

THE SERVICE EDITION
OF
THE WORKS OF
RUDYARD KIPLING

BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS

AND OTHER VERSES

VOL. II

BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS

AND OTHER VERSES

BY RUDYARD KIPLING

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II



277

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BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS

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WITH SCINDIA TO DELHI

More than a hundred years ago, in a great battle fought near Delhi, an Indian Prince rode fifty miles after the day was lost with a beggar-girl, who had loved him and followed him in all his camps, on his saddle-bow. He lost the girl when almost within sight of safety. A Maratta trooper tells the story:—

THE wreath of banquet overnight lay withered on the neck,

Our hands and scarves were saffron-dyed for
signal of despair,

When we went forth to Paniput to battle with
the *Mlech*,—

Ere we came back from Paniput and left a
kingdom there.

Thrice thirty thousand men were we to force the
Jumna fords—

The hawk-winged horse of Damajee, mailed
squadrons of the Bhao,

WITH SCINDIA TO DELHI

Stark levies of the southern hills, the Deccan's
sharpest swords,
And he the harlot's traitor son the goatherd
Mulhar Rao !

Thrice thirty thousand men were we before the
mists had cleared,
The low white mists of morning heard the
war-conch scream and bray ;
We called upon Bhowani and we gripped them
by the beard,
We rolled upon them like a flood and washed
their ranks away.

The children of the hills of Khost before our
lances ran,
We drove the black Rohillas back as cattle to
the pen ;

WITH SCINDIA TO DELHI

'Twas then we needed Mulhar Rao to end what
we began,

A thousand men had saved the charge ; he
fled the field with ten !

There was no room to clear a sword—no power
to strike a blow,

For foot to foot, ay, breast to breast, the battle
held us fast—

Save where the naked hill-men ran, and stabbing
from below

Brought down the horse and rider and we
trampled them and passed.

To left the roar of musketry rang like a falling
flood—

To right the sunshine rippled red from redder
lance and blade—

WITH SCINDIA TO DELHI

Above the dark *Upsaras*¹ flew, beneath us
plashed the blood,
And, bellying black against the dust, the
Bhagwa Jhanda swayed.

I saw it fall in smoke and fire, the banner of the
Bhao ;

I heard a voice across the press of one who
called in vain :—

‘ Ho ! Anand Rao Nimbalkhur, ride ! Get aid
of Mulhar Rao !

‘ Go shame his squadrons into fight—the
Bhao—the Bhao is slam ! ’

Thereat, as when a sand-bar breaks in clotted
spume and spray—

When rain of later autumn sweeps the Jumna
water-head,

¹ The Choosers of the Slain.

WITH SCINDIA TO DELHI

Before their charge from flank to flank our riven
ranks gave way ;
But of the waters of that flood the Jumna
fords ran red.

I held by Scindia, my lord, as close as man might
hold ;
A Soobah of the Deccan asks no aid to guard
his life ;
But Holkar's Horse were flying, and our chiefest
chiefs were cold,
And like a flame among us leapt the long lean
Northern knife.

I held by Scindia—my lance from butt to tuft
was dyed,
The froth of battle bossed the shield and roped
the bridle-chain—

WITH SCINDIA TO DELHI

What time beneath our horses' feet a maiden
rose and cried,
And clung to Scindia, and I turned a sword-
cut from the twain.

(He set a spell upon the maid in woodlands long
ago,

A hunter by the Tapti banks she gave him
water there :

He turned her heart to water, and she followed
to her woe.

What need had he of Lalun who had twenty
maids as fair ?)

Now in that hour strength left my lord ; he
wrenched his mare aside ;

He bound the girl behind him and we slashed
and struggled free.

WITH SCINDIA TO DELHI

Across the reeling wreck of strife we rode as
shadows ride

From Paniput to Delhi town, but not alone
were we.

'Twas Lutuf-Ullah Populzai laid horse upon our
track,

A swine-fed reiver of the North that lusted for
the maid ;

I might have barred his path awhile, but Scindia
called me back,

And I—O woe for Scindia !—I listened and
obeyed.

League after league the formless scrub took
shape and glided by—

League after league the white road swirled
behind the white mare's feet—

WITH SCINDIA TO DELHI

League after league, when leagues were done, we
heard the Populzai,
Where sure as Time and swift as Death the
tireless footfall beat.

Noon's eye beheld that shame of flight, the
shadows fell, we fled
Where steadfast as the wheeling kite he fol-
lowed in our train ;
The black wolf warred where we had warred, the
jackal mocked our dead,
And terror born of twilight-tide made mad
the labouring brain.

I gasped :—‘ A kingdom waits my lord ; her
love is but her own.
‘ A day shall mar, a day shall cure for her, but
what for thee ?

WITH SCINDIA TO DELHI

‘Cut loose the girl : he follows fast. Cut loose
and ride alone !’

Then Scindia ’twixt his blistered lips :—‘ My
Queens’ Queen shall she be !

‘Of all who ate my bread last night ’twas she
alone that came

‘To seek her love between the spears and find
her crown therein !

‘One shame is mine to-day, what need the weight
of double shame ?

‘If once we reach the Delhi gate, though all
be lost, I win !’

We rode—the white mare failed—her trot a
staggering stumble grew,—

The cooking-smoke of even rose and weltered
and hung low ;

THE BALLAD OF BOH DA THONE

*This is the ballad of Boh Da Thone,
Erst a Pretender to Theebaw's throne,
Who harried the district of Alalone :
How he met with his fate and the V.P.P.
At the hand of Harendra Mukerji,
Senior Gomashta, G.B.T.*

BOH DA THONE was a warrior bold :
His sword and his Snider were bossed with
gold,

And the Peacock Banner his henchmen bore
Was stiff with bullion, but stiffer with gore.

Hé shot at the strong and he slashed at the weak
From the Salween scrub to the Chindwin teak :

He crucified noble, he sacrificed mean,
He filled old ladies with kerosene :

BOH DA THONE

While over the water the papers cried,
'The patriot fights for his countryside!'

But little they cared for the Native Press,
The worn white soldiers in khaki dress,

Who tramped through the jungle and camped
in the byre,

Who died in the swamp and were tombed in the
mire,

Who gave up their lives, at the Queen's Com-
mand,

For the Pride of their Race and the Peace of the
Land.

Now, first of the foemen of Boh Da Thone
Was Captain O'Neil of the 'Black Tyrone,'

And his was a Company, seventy strong,
Who hustled that dissolute Chief along.

THE BALLAD OF

They had crippled his power for rapine and
raid,

They had routed him out of his pet stockade,

And at last, they came, when the Day Star
tired,

To a camp deserted—a village fired.

A black cross blistered the Morning-gold,
And the body upon it was stark and cold,

The wind of the dawn went merrily past,
The high grass bowed her plumes to the blast.

And out of the grass, on a sudden, broke
A spirtle of fire, a whorl of smoke—

And Captain O'Neil of the Black Tyrone
Was blessed with a slug in the ulnar-bone—
The gift of his enemy Boh Da Thone.

THE ' CLAMPHERDOWN '

They cleared the cruiser end to end,
From conning-tower to hold.
They fought as they fought in Nelson's fleet ;
They were stripped to the waist, they were
bare to the feet,
As it was in the days of old.

It was the sinking ' Clampherdown '
Heaved up her battered side—
And carried a million pounds in steel
To the cod and the corpse-fed conger-eel,
And the scour of the Channel tide.

It was the crew of the ' Clampherdown '
Stood out to sweep the sea,
On a cruiser won from an ancient foe,
As it was in the days of long ago,
And as it still shall be.

THE BALLAD OF THE 'BOLIVAR'

*SEVEN men from all the world back to Docks
again,*

*Rolling down the Ratcliffe Road drunk and rais-
ing Cain :*

*Give the girls another drink 'fore we sign away—
We that took the 'Bolivar' out across the Bay !*

We put out from Sunderland loaded down with
rails ;

We put back to Sunderland 'cause our cargo
shifted ;

We put out from Sunderland—met the winter
gales—

Seven days and seven nights to the Start we
drifted.

THE ' BOLIVAR '

Racketing her rivets loose, smoke-stack
white as snow,
All the coals adrift adeck, half the rails below,
Leaking like a lobster-pot, steering like a
dray—
Out we took the ' Bolivar,' out across the
Bay !

One by one the Lights came up, winked and let
us by ;
Mile by mile we waddled on, coal and fo'c'sle
short ;
Met a blow that laid us down, heard a bulk-
head fly ;
Left the ' Wolf ' behind us with a two-foot list
to port.

Trailing like a wounded duck, working out
her soul ;
Clanging like a smithy-shop after every roll ;

THE BALLAD OF

Just a funnel and a mast lurching through
the spray—

So we threshed the ' Bolivar ' out across the
Bay !

Felt her hog and felt her sag, betted when she 'd
break ;

Wondered every time she raced if she 'd stand
the shock ;

Heard the seas like drunken men pounding at
her strake ;

Hoped the Lord 'ud keep His thumb on the
plummer-block.

