

RUDYARD KIPLING

SONGS FROM
BOOKS

Rudyard Kipling

Songs from Books

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Содержание

PREFACE	5
'CITIES AND THRONES AND POWERS'	6
THE RECALL	8
PUCK'S SONG	10
THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS	13
A THREE-PART SONG	15
THE RUN OF THE DOWNS	16
BROOKLAND ROAD	17
THE SACK OF THE GODS	19
THE KINGDOM	21
TARRANT MOSS	23
SIR RICHARD'S SONG	25
A TREE SONG	27
CUCKOO SONG	30
A CHARM	32
THE PRAIRIE	34
CHAPTER HEADINGS	36
COLD IRON	42
A SONG OF KABIR	44
A CAROL	45
'MY NEW-CUT ASHLAR'	47
EDDI'S SERVICE	49
SHIV AND THE GRASSHOPPER	52

THE FAIRIES' SIEGE	54
A SONG TO MITHRAS	56
THE NEW KNIGHTHOOD	58
OUTSONG IN THE JUNGLE	60
HARP SONG OF THE DANE WOMEN	64
THE THOUSANDTH MAN	66
THE WINNERS	68
A ST. HELENA LULLABY	70
CHIL'S SONG	72
THE CAPTIVE	73
THE PUZZLER	75
HADRAMAUTI	77
CHAPTER HEADINGS	79
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	82

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PREFACE

I have collected in this volume practically all the verses and chapter-headings scattered through my books. In several cases where only a few lines of verse were originally used, I have given in full the song, etc., from which they were taken.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

'CITIES AND THRONES AND POWERS'

_Cities and Thrones and Powers,
Stand in Time's eye,
Almost as long as flowers,
Which daily die.
But, as new buds put forth
To glad new men,
Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth,
The Cities rise again.

This season's Daffodil,
She never hears,
What change, what chance, what chill,
Cut down last year's:
But with bold countenance,
And knowledge small,
Esteems her seven days' continuance
To be perpetual.

So Time that is o'er-kind,
To all that be,
Ordains us e'en as blind,
As bold as she:
That in our very death,

And burial sure,
Shadow to shadow, well persuaded, saith,
'See how our works endure!'_

THE RECALL

I am the land of their fathers.
In me the virtue stays.
I will bring back my children,
After certain days.

Under their feet in the grasses
My clinging magic runs.
They shall return as strangers,
They shall remain as sons.

Over their heads in the branches
Of their new-bought, ancient trees,
I weave an incantation
And draw them to my knees.

Scent of smoke in the evening.
Smell of rain in the night,
The hours, the days and the seasons,
Order their souls aright;

Till I make plain the meaning
Of all my thousand years —
Till I fill their hearts with knowledge.
While I fill their eyes with tears.

PUCK'S SONG

See you the ferny ride that steals
Into the oak-woods far?
O that was whence they hewed the keels
That rolled to Trafalgar.

And mark you where the ivy clings
To Bayham's mouldering walls?
O there we cast the stout railings
That stand around St. Paul's.

See you the dimpled track that runs
All hollow through the wheat?
O that was where they hauled the guns
That smote King Philip's fleet.

Out of the Weald, the secret Weald,
Men sent in ancient years,
The horse-shoes red at Flodden Field,
The arrows at Poitiers.

See you our little mill that clacks,
So busy by the brook?
She has ground her corn and paid her tax
Ever since Domesday Book.

See you our stilly woods of oak?
And the dread ditch beside?
O that was where the Saxons broke
On the day that Harold died.

See you the windy levels spread
About the gates of Rye?
O that was where the Northmen fled,
When Alfred's ships came by.

See you our pastures wide and lone,
Where the red oxen browse?
O there was a City thronged and known.
Ere London boasted a house.

And see you, after rain, the trace
Of mound and ditch and wall?
O that was a Legion's camping-place,
When Cæsar sailed from Gaul.

And see you marks that show and fade,
Like shadows on the Downs?
O they are the lines the Flint Men made,
To guard their wondrous towns.

Trackway and Camp and City lost,
Salt Marsh where now is corn;
Old Wars, old Peace, old Arts that cease,

And so was England born!

She is not any common Earth,
Water or wood or air,
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye,
Where you and I will fare.

THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS

They shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.
Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.
It is underneath the coppice and heath,
And the thin anemones.
Only the keeper sees
That, where the ring-dove broods.
And the badgers roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late,
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools
Where the otter whistles his mate.
(They fear not men in the woods.
Because they see so few)
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew

The old lost road through the woods ...
But there is no road through the woods!

A THREE-PART SONG

I'm just in love with all these three,
The Weald and the Marsh and the Down countrie;
Nor I don't know which I love the most,
The Weald or the Marsh or the white chalk coast!

I've buried my heart in a ferny hill,
Twix' a liddle low shaw an' a great high gill.
Oh hop-bine yaller an' wood-smoke blue,
I reckon you'll keep her middling true!

I've loosed my mind for to out and run
On a Marsh that was old when Kings begun.
Oh Romney Level and Brenzett reeds,
I reckon you know what my mind needs!

I've given my soul to the Southdown grass,
And sheep-bells tinkled where you pass.
Oh Firle an' Ditchling an' sails at sea,
I reckon you keep my soul for me!

