

Spanish Ladies

Farewell and adieu to you fair Spanish ladies,
Farewell and adieu, to you ladies of Spain,
For we've received orders, for to sail to old England,
And hope very soon we shall see you again.

*We'll rant and we'll roar, like true British sailors,
We'll rant and we'll roar across the salt seas,
Until we strike soundings in the Channel of old England,
From Ushant to Scilly is thirty-five leagues.*

We hove our ship to, with the wind at sou'west, me boys,
We hove our ship to for to take soundings clear.
In fifty-five fathoms with a fine sandy bottom,
We filled our maintops'l, up Channel did steer.

Chorus

The first land we made was a point called the Dodman,
Then Rame Head off Plymouth, Start, Portland, and Wight
We sailed then by Beachy, by Fairlee and Dungeness,
And then bore away for the South Foreland Light.

Chorus

The signal was made for the Grand Fleet to anchor,
All in the Downs that night for to meet;
Stand by your bow stoppers, see clear your shank painters;
Haul all your clew garnets, stick out tacks & sheets.

Chorus

Now let every man toss off his full bumper,
Let every man drink up his full bowl,
We'll drink and be merry and drown melancholy,
Here's a health to each jovial and true-hearted soul.

Chorus

Compiled by Steve Earwicker 2016 from various sources including Capt. W B Whall: "Sea Songs and Shanties" 1910; Stan Hugill: "Shanties from the Seven Seas" 1961 and currently sung versions. Roy Palmer in his book "Boxing the Compass" 2001, refers to the earliest text from 1769. Other texts are from Captain Marryat's "Poor Jack" 1840, and Melville refers to it in "Pequod" and "White Jacket" 1850. The song is known as a Royal Navy song and was sung when homeward bound from the Mediterranean, although it was also in common use on merchant ships in the 19th century as a capstan shanty.