

The lightly proffered laurel,<sup>4</sup>  
 The easy, ungrudged praise.  
 Comes now, to search your manhood  
 Through all the thankless years,  
 55 Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,  
 The judgment of your peers!

1899

## 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;  
 5 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;  
 10 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,  
 15 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,<sup>1</sup>  
 And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
 20 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!'

25 If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
 Or walk with Kings—nor<sup>o</sup> lose the common touch, *and not*  
 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  
 30 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!

1910

4. A symbol of military distinction in the triumphs celebrated by victorious Roman generals (later, Roman emperors wore a laurel crown as part of their official regalia).

1. A game, played with coins, that combines skill (tossing a coin as close as possible to a fixed mark) and luck (flipping coins and keeping those that come up heads).