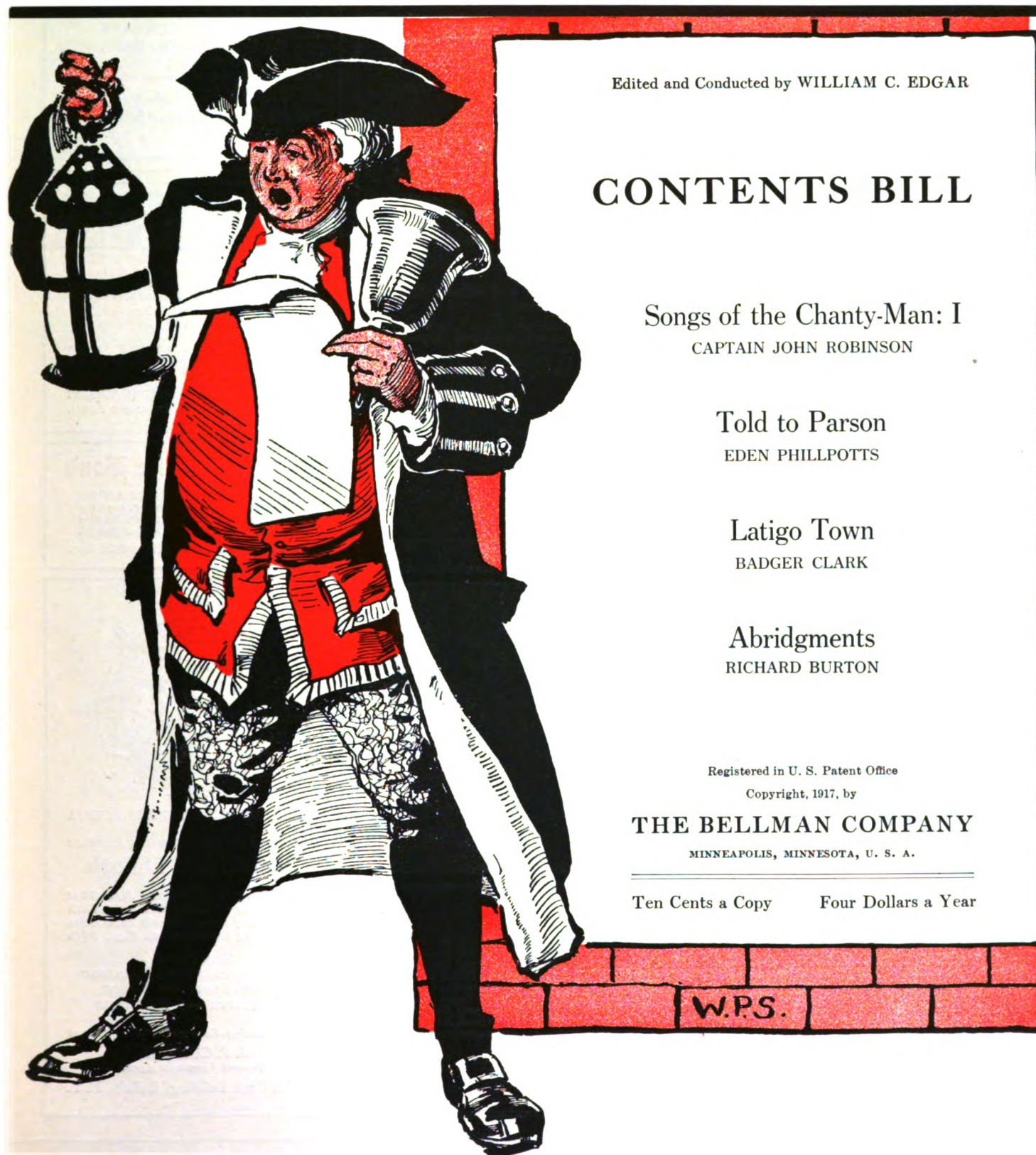


THE BELLMAN

Vol. XXIII

Minneapolis, Saturday, July 14, 1917

No. 574



Edited and Conducted by WILLIAM C. EDGAR

CONTENTS BILL

Songs of the Chanty-Man: I
CAPTAIN JOHN ROBINSON

Told to Parson
EDEN PHILLPOTTS

Latigo Town
BADGER CLARK

Abridgments
RICHARD BURTON

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MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, U. S. A.

