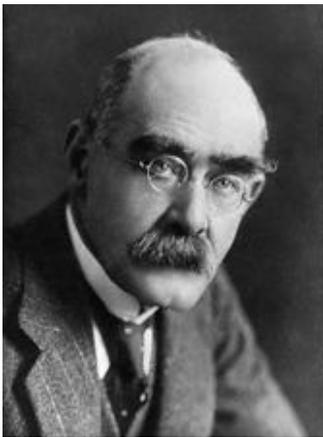


# RUDYARD KIPLING

1865 – 1936



The name “Rudyard Kipling” evokes images of the Raj in India, a time when Britannia ruled the waves, and the sun never set on the British Empire. Indeed his life spanned most of the duration of British Colonial Office rule in India (1858–1947). Kipling, for many years considered England’s unofficial poet laureate, was a strong proponent of Imperialism; he believed it was Britain’s duty to govern and civilize colonized lands. Though he was also capable of offering serious critiques of empire—and though he acknowledged that colonized people were “captives”—Kipling gave frequent voice to his belief that the British were in India to serve the native people. His famous 1899 poem “The White Man’s Burden,” published in *McClure’s Magazine*, aroused a storm of controversy, coming out at a time when many people were beginning to question the right of imperialist powers to subjugate foreigners. Nevertheless, for more than a half century

Kipling’s poems, short stories, and novels were wildly popular in India, Great Britain, and the United States, and in 1907 the Nobel Foundation honored him “in consideration of the power of observation, originality of imagination, virility of ideas and remarkable talent for narration which characterize the creations of this world-famous author.” Thus Kipling became the first British writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Kipling was named after Rudyard Lake in England, but he was born in Bombay (now Mumbai), India. Both his father, John Lockwood Kipling, professor of architectural sculpture at the University of Bombay, and his mother, Alice Macdonald, were children of Methodist ministers. Macdonald and her sisters were all associated with distinguished people—one sister married the neoclassical painter Sir Edward Poynter; another was the mother of Stanley Baldwin, who became Prime Minister of England in 1923; and another was the wife of the Pre-Raphaelite painter Sir Edward Burne-Jones. Kipling spent his first six years with his parents, learning the languages of his Indian friends and imbibing the cultural wealth of India. Of his school years, however, Kipling would say in his autobiography that his only happy moments were spent at the Burne-Jones home. Like many children of expatriates, he and his sister were sent to England for their education, where they spent five miserable years with severe, Calvinist foster parents in a home that Kipling would later call the House of Desolation. In 1878 he transferred to a boarding school in Devon (depicted in *Stalky and Co.*), which was also brutal at times, but where he acquired his schoolboy ethos (the sense of loyalty to and camaraderie with his peers so evident in his work) and began to write in earnest.

Upon graduation, Kipling moved back to India, working first as a newspaper journalist for the *Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore (now part of Pakistan) and then as an editor of *Pioneer* in Allahabad. Many of the poems and stories he wrote during that time were collected in *Departmental Ditties* (1886) and *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888), in which Kipling wrote about the moral and psychological difficulties of integrating Indian and British cultures. The Indian Railway Library also published some of Kipling’s stories, such as *The Phantom Rickshaw* and *Wee Willie Winkie* (1888), in booklet form. By the time he returned to England in 1889, Kipling was a well-established author in India and had become very popular in Britain as well. The English public loved his “tales of

the exotic,” which took them to worlds they could scarcely imagine and introduced them to cultures they would likely never experience first-hand.

Kipling published several collections of short stories and poems in the early 1890s; the volume *Barrack-Room Ballads and Other Verses* (1892), which included such well-known poems as “Mandalay” and “Gunga Din,” went into more than 50 editions in the 30 years following. Two early novels, *The Light that Failed* (1891) and *The Naulahka* (1892), did not fare as well. Nevertheless, in this period Kipling acquired a reputation as a spokesman for the people. With lyrics often inspired by street ballads and music hall ditties, he wrote using everyday language and expressed the thoughts of soldiers and other working people.

In 1892 Kipling married an American, Caroline Balestier, and the couple settled in Vermont. Although Kipling was unhappy in the United States, he wrote some of his most esteemed works during his five-year stay there, including *The Jungle Book* (1894), *The Second Jungle Book* (1895), and *Captains Courageous* (1897). On a return trip to the United States in 1899, Josephine, one of the three Kipling children, died. Another child, John, died in action in World War I; Kipling eventually dealt with his grief by writing a history of his son’s regiment, *The Irish Guards in the Great War*, published in 1923.

