

From "Roving Fisherman - An Autobiography"

By Frederick William Wallace

In December 1912, I received a telegram from Harry Ross stating that the *Effie M. Morrissey* was then in Portland, Maine, and would I like to join her right away and make a trip in her? That was on December 9th, and I wired him that I would leave Montreal for Portland that evening.

The night train from Montreal landed me in Portland on the morning of December 10th, 1912, and shortly after my arrival in the Maine city I found my way to Trefethen's Wharf and the *Morrissey*. Harry Ross was aboard and expecting me. "No locker for you this time, Fred," he said with a grin. "You'll bunk in along with me." Unlike the *Smart*, the skipper's berth on the American schooner was enclosed in a tiny cubicle partitioned off from the cabin and it contained a roomy double bunk. In all other respects, the layout and fittings were the same on both types of vessel. The *Morrissey* was slightly larger than either the *Smart* or *Lutz*, having more beam and depth of hold.

Some members of the crew were aboard. "The others are around town celebrating a before-Christmas, I reckon," explained the Skipper glumly. After sitting around for an hour or more, in which time two or three others of the crowd showed up and rather the worse for wear, Capt. Ross decided to go ashore and corral the missing hands. Together we visited the waterfront haunts – barber-shops, pool-rooms blind-pigs and other spots less respectable – and in the course of the morning managed to entice our crewmen away from the wharf-side habitues with whom they were carousing. Some of these shore friends, both male and female, were inclined to be resentful but Harry Ross generally ended all arguments by telling the delinquent fishermen to get down aboard the vessel immediately, otherwise he'd leave them in Portland.

It was after eleven by the time the *Morrissey's* gang was rounded up, and with a total of twenty-four, including myself, in the schooner, the Skipper lost no time in getting underway. It was a bright and frosty winter's day with a sharp south-west wind blowing. The Skipper, the spare hand and I got the stops off the sails and everything ready for hoisting. The gang were down in the cabin and forecastle, either mugging-up or passing the bottle around. An ancient phonograph was entertaining the after crowd with a favorite piece – "*She was bred in Old Kentucky*", while down for'ard a medley of songs and choruses heard through the hatch testified to the general hilarity.

A small tug ranged alongside and made fast as Capt. Ross sung out to get underway. Some of the crowd had shifted into sea-clothing, but many others tallied on to the halyards clad in derby hats and starched shirts. Everyone was in great good humor and the big mains'l went up the mast to the accompaniment of boisterous shouts and much laughter. The friends and loafers on the dock added their quota to the merriment inspired by Portland "bootleg".

The lines were cast off and the tug edged the schooner away from the wharf as foresail, jumbo and jib were set and jiggered up. Out in the harbor, the tug let go and the *Morrissey* set out on her own with the Skipper to the wheel. The gear was coiled up, and as we passed the snow-streaked shore of Portland Head and Cushing and Peak's islands, our crew disappeared below to a more congenial atmosphere. While the Skipper and I remained on deck to take her out, we had vocal evidence that the social amenities were resumed with the production of several "long-necks" of rum among the crowd in cabin and forecastle.

The *Morrissey* was a hard-looking packet that day. Much of her paint-work had vanished from off her deck and sides, and her rails and houses showed the scars of eighteen years of seafaring. Capt. Ross glanced over his vessel – decks littered with odds and ends, kindling wood, coal, broken ice, empty boxes and sacking. "She sure looks as dirty as an old coaster," he remarked disgustedly, "but I cal'late we'll wash her down a bit when we get outside." He squinted aloft at the fleecy clouds flying athwart the blue heavens. "We don't feel the breeze in here, but just wait 'til we get clear of the land."

In spite of the general shabbiness of her appearance, one could see the *Morrissey* as an able vessel – an old ocean mastiff whose shoulders had butted into many a bitter blow.

She had been built in Essex, Mass., in 1894, and the hands that fashioned her were those of men who took pride in their work. Her lines were those of the famous Burgess model, which with their clipper bows and long pole bowsprit – so lengthy that it had to be stayed with whisker-booms – were facetiously known as toothpicks." It was a model which combined fair sailing qualities with weatherliness, a great hold capacity for salt fish, and which revolutionized fishing vessel architecture at the time of her building. In her younger days, they used to brag about her as the fisherman that "cost sixteen thousand dollars to build, every plank and timber American oak, iron-jointed and full of hanging knees." In 1894, that was a considerable sum of money for a 110-ton schooner, but Gloucester's

famed fish-killer Capt. Wm. E. Morrissey, for whom she was built, knew what he wanted in a vessel and willingly paid the price.