THE RUN OF THE DOWNS

*The Weald is good, the Downs are best—
I'll give you the run of 'em, East to West.*
Beachy Head and Winddoor Hill,
They were once and they are still,
Firle, Mount Caburn and Mount Harry
Go back as far as sums'll carry.
Ditchling Beacon and Chanctonbury Ring,
They have looked on many a thing,
And what those two have missed between 'em
I reckon Truleigh Hill has seen 'em.
Highden, Bignor and Duncton Down
Knew Old England before the Crown.
Linch Down, Treyford and Sunwood
Knew Old England before the Flood.
And when you end on the Hampshire side —
Butser's old as Time and Tide.
*The Downs are sheep, the Weald is corn,
You be glad you are Sussex born!*

BROOKLAND ROAD

I was very well pleased with what I knowed,
I reckoned myself no fool —
Till I met with a maid on the Brookland Road,
That turned me back to school.

Low down – low down!
Where the liddle green lanterns shine –
O maids, I've done with 'ee all but one,
And she can never be mine!

'Twas right in the midst of a hot June night,
With thunder duntin' round,
And I see'd her face by the fairy light
That beats from off the ground.

She only smiled and she never spoke,
She smiled and went away;
But when she'd gone my heart was broke,
And my wits was clean astray.

O stop your ringing and let me be —
Let be, O Brookland bells!
You'll ring Old Goodman^A out of the sea,
Before I wed one else!

Old Goodman's Farm is rank sea-sand,
And was this thousand year:
But it shall turn to rich plough land
Before I change my dear.

O, Fairfield Church is water-bound
From autumn to the spring;
But it shall turn to high hill ground
Before my bells do ring.

O, leave me walk on the Brookland Road,
In the thunder and warm rain —
O, leave me look where my love goed,
And p'raps I'll see her again!

Low down – low down!
Where the liddle green lanterns shine –
O maids, I've done with 'ee all but one,
And she can never be mine!

THE SACK OF THE GODS

Strangers drawn from the ends of the earth, jewelled and plumed were we.

I was Lord of the Inca race, and she was Queen of the Sea.
Under the stars beyond our stars where the new-forged meteors glow
Hotly we stormed Valhalla, a million years ago.

Ever 'neath high Valhalla Hall the well-tuned horns begin
When the swords are out in the underworld, and the weary Gods come in.
Ever through high Valhalla Gate the Patient Angel goes;
He opens the eyes that are blind with hate – he joins the hands of foes.

Dust of the stars was under our feet, glitter of stars above —
Wrecks of our wrath dropped reeling down as we fought and we spurned and we strove.
Worlds upon worlds we tossed aside, and scattered them to and fro,
The night that we stormed Valhalla, a million years ago!

They are forgiven as they forgive all those dark wounds and deep,
Their beds are made on the lap of Time and they lie down

and sleep.

They are forgiven as they forgive all those old wounds that bleed,

They shut their eyes from their worshippers. They sleep till the world has need.

She with the star I had marked for my own – I with my set desire —

Lost in the loom of the Night of Nights – lighted by worlds afire —

Met in a war against the Gods where the headlong meteors glow,

Hewing our way to Valhalla, a million years ago!

They will come back – come back again, as long as the red Earth rolls. He never wasted a leaf or a tree. Do you think He would squander souls?

THE KINGDOM

Now we are come to our Kingdom,
And the State is thus and thus;
Our legions wait at the Palace gate —
Little it profits us,
Now we are come to our Kingdom!

Now we are come to our Kingdom,
And the Crown is ours to take —
With a naked sword at the Council board,
And under the throne the Snake,
Now we are come to our Kingdom!

Now we are come to our Kingdom,
And the Realm is ours by right,
With shame and fear for our daily cheer,
And heaviness at night,
Now we are come to our Kingdom!

Now we are come to our Kingdom,
But my love's eyelids fall.
All that I wrought for, all that I fought for,
Delight her nothing at all.
My crown is of withered leaves,
For she sits in the dust and grieves.

Now we are come to our Kingdom!

TARRANT MOSS

I closed and drew for my love's sake
That now is false to me,
And I slew the Reiver of Tarrant Moss
And set Dumeny free.

They have gone down, they have gone down,
They are standing all arow —
Twenty knights in the peat-water,
That never struck a blow!

Their armour shall not dull nor rust,
Their flesh shall not decay,
For Tarrant Moss holds them in trust,
Until the Judgment Day.

Their soul went from them in their youth,
Ah God, that mine had gone,
Whenas I leaned on my love's truth
And not on my sword alone!

Whenas I leaned on lad's belief
And not on my naked blade —
And I slew a thief, and an honest thief,
For the sake of a worthless maid.

They have laid the Reiver low in his place,
They have set me up on high,
But the twenty knights in the peat-water
Are luckier than I.

And ever they give me gold and praise
And ever I mourn my loss —
For I struck the blow for my false love's sake
And not for the Men of the Moss!

SIR RICHARD'S SONG

(A.D. 1066)

I followed my Duke ere I was a lover,
To take from England fief and fee;
But now this game is the other way over —
But now England hath taken me!

I had my horse, my shield and banner,
And a boy's heart, so whole and free;
But now I sing in another manner —
But now England hath taken me!

As for my Father in his tower,
Asking news of my ship at sea;
He will remember his own hour —
Tell him England hath taken me!

As for my Mother in her bower,
That rules my Father so cunningly,
She will remember a maiden's power —
Tell her England hath taken me!

As for my Brother in Rouen City,

A nimble and naughty page is he,
But he will come to suffer and pity —
Tell him England hath taken me!

As for my little Sister waiting
In the pleasant orchards of Normandie,
Tell her youth is the time for mating —
Tell her England hath taken me!

As for my Comrades in camp and highway,
That lift their eyebrows scornfully,
Tell them their way is not my way —
Tell them England hath taken me!