Banged against the iron decks, bilges choked
with coal ;

Flayed and frozen foot and hand, sick of
heart and soul ;

Last we prayed she 'd buck herself into
Judgment Day—

THE ' BOLIVAR '

Hi ! we cursed the ' Bolivar ' knocking
round the Bay !

O her nose flung up to sky, groaning to be
still—

Up and down and back we went, never time
for breath ;

Then the money paid at Lloyd's caught her by
the heel,

And the stars ran round and round dancin' at
our death.

Aching for an hour's sleep, dozing off be-
tween ;

Heard the rotten rivets draw when she took
it green ;

Watched the compass chase its tail like a
cat at play—

That was on the ' Bolivar,' south across the
Bay.

THE BALLAD OF

Once we saw between the squalls, lyin' head to
swell—

Mad with work and weariness, wishin' they
was we—

Some damned Liner's lights go by like a grand
hotel ;

Cheered her from the ' Bolivar ' swampin' in
the sea.

Then a greyback cleared us out, then the
skipper laughed ;

' Boys, the wheel has gone to Hell—rig the
winches aft !

' Yoke the kicking rudder-head—get her
under way !'

So we steered her, pully-haul, out across the
Bay !

Just a pack o' rotten plates puttied up with tar,
In we came, an' time enough, 'cross Bilbao Bar.

THE ' BOLIVAR '

Overloaded, undermanned, meant to founder,
we
Euchred God Almighty's storm, bluffed the
Eternal Sea !

*Seven men from all the world, back to town again,
Rollin' down the Ratcliffe Road drunk and raising
Cain :*

*Seven men from out of Hell. Ain't the owners gay,
'Cause we took the ' Bolivar ' safe across the Bay ?*

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

*ER-HEB beyond the Hills of Ao-Safai
Bears witness to the truth, and Ao-Safai
Hath told the men of Gorukh. Thence the tale
Comes westward o'er the peaks to India.*

The story of Bisesa, Armod's child,—
A maiden plighted to the Chief in War
The Man of Sixty Spears, who held the Pass
That leads to Thibet, but to-day is gone
To seek his comfort of the God called Budh
The Silent—showing how the Sickness ceased
Because of her who died to save the tribe.

Taman is One and greater than us all,
Taman is One and greater than all Gods :
Taman is Two in One and rides the sky,
Curved like a stallion's croup, from dusk to dawn,

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

And drums upon it with his heels, whereby
Is bred the *neighing* thunder in the hills.

This is Taman, the God of all Er-Heb,
Who was before all Gods, and made all Gods,
And presently will break the Gods he made,
And step upon the Earth to govern men
Who give him milk-dry ewes and cheat his Priests,
Or leave his shrine unlighted—as Er-Heb
Left it unlighted and forgot Taman,
When all the Valley followed after Kysh
And Yabosh, little Gods but very wise,
And from the sky Taman beheld their sin.

He sent the sickness out upon the hills,
The Red Horse Sickness with the iron hooves,
To turn the Valley to Taman again.

And the Red Horse snuffed thrice into the wind,
The naked wind that had no fear of him ;

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

That night, the Red Horse grazed beyond the
 Dam
A stone's-throw from the troughs. Men heard
 him feed,
And those that heard him sickened where they lay.
Thus came the sickness to Er-Heb, and slew
Of men a score, and of the women eight,
And of the children two.

 Because the road
To Gorukh was a road of enemies,
And Ao-Safai was blocked with early snow,
We could not flee from out the Valley. Death
Smote at us in a slaughter-pen, and Kysh
Was mute as Yabosh, though the goats were
 slain ;
And the Red Horse grazed nightly by the stream,
And later, outward, towards the Unlighted
 Shrine,
And those that heard him sickened where they lay.

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

Then said Bisesa to the Priests at dusk,
When the white mist rose up breast-high, and
choked

The voices in the houses of the dead :—

‘ Yabosh and Kysh avail not. If the Horse
‘ Reach the Unlighted Shrine we surely die.
‘ Ye have forgotten of all Gods the Chief,
‘ Taman !’ Here rolled the thunder through
the Hill.

And Yabosh shook upon his pedestal.

‘ Ye have forgotten of all Gods the Chief
‘ Too long.’ And all were dumb save one, who
cried

On Yabosh with the Sapphire ’twixt his knees,
But found no answer in the smoky roof,
And, being smitten of the sickness, died
Before the altar of the Sapphire Shrine.

Then said Bisesa :—‘ I am near to Death,
‘ And have the Wisdom of the Grave for gift

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

There was a Priest of Kysh
Bent with a hundred winters, hairless, blind,
And taloned as the great Snow-Eagle is.
His seat was nearest to the altar-fires,
And he was counted dumb among the Priests.
But, whether Kysh decreed, or from Taman
The impotent tongue found utterance we know
As little as the bats beneath the eaves.
He cried so that they heard who stood without :—
' To the Unlighted Shrine ! ' and crept aside
Into the shadow of his fallen God
And whimpered, and Bisesa went her way.

That night, the slow mists of the evening dropped,
Dropped as a cloth upon the dead, and rose
Above the roofs, and by the Unlighted Shrine
Lay as the slimy water of the troughs
When murrain thins the cattle of Er-Heb :
And through the mist men heard the Red Horse
feed.

BORDER CATTLE THIEF

And if I fall to your hand afresh

I give you leave for the sin,

That you cram my throat with the foul pig's
flesh,

And swing me in the skin !

THE RHYME OF THE THREE CAPTAINS

This ballad appears to refer to one of the exploits of the notorious Paul Jones, the American pirate. It is founded on fact.

. . . **A**T the close of a winter day,
 Their anchors down, by London
town, the Three Great Captains lay ;
And one was Admiral of the North from Solway
Firth to Skye,
And one was the Lord of the Wessex coast and
all the lands thereby,
And one was Master of the Thames from Lime-
house to Blackwall,
And he was Captain of the Fleet—the bravest of
them all.

THE THREE CAPTAINS

Their good guns guarded the great grey sides
that were thirty foot in the sheer,
When there came a certain trading brig with
news of a privateer.
Her rigging was rough with the clotted drift that
drives in a Northern breeze,
Her sides were clogged with the lazy weed that
spawns in the Eastern seas.
Light she rode in the rude tide-rip, to left and
right she rolled,
And the skipper sat on the scuttle-butt and
stared at an empty hold.
'I ha' paid Port dues for your Law,' quoth he,
'and where is the Law ye boast
'If I sail unscathed from a heathen port to be
robbed on a Christian coast ?
'Ye have smoked the hives of the Laccadives as
we burn the lice in a bunk,
'We tack not now to a Gallang prow or a plung-
ing Pei-ho junk ;

THE RHYME OF

- ‘ I had no fear but the seas were clear as far as a
sail might fare
‘ Till I met with a lime-washed Yankee brig that
rode off Finisterre.
‘ There were canvas blinds to his bow-gun ports
to screen the weight he bore,
‘ And the signals ran for a merchantman from
Sandy Hook to the Nore.
‘ He would not fly the Rovers’ flag—the bloody
or the black,
‘ But now he floated the Gridiron and now he
flaunted the Jack.
‘ He spoke of the Law as he crimped my crew—
he swore it was only a loan ;
‘ But when I would ask for my own again, he
swore it was none of my own.
‘ He has taken my little parrakeets that nest
beneath the Line,
‘ He has stripped my rails of the shaddock-frails
and the green unripened pine ;

THE THREE CAPTAINS

- ‘ He has taken my bale of dammer and spice I
won beyond the seas,
‘ He has taken my grinning heathen gods—and
what should he want o’ these ?
‘ My foremast would not mend his boom, my
deck-house patch his boats ;
‘ He has whittled the two, this Yank Yahoo, to
peddle for shoe-peg oats.
‘ I could not fight for the failing light and a rough
beam-sea beside,
‘ But I hulled him once for a clumsy crimp and
twice because he lied.
‘ Had I had guns (as I had goods) to work my
Christian harm,
‘ I had run him up from his quarter-deck to trade
with his own yard-arm ;
‘ I had nailed his ears to my capstan-head, and
ripped them off with a saw,
‘ And soused them in the bilgewater, and served
them to him raw ;

THE RHYME OF

- ‘ I had flung him blind in a rudderless boat to
rot in the rocking dark,
‘ I had towed him aft of his own craft, a bait for
his brother shark ;
‘ I had lapped him round with cocoa husk, and
drenched him with the oil,
‘ And lashed him fast to his own mast to blaze
above my spoil ;
‘ I had stripped his hide for my hammock-side,
and tasselled his beard i’ the mesh,
‘ And spitted his crew on the live bamboo that
grows through the gangrened flesh ;
‘ I had hove him down by the mangroves brown,
where the mud-reef sucks and draws,
‘ Moored by the heel to his own keel to wait for
the land-crab’s claws !
‘ He is lazar within and lime without, ye can
nose him far enow,
‘ For he carries the taint of a musky ship—the
reek of the slaver’s dhow ! ’

THE THREE CAPTAINS

The skipper looked at the tiering guns and the
bulwarks tall and cold,

And the Captains Three full courteously peered
down at the gutted hold,

And the Captains Three called courteously from
deck to scuttle-butt :—

‘ Good Sir, we ha’ dealt with that merchantman
or ever your teeth were cut.

