

# **THE FIVE NATIONS**

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The Five Nations by Rudyard Kipling

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**RUDYARD KIPLING**

**THE FIVE  
NATIONS**





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# The Five Nations

By Rudyard Kipling



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## DEDICATION

*Before a midnight breaks in storm,  
Or herded sea in wrath,  
Ye know what wavering gusts inform  
The greater tempest's path;  
Till the loosed wind  
Drive all from mind,  
Except Distress, which, so will prophets cry,  
O'ercome them, houseless, from the unhinting sky.*

*Ere rivers league against the land  
In piracy of flood,  
Ye know what waters slip and stand  
Where seldom water stood.  
Yet who will note,  
Till fields afloat,  
And washen carcass and the returning well,  
Trumpet what these poor heralds strove to tell?*

*Ye know who use the Crystal Ball  
(To peer by stealth on Doom),*

*The Shade that, shaping first of all,  
Prepares an empty room.  
Then doth It pass  
Like breath from glass,  
But, on the extorted vision bowed intent,  
No man considers why It came or went.*

*Before the years reborn behold  
Themselves with stranger eye,  
And the sport-making Gods of old,  
Like Samson slaying, die,  
Many shall hear  
The all-pregnant sphere,  
Bow to the birth and sweat, but—speech denied—  
Sit dumb or—dealt in part—fall weak and wide.*

*Yet instant to fore-shadowed need  
The eternal balance swings;  
That winged men the Fates may breed  
So soon as Fate hath wings.  
These shall possess  
Our littleness,  
And in the imperial task (as worthy) lay  
Up our lives' all to piece one giant day.*

Gift  
of the  
Library of the  
City of New York

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