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W.P.S.

SONGS OF THE CHANTY-MAN: I

CAPTAIN JOHN ROBINSON

I am exceedingly pleased that The Bellman has given me the opportunity to renew the memory of these old sea songs, sung long ago by the crews of the old sailing ships. They were heard by me over sixty years ago, and most of them are unknown to modern sailors. The solos are mere disjointed doggerel, merely something to which to hang the chorus.

I think I can talk of these things better than I can write about them. I break off in my train of thought, I fear, and get mixed. As may well be imagined, I cannot exactly recall all the original verses. They varied much according to the taste of the chanty-man and his powers of improvisation. In a crude way, however, I have endeavored to carry the spirit and sense of the originals into the words which I have written down.

In point of fact, many of the original words were quite unprintable, and never intended for delicate ears. For instance, in "Bangidero," "Galloping Randy Dandy"

and "Slav Ho," the words of some verses were really shocking, and the choruses quite unfit to be written, yet they were three good chanties, too.

I never heard these except upon the coasts of Chile, Bolivia and Peru. The west coast of South America was an excellent training school for the chanty-man. The anchorages were very deep, and when a ship was ready to sail for home, parts of the crews of the other vessels in port would assist in weighing her anchor. This meant that several chanty-men would be present, and there would be an interchange of chanties.

Most of those I submit were called "lime-juice" chanties by the American sailors; that is, they were originally sung on British ships, where a daily allowance of lime juice was served to the crew as an anti-scorbutic. On American ships of this period the food was much better, a great quantity of preserved vegetables was served to the men, and lime juice was unnecessary.

Maid of Amsterdam.

In Am-ster-dam, there lived a maid, mark well what I do say. In Am-ster-dam, there lived a maid, and

Chorus.
she was mis-tress of her trade. I'll go no more a-rov-ing with you, fair maid, A-

rov-ing, a-rov-ing. Since rov-ing's been my ru-in, I'll go no more a-rov-ing with you, fair maid

When Rudyard Kipling wrote the introductory verses to his "Fringes of the Fleet," he undoubtedly had in mind the old chanty, "Maid of Amsterdam." Note the resemblance between this stanza of Kipling's and the words of the chanty:

"In Lowestoft her keel was laid,
Mark well what I do say,
In Lowestoft her keel was laid
And she was built for the herring trade,
But now she's sent a-roving,
The Lord knows where."

Without the music, which is really the chief attraction of the chanty, the words would be valueless. Therefore, in accordance with The Bellman's suggestion, I have sung the tunes over to a competent musician, Madame Girardot, who has arranged them, as I think, in a very acceptable and satisfactory manner, showing great sympathy and interest.

The advent of steamships and the use of steam power almost eliminated the chanty-man, but not quite, although his fate was sealed and certain. Even when steam-driven ships became almost universal, he still survived on the large North Atlantic liners, because, as the old packet ships were put out of commission, the crews, or "packet rats," swarmed on board the liners.

These were originally heavily rigged. The Cunard boats were bark-rigged; the National Steamship Line vessels were very heavily bark-rigged; the Inman liners were full-rigged, as also those of the Collins Line. The White Star ships were full-rigged, with another mast added, while the Union Line vessels were brig-rigged.

At that time it was an unwritten law that steam power was not to be used in making or taking in sail, and as the wind on the North Atlantic is of a varying nature, it was necessary to set and furl the sails frequently during every twenty-four hours. Chanties were therefore sung, and the chanty-man continued to exist, for a time, but his end was near. Early in the nineties the heavy yards were being abolished, as the speed of the ships increased, and in a few years the square-rigged merchant ship was a thing of the past. When the yards came down, the crews were reduced. Thus the song of the chanty-man was ended.

