
ness o' things,  
He's er rekumposin', dekomposin' exercise  
thet rings.

Second verse: terms in Delsarte. The recomposing and decomposing exercises. The figure eight movements horizontal and vertical.

In skinning a fish, first, fins and napes are removed, then the skin. The fish are then cut up to fit various-sized boxes, then pressed down to make them compact. So much a hundred pounds is paid for skinning, — 35 to 40 cents. The better the skinner the higher the wages. It is carried on by both men and women.

## THE CHEEKERS

**T**HE night tide swirls between the piles;  
A Banshee grim, the wharf-shed  
smiles

At hide and seek.

The lanterns with the torches play,  
While crawls the night upon its way  
Sans tooth and weak.

For close upon the hour of one,  
And yet the cheekers are not done;  
To flashing ribs  
Still higher grow the fleshy hoards,  
While gruesome from the splitting boards  
The red blood drips.

There's old Jock Hill, half blind and dumb,  
And fierce Tom Burke with but one thumb,  
And pale French Cass,  
And Bummy Clint and thick-lipped Trent,  
And old Mose Gee, all crooked and bent,  
To pitch and pass.

## WHARF AND FLEET

And in and out, while old Jock croons,  
Each flashing knife-blade cuts and spoons  
    And hollows out,  
While yarn and tale are made and met  
With hissy spat and whetstone whet  
    The tables 'bout.

Until above each tattooed charm  
That blues each shrunk and cordy arm  
    The red blood gleams.  
Through meshes of a weird wove veil,  
Of slime and blood and gut and scale,  
    The ferret dreams.

So burn the lanterns to the morn,  
Until above the hills is born  
    The crowen's cry,  
And answering with a weird "Ye ho,"  
The fleets begin to hoist and go,  
    To live or die.

"Cheekers": the cheekers in a fishing-town are the men who cut out the fleshy portions of the decapitated heads of fish, the cheeks. It is generally the work of a few men who labor at night, after the trip has been weighed off and dressed.

"Tattooed charm": the India ink symbols often seen on the arms of the fishermen. They generally represent an anchor, vessel, initials of name, etc.

"Ferret": animal.



## FITTIN' OUT

**W**'EN th' grass is comin' up,  
An' th' swallers dive an' sup,  
An' th' gulls are lookin' roun' er bit ter pair,  
An' th' rain-drop 's on th' sport  
Full uv kisses an' fer court,  
Then it's proudy time fer conquis's an' fer  
dare.

Then yer 'll see th' chap'runs come,  
An' yer 'll hear th' gossip hum,  
An' th' maid'ns shy an' dainty, sweet an' fair,  
An' they 'll turn th' knobs an' locks  
With th' goods an' flash'n' frocks,  
An' they 'll haughty prance er down th'  
thoroughfare.

Then yer 'll hear th' shops unlock,  
An' yer 'll hear th' modis's talk,  
An' advise er bit ercordin' ter th' style,  
W'ether right it is fer trails  
Or fer short skirts or fer veils,  
W'ile th' sewin'-people sit eroun' an' smile.

## WHARF AND FLEET

Then yer 'll see th' goods displayed,  
Silks an' satins an' brocade,  
Yards an' yards uv dainty muslins fer th'  
belles,  
An' yer 'll see th' yardsticks go,  
As they measure fas' an' slow  
Fer th' frolick gowns ter flirt ermong th'  
swells.

Then yer 'll see 'em hurry back,  
An' yer 'll hear th' gossips clack,  
Till ergin yer hear th' knobs an' locks unturn,  
W'ile th' modis's all th' w'ile  
Chuckle sof'ly, laugh, an' smile,  
As they figger up th' goodly sums they 'll  
earn.

Oh, jest midway in th' stream,  
Ware th' cross-tides swirl an' gleam,  
An' ole Phoebis spouts his firs'ly ter th' wes',  
Yer can find these fash'n-shops,  
W'en th' spring rain sof'ly drops,  
An' th' swallers an' th' gulls begin ter nes'.

Yer can hear th' people sing  
In these luvly days uv spring,  
As they cast an' bind th' seams an' ruffles  
tight,

FIT T I N ' O U T

Watch th' needles fas' an' slow  
Sew an' kitch each ferbelow,  
Till ole Phoebis spouts his las'ly ter th' night.

Oh, these luvly days uv spring,  
W'en th' sewin'-people sing,  
An' th' happy fittin' time rings 'cross th'  
    tide,  
If th' joy could only las',  
As they trim each skirt an' barse,  
An' th' modis's hang th' sweepin' trails ter  
    glide.

But, erlas, th're singin' pain  
With th' vi'lits an' th' rain,  
An' th' swallers an' th' gulls erpon th' wing;  
Fer th' leaf has yet ter fall  
Ter th' black cloud an' th' squall,  
An' ole Grief has yet his score ter read an'  
    ring.

He will tell it all some day,  
W'en th' swallers flown erway,  
An' th' matid gulls are roamin' on th' deep,  
An' th' singin' is all done,  
An' er froz'n thing th' sun,  
An' th' vi'lit long, ah, long, has gone ter sleep.

## WHARF AND FLEET

He will tell it unto tears  
Ter th' barr'n w'arves an' piers,  
Ter th' chap'runs gazin' lonely o'er th' waves,  
How they flirtid an' they dared,  
How they matid an' they paired,  
Ere th' w'ite foam roses bloomed erbove th'  
graves.

The fleet getting ready for sea in the early spring.

"Chap'runs": figuratively used for the firm-holders.

"Maidens shy an' dainty": the clipper crafts of the fleet; the up-to-date seiners.

"Shops unlock": the sail-lofts and the block-shops and the fitting-out stores.

"Modis's": the sail-makers and the cutters.

"Sewin' people": sail-makers and seine knitters.

"Silks an' satins an' brocade": figuratively used for the canvas or duck in making the sails.

"Gossips clack": the skippers and the crews.





## TH' MACK'R'L COOPER

**H**E's th' sparkle an' th' song  
W'en th' chimes they would go  
wrong,

He's th' minstrel w'en the mack'ril days are  
farin' ;

With his kit an' flaggin' stubs,

An' his rub-a-dub-a-dubs,

He's th' jolly uv th' life th' lads are darin'.

'Mid th' pickle an' th' chaff

An' th' heart-aches an' th' laugh,

'Mid th' callin' an' th' cullin' an' th' packin',

An' th' crews er jumpin' roun'

Cuttin' barrels up an' down,

He's th' spirit uv th' w'arf th' trip er stackin'.

He will conjure up th' hoop

Like th' cobra fer th' swoop,

He will sleight er hand th' wedge ter any fakir.

He will make th' adze ter sing

Like er boberlink in spring,

An' th' shafe ter twirl th' cutest ballet caper.

## WHARF AND FLEET

He will pompous up th' butt  
Like th' justice on th' sputt',  
He will make th' quarter haughty vie th'  
halfer,  
He will dude th' little kit  
Till yer very sides will split,  
An' th' heads ter ring th' tumtums uv th'  
Kaffir.

Fer he's king erpon his soil  
W'en th' seiners dump th' spoil,  
He's th' Ber. G.'s merry lover, pal, an' trooper;  
With his kit an' flaggin' stubs,  
An' his rub-a-dub-a-dubs,  
He's th' jolly uv it all, th' merry cooper.

"Chimes or chimbs": the ends of a barrel or cask.

"Kit": tool-box.

"Flaggin' stubs": ends of the dried flags or rushes used in knitting the chimes together.

"Rub-a-dub-a-dubs": noise of the adze upon the wedge.

"Callin', cullin', packin'": as the men termed the "cullers" assort the mackerel into their varied sizes, and the weigher's tubs are filled with the ones, the twos, the threes, and the fours, usually called "tinkers," as the fish increase or decrease in size, the weighers, who guard the beam and register the number of pounds to a tub, dump the filled tubs into each packer's crib in turn, calling the numbers of the fish as they do so. Two hundred pounds of fish represent a packed barrel, each weigher's tub containing a hundred pounds each. A half-bushel of salt is used in packing a barrel. The packers make a cross or symbol on both the barrel-head and barrel, namely, #1, #2, #3, #4, with red chalk. As the weighers call out each packer's turn, they score on a shingle or building or barrel, as the case may be, the numbers of packed barrels, namely, + + + | | | . In packing a barrel of mackerel a layer of salt is thrown down first, or enough to cover



## TH' MACK'R'L COOPER

the bottom of a barrel. Then the fish are packed in layers, backs up, salt alternately thrown with each layer, the fish being pressed down by jumping on them.

"Cuttin' barrels": rolling the barrels end up.

"Stackin' ": tiering them up.

"Conjure up th' hoop": the hoops are straight and long at first, then they are bent and rounded to fit the barrel, usually caught in a little wedge-like cut in the sides of the hoop.

"Sleight er hand th' wedge": the wedge is wooden, and is used to press the hoops down as far as possible.

"Adze": a cutting-iron tool or hammer.

"Shafe": a long knife-like blade, with handles at each end, used to shape up each end of the chimes.

"Butt": a large hogshead used to salt up the dressed fish.

"Quarter": the quarter of a barrel.

"Halfer": the half of a barrel.

"Kit": in this sense, a small tub used in packing mackerel.

"Heads": the tops of the barrels.

"Ber. G.": flag.

## THE LITTLE SHORE BOATS

**L**IKE darling babes with blinking  
eyes

Upon some dear old mammy's lap  
The little shore boats' cuddy-lights  
Go drifting by the old wharf's cap,  
While softly, sweetly, gently steals  
The lullaby of drifting keels.

I see the eddies swirl and play  
And laugh unto their watching stare,  
The great white blankets of the sails,  
Like coverlets so warm and fair,  
While softly, sweetly, gently steals  
The lullaby of drifting keels.

Oh, beautiful the pictured dream,  
Oh, beautiful the moonlight's glow,  
The little shore boats in the stream,  
The chimes a-striking, sweet and low,  
While softly, sweetly, gently steals  
The lullaby of drifting keels.