‘ Your words be words of a lawless race, and the
Law it standeth thus :

‘ He comes of a race that have never a Law, and
he never has boarded us.

‘ We ha’ sold him canvas and rope and spar—we
know that his price is fair,

‘ And we know that he weeps for the lack of a
Law as he rides off *Finisterre*.

‘ And since he is damned for a gallows-thief by
you and better than you,

‘ We hold it meet that the English fleet should
know that we hold him true.’

THE RHYME OF

The skipper called to the tall taffrail :—‘ And
what is that to me ?

‘ Did ever you hear of a Yankee brig that rifled
a Seventy-three ?

‘ Do I loom so large from your quarter-deck that
I lift like a ship o’ the Line ?

‘ He has learned to run from a shotted gun and
harry such craft as mine.

‘ There is never a Law on the Cocos Keys to hold
a white man in,

‘ But we do not steal the niggers’ meal, for that
is a nigger’s sin.

‘ Must he have his Law as a quid to chew, or
laid in brass on his wheel ?

‘ Does he steal with tears when he buccaneers ?
’Fore Gad, then, why does he steal ? ’

The skipper bit on a deep-sea word, and the
word it was not sweet,

For he could see the Captains Three had sig-
nalled to the Fleet.

THE THREE CAPTAINS

But three and two, in white and blue, the whim-
pering flags began :—

‘ We have heard a tale of a—foreign sail, but he
is a merchantman.’

The skipper peered beneath his palm and swore
by the Great Horn Spoon :—

‘ Fore Gad, the Chaplain of the Fleet would bless
my picaroon ! ’

By two and three the flags blew free to lash the
laughing air :—

‘ We have sold our spars to the merchantman—
we know that his price is fair.’

The skipper winked his Western eye, and swore
by a China storm :—

‘ They ha’ rigged him a Joseph’s jury-coat to
keep his honour warm.’

The halliards twanged against the tops, the
bunting bellied broad,

The skipper spat in the empty hold and mourned
for a wasted cord.

THE BALLAD OF THE 'CLAMPHER-DOWN'

IT was our war-ship 'Clampherdown'
Would sweep the Channel clean,
Wherefore she kept her hatches close
When the merry Channel chops arose,
To save the bleached marine.

She had one bow-gun of a hundred ton,
And a great stern-gun beside ;
They dipped their noses deep in the sea,
They racked their stays and stanchions free
In the wash of the wind-whipped tide.

It was our war-ship 'Clampherdown'
Fell in with a cruiser light
That carried the dainty Hotchkiss gun
And a pair o' heels wherewith to run
From the grip of a close-fought fight.

THE 'CLAMPHERDOWN'

She opened fire at seven miles—

As ye shoot at a bobbing cork—

And once she fired and twice she fired,

Till the bow-gun drooped like a lily tired

That lolls upon the stalk.

'Captain, the bow-gun melts apace,

'The deck-beams break below,

'Twere well to rest for an hour or twain,

'And botch the shattered plates again.'

And he answered, 'Make it so.'

She opened fire within the mile—

As ye shoot at the flying duck—

And the great stern-gun shot fair and true,

With the heave of the ship, to the stainless
blue,

And the great stern-turret stuck.

THE BALLAD OF

It was our war-ship 'Clampherdown,'
Swung round upon the tide,
Her two dumb guns glared south and north,
And the blood and the bubbling steam ran
forth,
And she ground the cruiser's side.

'Captain, they cry, the fight is done,
'They bid you send your sword.'
And he answered, 'Grapple her stern and bow.
'They have asked for the steel. They shall
have it now ;
'Out cutlasses and board !'

It was our war-ship 'Clampherdown,'
Spewed up four hundred men ;
And the scalded stokers yelped delight,
As they rolled in the waist and heard the
fight,
Stamp o'er their steel-walled pen.

THE 'CLAMPHERDOWN'

They cleared the cruiser end to end,
From conning-tower to hold.
They fought as they fought in Nelson's fleet ;
They were stripped to the waist, they were
bare to the feet,
As it was in the days of old.

It was the sinking 'Clampherdown'
Heaved up her battered side—
And carried a million pounds in steel
To the cod and the corpse-fed conger-eel,
And the scour of the Channel tide.

It was the crew of the 'Clampherdown'
Stood out to sweep the sea,
On a cruiser won from an ancient foe,
As it was in the days of long ago,
And as it still shall be.

THE BALLAD OF THE 'BOLIVAR'

SEVEN men from all the world back to Docks
again,

*Rolling down the Ratcliffe Road drunk and rais-
ing Cain :*

Give the girls another drink 'fore we sign away—

We that took the 'Bolivar' out across the Bay !

We put out from Sunderland loaded down with
rails ;

We put back to Sunderland 'cause our cargo
shifted ;

We put out from Sunderland—met the winter
gales—

Seven days and seven nights to the Start we
drifted.

THE ' BOLIVAR '

Racketing her rivets loose, smoke-stack
white as snow,
All the coals adrift adeck, half the rails below,
Leaking like a lobster-pot, steering like a
dray—
Out we took the ' Bolivar,' out across the
Bay !

One by one the Lights came up, winked and let
us by ;
Mile by mile we waddled on, coal and fo'c'sle
short ;
Met a blow that laid us down, heard a bulk-
head fly ;
Left the ' Wolf ' behind us with a two-foot list
to port.

Trailing like a wounded duck, working out
her soul ;
Clanging like a smithy-shop after every roll ;

THE BALLAD OF

Just a funnel and a mast lurching through
the spray—
So we threshed the ' Bolivar ' out across the
Bay !

Felt her hog and felt her sag, betted when she 'd
break ;
Wondered every time she raced if she 'd stand
the shock ;
Heard the seas like drunken men pounding at
her strake ;
Hoped the Lord 'ud keep His thumb on the
plummer-block.

Banged against the iron decks, bilges choked
with coal ;
Flayed and frozen foot and hand, sick of
heart and soul ;
Last we prayed she 'd buck herself into
Judgment Day—

THE 'BOLIVAR'

Hi! we cursed the 'Bolivar' knocking
round the Bay!

O her nose flung up to sky, groaning to be
still—

Up and down and back we went, never time
for breath;

Then the money paid at Lloyd's caught her by
the heel,

And the stars ran round and round dancin' at
our death.

Aching for an hour's sleep, dozing off be-
tween;

Heard the rotten rivets draw when she took
it green;

Watched the compass chase its tail like a
cat at play—

That was on the 'Bolivar,' south across the
Bay.

THE BALLAD OF

Once we saw between the squalls, lyin' head to
swell—

Mad with work and weariness, wishin' they
was we—

Some damned Liner's lights go by like a grand
hotel ;

Cheered her from the ' Bolivar ' swampin' in
the sea.

Then a greyback cleared us out, then the
skipper laughed ;

' Boys, the wheel has gone to Hell—rig the
winches aft !

' Yoke the kicking rudder-head—get her
under way ! '

So we steered her, pully-haul, out across the
Bay !

Just a pack o' rotten plates puttied up with tar,
In we came, an' time enough, 'cross Bilbao Bar.

THE ' BOLIVAR '

Overloaded, undermanned, meant to founder,
we
Euchred God Almighty's storm, bluffed the
Eternal Sea !

*Seven men from all the world, back to town again,
Rollin' down the Ratcliffe Road drunk and raising
Cain :*

*Seven men from out of Hell. Ain't the owners gay,
'Cause we took the ' Bolivar ' safe across the Bay ?*

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

*ER-HEB beyond the Hills of Ao-Safai
Bears witness to the truth, and Ao-Safai
Hath told the men of Gorukh. Thence the tale
Comes westward o'er the peaks to India.*

The story of Bisesa, Armod's child,—
A maiden plighted to the Chief in War
The Man of Sixty Spears, who held the Pass
That leads to Thibet, but to-day is gone
To seek his comfort of the God called Budh
The Silent—showing how the Sickness ceased
Because of her who died to save the tribe.

Taman is One and greater than us all,
Taman is One and greater than all Gods :
Taman is Two in One and rides the sky,
Curved like a stallion's croup, from dusk to dawn,

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

And drums upon it with his heels, whereby
Is bred the neighing thunder in the hills.

This is Taman, the God of all Er-Heb,
Who was before all Gods, and made all Gods,
And presently will break the Gods he made,
And step upon the Earth to govern men
Who give him milk-dry ewes and cheat his Priests,
Or leave his shrine unlighted—as Er-Heb
Left it unlighted and forgot Taman,
When all the Valley followed after Kysh
And Yabosh, little Gods but very wise,
And from the sky Taman beheld their sin.

