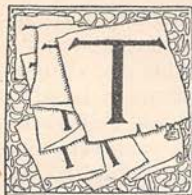


## RUDYARD KIPLING.



Two years ago there was suddenly revealed to us, no one seems to remember how, a new star out of the East. Not fewer distinguished men of letters profess to have "discovered" Mr. Kipling than there were cities of old in which Homer was born. Yet, in fact, the discovery was not much more creditable to them than it would be, on a summer night, to contrive to notice a comet flaring across the sky. Not only was this new talent robust, brilliant, and self-asserting, but its reception was prepared for by a unique series of circumstances. The fiction of the Anglo-Saxon world, in its more intellectual provinces, had become curiously feminized. Those novel-writers who cared to produce subtle impressions upon their readers, in England and America, had become extremely refined in taste and discreet in judgment. People who were not content to pursue the soul of their next-door neighbor through all the burrows of self-consciousness had no choice but to take ship with Mr. Rider Haggard for the "Mountains of the Moon." Between excess of psychological analysis and excess of superhuman romance, there was a great void in the world of Anglo-Saxon fiction. It is this void which Mr. Kipling, with something less than one hundred short stories, one novel, and a few poems, has filled by his exotic realism and his vigorous rendering of unacknowledged experience. His temperament is eminently masculine, and yet his imagination is strictly bound by existing laws. The Evarras of the novel had said:

Thus gods are made,  
And whoso makes them otherwise shall die,

when, behold, a young man comes up out of India, and makes them quite otherwise, and lives.

The vulgar trick, however, of depreciating other writers in order to exalt the favorite of a moment was never less worthy of practice than it is in the case of the author of "Soldiers Three." His relation to his contemporaries is curiously slight. One living writer there is, indeed, with whom it is not unnatural to compare him—Pierre Loti. Each of these men has attracted the attention, and then the almost exaggerated admiration, of a crowd of readers drawn from every class. Each has become

popular without ceasing to be delightful to the fastidious. Each is independent of traditional literature, and affects a disdain for books. Each is a wanderer, a lover of prolonged exile, more at home among the ancient races of the East than among his own people. Each describes what he has seen, in short sentences, with highly colored phrases and local words, little troubled to obey the laws of style if he can but render an exact impression of what the movement of physical life has been to himself. Each produces on the reader a peculiar thrill, a voluptuous and agitating sentiment of intellectual uneasiness, with the spontaneous art of which he has the secret. Totally unlike in detail, Rudyard Kipling and Pierre Loti have these general qualities in common, and if we want a literary parallel to the former, the latter is certainly the only one that we can find. Nor is the attitude of the French novelist to his sailor friends at all unlike that of the Anglo-Indian civilian to his soldier chums. To distinguish we must note very carefully the difference between Mulvaney and *mon frère Yves*; it is not altogether to the advantage of the latter.

The old rhetorical manner of criticism was not meant for the discussion of such writers as these. The only way in which, as it seems to me, we can possibly approach them, is by a frank confession of their personal relation to the feelings of the critic. I will therefore admit that I cannot pretend to be indifferent to the charm of what Mr. Kipling writes. From the first moment of my acquaintance with it it has held me fast. It excites, disturbs, and attracts me; I cannot throw off its disquieting influence. I admit all that is to be said in its disfavor. I force myself to see that its occasional cynicism is irritating and strikes a false note. I acknowledge the broken and jagged style, the noisy newspaper bustle of the little peremptory sentences, the cheap irony of the satires on society. Often—but this is chiefly in the earlier stories—I am aware that there is a good deal too much of the rattle of the piano at some café concert. But when all this is said, what does it amount to? What but an acknowledgment of the crudity of a strong and rapidly developing young nature? You cannot expect a creamy smoothness while the act of vinous fermentation is proceeding.

Wit will shine  
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line;  
A noble error, and but seldom made,



When poets are by too much force betray'd;  
 Thy generous fruits, though gather'd ere their  
 prime,  
 Still show a quickness, and maturing time  
 But mellows what we write to the dull sweets of  
 rime.

In the following pages I shall try to explain why the sense of these shortcomings is altogether buried for me in delighted sympathy and breathless curiosity. Mr. Kipling does not provoke a critical suspension of judgment. He is vehement, and sweeps us away with him; he plays upon a strange and seductive pipe, and we follow him like children. As I write these sentences, I feel how futile is this attempt to analyze his gifts, and how greatly I should prefer to throw this paper to the winds, and listen to the magician himself. I want more and more, like *Oliver Twist*. I want all those "other stories"; I wish to wander down all those by-paths that we have seen disappear in the brushwood. If one lay very still and low by the watch-fire, in the hollow of *Ortheris's* greatcoat, one might learn more and more of the inextinguishable sorrows of *Mulvaney*. One might be told more of what happened, out of the moonlight, in the blackness of *Amir Nath's Gully*. I want to know how the palanquin came into *Dearsley's* possession, and what became of *Kheni Singh*, and whether the seal-cutter did really die in the *House of Suddhoo*. I want to know who it is who dances the *Hälli Hukk*, and how, and why, and where. I want to know what happened at *Jagadhri*, when the *Death Bull* was painted. I want to know all the things that Mr. Kipling does not like to tell—to see the devils of the East "rioting as the stallions riot in spring." It is the strength of this new story-teller that he re-awakens in us the primitive emotions of curiosity, mystery, and romance in action. He is the master of a new kind of terrible and enchanting peepshow, and we crowd around him begging for "just one more look." When a writer excites and tantalizes us in this way, it seems a little idle to discuss his style. Let pedants, then, if they will, say that Mr. Kipling has no style; yet if so, how shall we designate such passages as this, frequent enough among his more exotic stories?