In the course of time, she was outdated by the later "round bow" knock-about and semi-knockabouts of the designers Crowninshield and McManus. In 1905, or thereabouts, she was sold to Digby interests as were many other American vessels – the *Quickstep*, *Harvester*, *Samual R. Crane*, etc. By retaining their United States registry, these craft could fit out in Canadian ports and sail with Canadian crews and run their fish into American ports free of duty. American law, however, decreed that the skipper be a United States citizen. To comply with this, one member of the crew held citizenship papers and acted as nominal captain in entering and clearing the ship. Entry and use of Canadian ports was granted by taking out of a *Modus Vivendi* license at an annual fee of \$1.50 per registered ton, which gave an American vessel the privilege of fitting out, procuring bait, ice, supplies, and shipping crews, but such vessels could not sell their fish in Canada, nor fish within three miles of Canadian territory.

The *Morrissey* was registered in Marblehead, Mass., but as before stated, she was owned in Digby, N.S., and her crew came from Digby and Yarmouth counties. One member of her gang, a cousin of the skipper's I believe, held United States citizenship and attended to all legal formalities as the vessel's nominal master.

When Cape Elizabeth came abeam at noon, we swung off and ran with the sheets started past Ram Island Ledge, steering East by South for the fishing grounds in the vicinity of Lurcher Lightship, Bay of Fundy – a run of about 160 miles. As we hauled offshore, we commenced to feel the weight of the south-west wind and the *Morrissey* began to step out. "We'll make the old toothpick travel today and see what she can do," observed the Skipper. The *Smart* and the *Lutz* ain't the only vessels that can sail." Within an hour of passing Cape Elizabeth, the *Effie* was logging 12 knots and running along like a scalded hog.

Around Digby they called her "an old plug of a vessel," but the men who had sailed her allowed that she wasn't much of a sailor "by the wind," but "slap it to her with the wind aft, fellers, and she'd run like a bull-moose!" The racing spirit inspired by the *Smart-Lutz* contests appeared to have been aroused in the *Morrissey's* gang this December day, and man after man came up on deck to have a look at her performance. A reckless young buck relieved the wheel. "Now," he said grimly as he pulled on his mittens, "we'll try this ol' peddler out. She'll move this afternoon or I'll tear the patch off her!"

Over a blue-green sea, tumultuous with rearing, roaring water marching in foam-capped battalions to the horizon, the schooner stormed along before the wind and the taffrail log was spinning to a rate of knots seldom before attained by her. With sheets eased off and taut as bar iron, the seventy-foot main-boom over the port quarter and every sail drawing so that a sledge-hammer would bounce off the canvas, the *Morrissey* raced past Sequin Island, logging 20 miles in one-and-a-half hours. A tremendous bow-wave sheared up from her cutwater and came boiling aft around the bends of her hull as the vessel leaped ahead of sea and wind.

Every once in a while, a man would appear in the cabin gangway to heave an empty longneck over the side. He would look around approvingly and shout down the hatch to his companions below: "Boys, but the old hooker's shiftin' some today!" In the forecabin, the Cook was staggering around his stove trying to get a meal fixed in the crowded apartment. Above the babbel of loud talk, singing and mouth-organ music, the creaking of the vessel's timbers, the dull thunder of the bow-wave, and the occasional crashes of water on deck added to the pandemonium below. Aft in the cabin, the phonograph was being held down on a locker by two of the hands while some recently purchased cylinder records were being played. Now and again a bottle of Portland "bug-juice" would be produced from a suitcase and circulated. One round, and the quart was "killed" and the bottle hove out through the open gangway. "Judas!" ejaculated the Skipper, "I'm thinking every man aboard fetched a couple of bottles of rum with him. I'll be glad to see the last of them."

Monhegan Island was passed at half-past-three in the afternoon and the schooner had logged 40 miles in a little over three hours. In the squalls, she made up to 15 knots at times. The Skipper was smiling broadly as he surveyed his plunging vessel. "The old plug is moving along now," he remarked. "Wish the *Lutz* or the *Smart* were here to give us a hook."

It was an inspiring sight and I jumped below to get my camera. It was just a cheap little box-form type. To the Skipper I said: "I want to take some pictures from the end of the bowsprit while she's going along like this. Will you come out with me and hold me while I snap the photos?"