He sent the sickness out upon the hills,
The Red Horse Sickness with the iron hooves,
To turn the Valley to Taman again.

And the Red Horse snuffed thrice into the wind,
The naked wind that had no fear of him ;

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

And the Red Horse stamped thrice upon the snow,
The naked snow that had no fear of him ;
And the Red Horse went out across the rocks,
The ringing rocks that had no fear of him ;
And downward, where the lean birch meets the
snow,
And downward, where the grey pine meets the
birch,
And downward, where the dwarf oak meets the
pine,
Till at his feet our cup-like pastures lay.

That night, the slow mists of the evening
dropped,
Dropped as a cloth upon a dead man's face,
And weltered in the valley, bluish-white
Like water very silent—spread abroad,
Like water very silent, from the Shrine
Unlighted of Taman to where the stream
Is dammed to fill our cattle-troughs—sent up

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

White waves that rocked and heaved and then
were still,

Till all the Valley glittered like a marsh,
Beneath the moonlight, filled with sluggish mist
Knee-deep, so that men waded as they walked.

That night, the Red Horse grazed above the Dam,
Beyond the cattle-troughs. Men heard him feed,
And those that heard him sickened where they lay.

Thus came the sickness to Er-Heb, and slew
Ten men, strong men, and of the women four ;
And the Red Horse went hillward with the dawn,
But near the cattle-troughs his hoof-prints lay.

That night, the slow mists of the evening dropped,
Dropped as a cloth upon the dead, but rose
A little higher, to a young girl's height ;
Till all the Valley glittered like a lake,
Beneath the moonlight, filled with sluggish mist.

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

That night, the Red Horse grazed beyond the
Dam

A stone's-throw from the troughs. Men heard
him feed,

And those that heard him sickened where they lay.

Thus came the sickness to Er-Heb, and slew

Of men a score, and of the women eight,

And of the children two.

Because the road

To Gorukh was a road of enemies,

And Ao-Safai was blocked with early snow,

We could not flee from out the Valley. Death

Smote at us in a slaughter-pen, and Kysh

Was mute as Yabosh, though the goats were
slain ;

And the Red Horse grazed nightly by the stream,

And later, outward, towards the Unlighted
Shrine,

And those that heard him sickened where they lay.

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

Then said Bisesa to the Priests at dusk,
When the white mist rose up breast-high, and
choked

The voices in the houses of the dead :—

‘ Yabosh and Kysh avail not. If the Horse

‘ Reach the Unlighted Shrine we surely die.

‘ Ye have forgotten of all Gods the Chief,

‘ Taman !’ Here rolled the thunder through
the Hill.

And Yabosh shook upon his pedestal.

‘ Ye have forgotten of all Gods the Chief

‘ Too long.’ And all were dumb save one, who
cried

On Yabosh with the Sapphire ’twixt his knees,

But found no answer in the smoky roof,

And, being smitten of the sickness, died

Before the altar of the Sapphire Shrine.

Then said Bisesa :—‘ I am near to Death,

‘ And have the Wisdom of the Grave for gift

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

‘To bear me on the path my feet must tread.
‘If there be wealth on earth, then I am rich,
‘For Armod is the first of all Er-Heb ;
‘If there be beauty on the earth,’—her eyes
Dropped for a moment to the temple floor,—
‘Ye know that I If there be Love,
‘Ye know that is mine.’ The Chief in
 War,
The Man of Sixty Spears, broke from the press,
And would have clasped her, but the Priests
 withstood,
Saying :—‘She has a message from Taman.’
Then said Bisesa :—‘By my wealth and love
‘And beauty, I am chosen of the God
‘Taman.’ Here rolled the thunder through the
 Hills
And Kysh fell forward on the Mound of Skulls.

In darkness, and before our Priests, the maid
Between the altars cast her bracelets down,

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

Therewith the heavy earrings Armod made,
When he was young, out of the water-gold
Of Gorukh—threw the breast-plate thick with
jade

Upon the turquoise anklets—put aside
The bands of silver on her brow and neck ;
And as the trinkets tinkled on the stones,
The thunder of Taman lowed like a bull.

Then said Bisesa, stretching out her hands,
As one in darkness fearing Devils :—‘ Help !
‘ O Priests, I am a woman very weak.
‘ And who am I to know the will of Gods ?
‘ Taman hath called me—whither shall I go ? ’
The Chief in War, the Man of Sixty Spears,
Howled in his torment, fettered by the Priests,
But dared not come to her to drag her forth,
And dared not lift his spear against the
Priests.

Then all men wept.

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

There was a Priest of Kysh
Bent with a hundred winters, hairless, blind,
And taloned as the great Snow-Eagle is.
His seat was nearest to the altar-fires,
And he was counted dumb among the Priests.
But, whether Kysh decreed, or from Taman
The impotent tongue found utterance we know
As little as the bats beneath the eaves.
He cried so that they heard who stood without :—
'To the Unlighted Shrine ! ' and cr- - side
Into the shadow of his fallen G,
And whimpered, and Bisesa went ner way.

That night, the slow mists of the evening dropped,
Dropped as a cloth upon the dead, and rose
Above the roofs, and by the Unlighted Shrine
Lay as the slimy water of the troughs
When murrain thins the cattle of Er-Heb :
And through the mist men heard the Red Horse
feed.

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

In Armod's house they burned Bisesa's dower,
And killed her black bull Tor, and broke her
wheel,
And loosed her hair, as for the marriage-feast,
With cries more loud than mourning for the dead.

Across the fields, from Armod's dwelling-place,
We heard Bisesa weeping where she passed
To seek the Unlighted Shrine; the Red Horse
neighed
And followed her, and on the river-mint
His hooves struck dead and heavy in our ears.

Out of the mists of evening, as the star
Of Ao-Safai climbs through the black snow-blur
To show the Pass is clear, Bisesa stepped
Upon the great grey slope of mortised stone,
The Causeway of Taman. The Red Horse
neighed
Behind her to the Unlighted Shrine—then fled

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

North to the Mountain where his stable lies.
They know who dared the anger of Taman,
And watched that night above the clinging mists,
Far up the hill, Bisesa's passing in.

She set her hand upon the carved door,
Fouled by a myriad bats, and black with time,
Whereon is graven the Glory of Taman
In letters older than the Ao-Safai ;
And twice she turned aside and twice she wept,
Cast down upon the threshold, clamouring
For him she loved—the Man of Sixty Spears,
And for her father,—and the black bull Tor,
Hers and her pride. Yea, twice she turned away
Before the awful darkness of the door,
And the great horror of the Wall of Man
Where Man is made the plaything of Taman,
An Eyeless Face that waits above and laughs.

1 MG5,1

But the third time she cried and put her palms

4.2

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

Against the hewn stone leaves, and prayed
Taman
To spare Er-Heb and take her life for price.

They know who watched, the doors were rent
apart
And closed upon Bisesa, and the rain
Broke like a flood across the Valley, washed
The mist away ; but louder than the rain
The thunder of Taman filled men with fear.

Some say that from the Unlighted Shrine she
cried
For succour, very pitifully, thrice,
And others that she sang and had no fear.
And some that there was neither song nor cry,
But only thunder and the lashing rain.

Howbeit, in the morning men rose up,
Perplexed with horror, crowding to the Shrine,

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

And when Er-Heb was gathered at the doors
The Priests made lamentation and passed in
To a strange Temple and a God they feared
But knew not.

From the crevices the grass
Had thrust the altar-slabs apart, the walls
Were grey with stains unclean, the roof-beams
swelled
With many-coloured growth of rottenness,
And lichen veiled the Image of Taman
In leprosy. The Basin of the Blood
Above the altar held the morning sun :
A winking ruby on its heart : below,
Face hid in hands, the maid Bisesa lay.

*Er-Heb beyond the Hills of Ao-Safai
Bears witness to the truth, and Ao-Safai
Hath told the men of Gorukh. Thence the tale
Comes westward o'er the peaks to India.*

THE EXPLANATION

LOVE and Death once ceased their strife
At the Tavern of Man's Life.
Called for wine, and threw—alas !—
Each his quiver on the grass.
When the bout was o'er they found
Mingled arrows strewed the ground.
Hastily they gathered then
Each the loves and lives of men.
Ah, the fateful dawn deceived !
Mingled arrows each one sheaved ;
Death's dread armoury was stored
With the shafts he most abhorred ;
Love's light quiver groaned beneath
Venom-headed darts of Death.

THE EXPLANATION

Thus it was they wrought our woe
At the Tavern long ago.
Tell me, do our masters know,
Loosing blindly as they fly,
Old men love while young men die ?

THE GIFT OF THE SEA

THE dead child lay in the shroud,
And the widow watched beside ;
And her mother slept, and the Channel swept
The gale in the teeth of the tide.

But the mother laughed at all.

‘ I have lost my man in the sea,
‘ And the child is dead. Be still,’ she said,
‘ What more can ye do to me ? ’

The widow watched the dead,
And the candle guttered low,
And she tried to sing the Passing Song
That bids the poor soul go.

