

Blow the Man Down

Blow means literally to assault a sailor with a blow of the fist, spar, belaying pin or whatever. The 'clipper' referred to in the penultimate verse is a Liverpool ship taking mail (packages) to New York. Clipper is strictly incorrect but easier for modern audiences to understand. 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! 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. Roud 2624.

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

Chorus

<Optional and not repeated 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 at 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 willing to pay"

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

She lowered her topsail, t'gan's'l and all
Let her lily white hand on my reef-tackle fall

<more>

I opened her hatches, there was plenty of room
And in her main locker I stowed my jib-boom

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

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

'Cos just as this clipper {packet} was clearing the bar
That little fire bucket had burnt me main spar

So all you bold fellers what follows the sea
Let this be a lesson and pay heed to 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 TOP'S HEALYARDS
"Oh, at I was a-sailin' down Paradise Street . . ." (Halyard Shanty)

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