The shore boats are the little sloop-rigged boats that fish along  
shore and in Ipswich Bay.

## PUTTIN' ON FRILLS

OH, th' gut th' yachty noshun  
Fer th' stainin' 'mongst th' fleet,  
An' its crick, crick, uv th' tackl's  
An' its hist uv bossun seat,  
An' its slip, slap, uv th' muck mops  
As they drip 'em down th' spars,  
An' its bang, bang, uv th' buckits  
As they sling 'em up ter Mars.  
An' its spit, spit, uv th' slushers  
As they chaw th' cuds erway,  
Oh, th' gut th' yachty noshun  
Fer th' frills, th' ole folk say.

Oh, th' mainm's's tog th' rich hues  
Uv th' Lebernuns uv yore,  
An' th' forem's's vie th' redwoods  
Uv Yosemertes out pour,  
An' th' topm's's pale th' cherries  
Uv th' Pullm'ns on th' run,  
Still its bang, bang, uv th' buckits  
Frum th' rise till set uv sun.

W H A R F   A N D   F L E E T

Oh, th' gut th' yachty noshun  
  Fer th' frills, th' ole folk say,  
An' th' slushers makin' money,  
  An' ole oakers come ter stay.

Oh, they 've crazed th' sails ter frenzy  
  At th' thought uv gasserlean;  
Th' puttin' big Kernarder lugs  
  On every tub that's seen;  
Ole Fifer's Mag, that's jest been topped  
  An' has run herself in debt,  
Th' loadin' down with haughty lugs  
  Fer ter match th' high-line set.  
Oh, this gittin' yachty noshuns  
  Is er bad thing, ter be plain,  
W'en th' hus'les all fer racin'  
  An' dum leetle with th' seine.

Oh, th' bowsprit once so haughty  
  With er jib erpon its back,  
Is luggin' four or five uv 'em  
  Jest er hell erpon er tack.  
Oh, th' bows once big an' solid,  
  Fer ter smash th' waves in two,  
Are as toppin' an' as pintid  
  As m' lady's how-de-do.

PUTTIN' ON FRILLS

Oh, this gittin' yachty noshuns  
Fer th' frills, th' ole folk say,  
Will be causin' luts uv truble  
An' er cuss all right some day.

"Yachty noshun": modern modelling of the fleets on yachting lines.

"Muck mops": the mops used when staining and slushing down the masts.

"Lebernuns": the cedars of Lebanon.

"Ole oaker": ochre.

"Gasserlean": the latest motive power of the mackerel fleet, gasolene.

"Fer th' ceader": the masts are of Oregon pine stained with colored ochre.

## AT SEA

**L**IKE grim, gaunt arms of some fierce  
frenzied leech,  
The wind-hurled tops'ls sway and beck and  
reach,  
And clutch and hold the frightened shrouds  
that screech.

Below, like jewels of some pirate Moor,  
The signals flash, now red a clot of gore,  
Now green like putrid spawn hyena's store.

Back distant where the gaping cradles yawn,  
Where sank a vessel in the early dawn,  
A veil of phosphor floats in fragments torn.

Like some dead cobra's ghost, a gruesome  
thing,  
A still wake breaks where drenchèd hagdons  
cling,  
A comber leaps and stills their muttering.

A T S E A

Black, ebon, like a haunted thing of Death,  
A lagging Banker pants as if for breath,  
A white hand guiding with the move of  
stealth.

Dim, phantomed, where the clouds and seas  
do meet,  
Like some stern court of God or judgment-  
seat,  
A flock of gulls in scattered lines wing fleet.

A smoke plume drifts like some fierce dragon's  
wing;  
A hawser groans where setting trawlers fling;  
A fog bank leers and creeps, a crafty thing.

Unseen, yet heard like noises cursed with  
hates,  
Or clanging bolts of mighty dungeon gates,  
Low thunders mutter like the growls of Fates.

A spar flits by; a gaunt hull beauty reft;  
A white corpse stark to all the noises deft, —  
One from a hundred souls to tell what's  
left.

WHARF AND FLEET

Now, like a sign, a hushèd stillness sweeps,  
A Lethean quiet o'er the turmoil sleeps,  
While night's accountants sum the day's grim  
    heaps.



## GITTIN' UNDERWAY

**I**N th' early dawn ere th' doors unlock,  
Then it's crick, crick, crick, an' it's  
    crock, crock, crock,  
An' it's ho an' hi fer th' blocks ter talk  
In th' early dawn e'er th' doors unlock.

Then it's ho an' hi fer th' dreams ter die,  
Fer th' crews an' th' bunks ter say good-by,  
Fer th' yawn an' gape, fer th' stretch an' sigh,  
In th' early dawn ere th' cocks crow high.

Then it's ho fer doublin' th' woolsey smocks,  
An' twicein' th' toes in th' home-knit socks,  
An' cuddlin' th' ears up under th' locks,  
An' haulin' down tighter th' souwes' chocks.

Then it's ho fer housin' th' rubber boots,  
An' firmin' th' heart in th' stiff oil suits,  
W'ile the cuddies blaze, an' th' coffee goots,  
An' th' windlass creaks, an' th' horn it hoots.

## W H A R F   A N D   F L E E T

Then it's ho fer grubbin' an' hi fer drink,  
Then shadder th' gangway an' meet th' brink  
Ter shape out th' course, an' ter careful think  
In th' early dawn w'ile th' stars still blink.

"Blocks ter talk": the hoisting of the sails.

"Woolsey smocks": flannel shirts.

"Souwes' chocks": the flannel-lined ear-lappets that are attached to the sou'westers.

"Housin' th' rubber boots": pulling them on.

"Cuddies": forecastle.

"Windlass": it is located forward the foremast, and is used in weighing up the anchor.

"Horn": the hand foghorn.

"Shape out th' course": making the grounds by chart and compass.

"Sou'wester": a broad-brimmed oil-cloth hat with ear-lappets lined with flannel.

## GAFFIN' FISH

**W**'EN th' tide is out er flirtin',  
An' fergits ter shut its door,  
An' th' happy clams are squirtin',  
Playin' injine with th' shore,

An' th' kids are ripe fer junkin',  
An' fer skippin' rocks an' shells,  
An' fer woodin' an' fer punkin'  
Bobbin' bottles in th' swells,

An' yer hear th' rats er squealin'  
Frum th' black cracks in th' walls,  
An' yer quizz th' tomcats stealin'  
Nearer, nearer ter th' calls,

An' yer mark some ole trap histid,  
Like er giddy thing on cogs,  
With its body kind uv listid  
T'ward th' black spiles an' th' logs,

WHARF AND FLEET

All togged up in robes uv coal tar,  
Yaller oaker, sash's an' bow's,  
P'r'aps er crimson-pintid five-star  
Sunburs'in' its puggy nose,

Like some poor, ole primay donnay  
Thet has wobbled all her say,  
Now shoved further ter th' corner  
W'ile th' daybute works her lay,

P'r'aps er ole T. D. er puffin'  
Frum er drollin' mouth er stern,  
Use ter bluffin', use ter cussin',  
Use ter words I know yer 'v hern,

Then yer know time 's ripe fer gaffin'  
An' fer puntin' roun' th' docks,  
Fer it's then th' crews git chaffin'  
An' er rattlin' th' pitchforks,

Fer it's then th' strays go slippin'  
Frum th' ole caps with er thud,  
An' th' quick gaffs raise 'em drippin'  
Ter th' sly punts frum th' mud.

## G A F F I N ' F I S H

Oh, it's art ter watch th' sneakin'  
Uv th' puntin' through th' spiles,  
Oh, it's art ter watch th' peekin'  
Uv th' gaffers an' th' wiles,

Fer it's thievin' pure an' simple  
An' it's skittish work at bes',  
Though th' cheek may wear th' dimple,  
An' th' eye stan' heaven's tes'.

Oh, it's risky work er gaffin',  
Full uv duckin's, fights, an' jaws,  
Full uv skuddin', full uv chaffin',  
Full uv haul-ups, full uv laws.

Fer if caught, as sure as Moses,  
Yer'll be chucked deep in th' dump,  
W'ile th' smells uv sweet June roses  
Won't c'logne up th' homeward slump.

When the trips are being taken out, often many fish slip from the pitchforks and sink to the docks. A class of young men and boys then row around in little boats, called punts, and gaff up the fish beneath the wharves and sell them. It is an illegal business, and if caught, they are subjected to a fine and imprisonment. It is operated at low tide.

"Ole trap histid": the old-fashioned shore boats that haul up on the dock flats for repairs.

"Pintid five-star": an old-fashioned emblem for decorating the ends of the bowsprits.

## TORCHING HERRING

**L**IGHTLY they row across the bar,  
Beyond the Lights like ghosts asleep,  
Each flaming torch a ruby star  
    Illumining the ebon deep.

Each measured stroke, each oar's low dip,  
    Like eerie whisperings sounding clear,  
So light they toss, and sway, and tip,  
    And thrid the lone wastes dark and drear.

O'er ev'ry bow, like death awake,  
    You'll see some pale face wan and old  
Bend low, as silver ripples break  
    And toss some finny gem of gold.

Anon some quavering voice will call,  
    Uncanny answers faint come back,  
From graybeards pulling in the trawl,  
    Or dropping nets from fishing-smack.

## TORCHING HERRING

As ev'ry ruby flame doth gleam  
And flash athwart the night-veiled sea,  
You almost think, you almost dream,  
It is some mermen's revelry.

Or bivouac watch-lights of the weird,  
Unhappy spirits of the seas,  
Above the white bones of the dead,  
Low wailing dull, sad litanies.

"Torching herring": the herring are lured to the surface of the water by torch lamps attached to the bows of the dories, and are caught with dip-nets.

P. G. DUFFY, SCRUBBER

**I**F yer might ter take th' walk,  
Yer can see this bit I talk,  
P. G. Duffy done in chalk,  
With flerishes er wendin'  
Ware th'y comes up endin'  
In this Duffy uv th' dock.