THE GIFT OF THE SEA

And ' Mary take you now,' she sang,
 ' That lay against my heart.'
And ' Mary smooth your crib to-night,'
 But she could not say ' Depart.'

Then came a cry from the sea,
 But the sea-rime blinded the glass,
And ' Heard ye nothing, mother ? ' she said,
 ' 'Tis the child that waits to pass.'

And the nodding mother sighed.
 ' 'Tis a lambing ewe in the whin,
' For why should the christened soul cry out
 ' That never knew of sin ? '

' O feet I have held in my hand,
 ' O hands at my heart to catch,
' How should they know the road to go,
 ' And how should they lift the latch ? '

THE GIFT OF THE SEA

They laid a sheet to the door,
With the little quilt atop,
That it might not hurt from the cold or the dirt,
But the crying would not stop.

The widow lifted the latch
And strained her eyes to see,
And opened the door on the bitter shore
To let the soul go free.

There was neither glimmer nor ghost,
There was neither spirit nor spark,
And ' Heard ye nothing, mother ? ' she said,
' 'Tis crying for me in the dark.'

And the nodding mother sighed :
' 'Tis sorrow makes ye dull ;
' Have ye yet to learn the cry of the tern,
' Or the wail of the wind-blown gull ? '

THE GIFT OF THE SEA

And 'Ma' are blown inland,

'T' grey gull follows the plough.

I was never a bird, the voice I heard,

'O mother, I hear it now !'

'Lie still, dear lamb, lie still ;

'The child is passed from harm,

'Tis the ache in your breast that broke your
rest

'And the feel of an empty arm.'

She put her mother aside,

'In Mary's name let be !

'For the peace of my soul I must go,' she said,
And she went to the calling sea.

In the heel of the wind-bit pier,

Where the twisted weed was piled,

She came to the life she had missed by an hour,
For she came to a little child.

THE GIFT OF THE SEA

She laid it into her breast,
And back to her mother she came,
But it would not feed and it would not heed,
Though she gave it her own child's name.

And the dead child dripped on her breast,
And her own in the shroud lay stark ;
And ' God forgive us, mother,' she said,
' We let it die in the dark ! '

EVARRA AND HIS GODS

READ here :

*This is the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.*

Because the city gave him of her gold,
Because the caravans brought turquoises,
Because his life was sheltered by the King,
So that no man should maim him, none should
steal,

Or break his rest with babble in the streets
When he was weary after toil, he made
An image of his God in gold and pearl,
With turquoise diadem and human eyes,
A wonder in the sunshine, known afar,
And worshipped by the King; but, drunk
with pride,

Because the city bowed to him for God,

EVARRA AND HIS GODS

He wrote above the shrine: '*Thus Gods are made,
' And whoso makes them otherwise shall die.'*

And all the city praised him. . . . Then he died.

Read here the story of Evarra—man—

Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.

Because the city had no wealth to give,
Because the caravans were spoiled afar,
Because his life was threatened by the King,
So that all men despised him in the streets,
He hewed the living rock, with sweat and tears,
And reared a God against the morning-gold,
A terror in the sunshine, seen afar,
And worshipped by the King; but, drunk
 with pride,
Because the city fawned to bring him back,
He carved upon the plinth: '*Thus Gods are made,
' And whoso makes them otherwise shall die.'*
And all the people praised him. . . . Then he
 died.

EVARRA AND HIS GODS

Read here the story of Evarra—man—

Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.

Because he lived among a simple folk,
Because his village was between the hills,
Because he smeared his cheeks with blood of
ewes,

He cut an idol from a fallen pine,
Smeared blood upon its cheeks, and wedged a
shell

Above its brows for eyes, and gave it hair
Of trailing moss, and plaited straw for crown.
And all the village praised him for this craft,
And brought him butter, honey, milk, and
curds.

Wherefore, because the shoutings drove him
mad,

He scratched upon that log : ‘ *Thus Gods are
made,*

‘ And whoso makes them otherwise shall die.’

And all the people praised him. . . . Then he died.

EVARRA AND HIS GODS

Read here the story of Evarra—man—

Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.

Because his God decreed one clot of blood
Should swerve one hair's-breadth from the
pulse's path,

And chafe his brain, Evarra mowed alone,
Rag-wrapped, among the cattle in the fields,
Counting his fingers, jesting with the trees,
And mocking at the mist, until his God
Drove him to labour. Out of dung and horns
Dropped in the mire he made a monstrous God,
Abhorrent, shapeless, crowned with plantain
tufts,

And when the cattle lowed at twilight-time,
He dreamed it was the clamour of lost crowds,
And howled among the beasts : '*Thus Gods are
made,*

'And whoso makes them otherwise shall die.'

Thereat the cattle bellowed. . . . Then he
died.

EVARRA AND HIS GODS

Yet at the last he came to Paradise,
And found his own four Gods, and that he
wrote ;

And marvelled, being very near to God,
What oaf on earth had made his toil God's law,
Till God said mocking : ' Mock not. These be
thine.'

Then cried Evarra : ' I have sinned!'—'Not so.
' If thou hadst written otherwise, thy Gods
' Had rested in the mountain and the mine,
' And I were poorer by four wondrous Gods,
' And thy more wondrous law, Evarra. Thine,
' Servant of shouting crowds and lowing kine.'

Thereat, with laughing mouth, but tear-wet
eyes,

Evarra cast his Gods from Paradise.

*This is the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.*

THE CONUNDRUM OF THE WORKSHOPS

WHEN the flush of a new-born sun fell first
on Eden's green and gold,
Our father Adam sat under the Tree and scratched
with a stick in the mould ;
And the first rude sketch that the world had seen
was joy to his mighty heart,
Till the Devil whispered behind the leaves, ' It 's
pretty, but is it Art ? '

Wherefore he called to his wife, and fled to
fashion his work anew—
The first of his race who cared a fig for the first,
most dread review ;
And he left his lore to the use of his sons—and
that was a glorious gain
When the Devil chuckled ' Is it Art ? ' in the ear
of the branded Cain.

THE CONUNDRUM OF

They bulded a tower to shiver the sky and
wrench the stars apart,

Till the Devil grunted behind the bricks : ' It 's
striking, but is it Art ? '

The stone was dropped at the quarry-side and
the idle derrick swung,

While each man talked of the aims of Art, and
each in an alien tongue.

They fought and they talked in the North and the
South, they talked and they fought in the West,

Till the waters rose on the pitiful land, and the
poor Red Clay had rest—

Had rest till the dank blank-canvas dawn when
the dove was preened to start,

And the Devil bubbled below the keel : ' It 's
human, but is it Art ? '

The tale is as old as the Eden Tree—and new as
the new-cut tooth—

THE WORKSHOPS

For each man knows ere his lip-thatch grows
 he is master of Art and Truth ;
And each man hears as the twilight nears, to the
 beat of his dying heart,
The Devil drum on the darkened pane : ‘ You
 did it, but was it Art ? ’

We have learned to whittle the Eden Tree to the
 shape of a surplice-peg,
We have learned to bottle our parents twain in
 the yolk of an addled egg,
We know that the tail must wag the dog, for the
 horse is drawn by the cart ;
But the Devil whoops, as he whooped of old
 ‘ It ’s clever, but is it Art ? ’

When the flicker of London sun falls faint on the
 Club-room’s green and gold,
The sons of Adam sit them down and scratch
 with their pens in the mould—

THE CONUNDRUM

They scratch with their pens in the mould of their
graves, and the ink and the anguish start,
For the Devil mutters behind the leaves : ‘ It ’s
pretty, but is it Art ? ’

Now, if we could win to the Eden Tree where the
Four Great Rivers flow,
And the Wreath of Eve is red on the turf as she
left it long ago,
And if we could come when the sentry slept and
softly scurry through,
By the favour of God we might know as much—
as our father Adam knew.

THE LEGEND OF EVIL

I

THIS is the sorrowful story
Told when the twilight fails
And the monkeys walk together
Holding each other's tails :—

‘ Our fathers lived in the forest,
‘ Foolish people were they,
‘ They went down to the cornland
‘ To teach the farmers to play.

‘ Our fathers frisked in the millet,
‘ Our fathers skipped in the wheat,
‘ Our fathers hung from the branches,
‘ Our fathers danced in the street.

THE LEGEND OF EVIL

‘ Then came the terrible farmers,
‘ Nothing of play they knew,
‘ Only . . . they caught our fathers
‘ And set them to labour too !

‘ Set them to work in the cornland
‘ With ploughs and sickles and flails,
‘ Put them in mud-walled prisons
‘ And—cut off their beautiful tails !

‘ Now, we can watch our fathers,
‘ Sullen and bowed and old,
‘ Stooping over the millet,
‘ Sharing the silly mould,

‘ Driving a foolish furrow,
‘ Mending a muddy yoke,
‘ Sleeping in mud-walled prisons,
‘ Steeping their food in smoke.

