

Captain Ward and the Rainbow

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Our King built a ship, 'twas a ship of great fame
The Rainbow she was called, and the Rainbow was her name:
He rigged her and fitted her and sent her off to sea,
With five hundred bold mariners to bear her company.

She cruised the blue waves over and sailed on many a lee;
At length a wicked pirate we chanced for to see;
He bore right down upon her, and hailed in the King's name,
We knew it was a pirate ship, a pirate of great fame.

"We've got you now, you cowardly dog, you ugly, lying thief;
What makes you rob and plunder, and keep your King in grief? "
"You lie, you lie," cries Captain Ward, such things can never be,
I've never robbed an English ship, an English ship but three."

Our guns we trained upon her, as everyone might see;
"We'll take you back to England, and hanged you shall be."
"Fire on ! Fire on !" cries Captain Ward, "I value you not a pin,
If you are brass on the outside, I am good steel within!"

They fought from six that morning till six o'clock at night,
And then the gallant Rainbow began to take her flight;
"Go home! Go home!" cries Captain Ward, "and tell your King of me,
If he reigns king upon the land, I'll reign king on the sea."

From Bronson, Singing Tradition of Child's Popular Ballads

Collected from Mrs. H. R. Murphy, Maine, 1928

Note: I find the last line of the third verse irresistible- RG

Child #287