

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

24 *The Peace of Dives*

The Word came down to Dives in Torment where he lay:

“Our World is full of wickedness, My Children maim and slay,

“And the Saint and Seer and Prophet

“Can make no better of it

“Than to sanctify and prophesy and pray.

5

“Rise up, rise up, thou Dives, and take again thy gold,

“And thy women and thy housen as they were to thee of old.

“It may be grace hath found thee

“In the furnace where We bound thee,

“And that thou shalt bring the peace My Son foretold.”

10

Then merrily rose Dives and leaped from out his fire,

And walked abroad with diligence to do the Lord’s desire;

And anon the battles ceased,

And the captives were released,

And Earth had rest from Goshen to Gadire.

15

The Word came down to Satan that raged and roared alone,

’Mid the shouting of the peoples by the cannon overthrown

(But the Prophets, Saints, and Seers

Set each other by the ears,

For each would claim the marvel as his own):

20

“Rise up, rise up, thou Satan, upon the Earth to go,

“And prove the Peace of Dives if it be good or no:

“For all that he hath planned

“We deliver to thy hand,

“As thy skill shall serve, to break it or bring low.”

25

Then mightily rose Satan, and about the Earth he hied,

And breathed on Kings in idleness and Princes drunk with pride.
But for all the wrong he breathed
There was never sword unsheathed,
And the fires he lighted flickered out and died. 30

Then terribly rose Satan, and darkened Earth afar,
Till he came on cunning Dives where the money-changers are:
And he saw men pledge their gear
For the gold that buys the spear,
And the helmet and the habergeon of war. 35

Yea, to Dives came the Persian and the Syrian and the Mede —
And their hearts were nothing altered, nor their cunning nor their greed —
And they pledged their flocks and farms
For the King-compelling arms,
And Dives lent according to their need. 40

Then Satan said to Dives: — “Return again with me,
“Who hast broken His Commandment in the day He set thee free,
“Who grindest for thy greed
“Man’s belly-pinch and need,
“And the blood of Man to filthy usury!” 45

Then softly answered Dives where the money-changers sit: —
“My Refuge is Our Master, O My Master in the Pit.
“But behold all Earth is laid
“In the Peace which I have made,
“And behold I wait on thee to trouble it!” 50

Then angrily turned Satan, and about the Seas he fled,
To shake the new-sown peoples with insult, doubt, and dread;
But, for all the sleight he used,
There was never squadron loosed,
And the brands he flung flew dying and fell dead. 55

But to Dives came Atlantis and the Captains of the West —
And their hates were nothing weakened nor their angers nor unrest —

And they pawned their utmost trade
For the dry, decreeing blade;
And Dives lent and took of them their best. 60

Then Satan said to Dives: — “Declare thou by The Name,
“The secret of thy subtlety that turneth mine to shame.
“It is known through all the Hells
“How my peoples mocked my spells,
“And my faithless Kings denied me ere I came.” 65

Then answered cunning Dives: “Do not gold and hate abide
“At the heart of every Magic, yea, and senseless fear beside?
“With gold and fear and hate
“I have harnessed state to state,
“And by hate and fear and gold their hates are tied. 70

“For hate men seek a weapon, for fear they seek a shield —
“Keener blades and broader targes than their frantic neighbours wield —
“For gold I arm their hands,
“And for gold I buy their lands,
“And for gold I sell their enemies the yield. 75

“Their nearest foes may purchase, or their furthest friends may lease,
“One by one from Ancient Accad to the Islands of the Seas.
“And their covenants they make
“For the naked iron’s sake,
“But I — I trap them armoured into peace. 80

“The flocks that Egypt pledged me to Assyria I drave,
“And Pharaoh hath the increase of the herds that Sargon gave.
“Not for Ashdod overthrown
“Will the Kings destroy their own,
“Or their peoples wake the strife they feign to brave. 85

“Is not Carchemish like Calno? For the steeds of their desire
“They have sold me seven harvests that I sell to Crowning Tyre;
“And the Tyrian sweeps the plains

“With a thousand hired wains,
“And the Cities keep the peace and — share the hire. 90

“Hast thou seen the pride of Moab? For the swords about his path,
“His bond is to Philistia, in half of all he hath.
“And he dare not draw the sword
“Till Gaza give the word,
“And he show release from Askalon and Gath. 95

“Wilt thou call again thy peoples, wilt thou craze anew thy Kings?
“Lo! my lightnings pass before thee, and their whistling servant brings,
“Ere the drowsy street hath stirred,
“Every masked and midnight word,
“And the nations break their fast upon these things. 100

“So I make a jest of Wonder, and a mock of Time and Space,
“The roofless Seas an hostel, and the Earth a market-place,
“Where the anxious traders know
“Each is surety for his foe,
“And none may thrive without his fellows’ grace. 105

“Now this is all my subtlety and this is all my wit,
“God give thee good enlightenment, My Master in the Pit.
“But behold all Earth is laid
“In the Peace which I have made,
“And behold I wait on thee to trouble it!” 110

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