THE LEGEND OF EVIL

‘ We may not speak to our fathers,
‘ For if the farmers knew
‘ They would come up to the forest
‘ And set us to labour too.’

This is the horrible story
Told as the twilight fails
And the monkeys walk together
Holding each other’s tails.

II

’TWAS when the rain fell steady an’ the Ark
was pitched an’ ready,
That Noah got his orders for to take the bastes
below ;
He dragged them all together by the horn an’
hide an’ feather,
An’ all excipt the Donkey was agreeable to go.

THE LEGEND OF EVIL

Thin Noah spoke him fairly, thin talked to him
severely,

An' thin he cursed him squarely to the glory
av the Lord :—

‘Divil take the ass that bred you, and the greater
ass that fed you—

‘Divil go wid you, ye spalpeen!’ an’ the
Donkey went aboard.

But the wind was always failin’, an’ ’twas most
onaisy sailin’, F

An’ the ladies in the cabin couldn’t stand the
stable air ;

An’ the bastes betwuxt the hatches, they tuk an’
died in batches,

Till Noah said :—‘ There ’s wan av us that
hasn’t paid his fare ! ’

For he heard a flusteration wid the bastes av all
creation—

THE LEGEND OF EVIL

The trumpetin' av elephints an' bellowin' av
whales ;

An' he saw forninst the windy whin he wint to
stop the shindy

The Divil wid a stable-fork bedivillin' their
tails.

The Divil cursed outrageous, but Noah said um-
brageous :—

‘ To what am I indebted for this tenant-right
invasion ? ’

An' the Divil gave for answer :—‘ Evict me if
you can, sir,

‘ For I came in wid the Donkey—on Your
Honour's invitation.’

THE ENGLISH FLAG

Above the portico a flag-staff, bearing the Union Jack, remained fluttering in the flames for some time, but ultimately when it fell the crowds rent the air with shouts, and seemed to see significance in the incident.

DAILY PAPERS.

WINDS of the World, give answer ! They
are whimpering to and fro—

And what should they know of England who
only England know ?—

The poor little street-bred people that vapour
and fume and brag,

They are lifting their heads in the stillness to yelp
at the English Flag !

Must we borrow a clout from the Boer—to
plaster anew with dirt ?

THE ENGLISH FLAG

An Irish liar's bandage, or an English coward's
shirt ?

We may not speak of England ; her Flag's to
sell or share.

What is the Flag of England ? Winds of the
World, declare !

The North Wind blew :—‘ From Bergen my
steel-shod vanguards go ;

‘ I chase your lazy whalers home from the Disko
floe ;

‘ By the great North Lights above me I work
the will of God,

‘ And the liner splits on the ice-field or the
Dogger fills with cod.

‘ I barred my gates with iron, I shuttered my
doors with flame,

‘ Because to force my ramparts your nutshell
navies came ;

THE ENGLISH FLAG

‘ I took the sun from their presence, I cut them
down with my blast,

‘ And they died, but the Flag of England blew
free ere the spirit passed.

‘ The lean white bear hath seen it in the long,
long Arctic night,

‘ The musk-ox knows the standard that flouts
the Northern Light :

‘ What is the Flag of England ? Ye have but
my bergs to dare,

‘ Ye have but my drifts to conquer. Go forth,
for it is there ! ’

The South Wind sighed :—‘ From the Virgins
my mid-sea course was ta’en

‘ Over a thousand islands lost in an idle main,

‘ Where the sea-egg flames on the coral and the
long-backed breakers croon

‘ Their endless ocean legends to the lazy, locked
lagoon.

THE ENGLISH FLAG

‘ Strayed amid lonely islets, mazed amid outer
keys,

‘ I waked the palms to laughter—I tossed the
scud in the breeze—

‘ Never was isle so little, never was sea so lone,

‘ But over the scud and the palm-trees an Eng-
lish flag was flown.

‘ I have wrenched it free from the halliard to
hang for a wisp on the Horn ;

‘ I have chased it north to the Lizard—ribboned
and rolled and torn ;

‘ I have spread its fold o’er the dying, adrift in a
hopeless sea ;

‘ I have hurled it swift on the slaver, and seen the
slave set free.

‘ My basking sunfish know it, and wheeling
albatross,

‘ Where the lone wave fills with fire beneath the
Southern Cross.

THE ENGLISH FLAG

‘What is the flag of England? Ye have but my
reefs to dare,
‘Ye have but my seas to furrow. Go forth, for
it is there!’

The East Wind roared:—‘From the Kuriles,
the Bitter Seas, I come,

‘And me men call the Home-Wind, for I bring
the English home.

‘Look—look well to your shipping! By the
breath of my mad typhoon

‘I swept your close-packed Praya and beached
your best at Kowloon!

‘The reeling junks behind me and the racing
seas before,

‘I raped your richest roadstead—I plundered
Singapore!

‘I set my hand on the Hoogli; as a hooded snake
she rose,

THE ENGLISH FLAG

‘ And I flung your stoutest steamers to roost
with the startled crows.

‘ Never the lotos closes, never the wild-fowl wake,
‘ But a soul goes out on the East Wind that died
for England’s sake—

‘ Man or woman or suckling, mother or bride or
maid—

‘ Because on the bones of the English the English
Flag is stayed.

‘ The desert-dust hath dimmed it, the flying
wild-ass knows,

‘ The scared white leopard winds it across the
taintless snows.

‘ What is the flag of England ? Ye have but my
sun to dare,

‘ Ye have but my sands to travel. Go forth, for
it is there ! ’

THE ENGLISH FLAG

The West Wind called :—‘ In squadrons the
thoughtless galleons fly

‘ That bear the wheat and cattle lest street-bred
people die.

‘ They make my might their porter, they make
my house their path,

‘ Till I loose my neck from their rudder and
whelm them all in my wrath.

‘ I draw the gliding fog-bank as a snake is drawn
from the hole,

‘ They bellow one to the other, the frightened ship-
bells toll,

‘ For day is a drifting terror till I raise the shroud
with my breath,

‘ And they see strange bows above them and the
two go locked to death.

‘ But whether in calm or wrack-wreath, whether
by dark or day,

THE ENGLISH FLAG

- ‘ I heave them whole to the conger or rip their
plates away,
‘ First of the scattered legions, under a shrieking
sky,
‘ Dipping between the rollers, the English Flag
goes by.
- ‘ The dead dumb fog hath wrapped it—the
frozen dews have kissed—
‘ The naked stars have seen it, a fellow-star in
the mist.
‘ What is the Flag of England ? Ye have but
my breath to dare,
‘ Ye have but my waves to conquer. Go forth,
for it is there ! ’

‘CLEARED’

(IN MEMORY OF A COMMISSION)

HELP for a patriot distressed, a spotless
spirit hurt,
Help for an honourable clan sore trampled in the
dirt !
From Queenstown Bay to Donegal, O listen to
my song,
The honourable gentlemen have suffered grievous
wrong.

Their noble names were mentioned—O the burn-
ing black disgrace !—
By a brutal Saxon paper in an Irish shooting-
case ;

‘ CLEARED

They sat upon it for a year, then steeled their
heart to brave it,
And ‘ coruscating innocence ’ the learned Judges
gave it.

Bear witness, Heaven, of that grim crime beneath
the surgeon’s knife,
The honourable gentlemen deplored the loss of
life !
Bear witness of those chanting choirs that burk
and shirk and snigger,
No man laid hand upon the knife or finger to the
trigger !

Cleared in the face of all mankind beneath the
winking skies,
Like phoenixes from Phoenix Park (and what lay
there) they rise !

‘ CLEARED ’

Go shout it to the emerald seas—give word to
Erin now,
Her honourable gentlemen are cleared—and this
is how :—

They only paid the Moonlighter his cattle-hock-
ing price,
They only helped the murderer with counsel’s
best advice,
But—sure it keeps their honour white—the
learned Court believes
They never give a piece of plate to murderers and
thieves.

They never told the ramping crowd to card a
woman’s hide,
They never marked a man for death—what
fault of theirs he died ?—

‘ CLEARED ’

They only said ‘intimidate,’ and talked and
went away—

By God, the boys that did the work were braver
men than they !

*Their sin it was that fed the fire—small blame to
them that heard—*

The ‘ bhoys ’ get drunk on rhetoric, and madden
at a word—

They knew whom they were talking at, if they
were Irish too,

The gentlemen that lied in Court, they knew, and
well they knew.

They only took the Judas-gold from Fenians out
of jail,

They only fawned for dollars on the blood-dyed
Clan-na-Gael.

‘ CLEARED ’

If black is black or white is white, in black and
white it ’s down,
They ’re only traitors to the Queen and rebels to
the Crown.

‘ Cleared,’ honourable gentlemen ! Be thankful
it ’s no more :——
The widow’s curse is on your house, the dead are
at your door.
On you the shame of open shame, on you from
North to South
The hand of every honest man flat-heeled across
your mouth.

