

Lee Fore Brace

There was ten men hauling on the lee fore brace
In the rain an' the drivin' hail,
An' the mile-long graybeards chargin' by,
An' the thunderin' Cape Horn gale.
(That dark it was, you scarce could see
Your hand before your face;
That cold it was, our fingers froze
Stiff as they gripped the brace.

***An' "Christ!" says Dan, "for a night in port
An' a Dago fiddler's tune,
An' just one whiff o' the drinks again
In a Callao saloon!"***

There was ten men haulin' on the lee fore brace
When the big sea broke aboard;
Like a stream in spate, a foaming flood
Right fore an' aft it poured.
The ship, she staggered an' lay still —
So deep, so dead lay she,
You'd think she could not rise again
From such a weight of sea.

There was ten men haulin' on the lee fore brace . . .
Seven when she rose at last;
The rest was gone to the pitch-dark night,
An' the sea, an' the ice-cold blast.
An' one of them was Dago Pete,
An' one was Lars the Dane,
An' the third was the lad whose like on earth
I shall not find again.

An' I'll heave an' haul an' stand my wheel,
An' reef an' furl wi' the rest . . .
For winds an' seas go on the same,
When they've took an' drowned the best.
An' it ain't no use to curse the Lord,
Nor it ain't no sense to moan,
For a man must live his life the same,
An' keep his grief his own.

An' I'll drink my drink an' sing my song,
An' nobody'll know but me
A lump o' my heart went down with Dan
That night in the wild Horn sea!

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