Sometimes, even to this day, one may hear the sound of some ancient chanty on an old-time ship, but it is merely a feeble echo of its once virile, swinging chorus, just a memory of old days long departed.

The sailor's chanty belongs just as much to the period of the square-rigged ship as all the other time-honoured traditions of the sea which steam has put to flight. It

Oh My Santi.

With Spirit.

My name is Lar-ry Dool-an, a na-tive of the soil. If you want a day's di-ver-sion,

Chorus.

I can drive you out in sty--le. Then a--way you San-ti! My dear

Hon-ey! Oht you San-ti! I love you for your mon-ey!

grew out of the need for something to stimulate hand labor, and when machinery took the place of labor of this kind, the only true function of the chanty disappeared. One could not sing a song to encourage a steam windlass, or inspire a donkey-engine with a chorus, no matter how rousing.

There is plenty of work still for the crew of a modern liner or freight steamer, but it is not the kind of work that has to be done in unison, with perhaps most of the

ship's crew tugging at a single rope. It was in the heavy pulling and hauling that the chanty proved most effective, and today steam raises the anchor, lifts the ship's boats to their davits, works the cargo derricks, and in general replaces the muscles of the men who used to find such tasks the hardest part of their duties. As for sails, they have practically disappeared from all steam-driven vessels, and most of the larger sailing ships carry donkey-engines for the purpose of hoisting sail, and for other

Ranso Ray.

f *Chorus.* *Solo.*

We've pass'd the cliffs of Do-ver, In the good old ship the Ro - - ver. Ran-so, Ran-so, Ray..... ay! We've

f *Chorus.*

an-chored in the downs, for we're bound for Lon-don Town, with my Hi-lo! My Ran-so Ray!

Blow, Boys, Blow!

Solo. *Chorus.* *f* *Solo.*

A yan - - kee ship came down the riv - er. Blow, boys, blow! And

f *Chorus.* *f*

who do you think was cap - - tain of her? Blow, my bul - ly boys, blow!

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heavy work. The gradual replacement of the square-riggers by schooner-rigged ships, the sails of which are far easier to handle, has likewise contributed to the disappearance of the chanty.

The "Derby Ram," an old English chanty which was not often sung, was a windlass song. Its words do not suggest the sea, but a good chanty-man could put enough salt into it to answer his purpose. The chorus was the thing that gave satisfaction, and it was thoroughly en-

joyed for its "That's a lie!" The song explained that the ram was induced to go aboard ship, where he committed all sorts of extravagant acts. I can recall a few of the many verses beside that which accompanies the notes. Thus:

"This ram and I got drunk, sir,
As drunk as drunk could be,
And when we sobered up, sir,
We were far away out on the sea.

Derby Ram.

Solo.

As I was go - ing to Der - by, 'twas on a mar - ket day - I met the fin - est ram, sirs, that

Chorus.

ev - er was fed up - on hay! That's a lie! That's a lie! That's a lie, a lie, a lie!....

Huckleberry Picking.

Solo.

Oh the boys and the girls went a huck - le - ber - ry pick - ing. To my way..... aye..... aye.

Chorus.

Hey, yah. Oh! the boys and the girls went a huck - le - ber - ry pick - ing; to my Hi - lo, my Ran - so Ray.....

"This wonderful old ram, sir,
Was as playful as a kid,
He swallow'd the captain's spyglass
Along with the bo'sun's fid.

"One morning on the poop, sir,
Before eight bells were rung,
He grabbed the captain's sextant
And took a shot at the sun.

"One night 'twas wet and rough, sir,
And the wind was blowing keen,
He borrowed my suit of oilskins
And he took my trick at the wheel.

"The butcher who killed this ram, sir,
Was up to his knees in blood,
And the boy who told the tale, sir,
Was carried away with the flood.

