

"Down in the deep, with freight and crew,
Past any help she lies,
And never a bale has come to shore,
Of all thy merchandise."

"For cloth of gold and comely frieze,"
Winstanley said, and sighed,
"For velvet colf, or costly coat,
They fathoms deep may bide."

"O, thou brave skipper, blithe and kind
O, mariners, bold and true,
Sorry at heart, right sorry am I,
A-thinking of yours and you."

"Many long days Winstanley's breast
Shall feel a weight within,
For a waft of wind he shall be feared,
And trading count but sin."

"To him no more it shall be joy
To pace the cheerful town,
And see the lovely ladies gay
Step on in velvet gown."

The "Snowdrop" sunk at Lammas tide,
All under the yeasty spray;
On Christmas Eve the brig "Content"
Was also cast away.

He little thought o' New Year's night,
So jolly as he sat then,
While drank the toast and praised the roast
The round-faced Aldermen;

While serving-lads ran to and fro,
Pouring the ruby wine,
And jellies trembled on the board,
And towering pasties fine;

While loud huzzas ran up the roof,
Till the lamps did rock o'erhead,
And holly boughs from rafters hung
Dropped down their berries red;

He little thought on Plymouth Hoe,
With every rising tide,
How the wave washed in his sailor-lads
And laid them side by side.

There stepped a stranger to the board—
"Now, stranger, who be ye?"
He looked to right, he looked to left,
And "Rest you merry," quoth he;

"For you did not see the brig go down,
Or ever a storm had blown;
For you did not see the white wave rear
At the rock—the Eddystone."

"She drove at the rock with sternsails set;
Crash went the masts in twain;
She staggered back with her mortal blow,
Then leaped at it again."

"There rose a great cry, bitter and strong—
The misty moon looked out—
And the water swarmed with seamen's heads,
And the wreck was strewn about."

"I saw her mainsail lash the sea,
As I clung to the rock alone;
Then she heeled over, and down she went,
And sank like any stone."

"She was a fair ship, but all's one!
For naught could stand the shock."
"I will take horse," Winstanley said,
"And see this deadly rock."

"For never again shall bark of mine
Sail over the windy sea,
Unless, by the blessing of God, for this
Be found a remedy."

Winstanley rode to Plymouth town
All in the sleet and snow,

And he looked around on shore and sound,
As he stood on Plymouth Hoe.

Till a pillar of spray rose, far away,
And shot up its stately head,
Reared and fell over, and reared again;
"Tis the rock! the rock!" he said.

Straight to the Mayor he took his way—
"Good Master Mayor," quoth he,
"I am a mercer of London town,
And owner of vessels three;

"But for your rock of dark renown,
I had five to track the main."
"You are one of many," the old Mayor said,
"That of the rock complain."

"An ill rock, mercer! your words ring right,
Well with my thoughts they chime,
For my two sons to the world to come
It sent before their time."

"Lend me a lighter, good Master Mayor,
And a score of shipwrights free,
For I think to raise a lantern-tower
On this rock of destiny."

The old Mayor laughed, but sighed also.
"Ah, youth," quoth he, "is rash;
Sooner, young man, thou'lt root it out
From the sea than doth it lash."

"Who sails too near its jagged teeth,
He shall have evil lot;
For the calmest seas that tumble there
Froth like a boiling pot."

"And the heavier seas, few look on nigh,
But straight they lay him dead;
A seventy-gun-ship, sir! they'll shoot
Higher than her mast-head."

"O, beacons sighted in the dark,
They are right welcome things,
And pitch-pots flaming on the shore:
Show fair as angel's wings."

"Hast gold in hand? then light the land,
It 'longs to thee and me;
But let alone the deadly rock
In God Almighty's sea."

Yet said he, "Nay, I must away,
On the rock to set my feet;
My debts are paid, my will I made,
Or ever I did thee greet."

"If I must die, then let me die
By the rock, and not elsewhere;
If I may live, O, let me live
To mount my lighthouse stair."

The old Mayor looked him in the face,
And answered, "Have thy way;
Thy heart is stout, as if round about
It was braced with an iron stay."

"Have thy will, mercer! choose thy men,
Put off from the storm-rid shore;
God with thee be, or I shall see
Thy face and theirs no more."

Heavily plunged the breaking wave,
And foam flew up the lea,
Morning and even the drifted snow
Fell into the dark-grey sea.

Winstanley choose him men and gear;
He said, "My time I waste,"
For the seas ran seething up the shore,
And the wrack drave on in haste.

But twenty days he waited, and more,
Facing the strand, alone,
Or ever he set his manly foot
On the rock,—the Eddystone.