He's th' boss, an' thet's his sign.  
Sumthin' out th' ginrul line  
Is his callin', but he's fine  
With his brooms uv stocky scrubs  
Chocked tergether ter th' hubs,  
Lashed tergether stout with twine.

On his raf's, oh, fore an' af's,  
Wotsoever be th' craf's,  
With his pants erbove his calfs,  
An' his buckits, an' his tubs,  
An' his "Hi thar," "Hello, bubs,"  
An' his guffaws an' his laughs,



P. G. DUFFY, SCRUBBER

He's er study ter th' crew  
Uv th' city folk yer view,  
An' th' chappies "Haow de dew,"  
W'en they prate an' w'en they talk,  
P. G. Duffy uv th' dock  
An' ole Sol jest soaks yer through.

He's no bluff, er bull's eye straight,  
Alwuz at it morn an' late,  
With his gang, an' sich er gait,  
An' his rigs an' arms an' legs,  
Muscles on 'em big as kegs,  
Cords like tires yer 'd inflate.

Mucky holds with bilgy stinks,  
Hawser pipes with docky clinks,  
Tangled chains with rusty chinks,  
Grassy hulls an' soggy keels,  
He will spick, span, head ter heels  
Ere one knows it, ere one thinks.

Dowse pig iron, ballist rinse,  
Fix er pen up like er fince;  
Any muck he'll bring ter sinse.  
Tag er craf' clean out ter sea  
Foams er lath'rin' up each knee,  
Till yer clutched by ole suspinse.

## WHARF AND FLEET

Hello! ter th' fleets an' fly  
Ter er Banker rushin' by,  
Sling th' painter, cock his eye,  
    Leap erboard an' have it out,  
    Groom 'em up fer fifty stout  
E'er th' sun is in th' sky.

Rocks? ha! well, now, I should smile;  
Would n't think it by his style.  
All his life jest one straight file,  
    Colored shirt an' dungeree,  
    Cap uv way-back pedergree,  
Put 'im crazy with er tile.

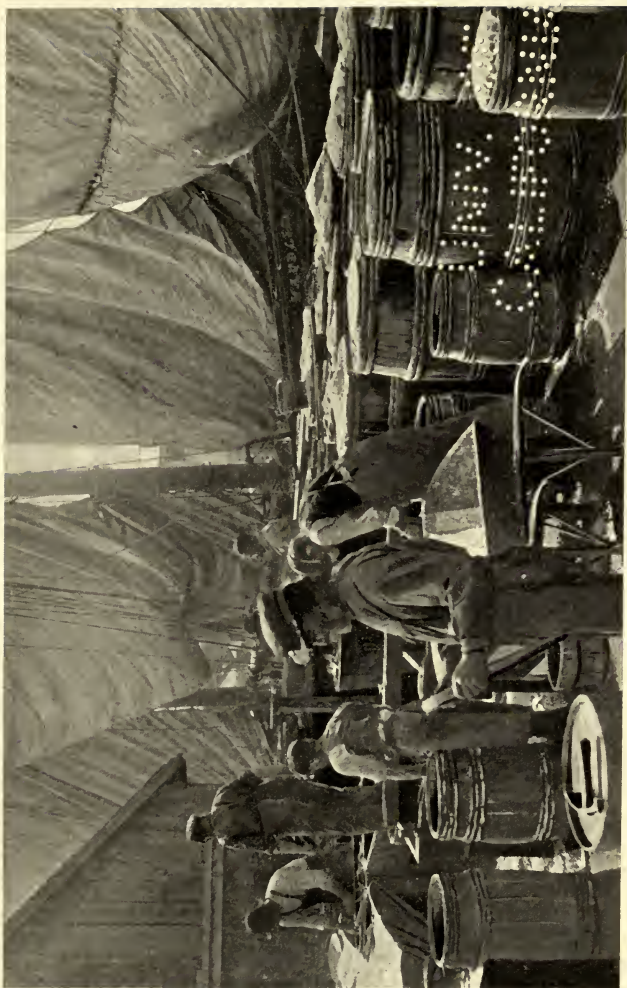
But he's w'ispered in er ear,  
" 'T won't be alwuz so, m' dear.  
Toil is funny, keep yer cheer.  
    I'll drudge on an' w'ack th' rocks,  
    Yer shall wear th' Sunday frocks."  
An' he's one uv many here.

The scrubbers are the men who contract to clean the vessels. They cleanse the hulls of weedy growths with scrub-brooms, wash the ballast, and put the holds in shape.

"Hawser pipes" are in the port and starboard of the bow; the cables are run through them.

"Fix er pen": the holds of the vessels are divided up into pens.

"Fling th' painter": the rope attached to a dory.





## PACKIN' MACK'R'L

**W**'EN all th' cribs are in er row  
Like spellin' chil'r'n smart,  
An' flerishes begin ter show  
In all th' figger-art,  
Erpon th' w'irlin' barril-heads  
An' pickly kits uv spruce,  
Then hist yer salt or cry er halt,  
But git yer red chalks loose.

Oh, w'en th' tubs begin ter go  
Like schoolmarms prim an' pert,  
An' slat th' 'zamples fas' 'n slow,  
An' birch yer ter th' hurt,  
An' add yer up an' fracshunize  
An' sum yer in er lump,  
Then spread yer salt or cry er halt,  
But let yer red chalks thump.

Oh, w'en th' crowds begin ter pour,  
An' all th' school is filled,  
An' frum th' back desk ter th' door  
Each face looks baked an' grilled,

## WHARF AND FLEET

An' all th' 'mittee men come roun'  
Ter put yer head or back,  
Then screech yer biggest numbers out,  
An' make yer red chalks crack.

Oh, w'en th' 'zaminashuns done,  
An' all th' papers in  
Uv all th' ones, th' twos, th' threes,  
Uv all th' figgerin',  
Then ring th' bell fer endin' time,  
An' give th' brand men sway,  
Th' cooper men ter flag th' chine;  
It's recess time an' play.

See notes on "Mack'r'l Cooper."

Second verse: figuratively used for the dumping of the weighers and the packers keeping score.

Third verse: figuratively, when there is a rush of work and more than one trip is in.

After the barrels are packed and are rolled out on the wharf, the brand men with their iron burners burn the numbers of the fish and the firm's name on the barrels, or stencil the numbers and firm's name with brush and coloring.

# THE FOG BELL AND WHISTLING BUOY

## EASTERN POINT LIGHTHOUSE

**T**WO voices send a welcome cry,  
Two voices through the mists and  
rain;

With matted locks and sunken eye,

Ho! ancient fisher, back again!

For thee, for thee, we welcomes roll.

Whoo! Whoo! Toll-toll.

Ho! gray gulls, tired, sweeping on,

Not long the fogs shall blind thy way,

Red mussels shalt thou feed upon,

Mid creamy lace that hems the bay,

But patient wait, to cheer they roll,

Whoo! Whoo! Toll-toll.

Ho! Brave young hearts that toil unseen,

We hear the creek of kelp-draped oar;

When o'er the cobble frail you lean

And pull the glistening net to shore,

Beware the reef, beware the shoal,

Whoo! Whoo! Toll-toll.

## WHARF AND FLEET

Oh! weary hearts, why wail and weep?  
Why eager watch with faces wan,  
A stern-kept tryst from them we keep  
To louder cry, to sharper clang,  
When cold white fogs would fierce control.  
Whoo! Whoo! Toll-toll.

By day, by night, in the red light's glare,  
Each voice is heard, each form is seen,—  
One alone by the tower fair,  
One in the sea enrobed in green,  
While ever brave they welcomes roll.  
Whoo! Whoo! Toll-toll.



“PORT ER REEK”

THE PORTO RICO TRADE

**S**WISH, swash, swish, swash, th' ole  
w'arves speak,

“Ho! Port Er Reek!”

Cap'n Huntin's trip is sold,  
Hundrid thous'n in th' hold,  
Crews er blowin out th' gold,

“Ho! Port Er Reek!”

Swish, swash, swish, swash, th' ole w'arves  
speak,

“Ho! Port Er Reek!”

All th' fleet er kitchin' on  
High line Johnnie an' his John,  
Sports with Sunday breeches on,

“Ho! Port Er Reek!”

WHARF AND FLEET

Swish, swash, swish, swash, th' ole w'arves  
speak,

“Ho! Port Er Reek!”

No more snooz'n' inter bed,  
Hungry stomiks gittin' fed,  
Sweethearts ready ter be wed,

“Ho! Port Er Reek!”

Swish, swash, swish, swash, th' ole w'arves  
speak,

“Ho! Port Er Reek!”

Jest er duel 'tween th' firms,  
Cuttin' throats ter come ter terms,  
Honer slimy as th' worms,

“Ho! Port Er Reek!”

Swish, swash, swish, swash, th' ole w'arves  
speak,

“Ho! Port Er Reek!”

Rook-town jab'ers ter th' fore,  
Waybacks hurlin' back th' lore  
Has Bins with th' breeches tore,

“Ho! Port Er Reek!”

"PORTER REEK"

Swish, swash, swish, swash, th' ole w'arves  
speak,

"Ho! Port Er Reek!"

Lifein' full th' August days,  
Voicin' sweet th' dreamy haze,  
Driftin' up th' harber ways,

"Ho! Port Er Reek!"

Swish, swash, swish, swash, th' ole w'arves  
speak,

"Ho! Port Er Reek!"

Jest er soundin' key w'en strife  
Sanctified th' better life,  
Carnage carved with drippin' knife,

"Ho! Port Er Reek!"

Since the late war with the United States and Spain, the fishing-firms have established trade relations with Porto Rico.

