

**SONGS  
FOR SAILORS**

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Songs for Sailors by W. C. Bennett

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**W. C. BENNETT**

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# SONGS *for* SAILORS

BY

W. C. BENNETT

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A people which takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered with pride by remote descendants. It is a sentiment which belongs to the higher and purer part of human nature, and which adds not a little to the strength of states.

*MACAULAY'S History of England*

'Love thou thy land with love far-brought  
From out the pictured past'—TENNYSON

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SONGS *for* SAILORS

Ten sail had joined us just in time, and a right good  
sort they sent ;  
We numbered thirteen seventy-fours, and after them we  
went  
With every stitch of canvas set, due East for Egypt  
bound,  
For well we guessed the Frenchmen there full surely  
would be found.  
And there we should have found them, but we passed  
them on the way,  
And blank we looked when not a mast showed in  
Aboukir's bay ;  
We'd beat them just by three days and they were safe  
awhile,  
As North again in search of them, we bore up from the  
Nile.

That was the first of August when next we reached  
that shore,  
For there it flew, on mast and fort, the flaunting tricolor,  
And—a sight that did our eyes good—there anchored  
round the bay,  
And ours at last, just thirteen sail, all safe the French-  
men lay.  
From east to west, right in to shore, their line of battle  
ran,  
And shoal and fort they thought made safe the head  
ships of their van ;  
But of shoal and fort we never thought, for in our  
Admiral's look  
We plainly saw, if they were safe, his meaning we  
mistook.  
For days—till they were his at last—till now there lay  
their line,  
He had not slept or eat: 'Now, men,' he laughing  
said; 'I'll dine.'  
It might have been his wedding-day, so happy was his  
smile,  
He knew that many a year would tell of Nelson and the  
Nile.



Portrait of W. W. Bennett, 1850

W. W. Bennett



By nine three riddled Mounseers had sickened of the  
game,  
By ten their Admiral's L'Orient was burning bright  
afame ;  
And well our conquering hero, though wounded sore,  
might smile  
As he learned how flag on flag was struck that mid-  
night at the Nile.

At last their huge four-decker was hurled up with a  
roar  
That struck the fight to silence for minutes ten and  
more ;  
At twelve the battle slackened, and when upsprang  
the day,  
Not a Frenchman's flag was flying but on two that  
stood away.  
Of thirteen sail, the Guillaume Tell and Généreux  
'scaped alone ;  
The fire had two ; the other nine were, safe and sure,  
our own.  
'Twas 'a conquest, not a victory' our glorious Nelson  
said ;  
As there he, blinded, lay below, with the wounded and  
the dead ;  
As the hush of victory told him, as ceased the latest gun,  
Not the tomb in the old Abbey, but the Peerage, he had  
won.  
Then he said, 'Let God be thanked, men!' and who  
but thanked God while  
We thought that He had spared to us our Nelson of the  
Nile?

## THE DUTCHMAN'S BROOM.

THERE'S a day in our ocean-story  
 That in mind should be always kept:  
 When Van Tromp through our seas, in glory,  
 With the broom at his mast-head, swept.  
 Unready, the Dutch had caught us;  
 Blake had fought; his cannon might boom;  
 But Mynheer, he for two months taught us  
 To make way for the Dutchman's broom.

Not long was that besom flaunted,  
 For 'twas England's grand old day,  
 When Cromwell did more than he vaunted,  
 And Blake swept all foes away;  
 'Twas not weakness or sloth that forced us  
 To Van Tromp two months, to give room;  
 'Twas rashness the Channel lost us  
 When 'twas swept by the Dutchman's broom.

Rare wisdom that old December  
 Taught to us, beyond all price;  
 That wisdom shall we remember,  
 Or dare to be taught it twice?  
 Our fleets must our seas be keeping  
 Too well for foes to presume  
 To think of our Channel sweeping,  
 As 'twas swept by the Dutchman's broom.

Then a word to the men who rule us:  
 For cash we may something care,  
 But never a foe shall fool us,  
 Whatever our wealth must spare.  
 Let who will for our fancy blame us,  
 We'll have fleets that shall leave no room  
 For a foe for an hour to shame us  
 With the sweep of the Dutchman's broom.

## OAK AND IRON.

A SONG FOR OUR IRONSIDES.

Yes, the days of our wooden walls are ended,  
 And the days of our iron ones begun ;  
 But who cares by what our land's defended,  
 While the hearts that fought and fight are one ?  
 'Twas not the oak that fought each battle,  
 'Twas not the wood that victory won ;  
 'Twas the hands that made our broadsides rattle,  
 'Twas the hearts of oak that served each gun.  
 Then be ours iron ships or oaken,  
 So long as Britons serve each gun,  
 The spell of glory lives unbroken ;  
 Our foes shall strike to us or run.

They may change the stuff in which we're floating,  
 But what matters that to old Dame Fame ?  
 She'll ship with English tars, unnoting  
 The change, while we are still the same ;  
 So long as English blood is sailing  
 The ships in which with us she swims,  
 She sticks to us with pride unfailing,  
 And Victory with her shares her whims.  
 In oak or iron who will doubt us ?  
 As long as Britons serve each gun,  
 There's the knack of drubbing foes about us,  
 Of making foes to strike or run.

Then don't let any friends mistake us ;  
 We are as our fathers chose to be,  
 We are what those fathers chose to make us :  
 The roamers and rulers of the sea.