The family eventually settled in Sussex, England, but Kipling continued to travel the world as a newspaper correspondent. He covered the Boer War in South Africa in 1899 and returned to the region annually thereafter, staying in a house given to him by Cecil Rhodes, the famous British imperialist and business magnate. Kipling’s own imperialist, political sentiments were disseminated widely at the turn of the century, most notably in the London *Times*, which published “Recessional,” composed in honor of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, and “The White Man’s Burden.” The latter poem was soon afterward countered in the London magazine *Truth* by a poem by Henry Labouchère, which changed Kipling’s opening refrain from “Take up the white man’s burden,” to “Pile on the brown man’s burden.” Amid the controversy that ensued, a letter to the editor was published that read: “There is something almost sickening in this ‘imperial’ talk of assuming and bearing burdens for the good of others. They are never assumed or held where they are not found to be of material advantage or ministering to honor or glory.” Kipling, however, felt that his poem was not a noble call to arms or a justification for colonization, but rather a warning of the costs involved on both sides of imperialist missions abroad.

Kipling’s least controversial and best-loved novel appeared in 1901. *Kim* is a picaresque adventure tale of a British beggar boy, the orphaned son of an Irish soldier. Raised in Lahore by an opium-addicted, half-caste woman, Kim O’Hare comes to believe he is destined for greatness and eventually travels through India with a holy man in search of his glorious future. In 1907, the Nobel committee said that in *Kim* “there is an elevated diction as well as a tenderness and charm . . . . In sketching a personality he makes clear, almost in his first words, the peculiar traits of that person’s character and temper . . . . [Kipling is] capable of reproducing with astounding accuracy the minutest detail from real life.”

In the decades following his Nobel Prize, Kipling’s literary output dwindled somewhat amid controversy over his politics and grief over the loss of two of his three children. Even former admirers, such as W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot, began to be critical of Kipling’s unwavering allegiance to British imperialism. Nevertheless, the last half century has seen a resurgence of interest in his work.

Sir Ian Hamilton said that Kipling’s death in January 1936 (two days before the death of Kipling’s friend, King George V) placed “a full stop to the period when war was a romance and the expansion of our Empire a duty.” When his ashes were interred in Poets’ Corner of Westminster Abbey, Kipling’s pallbearers included the then-prime minister of England, a field marshal, and the admiral of the fleet; the poem “Recessional” was sung as a hymn. Kipling’s unfinished autobiography, *Something of Myself*, was published posthumously a year after his death.



*Gunga Din*

You may talk o' gin and beer  
 When you're quartered safe out 'ere,  
 An' you're sent to penny-fights<sup>1</sup> an' Aldershot<sup>1</sup> it; *skirmishes*  
 But when it comes to slaughter  
 5 You will do your work on water,  
 An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.  
 Now in Injia's sunny clime,  
 Where I used to spend my time  
 A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,  
 10 Of all them blackfaced crew  
 The finest man I knew  
 Was our regimental bhisti,<sup>o</sup> Gunga Din. *water carrier*  
 He was "Din! Din! Din!"  
 "You limpin' lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!"  
 15 "Hi! Slippy *hitherao!*<sup>2</sup>  
 "Water, get it! *Paneee lao,*<sup>3</sup>  
 "You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din."  
 The uniform 'e wore  
 Was nothin' much before,  
 20 An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,  
 For a piece o' twisty rag  
 An' a goatskin water bag  
 Was all the field equipment 'e could find.  
 When the sweatin' troop train lay  
 25 In a sidin' through the day,  
 Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,  
 We shouted "Harry By!"  
 Till our throats were bricky-dry,  
 Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.  
 30 It was "Din! Din! Din!"  
 "You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?"  
 "You put some *juldee*<sup>o</sup> in it *speed*  
 "Or I'll *marrow*<sup>o</sup> you this minute *hit*  
 "If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!"

35 'E would dot an' carry one<sup>4</sup>  
 Till the longest day was done;  
 An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.  
 If we charged or broke or cut,  
 You could bet your bloomin' nut,  
 40 'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.  
 With 'is mussick<sup>o</sup> on 'is back, *waterbag*  
 'E would skip with our attack,  
 An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire,"  
 An' for all 'is dirty 'ide  
 45 'E was white, clear white, inside  
 When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!  
 It was "Din! Din! Din!"  
 With the bullets kickin' dust spots on the green.  
 When the cartridges ran out,  
 50 You could hear the front ranks shout,  
 "Hi! ammunition mules an' Gunga Din!"