Come back with me to the north and be among men once more. Come back when this matter is accomplished and I call for thee. The bloom of the peach orchards is upon all the valley, and *here* is only dust and a great stink. There is a pleasant wind among the mulberry trees, and the streams are bright with snow-water, and the caravans go up and the caravans go down, and a hundred fires sparkle in the gut of the pass, and tent-peg answers hammer-nose, and pony squeals to pony across the drift-smoke of the evening. It is good in the north now. Come back with me. Let us return to our own people. Come!

I.

THE private life of Mr. Rudyard Kipling is not a matter of public interest, and I should be very unwilling to exploit it, even if I had the means of doing so. The youngest of living writers should really be protected for a few years longer against those who chirp and gabble about the unessential. All that needs to be known, in order to give him his due chronological place, is that he was born in Bombay in Christmas week, 1865, and that he is therefore only in his twenty-sixth year yet. The careful student of what he has published will collect from it the impression that Mr. Kipling was in India at an age when few European children remain there; that he returned to England for a brief period; that he began a career on his own account in India at an unusually early age; that he has led a life of extraordinary vicissitude, as a journalist, as a war correspondent, as a civilian in the wake of the army; that an insatiable curiosity has led him to shrink from no experience that might help to solve the strange riddles of Oriental existence; and that he is distinguished from other active, adventurous, and inquisitive persons in that his capacious memory retains every impression that it captures. Beyond this, all that must here be said about the man is that his stories began to be published—I think about eight years ago—in local newspapers of India, that his first book of verse, "Departmental Ditties," appeared in 1886, while his prose stories were not collected from a Lahore journal, of which he was the sub-editor, until 1888, when a volume of "Plain Tales from the Hills" appeared in Calcutta. In the same year six successive pamphlets or thin books appeared in an "Indian Railway Library," published at Allahabad, under the titles of "Soldiers Three," "The Gadsbys," "In Black and White," "Under the Deodars," "The Phantom Rickshaw," and "Wee Willie Winkie." These formed the literary baggage of Mr. Rudyard Kipling when, in 1889, he came home to find himself suddenly famous at the age of twenty-three.

Since his arrival in England Mr. Kipling has not been idle. In 1890 he brought out a Christmas annual called "The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot," and a short novel, "The Light that Failed." Already in 1891 he has published a fresh collection of tales called (in America) "Mine Own People," and a second miscellany of verses. This is by no means a complete record of his activity, but it includes the names of all his important writings. At an age when few future novelists have yet produced anything at all, Mr. Kipling is already voluminous. It would be absurd not to acknowledge that a danger lies in this precocious fe-



cundity. It would probably be an excellent thing for every one concerned if this brilliant youth could be deprived of pens and ink for a few years and be buried again somewhere in the far East. There should be a "close time" for authors no less than for seals, and the extraordinary fullness and richness of Mr. Kipling's work does not completely reassure us.

The publications which I have named above have not, as a rule, any structural cohesion. With the exception of "Badalia Herodsfoot" and "The Light that Failed," which deal with phases of London life, their contents might be thrown together without much loss of relation. The general mass so formed could then be re-divided into several coherent sections. It may be remarked that Mr. Kipling's short stories, of which, as I have said, we hold nearly a hundred, mainly deal with three or four distinct classes of Indian life. We may roughly distinguish these as the British soldier in India, the Anglo-Indian, the Native, and the British child in India. In the following pages I shall endeavor to characterize his treatment of these four classes, and finally to say a word about him as a poet.

## II.

THERE can be no question that the side upon which Mr. Kipling's talent has most delicately tickled British curiosity, and British patriotism too, is his revelation of the soldier in India. A great mass of our countrymen are constantly being drafted out to the East on Indian service. They serve their time, are recalled, and merge in the mass of our population; their strange temporary isolation between the civilian and the native and their practical inability to find public expression for their feelings make these men — to whom, though we so often forget it, we owe the maintenance of the English Empire in the East — an absolutely silent section of the community. Of their officers we may know something, although "A Conference of the Powers" may perhaps have awakened us to the fact that we know very little. Still, people like Tick Boileau and Captain Maffin of the Duke of Derry's Pink Hussars are of ourselves; we meet them before they go out and when they come back; they marry our sisters and our daughters; and they lay down the law about India after dinner. Of the private soldier, on the other hand, of his loves and hates, sorrows and pleasures, of the way in which the vast, hot, wearisome country and its mysterious inhabitants strike him, of his attitude towards India, and of the way in which India treats him, we know, or knew until Mr. Kipling enlightened us, absolutely nothing. It is not surprising, then, if the novelty of this portion of his writings has

struck ordinary English readers more than that of any other.

This section of Mr. Kipling's work occupies the seven tales called "Soldiers Three," and a variety of stories scattered through his other books. In order to make his point of view that of the men themselves, not spoiled by the presence of superior officers or by social restraint of any sort, the author takes upon himself the character of an almost silent young civilian who has gained the warm friendship of three soldiers, whose intimate companion and chum he becomes. Most of the military stories, though not all, are told by one of these three, or else recount their adventures or caprices. Before opening the book called "Soldiers Three," however, the reader will do well to make himself familiar with the opening pages of a comparatively late story, "The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney," in which the characteristics of the famous three are more clearly defined than elsewhere. Mulvaney, the Irish giant, who has been the "grizzled, tender, and very wise Ulysses" to successive generations of young and foolish recruits, is a great creation. He is the father of the craft of arms to his associates; he has served with various regiments from Bermuda to Halifax; he is "old in war, scarred, reckless, resourceful, and in his pious hours an unequaled soldier." Learoyd, the second of these friends, is "six and a half feet of slow-moving, heavy-footed Yorkshireman, born on the wolds, bred in the dales, and educated chiefly among the carriers' carts at the back of York railway-station." The third is Ortheris, a little man as sharp as a needle, "a fox-terrier of a cockney," an inveterate poacher and dog-stealer.