"Sure thing," he replied, and to the wheelsman he said, "Watch her now and don't let there be any funny-business while we're out there!" The man stared at us with astonishment on his features. Taking a firm grip on the spokes, he nodded, "I'll watch her, Skipper!"

With oilskins and rubber boots on, we went over the bows and clambered out along the footropes of the *Morrissey's* lengthy bowsprit. Below our feet, the stem was shearing and ploughing the blue-green sea into a mass of glittering, thundering foam. From our perch, we could feel the vessel trembling throughout her hard-driven hull. And when she topped a big comber, we hung like bats to the jack-stay and caught our breaths as she swooped down into the sea with the suds boiling up and through the hawse-pipes.

The Skipper grabbed the jib-stay and pulled himself up to stand on the extreme end of the bowsprit. I got up next and he held me around the waist in order that I might have my two hands free to handle the camera. I got one snap, when the helmsman let her come-to a little. The *Morrissey* listed to port and laid her whole side down. "The crazy scut!" growled Harry as we lurched precariously to leeward. But animated with the recklessness of the seeker after something novel, I made two snaps as she careened. "Did you get it, Fred?" inquired Ross excitedly. "I sure did," was my reply. "Then let's get to hell out of this," he said hurriedly, "afore we get run under!"

We came in over the bows, drenched in salt water as she smashed into a comber. Aft we came to meet an audience who had been watching our efforts – called by the wheelsman who considered that both of us had taken leave of our senses. However, I got the pictures I wanted and they came out fairly clear under the circumstances.

Following our picture-making the wind increased perceptibly, and in the sea that was piling up as we hauled offshore, the *Morrissey* began to look at the wake. Several huge combers broke alongside the quarters and hurled sprays over the wheelman. The violent yawing of the over-driven schooner and the alarming antics of our main-boom – one minute it would strike the crest of a sea, and the next it would "top up" and threaten a jibe – was enough to daunt the hard-case fisherman steering. "Hey, Skipper," he yelled. "Take this blame' wheel. I can't hold the bloody old scow to it!"

Two or three men were called and refused the job. Finally, one fellow took charge for a spell and finally admitted it was too much for him. "It's gittin' bad," he said, "and I doubt ef I kin hold her stiddy much longer with the mains'l on her." The *Morrissey* herself was revealing evidence of being unduly pressed in the vibration of her timbers and planking and the water she was lifting aboard. The decks were well washed down by this time and all the debris was over the side, including the Cook's kindling wood.

The thump of the sea piling over the quarter fetched the Skipper on deck. He glanced around unperturbed at the big comber rolling up astern and the wallowing schooner racing before the southwester. Gazing at the straining mains'l, he remarked coolly: "Humph, she's breezing up." Staggering over to the patent log on the taffrail, he scrutinized the dial. "You're some wheelsman, boy!" he shouted with a grin. "She's logging nigh sixteen this last hour. Who said the *Morrissey* couldn't sail?"

I fancied I had seen some vessel-driving in my previous trips, but this beat everything. Our sail-dragging Skipper, however, was seaman enough to know how much a vessel could safely stand, and he passed the word: "All out and get yer mains'l and jib in!"

The gang, oiled-up and sea-booted, mustered on deck – some of them sober, others exhibiting the effect of their potations. Nevertheless, these latter were able to stand on their feet and lay ahold of a rope. But the job of getting the big mains'l in – and it's a tricky job in a breeze with the vessel rolling and plunging – was thoroughly botched up. The long main-boom was hauled aboard and made fast, but someone let the halliards go "by the run" and there was nobody attending the gaff-downhaul. The slackened canvas blew out to leeward, ballooning and flogging, with the gaff swinging violently back and forth and fetching up against the lee rigging with blows that shook the mast.

"Oh, you jeesly farmers!" shouted the Skipper. "Look alive and get that goddam gaft in!" As he burst forth in fervid comment, the crowd began pulling away on the gaff-downhaul, but the spar had swung out so far that the peak-halyards had become foul of the lee spreaders at the masthead. "Up you go, some of you, and clear that!" he cried, adding: "Damned if this ain't the lousiest job of making a mains'l fast I ever saw in all my going afishing!"