Kings and Princes and Barons famèd,
Knights and Captains in your degree;
Hear me a little before I am blamèd —
Seeing England hath taken me!

Howso great man's strength be reckoned,
There are two things he cannot flee;
Love is the first, and Death is the second —
And Love in England hath taken me!

A TREE SONG

(A.D. 1200)

Of all the trees that grow so fair,
Old England to adorn,
Greater are none beneath the Sun,
Than Oak, and Ash, and Thorn.
Sing Oak, and Ash, and Thorn, good sirs
(All of a Midsummer morn)!
Surely we sing no little thing,
In Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Oak of the Clay lived many a day
Or ever Æneas began;
Ash of the Loam was a lady at home
When Brut was an outlaw man.
Thorn of the Down saw New Troy Town
(From which was London born);
Witness hereby the ancientry
Of Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Yew that is old in churchyard mould,
He breedeth a mighty bow;
Alder for shoes do wise men choose,

And beech for cups also.
But when ye have killed, and your bowl is spilled,
And your shoes are clean outworn,
Back ye must speed for all that ye need,
To Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Ellum she hateth mankind, and waiteth
Till every gust be laid,
To drop a limb on the head of him
That anyway trusts her shade:
But whether a lad be sober or sad,
Or mellow with ale from the horn,
He will take no wrong when he lieth along
'Neath Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Oh, do not tell the Priest our plight,
Or he would call it a sin;
But – we have been out in the woods all night,
A-conjuring Summer in!

And we bring you news by word of mouth —
Good news for cattle and corn —
Now is the Sun come up from the South,
With Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Sing Oak, and Ash, and Thorn, good sirs
(All of a Midsummer morn)!
England shall bide till Judgment Tide,
By Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

CUCKOO SONG

Spring begins in Southern England on the 14th April, on which date the Old Woman lets the Cuckoo out of her basket at Heathfield Fair – locally known as Heffle Cuckoo Fair.

Tell it to the locked-up trees,
Cuckoo, bring your song here!
Warrant, Act and Summons, please.
For Spring to pass along here!
Tell old Winter, if he doubt,
Tell him squat and square – a!
Old Woman!
Old Woman!
Old Woman's let the Cuckoo out
At Heffle Cuckoo Fair – a!

March has searched and April tried —
'Tisn't long to May now,
Not so far to Whitsuntide,
And Cuckoo's come to stay now!
Hear the valiant fellow shout
Down the orchard bare – a!
Old Woman!
Old Woman!
Old Woman's let the Cuckoo out
At Heffle Cuckoo Fair – a!

When your heart is young and gay
And the season rules it —
Work your works and play your play
'Fore the Autumn cools it!
Kiss you turn and turn about,
But my lad, beware – a!
Old Woman!
Old Woman!
Old Woman's let the Cuckoo out
At Heffle Cuckoo Fair – a!

A CHARM

Take of English earth as much
As either hand may rightly clutch.
In the taking of it breathe
Prayer for all who lie beneath.
Not the great nor well-bespoke,
But the mere uncounted folk
Of whose life and death is none
Report or lamentation.

Lay that earth upon thy heart,
And thy sickness shall depart!

It shall sweeten and make whole
Fevered breath and festered soul.
It shall mightily restrain
Over-busy hand and brain.
It shall ease thy mortal strife
'Gainst the immortal woe of life,
Till thyself restored shall prove
By what grace the Heavens do move.

Take of English flowers these —
Spring's full-facèd primroses,
Summer's wild wide-hearted rose,
Autumn's wall-flower of the close,

And, thy darkness to illumine,
Winter's bee-thronged ivy-bloom.
Seek and serve them where they bide
From Candlemas to Christmas-tide,
For these simples, used aright,
Can restore a failing sight.

These shall cleanse and purify
Webbed and inward-turning eye;
These shall show thee treasure hid,
Thy familiar fields amid;
And reveal (which is thy need)
Every man a King indeed!

THE PRAIRIE

'I see the grass shake in the sun for leagues on either hand,
I see a river loop and run about a treeless land —
An empty plain, a steely pond, a distance diamond-clear,
And low blue naked hills beyond. And what is that to fear?'

'Go softly by that river-side or, when you would depart,
You'll find its every winding tied and knotted round your
heart.

Be wary as the seasons pass, or you may ne'er outrun
The wind that sets that yellowed grass a-shiver 'neath the
Sun.'

'I hear the summer storm outblown – the drip of the grateful
wheat.

I hear the hard trail telephone a far-off horse's feet.
I hear the horns of Autumn blow to the wild-fowl overhead;
And I hear the hush before the snow. And what is that to
dread?'

'Take heed what spell the lightning weaves – what charm the
echoes shape —

Or, bound among a million sheaves, your soul may not
escape.

Bar home the door of summer nights lest those high planets

drown

The memory of near delights in all the longed-for town.'

'What need have I to long or fear? Now, friendly, I behold
My faithful seasons robe the year in silver and in gold.

Now I possess and am possessed of the land where I would
be,

And the curve of half Earth's generous breast shall soothe
and ravish me!'

CHAPTER HEADINGS

PLAIN TALES FROM THE HILLS

Look, you have cast out Love! What Gods are these
You bid me please?
The Three in One, the One in Three? Not so!
To my own Gods I go.
It may be they shall give me greater ease
Than your cold Christ and tangled Trinities.

Lispeth.

When the Earth was sick and the Skies were grey,
And the woods were rotted with rain,
The Dead Man rode through the autumn day
To visit his love again.

