

CHANT PAGAN  
English Irregular, Discharged  
By Rudyard Kipling

Me that 'ave been what I've been --  
    Me that 'ave gone where I've gone --  
Me that 'ave seen what I've seen --  
    'Ow can I ever take on  
With awful old England again,  
An' 'ouses both sides of the street,  
And 'edges two sides of the lane,  
And the parson an' gentry between,  
An' touchin' my 'at when we meet --  
    Me that 'ave been what I've been?

Me that 'ave watched 'arf a world  
    'Eave up all shiny with dew,  
Kopje on kop to the sun,  
An' as soon as the mist let 'em through  
Our 'elios winkin' like fun --  
Three sides of a ninety-mile square,  
Over valleys as big as a shire --  
*"Are ye there? Are ye there? Are ye there?"*  
An' then the blind drum of our fire . . .  
An' I'm rollin' 'is lawns for the Squire,  
  Me!

Me that 'ave rode through the dark  
Forty mile, often, on end,  
Along the Ma'ollisberg Range,  
With only the stars for my mark  
An' only the night for my friend,  
An' things runnin' off as you pass,  
An' things jumpin' up in the grass,  
An' the silence, the shine an' the size  
Of the 'igh, unexpressible skies --  
I am takin' some letters almost  
As much as a mile to the post,  
An' "mind you come back with the change!"  
  Me!

Me that saw Barberton took  
When we dropped through the clouds on their 'ead,  
An' they 'ove the guns over and fled --  
Me that was through Di'mond 'Ill,  
An' Pieters an' Springs an' Belfast --  
From Dundee to Vereeniging all --  
Me that stuck out to the last  
(An' five bloomin' bars on my chest) --  
I am doin' my Sunday-school best,  
By the 'elp of the Squire an' 'is wife  
(Not to mention the 'ousemaid an' cook),  
To come in an' 'ands up an' be still,  
An' honestly work for my bread,  
My livin' in that state of life  
To which it shall please God to call  
  Me!

Me that 'ave followed my trade  
In the place where the Lightnin's are made;  
'Twixt the Rains and the Sun and the Moon --  
Me that lay down an' got up  
Three years with the sky for my roof --  
That 'ave ridden my 'unger an' thirst  
Six thousand raw mile on the hoof,  
With the Vaal and the Orange for cup,  
An' the Brandwater Basin for dish, --  
Oh! it's 'ard to be'ave as they wish  
(Too 'ard, an' a little too soon),  
I'll 'ave to think over it first --

Me!

I will arise an' get 'ence --  
I will trek South and make sure  
If it's only my fancy or not  
That the sunshine of England is pale,  
And the breezes of England are stale,  
An' there's something' gone small with the lot.  
For *I* know of a sun an' a wind,  
An' some plains and a mountain be'ind,  
An' some graves by a barb-wire fence,  
An' a Dutchman I've fought 'oo might give  
Me a job where I ever inclined  
To look in an' offsaddle an' live  
Where there's neither a road nor a tree --  
But only my Maker an' me,  
And I think it will kill me or cure,  
So I think I will go there an' see.