Perched precariously on the spreaders, eighty feet above the deck, two of the men who had clambered aloft swung through the air in giddy arcs as the schooner rolled. They wrestled with the entangled ropes, but it was more than they could accomplish with one hand for self, and the other for the ship. And the sight of them swinging about aloft, and none too sober, caused the Skipper to order them peremptorily down on deck.

It took all the skill and strength of twenty-two men to roll up the mainsail in that breeze, for the time was long past when it could be handled without a tough struggle. With the biggest part of the sail in the sea over the port quarter, and full

of wind and salt water, and with the peak halyards snarled aloft, the vessel was doing her best to throw every man-jack off his feet; with clouds of spray being hurled over us in the frigid wind and the decks slippery with a film of ice – it wasn't a task to be done by the wave of a wand. But it was finally accomplished to the accompaniment of the Skipper's biting sarcasm and much lurid cursing on the part of the gang. "And I'm dam' glad there was no other vessels around to see the botch you fellows made of it besides them halyards foul aloft!" was Ross's final comment.

With jib triced up and mainsail fast, the *Morrissey* raced off on her course again under foresail and jumbo. As the fiery sun dipped below a clear horizon, the twin lights of Matinicus Rock blinked over the port quarter. A crescent moon rode in a cloudless sky sprinkled with stars twinkling, diamond-like, in the frosty air. It was a wonderful night and there was something indescribably grand and inspiring in the sight and feel of the old schooner storming along under the moon. But a December night in the Gulf of Maine, and blowing hard is no place to spend much time moon-gazing on deck.

Down for'ad, there was a poker game going on. Braced in his bunk, the lad with the mouth-organ was entertaining himself with the latest Portland vaudeville ditty; up in the peak someone was bawling about some gal who preferred to "*walk with Billy, 'cause Billy knew just where to walk* –" (an excerpt from one of the new phonograph records). Music, singing and loud laughter and talk, shouts of "I'll raise ye, Bill!" or "Full house, bully!" mingled with the creaking of strained timbers and booming of wind and sea. Aft in the cabin, the atmosphere was supercharged with tobacco smoke, bilge stink and coal gas, but the overworked phonograph was grinding out ditties of Ada Jones and Len Spencer to the appreciative audience who lolled on lockers or in bunks. On deck, the two watch-mates – one steering, the other on look-out – shivered in the bitter wind and dodged the sprays and the dollops of water which every now and again slobbered over the low rail.

"Cal'late there'll be the old hell of a sea runnin' with the tide when we git over towards the Lurcher," observed the look-out. "The next watch'll ketch her stickin' her tail into it 'long about midnight."

The *Morrissey* started "stickin' her tail into it" long before midnight. Over the quarter came the seas and we in our bunks below could hear and feel the fall of water on the deck above; hear the shout of the man at the wheel and the thump of his dory-mate's boots as he jumped for the top of the house; then the rush and

gurgle of the frigid brine as it streamed over the rail or through the scuppers. Though the Skipper and I were rolled up in our blankets and snug in the double berth, we were sensible of everything that was happening on deck. For the companion hatch was half-opened in order to ventilate the cabin, and we could hear the watchmen's "Look out! Here comes another one!" Some of the big ones, when they hit her, tossed sprays down into the cabin through the aperture, or through the leaky skylight, and these would strike the red-hot stove and dissolve in hissing steam. The cabin "bunkers", however, seemed utterly oblivious to the noise and motion and slept serenely through it all.

About midnight, the Skipper and I were aroused by a shout on deck followed by the staggering crash of solid water on the planks above our heads. The Atlantic poured into the cabin in wholesale quantity and it was followed by the dory-mate on watch. "Holy Sailor!" he shouted indignantly as we peered out. "Ef this ain't the limit! She shipped a sea clean over the house that time an' tore the leg off my oil-pants as I was ahangin' on to the boom. My boots are full of water and that sea near hove me clear over the gaft." It was as the man had said. He was streaming with water and one leg of his oilskin pants had been torn off clean at the thigh. "How's the weather?" inquired the Skipper sleepily. The watchman hauled his boots off and emptied the water out of them. "Gittin' worse, if anything," he replied. "Tide's kickin' up a bad sea."

Sleep was pretty well out of the question so far as I was concerned, for the boarding combbers were coming more frequently after this incident and they sometimes filled the quarter to the height of the rails. The lookoutman kept watch standing on top of the cabin house with an arm thrust through the stops of the furlled mainsail; the wheelsman had a rope around his waist and there were times when he was steering submerged to his hips in water. One wave piling over the quarter floated the cover off the wheel-box and it would have gone over the side had it not been quickly rescued by the lookoutman. The tide was running out of the Bay of Fundy and bucking a gale of wind, making an ugly steep sea through which the schooner was plunging violently.