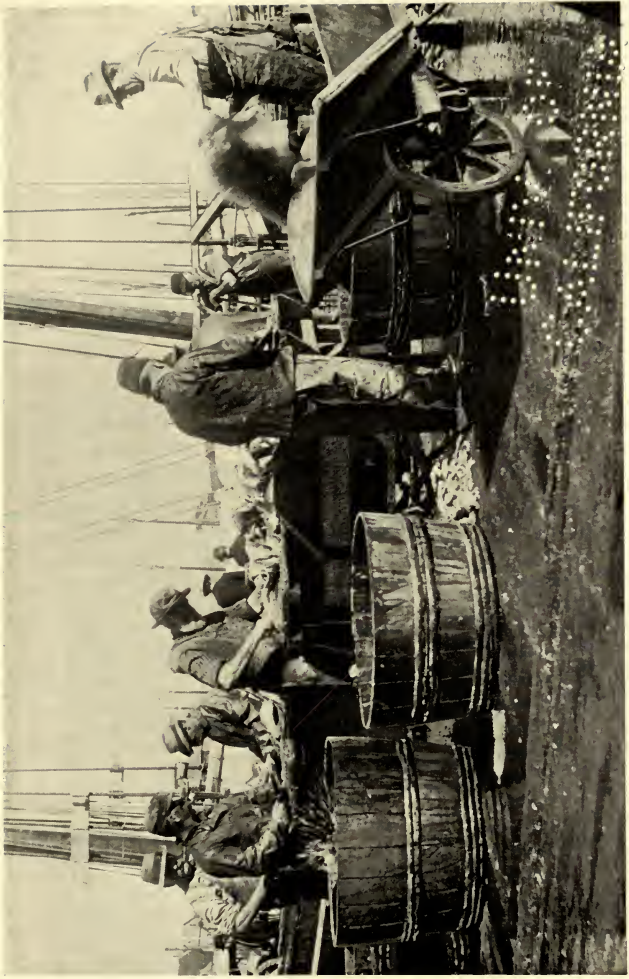
"High line": the member of a crew who stocks the highest share.

## SPLITTIN' ER TRIP

### ER DRIVE

**W**'EN two's at front an' two's at side  
An' one is haulin' in,  
It's, Tommie, slat yer barvil on  
An' shove th' dories in,  
An', Hockey, mind th' beam's all right,  
An', Frenchy, fork an' pitch,  
W'en two's at front an' two's at side  
An' one is in th' ditch.

W'en two's at front an' two's at side  
An' one is haulin' in,  
It's drive 'em, boys, an' slat 'em, boys,  
An' bone 'em thick an' thin.  
It's tub 'em, boys, an' scrub 'em, boys,  
An' wash 'em all yer worth,  
W'en two's at front an' two's at side  
An' one waits fer er birth.





SPLITTING ER TRIP

W'en two's at front an' two's at side  
An' one is haulin' in,  
It's w'eel 'em, boys, an' butt 'em, boys,  
An' kinch 'em thick an' thin.  
It's salt 'em, boys, an' crown 'em, boys,  
An' king 'em in er row,  
W'en two's at front an' two's at side  
An' one's ter jine th' show.

W'en all have gone frum front an' side  
An' all th' haulin' in,  
It's clean up guts an' bind up cuts  
An' chook yer sufferin'.  
It's pick up knives fer grub an' wives,  
Fer loved ones sweet ter kiss,  
It's time fer blow an' cuds ter go,  
An' pipes ter smack an' hiss.

W'en all have gone frum front an' side  
An' all th' haulin' in,  
It's swipe yer spits an' souse yer mits  
An' howl yer sufferin'.

## WHARF AND FLEET

It 's leave th' winds th' fall ter sag,  
Ter nag th' gibbit boot,  
It 's hug yer chink fer home or drink,  
It 's plank yer heels an' scoot.

"W'en two's at front an' two 's at side": when two vessels are at front of the wharf and two are at the side of the wharf waiting to be unloaded of fish; in wharf vernacular termed "er drive."

"Souse yer mits": washing out mittens after splitting a trip.

"Gibbit boot": the leather boot that hangs suspended from the weighing-beam.



## TH' BANK FLEET

OH, w'en th' wind's er sarcy thing,  
An' never minds its ma,  
An' roun' th' moon's er cirkis ring,  
An' ev'ry leetle star  
Has got er gran'ma by th' han',  
With black veils roun' 'em tight,  
It's then yer find 'em man ter man  
All ready fer th' fight.

Oh, w'en th' wind's er tuffy kid,  
An' never minds its pa,  
An' licks th' dev'l fer er quid  
Uv his "B. L." or "Star,"  
An' jumps him down an' poun's him  
soun'  
Until he roars with rage,  
Then face ter face they batt'n down  
An' peer fer ankerage.

W H A R F   A N D   F L E E T

Oh, w'en th' wind's er drunk'n beast,  
An' scowls an' leers an' screams,  
An' gits hauled up fer squirtin' yeast  
On dada Neptune's dreams,  
An' spatters him an' wasteth him,  
Till ev'ry reef's in fright,  
Then face ter face th' Holy Writ  
An' Christ erbove in might.

Oh, w'en th' wind's er crazy thing,  
All wild frum head ter foot,  
An' great, black waves come tiptoein'  
Like Malay men ter loot,  
Ter cut, ter slash, ter flay yer up,  
Ter drown yer up in bits,  
Then man ter man they drain Hope's  
cup,  
An' gaze ware Christ he sits.

Oh, w'en th' wind's er dead, spent thing,  
An' silent, wold an' sea,  
An' wings th' land bird sweet ter sing  
Uv its Gethsemernee,

## T H ' B A N K F L E E T

Mayhap out in its seaward flight,  
Or wingin' home ter rest,  
It will bring ergin th' love light  
Shrined erpon its beatin' breast.

The Bank fleet sail to the following fishing-grounds off the coast of Newfoundland, namely, Western Bank, St. Peter's Bank, Le Have, Flemish Cap, Green Bank, and Grand Banks for codfish and halibut; distance from Gloucester port from eight to twelve hundred miles.

## JUMPIN' ROPE

HAULIN' IN TH' HAWSER AT LOW TIDE

**W**'EN all th' docks er fieldy sight, say,  
such er time as June,  
An' in th' cabbige an' th' kelp th' minnies  
gasp an' swoon,  
An' all th' piers an' all th' w'arves an' all th'  
fleets ride stilts,  
An' all th' beacons an' th' lamps make dag-  
gers with big hilts,  
An' all th' crews with yep an' ho th' bodies  
gait th' lope,  
It's then th' homin' craf's git stuck an' phos-  
phers jump at rope.

Oh, 't is er pleasin' time ter watch, say, w'en  
th' sun's gone down  
Ter escort up th' easty deep th' lady moon  
ter town,

## JUMPIN' ROPE

With all her baggige an' her trunks strapped  
tight behind th' clouds,  
All full uv silver petticoats an' robes with  
trailin' shrouds,  
Ter watch th' hawsers 'gin ter swing er space  
'twixt spile an' prow,  
An' watch th' phospher chil'r'n come an' jump  
erroun' an' bow.

I bet they jump er thousan', ere th' spile lets  
go its han',  
I bet they laugh er thousan', if we could but  
understan',  
Ter see such merry, happy things so full uv  
life an' love,  
So full uv such perliteness ter th' lady moon  
erbove,  
Er lookin' down an' smilin' ter th' happy feet  
er trip,  
As high an' low, now to an' fro, th' great  
rope lif's ter drip.

I bet they have er merry time until comes  
back ter shore  
Th' gaddin' tide, brimful uv news uv wot th'  
sea-nymphs wore,

## WHARF AND FLEET

Uv wot th' mermen said ter it er flirtin' on  
th' deep,  
Till tired out th' crews let go, an' th' chil'r'n  
fall ersleep,  
An' up th' homin' craf' comes in ter hug th'  
cap an' kiss,  
An' take er look erroun' er bit if anything's  
gone 'miss.

When the tide is out and a vessel cannot make the wharf, a hawser line is run out from the vessel and attached to some pile; then the crew gradually haul her in.

"Fieldy sight": the green vegetable growth left on the dock flats at the receding of the tide; in wharf vernacular termed "cabbige."

"Minnies": small tiny fish, called minnows.

"Ride stilts": reflections of the piles at low tide. As the hawser lifts and drips and the crew hauls upon it, the phosphor at night gleams most beautifully.

## WASHIN' OUT

**W**OT's th' rackit all erbout?  
Orders come ter wash 'em out.  
Hus'le up, then, shake th' sun,  
Work erpon th' w'arf's begun.

Pull yer soggy mitt'ns on,  
Sollie, Hockey, Jake, an' John.  
Let th' dories easy slip.  
Hi there! butts uv Kinney's trip.

Stack 'em up ergin th' shed,  
Bellies down'rd, tail an' head.  
Leave er gangway 'gin th' cap  
Full er foot an' half er lap.

Hus'le up an' shake th' sun,  
W'ack yer cuds an' tack th' fun,  
Thump yer red-jacks, blart yer blow,  
Let th' ole w'eel w'iz an' go.

## WHARF AND FLEET

Rattle up them rusty picks,  
Dowse that salt there red as bricks,  
Hus'le up there, shake th' sun,  
Work erpon th' w'arf's begun.

In washing out a trip of fish, dories are used and filled with salt water, the fish being scrubbed and cleansed with brushes.

"Ole w'eel w'iz an' go": an automatic wheel on the wharf used to draw up the salt water.







## THE STEVEDORE

**I** CAN hear his cries  
As the great tubs rise,  
As the great tubs fall,  
Where the shrouds grim fret,  
Like a statue set,  
I can hear him call.

On the platform's shaft,  
Like a floating raft,  
I can see him sway,  
As he peers and looks,  
While the great black hooks  
Speed down their way.

'Twixt the mighty spars  
And the furled yards' bars,  
Like a thing in air,  
'Bove the white steam plumes,  
In the gray air's rooms,  
Like a spirit there.

WHARF AND FLEET

'Bove the mighty deck,  
Like a flutt'ring speck,  
    I can see him reach  
For the tricky fall,  
While the gulls shrill call  
    And the rain loons screech.

