

Anchor Song

~ Rudyard Kipling; Peter Bellamy

Heh! Walk her round. Heave, ah, heave her
short again!

Over, snatch her over, there, and hold her
on the pawl.

Loose all sail, and brace your yards aback
and full --

Ready jib to pay her off and heave short all!

Well, ah, fare you well; we can stay no more
with you, my love --

Down, set down your liquor and your girl
from off your knee;

For the wind has come to say:

"You must take me while you may,

If you'd go to Mother Carey

(Walk her down to Mother Carey!),

Oh, we're bound to Mother Carey where she
feeds her chicks at sea!"

Peter Bellamy:

<https://youtu.be/kjWn-RmKGSE>

Fay Hield: <https://youtu.be/j5ergi9p5JE>

Tony Barrand & John Roberts:

<https://youtu.be/UCasXPDI5Ws>

Walk her round - The sailors are walking
round the capstan as they push on the
capstan bars, hauling in the anchor
cable.

snatch her over - give a sudden extra effort
so that the pawl, the ratchet on the
capstan, drops into place and stops the
cable running out again. Then the
sailors can leave the capstan for the
moment and set the sails.

Loose all sail, and brace your yards aback
and full - the wind is blowing down the
harbour. The ship, anchored by the bow,
is facing into it like a weathervane. So
the sails are "aback" the wind is blowing
onto the front of them. The yards (the
spars that carry the sails) are swung as
far as possible, ready to catch the wind
as soon as the ship can be turned.

Ready jib to pay her off - the foremost sail
on the ship is ready to turn the bows as
soon as the anchor is raised.

You must take me while you may - a
sailing-ship must leave as soon as the
wind is favourable.

Mother Carey - a mythical figure
personifying the cruel and threatening
sea.

she feeds her chicks - "Mother Carey's
chickens" is a sailor's name for stormy
petrels.

Heh! Walk her round. Break, ah, break it out
o' that!

Break our starboard-bower out, apeak,
awash, and clear!

Port -- port she casts, with the harbour-mud
beneath her foot,

And that's the last o' bottom we shall see
this year!

Well, ah, fare you well, for we've got to take
her out again --

Take her out in ballast, riding light and
cargo-free.

And it's time to clear and quit

When the hawser grips the bitt,

So we'll pay you with the foresheet and a
promise from the sea!

break her out - pull the anchor free of the
seabed

starboard - the right hand side of a ship
when facing the bows the left hand side
is the port side

bower - an anchor stowed at the bow

apeak - the Oxford English Dictionary
quotes Admiral Smyth, Sailor's
Word-book of 1867: 'The anchor is
apeek (sic) when the cable has been
sufficiently hove in to bring the ship over
it.'

awash - the top of the anchor is just
breaking the surface of the sea

clear - the anchor is out of the water

port she casts - the ship turns to the left
under the influence of the wind against
the jib. Here again Kipling displays his
mastery of technicalities: the rule was to
cast away from the anchor, which is the
starboard bower, and the ship correctly
casts to port.

harbour-mud beneath her foot - the harbour
is so shallow that as the ship turns, her
forefoot (the front of her keel) stirs up
the mud.

the last o' bottom - they do not expect to
drop anchor again for a year.

ballast - heavy material put on board to
keep the ship stable as she is unladen --
cargo-free.

hawser - a heavy cable.

bitt - a post on the ship's deck for attaching
a cable (usually in pairs).

we'll pay you with the foresheet - we won't
pay you at all because we are off to sea
and you can't catch us.

Heh! Tally on. Aft and walk away with her!
Handsome to the cathead, now; O tally on
the fall!

Stop, seize and fish, and easy on the
davit-guy.

Up, well up the fluke of her, and inboard
haul!

Well, ah, fare you well, for the Channel
wind's took hold of us,
Choking down our voices as we snatch the
gaskets free.

And it's blowing up for night,
And she's dropping light on light,
And she's snorting under bonnets for a
breath of open sea,

Now that the ship has turned and is heading
out of harbour, the crew have time to
stow the anchor securely. This verse
describes the process in detail.

Tally on - take hold of a rope.

Aft and walk away with her! - Walk towards
the stern of the ship while you haul on
the rope.

handsome - slowly and with care.

cathead - a beam projecting over the bow
for securing the ring of the anchor.

(right) It was so called because it was
traditionally decorated with a lion's head
mask.

fall - the free end of a rope to which power
is applied.

stop - make fast. The anchor has been
drawn up to the cathead with a block or
pulley. Now it is tied and the block can
be released.

seize - make fast with a number of turns of
rope.

fish - draw the flukes of an anchor up to the
gunwale (OED). The ring of the anchor
is secure, now the flukes at the other
end must be raised and tied up.

davit - a small crane to handle the weight of
the anchor.

fluke - the triangular plate on the end of the
arm of an anchor.

inboard haul - pull the fluke onto the ship so
that it can be tied up.

the Channel - the English Channel between
England and France.

gaskets - ropes that furl (gather) the sails
against the yards in harbour. The
remaining sails are now being set.

blowing up - the wind is getting stronger.

dropping light on light - leaving beacons and
lighthouses behind her one after the
other as she sails down the Channel.

Wheel, full and by; but she'll smell her road
alone to-night.
Sick she is and harbour-sick -- Oh, sick to
clear the land!
Roll down to Brest with the old Red Ensign
over us --
Carry on and thrash her out with all she'll
stand!

Well, ah, fare you well, and it's Ushant
slams the door on us,
Whirling like a windmill through the dirty
scud to lee:
Till the last, last flicker goes
From the tumbling water-rows,
And we're off to Mother Carey
(Walk her down to Mother Carey!),
Oh, we're bound for Mother Carey where
she feeds her chicks at sea!

Source:

https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poem/poems_anchor.htm

Wheel, full and by - instruction to the
helmsman to keep the sails filled and
drawing well.
she'll smell her road alone - she will hardly
need steering to keep on her course.
Brest - port city in the north-west of France.
Red Ensign - the flag of British merchant
ships.

all she'll stand - carrying as much sail as is
safe in the wind that is blowing.

Ushant - island off the extreme west of
France, marking the Western end of the
English Channel.

Whirling like a windmill - the rotating beams
from the lighthouse on Ushant show up
on the thin cloud – scud – downwind (to
lee).

last flicker goes - the lighthouse drops out of
sight below the horizon.

Analysis:

https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/readers-guide/rq_anchor1.htm