

There was a **Skipper** hailing from far west;
He came from Dartmouth, so I understood.
He rode a farmer's horse the best he could, [He's having trouble staying on the horse because he's used to being on a ship.]
In a woolen gown that reached his knee.
A dagger on a lanyard falling free
Hung from his neck under his arm and down. [The Skipper is well-armed.]
The summer heat had tanned his color brown,
And certainly he was an excellent fellow
Many a draught of vintage,
He'd drawn at Bordeaux, while the trader snored. [He stole extra barrels of wine if the trader fell asleep.]
The nicer rules of conscience he ignored.
If, when he fought, the enemy vessel sank,
He sent his prisoners home; they walked the plank. [He's a pirate!]
As for his skill in reckoning his tides,
Currents and many another risk besides,
Moons, harbors, pilots, he had such skill
That none from Hull to Carthage was his match.
Hardy he was, careful in undertaking;
His beard in many a fight had its shaking,
And he knew all the safe places as they were
From Gottland to the Cape of Finisterre,
And every creek in Brittany and Spain; [He had been in so many fights and so active in piracy that he knew all the hiding places

from the coasts of northern Europe to the rivers in France and Spain.]

The barge he owned was called *The Maudelayne*.