Of these three strongly contrasted types the first and the third live in Mr. Kipling's pages with absolute reality. I must confess that Learoyd is to me a little shadowy, and even in a late story, "On Greenhow Hill," which has apparently been written in order to emphasize the outline of the Yorkshireman, I find myself chiefly interested in the incidental part, the sharp-shooting of Ortheris. It seems as though Mr. Kipling required, for the artistic balance of his cycle of stories, a third figure, and had evolved Learoyd while he observed and created Mulvaney and Ortheris, nor am I sure that places could not be pointed out where Learoyd, save for the dialect, melts undistinguishably into an incarnation of Mulvaney. The others are studied from the life, and by an observer who goes deep below the surface of conduct. How penetrating the study is, and how clear the diagnosis, may be seen in one or two stories which lie somewhat outside the popular group. It is no superficial idler among men who has taken down the strange notes on



military hysteria which inspire "The Madness of Ortheris" and "In the Matter of a Private," while the skill with which the battered giant Mulvaney, who has been a corporal and then has been reduced for misconduct, who to the ordinary view and in the eyes of all but the wisest of his officers is a dissipated blackguard, is made to display the rapidity, wit, resource, and high moral feeling which he really possesses, is extraordinary.

We have hitherto had in English literature no portraits of private soldiers like these, and yet the soldier is an object of interest and of very real, if vague and inefficient, admiration to his fellow-citizens. Mr. Thomas Hardy has painted a few excellent soldiers, but in a more romantic light and a far more pastoral setting. Other studies of this kind in fiction have either been slight and unsubstantial, or else they have been, as in the baby-writings of a certain novelist who has enjoyed popularity for a moment, odious in their sentimental unreality. There seems to be something essentially volatile about the soldier's memory. His life is so monotonous, so hedged in by routine, that he forgets the details of it as soon as the restraint is removed, or else he looks back upon it to see it bathed in a fictitious haze of sentiment. The absence of sentimentality in Mr. Kipling's version of the soldier's life in India is one of its great merits. What romance it assumes under his treatment is due to the curious contrasts it encourages. We see the ignorant and raw English youth transplanted, at the very moment when his instincts begin to develop, into a country where he is divided from everything which can remind him of his home, where by noon and night, in the bazar, in barracks, in the glowing scrub jungle, in the ferny defiles of the hills, everything he sees and hears and smells and feels produces on him an unfamiliar and an unwelcome impression. How he behaves himself under these new circumstances, what code of laws still binds his conscience, what are his relaxations and what his observations, these are the questions which we ask and which Mr. Kipling essays for the first time to answer.

Among the short stories which Mr. Kipling has dedicated to the British soldier in India there are a few which excel all the rest as works of art. I do not think that any one will deny that of this inner selection none exceeds in skill or originality "The Taking of Lungtungpen." Those who have not read this little masterpiece have yet before them the pleasure of becoming acquainted with one of the best short stories not merely in English but in any language. I do not know how to praise adequately the technical merit of this little narrative. It possesses to the full that masculine buoyancy, that power of sustaining an extremely spirited narrative in

a tone appropriate to the action, which is one of Mr. Kipling's rare gifts. Its concentration, which never descends into obscurity, its absolute novelty, its direct and irresistible appeal to what is young and daring and absurdly splendid, are unsurpassed. To read it, at all events to admire and enjoy it, is to recover for a moment a little of that dare-devil quality that lurks somewhere in the softest and the baldest of us. Only a very young man could have written it, perhaps, but still more certainly only a young man of genius.

A little less interesting, in a totally different way, is "The Daughter of the Regiment," with its extraordinarily vivid account of the breaking-out of cholera in a troop-train. Of "The Madness of Ortheris" I have already spoken; as a work of art this again seems to me somewhat less remarkable, because carried out with less completeness. But it would be hard to find a parallel, of its own class, to "The Rout of the White Hussars," with its study of the effects of what is believed to be supernatural on a gathering of young fellows who are absolutely without fear of any phenomenon of which they comprehend the nature. In a very late story, "The Courting of Dinah Shadd," Mr. Kipling has shown that he is able to deal with the humors and matrimonial amours of India barrack-life just as rapidly, fully, and spiritedly as with the more serious episodes of a soldier's career. The scene between Judy Sheehy and Dinah, as told by Mulvaney in that story, is pure comedy, without a touch of farce.

On the whole, however, the impression left by Mr. Kipling's military stories is one of melancholy. Tommy Atkins, whom the author knows so well and sympathizes with so truly, is a solitary being in India. In all these tales I am conscious of the barracks as of an island in a desolate ocean of sand. All around is the infinite waste of India, obscure, monotonous, immense, inhabited by black men and pariah dogs, Pathans and green parrots, kites and crocodiles, and long solitudes of high grass. The island in this sea is a little collection of young men, sent out from the remoteness of England to serve "the Widder," and to help to preserve for her the rich and barbarous empire of the East. This microcosm of the barracks has its own laws, its own morals, its own range of emotional sentiment. What these are the new writer has (not told us, for that would be a long story) but shown us that he himself has divined. He has held the door open for a moment, and has revealed to us a set of very human creations. One thing, at least, the biographer of Mulvaney and Ortheris has no difficulty in persuading us, namely, that "God in his wisdom has made the heart of the British soldier,



who is very often an unlicked ruffian, as soft as the heart of a little child, in order that he may believe in and follow his officers into tight and nasty places."