"The crew of the Vencedora
Are handsome, strong, and brave,
The smartest lot of sailors
That ever sailed over the wave."

I made many voyages before the mast in the Vencedora, always around Cape Horn to the coast of Chile.

It should be remembered that the words of many, perhaps most, of the chanties varied according to the tastes of the individual chanty-man. Some of the most popular chanties acquired an almost endless number of verses. The choruses would stay relatively unchanged, because the men who sang them were, as a rule, by no means gifted with inventive genius. The verses, on the other hand, could be strung out just as long as the chanty-man could remember or invent them. No one was very particular about rhyme or meter, and there was seldom any great continuity to the songs themselves.

In the "Derby Ram," for example, an ingenious chanty-man could make up endless adventures in which the ram played the leading part. The tune and the chorus would be found pretty much the same wherever they were sung, but every ship would be likely to have a number of verses which were peculiarly its own.

This makes any attempt to record the chanties very difficult. Two persons familiar with any given song are likely to find that the verses for it that they know are very different. The chanty-men did not learn their songs from books, but passed them along from mouth to mouth, with such changes or additions as happened to occur to them. The verses I give are simply such as I remember—with many, from motives of propriety, omitted.

Dance the Boatman Dance.

Chorus.

The boat - man he can dance and sing, and he's the one knows ev' - ry - thing. Dance the boat - man dance.

Dance the boat - man dance. We'll dance all night, till the broad day - light, and go home with the girls in the morn - ing.

Refrain after every verse.

Hur - rah! the boat - man Ho! Spends his mon - ey when he comes on shore!

These are additional verses of "Old Stormy":

"Old Stormy he is dead and gone,
And for his loss, we'll always mourn.

"He slipped his cable off Cape Horn,
Our sails were split, and mainmast gone.

"We buried him in the raging main,
And none shall see his like again.

"Oh, if I was old Stormy's son,
I'd give the sailors lots of rum."

Old Stormy!

Slowly. *Chorus.*

Old Storm - y was a fine old man, Hi, Hi, Hi, Mist-er Storm - y a-long!

Old Storm - - y was a fine old man, To my way- o storm a - - long.

We're All Bound Away.

Chorus. *Solo.*

As I walked out one morn-ing... 'twas by the canning dock. Heave a - way,.... my John-ny, heave a - way..... I

met a no - ble Ir - ish girl, con - vers-ing with Tap Scott, And a - way.... my John - ny boys, we're all bound a - way!

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For a good bowsing-up chanty, either for the bunt of a topsail, bowsing down the main tack, or sweating up the topsail halyards, I think nothing could beat "Do, my Johnny Boker." There is but one pull in it. When the chorus sang the final "do," the sailors put out all their strength, and a mighty haul was the result. Verses other than those given with the music are:

"Years ago my Sally was fresh as any daisy,
But now she's growing old, she's growing fat and lazy.

"Last time that I met her she wasn't very civil,
So I stuck a plaster on her back and sent her to the devil.

"Sheepskin, pitch and beeswax makes a bully plaster;
The more she tried to pull it off, it only stuck the faster."

Johnny Boker.

1. Do, my John - ny Bok - er, roll me in the clov - er; do, my John - ny Bok - er, do!!

2. Do, my John - ny Bok - er, rock and roll us o - ver; do, my John - ny Bok - er, do!!

The musical score for "Johnny Boker" consists of two systems. Each system includes a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The first system is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system also includes a forte (f) dynamic marking.

Lowlands.

Solo. Last night I dreamt... of my true love. *Chorus.* Low - lands, Low - lands, a - way my John..... She

begged me ne'er..... a - gain to rove..... my Low - lands..... a - way.

Ped.....

The musical score for "Lowlands" is in 2/3 time and one flat (Bb) key signature. It is divided into a "Solo" section and a "Chorus" section. The score includes a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. A piano (p) dynamic marking is present in the chorus section. A pedal point instruction (*Ped.....*) is located at the bottom of the piano part.

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