

Vive La Compagnie

(a.k.a. "Vive l'Amour")

Words & Music:
Traditional

"Vive La Compagnie" has many variations from around the world. Scouts adopted it as one of their tunes under "Vive l'Amour". It dates to 1818 in England's Traditional Ballads Index. Irish singers adopted the tune for political use in the 19th century ("Ireland Blocks The Way") and Confederate soldiers adopted it during America's Civil War as "Chivalrous C.S.A." (1861). The Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music has the first American publication dating from 1844. As always, thanks to Mudcat Café for the song info & versions! It is best sung as a call-and-response.

1. Modern Grown-up Version:

G (D7 G) D7 G
Let every good fellow now fill up his glass. Vive la compagnie!
G Am7 D7 G
And drink to the health of our glorious class. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

G D G
Vive la, vive la, vive l'amour! Vive la, vive la, vive l'amour!
Em Am D7 G
Vive l'amour! Vive l'amour! Vive la compagnie!

Now let every married man drink to his wife. Vive la compagnie!
The joy of his bosom and plague of his life. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

Come fill up your glasses, I'll give you a toast. Vive la compagnie!
A health to our dear friend, our kind worthy host. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

Since all with good humor I've toasted so free. Vive la compagnie!
I hope it will please you to drink now with me. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

Let every good fellow now join in a song. Vive la compagnie!
Success to each other and pass it along. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

Let every good fellow, now join in our song. Vive la compagnie!
Success to each other, and pass it along. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

2. Scout lyrics version

Let every good fellow, now join in our song. Vive la compagnie!
Success to each other, and pass it along. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

Vive la, vive la, vive l'amour! Vive la, vive la, vive l'amour!
Vive l'amour! Vive l'amour! Vive la compagnie!

A friend on your left, and a friend on your right. Vive la compagnie!
In love and good fellowship, let us unite. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

Now, wider and wider, our circle expands. Vive la compagnie!
We'll sing to our comrades, in faraway lands. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

With friends all around us, we'll sing out our song. Vive la compagnie!
We'll banish our troubles, it won't take us long. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

Should time or occasion compel us to part. Vive la compagnie!
These days shall forever, enliven our heart. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

3. 1844 Baltimore lyrics version:

From the sheet music at The Library of Congress American Memory Collection. Published by F. D. Benteen, Baltimore, 1844:

Let Bacchus to Venus libations pour forth. Vive la compagnie!
And let us make use of our time while it lasts. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

Vive la, vive la, vive l'amour! Vive la, vive la, vive l'amour!
Vive l'amour! Vive l'amour! Vive la compagnie!

Let ev'ry old bachelor fill up his glass. Vive la compagnie!
And drink to the health of his favorite lass. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

Let ev'ry married man drink to his wife. Vive la compagnie!
The friend of his bosom and comfort of life. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

Come fill up your glasses—I'll give you a toast. Vive la compagnie!
Here's a health to our friend—our kind worthy host. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

Since all with good humor, I've toasted so free. Vive la compagnie!
I hope it will please you to drink now with me. Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:

4. "Vive Le Capitaine John" version:

pp. 177-178, Songs of Amherst, "Carmina Collegensia," 1868, Oliver Ditson & Co. Also: no. 64, lacking verse 4, Charles H. Levermore, 1895, "The Academy Song-Book," Ginn & Co.; book dedicated to Adelphi Academy, p. 202 with score.

In ye days when ye salvages lived in ye land. Vive le Capitaine John!
And ye Injun papooses dug holes in ye sand. Vive le Capitaine John!
A maiden was born of ye cannibal race,
Who delighted not in ye fight or chase,
But loved to view ye jovial face of ye jolie Capitaine John.

But now as the legend doth truly relate. Vive le Capitaine John!
Poor Johnnie was taken and doomed to his fate. Vive le Capitaine John!
He was doomed to be hung or knock'd on ye head,
By ye salvage adze of ye Injuns red,
Until, indeed, he was dead, dead, dead. Vive le Capitaine John!

Now, Pocahontas hearing ye vote. Vive le Capitaine John!
She took some birch barque and thereupon wrote. Vive le Capitaine John!
"If you'll promise to give your heart to me,
You shall keep your head and go scot-free,
And together we'll live right jollilee. Vive le Capitaine John!"

But Johnnie, ye gay deceiver, alas! Vive le Capitaine John!
When he'd saved his scalp, it came to pass. Vive le Capitaine John!
He packed up his trunk and fled from the shore,
And left Pocahontas his loss to deplore,
While Johnnie was more than "half seas o'er". Vive le Capitaine John!

5. Jèrriais (Anglo-Normand) version from the Isle of Jersey:

Titled "Vive La Compagnie" this French version is also found in Canada. It was first collected from an 1860 manuscript there and most likely came over with French fishermen.

Allons mes bouonnes gens vite un verre à la main!
Vive la Compagnie!
Empliez-lé jusqu'au bord et pis vied'gis lé bein.
Vive la Compagnie!