### III.

THE Anglo-Indians with whom Mr. Kipling deals are of two kinds. I must confess that there is no section of his work which appears to me so insignificant as that which deals with Indian "society." The eight tales which are bound together as "The Story of the Gadsbys" are doubtless very early productions. I have been told, but I know not whether on good authority, that they were published before the author was twenty-one. Judged as the observation of Anglo-Indian life by so young a boy, they are, it is needless to say, astonishingly clever. Some pages in them can never, I suppose, come to seem unworthy of his later fame. The conversation in "The Tents of Kedar," where Captain Gadsby breaks to Mrs. Herriott that he is engaged to be married, and absolutely darkens her world to her during "a Naini Tal dinner for thirty-five," is of consummate adroitness. What a "Naini Tal dinner" is I have not the slightest conception, but it is evidently something very sumptuous and public, and if any practised hand of the old social school could have contrived the thrust and parry under the fire of seventy critical eyes better than young Mr. Kipling has done, I know not who that writer is. In quite another way the pathos of the little bride's delirium in "The Valley of the Shadow" is of a very high, almost of the highest, order.

But, as a rule, Mr. Kipling's "society" Anglo-Indians are not drawn better than those which other Indian novelists have created for our diversion. There is a sameness in the type of devouring female, and though Mr. Kipling devises several names for it, and would fain persuade us that Mrs. Herriott, and Mrs. Reiver, and Mrs. Hauksbee possess subtle differences which distinguish them, yet I confess I am not persuaded. They all—and the Venus Annodomini as well—appear to me to be the same high-colored, rather ill-bred, not wholly spoiled professional coquette. Mr. Kipling seems to be too impatient of what he calls "the shiny toy-scum stuff people call civilization" to paint these ladies very carefully. "The Phantom 'Rickshaw," in which a hideously selfish man is made to tell the story of his own cruelty and of his mechanical remorse, is indeed highly original, but here it is the man, not the woman, in whom we are interested. The proposal of marriage in the dust-storm in "False Dawn," a theatrical, lurid scene,

though scarcely natural, is highly effective. The archery contest in "Cupid's Arrows" needs only to be compared with a similar scene in "Daniel Deronda" to show how much more closely Mr. Kipling keeps his eye on detail than George Eliot did. But these things are rare in this class of his stories, and too often the Anglo-Indian social episodes are choppy, unconvincing, and not very refined.

All is changed when the central figure is a man. Mr. Kipling's officials and civilians are admirably vivid and of an amazing variety. If any one wishes to know why this new author has been received with joy and thankfulness by the Anglo-Saxon world, it is really not necessary for him to go further for a reason than to the moral tale of "The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin." Let the author of that tract speak for himself.

Every man is entitled to his own religious opinions; but no man—least of all a junior—has a right to thrust these down other men's throats. The government sends out weird civilians now and again; but McGoggin was the queerest exported for a long time. He was clever—brilliantly clever—but his cleverness worked the wrong way. Instead of keeping to the study of the vernaculars, he had read some books written by a man called Comte, I think, and a man called Spencer, and a Professor Clifford. [You will find these books in the Library.] They deal with people's insides from the point of view of men who have no stomachs. There was no order against his reading them, but his mama should have smacked him. . . . I do not say a word against this creed. It was made up in town, where there is nothing but machinery and asphalt and building—all shut in by the fog. . . . But in this country [India], where you really see humanity—raw, brown, naked humanity—with nothing between it and the blazing sky, and only the used-up, over-handled earth underfoot, the notion somehow dies away, and most folk come back to simpler theories.

Those who will not come back to simpler theories are prigs, for whom the machine-made notion is higher than experience. Now Mr. Kipling, in his warm way, hates many things, but he hates the prig for preference. Aurelian McGoggin, better known as the Blastoderm, is a prig of the over-educated type, and upon him falls the awful calamity of sudden and complete nerve-collapse. Lieutenant Golightly, in the story which bears his name, is a prig who values himself for spotless attire and clock-work precision of manner; he therefore is mauled and muddled up to his eyes, and then arrested under painfully derogatory conditions. In "Lisbeth" we get the missionary prig, who thinks that the Indian instincts can be effaced by a veneer of Christianity. Mr. Kipling hates "the sheltered life." The men he likes are those



who have been thrown out of their depth at an early age, and taught to swim off a boat. The very remarkable story of "Thrown Away" shows the effect of preparing for India by a life "unspotted from the world" in England; it is as hopelessly tragic as any in Mr. Kipling's somewhat grim repertory.

Against the régime of the prig Mr. Kipling sets the régime of Strickland. Over and over again he introduces this mysterious figure, always with a phrase of extreme approval. Strickland is in the police, and his power consists in his determination to know the East as the natives know it. He can pass through the whole of Upper India, dressed up as a fakir, without attracting the least attention. Sometimes, as in "Beyond the Pale," he may know too much. But this is an exception, and personal to himself. Mr. Kipling's conviction is that this is the sort of man to pervade India for us, and that one Strickland is worth a thousand self-conceited civilians. But even below the Indian prig, because he has at least known India, is the final object of Mr. Kipling's loathing, "Pagett, M. P.," the radical English politician who comes out for four months to set everybody right. His chastisement is always severe and often comic. But in one very valuable paper, which Mr. Kipling must not be permitted to leave unprinted, "The Enlightenments of Pagett, M. P.," he has dealt elaborately and quite seriously with this noxious creature. Whether Mr. Kipling is right or wrong, far be it from me in my ignorance to pretend to know. But his way of putting these things is persuasive.

Since Mr. Kipling has come back from India he has written about society "of sorts" in England. Is there not perhaps in him something of Pagett, M. P., turned inside out? As a delineator of English life, at all events, he is not yet thoroughly master of his craft. Everything he writes has vigor and picturesqueness. But "The Lamentable Comedy of Willow Wood" is the sort of thing that any extremely brilliant Burman, whose English, if slightly odd, was nevertheless unimpeachable, might write of English ladies and gentlemen, having never been in England. "The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot" was in every way better, more truly observed, more credible, more artistic, but yet a little too cynical and brutal to come straight from life. And last of all there is the novel of "The Light that Failed," with its muck-discussed two endings, its oases of admirable detail in a desert of the undesirable, with its extremely disagreeable woman, and its far more brutal and detestable man, presented to us, the precious pair of them, as typical specimens of English society. I confess that it is "The Light that Failed" that has wakened me to the fact

that there are limits to this dazzling new talent, the *éclat* of which had almost lifted us off our critical feet.

