

And we roll'd at the waves' sporting  
A cable's length from the town,  
With girls and boys courting  
While she shuffled down.

In November 'fifty-seven,  
One of the foremast hands,  
I was nearly blown to Heaven  
In the troopship\* *Sarah Sands*:  
For the flames were snaking and  
reaching  
To where the powder was stored  
But there wasn't much screeching  
With Captain Castle aboard.

Ten mortal days  
We look'd to see a puff,  
And go and blow our ways  
Like a pinch of black snuff.  
But the captain held us together—  
Sorrow a man shirk'd—  
We fought the fire and the weather  
And kept the pumps work'd.

For, beating back the flame,  
And steaming for our port,  
On a gale came,  
And took us sharp and short :  
Struck us very vicious  
(Our port quarter gone),  
But we anchored at Mauritius  
November twenty-one.

Three trips I made,  
Very calm and cool,  
Running the blockade  
In a brig of Liverpool ;  
Crawling up the coast,  
Painted smock-white,  
Like the *Flying Dutchman's* ghost,  
Never a pipe alight.  
The fourth time we slapp'd in,  
Minding ne'er a pip ;  
And, faith, they nick'd the captain,  
And took the poor ship.

In the *Parrot*, coasting smack,  
I was wreck'd off Spurn Head :  
Along o' Yellow Jack †  
I was twice left for dead.  
I suffer'd sore disaster  
On the brig *Richard Lee*—  
Abraham Davis, master—  
In the fall of 'seventy-three.

Driven south o' the Horn,  
Nosing for the ice ;  
Neither night nor morn,  
But dark you could slice ;  
Every stitch she shook out  
Jagg'd with ice and spear'd,  
And every cry of the look-out  
Clotting in his beard :—

Sudden came a rip,  
And a roar, and a squeal :  
Over lay the ship,  
Baring half her keel.  
Back she roll'd to the smother,  
Groaning sore and loud,  
And, behold ! myself and another  
Were shook from the shroud.

Caking into ice,  
Praying all I knew,  
I struck a spar twice,  
And at last I brought it to.  
Then I shouted pretty strong  
To my mate, Andrew Brown ;  
But he pipes back, "So-long,"  
And I hears him gurgle down.

How they pull'd me in  
The good Lord knows !  
Pot-black my skin,  
So cruel was I froze.  
Two fingers I lost,  
Dropping most forlorn,  
Eaten by the frost,  
South of Cape Horn.

Fourscore and three !  
I'm an old man and ripe :  
But no drink for me,  
And easy on the pipe.  
So I meet the world merry,  
With my joke and my tale,  
Working of the ferry  
Back at Kinsale.

And this is an old man's lore,  
Which I give without fee :—  
You hear of God ashore ;  
You meet Him at sea.  
And storm or even keel  
Makes little odds ;  
You want two hands at the wheel  
And one of the two — God's

\* Not strictly a troopship, but conveying troops on this occasion.

† Yellow fever.