I shan't forgit the night  
 When I dropped be'ind the fight  
 With a bullet where my belt plate should 'a' been.  
 55 I was chokin' mad with thirst,  
 An' the man that spied me first  
 Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.  
 'E lifted up my 'ead,  
 An' he plugged me where I bled,  
 60 An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water green.  
 It was crawlin' and it stunk,  
 But of all the drinks I've drunk,  
 I'm gratefulest to one from Gunga Din.  
 It was "Din! Din! Din!"  
 65 "'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;  
 "'E's chawin' up the ground,  
 "'An' 'e's kickin' all around:  
 "For Gawd's sake git the water, Gunga Din!"

'E carried me away  
 70 To where a dooli<sup>o</sup> lay, *stretcher*  
 An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.  
 'E put me safe inside,

<sup>1</sup> *Aldershot* Town southwest of London, site of a military training centre.

<sup>2</sup> *Slippy hitherao* Come here.

<sup>3</sup> *Paneee lao* Bring water.

<sup>4</sup> *dot an' carry one* From mathematics: calculate.

An' just before 'e died,  
 "I 'ope you liked your drink," sez Gunga Din.  
 75 So I'll meet 'im later on  
 At the place where 'e is gone—  
 Where it's always double drill and no canteen.  
 'E'll be squattin' on the coals  
 Givin' drink to poor damned souls,  
 80 An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din!  
     Yes, Din! Din! Din!  
     You Lazarushian<sup>1</sup>-leather Gunga Din!  
     Though I've belted you and flayed you,  
     By the livin' Gawd that made you,  
 85 You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!  
 —1890

*The Widow at Windsor*<sup>2</sup>

'AVE you 'eard o' the Widow at Windsor  
 With a hairy gold crown on 'er 'ead?  
 She 'as ships on the foam—she 'as millions at 'ome,  
 An' she pays us poor beggars in red.<sup>3</sup>  
 5 (Ow, poor beggars in red!)  
 There's 'er nick<sup>4</sup> on the cavalry 'orses,  
 There's 'er mark<sup>5</sup> on the medical stores—  
 An' 'er troopers<sup>o</sup> you'll find with a fair wind be'ind *troop-ships*  
 That takes us to various wars.  
 10 (Poor beggars!—barbarious wars!)  
     Then 'ere's to the Widow at Windsor,  
     An' 'ere's to the stores an' the guns,  
     The men an' the 'orses what makes up the forces  
     O' Missis Victorier's sons.  
 15 (Poor beggars! Victorier's sons!)

Walk wide o' the Widow at Windsor,  
 For 'alf o' Creation she owns:  
 We 'ave bought 'er the same with the sword an' the flame,

<sup>1</sup> *Lazarushian* Cf. Luke 16; the good Lazarus was a leper/beggar.

<sup>2</sup> *The Widow at Windsor* Queen Victoria, who, upon losing her husband in 1861, went into permanent mourning. (See the "In Context" section below for more information.)

<sup>3</sup> *red* Red coats of British soldiers.

<sup>4</sup> *'er nick* Mark distinguishing animals as belonging to the queen.

<sup>5</sup> *'er mark* "V.R.I.," the queen's identification mark.

An' we've salted it down with our bones.  
 20 (Poor beggars!—it's blue with our bones!)  
 Hands off o' the sons o' the Widow,  
 Hands off o' the goods in 'er shop,  
 For the kings must come down an' the emperors frown  
 When the Widow at Windsor says "Stop!"  
 25 (Poor beggars!—we're sent to say "Stop!")  
     Then 'ere's to the lodge o' the Widow,  
     From the pole to the tropics it runs—  
     To the lodge that we tile with the rank an' the file,  
     An' open in form with the guns.  
 30 (Poor beggars!—it's always they guns!)