His love she neither saw nor heard,
So heavy was her shame;
And tho' the babe within her stirred
She knew not that he came.

The Other Man.

Cry 'Murder' in the market-place, and each
Will turn upon his neighbour anxious eyes
Asking; – 'Art thou the man?' We hunted Cain
Some centuries ago across the world.
This bred the fear our own misdeeds maintain
To-day.

His Wedded Wife.

Go, stalk the red deer o'er the heather,
Ride, follow the fox if you can!
But, for pleasure and profit together,
Allow me the hunting of Man —
The chase of the Human, the search for the Soul
To its ruin – the hunting of Man.

Pig.

'Stopped in the straight when the race was his own!
Look at him cutting it – cur to the bone!'
Ask ere the youngster be rated and chidden
What did he carry and how was he ridden?
Maybe they used him too much at the start;
Maybe Fate's weight-cloths are breaking his heart.

In the Pride of his Youth.

'And some are sulky, while some will plunge.
(So ho! Steady! Stand still, you!)

Some you must gentle, and some you must lunge.
(*There! There! Who wants to kill you?*)

Some – there are losses in every trade —
Will break their hearts ere bitted and made,
Will fight like fiends as the rope cuts hard,
And die dumb-mad in the breaking-yard.'

Thrown Away.

The World hath set its heavy yoke
Upon the old white-bearded folk
Who strive to please the King.
God's mercy is upon the young,
God's wisdom in the baby tongue
That fears not anything.

Tod's Amendment.

Not though you die to-night, O Sweet, and wail,
A spectre at my door,
Shall mortal Fear make Love immortal fail —
I shall but love you more,
Who, from Death's House returning, give me still
One moment's comfort in my matchless ill.

By Word of Mouth.

They burnt a corpse upon the sand —
The light shone out afar;

It guided home the plunging boats
That beat from Zanzibar.
Spirit of Fire, where'er Thy altars rise,
Thou art the Light of Guidance to our eyes!

In Error.

Ride with an idle whip, ride with an unused heel.
But, once in a way, there will come a day
When the colt must be taught to feel
The lash that falls, and the curb that galls, and the sting of
the rowelled steel.

The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin.

It was not in the open fight
We threw away the sword,
But in the lonely watching
In the darkness by the ford.
The waters lapped, the night-wind blew,
Full-armed the Fear was born and grew,
From panic in the night.

The Rout of the White Hussars.

In the daytime, when she moved about me,
In the night, when she was sleeping at my side, —
I was wearied, I was wearied of her presence.
Day by day and night by night I grew to hate her —

Would God that she or I had died!

The Bronckhorst Divorce Case.

A stone's throw out on either hand
From that well-ordered road we tread,
And all the world is wild and strange;
Churel and ghoul and Djinn and sprite
Shall bear us company to-night,
For we have reached the Oldest Land
Wherein the powers of Darkness range.

In the House of Suddhoo.

To-night, God knows what thing shall tide,
The Earth is racked and fain —
Expectant, sleepless, open-eyed;
And we, who from the Earth were made,
Thrill with our Mother's pain.

False Dawn.

Pit where the buffalo cooled his hide,
By the hot sun emptied, and blistered and dried;
Log in the reh-grass, hidden and lone;
Bund where the earth-rat's mounds are strown;
Cave in the bank where the sly stream steals;
Aloe that stabs at the belly and heels,
Jump if you dare on a steed untried —

Safer it is to go wide – go wide!

Hark, from in front where the best men ride; —

'Pull to the off, boys! Wide! Go wide!'

Cupid's Arrows.

He drank strong waters and his speech was coarse;

He purchased raiment and forbore to pay;

He stuck a trusting junior with a horse,

And won gymkhanas in a doubtful way.

Then, 'twixt a vice and folly, turned aside

To do good deeds and straight to cloak them, lied.

A Bank Fraud.

COLD IRON

*'Gold is for the mistress – silver for the maid —
Copper for the craftsman cunning at his trade.'*

'Good!' said the Baron, sitting in his hall,
'But Iron – Cold Iron – is master of them all.'

So he made rebellion 'gainst the King his liege,
Camped before his citadel and summoned it to siege.
'Nay!' said the cannoneer on the castle wall,
'But Iron – Cold Iron – shall be master of you all!'

Woe for the Baron and his knights so strong,
When the cruel cannon-balls laid 'em all along!
He was taken prisoner, he was cast in thrall,
And Iron – Cold Iron – was master of it all.

Yet his King spake kindly (Ah, how kind a Lord!)
'What if I release thee now and give thee back thy sword?'
'Nay!' said the Baron, 'mock not at my fall,
For Iron – Cold Iron – is master of men all.'

*'Tears are for the craven, prayers are for the clown —
Halters for the silly neck that cannot keep a crown.'*
'As my loss is grievous, so my hope is small,
For Iron – Cold Iron – must be master of men all!'

Yet his King made answer (few such Kings there be!)
'Here is Bread and here is Wine – sit and sup with me.
Eat and drink in Mary's Name, the whiles I do recall
How Iron – Cold Iron – can be master of men all!'

He took the Wine and blessed It. He blessed and brake the
Bread.

With His own Hands He served Them, and presently He said:
'See! These Hands they pierced with nails, outside My city
wall,
Show Iron – Cold Iron – to be master of men all!'

'Wounds are for the desperate, blows are for the strong,
Balm and oil for weary hearts all cut and bruised with wrong.
I forgive thy treason – I redeem thy fall —
For Iron – Cold Iron – must be master of men all!'

