

The Old Buccaneer

by George Albert Leddy

**IT COULD BE HE, OR PERHAPS THAT HE,
THINKS IT IS ME, AND SO;
EACH MAN MAY THINK THE THOUGHTS HE THINKS,
BUT LET NO OTHER KNOW.**

I stood all alone on the bridge that night, when I heard the Captain shout:

“What are ye doin’ there, ye swab; and what is it all about?”

Then all was still, and I wondered why, it wasn’t the Captain’s way;
For he’d holler loud, and he’d holler long, when he had aught to say.
But the Sea was rough, and I held the wheel, and I dared not let it go;
So I rang the bell, and I called the Mate, to come and look below.

Well what he saw, when he came aloft, was the Captain lying dead;

A belayin’ pin is by his side, a hole is in his head.

The burley brute who’d fought the Sea, and ruled with iron-hand;

Yet never in his life was known, to harm a fellowman;

Was lying now, on his own ship, a lifeless hunk of clay;

And somewhere on that ship there was—someone who’d have to pay.

And once again, a deed confirmed, a sailors firm belief:

To bring a woman ‘board-a-ship, is sure to bring it grief.

And that’s the thing the Captain did, a-grinin’ broad and wide;

And introduced the lady as his—new and lovely Bride.

And through the days, we sailed along, through waters calm and clear;

We part forgot, the things we thought, and part forgot to fear.

Then from the dark, grim-death reached out, and stole a life away;

And no man on that ship did speak, and none had aught to say:

“It could be he, or perhaps that he, thinks it is me, and so;

Each man may think the thoughts he thinks, but let no other know.”

While in the cabin waits the Bride, the one we scarcely knew;

We’d take her back to her own land—it’s the best that we can do.

‘Tis night again: the Moon appears, so big, so round, so bright;

The crested waves, like silver diamonds, sparkle in its light.

I stand alone, and listen to, the murmur of the waves;

And one last prayer, I offer there, o’er my lost Captain’s grave . . .

I turn about, I nearly shout, a shadow do I see;

Belayin’ pin is in his hand—he’s coming now for me!

But I'm alert, and by an inch, it whistles by my head;
'Twas my good-luck he missed me, and I had him now instead.
The man whose brain was wrecked by hate, now trembled cold with fear;
He chattered like a maniac, his words were hard to hear:
He'd stowed-away upon the ship, he'd sworn to take the life,
Of the man who'd come into his Home—and sole away his Wife!

Well, I had known the Captain, as a man who'd always been;
The kind that thought that stealing wives, was really not a sin.
And all at once, I seemed to feel, this man was in the right;
He'd fought to save the one he loved—he had the right to fight.
So I lowered down a lifeboat, and I placed them both inside;
And e'er a new Sun kissed the sky, they'd drifted with the tide.

Now, that is many years ago, I'm sitting here today;
In a tiny room, in the Sailors' Home, that overlooks the bay.
I think of things that's passed and gone, and I have no regrets;
But sometimes often wonder if, "ever God forgets."
I gave them life and liberty, yet, sailing 'aint so grand;
In a measly little lifeboat—a thousand miles from land.
