

# RUDYARD KIPLING

THE YEARS  
BETWEEN

Редьярд Киплинг

**The Years Between**

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# **Rudyard Kipling**

## **The Years Between**

### **DEDICATION**

### **TO THE SEVEN WATCHMEN**

Seven Watchmen sitting in a tower,  
Watching what had come upon mankind,  
Showed the Man the Glory and the Power,  
And bade him shape the Kingdom to his mind.  
'All things on Earth your will shall win you'  
('Twas so their counsel ran)  
'But the Kingdom – the Kingdom is within you,'  
Said the Man's own mind to the Man.  
For time, and some time —  
As it was in the bitter years before,  
So it shall be in the over-sweetened hour —  
That a man's mind is wont to tell him more  
Than Seven Watchmen sitting in a tower.

## THE ROWERS

1902

**(When Germany proposed that England should help her  
in a naval demonstration to collect debts from Venezuela.)**

The banked oars fell an hundred strong,  
And backed and threshed and ground,  
But bitter was the rowers' song  
As they brought the war-boat round.

They had no heart for the rally and roar  
That makes the whale-bath smoke —  
When the great blades cleave and hold and leave  
As one on the racing stroke.

They sang: – 'What reckoning do you keep,  
And steer her by what star,  
If we come unscathed from the Southern deep  
To be wrecked on a Baltic bar?

'Last night you swore our voyage was done,  
But seaward still we go,  
And you tell us now of a secret vow  
You have made with an open foe!

'That we must lie off a lightless coast  
And haul and back and veer,  
At the will of the breed that have wronged us most  
For a year and a year and a year!

'There was never a shame in Christendie  
They laid not to our door —  
And you say we must take the winter sea  
And sail with them once more?

'Look South! The gale is scarce o'erpast  
That stripped and laid us down,  
When we stood forth but they stood fast  
And prayed to see us drown

'Our dead they mocked are scarcely cold,  
Our wounds are bleeding yet —

And you tell us now that our strength is sold  
To help them press for a debt'

"Neath all the flags of all mankind  
That use upon the seas,  
Was there no other fleet to find  
That you strike hands with these?

'Of evil times that men can choose  
On evil fate to fall,  
What brooding Judgment let you loose  
To pick the worst of all?

'In sight of peace – from the Narrow Seas  
O'er half the world to run —  
With a cheated crew, to league anew  
With the Goth and the shameless Hun!'

## THE VETERANS

**[Written for the gathering of survivors of the Indian Mutiny, Albert Hall, 1907.]**

To-day, across our fathers' graves,  
The astonished years reveal  
The remnant of that desperate host  
Which cleansed our East with steel.

Hail and farewell! We greet you here,  
With tears that none will scorn —  
O Keepers of the House of old,  
Or ever we were born!

One service more we dare to ask —  
Pray for us, heroes, pray,  
That when Fate lays on us our task  
We do not shame the Day!



# THE DECLARATION OF LONDON

JUNE 29, 1911

**('On the re-assembling of Parliament after the Coronation, the Government have no intention of allowing their followers to vote according to their convictions on the Declaration of London, but insist on a strictly party vote' —*Daily Papers.*)**

We were all one heart and one race  
When the Abbey trumpets blew.  
For a moment's breathing-space  
We had forgotten you  
Now you return to your honoured place  
Panting to shame us anew.

We have walked with the Ages dead —  
With our Past alive and ablaze,  
And you bid us pawn our honour for bread;  
This day of all the days!  
And you cannot wait till our guests are sped,  
Or last week's wreath decays?

The light is still in our eyes  
Of Faith and Gentlehood,  
Of Service and Sacrifice,  
And it does not match our mood,  
To turn so soon to your treacheries  
That starve our land of her food.

Our ears still carry the sound  
Of our once Imperial seas,  
Exultant after our King was crowned,  
Beneath the sun and the breeze.  
It is too early to have them bound  
Or sold at your decrees.

Wait till the memory goes,  
Wait till the visions fade,  
We may betray in time, God knows,  
But we would not have it said,  
When you make report to our scornful foes,  
That we kissed as we betrayed!

## ULSTER

1912

**('Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.' —*Isaiah lix 6*)**

The dark eleventh hour  
Draws on and sees us sold  
To every evil power  
We fought against of old.  
Rebellion, rapine, hate,  
Oppression, wrong and greed  
Are loosed to rule our fate,  
By England's act and deed.

The Faith in which we stand,  
The laws we made and guard,  
Our honour, lives, and land  
Are given for reward  
To Murder done by night,  
To Treason taught by day,  
To folly, sloth, and spite,  
And we are thrust away.

The blood our fathers spilt,  
Our love, our toils, our pains,  
Are counted us for guilt,  
And only bind our chains.  
Before an Empire's eyes  
The traitor claims his price.  
What need of further lies?  
We are the sacrifice.