## IV.

THE conception of Strickland would be very tantalizing and incomplete if we were not permitted to profit from his wisdom and experience. But, happily, Mr. Kipling is perfectly willing to take us below the surface, and to show us glimpses of the secret life of India. In so doing he puts forth his powers to their fullest extent, and I think it cannot be doubted that the tales which deal with native manners are not merely the most curious and interesting which Mr. Kipling has written, but are also the most fortunately constructed. Every one who has thought over this writer's mode of execution will have been struck with the skill with which his best work is restrained within certain limits. When inspiration flags with him, indeed, his stories may grow too long, or fail, as if from languor, before they reach their culmination. But his best short stories—and among his best we include the majority of his native Indian tales—are cast at once, as if in a mold; nothing can be detached from them without injury. In this consists his great technical advantage over almost all his English rivals; we must look to France or to America for stories fashioned in this way. In several of his tales of Indian manners this skill reaches its highest because most complicated expression. It may be comparatively easy to hold within artistic bonds a gentle episode of European amorosity. To deal, in the same form, but with infinitely greater audacity, with the muffled passions and mysterious instincts of India, to slur over nothing, to emphasize nothing, to give in some twenty pages the very spicy odor of the East, this is marvelous.

Not less than this Mr. Kipling has done in a little group of stories which I cannot but hold to be the culminating point of his genius so far. If the remainder of his writings were swept away, posterity would be able to reconstruct its Rudyard Kipling from "Without Benefit of Clergy," "The Man who Would be King," "The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes," and "Beyond the Pale." More than that, if all record of Indian habits had been destroyed, much might be conjectured from them of the pathos, the splendor, the cruelty, and the mystery of India. From "The Gate of the Hundred Sorrows" more is to be gleaned of the real action of opium-smoking, and the causes of that indulgence, than from many sapient debates in the British House of Commons. We come very close to the confines of the moonlight-colored world of magic in "The Bisara of Pooree." For pure horror and for the hopeless



impenetrability of the native conscience there is "The Recrudescence of Imray." In a revel of color and shadow, at the close of the audacious and Lucianic story of "The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney," we peep for a moment into the mystery of "a big queen's praying at Benares."

Admirable, too, are the stories which deal with the results of attempts made to melt the Asiatic and the European into one. The red-headed Irish-Thibetan who makes the king's life a burden to him in the fantastic story of "Namgay Doola" represents one extremity of this chain of grotesque Eurasians; Michele D'Cruze, the wretched little black police inspector, with a drop of white blood in his body, who wakes up to energetic action at one supreme moment of his life, is at the other. The relapse of the converted Indian is a favorite theme with this cynical observer of human nature. It is depicted in "The Judgment of Dungara," with a rattling humor worthy of Lever, where the whole mission, clad in white garments woven of the scorpion nettle, go mad with fire and plunge into the river, while the trumpet of the god bellows triumphantly from the hills. In "Lispeth" we have a study—much less skilfully worked out, however—of the Indian woman carefully Christianized from childhood reverting at once to heathenism when her passions reach maturity.

The lover of good literature, however, is likely to come back to the four stories which we named first in this section. They are the very flower of Mr. Kipling's work up to the present moment, and on these we base our highest expectations for his future. "Without Benefit of Clergy" is a study of the Indian woman as wife and mother, uncovenanted wife of the English civilian and mother of his son. The tremulous passion of Ameera, her hopes, her fears, and her agonies of disappointment, combine to form by far the most tender page which Mr. Kipling has written. For pure beauty the scene where Holden, Ameera, and the baby count the stars on the housetop for Tota's horoscope is so characteristic that, although it is too long to quote in full, its opening paragraph must here be given as a specimen of Mr. Kipling's style in this class of work.

Ameera climbed the narrow staircase that led to the flat roof. The child, placid and unwinking, lay in the hollow of her right arm, gorgeous in silver-fringed muslin, with a small skull-cap on his head. Ameera wore all that she valued most. The diamond nose-stud that takes the place of the Western patch in drawing attention to the curve of the nostril, the gold ornament in the center of the forehead studded with tallow-drop emeralds and flawed rubies, the heavy circlet of beaten gold that was fastened round her

neck by the softness of the pure metal, and the clinking curb-patterned silver anklets hanging low over the rosy ankle-bone. She was dressed in jade-green muslin, as befitted a daughter of the Faith, and from shoulder to elbow and elbow to wrist ran bracelets of silver tied with floss silk; frail glass bangles slipped over the wrist in proof of the slenderness of the hand, and certain heavy gold bracelets that had no part in her country's ornaments, but, since they were Holden's gift, and fastened with a cunning European snap, delighted her immensely.

They sat down by the low white parapet of the roof, overlooking the city and its lights.

What tragedy was in store for the gentle astrologer, or in what darkness of waters the story ends, it is needless to repeat here.

In "The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes" a civil engineer stumbles by chance on a ghastly city of the dead who do not die, trapped into it, down walls of shifting sand, on the same principle as the ant-lion secures its prey, the parallel being so close that one half suspects Mr. Kipling of having invented a human analogy to the myrmeleon. The abominable settlement of living dead men is so vividly described, and the wonders of it are so calmly, and, as it were, so temperately discussed, that no one who possesses the happy gift of believing can fail to be persuaded of the truth of the tale. The character of Gunga Dass, a Deccanee Brahmin whom Jukes finds in this reeking village, and who, reduced to the bare elements of life, preserves a little, though exceedingly little, of his old traditional obsequiousness, is an admirable study. But all such considerations are lost, as we read the story first, in the overwhelming and Poe-like horror of the situation and the extreme novelty of the conception.

