

Blow the Man Down

Blow means literally to assault a sailor with a blow of the fist, spar, belaying pin or whatever. The 'packet' referred to in the penultimate verse is a Liverpool ship taking mail (packages) to New York. These were infamously tough ships on which to work as they had contractual time targets to meet in crossing the Atlantic. The 'package' referred to in the first verse is another matter all together! There are many variants of the words (see Hugill pp 158-167). Our version is a saucy moral tale about the perils of the pox - an early sort of public health warning.

As I was a rollin' down Paradise Street
To me *Way hey blow the man down*
A Liverpool package I chanced for to meet.
Oh give me some time to blow the man down!

Chorus

<Optional and do not repeat between all verses otherwise it is far too long - current practice is to omit all but the final chorus >

{Blow the man down, bullies, blow the man down

To me Way hey blow the man down

Blow the man down, bullies, blow him away

Oh! Give me some time to blow the man down!}

She were bowling along with the wind blowing free
She clewed up her courses and waited for me

She was round in the counter and bluff at the bow
So I pulled out me tow rope, said "Weighin' up now"

I offered to board her with no more delay
"You're welcome young man if you're able to pay"

I tipped her me flipper and took her in tow
And yardarm to yardarm away we did go

I opened her hatches, she'd plenty of room
And in her main locker I stowed my jib-boom

<more>

I fired off me bow gun, I was but a wreck
Her topsails and rigging were all on the deck

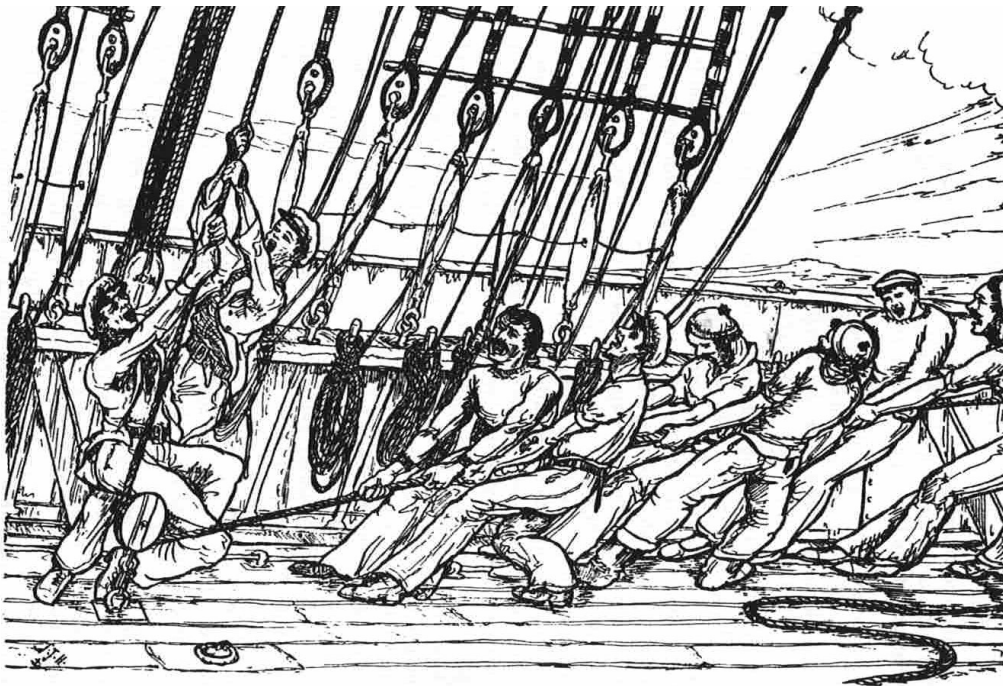
Then it's on with me sea boots and off from the town
It's on with me sea boots and blow the man down

As soon as our packet was clear of the bar
That little fire bucket had burnt me main spar

So all you bold fellers, that follows the sea
Let this be a lesson, take warning from me

Final Chorus

*Blow the man down, bullies, blow the man down
To me Way hey blow the man down
Blow him right back into Liverpool town
Oh! Give me some time to blow the man down!*



HAULING ON THE TOPS'L HALYARDS
'Oh, as I wuz a-rollin' down Paradise Street . . .' (Halyard Shanty)

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