When the Cadiz ships  
Kiss the harbor's lips  
    Like an Old World's dream,  
And the Trapani barks  
From foreign larks  
    In the sunsets gleam,

I can hear him call  
'Bove the white salt's fall,  
    'Bove the wheeler's cries,  
Like a statue set  
In the sparkling fret  
    And the dreaming skies.

When the coaliers roll  
'Twixt each fierce wave's goal,  
    Like the ghost of Cain,  
Through the still fog's mist  
Drifts his smothered hist  
    Like that soul in pain.

THE STEVEDORE

Then I hear his cry  
Like a long dead sigh  
    For the blight he bore;  
Then I hear him call  
As the black jets fall  
    With their rush and roar.

When the great tramps lag  
With a mighty sag,  
    And, like Pisa's own,  
Their black stacks lean,  
With each smoke drift seen  
    Like black plumes blown,

And the English Jack  
Prouds the windward tack  
    To the dwarfing pier,  
I can hear him call  
'Bove the white salt's fall  
    And the steam mist's tear.

In the burning heats,  
In the cutting sleets,  
    In the freezing snows,  
In the roar of storms,  
In the melting warms,  
    In the checkless blows.

## WHARF AND FLEET

I can see him stand  
Where the masts weird band,  
    And the wharves grim lock,  
Where the tackles swing,  
And the shrouds grim sing,  
    And the rain loons talk.

"Stevedore": the man employed in the loading and the unloading of the vessels.

"Tubs": salt and coal are discharged in tubs through the steam motive power of the lighters.

"Platform's shaft": the platform on which the stevedore stands is extended from the top of the sheds.

"Tricky fall": the tackle.

"Cadiz ships," "Trapani barks": ships from the salt ports of Cadiz and Trapani from which salt is imported.

"Wheeler's cries": the salt is wheeled in wheelbarrows to the sheds.

"Great tramps lag": the salt steamers termed "tramps."

"Pisa's own": the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

"Masts weird band": when a large fleet is in.

## GEORGIE COD

**Y**ER may prate yer cult fer Brownin'  
With er fine dissectin' taste,  
Fer th' Injee lore uv Kiplin'  
Yer may w'ack it on with paste;  
But fer er vivisectin'  
Uv th' English with er prod,  
In this world uv butt an' red jack,  
It is th' Georgie Cod.

Not th' leetle, not th' mejum,  
Not th' pickled bank m' praise,  
Not th' heavy saltid pollick  
That will seat yer out yer stays,  
Not th' sneaky hake so tuffy  
Yer jest meller it ter fits,  
Or th' ole shore cusk so puffy  
Yer disrobe it down in bits;

But er trip uv deep-finned soakers  
Plump uv Georgie Cod ter stay  
Will refine th' biggest croakers  
On this side uv God's own bay.

## WHARF AND FLEET

Th' th' blossom uv th' skinner  
W'en he bunches up his pile;  
Th' th' Firm's finanshul orkid,  
An' they wear 'em with er smile.

Georgie Cod is the most remunerative fish to handle; the favorite of the fish-skinners.

"Butt": a large hogshead of the wharf.

"Red jacks": the heavy red leather boots of the fishermen and wharf hands.

"Leettle," "mejum," "pickled bank": names and ratings of some of the fish.



## THE EASTERLY

**T**HE fleets in the harbor heave listless  
and dull;

The fog's ghostly arbor shrouds topmast and  
hull;

The signals flash weirdly, though cursed by  
a doom;

While the sea stretches out a chaos of gloom.

The crews they are calling like phantoms at  
bay;

The cold hail, dull falling, the dazed waters  
flay;

A gull screams in anger, her eerie course  
hid;

While, sullen and silent, night glares like a  
Cid.

Then a wrangle of hell she quickly begins;  
She sullens each swell with her dark mutter-  
ings.

W H A R F   A N D   F L E E T

The fogs warn aloft to their cohorts of mist;  
While, like fiends assembling, the rising winds  
list.

Then, like a wild crying for nothing to gain,  
Or moans of the dying upheaped mid the slain,  
The swirl of the sea-swells commingle the  
din,  
As, baffled and blinded, they madly rush in.

I blow out the lamp-wick that blindeth the  
light,  
And, pierced to my heart's quick, I hie to the  
fight.  
My cheeks like the crimson I see in the slain,  
My heart full of tears like the rain on the  
pane.

I doff on my greatcoat, my storm-boots, and  
all,  
And haste where the winds flout the storm-  
spirit's call,  
And weeds' rough-shorn tresses leap living  
the piles,  
Far in with the wharf dusk, the waves, and  
their wiles.

THE EASTERLY

I plunge through the night-mists, a hell in  
the air.

Their breaths drip my dank wrists and  
dampen my hair,

And clammily my throat grows wet with the  
lick

Of easterlies rising fierce, sullen, and quick.

I cry to the lone cries afloat in the storm,  
I moan for the cold heart and cheer for the  
warm.

Be it man, be it bird, how lost on the sea,  
I cry, "Oh, my God, find them thy Galilee!"

## TH' NIPPER WOMAN

**I** SEE her black shawl mid th' butts  
Clutched tight erpon her breast,  
I see her black cloud full uv ruts  
Er shamin' off its best,  
I see her pinched an' wrinkled face  
Er quizzin' uv th' crew,  
An' this ter-night is ole Mart Place,  
That once wuz Marthay True.

I see her lookin' down th' deck  
Ter git some welcome nod,  
Or still perchance th' courage beck  
Ter put her feet erboard.  
I know her arms are tired out  
Er holdin' uv th' string,  
Fer ev'ry one is knittid stought  
Ter pace th' haddickin'.

TH' NIPPER WOMAN

Oh, Marthay True uv long ergo,  
    Could you have looked ter see  
Yer rosy cheeks an' eyes erglow  
    Come cryin' back ter thee,  
Could you have looked ter see each braid  
    Thin twistid stran's uv snow,  
I know yer would ter God have prayed  
    Fer ankrige long ergo.

Oh, Marthay True that bird-like sang,  
    An' twined th' red rose high,  
An' bade my boyhood's heart ter hang  
    Er love-light in thine eye,  
Could you have known th' years would  
    fling  
    Yer, strandid wreck uv Time,  
Ter sell with ev'ry knittid ring  
    Er dead heart's silent chime,

Er Nipper woman in th' cold,  
    Unnoticed an' ferlorn,  
Mid fisher faces sad an' bold,  
    With hearts bruised like yer own,  
I know yer would ter God have prayed  
    Fer ankrige long ere this,  
Than rather been by Fate errayed  
    Er thing fer chance ter kiss.

WHARF AND FLEET

Oh, Marthay True, we laugh an' woo,  
An' twine th' red rose high,  
An' prate, an' tell what we will do,  
With laughter in our eye;  
But way down in our hearts we know  
Time's but er fickle thing,  
An' ere life's winds begin ter blow  
Come grief an' sufferin'.

Oh, Marthay True, we laugh an' woo,  
An' twine th' red rose high,  
An' prate, an' tell what we will do,  
With laughter in our eye;  
But soon, too soon, our castles fall,  
Our gay ships drink th' sea,  
An' what should been joy's merry call  
Jest tears fer memory.

Oh, Marthay True, God wot that thou  
Meet luck with all th' fleet,  
An' if er kind word will endow  
I'll speak it quick an' neat.  
I know er fisher's tender spot  
Is ankered in his heart,  
Fer once with Christ they threw th' lot,  
An' hauled er goodly part.

## TH' NIPPER WOMAN

Oh, Marthay True, yer tale is told.  
Th' hearts are tried an' staunch,  
An' they have trawled er sum uv gold  
Ter speed yer in joy's launch.  
God wot that thou mayst happy be.  
Jest keep yer sad heart bright,  
An' He will steer yer down Life's sea  
Ter find Hope's port erlight.

Nipper woman: one of a class of women who knit and sell to the crews of the fleet the woollen nippers worn to prevent chafing of the fishing lines. It is an industry pursued in the winter and sold to the firms and the crews in the early spring, at the fitting out or in the fall at the "shifting of voyages."

Nippers: when the trawl gets caught, — "hung up," in fishing vernacular, — mittens are removed and the trawls are hauled in with a pair of nippers, bracelets of knitted wool or cloth held in the palm of the hand, creased to allow of a better hold of the line.

## THE OLD WHARF-BUTTS

**T**HE barrels they just pine to flirt,  
The flakes when crossed get slatty,  
The packing-boxes flashy, curt,  
The beam is sly and ratty;  
But for a race of stanch old puts  
Always the same give me the butts.

They are the yeomen of the soil,  
The firm's own Handy Andys,  
Whose fat old bellies mark its toil,  
Its sand and wide expanses, —  
These good old, brave old, stanch old puts,  
Always the same the gray old butts.

They are the burghers of the sheds,  
The scarred cap's rotund Dutchies,  
The solid chums the red-jack heads,  
The wharf-hand grips and clutches, —  
These good old, brave old, stanch old puts,  
Always the same the gray old butts.



THE OLD WHARF-BUTTS

They are the kings the harbor round,  
Whose crystal coronals you view,  
Imperial by Cadiz crowned  
Or Trapani 'neath skies of blue, —  
These good old, brave old, stanch old puts,  
Always the same the gray old butts.

They are the prophets and the saws,  
The prosperous vouchers one can greet,  
Or Time's revealers of Life's laws  
When on some wharf rough ways did  
meet, —  
These good old, brave old, stanch old puts,  
Always the same the gray old butts.

## DRYIN' TIME

**O**H, w'en th' wind an' sun's at tag,  
An' all th' rain-cry's done,  
An' wing th' gulls ermong th' hulls  
With laughter an' with fun,  
W'en all th' scrubbin' boards are out  
With Neptune's gals erglow,  
Then hang up lines, fer right th' signs  
Fer dryin' time an' blow.

Oh, in th' stream it is ter dream  
An' watch th' dryin' go,  
Ter see th' swart an' fereign wives  
Hang frill an' ferbelo,  
Th' ole-world lingerie uv Time,  
Frum topmas' yard an' peak,  
Ter lead yer heart up ter th' door  
An' crave er boon an' speak.