*'Crowns are for the valiant – sceptres for the bold!
Thrones and powers for mighty men who dare to take and
hold.'*

'Nay!' said the Baron, kneeling in his hall,
'But Iron – Cold Iron – is master of man all!
Iron out of Calvary is master of men all!'

A SONG OF KABIR

Oh, light was the world that he weighed in his hands!
Oh, heavy the tale of his fiefs and his lands!
He has gone from the *guddee* and put on the shroud,
And departed in guise of *bairagi* avowed!

Now the white road to Delhi is mat for his feet.
The *sal* and the *kikar* must guard him from heat.
His home is the camp, and the waste, and the crowd —
He is seeking the Way as *bairagi* avowed!

He has looked upon Man, and his eyeballs are clear —
(There was One; there is One, and but One, saith Kabir);
The Red Mist of Doing has thinned to a cloud —
He has taken the Path for *bairagi* avowed!

To learn and discern of his brother the clod,
Of his brother the brute, and his brother the God,
He has gone from the council and put on the shroud
(‘Can ye hear?’ saith Kabir), a *bairagi* avowed!

A CAROL

Our Lord Who did the Ox command
To kneel to Judah's King,
He binds His frost upon the land
To ripen it for Spring —
To ripen it for Spring, good sirs,
According to His Word;
Which well must be as ye can see —
And who shall judge the Lord?

When we poor fenmen skate the ice
Or shiver on the wold,
We hear the cry of a single tree
That breaks her heart in the cold —
That breaks her heart in the cold, good sirs,
And rendeth by the board;
Which well must be as ye can see —
And who shall judge the Lord?

Her wood is crazed and little worth
Excepting as to burn,
That we may warm and make our mirth
Until the Spring return —
Until the Spring return, good sirs.
When people walk abroad;

Which well must be as ye can see —
And who shall judge the Lord?

God bless the master of this house.
And all who sleep therein!
And guard the fens from pirate folk.
And keep us all from sin,
To walk in honesty, good sirs,
Of thought and deed and word!
Which shall befriend our latter end —
And who shall judge the Lord?

'MY NEW-CUT ASHLAR'

My new-cut ashlar takes the light
Where crimson-blank the windows flare.
By my own work before the night,
Great Overseer, I make my prayer.

If there be good in that I wrought,
Thy Hand compelled it, Master, Thine —
Where I have failed to meet Thy Thought
I know, through Thee, the blame was mine.

One instant's toil to Thee denied
Stands all Eternity's offence.
Of that I did with Thee to guide
To Thee, through Thee, be excellence.

The depth and dream of my desire,
The bitter paths wherein I stray —
Thou knowest Who hath made the Fire,
Thou knowest Who hast made the Clay.

Who, lest all thought of Eden fade,
Bring'st Eden to the craftsman's brain —
Godlike to muse o'er his own Trade
And manlike stand with God again!

One stone the more swings into place
In that dread Temple of Thy worth.
It is enough that, through Thy Grace,
I saw nought common on Thy Earth.

Take not that vision from my ken —
Oh whatsoe'er may spoil or speed.
Help me to need no aid from men
That I may help such men as need!

EDDI'S SERVICE

(A.D. 687)

Eddi, priest of St. Wilfrid
In the chapel at Manhood End,
Ordered a midnight service
For such as cared to attend.

But the Saxons were keeping Christmas,
And the night was stormy as well.
Nobody came to service
Though Eddi rang the bell.

'Wicked weather for walking,'
Said Eddi of Manhood End.
'But I must go on with the service
For such as care to attend.'

The altar-candles were lighted, —
An old marsh donkey came,
Bold as a guest invited,
And stared at the guttering flame.

The storm beat on at the windows,

The water splashed on the floor,
And a wet, yoke-weary bullock
Pushed in through the open door.

'How do I know what is greatest,
How do I know what is least?
That is My Father's business,'
Said Eddi, Wilfrid's priest.

'But – three are gathered together —
Listen to me and attend.
I bring good news, my brethren!'
Said Eddi of Manhood End.

And he told the Ox of a Manger
And a Stall in Bethlehem,
And he spoke to the Ass of a Rider,
That rode to Jerusalem.

They steamed and dripped in the chancel,
They listened and never stirred,
While, just as though they were Bishops,
Eddi preached them The Word.

Till the gale blew off on the marshes
And the windows showed the day,
And the Ox and the Ass together
Wheeled and clattered away.

And when the Saxons mocked him,
Said Eddi of Manhood End,
'I dare not shut His chapel
On such as care to attend.'

SHIV AND THE GRASSHOPPER

Shiv, who poured the harvest and made the winds to blow,
Sitting at the doorways of a day of long ago,
Gave to each his portion, food and toil and fate,
From the King upon the guddee to the Beggar at the gate.
All things made he – Shiva the Preserver.
Mahadeo! Mahadeo! He made all, —
Thorn for the camel, fodder for the kine,
And mother's heart for sleepy head, O little son of mine!

Wheat he gave to rich folk, millet to the poor,
Broken scraps for holy men that beg from door to door;
Cattle to the tiger, carrion to the kite,
And rags and bones to wicked wolves without the wall at night.
Naught he found too lofty, none he saw too low —
Parbati beside him watched them come and go;
Thought to cheat her husband, turning Shiv to jest —
Stole the little grasshopper and hid it in her breast.
So she tricked him, Shiva the Preserver.
Mahadeo! Mahadeo! turn and see!
Tall are the camels, heavy are the kine,
But this was Least of Little Things, O little son of mine!