We asked no more than leave  
To reap where we had sown,  
Through good and ill to cleave  
To our own flag and throne.  
Now England's shot and steel  
Beneath that flag must show  
How loyal hearts should kneel  
To England's oldest foe.

We know the war prepared  
On every peaceful home,  
We know the hells declared  
For such as serve not Rome —  
The terror, threats, and dread  
In market, hearth, and field —  
We know, when all is said,  
We perish if we yield.

Believe, we dare not boast,  
Believe, we do not fear —  
We stand to pay the cost  
In all that men hold dear.  
What answer from the North?  
One Law, one Land, one Throne.  
If England drive us forth  
We shall not fall alone.

## THE COVENANT

1914

We thought we ranked above the chance of ill.  
Others might fall, not we, for we were wise —  
Merchants in freedom. So, of our free-will  
We let our servants drug our strength with lies.  
The pleasure and the poison had its way  
On us as on the meanest, till we learned  
That he who lies will steal, who steals will slay.  
Neither God's judgment nor man's heart was turned.

Yet there remains His Mercy – to be sought  
Through wrath and peril till we cleanse the wrong  
By that last right which our forefathers claimed  
When their Law failed them and its stewards were bought.  
This is our cause. God help us, and make strong  
Our wills to meet Him later, unashamed!

## FRANCE

1913

*Broke to every known mischance, lifted over all  
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the Gaul;  
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,  
Terrible with strength that draws from her tireless soil;  
Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of man's mind,  
First to follow Truth and last to leave old Truths behind —  
France, beloved of every soul that loves its fellow-kind!*

Ere our birth (rememberest thou?) side by side we lay  
Fretting in the womb of Rome to begin our fray.  
Ere men knew our tongues apart, our one task was known —  
Each must mould the other's fate as he wrought his own  
To this end we stirred mankind till all Earth was ours,  
Till our world-end strifes begat wayside thrones and powers —  
Puppets that we made or broke to bar the other's path —  
Necessary, outpost folk, hirelings of our wrath  
To this end we stormed the seas, tack for tack, and burst  
Through the doorways of new worlds, doubtful which was first,  
Hand on hilt (rememberest thou?) ready for the blow —  
Sure, whatever else we met, we should meet our foe.  
Spurred or balked at every stride by the other's strength,  
So we rode the ages down and every ocean's length!

Where did you refrain from us or we refrain from you?  
Ask the wave that has not watched war between us two!  
Others held us for a while, but with weaker charms,  
These we quitted at the call for each other's arms.  
Eager toward the known delight, equally we strove —  
Each the other's mystery, terror, need, and love  
To each other's open court with our proofs we came.  
Where could we find honour else, or men to test our claim?  
From each other's throat we wrenched – valour's last reward —  
That extorted word of praise gasped 'twixt lunge and guard.  
In each other's cup we poured mingled blood and tears,  
Brutal joys, unmeasured hopes, intolerable fears —  
All that soiled or salted life for a thousand years.  
Proved beyond the need of proof, matched in every clime,  
O companion, we have lived greatly through all time!

Yoked in knowledge and remorse, now we come to rest,  
Laughing at old villainies that Time has turned to jest,

Pardoning old necessities no pardon can efface —  
That undying sin we shared in Rouen marketplace.  
Now we watch the new years shape, wondering if they hold  
Fiercer lightnings in their heart than we launched of old.  
Now we hear new voices rise, question, boast or gird,  
As we raged (rememberest thou?) when our crowds were stirred,  
Now we count new keels afloat, and new hosts on land,  
Massed like ours (rememberest thou?) when our strokes were planned.  
We were schooled for dear life's sake, to know each other's blade  
What can blood and iron make more than we have made?  
We have learned by keenest use to know each other's mind.  
What shall blood and iron loose that we cannot bind?  
We who swept each other's coast, sacked each other's home,  
Since the sword of Brennus clashed on the scales at Rome,  
Listen, count and close again, wheeling girth to girth,  
In the linked and steadfast guard set for peace on earth!

Broke to every known mischance, lifted over all  
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the Gaul;  
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,  
Terrible with strength renewed from a tireless soil;  
Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of man's mind,  
First to face the Truth and last to leave old Truths behind —  
France, beloved of every soul that loves or serves its kind!

## 'FOR ALL WE HAVE AND ARE'

1914

For all we have and are,  
For all our children's fate,  
Stand up and take the war,  
The Hun is at the gate!  
Our world has passed away,  
In wantonness o'erthrown.  
There is nothing left to-day  
But steel and fire and stone!  
Though all we knew depart,  
The old Commandments stand: —  
'In courage keep your heart,  
In strength lift up your hand.'