‘ Less black than we were painted ’ ?—Faith, no
word of black was said ;
The lightest touch was human blood, and that,
you know, runs red.

‘ CLEARED ’

It's sticking to your fist to-day for all your
sneer and scoff,
And by the Judge's well-weighed word you
cannot wipe it off.

Hold up those hands of innocence—go, scare
your sheep together,
The blundering, tripping tups that bleat behind
the old bell-wether ;
And if they snuff the taint and break to find
another pen,
Tell them it 's tar that glistens so, and daub them
yours again !

‘ The charge is old ’ ?—As old as Cain—as fresh
as yesterday ;
Old as the Ten Commandments—have ye talked
those laws away ?

‘ CLEARED ’

If words are words, or death is death, or powder
sends the ball,
You spoke the words that sped the shot—the
curse be on you all.

‘ Our friends believe ’ ? Of course they do—as
sheltered women may ;
But have they seen the shrieking soul ripped
from the quivering clay ?
They !—If their own front door is shut, they ’ll
swear the whole world ’s warm ;
What do they know of dread of death or hanging
fear of harm ?

The secret half a county keeps, the whisper in
the lane,
The shriek that tells the shot went home behind
the broken pane,

‘ CLEARED ’

The dry blood crisping in the sun that scares the
honest bees,
And shows the ‘ bhoys ’ have heard your talk—
what do they know of these ?

But you—you know—ay, ten times more ; the
secrets of the dead,
Black terror on the country-side by word and
whisper bred,
The mangled stallion’s scream at night, the tail-
cropped heifer’s low.
Who set the whisper going first ? You know,
and well you know !

My soul ! I ’d sooner lie in jail for murder plain
and straight,
Pure crime I ’d done with my own hand for
money, lust, or hate,

‘ CLEARED ’

Than take a seat in Parliament by fellow-fclons
cheered,
While one of those ‘ not provens ’ proved me
cleared as you are cleared.

Cleared—you that ‘ lost ’ the League accounts—
go, guard our honour still,
Go, help to make our country’s laws that broke
God’s law at will—
One hand stuck out behind the back, to signal
‘ strike again ’ ;
The other on your dress-shirt-front to show your
heart is clane.

If black is black or white is white, in black and
white it ’s down,
You ’re only traitors to the Queen and rebels to
the Crown.

‘ CLEARED ’

If print is print or words are words, the learned

Court perpend :—

We are not ruled by murderers, but only—by
their friends.

AN IMPERIAL RESCRIPT

NOW this is the tale of the Council the German
Kaiser decreed,
To ease the strong of their burden, to help the
weak in their need,
He sent a word to the peoples, who struggle, and
pant, and sweat,
That the straw might be counted fairly and the
tally of bricks be set.

The Lords of Their Hands assembled ; from the
East and the West they drew—
Baltimore, Lille, and Essen, Brummagem, Clyde,
and Crewe.

AN IMPERIAL RESCRIPT

And some were black from the furnace, and some
were brown from the soil,
And some were blue from the dye-vat ; but all
were wearied of toil.

And the young King said :—‘ I have found it,
the road to the rest ye seek :
‘ The strong shall wait for the weary, the hale
shall halt for the weak ;
‘ With the even tramp of an army where no man
breaks from the line,
‘ Ye shall march to peace and plenty in the bond
of brotherhood—sign ! ’

The paper lay on the table, the strong heads
bowed thereby,
And a wail went up from the peoples :—‘ Ay,
sign—give rest, for we die ! ’

AN IMPERIAL } RESCRIPT

A hand was stretched to the goose-quill, a fist
was cramped to scrawl,
When—the laugh of a blue-eyed maiden ran clear
through the council-hall.

And each one heard Her laughing as each one
saw Her plain—
Saidie, Mimi, or Olga, Gretchen, or Mary Jane.
And the Spirit of Man that is in Him to the light
of the vision woke ;
And the men drew back from the paper, as a
Yankee delegate spoke :—

‘ There ’s a girl in Jersey City who works on the
telephone ;
‘ We ’re going to hitch our horses and dig for a
house of our own,
‘ With gas and water connections, and steam
heat through to the top ;

AN IMPERIAL RESCRIPT

‘And, W. Hohenzollern, I guess I shall work till
I drop.’

And an English delegate thundered :—‘The
weak an’ the lame be blowed !

‘I’ve a berth in the Sou’-West workshops, a
home in the Wandsworth Road ;

‘And till the ’sociation has footed my buryin’ bill,

‘I work for the kids an’ the missus. Pull up !
I ’ll be damned if I will !’

And over the German benches the bearded
whisper ran :—

‘Lager, der girls und der dollars, dey makes or
dey breaks a man.

‘If Schmitt haf collared der dollars, he collars
der girl deremit ;

‘But if Schmitt bust in der pizness, we collars
der girl from Schmitt.’

AN IMPERIAL RESCRIPT

They passed one resolution :—‘ Your sub-committee believe

‘ You can lighten the curse of Adam when you ’ve lightened the curse of Eve.

‘ But till we are built like angels, with hammer and chisel and pen,

‘ We will work for ourself and a woman, for ever and ever, amen.’

Now this is the tale of the Council the German Kaiser held—

The day that they razored the Grindstone, the day that the Cat was belled,

The day of the Figs from Thistles, the day of the Twisted Sands,

The day that the laugh of a maiden made light of the Lords of Their Hands.

TOMLINSON

NOW Tomlinson gave up the ghost in his
house in Berkeley Square,

And a Spirit came to his bedside and gripped him
by the hair—

A Spirit gripped him by the hair and carried him
far away,

Till he heard as the roar of a rain-fed ford the
roar of the Milky Way :

Till he heard the roar of the Milky Way die down
and drone and cease,

And they came to the Gate within the Wall
where Peter holds the keys.

‘Stand up, stand up now, Tomlinson, and answer
loud and high

TOMLINSON

‘The good that ye did for the sake of men or
ever ye came to die—

‘The good that ye did for the sake of men in
little earth so lone !’

And the naked soul of Tomlinson grew white as
a rain-washed bone.

‘O I have a friend on earth,’ he said, ‘that was
my priest and guide,

‘And well would he answer all for me if he were
by my side.’

—‘For that ye strove in neighbour-love it shall
be written fair,

‘But now ye wait at Heaven’s Gate and not in
Berkeley Square :

‘Though we called your friend from his bed this
night, he could not speak for you,

‘For the race is run by one and one and never
by two and two.’

Then Tomlinson looked up and down, and little
gain was there,

TOMLINSON

For the naked stars grinned overhead, and he
saw that his soul was bare :

The Wind that blows between the worlds, it cut
him like a knife,

And Tomlinson took up his tale and spoke of his
good in life.

‘ This I have read in a book,’ he said, ‘ and that
was told to me,

‘ And this I have thought that another man
thought of a Prince in Muscovy.’

The good souls flocked like homing doves and
bade him clear the path,

And Peter twirled the jangling keys in weariness
and wrath.

‘ Ye have read, ye have heard, ye have thought,’
he said, ‘ and the tale is yet to run :

‘ By the worth of the body that once ye had,
give answer—what ha’ ye done ? ’

Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and
little good it bore,

TOMLINSON

For the Darkness stayed at his shoulder-blade
and Heaven's Gate before :—

' O this I have felt, and this I have guessed, and
this I have heard men say,

' And this they wrote that another man wrote of
a carl in Norroway.'

' Ye have read, ye have felt, ye have guessed, good
lack ! Ye have hampered Heaven's Gate ;

' There 's little room between the stars in idleness
to prate !

' O none may reach by hired speech of neighbour,
priest, and kin

' Through borrowed deed to God's good meed
that lies so fair within ;

' Get hence, get hence to the Lord of Wrong, for
doom has yet to run,

' And . . . the faith that ye share with Berkeley
Square uphold you, Tomlinson ! '

.

TOMLINSON

The Spirit gripped him by the hair, and sun by
sun they fell

Till they came to the belt of Naughty Stars that
rim the mouth of Hell :

The first are red with pride and wrath, the next
are white with pain,

But the third are black with clinkered sin that
cannot burn again :

They may hold their path, they may leave their
path, with never a soul to mark,

They may burn or freeze, but they must not
cease in the Scorn of the Outer Dark.

The Wind that blows between the worlds, it
nipped him to the bone,

And he yearned to the flare of Hell-Gate there as
the light of his own hearth-stone.

The Devil he sat behind the bars, where the des-
perate legions drew,

But he caught the hasting Tomlinson and would
not let him through.

TOMLINSON

‘ Wot ye the price of good pit-coal that I must
pay ? ’ said he,

‘ That ye rank yoursel’ so fit for Hell and ask no
leave of me ?

‘ I am all o’er-sib to Adam’s breed that ye should
give me scorn,

‘ For I strove with God for your First Father the
day that he was born.

‘ Sit down, sit down upon the slag, and answer
loud and high

‘ The harm that ye did to the Sons of Men or
ever you came to die.’

