

Botany Bay

1. Come all young men of learning, And a warning take by me. I'll
 have you quickly walking, And shun bad company, I'll
 have you quickly walking, Or else you'll rue the day, On
 when you were transported, You went to Botany Bay.

2. I was brought up in London Town, a place I know full well,
 Brought up by honest parents, the truth to you I'll tell.
 Brought up by honest parents which loved so tenderly,
 Till I became a roving blade to prove my destiny.

[3.The cry went forth, "Tonight my lads, in front of yonder town,
 We'll meet with hatchet, sledge and bar, and riot up and down."
 But a traitor spied upon us, before the break of day,
 And soon the soldiers came and said, "You're down for Botany Bay."]

[4.To see my aged father dear as he stood at the bar,
 Likewise my tender mother, her old grey locks she tore;
 In tearing off her old grey locks, these words she then did say -
 "Oh, son! Oh, son! What hast thou done? Thou'rt going to Botany Bay."]

5. My character was taken and I was sent to gaol.
 My parents tried to clear me, but nothing could prevail.
 At the Rutland sessions the Judge to me did say,
 "The Jury found you guilty. You must go to Botany Bay".

[6.As we sailed down the river on the twenty eighth of May
 All in the morning early - at the dawning of the day
 On every ship that we passed by we could hear the sailors say -
 "Oh, for some crime or other, my lads, they're bound for Botany Bay."]

[7. There is a girl in London town, a girl I know full well,
If ever I get my liberty along with her I'll dwell;
If ever I get my liberty I'll forsake all other girls,
And shun all evil company, then adieu to New South Wales.]

Source: Richard Toms of Fairford, at Cirencester Union. Collected by Cecil Sharp 2 November 1911.

Notes: Verses 1-2 and 5 from Mr Toms. The remaining verses are from Henry 'Wassail' Harvey, Cricklade, Wilts, noted by Alfred Williams.

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