When the dole was ended, laughingly she said,

'Master, of a million mouths is not one unfed?'
Laughing, Shiv made answer, 'All have had their part,
Even he, the little one, hidden 'neath thy heart.'
From her breast she plucked it, Parbati the thief,
Saw the Least of Little Things gnawed a new-grown leaf!
Saw and feared and wondered, making prayer to Shiv,
Who hath surely given meat to all that live.
All things made he – Shiva the Preserver.
Mahadeo! Mahadeo! He made all, —
Thorn for the camel, fodder for the kine,
And mother's heart for sleepy head, O little son of mine!

THE FAIRIES' SIEGE

I have been given my charge to keep —
Well have I kept the same!
Playing with strife for the most of my life,
But this is a different game.
I'll not fight against swords unseen,
Or spears that I cannot view —
Hand him the keys of the place on your knees —
'Tis the Dreamer whose dreams come true!

Ask for his terms and accept them at once.
Quick, ere we anger him; go!
Never before have I flinched from the guns,
But this is a different show.
I'll not fight with the Herald of God
(I know what his Master can do!)
Open the gate, he must enter in state,
'Tis the Dreamer whose dreams come true!

I'd not give way for an Emperor,
I'd hold my road for a King —
To the Triple Crown I would not bow down —
But this is a different thing.
I'll not fight with the Powers of Air,
Sentry, pass him through!

Drawbridge let fall, it's the Lord of us all,
The Dreamer whose dreams come true!

A SONG TO MITHRAS

(Hymn of the 30th Legion: *circa* A.D. 350.)

Mithras, God of the Morning, our trumpets waken the Wall!
'Rome is above the Nations, but Thou art over all!'
Now as the names are answered and the guards are marched
away,
Mithras, also a soldier, give us strength for the day!

Mithras, God of the Noontide, the heather swims in the heat.
Our helmets scorch our foreheads, our sandals burn our feet.
Now in the ungirt hour – now ere we blink and drowse,
Mithras, also a soldier, keep us true to our vows!

Mithras, God of the Sunset, low on the Western main —
Thou descending immortal, immortal to rise again!
Now when the watch is ended, now when the wine is drawn,
Mithras, also a soldier, keep us pure till the dawn!

Mithras, God of the Midnight, here where the great bull dies,
Look on thy children in darkness. Oh take our sacrifice!
Many roads thou hast fashioned – all of them lead to the
Light:
Mithras, also a soldier, teach us to die aright!

THE NEW KNIGHTHOOD

Who gives him the Bath?

'I,' said the wet,
Rank Jungle-sweat,
'I'll give him the Bath!'

Who'll sing the psalms?

'We,' said the Palms.
'Ere the hot wind becalms,
We'll sing the psalms.'

Who lays on the sword?

'I,' said the Sun,
'Before he has done,
I'll lay on the sword.'

Who fastens his belt?

'I,' said Short-Rations,
'I know all the fashions
Of tightening a belt!'

Who gives him his spur?

'I,' said his Chief,
Exacting and brief,
'I'll give him the spur.'

Who'll shake his hand?
'I,' said the Fever,
'And I'm no deceiver,
I'll shake his hand.'

Who brings him the wine?
'I,' said Quinine,
'It's a habit of mine.
'I'll come with the wine.'

Who'll put him to proof?
'I,' said All Earth,
'Whatever he's worth,
I'll put to the proof.'

Who'll choose him for Knight?
'I,' said his Mother,
'Before any other,
My very own Knight.'

And after this fashion, adventure to seek,
Was Sir Galahad made – as it might be last week!

OUTSONG IN THE JUNGLE

BALOO

FOR the sake of him who showed
One wise Frog the Jungle-Road,
Keep the Law the Man-Pack make
For thy blind old Baloo's sake!
Clean or tainted, hot or stale,
Hold it as it were the Trail,
Through the day and through the night,
Questing neither left nor right.
For the sake of him who loves
Thee beyond all else that moves,
When thy Pack would make thee pain,
Say: 'Tabaqui sings again.'
When thy Pack would work thee ill,
Say: 'Shere Khan is yet to kill.'
When the knife is drawn to slay,
Keep the Law and go thy way.
(Root and honey, palm and spathe,
Guard a cub from harm and scathe!)
*Wood and Water, Wind and Tree,
Jungle-Favour go with thee!*

KAA

Anger is the egg of Fear —
Only lidless eyes are clear.
Cobra-poison none may leech,
Even so with Cobra-speech.
Open talk shall call to thee
Strength, whose mate is Courtesy.
Send no lunge beyond thy length;
Lend no rotten bough thy strength.
Gauge thy gape with buck or goat,
Lest thine eye should choke thy throat
After gorging, wouldst thou sleep?
Look thy den be hid and deep,
Lest a wrong, by thee forgot,
Draw thy killer to the spot.
East and West and North and South,
Wash thy hide and close thy mouth.
(Pit and rift and blue pool-brim,
Middle-Jungle follow him!)
Wood and Water, Wind and Tree,
Jungle-Favour go with thee!

BAGHEERA

In the cage my life began;
Well I know the worth of Man.
By the Broken Lock that freed —
Man-cub, 'ware the Man-cub's breed!
Scenting-dew or starlight pale,
Choose no tangled tree-cat trail.
Pack or council, hunt or den,
Cry no truce with Jackal-Men.
Feed them silence when they say:
'Come with us an easy way.'
Feed them silence when they seek
Help of thine to hurt the weak.
Make no *bandar's* boast of skill;
Hold thy peace above the kill.
Let nor call nor song nor sign
Turn thee from thy hunting-line.
(Morning mist or twilight clear,
Serve him, Wardens of the Deer!)
Wood and Water, Wind and Tree,
Jungle-Favour go with thee!

