

SEA SONGS

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Sea Songs by W. C. Bennett

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W. C. BENNETT

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W. C. BENNETT.

"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.



CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

1878.

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DEDICATION.

DEAR MR. LOCKER,

I have several reasons for dedicating this volume of Sea Songs to you.

You and the ocean have memories in common. Both mind well that fine old English Admiral, your Grandfather, the warmly-loved friend of Hawke, and the Captain who trained both Nelson and Collingwood for the days of St. Vincent and Trafalgar.

Your father, my father's friend, was the ruling power at Greenwich Hospital. He founded the Naval Gallery which peoples the Painted Hall with the men whose deeds have made England the ruler of all seas.

Sitting among those pictures I felt these grand old

heroes were but names to the people. So my pen has striven to make them and their victories known to the Englishmen of to-day.

We are both Greenwich men, and both penmen, but the place you have so worthily won in the literature of our time would alone be enough to make it a pleasure to me to say how sincerely I am,

Yours truly,

W. C. BENNETT.

Hyde Cottage, Greenwich.

April 20th, 1878.

P R E F A C E .

THERE is no part of our history grander than that which records the triumphs of our seamen. Every Englishman ought to be familiar with the great men and the great deeds that have made ours the mightiest naval power that men have as yet known ; yet the daring, the magnanimity, and the successes of our sea-kings, lie buried in our prose histories, little known to any but literary students. There are good reasons why this should be altered ; why our grand old Admirals and their days of victory should become stirring melodies for the whole nation, but especially for our sailors. Our iron walls must guard our shores from all invasion, as our wooden walls through centuries have shielded us from hostile approach. The English people must be made to feel that pride in our navy which shall induce them to make all needful sacrifices to maintain its full efficiency and power. Those who man our ironclads must be full of that old spirit which defeated the Armada and won Trafalgar.

It is strange that our poets have done no more than they have to keep alive our pride in our ocean rule, and our determination that it shall never be lost. Let me endeavour to supply our sailors and the people with

some songs which shall make our Blake and Vernon, our Anson and Exmouth more than names to them. If I succeed, I shall rightly feel that I have laboured at a work which may be held to be even of national importance.

I have used the ordinary language of the people, intending my songs to be such as can be felt and sung by the class for which they are written. I have trusted to the grandeur of the incidents narrated and the dramatic truth of the feelings uttered, to interest and stir my readers. If it be urged that the length of some of my songs renders them unsuitable for singing, I reply that in the intervals of leisure which a sailor has, he will as readily listen to a ballad as to a song. A fore-castle audience requires what the hearers of our old ballads demanded—plenty of stirring incidents and strong, true feeling simply expressed. These I have sought to give. My success or failure will be determined by the adoption or neglect of my songs by our blue jackets themselves. To them I send forth my volume, not without a strong hope that I shall not have written for them in vain.

I have concluded my volume with two poems connected with the sea.

The pleasant way in which my 'Songs for Sailors' have been received by my literary brethren and the people, lead me to hope these Sea Songs will not be unwelcome to English readers.