

## M'Andrew's Hymn

Lord, Thou hast made this world below the shadow of a dream,  
 'An, taught by time, I tak' it so—exceptin' always Steam.  
 From the coupler-flange to spindle-guide I see Thy Hand, O God—  
 Predestination in the stride o' yon connectin'-rod.  
 John Calvin might ha' forged the same—enormous, certain, slow—  
 Ay, wrought it in the furnace-flame—*my* "Institutio."  
 I cannot get my sleep tonight; old bones are hard to please;  
 I'll stand the middle watch up here—alone wi' God an' these  
 My engines, after ninety days o' race an' rack an' strain  
 Through all the seas of all Thy world, slam-bangin' home again.  
 Slam-bang too much—they knock a wee—the crosshead-gibs are loose,  
 But thirty thousand mile o' sea has gied them fair excuse . . .  
 Fine, clear an' dark—a full-draught breeze, wi' Ushant out o' sight,  
 An' Ferguson relievin' Hay. Old girl, ye'll walk tonight!  
 His wife's at Plymouth . . . Seventy-One-Two-Three since he began—  
 Three turns for Mistress Ferguson . . . and who's to blame the man?  
 There's none at any port for me, by drivin' fast or slow,  
 Since Elsie Campbell went to Thee, Lord, thirty years ago.  
 (The year the *Sarah Sands* was burned. Oh roads we used to tread,  
 Fra' Maryhill to Pollokshaws—fra' Govan to Parkhead!)  
 Not but they're ceevil on the Board. Ye'll hear Sir Kenneth say:  
 "Good mornn M'Andrew. Back again? An' how's your bilge today?"  
 Miscallin' technicalities but handin' me my chair  
 To drink Madeira wi' three Earls—the auld Fleet Engineer  
 That started as a boiler-whelp—when steam and he were low.  
 I mind the time we used to serve a broken pipe wi' tow!  
 Ten pound were all the pressure then—Eh! Eh!—a man wad drive;  
 An' here, our workin' gauges give one hunder sixty-five!  
 We're creepin' on wi' each new rig,—less weight an' larger power;  
 There'll be the loco-boiler next an' thirty knots an hour!  
 Thirty an' more. What ha' I seen since ocean-steam began  
 Leaves me no doot for the machine: but what about the man?  
 The man that counts, wi' all his runs, one million mile o' sea:  
 Four time the span from earth to moon . . . How far, O Lord, from Thee?  
 —By Rudyard Kipling.