Wings of a Gull

Wings of a Gull

Oh if I had the wings of a gull, me boys,
I would spread 'em and fly home.
I would leave old Greenland's icy grounds,
For the right whale here is none.
  The weather's rough and the winds do blow.
  There's little comfort here
  And I'd sooner be snug in a Deptford pub
  A' drinking of strong beer.

Oh, a man must be mad or he's wanting money bad
To venture catching whales,
For he may be drowned when the fish turns around
Or his head smashed in with its tail.
  Though the work seems grand to a young green hand
  And his heart is high when he goes,
  In a very short burst he'd as soon as hear a curse
  As the cry of: "There she blows!"

"All hand on deck now, for God's sake!
Move briskly if you can."
And he stumbles on deck so dizzy and so sick,
For his life he don't give a damn.
  High overhead the great flukes spread
  And the mate gives the whale the iron
  And soon the blood in a purple flood
  From his spout all comes a flyin'.

These trials we bear for nigh on four years
'Til our flying jib points to home.
We're supposed for our toil to get a bonus on the oil
And an equal share of the bone.
  We go to the agent to settle for the trip
  And there we've cause to repent,
  For we've slaved away four years of our lives
  And we've earned about three pounds ten.

Note: Huntington has a similar lyric called The Wings of a Goney in Songs
  the Whalemen Sang,from the journal of the Ocean Rover, 1859
Huntington's last verse is:
    But he goes to the agents to settle his voyage
    And there he finds cause to repent;

He finds he as spent four years of his life
And not earned a single red cent.

Tune is a mix of Ten Thousand Miles and House Carpenter; has also been sung to Botany Bay and The Prisoner's Song.

This version recorded by David Jones

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