

The Whale Catchers

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On the twenty-third of March, my boys,
We hoisted our topsail,
Crying, "Heav'n above protect us
With a sweet and a pleasant gale."
We never was down-hearted
Nor let our courage fail
But bore away up to Greenland
For to catch the Greenland whale,
For to catch the Greenland whale.

And when we came to Greenland
Where the bitter winds did blow,
We tacked about all in the north
Among the frost and snow.
Our finger-tops were frozen off,
And likewise our toe-nails,
As we crawled on the deck, my boys,
Looking out for the Greenland whale
Looking out for the Greenland whale.

And when we came to Imez,
Where the mountains flowed with snow,
We tacked about all in the north
Till we heard a whalefish blow.
And when we catch this whale, brave boys,
Homeward we will steer.
We'll make the valleys ring, my boys,
A-drinking of strong beer.

We'll make those lofty alehouses
In London town to roar;
And when our money is all gone,
To Greenland go for more,
To Greenland go for more.

From the Penguin Book of English Folksongs, Williams and LLoyd
Recorded by John Faulkner on Kind Providence
Note: According to LLoyd, who should know, this is not a variant
of Greenland Whale Fishery.