



*The tailrods leap in their bearings,
They rise with a rush and ring,
Then sink to a sound of laughter,
And hurried and short they sing—
“We carry the Mails—
His Majesty’ Mails—
Make way for the Mails of the King.”*

We’ve swung her head for the open bay,
And spun by the maddening steam,
Her screws are drumming the miles away
Where the bright star-shadows dream.
She lifts and sways to the ocean swell—
The lighthouse glares on high,
And the fisher-lads in their boats will tell
How they saw the Mail sweep by
A-thrill from keel to her reeling spars,
With the screw-foam boiling white,
And her black smoke dimming the watching
stars
As she soared thro’ the soundless night,
“Full speed ahead!” shout the wrenching
rods,
“Full speed,” and spray on her rail,
We’ll heed no order to stop save God’s,
For we are the Ocean Mail.

We carry the wealth of the world, I trow,
The power and the fame of men,
The augered word, and the lover’s vow,
All held in the turn of a pen;
To the clash and ring of the whirling throws,
And the crash and swing of the seas,
We bearing the grief that the mother knows
As she sobs and prays on her knees.
The cares and joys of the throbbing world,
They are measured in piston-strokes,
When the bright prow-smother is rent and
hurled,
And the hot wake steams and smokes.
And the stars may blaze in the skies a-thrill,
And the weary stars grow pale,
But night and day we are driving still,
For we are the Ocean Mail.

A faint, far hail, and a waving light—
The whirl of our steering-gear—
And we are staggering in our flight,
With a fishing-boat just clear.
The big fish shudder to hear the thud
And stamp of our engine-room,
As we thunder on with our decks a-flood
In the blind, bewildering gloom.