

Leave Her, Johnny, Leave Her

O the times are - hard and the wa - ges low, -

Leave her, John - ny, leave - her! I - think it's time for—

us to go! An' it's time for us to leave her!

Leave her, John - ny, leave her! Oh, - leave her, John - ny,

leave her! For the voyage - is done an' the winds don't blow, An' it's

time for us to leave her!

- O the times are hard and the wages low,
Leave her, Johnny, leave her!
I think it's time for us to go!
An' it's time for us to leave her!
- O I thought I heard the old man say,
Tomorrow ye will get your pay!
- It's Liverpool Pat with his tarpaulin hat,
It's Yankee John the packet rat.
- It's rotten beef an' weev'ly bread,
It's pump or drown the old man said.
- The wind was foul an' the sea ran high,
She shipped it green an' none went by.
- We'd be better off in a nice clean gaol,
With all night in an' plenty o' ale!
- The mate was a bucko an' the old man a turk,
The bosun was a beggar with the middle
name o' work!
- It's growl yer may an' go yer must,
It matters not whether yer last or furst!
- The cook's a drunk, he likes to booze,
Between him an' the mate there's little to choose!

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| 10. I hate to sail on this rotten tub,
No grog allowed and rotten grub! | 13. The old man shouts, the pumps stand by,
Oh, we can never suck her dry. |
| 11. The ship won't steer, or stay, or wear,
An' so us shellbacks learnt to swear. | 14. Now I thought I hear the old man say,
Just one more pull an' then belay. |
| 12. No Liverpool bread, nor rotten
crackerhash,
No dandyfunk, nor cold an' sloppy hash. | 15. We swear by rote for want o' more,
But now we're through so we'll go on shore. |

Stan Hugill printed verses of "Leave Her, Johnny" as a halyard and as a pump shanty. He wrote:

"And now we come to the 'Johnny' song that usually ended the voyage— 'Leave Her, Johnny, Leave Her!' Collectors give pumps and halyards alike as the job it was used for. Terry and Whall call it a hauling song; Miss Colcord and Doerflinger give it for pumps. I think they are all right. It was probably sung at halyards with two solos and refrains, and when a full chorus was added then it was used at the pumps and even capstan. I learnt it partly from my mother's father, and he always sang the full chorus, and partly from an old Irish sailor, who also used the final chorus. It probably came to life about the time of the Irish potato famine, in the forties, and was originally sung in the Western Ocean Packets. The later version 'Leave Her, Johnnies' or as some sang it 'Leave Her, Bullies' was sometimes sung during the voyage — at the pumps — but its better-known function was that of airing grievances just prior to the completion of the voyage either when warping the vessel in through the locks or at the final spell of the pumps after the vessel had docked. Many unprintable stanzas were sung, directed at the afterguard, the grub, and the owners. Bullen writes that: 'to sing it before the last day or so was almost tantamount to mutiny.'"

This shanty is collected as number 356 in the Roud **Folksong Index**.

This has been recorded by Stan Rodgers, The Hardtackers and others.