THE THREE

On the trail that thou must tread
To the thresholds of our dread,
Where the Flower blossoms red;
Through the nights when thou shalt lie
Prisoned from our Mother-sky,
Hearing us, thy loves, go by;
In the dawns when thou shalt wake
To the toil thou canst not break,
Heartsick for the Jungle's sake:
Wood and Water, Wind and Tree,
Wisdom, Strength, and Courtesy,
Jungle-Favour go with thee!

HARP SONG OF THE DANE WOMEN

What is a woman that you forsake her,
And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,
To go with the old grey Widow-maker?

She has no house to lay a guest in —
But one chill bed for all to rest in,
That the pale suns and the stray bergs nest in.

She has no strong white arms to fold you,
But the ten-times-fingering weed to hold you —
Out on the rocks where the tide has rolled you.

Yet, when the signs of summer thicken,
And the ice breaks, and the birch-buds quicken,
Yearly you turn from our side, and sicken —

Sicken again for the shouts and the slaughters.
You steal away to the lapping waters,
And look at your ship in her winter quarters.

You forget our mirth, and talk at the tables,
The kine in the shed and the horse in the stables —
To pitch her sides and go over her cables.

Then you drive out where the storm-clouds swallow,
And the sound of your oar-blades, falling hollow.
Is all we have left through the months to follow.

Ah, what is Woman that you forsake her,
And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,
To go with the old grey Widow-maker?

THE THOUSANDTH MAN

One man in a thousand, Solomon says,
Will stick more close than a brother.
And it's worth while seeking him half your days
If you find him before the other.
Nine hundred and ninety-nine depend
On what the world sees in you,
But the Thousandth Man will stand your friend
With the whole round world against you.

'Tis neither promise nor prayer nor show
Will settle the finding for 'ee.
Nine hundred and ninety-nine of 'em go
By your looks or your acts or your glory.
But if he finds you and you find him,
The rest of the world don't matter;
For the Thousandth Man will sink or swim
With you in any water.

You can use his purse with no more talk
Than he uses yours for his spendings,
And laugh and meet in your daily walk
As though there had been no lendings.
Nine hundred and ninety-nine of 'em call
For silver and gold in their dealings;

But the Thousandth Man he's worth 'em all.
Because you can show him your feelings.

His wrong's your wrong, and his right's your right,
In season or out of season.
Stand up and back it in all men's sight —
With *that* for your only reason!
Nine hundred and ninety-nine can't bide
The shame or mocking or laughter,
But the Thousandth Man will stand by your side
To the gallows-foot – and after!

THE WINNERS

What is the moral? Who rides may read.
When the night is thick and the tracks are blind
A friend at a pinch is a friend indeed,
But a fool to wait for the laggard behind.
Down to Gehenna or up to the Throne,
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

White hands cling to the tightened rein,
Slipping the spur from the booted heel,
Tenderest voices cry 'Turn again,'
Red lips tarnish the scabbarded steel,
High hopes faint on a warm hearth stone —
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

One may fall but he falls by himself —
Falls by himself with himself to blame,
One may attain and to him is pelf,
Loot of the city in Gold or Fame.
Plunder of earth shall be all his own
Who travels the fastest and travels alone.

Wherefore the more ye be holpen and stayed,
Stayed by a friend in the hour of toil,
Sing the heretical song I have made —

His be the labour and yours be the spoil,
Win by his aid and the aid disown —
He travels the fastest who travels alone!

A ST. HELENA LULLABY

'How far is St. Helena from a little child at play?'
What makes you want to wander there with all the world
between?
Oh, Mother, call your son again or else he'll run away.
(No one thinks of winter when the grass is green!)

'How far is St. Helena from a fight in Paris street?'
I haven't time to answer now – the men are falling fast.
The guns begin to thunder, and the drums begin to beat.
(If you take the first step you will take the last!)

'How far is St. Helena from the field of Austerlitz?'
You couldn't hear me if I told – so loud the cannons roar.
But not so far for people who are living by their wits.
('Gay go up' means 'Gay go down' the wide world o'er!)

'How far is St. Helena from an Emperor of France?'
I cannot see – I cannot tell – the crowns they dazzle so.
The Kings sit down to dinner, and the Queens stand up to
dance.
(After open weather you may look for snow!)

'How far is St. Helena from the Capes of Trafalgar?'
A longish way – a longish way – with ten year more to run.

It's South across the water underneath a setting star.
(What you cannot finish you must leave undone!)

'How far is St. Helena from the Beresina ice?'
An ill way – a chill way – the ice begins to crack.
But not so far for gentlemen who never took advice.
(When you can't go forward you must e'en come back!)

'How far is St. Helena from the field of Waterloo?'
A near way – a clear way – the ship will take you soon.
A pleasant place for gentlemen with little left to do,
(Morning never tries you till the afternoon!)

'How far from St. Helena to the Gate of Heaven's Grace?'
That no one knows – that no one knows – and no one ever
will.
But fold your hands across your heart and cover up your face,
And after all your trapesings, child, lie still!

CHIL'S SONG

These were my companions going forth by night – (*For Chil! Look you, for Chil!*) Now come I to whistle them the ending of the fight. (*Chil! Vanguard's of Chil!*) Word they gave me overhead of quarry newly slain, Word I gave them underfoot of buck upon the plain. Here's an end of every trail – they shall not speak again!