We 'ave 'eard o' the Widow at Windsor,  
 It's safest to leave 'er alone:  
 For 'er sentries we stand by the sea an' the land  
 Wherever the bugles are blown.  
 35 (Poor beggars!—an' don't we get blown!)  
 Take 'old o' the Wings o' the Mornin',<sup>6</sup>  
 An' flop round the earth till you're dead;  
 But you won't get away from the tune that they play  
 To the bloomin' old rag over'ead.  
 40 (Poor beggars!—it's 'ot over'ead!)  
     Then 'ere's to the sons o' the Widow,  
     Wherever, 'owever they roam.  
     'Ere's all they desire, an' if they require  
     A speedy return to their 'ome.  
 45 (Poor beggars! they'll never see 'ome!)  
 —1890

*Recessional*<sup>7</sup>

God of our fathers, known of old,  
 Lord of our far-flung battle-line,  
 Beneath whose awful Hand we hold  
 Dominion over palm and pine—

<sup>6</sup> *Wings of the Mornin'* From Psalm 139.9–10: "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; / Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

<sup>7</sup> *Recessional* Hymn written for Queen Victoria's sixtieth anniversary Jubilee.

5 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget<sup>1</sup>—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;  
The captains and the kings depart:  
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,  
10 An humble and a contrite heart.<sup>2</sup>  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;  
On dune and headland sinks the fire:  
15 Lo, all our pomp of yesterday  
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!<sup>3</sup>  
Judge of the nations, spare us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose  
20 Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,  
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,  
Or lesser breeds without the law<sup>4</sup>—  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

25 For heathen heart that puts her trust  
In reeking tube and iron shard,  
All valiant dust that builds on dust,  
And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,  
For frantic boast and foolish word—  
30 Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord!  
—1897

### *The White Man's Burden*

<sup>1</sup> *Lest we forget* Cf. Deuteronomy 4.9: “[T]ake heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons.”

<sup>2</sup> *contrite heart* Cf. Psalms 51.17: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart.”

<sup>3</sup> *Nineveh and Tyre* Ruined cities that were once capitals of empires.

<sup>4</sup> *Gentiles ... law* Cf. Romans 2.14: “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.”

### THE UNITED STATES AND THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS<sup>5</sup>

Take up the White Man's burden—  
Send forth the best ye breed—  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
5 To wait in heavy harness  
On fluttered folk and wild—  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half devil and half child.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
10 In patience to abide,  
To veil the threat of terror  
And check the show of pride;  
By open speech and simple,  
An hundred times made plain.  
15 To seek another's profit,  
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
The savage wars of peace—  
Fill full the mouth of Famine  
20 And bid the sickness cease;  
And when your goal is nearest  
The end for others sought,  
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly  
Bring all your hope to nought.

25 Take up the White Man's burden—  
No tawdry rule of kings,  
But toil of serf and sweeper—  
The tale of common things.  
The ports ye shall not enter,  
30 The roads ye shall not tread,  
Go make them with your living,  
And mark them with your dead!

Take up the White Man's burden—  
And reap his old reward:  
35 The blame of those ye better,  
The hate of those ye guard—

<sup>5</sup> *United States and the Philippine Islands* Response to the American takeover of the Philippines after the Spanish American War of 1898. (See the “In Context” section below for more information.)

The cry of hosts ye humour  
 (Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—  
 “Why brought ye us from bondage,  
 40 “Our loved Egyptian night?”

Take up the White Man’s burden—  
 Ye dare not stoop to less—  
 Nor call too loud on Freedom  
 To cloak your weariness;  
 45 By all ye cry or whisper,  
 By all ye leave or do,  
 The silent, sullen peoples  
 Shall weigh your gods and you.

Take up the White Man’s burden—  
 50 Have done with childish days—  
 The lightly proffered laurel,<sup>1</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*—<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> *laurel* Leaves of the bay laurel tree are a symbol of victory.

<sup>2</sup> *If* Among other possibilities, this poem may have been written in celebration of Dr. Leander Starr Jameson. Jameson launched the failed Jameson Raid of British troops against the Boers in South Africa in 1895, which ultimately led to the Boer War (1899–1902). Jameson went on to serve as Premier of the Cape Colony from 1904–08.

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>3</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!”

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  
 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

*The Story of Muhammad Din*

“Who is the happy man? He that sees in his own house at home little children crown with dust, leaping and falling and crying.”

*Munichandra*, translated by Professor Peterson

The polo-ball was an old one, scarred, chipped, and dented. It stood on the mantelpiece among the pipe-stems which Imam Din, *khitmatgar*,<sup>4</sup> was cleaning for me.

“Does the heaven-born want this ball?” said Imam Din deferentially.”