A still higher place, however, I am inclined to claim for the daring invention of "The Man who Would be King." This is a longer story than is usual with Mr. Kipling, and it depends for its effect, not upon any epigrammatic surprise or extravagant dénouement of the intrigue, but on an imaginative effort brilliantly sustained through a detailed succession of events. Two ignorant and disreputable Englishmen, exiles from social life, determine to have done with the sordid struggle, and to close with a try for nothing less than empire. They are seen by the journalist who narrates the story to disappear northward from the Kumharsan Serai disguised as a mad priest and his servant starting to sell whirligigs to the Ameer of Kabul. Two years later there stumbles into the newspaper office a human creature bent into a circle, and moving his feet one over the other like a bear. This is the surviving adventurer, who, half dead and half dazed, is roused by doses of raw whisky into a condition which permits him to unravel the squalid and splendid chron-



icle of adventures beyond the utmost rim of mountains, adventures on the veritable throne of Kafiristan. The tale is recounted with great skill as from the lips of the dying king. At first, to give the needful impression of his faint, bewildered state, he mixes up his narrative, whimpers, forgets, and repeats his phrases; but by the time the curiosity of the reader is fully arrested, the tale has become limpid and straightforward enough. When it has to be drawn to a close, the symptoms of aphasia and brain-lesion are repeated. This story is conceived and conducted in the finest spirit of an artist. It is strange to the verge of being incredible, but it never outrages possibility, and the severe moderation of the author preserves our credence throughout.

It is in these Indian stories that Mr. Kipling displays more than anywhere else the accuracy of his eye and the retentiveness of his memory. No detail escapes him, and, without seeming to emphasize the fact, he is always giving an exact feature where those who are in possession of fewer facts or who see less vividly are satisfied with a shrewd generality.

## v.

IN Mr. Kipling's first volume there was one story which struck quite a different note from all the others, and gave promise of a new delineator of children. "Tods' Amendment," which is a curiously constructed piece of work, is in itself a political allegory. It is to be noticed that when he warms to his theme the author puts aside the trifling fact that Tods is an infant of six summers, and makes him give a clear statement of collated native opinion worthy of a barrister in ample practice. What led to the story, one sees without difficulty, was the wish to emphasize the fact that unless the Indian government humbles itself, and becomes like Tods, it can never legislate with efficiency, because it never can tell what all the *jhampanis* and *saises* in the bazar really wish for. If this were all, Mr. Kipling in creating Tods would have shown no more real acquaintance with children than other political allegorists have shown with sylphs or Chinese philosophers. But Mr. Kipling is always an artist, and in order to make a setting for his child-professor of jurisprudence, he invented a really convincing and delightful world of conquering infancy. Tods, who lives up at Simla with Tods' mama, and knows everybody, is "an utterly fearless young pagan," who pursues his favorite kid even into the sacred presence of the Supreme Legislative Council, and is on terms of equally well-bred familiarity with the Viceroy and with Futtah Khan, the villainous loafer *khit* from Mussoorie.

To prove that "Tods' Amendment" was not an accident, and also, perhaps, to show that he could write about children purely and simply, without any after-thought of allegory, he brought out, as the sixth instalment of the "Indian Railway Library," a little volume entirely devoted to child-life. Of the four stories contained in this book one is among the finest productions of its author, while two others are very good indeed. There are also, of course, the children in "The Light that Failed," although they are too closely copied from the author's previous creations in "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep"; and in other writings of his children take a position sufficiently prominent to justify us in considering this as one of the main divisions of his work.

In his preface to "Wee Willie Winkie" Mr. Kipling has sketched for us the attitude which he adopts towards babies. "Only women," he says, but we may doubt if he means it, "understand children thoroughly; but if a merman keeps very quiet, and humbles himself properly, and refrains from talking down to his superiors, the children will sometimes be good to him, and let him see what they think about the world." This is a curious form of expression, and suggests the naturalist more than the lover of children. So might we conceive a successful zoölogist describing the way to note the habits of wild animals and birds, by keeping very quiet, and lying low in the grass, and refraining from making sudden noises. This is, indeed, the note by which we may distinguish Mr. Kipling from such true lovers of childhood as Mrs. Ewing. He has no very strong emotion in the matter, but he patiently and carefully collects data, partly out of his own faithful and capacious personal memory, partly out of what he observes.

The Tods type he would probably insist that he has observed. A finer and more highly developed specimen of it is given in "Wee Willie Winkie," the hero of which is a noble infant of overpowering vitality, who has to be put under military discipline to keep him in any sort of domestic order, and who, while suffering under two days' confinement to barracks (the house and veranda), saves the life of a headstrong girl. The way in which Wee Willie Winkie—who is of Mr. Kipling's favorite age, six—does this is at once wholly delightful and a terrible strain to credence. The baby sees Miss Allardyce cross the river, which he has always been forbidden to do, because the river is the frontier, and beyond it are bad men, goblins, Afghans, and the like. He feels that she is in danger, he breaks mutinously out of barracks on his pony and follows her, and when she has an accident, and is surrounded by twenty hill-men, he saves her by his spirit and



by his complicated display of resource. To criticize this story, which is told with infinite zest and picturesqueness, seems merely priggish. Yet it is contrary to Mr. Kipling's whole intellectual attitude to suppose him capable of writing what he knows to be supernatural romance. We have therefore to suppose that in India infants "of the dominant race" are so highly developed at six, physically and intellectually, as to be able to ride hard, alone, across a difficult river, and up pathless hilly country, to contrive a plan for succoring a hapless lady, and to hold a little regiment of savages at bay by mere force of eye. If Wee Willie Winkie had been twelve instead of six, the feat would have been just possible. But then the romantic contrast between the baby and his virile deeds would not have been nearly so piquant. In all this Mr. Kipling, led away by sentiment and a false ideal, is not quite the honest craftsman that he should be.