Once more we hear the word  
That sickened earth of old: —  
'No law except the Sword  
Unsheathed and uncontrolled.'  
Once more it knits mankind,  
Once more the nations go  
To meet and break and bind  
A crazed and driven foe.

Comfort, content, delight,  
The ages' slow-bought gain,  
They shrivelled in a night.  
Only ourselves remain  
To face the naked days  
In silent fortitude,  
Through perils and dismays  
Renewed and re-renewed.  
Though all we made depart,  
The old Commandments stand; —  
'In patience keep your heart,  
In strength lift up your hand.'

No easy hope or lies  
Shall bring us to our goal,  
But iron sacrifice  
Of body, will, and soul.  
There is but one task for all —  
One life for each to give

Who stands if Freedom fall?  
Who dies if England live?



## A SONG IN STORM

Be well assured that on our side  
The abiding oceans fight,  
Though headlong wind and heaping tide  
Make us their sport to-night.  
By force of weather not of war  
In jeopardy we steer,  
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it shall appear,  
How in all time of our distress,  
And our deliverance too,  
The game is more than the player of the game,  
And the ship is more than the crew.

Out of the mist into the mirk  
The glimmering combers roll.  
Almost these mindless waters work  
As though they had a soul —  
Almost as though they leagued to overwhelm  
Our flag beneath their green  
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it shall be seen, etc.

Be well assured, though wave and wind  
Have weightier blows in store,  
That we who keep the watch assigned  
Must stand to it the more;  
And as our streaming bows rebuke  
Each billow's baulked career,  
Sing, welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it is made clear, etc.

No matter though our deck be swept  
And masts and timber crack —  
We can make good all loss except  
The loss of turning back.  
So, 'twixt these Devils and our deep  
Let courteous trumpets sound,  
To welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it will be found, etc.

Be well assured, though in our power  
Is nothing left to give  
But chance and place to meet the hour,  
And leave to strive to live,  
Till these dissolve our Order holds,

Our Service binds us here.  
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it is made clear,  
How in all time of our distress,  
And in our triumph too,  
The game is more than the player of the game,  
And the ship is more than the crew!

## THE OUTLAWS

1914

Through learned and laborious years  
They set themselves to find  
Fresh terrors and undreamed-of fears  
To heap upon mankind.

All that they drew from Heaven above  
Or digged from earth beneath,  
They laid into their treasure-trove  
And arsenals of death:

While, for well-weighed advantage sake,  
Ruler and ruled alike  
Built up the faith they meant to break  
When the fit hour should strike.

They traded with the careless earth,  
And good return it gave;  
They plotted by their neighbour's hearth  
The means to make him slave.

When all was ready to their hand  
They loosed their hidden sword,  
And utterly laid waste a land  
Their oath was pledged to guard.

Coldly they went about to raise  
To life and make more dread  
Abominations of old days,  
That men believed were dead.

They paid the price to reach their goal  
Across a world in flame;  
But their own hate slew their own soul  
Before that victory came.

## ZION

The Doorkeepers of Zion,  
They do not always stand  
In helmet and whole armour,  
With halberds in their hand,  
But, being sure of Zion,  
And all her mysteries,  
They rest awhile in Zion,  
Sit down and smile in Zion;  
Ay, even jest in Zion;  
In Zion, at their ease.

The Gatekeepers of Baal,  
They dare not sit or lean,  
But fume and fret and posture  
And foam and curse between;  
For being bound to Baal,  
Whose sacrifice is vain.  
Their rest is scant with Baal,  
They glare and pant for Baal,  
They mouth and rant for Baal,  
For Baal in their pain!

But we will go to Zion,  
By choice and not through dread,  
With these our present comrades  
And those our present dead;  
And, being free of Zion  
In both her fellowships,  
Sit down and sup in Zion —  
Stand up and drink in Zion  
Whatever cup in Zion  
Is offered to our lips!

## LORD ROBERTS

1914

He passed in the very battle-smoke  
Of the war that he had descried.  
Three hundred mile of cannon spoke  
When the Master-Gunner died.

He passed to the very sound of the guns;  
But, before his eye grew dim,  
He had seen the faces of the sons  
Whose sires had served with him.

He had touched their sword-hilts and greeted each  
With the old sure word of praise;  
And there was virtue in touch and speech  
As it had been in old days.

So he dismissed them and took his rest,  
And the steadfast spirit went forth  
Between the adoring East and West  
And the tireless guns of the North.

Clean, simple, valiant, well-beloved,  
Flawless in faith and fame,  
Whom neither ease nor honours moved  
An hair's-breadth from his aim.

Never again the war-wise face,  
The weighed and urgent word  
That pleaded in the market-place —  
Pleaded and was not heard!

Yet from his life a new life springs  
Through all the hosts to come,  
And Glory is the least of things  
That follow this man home.