The heaven-born set no particular store by it; but of what use was a polo-ball to a *khitmatgar*?

<sup>3</sup> *pitch-and-toss* Coin tossing game.

<sup>4</sup> *khitmatgar* Male servant whose primary job is to serve food.

“By Your Honor’s favor, I have a little son. He has seen this ball, and desires it to play with. I do not want it for myself.”

No one would for an instant accuse portly old Imam Din of wanting to play with polo-balls. He carried out the battered thing into the verandah; and there followed a hurricane of joyful squeaks, a patter of small feet, and the *thud-thud-thud* of the ball rolling along the ground. Evidently the little son had been waiting outside the door to secure his treasure. But how had he managed to see that polo-ball?

Next day, coming back from office half an hour earlier than usual, I was aware of a small figure in the dining room—a tiny, plump figure in a ridiculously inadequate shirt which came, perhaps, halfway down the tubby stomach. It wandered round the room, thumb in mouth, crooning to itself as it took stock of the pictures. Undoubtedly this was the “little son.”

He had no business in my room, of course; but was so deeply absorbed in his discoveries that he never noticed me in the doorway. I stepped into the room and startled him nearly into a fit. He sat down on the ground with a gasp. His eyes opened, and his mouth followed suit. I knew what was coming, and fled, followed by a long, dry howl which reached the servants’ quarters far more quickly than any command of mine had ever done. In ten seconds Imam Din was in the dining room. Then despairing sobs arose, and I returned to find Imam Din admonishing the small sinner who was using most of his shirt as a handkerchief.

“This boy,” said Imam Din, judicially, “is a *budmash*,<sup>1</sup> a big *budmash*. He will, without doubt, go to the *jail-khana* for his behavior.” Renewed yells from the penitent, and an elaborate apology to myself from Imam Din.

“Tell the baby,” said I, “that the *Sahib*<sup>2</sup> is not angry, and take him away.” Imam Din conveyed my forgiveness to the offender, who had now gathered all his shirt round his neck, stringwise, and the yell subsided into a sob. The two set off for the door. “His name,” said Imam Din, as though the name were part of the crime, “is Muhammad Din, and he is a *budmash*.” Freed from

present danger, Muhammad Din turned round, in his father’s arms, and said gravely: “It is true that my name is Muhammad Din, *Tabib*, but I am not a *budmash*. I am a *man*!”

From that day dated my acquaintance with Muhammad Din. Never again did he come into my dining room, but on the neutral ground of the compound, he greeted each other with much state, though our conversation was confined to “*Talaam*,<sup>3</sup> *Tabib*” from his side, and “*Salaam, Muhammad Din*” from mine. Daily on my return from office, the little white shirt, and the fat little body used to rise from the shade of the creeper-covered trellis where they had been hid; and daily I checked my horse here, that my salutation might not be slurred over or given unseemly.

Muhammad Din never had any companions. He used to trot about the compound, in and out of the castor-oil bushes, on mysterious errands of his own. One day I stumbled upon some of his handiwork far down the ground. He had half buried the polo-ball in dust, and stuck six shrivelled old marigold flowers in a circle round it. Outside that circle again, was a rude square, traced out in bits of red brick alternating with fragments of broken china; the whole bounded by a little bank of dust. The *bhistie*<sup>4</sup> from the well-curb<sup>5</sup> put in a plea for the small architect, saying that it was only the play of a baby and did not much disfigure my garden.

Heaven knows that I had no intention of touching the child’s work then or later; but, that evening, a stroll through the garden brought me unawares full on it; so that I trampled, before I knew, marigold-heads, dust-bank, and fragments of broken soap-dish into confusion past all hope of mending. Next morning I came upon Muhammad Din crying softly to himself over the ruin I had wrought. Someone had cruelly told him that the *Sahib* was very angry with him for spoiling the garden, and had scattered his rubbish using bad language the while. Muhammad Din labored for an hour at effacing every trace of the dust-bank and pottery fragments, and it was with a tearful and apologetic face that he said,

<sup>1</sup> *budmash* Bad character; rascal.

<sup>2</sup> *Sahib* Title of respect, like “Sir,” used by the natives of India in addressing Europeans.

<sup>3</sup> *Talaam* I.e., salaam: East Indian and Pakistanic salutation meaning “peace be upon you”

<sup>4</sup> *bhistie* Also spelled “bheestie”; servant who carries water from the well.