## DRYIN' TIME

Oh, in th' stream it is ter dream  
An' watch th' home lines sway,  
Ter mark each dainty over-dress,  
Each bonnit cute an' gay,  
Th' big an' roomy mother sheets  
Er swingin' o'er each stern,  
An' see th' socks an' patched-up things  
High ware th' sign'ls burn.

Oh, in th' stream it is ter dream  
An' watch all day th' glee,  
Ter hear 'em flap with blow an' snap  
At moorin' chain er lea.  
Ter foller, foller with th' wind  
Until th' poles come down,  
An' pins an' lines fade in th' shines  
Uv beac'n lights an' town.

After a heavy rain or spell of easterly weather, one of the most picturesque scenes of the harbor is the hanging of the hoisted and half-hoisted sails from all sorts of crafts to dry in the coming forth of the sun.

"Swart an' fereign wives": the Cadiz ships and Trapani barks.

"Socks an' patched-up things": the drying clothes of the crews.

## THE SHORE FISHERMEN

**T**HE great waves rocked them to and fro,  
The mad winds tossed their locks of  
snow,  
And wailing in their ears cried, "Woe,  
Woe, woe, ahead, pale fishermen.

"Woe, woe, woe, woe, whither thou row.  
The night grows dark, cold falls the snow;  
The reefs are bare, no farther go;  
Turn back, turn back, pale fishermen.

"Woe, woe, woe, woe, creak, creak, creak,  
creak,"  
The oars reply to winds that speak;  
"They bid us on their dories leak.  
Stay, stay these mad pale fishermen."

No stars came out, the fierce winds blew,  
Like ghosts of birds the salt sprays flew,  
An' phosphors hissed as bows plunged  
through;  
Still fearless rowed the fishermen.

## THE SHORE FISHERMEN

They found one face in sea-weeds white,  
Two faces stared the beacon light, —  
One frozen 'neath the Brace Cliff's height, —  
And four crones mourned the fishermen.

Above the sea they made their bed,  
A stake they placed at foot and head,  
And on the stake these words I read  
An old crone traced with gull's blood red,  
"Here sleepeth four pale fishermen."

## FILLIN' TH' WATER-BARRELS

**W**'EN th' topmas' is er beavered  
With er buckit slant its crown,  
Like er boozey tickit man'ger  
Or er merry laughin' clown;

W'en th' crews are all er hootin'  
An' er racin' roun' th' deck,  
Like er pack uv tum'lin' chil'r'n,  
Like as 'nough ter break th' neck, —

Then yer know some craf' is thirsty,  
An' is ripe ter take its fill  
With its mash, ole Aquay Puray,  
An' its chum ole Wenham Still.

Oh, they pipe 'em in th' highway,  
An' they swig 'em close ter shore,  
An' I would that there were only  
Jest such swiggers an' no more.



FILLIN' TH' WATER-BARRELS

Oh, how light would be th' sorrers  
Uv th' many hearts, jest think,  
Mashin' sports like Aquay Puray,  
Mashin' luves like Wenham Brink!

The sail water-boats of the fleet bear the names of Aqua Pura and  
Wenham Lake.

## SWEEPIN' TH' FLAKES IN WINTER

**T**ALK uv sweepin' on er Friday,  
Shakin' mats an' dustin' roun',  
W'y, er scrubbin' wench ain't in it  
W'en th' powder snows come roun', —

W'en th' powdery snows like flour  
Does th' make up ac' an' shakes  
Forty million dredgin'-boxes  
In th' wrinkles uv th' flakes;

Makin' Gilsy's w'arf er Banquo,  
Kiley's place er Hamlit's pa,  
Ole Bill Jarmin's shack er faintin'  
Scared-ter-death Cordeliah;

Packin' all th' hake an' haddick,  
All th' cod an' all th' shack,  
Inter dreamy beds uv silence  
Tight tergither, back ter back;

S W E E P I N ' F L A K E S I N W I N T E R

Makin' crooked-leg Tim an' Sanders,  
Stiff-legged Prot an' surly Kile,  
W'eezin' jest like nags with glanders,  
Do th' tight rope ac's th' w'ile;

Red Jacks squeakin', thumpin', creakin',  
Swayin' frames, an' bucklin' slats,  
Till ole Sol, disgustid, hollers,  
" Ah, come off, yer wot yer ats!

" Ah, come off, yer clumsy Bridgits,  
Tumble down an' take er leap.  
You he wenchs don't know nuth'n';  
Let me show yer how ter sweep!"

An' with one long dash, er dandy,  
Never mortal wench could do,  
He jest does th' biggest sweepin',  
Fit fer any gilt-edged crew.

The flakes are generally swept after the dry powder-like snows come down.

"Banquo": a character in "Macbeth."

"Hamlet's pa": the King.

"Cordeliah": the youngest and favorite daughter of King Lear.

## BAITING UP

**R**INGS the deck with life and song,  
Baiting up for one more trip,  
Thinning out the rusting thong,  
Weighting down the hookèd lip,  
While a wind unseen in air,  
Haunting shroud and listless sail,  
Hovers round ten men of care,  
Whisp'ring like a phantom pale.

Bait the hook and knot the gange,  
Coil and heap the snaky twist,  
Glist'ning with the scalèd mange,  
Hubbled with the shuttling fist.  
Slive and knot and hook and heap,  
Speed the jest and ring the laugh.  
Seas are rolling just as deep,  
Hope's a phantom best at half.  
Slive the hook and fast the knot,  
Round them up and tub the trawl.  
Fate's a-laughing at the lot,  
Death is jesting at it all.





B A I T I N G   U P

Lone a wharf and dark a day,  
    Still an air and red lips pale,  
While a wind upon its way,  
    Like a deaf mute, signs the gale,  
To the black ledge, through the limb,  
    To a dead heart hope bereft,  
All there is of them and him,  
    All that toiling hope has left.

Rusts the hook and rots the gange,  
    Slimed the tangled snaky twist,  
Floating far the scalèd mange,  
    White and cold the hubbled fist,  
Black and grim the hook and knot,  
    Jest and laughter all are still,  
While Fate flits a spirit lot,  
    Ten white ghosts where waves may  
    will.

Bare the hook and loose the knot,  
    Tangled, torn, the tubbèd trawl,  
Fate a-laughing at the lot,  
    Death the jester of it all.

“Gange”: the short hooked lines attached to the main line, baited with slivers either of squid, alewives, or herring.

“Coil and heap the snaky twist”: the form in which the trawl is coiled into the tubs.

## OLE FATHER KIFE

**O**LE Father Kife is come ter town,  
With 'barrer green an' horn uv brown,  
An' lobsters hot an' steamin'.  
He's got six towils o'er th' show.  
Toot, toot, toot, toot, jest hear him blow,  
An' watch his blue eyes gleamin'.

Full six good, stubby miles he's come,  
His red jacks coatid o'er with gum  
Uv damp sea kelp an' weed.  
Th' salt sea brine is in his hair,  
Yer scent it through him ev'ryware,  
It luves him so ter greed.

Full six good, stubby miles he's come,  
Er cud uv baccer 'twixt each gum  
Ter nerish him er w'eelin',  
W'ile, dancin' in each bright blue eye,  
Yer'll catch th' light uv Truths swung high,  
Undimmed ter all wrong dealin'.



OLE FATHER KIFE

Ole Father Kife can make er prayer  
At haulin' time or on th' Square,  
An' sen' th' hymns er singin',  
W'ile makin' change or passin' out  
Th' steamin' lobsters, red an' stout,  
Ter jingly nick'ls ringin'.

Some day, w'en swif' through heaven's foam  
Death's pale w'ite shallop sails him home,  
An' angels wing erside him,  
I know th' light he's hung through life,  
That's twinkled high 'bove ev'ry strife,  
Will tend'ly watch an' guide him.

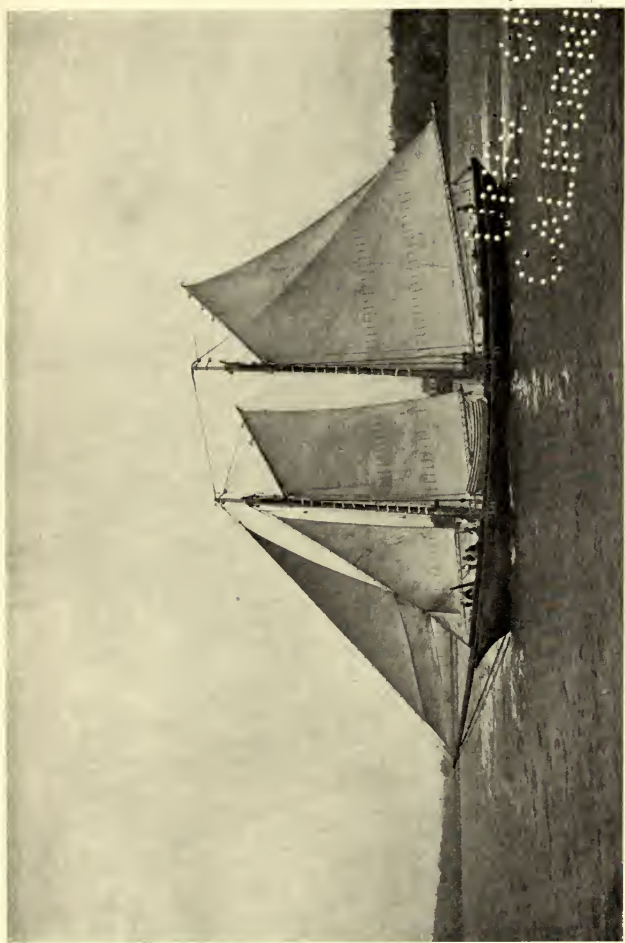
An' at that haven w'ence each soul  
Must find, at last, Hope's restin' goal,  
With all its lights er glowin',  
I know, if in th' throngs I press,  
Or fer way back ermid th' less,  
I'll hear his horn still blowin'.