And Tomlinson looked up and up, and saw
against the night

The belly of a tortured star blood-red in Hell-
Mouth light ;

And Tomlinson looked down and down, and saw
beneath his feet

The frontlet of a tortured star milk-white in
Hell-Mouth heat.

TOMLINSON

‘ O I had a love on earth,’ said he, ‘ that kissed
me to my fall,

‘ And if ye would call my love to me I know she
would answer all.’

—‘ All that ye did in love forbīd it shall be
written fair,

‘ But now ye wait at Hell-Mouth Gate and not
in Berkeley Square :

‘ Though we whistled your love from her bed to-
night, I trow she would not run,

‘ For the sin ye do by two and two ye must pay
for one by one !’

The Wind that blows between the worlds, it cut
him like a knife,

And Tomlinson took up the tale and spoke of his
sin in life :—

‘ Once I ha’ laughed at the power of Love and
twice at the grip of the Grave,

‘ And thrice I ha’ patted my God on the head
that men might call me brave.’

TOMLINSON

The Devil he blew on a brandered soul and set it
aside to cool :—

‘ Do ye think I would waste my good pit-coal on
the hide of a brain-sick fool ?

‘ I see no worth in the hobnailed mirth or the
jolt-head jest ye did

‘ That I should waken my gentlemen that are
sleeping three on a grnd.’

Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and
there was little grace,

For Hell-Gate filled the houseless Soul with the
Fear of Naked Space.

‘ Nay, this I ha’ heard,’ quo’ Tomlinson, ‘ and
this was noised abroad,

‘ And this I ha’ got from a Belgian book on the
word of a dead French lord.’

—‘ Ye ha’ heard, ye ha’ read, ye ha’ got, good
lack ! and the tale begins afresh—

‘ Have ye sinned one sin for the pride o’ the eye
or the sinful lust of the flesh ? ’

TOMLINSON

Then Tomlinson he gripped the bars and yammered, 'Let me in—

'For I mind that I borrowed my neighbour's wife
to sin the deadly sin.'

The Devil he grinned behind the bars, and
banked the fires high :

'Did ye read of that sin in a book?' said he ;
and Tomlinson said, 'Ay !'

The Devil he blew upon his nails, and the little
devils ran,

And he said : 'Go husk this whimpering thief
that comes in the guise of a man :

'Winnow him out 'twixt star and star, and sieve
his proper worth :

'There 's sore decline in Adam's line if this be
spawn of earth.'

Empusa's crew, so naked-new they may not face
the fire,

But weep that they bin too small to sin to the
height of their desire,

TOMLINSON

Over the coal they chased the Soul, and racked
it all abroad,

As children rifle a caddis-case or the raven's
foolish hoard.

And back they came with the tattered Thing, as
children after play,

And they said: 'The soul that he got from God
he has bartered clean away.

'We have threshed a stook of print and book,
and winnowed a chattering wind

'And many a soul wherefrom he stole, but his
we cannot find :

'We have handled him, we have dandled him,
we have seared him to the bone,

'And sure if tooth and nail show truth he has
no soul of his own.'

The Devil he bowed his head on his breast and
rumbled deep and low :—

'I'm all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that I should
bid him go.

TOMLINSON

‘ Yet close we lie, and deep we lie, and if I gave
him place,

‘ My gentlemen that are so proud would flout
me to my face ;

‘ They ’d call my house a common stew and me
a careless host,

‘ And—I would not anger my gentlemen for the
sake of a shiftless ghost.’

The Devil he looked at the mangled Soul that
prayed to feel the flame,

And he thought of Holy Charity, but he thought
of his own good name :—

‘ Now ye could haste my coal to waste, and sit
ye down to fry :

‘ Did ye think of that theft for yourself ? ’ said
he ; and Tomlinson said, ‘ Ay ! ’

The Devil he blew an outward breath, for his
heart was free from care :—

‘ Ye have scarce the soul of a louse,’ he said, ‘ but
the roots of sin are there,

TOMLINSON

- ‘ And for that sin should ye come in were I the
lord alone.
- ‘ But sinful pride has rule inside—and mightier
than my own.
- ‘ Honour and Wit, fore-damned they sit, to each
his priest and whore :
- ‘ Nay, scarce I dare myself go there, and you
they ’d torture sore.
- ‘ Ye are neither spirit nor spirk,’ he said ; ‘ ye
are neither book nor brute—
- ‘ Go, get ye back to the flesh again for the sake
of Man’s repute.
- ‘ I ’m all o’er-sib to Adam’s breed that I should
mock your pain,
- ‘ But look that ye win to worthier sin ere ye come
back again.
- ‘ Get hence, the hearse is at your door—the grim
black stallions wait—
- ‘ They bear your clay to place to-day. Speed,
lest ye come too late !

TOMLINSON

- ‘ Go back to Earth with a lip unsealed—go back
with an open eye,
‘ And carry my word to the Sons of Men or ever
ye come to die :
‘ That the sin they do by two and two they must
pay for one by one—
‘ And . . . the God that you took from a printed
book be with you, Tomlinson ! ’

L'ENVOI

THERE'S a whisper down the field where the
year has shot her yield,

And the ricks stand grey to the sun,
Singing :—‘ Over then, come over, for the bee
has quit the clover,

‘ And your English summer's done.’

You have heard the beat of the off-shore
wind,

And the thresh of the deep-sea rain ;

You have heard the song—how long !
how long ?

Pull out on the trail again !

Ha' done with the Tents of Shem, dear lass,
We've seen the seasons through,

L'ENVOI

And it's time to turn on the old trail, our
own trail, the out trail,
Pull out, pull out, on the Long Trail—the
trail that is always new.

It's North you may run to the rime-ringed sun
Or South to the blind Horn's hate ;
Or East all the way into Mississippi Bay,
Or West to the Golden Gate ;
Where the blindest bluffs hold good, dear
lass,
And the wildest tales are true,
And the men bulk big on the old trail, our
own trail, the out trail,
And life runs large on the Long Trail—the
trail that is always new.

The days are sick and cold, and the skies are grey
and old,
And the twice-breathed airs blow damp ;

L'ENVOI

And I 'd sell my tired soul for the bucking beam-
sea roll

Of a black Bilbao tramp ;

With her load-line over her hatch, dear
lass,

And a drunken Dago crew,

And her nose held down on the old trail, our
own trail, the out trail

From Cadiz Bar on the Long Trail—the
trail that is always new.

There be triple ways to take, of the eagle or the
snake,

Or the way of a man with a maid ;

But the sweetest way to me is a ship's upon the
sea

In the heel of the North-East Trade.

Can you hear the crash on her bows, dear
lass,

And the drum of the racing screw,

L'ENVOI

As she ships it green on the old trail, our own
trail, the out trail,
As she lifts and 'scends on the Long Trail—
the trail that is always new ?

See the shaking funnels roar, with the Peter at
the fore,
And the fenders grind and heave,
And the derricks clack and grate, as the tackle
hooks the crate,
And the fall-rope whines through the sheave ;
It 's ' Gang-plank up and in,' dear lass,
It 's 'Hawsers warp her through !'
And it 's ' All clear aft ' on the old trail, our
own trail, the out trail,
We 're backing down on the Long Trail—
the trail that is always new.

O the mutter overside, when the port-fog holds
us tied,
And the sirens hoot their dread !

L'ENVOI

When foot by foot we creep o'er the hueless view-
less deep

To the sob of the questing lead !

It's down by the Lower Hope, dear lass,

With the Gunfleet Sands in view,

Till the Mouse swings green on the old trail,
our own trail, the out trail,

And the Gull Light lifts on the Long Trail—
the trail that is always new.

O the blazing tropic night, when the wake's a
welt of light

That holds the hot sky tame,

And the steady fore-foot snores through the
planet-powdered floors

Where the scared whale flukes in flame !

Her plates are scarred by the sun, dear lass,

And her ropes are taunt with the dew,

For we're booming down on the old trail,
our own trail, the out trail,

L'ENVOI

We're sagging south on the Long Trail—
the trail that is always new.

Then home, get her home, where the drunken
rollers comb,

And the shouting seas drive by,

And the engines stamp and ring, and the wet
bows reel and swing,

And the Southern Cross rides high !

Yes, the old lost stars wheel back, dear lass,

That blaze in the velvet blue.

They're all old friends on the old trail, our
own trail, the out trail,

They're God's own guides on the Long
Trail—the trail that is always new.

Fly forward, O my heart, from the Foreland to
the Start—

We're steaming all-too slow,

L'ENVOI

And it's twenty thousand mile to our little lazy
isle

Where the trumpet-orchids blow !

You have heard the call of the off-shore
wind

And the voice of the deep-sea rain ;

You have heard the song—how long ! how
long ?

Pull out on the trail again !

The Lord knows what we may find, dear lass,

And The Deuce knows what we may do—

But we're back once more on the old trail,
our own trail, the out trail,

We're down, hull down on the Long Trail—
the trail that is always new.