<sup>5</sup> *well-curb* Border around a well.

“*Talaam Tabib*,” when I came home from the office. A hasty inquiry resulted in Imam Din informing Muhammad Din that by my singular favor he was permitted to disport himself as he pleased. Whereat the child took heart and fell to tracing the ground-plan of an edifice which was to eclipse the marigold-polo-ball creation.

For some months, the chubby little eccentricity revolved in his humble orbit among the castor-oil bushes and in the dust; always fashioning magnificent palaces from stale flowers thrown away by the bearer, smooth water-worn pebbles, bits of broken glass, and feathers pulled, I fancy, from my fowls——always alone and always crooning to himself.

A gayly-spotted seashell was dropped one day close to the last of his little buildings; and I looked that Muhammad Din should build something more than ordinarily splendid on the strength of it. Nor was I disappointed. He meditated for the better part of an hour, and his crooning rose to a jubilant song. Then he began tracing in dust. It would certainly be a wondrous palace, this one, for it was two yards long and a yard broad in ground-plan. But the palace was never completed.

Next day there was no Muhammad Din at the head of the carriage-drive, and no “*Talaam Tabib*” to welcome my return. I had grown accustomed to the greeting, and its omission troubled me. Next day, Imam Din told me that the child was suffering slightly from fever and needed quinine. He got the medicine, and an English doctor.

“They have no stamina, these brats,” said the doctor, as he left Imam Din’s quarters.

A week later, though I would have given much to have avoided it, I met on the road to the Mussalman<sup>1</sup> burying-ground Imam Din, accompanied by one other friend, carrying in his arms, wrapped in a white cloth, all that was left of little Muhammad Din.

—1886

## *The Mark of the Beast*<sup>2</sup>

*Your gods and my gods—do you or I know which are the stronger?*

NATIVE PROVERB

East of Suez, some hold, the direct control of providence ceases, man being there handed over to the power of the gods and devils of Asia, and the Church of England providence only exercising an occasional and modified supervision in the case of Englishmen.

This theory accounts for some of the more unnecessary honors of life in India: it may be stretched to explain my story.

My friend Strickland of the police, who knows as much of the natives as is good for any man, can bear witness to the facts of the case. Dumoise, our doctor, also saw what Strickland and I saw. The inference which he drew from the evidence was entirely incorrect. He is dead now; he died, in a rather curious manner, which has been elsewhere described.

When Fleete came to India he owned a little money and some land in the Himalayas, near a place called Dharmasala. Both properties had been left him by an uncle, and he came out to finance them. He was a big, heavy, genial, and inoffensive man. His knowledge of natives was, of course, limited, and he complained of the difficulties of the language.

He rode in from his place in the hills to spend New Year in the station,<sup>3</sup> and he stayed with Strickland. On New Year’s Eve there was a big dinner at the club, and the night was excusably wet. When men foregather from the uttermost ends of the Empire, they have a right to be riotous. The Frontier had sent down a contingent o’ Catch-’em-Alive-O’s<sup>4</sup> who had not seen twenty white faces a year, and were used to ride fifteen miles to dinner at the next fort at the risk of a Khyber bullet<sup>5</sup> where

<sup>2</sup> *Mark of the Beast* According to Revelations 16.2, those who had this mark were devil worshipers: “[T]here fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.”

<sup>3</sup> *station* Colonial outpost.

<sup>4</sup> *Catch-’em-Alive-O’s*: Slang regimental name.

<sup>5</sup> *Khyber bullet* Bullet fired from the gun of a denizen of the Khyber Pass, which runs through northern Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, and was the scene of many British battles.

<sup>1</sup> *Mussalman* Muslim.

there drinks should lie. They profited by their new security, for they tried to play pool with a curled-up hedgehog found in the garden, and one of them carried the marker round the room in his teeth. Half a dozen planters had come in from the south and were talking “horse”<sup>1</sup> to the Biggest Liar in Asia, who was try to cap all their stories at once. Everybody was there, and there was a general closing up of ranks and taking stock of our losses in dead or disabled that had fallen during the past year. It was a very wet night, and I remember that we sang “Auld Lang Syne” with our feet in the Polo Championship Cup, and our heads among the stars, and swore that we were all dear friends. Then some of us went away and annexed Burma, and some tried to open up the Sudan and were opened up by Fuzzies in that cruel scrub outside Suakim,<sup>2</sup> and some found stars and medals, and some were married, which was bad, and some did other things which were worse, and the others of us stayed in our chains and strove to make money on insufficient experiences.