"Square": name of a portion of East Gloucester.

## TH' GEORGIE FLEET

**U**NDER th' scream uv th' gulls,  
Under th' talk uv th' rains,  
Upstagger th' Georgie hulls,  
Down rattle th' Georgie chains.  
Spindrif' like g'osts in th' air,  
Dyin' like g'osts in each wake,  
Firms hungry waitin' th' share,  
Skippers an' crews on th' make.

Shiein' th' toots uv th' tugs,  
Haughty er wavin' th' plumes,  
Clearin' th' channel with lugs,  
Jawin' th' sheets an' th' booms.  
Spindrif' like g'osts in th' air,  
Dyin' like g'osts in each wake,  
Firms hungry waitin' th' share,  
Skippers an' crews on th' make.





T H' G E O R G I E F L E E T

Tackin' an' rufflin' th' spiles,  
Flutin' th' knees uv th' shore,  
Cuttin' th' stream inter styles,  
Bias line, curve, sweep, an' gore.  
Spindrif' like g'osts in th' air,  
Dyin' like g'osts in each wake,  
Firms hungry waitin' th' share,  
Skippers an' crews on th' make.

Talkin' th' caps'n, hello!  
Warm with th' home harth, an' wool  
Measurin' answers an' slow,  
Souwesters lurched with er pull.  
Spindrif' like g'osts in th' air,  
Dyin' like g'osts in each wake,  
Firms hungry waitin' th' share,  
Skippers an' crews on th' make.

Out in th' dusk an' th' dark,  
Sign'ls flashin' er peak,  
I, frum th' land gloom hush, hark,  
W'ile through th' rain talk they speak.

## WHARF AND FLEET

Spindrif' like g'osts in th' air,  
Dyin' like g'osts in each wake,  
Firms hungry waitin' th' share,  
Skippers an' crews on th' make.

Second verse : the tugs keeping open the channel of the harbor.

"Tackin' an' ruffin' th' spiles" : the swirl and swell of the waves lashing against the piles of the wharf.

"Spiles" : the wharf pronunciation for piles.

"Talkin' th' caps'n, hello!" : calling of the crews to friends on the wharves.

The Georges Fleet sail to Georges Banks for codfish and halibut, a distance from port of a hundred and fifty to two hundred miles. In wharf vernacular, pronounced "Georgies."

Georges Bank : it is on the westerly shoals of Georges where the best fishing is found. In some places scarcely more than two fathoms of water cover these shoals, and in the gales and storms the vessels find no mercy. It is here where so many disasters occur; it is the graveyard of the fishermen.

## TH' HEAD MAN

“**D**RIVER! driver!” Th’ head man is  
ringin’.

“Driver! driver!” Th’ echoes ring back.  
“Driver! driver!” Th’ torches flare, flingin’  
G’osts frum th’ gloom ware black butts  
upstack.

“Driver! driver!” Th’ sharp blades sink  
deeper.

“Driver! driver!” Th’ cold bellies slip.  
“Driver! driver!” Ter hell with th’ sleeper  
Who’d snore w’en fleets are snarlin’ th’ rip.

“Driver! driver! yer life be one daytime.  
Driver! driver! or take boots an’ git.  
Driver! driver! an’ waller th’ cold slime.  
Driver! driver! yer sports in th’ pit.

“Driver! driver! yer bluffers uv ole men,  
Shiv’rin’, croonin’ with locks w’ite an’ gray.  
Driver! driver! yer fakes in th’ open  
Hidin’ yer slack ’neath awn’s uv th’ stay’.

## WHARF AND FLEET

“ Driver! driver! I ’m boss uv this hus’le.  
Up ter th’ scratch or take boots an’ quick.  
Wot if yer hearts are sick uv th’ tussle,  
Plenty ’s waitin’ who won’t growl an’ kick.”

“ Head man ”: the foreman of the wharf.

“ Driver ”: the wharf term used to urge the men to cover a certain limit of work.

“ Torches ”: the torches are suspended above the butts when night work is on.

“ Sports in th’ pit ”: the crews pitching out fish in the holds of the vessels.

“ Awn’s uv th’ stay ”: staysails forming awnings.



## AT THE HAULING UP

**W**HEN black scales rot where hawsers  
    hitch,  
And wind-swept hags in topsail bags  
    Snarl, "Kitch, kitch, kitch,"  
And Hecates in ghoul-robed shrouds  
Flit fog-pressed seas and sullen clouds  
    And pitch, pitch, pitch,  
It's then the service of the catch,  
It turns its key in Time's stern latch.

Then wends a congregation past  
With sheaves half bound to pipes that sound  
    In hands clutched fast.  
The pilgrim pale from Iceland's shore,  
The wayfarer from Labrador,  
    With gaunt forms cast  
Their rosaries of griefs to show  
To chant with trembling voices low.

## WHARF AND FLEET

Then sweeps the congregation in  
To cymbal clash of seas that splash  
    To own each sin.  
The youth from far Newfoundland's shore  
Whose mother waits him at the door  
    To lead him in,  
To bow on knees and ask in prayer  
Forgotten things when life was fair.

Then sweeps the congregation in  
To banner clash of sails that lash  
    And culverin.  
The racers lone of Georgie's shoals,  
That graveyard grim of drowned men's souls,  
    To greet their kin,  
The foam wreaths of the spectral race  
Still damp upon each staring face.

Then kneels the congregation down.  
In fadeless ways of yesterdays  
    Flits far the frown.  
The priest of Peace signs sweet release  
To wait and watch with love's surcease  
    Hope's fadeless gown,  
To drift again each darkling sea  
With Love's own sweetest litany.

A T T H E H A U L I N G U P

Ah! God of mine, I cry thee, halt!  
The tears fall down my cheeks of brown,  
    My heart turns salt.  
Like Lot, my blood congeals and hards,  
My beakers are but broken shards.  
    Ah, hear each fault,  
And soothe these spirits of the gale  
That come to me when dead years wail.

“Hauling up”: when the catch is over and the vessels are moored to winter quarters, or when “shifting voyages.”

“In topsail bags”: when the topsails are not furled and are blown by the wind, they have a bag-like form.

## SPREAD'N' TIME

**E**R lowry day does vary well  
Fer splitt'n' or fer head'n',  
But, mark me, fer these truths I tell,  
'T wull never do fer spread'n'.

No matter haow yer fish m' lay  
On clean new flakes or mussay,  
Yer gut ter have er sunny day  
Ter tough 'em rich an' glussay.

Er dampy wind with easty sough,  
Er wet new monay drizzle  
Thet consumps man as well as caow  
Will make er spread er fizzle.

No matter if yer awnin' 's up,  
All bellied w'ite an' windy,  
Yer might as well pull on th' scup,  
An' chuck yer plans ter shindy.





S P R E A D ' N ' T I M E

All knaow each hour makes th' man,  
An' swells er w'arf hands dow'r,  
An' helps ter fill his Sunday can  
With fi'ry, horse-rate pow'r.

But, bless yer stars an' shoot yer gun,  
Ter have 'n A one spread'n',  
Yer gut ter have er laugh'n' sun,  
Er westy sky er head'n'.

Yer gut ter have th' boxes daown  
Er beehive 'n' th' shadders,  
Say sich er time w'en lintsy daown  
Goes roamin' frisky gadders.

Yer gut ter have er day, say, w'en  
Th' linnit caps th' this'le,  
An' shouts fer joy ercross th' fen  
Ter Bobby W'ite's sly w'is'le.

Yer gut ter git er luvy time,  
W'en yaller birds cernary,  
An' up th' sunflow'rs merry climb,  
An' robins peck th' cherry.

## WHARF AND FLEET

Yer gut ter have er time w'en bees  
Are honeyin' th' cluver,  
Say, sich er time w'en foamy seas  
Roll back th' laugh'n' luver.

So, mark me, fer these truths I tell,  
Er sunny day fer spread'n',  
But any time 'twixt here an' — well,  
Best won't say fer head'n'.

Before the fish are ready for market or shipment, they are spread upon the flakings and dried, being protected from the hot rays of the sun with cotton-cloth awnings.

"Boxes daown": the boxes are made of wood, and when not covering the made-up fish are stored under the flakes.



## DRYING THE SEINES

**H**OT with breaths of the steaming vats,  
The night-dyed seines they merry  
store,

Then swing aloft with tar-grimmed hats  
To dry the drift along the shore.  
Arms akimbo of tannèd brawn,  
Throats and chests of the nomad's blush,  
They ride away at early dawn,  
Sweet with the voicing songs of thrush.

Over the hubbles and o'er the hills  
Spangling still with tears of night,  
Echoing sweet with the lilting rills,  
Fanned by waking wings in flight,  
They laugh at toil on the hummocked rifts,  
And jest at care and the gales,  
While the gull at sea, a wild rose, drifts  
To music of hoisting sails.

## WHARF AND FLEET

Over the hills and into the calms  
Of meadow-lands old with age,  
They heave the seine with their brawny arms  
To the creaking roller's gage,  
Till the black rack stands a lonely thing,  
And the hoisting sails grow dim,  
And the bird comes back with tired wing  
In the full day's glowing rim.

And the tears of night are dry and set  
In the veils and meshes fine,  
While the black rack jolts like living jet  
Down the landscape's low incline.  
And arms akimbo and chests of brawn  
Again in the hot vats steam,  
Till ready the rift for oar and horn,  
And the schools like rainbows gleam.

The seines, after first being knitted, are colored by extracts of either hemlock or cutch, which gives to them the brown effect. For black effect, they are, in seining-business vernacular, "steamed tarred," being treated with a solution of tar and water constantly steamed. Then they are stored into large hay-racks loaded and unloaded through the motive power of a wooden roller attached to the back of the rack. They are dried by spreading them evenly over some field or level country.

