

Rudyard Kipling

# A Song of the English



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# Kipling Rudyard

## A Song of the English

### A SONG OF THE ENGLISH

Fair is our lot – O goodly is our heritage!  
(Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your mirth!)  
For the Lord our God Most High  
He hath made the deep as dry,  
He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all the Earth!

Yea, though we sinned – and our rulers went from  
righteousness —  
Deep in all dishonour though we stained our garments' hem.  
Oh be ye not dismayed,  
Though we stumbled and we strayed,  
We were led by evil counsellors – the Lord shall deal with  
them!

Hold ye the Faith – the Faith our Fathers sealèd us;  
Whoring not with visions – overwise and over-stale.  
Except ye pay the Lord  
Single heart and single sword,  
Of your children in their bondage shall He ask them treble-  
tale!

Keep ye the Law – be swift in all obedience —  
Clear the land of evil, drive the road and bridge the ford.  
Make ye sure to each his own  
That he reap where he hath sown;  
By the peace among Our peoples let men know we serve the  
Lord!

Hear now a song – a song of broken interludes —  
A song of little cunning; of a singer nothing worth.  
Through the naked words and mean  
May ye see the truth between  
As the singer knew and touched it in the ends of all the Earth!

# THE COASTWISE LIGHTS

Our brows are bound with spindrift and the weed is on our knees;

Our loins are battered 'neath us by the swinging, smoking seas.

From reef and rock and skerry – over headland ness, and voe

—

The Coastwise Lights of England watch the ships of England go!

Through the endless summer evenings, on the lineless, level floors;

Through the yelling Channel tempest when the siren hoots and roars —

By day the dipping house-flag and by night the rocket's trail

—

As the sheep that graze behind us so we know them where they hail.

We bridge across the dark and bid the helmsman have a care,  
The flash that wheeling inland wakes his sleeping wife to prayer;

From our vexed eyries, head to gale, we bind in burning chains

The lover from the sea-rim drawn – his love in English lanes.

We greet the clippers wing-and-wing that race the Southern  
wool;

We warn the crawling cargo-tanks of Bremen, Leith, and  
Hull;

To each and all our equal lamp at peril of the sea —  
The white wall-sided warships or the whalers of Dundee!

Come up, come in from Eastward, from the guard-ports of  
the Morn!

Beat up, beat in from Southerly, O gipsies of the Horn!  
Swift shuttles of an Empire's loom that weave us, main to  
main,  
The Coastwise Lights of England give you welcome back  
again!

Go, get you gone up-Channel with the sea-crust on your  
plates;

Go, get you into London with the burden of your freights!  
Haste, for they talk of Empire there, and say, if any seek,  
The Lights of England sent you and by silence shall ye speak!

# THE SONG OF THE DEAD

Hear now the Song of the Dead – in the North by the torn  
berg-edges —

They that look still to the Pole, asleep by their hide-stripped  
sledges.

Song of the Dead in the South – in the sun by their skeleton  
horses,

Where the warrigal whimpers and bays through the dust of  
the sere river-courses.

Song of the Dead in the East – in the heat-rotted jungle  
hollows,

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