Fleete began the night with sherry and bitters, drank champagne steadily up to the dessert, then raw, rasping Capri with all the strength of whisky, took Benedictine with his coffee, four or five whiskies and sodas to improve his pool strokes, beer and bones at half-past two, winding up with old brandy. Consequently, when he came out, at half past three in the morning, into fourteen degrees of frost, he was very angry with his horse for coughing and tried to leapfrog into the saddle. The horse broke away and went to his stables; so Strickland and I formed a Guard of Dishonour to take Fleete home.

Our road lay through the bazaar, close to a little temple of Hanuman, the Monkey god, who is a leading divinity worthy of respect. All gods have good points, just as have all priests. Personally, I attach much importance to Hanuman, and am kind to his people—the great gray apes of the hills. One never knows when one may want a friend.

<sup>1</sup> *talking “horse”* Bragging.

<sup>2</sup> *Sudan ... Suakim* In 1884 the British were involved in a campaign to seize control of Sudan from the Egyptian occupiers and the Sudanese Mahdis; *Fuzzies* “Fuzzy-wuzzies” was the British nickname for the Beja tribe that was fighting with the Mahdis against the British and Egyptians; *Suakim* Red Sea port, site of an 1884 Beja massacre of Egyptians.

There was a light in the temple, and as we passed, we could hear voices of men chanting hymns. In a native temple, the priests rise at all hours of the night to do honour to their god. Before we could stop him, Fleete dashed up the steps, patted two priests on the back, and was gravely grinding the ashes of his cigar butt into the forehead of the red stone image of Hanuman. Strickland tried to drag him out, but he sat down and said solemnly:

“Shee that? Mark of the B—beasht! I made it. Ishn’t it fine?”

In half a minute the temple was alive and noisy, and Strickland, who knew what came of polluting gods, said that things might occur. He, by virtue of his official position, long residence in the country, and weakness for going among the natives, was known to the priests and he felt unhappy. Fleete sat on the ground and refused to move. He said that “good old Hanuman” made a very soft pillow.

Then, without any warning, a Silver Man<sup>3</sup> came out of a recess behind the image of the god. He was perfectly naked in that bitter, bitter cold, and his body shone like frosted silver, for he was what the Bible calls “a leper as white as snow.”<sup>4</sup> Also he had no face, because he was a leper of some years’ standing and his disease was heavy upon him. We two stooped to haul Fleete up, and the temple was filling and filling with folk who seemed to spring from the earth, when the Silver Man ran in under our arms, making a noise exactly like the mewling of an otter, caught Fleete round the body and dropped his head on Fleete’s breast before we could wrench him away. Then he retired to a corner and sat mewling while the crowd blocked all the doors.

The priests were very angry until the Silver Man touched Fleete. That nuzzling seemed to sober them.

At the end of a few minutes’ silence one of the priests came to Strickland and said, in perfect English, “Take your friend away. He has done with Hanuman, but Hanuman has not done with him.” The crowd gave room and we carried Fleete into the road.

<sup>3</sup> *Silver Man* Possibly a Hindu “Sadhu,” a holy man, who would traditionally cover his naked body with ash.

<sup>4</sup> “*a leper as white as snow*” From 2 Kings 5:27: “The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.”

Strickland was very angry. He said that we might all three have been knifed, and that Fleete should thank his stars that he had escaped without injury.

Fleete thanked no one. He said that he wanted to go to bed. He was gorgeously drunk.

We moved on, Strickland silent and wrathful, until Fleete was taken with violent shivering fits and sweating. He said that the smells of the bazaar were overpowering, and he wondered what slaughterhouses were permitted so near English residences. "Can't you smell the blood?" said Fleete.

We put him to bed at last, just as the dawn was breaking, and Strickland invited me to have another whisky and soda. While we were drinking he talked of the trouble in the temple, and admitted that it baffled him completely. Strickland hates being mystified by natives, because his business in life is to overmatch them with their own weapons. He has not yet succeeded in doing this, but in fifteen or twenty years he will have made some small progress.

"They should have mauled us," he said, "instead of mewing at us. I wonder what they meant. I don't like it one little bit."

