

The wrack of the Queen Charlotte

THE WRACK OF THE QUEEN CHARLOTTE: A Ballad of Chesapeake Bay.

IT was the good *Queen Charlotte* That sailed the roily tide; And the Skipper hath taken his little daughter To see the other side.

The hold was filled with trucking, The deck was filled with swells, The slip was filled with orange-peels, The air, with flags and bells.

The gents cinched up their dusters, The ladies pinned their veils, The Skipper spat to loo'ard: Behold! The *Charlotte* sails!

The mud flats lay to starboard, The mud flats lay to port; He set a course between them And poured himself a snort.

And ere they reached the middle He'd killed his flask of gin. "What cheer! I've got another Within my locker-bin.

"Oh, stand beside my daughter Whilst I retire below." His good mate took the tiller: A worthy man, but slow.

What mean these little buoys That bob with aspect strange? Full speed astern the engines! It is the Sonic Range!

Beneath these laughing wavelets There sleeps the Yankee fleet Rusting at forty fathoms. (A fathom—that's six feet.)

Beneath these laughing wavelets There lurks a menace fell— A menace fell and secret: Just what, I cannot tell.

The bold mate pulled his forelock And took another chaw; He trolled a capstan chantey Nor heeded what he saw.

Alas! the good *Queen Charlotte!* Too late to put about! The fateful jaws close on her! Her bottom it drops out!

The Coast Guard sent some buckets— An effort doomed to fail; For when they raised the hatches They found no hold to bail.

Alas! the gents and ladies! The lifeboats fall apart! The lifebelts sink like plummets! Now quails the stoutest heart!

The Skipper drowned in his locker-bin, And the last above the wave Were the nonplussed mate & the fainting form Of the girl he could not save.

Her wraith at midnight roams the shore Where the ripples ebb and surge, While the fiddler-crabs lift up their claws And scrape an eerie dirge.

And still from Wye to Matapeake They tell the story strange, How the good *Queen Charlotte* came to grief On the seething Sonic Range.

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