## THE QUESTION

1916

Brethren, how shall it fare with me  
When the war is laid aside,  
If it be proven that I am he  
For whom a world has died?

If it be proven that all my good,  
And the greater good I will make,  
Were purchased me by a multitude  
Who suffered for my sake?

That I was delivered by mere mankind  
Vowed to one sacrifice,  
And not, as I hold them, battle-blind,  
But dying with open eyes?

That they did not ask me to draw the sword  
When they stood to endure their lot —  
That they only looked to me for a word,  
And I answered I knew them not?

If it be found, when the battle clears,  
Their death has set me free,  
Then how shall I live with myself through the years  
Which they have bought for me?

Brethren, how must it fare with me,  
Or how am I justified,  
If it be proven that I am he  
For whom mankind has died,  
If it be proven that I am he  
Who being questioned denied?

## THE CHOICE

1917

### (THE AMERICAN SPIRIT SPEAKS)

*To the Judge of Right and Wrong  
With Whom fulfilment lies  
Our purpose and our power belong,  
Our faith and sacrifice.*

Let Freedom's Land rejoice!  
Our ancient bonds are riven;  
Once more to us the eternal choice  
Of Good or Ill is given.

Not at a little cost,  
Hardly by prayer or tears,  
Shall we recover the road we lost  
In the drugged and doubting years.

But, after the fires and the wrath,  
But, after searching and pain,  
His Mercy opens us a path  
To live with ourselves again.

In the Gates of Death rejoice!  
We see and hold the good —  
Bear witness, Earth, we have made our choice  
With Freedom's brotherhood!

Then praise the Lord Most High  
Whose Strength hath saved us whole,  
Who bade us choose that the Flesh should die  
And not the living Soul!

*To the God in Man displayed —  
Where e'er we see that Birth,  
Be love and understanding paid  
As never yet on earth!*

*To the Spirit that moves in Man,  
On Whom all worlds depend,  
Be Glory since our world began*

*And service to the end!*



## THE HOLY WAR

1917

**('For here lay the excellent wisdom of him that built Mansoul that the walls could never be broken down nor hurt by the most mighty adverse potentate unless the townsmen gave consent thereto' – Bunyan's *Holy War*)**

*A tinker out of Bedford,  
A vagrant oft in quod,  
A private under Fairfax,  
A minister of God —  
Two hundred years and thirty  
Ere Armageddon came  
His single hand portrayed it,  
And Bunyan was his name!*

He mapped, for those who follow,  
The world in which we are —  
'This famous town of Mansoul'  
That takes the Holy War  
Her true and traitor people,  
The gates along her wall,  
From Eye Gate unto Feel Gate,  
John Bunyan showed them all.

All enemy divisions,  
Recruits of every class,  
And highly-screened positions  
For flame or poison-gas,  
The craft that we call modern,  
The crimes that we call new,  
John Bunyan had 'em typed and filed  
In Sixteen Eighty-two

Likewise the Lords of Looseness  
That hamper faith and works,  
The Perseverance-Doubters,  
And Present-Comfort shirks,  
With brittle intellectuals  
Who crack beneath a strain —  
John Bunyan met that helpful set  
In Charles the Second's reign.

Emmanuel's vanguard dying  
For right and not for rights,  
My Lord Apollyon lying  
To the State-kept Stockholmites,  
The Pope, the swithering Neutrals,  
The Kaiser and his Gott —  
Their rôles, their goals, their naked souls —  
He knew and drew the lot.

Now he hath left his quarters,  
In Bunhill Fields to lie.  
The wisdom that he taught us  
Is proven prophecy —  
One watchword through our armies,  
One answer from our lands —  
'No dealings with Diabolus  
As long as Mansoul stands.

*A pedlar from a hovel,  
The lowest of the low,  
The father of the Novel,  
Salvation's first Defoe,  
Eight blinded generations  
Ere Armageddon came,  
He showed us how to meet it,  
And Bunyan was his name!*

## THE HOUSES

### (A SONG OF THE DOMINIONS)

1898

'Twixt my house and thy house the pathway is broad,  
In thy house or my house is half the world's hoard;  
By my house and thy house hangs all the world's fate,  
On thy house and my house lies half the world's hate.

For my house and thy house no help shall we find  
Save thy house and my house – kin cleaving to kind:  
If my house be taken, thine tumbleth anon,  
If thy house be forfeit, mine followeth soon.

'Twixt my house and thy house what talk can there be  
Of headship or lordship, or service or fee?  
Since my house to thy house no greater can send  
Than thy house to my house – friend comforting friend;  
And thy house to my house no meaner can bring  
Than my house to thy house – King counselling King.

## **RUSSIA TO THE PACIFISTS**

God rest you, peaceful gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,  
But – leave your sports a little while – the dead are borne this way!  
Armies dead and Cities dead, past all count or care.

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