## THE BURIAL AT SEA

**L**IKE the surge of a mighty forest  
No man has ever trod,  
The rattlings ring, the shrouds grim sing,  
The wind-beat pennons nod.  
The night clouds 'bove each topmast height  
Like dark-stoled demons speed;  
The waves uplift, like faces white,  
Concealing some dark deed.

With em'rald signals blazing  
And garnet signals red  
Like droves of grim beasts grazing  
Upon the ocean's bed,  
The fisher-fleet lay huddled,  
With cables making moan,  
O'er gear and ropes all muddled  
The sad crews work alone.

WHARF AND FLEET

By a cuddy's fire blazing  
A group of fishers stand,  
And watch stern Death slow glazing  
Eyes turned toward heaven's strand.  
They hear the winds go wailing  
Athrough the starless waste,  
And watch the black clouds sailing  
Like life-boats in their haste.

“ At anchor comrades are we.  
How wild th' winds do blow!  
Jest hear th' angels callin'; see  
How fair th' w'ite wings show.  
I'm tired, tired, sailin';  
I long ter go ter sleep.”  
And two eyelids by death paling  
Fall fringed with lashes deep.

By a cuddy's fire blazing  
A group of fishers stand,  
Like gentle women raising  
A form with nerveless hand.  
O'er a rough bunk lowly bending,  
They bow each care-worn face,  
While a comrade low is sending  
To heaven this strange grace, —

THE BURIAL AT SEA

“ O Father, in this awful night,  
Erlone upon th’ deep,  
Surrender we all earthly right  
Ter Jim there fas’ t’ sleep.  
We ’d ruther had him die at home  
With loved ones sweet ter cheer,  
An’ buried ware th’ song-birds roam  
Than in th’ deep so drear.

“ O Father, Jim could never bluff  
Like us th’ trawl an’ oar;  
His place should been fer frum th’ rough.  
Right him on heaven’s shore.  
Wuz pretty good at tender words,  
As gentle as er lamb.  
His voice wuz like th’ song uv birds,  
He loathed all outward sham.

“ Now, Father, give us strength ter drop  
Poor Jim down in th’ deep.  
An’, Father, w’en his heart did stop,  
Yer sure his soul yer keep.  
Yer loved th’ fishers long ergo,  
Yer calmed er stormy deep,  
Then give ter us er little show,  
An’ right Jim fas’ ter sleep.

## WHARF AND FLEET

“An’, Father, ev’ry bit that Jim  
Did earn in this dark trip  
We’ll give ter her as if frum him,  
His wife, er wee girl slip.  
We’ll tell her how he happy died,  
An’ heard sweet angels sing,  
An’ how he faced with such brave pride  
Th’ unseen death can bring.”

Like the surge of a mighty forest  
No man has ever trod  
The rattlings ring, the shrouds grim sing,  
The wind-beat pennons nod.  
The night clouds ’bove each topmast height  
Like dark-stoled demons speed  
The waves uplift, like faces white,  
Concealing some dark deed.

’Neath em’rald signals blazing  
And garnet signals bright,  
Sad fishermen are raising  
A canvas coffin white.  
Up through the sea-drenched gangway,  
Across the sea-drenched deck,  
To where the wild waves swirl and play,  
And seem the dead to beck.

THE BURIAL AT SEA

Beside the trembling rattlings,  
Mid trawl and tangled gear,  
Tossed by the wind that wails and sings,  
They lift their messmate dear.  
Over the foam-tossed railing  
They lift the canvas light,  
With a fisher's face out-paling  
The foam-decked billows white.

Down in the green gulfs yawning  
Like hideous cradles deep,  
With the birth of an heavenly morning  
Sweet pictured in his sleep,  
Down through the white foams wreathing  
Crowns on his tired head,  
Mid seething phosphors breathing,  
They give to God the dead.

“TH’ SPIDER AN’ TH’ FLY”

DRIVIN’ TH’ SPILES; BUILDIN’ TH’  
W’ARVES

**W**’EN yer see er string uv spilin’  
Like er squad uv sojers filin’,  
An’ er ole mud scow er smilin’  
Ter th’ fore,

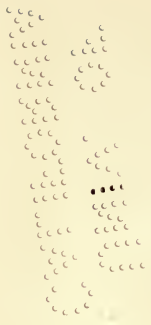
An’ er dock once big an’ roomy  
Looks down-heartid, sad, an’ gloomy,  
An’ er tide sweeps not so bloomy  
As before,

Then yer know th’ fly an’ spider  
Is ter fight ergin an’ pride ’er,  
Oh, this doughty ole four-sider  
Uv er Boer.

Oh, enthroned erbove th’ ladder,  
Yer can mark th’ spider’s shadder,  
Watch his majesty grow madder,  
Dart an’ cling.







“TH’ SPIDER AN’ TH’ FLY”

See th’ fly spiles git erfruntid,  
Shrink th’ farther dazed an’ stuntid  
Spirits broke an’ wits all bluntid  
    With his spring.

W’ile erroun’ th’ w’arf an’ cappin’  
Yer can mark th’ kids er gappin’,  
Hol’rin’, laughin’, sarcin’, clappin’,  
W’en some ole fly’s life goes sappin’  
    Frum er sting.

Jest er sayin’, sweet an’ joyous,  
Youth still makes ter live out fer us,  
Fun still makes ter blend an’ chorus  
    Through th’ years.

Jest er fadeless bit uv vishun  
Frum our childhood’s lore elishun,  
Tellin’ hearts with stern precishun,  
    Swif’ th’ years.

Jest er sayin’, sweet an’ cheery,  
W’en our tired hearts were merry,  
An’ our mothers called us dearie  
    With her fears,

## W H A R F A N D F L E E T

Jest as loved as "Ring er Rounder,"  
Tumblin' tag ter kitch an' flounder,  
W'en th' iron rings its sounder  
    Birthin' piers.

In building a wharf, the piles are first inserted into holes made in the dock, then after being carefully inserted and put in shape, they are driven down to a certain point by a heavy iron weight suspended from the top of the scow.

"Fly an' spider": figuratively used when the heavy iron weight ("th' spider") strikes the top of the pile ("th' fly"). An old saying, long handed down by the fisher-folk.

"Ring er Rounder": an old-time game of the long ago.  
The piles are of hemlock, the capping of oak.

## WEIGHIN' OFF ER TRIP

'**T**WIXT hull an' cap  
It's yep an' yap,  
It's bluff 'em, boys, an' praise 'em.  
With plungin' prongs,  
It's speed th' songs,  
An' let th' baskits raise 'em.

It's fork 'em in,  
An' hist like sin;  
It's damn th' tackle's antic;  
It's blood th' beams,  
An' drench th' seams,  
An' red th' ole Atlantic.

It's slash th' cuts,  
It's heap th' guts,  
It's blood th' blades an' ghout 'em,  
It's fin 'em down  
Like hell ter town,  
An' let th' pitchers scoot 'em.

## WHARF AND FLEET

With lax ter charms  
It's bare th' arms,  
An' bulge th' muscles swellin',  
An' frame th' lark  
Uv Injee mark  
In lifein' veins er wellin'.

Oh, weighin' off  
Is "ratty toff,"  
Or pious square at checks,  
W'en trips are in,  
An' toil means "tin,"  
An' dories nes' th' decks.

"Weighin' off": taking out a trip of fish.

"Plungin' prongs": pitchforks used in forking up the fish.

"Baskits raise 'em": when weighing off a trip of fish, the fish are drawn up in baskets.

"Beams": the weighing scales.

"Slash th' cuts": splitting open the fish.

"Blood th' blades an' ghout 'em": the dripping of the blood from the splitting-knives.

"Fin 'em down": boning the fish down the back.

"Pitchers": the men who fork up the fish with pitchforks.

"Dories nes' th' decks": when the dories are stored one inside the other on deck.

## TH' LOST TRAWLERS

**W**E saw th' dories fade erway,  
As swif' th' current swep',  
An' watched th' forms fade in th' gray,  
So dark th' shadders crep'.  
We saw th' ice-bird wing its flight  
Ter some dark reef ter cling,  
An' saw lone Sable's far-'way light  
Flash 'bove th' moon's pale ring.

We watched th' swells upheave an' fall  
An' floatin' seaweeds kiss,  
An' heard th' hagdons snarl an' call  
Erbove th' phosphor's hiss.  
We looked into each other's face,  
An' woe spake unto woe.  
Despair's grim outline could we trace,  
As only death can show.

WHARF AND FLEET

Th' dory frail would pitch an' sway,  
Th' rowlocks shif' an' creak;  
Th' oars would bend as if at bay,  
W'en up th' waves would leap.  
Th' swells would lif' 'em high in air,  
Then plunge 'em out uv sight;  
Th' spray would drench th' dank brown hair,  
An' sweep th' faces w'ite.

Ah, God, it was er piteous sight  
Ter see 'em drif' erlong,  
Ter see such faces wan an' w'ite  
Ever so firm an' strong,  
Ter see brave men like helpless things  
Erpon th' treach'rous deep,  
Jest toys ter play th' wind that sings,  
An' seas that crawl an' creep.

We sent er shout, we sent er cheer,  
But, oh, like g'osts they fled.  
Th' darkness it was drawin' near,  
An' day would soon be dead.



## TH' LOST TRAWLERS

We sent er prayer, we changed our course,  
Till night like doom came down.  
We floatid here, we floatid there,  
Then sailed fer Gloster town.

When the crews go out to set their trawls, they row out in their dories and circle the vessel in all directions. Two men man a dory; one handles the oars, the other man aft throws over the buoy line. The trawls are then uncoiled from the tubs by the aid of a stick and sent after the buoy line. The fishing-gear consists of ropes several hundred feet long to which, at intervals of a yard or so, hooks are attached by smaller lines two feet long and submerged by anchors and then buoyed. There are about three thousand hooks to handle to a dory. Fogs and snow-squalls are the dread of the trawlers, and account for the loss of so many of that class of fishermen while away from the vessel in their dories.









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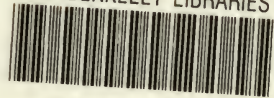
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