CHORUS:

Vive la, vive la, vive l'amour! Vive la, vive la, vive l'amour!
Vive la, vive la, vive l'amour! Vive la Compagnie!

À toutes les jeunes filles tch'attendent un amouotheux.
Vive la Compagnie!
L'vez vos verres bein haut, ch'est un pliaïsi j'sis seus,
Vive la Compagnie!

CHORUS:

Qué touos l's hoummes mathiés bevent un verre en même temps,
Vive la Compagnie!
Les siens qui les picagnent et qui l's aiment tout l'temps,
Vive la Compagnie!

CHORUS:

Eune dernié santé ch'est à touos nous chutte fais.
Vive la Compagnie!
Plaisi, prospéthité, ridgeu et success.
Vive la Compagnie!

CHORUS:

6. "Ireland Blocks The Way" version:

"Pub. by Liverpool Corn Trade News. Ballads Cat., Johnson Ballads, 1854A, Bodleian Collection. Use of "Vive la Compagne" for political parody. No date, but Gladstone was a champion of the Home Rule Bill which would ave established self-government for Ireland. He served 1868-74, 1880-85, 886 and 1892-94; I would guess the broadside dates from 1875-1880, etween his 1st and 2nd terms as prime minister, because six years of Union rule is mentioned."

What Gladstone is to the working men
Is "Ireland blocks the way."
You must give him your votes, he says; and then
"Ireland blocks the way."

CHORUS:

'Tis Ireland first, and Ireland last, and Ireland every day;
And the working man must shift as he can, for "Ireland blocks the way."

He's in favour of this, in favour of that;
But "Ireland blocks the way,"
And naught he will do, he tells us flat
For "Ireland blocks the way."

CHORUS:

Toiling millions may suffer wrong
While "Ireland blocks the way;"
They must wait, he says, be it never so long,
For "Ireland blocks the way."

CHORUS:

We are fools if we wait at his request,
While "Ireland blocks the way,"
The "Union" leaders have served us best,
And they've nothing to block the way.

CHORUS:

No "Ireland this," no "Ireland that," no Ireland every day
But they do what they can, for each honest man,
With nothing to block their way.

CHORUS:

They have served us well in their six years' spell,
No Ireland blocked their way;
For Ireland's self they have governed so well
No longer it blocks the way.

CHORUS:

Then Gladstone's train may plead in vain,
While "Ireland blocks the way;"
We know our friends, their way is plain,
They've nothing to block the way.

CHORUS:

They do not prate of Ireland's wrongs, they sweep them all away
And do what they can for each honest man,
With nothing to block the way.

CHORUS:

7. German version "Ich Nehm Mein Gläschen In Die Hand":

The title translates as "I Take My Glass In Hand" and was first published in 1818.

Ich nehm mein Gläschen in die Hand. Vive la compagneia!
Und fahr damit ins Unterland. Vive la compagneia!

CHORUS:

Vive la, vive la, vive la va! Vive la, vive la, hopsasa!
Vive la compagneia!

CHORUS:

Ich nehm' mein Gläschen wieder hervor. Vive la compagneia!
Und halt's ans recht' und linke Ohr. Vive la compagneia!

CHORUS:

Ich setz' mein Gläschen an den Mund. Vive la compagneia!
Und trink' es aus bis auf den Grund. Vive la compagneia!

CHORUS:

Dem Gläschen ist sein Recht gescheh'n. Vive la compagneia!
Was oben ist, muß unten steh'n. Vive la compagneia!

CHORUS:

Das Gläschen, das muß wandern. Vive la compagneia!
Von einem Freund zum andern. Vive la compagneia!

CHORUS:

Translation [and actions as you sing]:

1. I take my glass with my hand and go with it to the Lowlands. [The glass is knocked with its brim under the tabletop.]
 2. I get it out again and put it near my right and left ear.
 3. I put my glass to my mouth and empty it completely.
 4. The glass has got its due and must stand upside down.
 5. The glass must wander from one friend to the other. [The glass is filled again and handed to the neighbor.]
- [repeat procedure for all participants]

"The parts 3 to 5 of the song can be retraced to older songs with different tunes back to the 16th century; apparently a special tumbler without a foot was handed around and had to be emptied completely, since it could only stand on its brim. The rigmaroles at the beginning (putting the glass elsewhere before drinking) must be younger additions. The tune stems from the 17th century; in the present form it is used since 1815 at German universities. It is the same one as given in the DT, which - alas! - seems to be a little bit corrupted."

7. Modern Frat Version:

As told to me by a correspondent who wishes to remain anonymous: "...This song was adopted and is still used today as a national song by Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity as one of it's "campfire songs". There are also several more...shall we say, "devious" verses to the song..."

A thigh on the left and a thigh on the right

Vive La Compagnie!

[Place your face in the crook of your elbow, and make loud mumbling noises in rhythm]

Vive La Compagnie!

and...

A tit on the left and a tit on the right

Vive La Compagnie!

One there to suck and the other to bite

Vive La Compagnie!