

This article was downloaded by: [New York University]

On: 29 July 2015, At: 01:24

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London, SW1P 1WG



## The Mariner's Mirror

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmir20>

### SOME BALLADS AND SONGS OF THE SEA

John Leyland

Published online: 22 Mar 2013.

To cite this article: John Leyland (1922) SOME BALLADS AND SONGS OF THE SEA, *The Mariner's Mirror*, 8:12, 373-375, DOI: [10.1080/00253359.1922.10655164](https://doi.org/10.1080/00253359.1922.10655164)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00253359.1922.10655164>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is

expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

## SOME BALLADS AND SONGS OF THE SEA.

BY JOHN LEYLAND.

### III.

THIS series of articles shall conclude with extracts from two rhymes belonging to the time of the war of the French Revolution, and with some notes concerning them. Both appear to belong to the year 1793. The first is remarkable in several ways. It opens with two lines, which are identical with those which form the introduction to a nautical song, dating from the Spanish war of Jenkins's Ear, 1739, now in the Madden collection. No doubt the nautical bard would often be at his wits' end to discover some new rhyme to the word "bold," which was often used, and conceivably two rhymsters at an interval of over half-a-century might hit upon the device of introducing the word "controul'd," without one having copied the other. The song of the Revolution is entitled, "A New Song of the Capture of the Dumourier Privateer and the rich Galleon, the richest prize ever brought into England." The form "Dumourier"—evidently pronounced Dumoureer—for Dumouriez, was common in this country. The captured ship in company with the privateer, is described as a galleon, which was not a rating at the time either in the British or the French service. The form "galloon" is not unknown. It occurs in a Newcastle song of about 1756 :

If we should meet with a galloon,  
Our own we'll make her very soon.

The capture of the *Dumouriez*, named, of course, after the famous general of the Revolution, seems not to be recorded, nor that of her prize, either by James or Laird Clowes, nor is it mentioned in any other volume I have access to. This is perhaps not surprising, the lists being evidently incomplete, and sometimes unnamed privateers are mentioned. The prize captured seems to have been a veritable treasure ship, and we are given to understand, the Convention having declared war upon Spain on March 7th, 1793, that she was a Spanish ship, made prize by the privateer. This would account for her "wine of shining gold," with £500,000, "we are told" in "good hard Spanish dollars," as well as two hundred chests of silver, "casks of rich diamonds," much cochineal and silk, and for ballast 500 tons of copper. The scribe was probably a megalomaniac in the matter of treasure, for the arrival of twenty-one waggons so laden at the Bank of England would have created a great sensation. No

wonder the crowds of Portsmouth had cried "huzza," and the girls, decked with blue ribbons, had sworn they loved "a sailor true." With these remarks, let some verses speak for themselves. Booty and prize did certainly loom very large in the minds of otherwise simple sailors :

Come all you jolly sailors bold,  
 Who alway scorn to be controul'd,  
 A story I will now unfold  
 Perhaps may give you pleasure.  
 'Tis the taking of the *Dumourier*,  
 A noble French built privateer,  
 And rich galloon as you shall hear,  
 Who fought so bold to save their gold,  
 Five hours hard as we are told,  
 But forc'd to surrender.

Fam'd ninety-three it was that year  
 As we sailed over Cape Finister,  
 We met this haughty privateer,  
 And this rich prize beside her.  
 The French they were in a rage,  
 But thought it useless to engage,  
 And quickly we did them assuage,  
 We brought them to,  
 What could they do?  
 The French were forc'd to cry Morbleu!  
 Our force was so superior.

\* \* \*

Such prize was never known,  
 To be brought unto the English shore.  
 Our tars did sing, our guns did roar,  
 Success to England's forces!  
 We sent our prize into Spithead,  
 With colours flying at topmast head,  
 We display the white, the blue, the red.  
 The people flew this sight to view,  
 The richest prize of all Peru  
 Brought to Portsmouth harbour.

\* \* \*

From these lame and halting verses we pass to a song with a lilt in it. This is "A favourite new song, called Jolly Jack of Dover, the Ferryman from there to Calais, who swears he'll never bring no more Frenchmen over to distress Old England." Many of the French emigrés of 1793 were fine people who had fled from the tide of horror they could not stem, but others were undesirable, and among the starving people in England a strong feeling grew up against them. France, in the English obsession, was a land peopled by demons, and in many quarters the French emigrés were regarded with dislike and suspicion.

This won the sentiment of Jolly Jack, who in sarcastic verses, each followed by his rousing chorus, described the parson, the lady, the barber, the captain, the milliner, the swindler, the miller, and the lawyer who had been his passengers. Not all his character sketches can be given here.

I am a bold true British tar call'd Jolly Jack of Dover,  
I've lately been employ'd much in bringing Frenchmen over.  
Split my top-sails if e'er I had such cargoes before, Sir,  
And sink me to the bottom if I carry any more, Sir.

*Chorus.* : O ! no the devil a bit with Jolly Jack of Dover,  
None of your murd'ring Frenchmen to England shall come over.

\* \* \*

I brought over a Lady of distinguished note, Sir,  
She offered for her passage a corner of her passage-boat, Sir,  
Says I, it will not do, Mam, perhaps your boat is leaking,  
Or you're a French fire-ship, so sink me if I speak ye.

I brought over a Barber, who offer'd me his tweezer case,  
A pot of paints and curling tongs, to decorate my rosy face ;  
Smash your sprit-sails, says I, my face wants no careening,  
But you want to go passage free, I know it by your meaning.

I brought over a Milliner, who said her name was Nancy,  
She said she had some fringes that would arouse my fancy ;  
But I said avast there, my dear, I am not so eager,  
Nor so tir'd of English meat to long for your soup meagre.

The last he was a Lawyer. He came trembling and quacking,  
From the first of the disturbance his fortune he'd been making ;  
He gave me ten guineas got by his evil ways, Sir,  
But now he's come to England to end his roguish days, Sir.

Here's a health to old England and her jolly Tars, Sir.  
May the heavens keep us from evil broils and jars, Sir.  
I'll ne'er fall astern when my country's in distress, Sir,  
Nor bring another Frenchman this country to oppress, Sir.

Few of the verses reproduced in these articles possess any literary merit. They are really typical and representative of a vast mass of writing, which, with sentiment on the one hand and description and laudation on the other, has endeavoured to mirror the life and occupation of the mariner—his strong character, his rough honesty, his valour, his hardihood, his patriotism, and his prejudices, his good humour and his sentiment, his love of glory—of which Nelson was his exemplar—and his achievements. That is the value of such literature, and it gives interest, I think, to the hitherto unknown examples of it which have been printed here.