At midnight, my bunk-mate aroused himself and rolled out. Pulling on his boots and oil-skins, and seeing that I was awake, he said: "Guess I'll have a look around." I decided to follow his example, for I had not become tough enough to sleep peacefully under such conditions. Bear in mind, I hadn't been in a vessel since March and this was December and I had landed in Portland from Montreal that morning.

Captain Ross surveyed the seascape and the behaviour of the schooner. "We'll get the jumbo off her," he decided. If I remember rightly, we stowed this sail without calling all hands. It was bright moonlight and blowing very hard. For a while, we remained on deck to watch the vessel running under foresail only. In the clear light of the moon, the decks, wet and filmed with ice, gleamed as though planked with silver. The lofty main-mast and its web-like gear stood out brightly in the radiance and described mighty arcs as the *Morrissey* rolled in the sea. Looking astern, the uplifted crests of the waves shown luminously, like chrysoprase in the moon glow. Above our heads, the glittering stars, brilliant in the frosty air, seemed to reel across the deep night-blue of the heavens. A night of beauty, yes, but not when viewed from aboard a little schooner under the conditions prevailing at the time.

At four in the morning, we raised the twin occulting lights of the Lurcher Shoal lightship. At that time, we were making heavy weather of it and the *Morrissey* was being roughly handled and she was shipping a lot of water on deck. One of the dories had its side stove-in by a sea. This was our fishing ground and we had made a fast but dusty passage of it – running about 160 miles from Cape Elizabeth in 16 hours. In rough water, this was good travelling.

It was now December 11th and my birthday. I was then 26 years of age and this was the wildest birthday morning I had so far experienced. "I don't know whether I should say many happy returns of the day in this sort of thing," said the Skipper with a laugh.

We held on for a while as Capt. Ross consulted the barometer and debated in his mind whether to heave to the schooner to the wind and ride out the breeze, or make for port. "We'll make for shelter," he said finally. "It's going to blow for a while and there'll be no fishing today." And to the wheelsman, he shouted: "Let 'er go south-east by east half east and call me when you sight Cape Forchu."

Under the narrow rectangle of the foresail, we rambled in towards Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and sighted the light just before dawn. Around the Cape we rolled and drove in past Cat Rock on the breast of a tremendous swell. The rock showed twenty feet of its ominous bulk out of the water when the swell sucked back, and then it would disappear from view in tons of piling, creaming brine. Shortly after passing the rock, the schooner was in smooth water and making her way up the dolphin-marked channel of Yarmouth harbour. As the foresail was hauled down, we rounded up amidst a fleet of fishing schooners and let go the anchor about half-past seven in the morning.

It was very quiet in the harbour and the old *Morrissey* lay to her chain like a tired horse. From the dock in Portland to anchor in Yarmouth, she had made the 200 mile passage in 20 hours – an average of 10 miles per hour. The mainsail and jib were on her for four hours of that period; for eight-and-a-half hours she carried foresail and jumbo only, and the last seven-and-a-half hours of the passage was made under foresail alone. Allowing for the time working out of Portland and into Yarmouth, the easy 25-mile jog from off the Lurcher into Yarmouth, the old hooker must have been travelling at times. In the sea that was running, it took a stoutly-built and well-gearred vessel to average 10 miles an hour under the conditions prevailing.

During the last hour that the mainsail was on her, she logged over 15 knots. Not too bad for the "old plug" that they called her. When I told the late Capt. Bob Bartlett of this run, he was delighted. He owned the *Effie Morrissey* then and we met in the New York Yacht Club, New York, around 1927, and he was eager for all the details. "You're absolutely right," he exclaimed, "Give her the wind abaft the beam and she'd run like a hound. Not so good in closehaul sailing like modern round-bows, but in running in a breeze and sea, she'd trim 'em all."

Both the *Lutz* and *Smart* were lying to anchor in Yarmouth when we came in. Since their crews were mostly Digby men, as was our own, there was a lot of sailing talk around the wharves when they met with our fellows – many of whom had sailed in the *Smart* during the first race in 1911. "Give us a breeze of wind over the quarter and we'd run away from you both, old and all as she is," declared our fellows.