But when, instead of romancing and creating, he is content to observe children, he is excellent in this as in other branches of careful natural history. But the children he observes, are, or we much misjudge him, himself. "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep" is a strange compound of work at first and at second hand. Aunt Rosa (delightfully known, without a suspicion of supposed relationship, as "Anti-rosa"), the Mrs. Squeers of the Rocklington lodgings, is a sub-Dickensian creature, tricked out with a few touches of reality, but mainly a survival of early literary hatreds. The boy Harry and the soft little sister of Punch are rather shadowy. But Punch lives with an intense vitality, and here, without any indiscretion, we may be sure that Mr. Kipling has looked inside his own heart and drawn from memory. Nothing in the autobiographies of their childhood by Tolstoi and Pierre Loti, nothing in Mr. R. L. Stevenson's "Child's Garden of Verses," is more valuable as a record of the development of childhood than the account of how Punch learned to read, moved by curiosity to know what the "falchion" was with which the German man split the Griffin open. Very nice, also, is the reference to the mysterious rune, called "Sonny, my Soul," with which mama used to sing Punch to sleep.

By far the most powerful and ingenious story, however, which Mr. Kipling has yet dedicated to a study of childhood is "The Drums of The Fore and Aft." "The Fore and Aft" is a nickname given in derision to a crack regiment, whose real title is "The Fore and Fit," in memory of a sudden calamity which befell them on a certain day in an Afghan pass, when, if it had not been for two little blackguard drummer-boys, they would have been wofully and contemptibly cut to pieces, as they were

routed, by a dashing troop of Ghazis. The two little heroes, who only conquer to die, are called Jakin and Lew, stunted children of fourteen, "gutter-birds" who drink and smoke and "do everything but lie," and are the disgrace of the regiment. In their little souls, however, there burns what Mr. Pater would call a "hard, gem-like flame" of patriotism, and they are willing to undergo any privation, if only they may wipe away the stigma of being "bloomin' non-combatants." In the intervals of showing us how that stain was completely removed, Mr. Kipling gives us not merely one of the most thrilling and effective battles in fiction, but a singularly delicate portrait of two grubby little souls turned white and splendid by an element of native greatness. It would be difficult to point to a page of modern English more poignant than that which describes how "the only acting-drummers who were took along," and—left behind, moved forward across the pass alone to the enemy's front, and sounded on drum and fife the return of the regiment to duty. But perhaps the most remarkable feature of the whole story is that a record of shocking British retreat and failure is so treated as to flatter in its tenderest susceptibilities the pride of British patriotism.

## VI.

MR. KIPLING'S *début* was made in a volume of verse, called "Departmental Ditties," which has continued to enjoy considerable popularity and has frequently been reprinted. This collection of comical and satirical pieces representative of Indian official life has, however, very slight literary value. The verses in it are mostly imitations of popular English and American bards, with but here and there a trace of the true accent of the author in such strong though ill-executed strains as "The Story of Uria," and "The Song of the Women." In other cases they follow, but more faintly, the lines of the author's prose stories. It cannot be said that in this collection Mr. Kipling soars above the "Ali Babas" and "Aliph Cheems" who strike an agreeable lyre for the entertainment of their fellow Anglo-Indians. No claim for the title of poet could be founded on literary baggage so slight as "Departmental Ditties."

Of late years, however, Mr. Kipling has put forward, in a great variety of directions, essays in verse which deserve much higher consideration. He has indulged the habit of prefixing to his prose stories fragments of poems which must be his own, for there is nobody else to claim them. Some of these are as vivid and tantalizing as the tiny bits we possess of lost Greek tragedians. Among them is to be found



this extract from a "barrack-room ballad" used to introduce the story of "The Madness of Private Ortheris":

Oh! where would I be when my froat was dry?  
Oh! where would I be when the bullets fly?  
Oh! where would I be when I come to die?

Why,  
Somewheres anigh my chum.  
If 'e 's liquor 'e 'll give me some,  
If I 'm dying 'e 'll 'old my 'ead,  
An' 'e 'll write 'em 'ome when I 'm dead.  
God send us a trusty chum!

There must have been not a few readers who, like the present writer, on finding this nugget of ballad-doggerel, felt that here was a totally unworked field just touched by the spade, and left. Happily, Mr. Kipling has digged farther and deeper, and he has written a series of barrack-room ballads which are quite unique in their kind, and of which scarcely one but is of definite and permanent value. The only writer who has, to my mind, in any degree anticipated the mixture of vulgar and realistic phraseology with the various elements of pathos combined in the lives of rough young men exiled from home is the Australian poet Adam Lindsay Gordon, whom Mr. Kipling greatly excels in variety of meter and force of language. Except in its sardonic form, humor has never been a prominent feature of Mr. Kipling's prose. I hardly know an instance of it not disturbed by irony or savagery, except the story of "Moti Guj," the mutineer elephant. But in some of the "Barrack-room Ballads" there is found the light of a genuine humor. What can be more delightful, for instance, than this appreciative description of Fuzzy-Wuzzy, by one of the Soudan force who has had to deal with him in the bush?

'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,  
An', before we know, 'e 's 'ackin' at our 'ead;  
'E 's all 'ot sand and ginger when alive,  
An' 'e 's generally shammin' when 'e 's dead.  
'E 's a daisy, e' 's a ducky, 'e 's a lamb!  
'E 's a' injia-rubber idiot on the spree;  
'E 's the on'y thing that does n't care a damn  
For a regiment of British Infantee.

