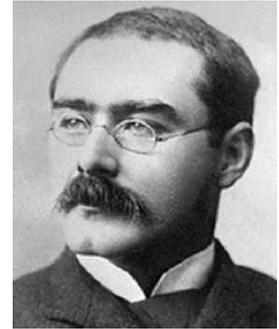


For today's poem, I thought I would give you the poem 'If', written by RUDYARD KIPLING. The poem is the most famous poem written by RUDYARD KIPLING, who was born in 1865 and died in 1936. It's also quite appropriate for this week, as Rudyard Kipling would certainly have approved of people like Boadicea and Hereward the Wake and Winston Churchill - all people who stood up for their country against their enemies. And the poem 'If' is about the qualities you need in order to do this. But standing up for your country sometimes involves making sacrifices - and Kipling's son, John Kipling, was killed in WORLD WAR I in 1915, after Kipling had encouraged his son to fight in the war. I wonder he ever regretted doing that. But 'If' was written a lot earlier - in 1895, when Kipling was 30 years old, and 20 years before Kipling's son died. And this is the poem:



If

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!