I recall the answer given to this boast by an old-timer belonging to the *Lutz*. "Yeah, maybe you could at that," he said judiciously, "ef your gang was well-primed with a skinfull of Portland rum."

Some time afterwards I composed a string of verses recounting the incidents of this trip. Under the title of "The Log of a Record Run" it was printed in the *Canadian Fisherman* in 1914. It was just a "Come-all-ye" doggerel, but it must have appealed to some of the East Coast fishermen for one of them picked it up and put a tune to it and it got spread around. Years later it was included in a collection of Nova Scotia ballads compiled by Miss Helen Creighton who was under the impression that it was an old-time composition. In the verses, I altered the name of the schooner to *Mary L. Mackay* as I was afraid that to put *Effie Morrissey* in them might incur the displeasure of my shipmates. However, I need not have worried on

that score for most, if not all of them, would have been delighted to have been identified with the escapade – so I was told.

Capt. Bartlett was intrigued with the lay and had me send a copy to his mother in Brigus, N.F. I heard it sung in a ship's fo'c'sl in 1917. The ballad will be found in the Appendix. [following here]

The Log of a Record Run

*Come all ye hardy haddockers that winter fishin' go,
An' brave the seas upon the Banks in stormy wind and snow.
To all that love hard drivin' – come an' listen to my lay
Of the run we made from Portland in the Mary L. Mackay.*

*We hung the muslin on her, as the wind began to hum;
Twenty hard-case deep-sea fishermen 'most full of Portland rum.
Main and fores'l, jib and jumbo, on that tough December day,
And out past Cape Elizabeth we slugged for Fundy Bay.*

*We slammed her to Monhegan as the gale began to scream,
And the vessel started jumpin' in a way that was no dream,
With a howler o'er the taffrail, boys, we steered her east away,
Oh she was a hound for runnin' was the Mary L. Mackay.*

*Storm along! An' drive along! An' punch her through the rips!
Never mind the boardin' combers an' the sold green she ships!
"Just mind yer eye an' watch yer wheel!" the Skipper he would say.
"Clean decks we'll sport to-morrow on the Mary L. Mackay!"*

*We lashed the hawser to the rack and chocked the cable box,
An' overhauled the shackles on the fore an' main sheet blocks.
We double griped the dories as the gang began to pray,
For a breeze to rip the bitts from out the Mary L. Mackay.*

*The sea was runnin' ugly and the crests were heavin' high,
Our main-boom useter swipe them 'til we thought the spar 'ud fly,
The stoo'ard moused his pots an' pans and unto us did say,
"Ye'll get nawthin' else but mug-ups on the Mary L. Mackay.*

*Then we warmed her past Matinicus and the skipper hauled the log,
"Sixteen knots! Lord Harry! Ain't she just the gal to jog?"*

*And the half-canned wheelman shouted, as he swung her on her way –
"Jest watch me tear the mains'l off the Mary L. Mackay!"*

*The rum was passing merrily and the gang were feelin' grand,
With long-necks dancin' in our wake from where we cleared the land,
But the skipper he kept sober, and he knew the time o' day,
So he made us furl the mains'l on the Mary L. Mackay.*

*Under fores'l and her jumbo we tore plungin' through the night
And the white-capped waves that chased us, in the moonshine made a sight
To fill yer heart with terror, boys, an' wish ye were away
At home n bed, and not aboard the Mary L. Mackay.*

*Over on the Lurcher Shoals the sea was piling strong.
In wind and foamin' breakers – full three to four miles long,
And in this devil's horse-pond, boys, there soon was hell to pay,
But they didn't care a dam' aboard the Mary L. Mackay.*

*To the box was lashed the wheelsman as he socked her through the gloom
And a big sea hove his dory-mate nigh over the main-boom,
It ripped the oil-pants off his legs an' we could hear him say,
"There's a power of water flyin' o'er the Mary L. Mackay."*

*The skipper didn't care to have our folks a'wearin' crape
So he stripped her to the fores'l and made for Yarmouth Cape,
And past Forchu that morning we shot in at break of day,
And soon in shelter harbor lay the Mary L. Mackay.*

*From Portland, Maine to Yarmouth Sound, two hundred miles we ran
In nineteen hours, my bully boys, and beat that if you can!
The gang, they said, "Twas seamanship!" The skipper he was mum,
For he knew that Mary traveled on the power of bootleg rum!*