So 'ere 's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in  
the Sowdan;  
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class  
fightin' man;  
And 'ere 's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ay-  
rick 'ead of 'air—  
You big black boundin' beggar—for you bruk a  
British square.

But more often, underneath the rollicking storm of the verses, there may be heard the melancholy which is characteristic of so much of the best modern writing, the murmur of that *Weltschmerz* which is never far off, at all events, from Mr. Kipling's verse. It sometimes seems as though it were the author himself who speaks to us in the soldier's impatience at the colorlessness and restraint of Western life. And it is with the exquisite melody of his own ballad of "Mandalay" that we leave the author who has so strangely moved and fascinated us, who has enlarged our horizon on one wholly neglected side, and from whom, in the near future, we have a right to expect so much imaginative invigoration. But what is he saying?—

Ship me somewhere east of Suez where the best  
is like the worst,  
Where there are n't no Ten Commandments,  
an' a man can raise a thirst;  
For the temple-bells are callin', an' it 's there  
that I would be—  
By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' lazy at  
the sea—  
On the road to Mandalay,  
Where the old flotilla lay,  
With our sick beneath the awnings when we went  
to Mandalay!  
Oh, the road to Mandalay,  
Where the flyin'-fishes play,  
An' the dawn comes up liike thunder out er  
China 'cros't the bay!

Ah, yes! Mr. Kipling, go back to the far East! Yours is not the talent to bear with patience the dry-rot of London or of New York. Disappear, another Waring, and come back in ten years' time with a fresh and still more admirable budget of precious loot out of Wonderland!

Edmund Gosse.

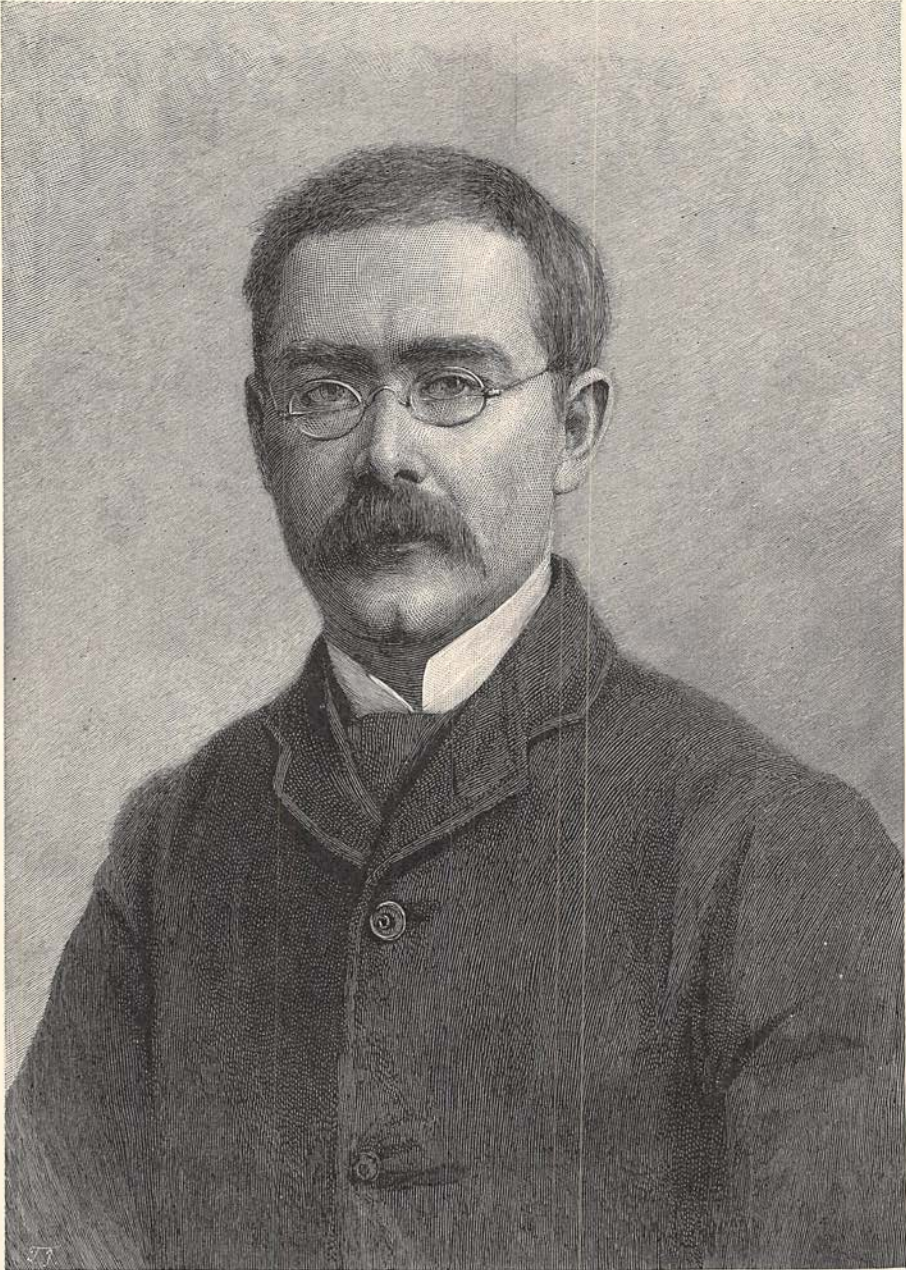
## LOVE.

LOVE came at dawn when all the world was fair,  
When crimson glories, bloom, and song were rife;  
Love came at dawn when hope's wings fanned the air,  
And murmured, "I am life."

Love came at even when the day was done,  
When heart and brain were tired, and slumber pressed;  
Love came at eve, shut out the sinking sun,  
And whispered, "I am rest."

William Wilfred Campbell.





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*J. C. Kipling*  
*Rudyard Kipling*