

## Fire Down Below (Just a village maiden)

1. She was just a village maiden with  
red and rosy cheeks,

**To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!**

She went to church and Sunday School  
and sang this anthem sweet,

**Oh there's fyer down below.**

2. The passon wuz a misery, so scraggy an'  
so thin,

**To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!**

Set he, 'Look 'ere, you shellbacks, if yer lead  
a life of sin - '

**Then there's fyer down below.**

3. He took his text from Malachi an' he  
pulled a weary fayice,

**To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!**

Oh, I took french leave an' I sailed away,  
and now I've fell from grace.

**Oh there's fyer down below.**

4. This passon had a daughter who was  
sweet as sugar candy.

**To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!**

I said to her, "Us sailors would make lovers  
neat an' handy."

**Oh there's fyer down below.**

5. She set to me, "You sailors is a bunch o'  
bloomin' liars,

**To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!**

An' ail of yous is bound ter Hell, ter feed  
the flamin' fyers."

**Oh there's fyer down below.**

6. She wuz a very naughty girl this passon's  
only daughter,

**To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!**

She went down to a creek for to wash her  
locks in water.

**Oh there's fyer down below.**

7. The fyer down below, me lads, is very  
hot an' jolly,

But the fyer there's not 'arf so 'ot as my  
sweet clipper Polly.

8. There's fyer all around us, boys--it's  
playin' hide an' seek,

**To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!**

It's tryin' to find a space, m' lads, where it  
can find some sleep.

**Oh there's fyer down below.**

9. There's fyer in the cabin, boys, and in  
the galley too,

**To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!**

But there's no fyer in the fo'c'sle an' it's cold  
as is the crew.

**Oh there's fyer down below.**

10. There's fyer in the galley an' it's runnin'  
down below,

There's fyer in the bosun's pipe-it's time for  
us to go.

11. If the rotten boats won't hold us when it's  
time for us to go,

We'll complain to Havelock Wilson when we  
gits him down below.

12. There's fyer up, there's fyer up,  
there's fyer down below,

**To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!**

There's bonnie lassies waiting us in Liverpool  
you know

**Oh there's fyer down below.**

The trio **Jenkins Ear Shantymen** sing this -  
the **non-indented** verses at [youtu.be/KmLaZRnjn8g](https://youtu.be/KmLaZRnjn8g)



priest, by [melwe](#), from

[openclipart.org/](https://openclipart.org/)

### Notes

There are at least four other shanties with a refrain  
of Fire Down Below.

This is the last **Pump** shanty to be sung aboard a  
British square-rigger. It was sung by the  
shantyman **Stan Hugill**, aboard **The Garthpool**,  
a week before she was wrecked in the Cape  
Verde Islands in October 1929.

**Stan Hugill**, in *Shanties from the Seven Seas*,  
1994, gives five different shanties named Fire  
Down Below (p377-381). This one is the first and  
he calls it Fire Down Below (a), hence the name I  
have used for this file.

Fire was a very serious threat aboard a wooden  
ship and very much feared. However, clearly the  
fire mentioned in this song is aboard the girl and  
the sailor, not aboard the ship at all.