They that called the hunting-cry – they that followed fast – (*For Chil! Look you, for Chil!*) They that bade the sambhur wheel, or pinned him as he passed – (*Chil! Vanguard's of Chil!*) They that lagged behind the scent – they that ran before, They that shunned the level horn – they that overbore, Here's an end of every trail – they shall not follow more.

These were my companions. Pity 'twas they died! (*For Chil! Look you, for Chil!*) Now come I to comfort them that knew them in their pride. (*Chil! Vanguard's of Chil!*) Tattered flank and sunken eye, open mouth and red, Locked and lank and lone they lie, the dead upon their dead. Here's an end of every trail – and here my hosts are fed!

THE CAPTIVE

Not with an outcry to Allah nor any complaining
He answered his name at the muster and stood to the
chaining.

When the twin anklets were nipped on the leg-bars that held
them,

He brotherly greeted the armourers stooping to weld them.
Ere the sad dust of the marshalled feet of the chain-gang
swallowed him,

Observing him nobly at ease, I alighted and followed him.
Thus we had speech by the way, but not touching his sorrow
—

Rather his red Yesterday and his regal To-morrow,
Wherein he statelily moved to the clink of his chains
unregarded,
Nowise abashed but contented to drink of the potion
awarded.

Saluting aloofly his Fate, he made swift with his story,
And the words of his mouth were as slaves spreading carpets
of glory
Embroidered with names of the Djinns – a miraculous
weaving —

But the cool and perspicuous eye overbore unbelieving.
So I submitted myself to the limits of rapture —
Bound by this man we had bound, amid captives his capture

Till he returned me to earth and the visions departed.
But on him be the Peace and the Blessing; for he was great-
hearted!

THE PUZZLER

The Celt in all his variants from Bult to Ballyhoo,
His mental processes are plain – one knows what he will do,
And can logically predicate his finish by his start;
But the English – ah, the English – they are quite a race apart.

Their psychology is bovine, their outlook crude and raw.
They abandon vital matters to be tickled with a straw,
But the straw that they were tickled with – the chaff that they
were fed with —
They convert into a weaver's beam to break their foeman's
head with.

For undemocratic reasons and for motives not of State,
They arrive at their conclusions – largely inarticulate.
Being void of self-expression they confide their views to
none;
But sometimes in a smoking-room, one learns why things
were done.

Yes, sometimes in a smoking-room, through clouds of 'Ers'
and 'Ums,'
Obliquely and by inference illumination comes,
On some step that they have taken, or some action they
approve —

Embellished with the *argot* of the Upper Fourth Remove.

In telegraphic sentences, half nodded to their friends,
They hint a matter's inwardness – and there the matter ends.
And while the Celt is talking from Valencia to Kirkwall,
The English – ah, the English! – don't say anything at all!

HADRAMAUTI

Who knows the heart of the Christian? How does he reason?
What are his measures and balances? Which is his season
For laughter, forbearance or bloodshed, and what devils move
him
When he arises to smite us? *I* do not love him.

He invites the derision of strangers – he enters all places.
Booted, bareheaded he enters. With shouts and embraces
He asks of us news of the household whom we reckon
nameless.
Certainly Allah created him forty-fold shameless.

So it is not in the Desert. One came to me weeping —
The Avenger of Blood on his track – I took him in keeping.
Demanding not whom he had slain, I refreshed him, I fed him
As he were even a brother. But Eblis had bred him.

He was the son of an ape, ill at ease in his clothing,
He talked with his head, hands and feet. I endured him with
loathing.
Whatever his spirit conceived his countenance showed it
As a frog shows in a mud-puddle. Yet I abode it!

I fingered my beard and was dumb, in silence confronting

him.

His soul was too shallow for silence, e'en with Death hunting him.

I said: 'Tis his weariness speaks,' but, when he had rested,
He chirped in my face like some sparrow, and, presently,
jested!

Wherefore slew I that stranger? He brought me dishonour.

I saddled my mare, Bijli, I set him upon her.

I gave him rice and goat's flesh. He bared me to laughter.

When he was gone from my tent, swift I followed after,

Taking my sword in my hand. The hot wine had filled him.

Under the stars he mocked me – therefore I killed him!

CHAPTER HEADINGS

THE NAULAHKA

We meet in an evil land
That is near to the gates of hell.
I wait for thy command
To serve, to speed or withstand.
And thou sayest, I do not well?

Oh Love, the flowers so red
Are only tongues of flame,
The earth is full of the dead,
The new-killed, restless dead.
There is danger beneath and o'erhead,
And I guard thy gates in fear
Of peril and jeopardy,
Of words thou canst not hear,
Of signs thou canst not see —
And thou sayest 'tis ill that I came?

This I saw when the rites were done,
And the lamps were dead and the Gods alone,
And the grey snake coiled on the altar stone —
Ere I fled from a Fear that I could not see,

And the Gods of the East made mouths at me.

* * * * *

Now it is not good for the Christian's health to hustle the
Aryan brown,
For the Christian riles, and the Aryan smiles and he weareth
the Christian down;
And the end of the fight is a tombstone white with the name
of the late deceased,
And the epitaph drear: 'A fool lies here who tried to hustle
the East.'

* * * * *

Beat off in our last fight were we?
The greater need to seek the sea.
For Fortune changeth as the moon
To caravel and picaroon.
Then Eastward Ho! or Westward Ho!
Whichever wind may meetest blow.
Our quarry sails on either sea,
Fat prey for such bold lads as we.
And every sun-dried buccaneer

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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