I said that the managing committee of the temple would in all probability bring a criminal action against us for insulting their religion. There was a section of the Indian Penal Code which exactly met Fleete's offence. Strickland said he only hoped and prayed that they would do this. Before I left I looked into Fleete's room, and saw him lying on his right side, scratching his left breast. Then I went to bed cold, depressed, and unhappy, at seven o'clock in the morning.

At one o'clock I rode over to Strickland's house to inquire after Fleete's head. I imagined that it would be a sore one. Fleete was breakfasting and seemed unwell. His temper was gone, for he was abusing the cook for not supplying him with an underdone chop. A man who can eat raw meat after a wet night is a curiosity. I told Fleete this and he laughed.

"You breed queer mosquitoes in these parts," he said. "I've been bitten to pieces, but only in one place."

"Let's have a look at the bite," said Strickland. "It may have gone down since this morning."

While the chops were being cooked, Fleete opened his shirt and showed us, just over his left breast, a mark,

the perfect double of the black rosettes—the five or six irregular blotches arranged in a circle—on a leopard's hide. Strickland looked and said, "It was only pink this morning. It's grown black now."

Fleete ran to a glass.

"By jove!" he said, "this is nasty. What is it?"

We could not answer. Here the chops came in, all red and juicy, and Fleete bolted three in a most offensive manner. He ate on his right grinders only, and threw his head over his right shoulder as he snapped the meat. When he had finished, it struck him that he had been behaving strangely for he said apologetically, "I don't think I ever felt so hungry in my life. I've bolted like an ostrich."

After breakfast Strickland said to me, "Don't go. Stay here, and stay for the night."

Seeing that my house was not three miles from Strickland's, this request was absurd. But Strickland insisted, and was going to say something when Fleete interrupted by declaring in a shamefaced way that he felt hungry again. Strickland sent a man to my house to fetch over my bedding and a horse, and we three went down to Strickland's stables to pass the hours until it was time to go out for a ride. The man who has a weakness for horses never wearies of inspecting them; and when two men are killing time in this way they gather knowledge and lies the one from the other.

There were five horses in the stables, and I shall never forget the scene as we tried to look them over. They seemed to have gone mad. They reared and screamed and nearly tore up their pickets; they sweated and shivered and lathered and were distraught with fear. Strickland's horses used to know him as well as his dogs, which made the matter more curious. We left the stable for fear of the brutes throwing themselves in their panic. Then Strickland turned back and called me. The horses were still frightened, but they let us "gentle" and make much of them, and put their heads in our bosoms.

"They aren't afraid of *us*," said Strickland. "D'you know, I'd give three months' pay if Outrage here could talk."

But Outrage was dumb and could only cuddle up to his master and blow out his nostrils, as is the custom of horses when they wish to explain things but can't. Fleete came up when we were in the stalls, and as soon as the

horses saw him, their fright broke out afresh. It was all that we could do to escape from the place unkicked. Strickland said, "They don't seem to love you, Fleete." "Nonsense," said Fleete, "my mare will follow me like a dog." He went to her; she was in a loose-box; but as he slipped the bars she plunged, knocked him down, and broke away into the garden. I laughed, but Strickland was not amused. He took his moustache in both fists and pulled at it till it nearly came out. Fleete, instead of going off to chase his property, yawned, saying that he felt sleepy. He went to house to lie down, which was a foolish way of spending New Year's Day.

Strickland sat with me in the stables and asked if I had noticed anything peculiar in Fleete's manner. I said that he ate his food like a beast, but that this might have been the result of living alone in the hills out of the reach of society as refined and elevating as ours for instance. Strickland was not amused. I do not think that he listened to me, for his next sentence referred to the mark on Fleete's breast, and I said that it might have been caused by blister-flies, or that it was possibly a birthmark newly born and now visible for the first time. We both agreed that it was unpleasant to look at, and Strickland found occasion to say that I was a fool.

"I can't tell you what I think now," said he, "because you would call me a madman; but you must stay with me for the next few days, if you can. I want you to watch Fleete, but don't tell me what you think till I have made up my mind."

"But I am dining out tonight," I said.

"So am I," said Strickland, "and so is Fleete. At least if he doesn't change his mind."

We walked about the garden smoking, but saying nothing—because we were friends, and talking spoils good tobacco—till our pipes were out. Then we went to wake up Fleete. He was wide awake and fidgeting about his room.

"I say, I want some more chops," he said. "Can I get them?"

We laughed and said, "Go and change. The ponies will be round in a minute."

"All right," said Fleete. "I'll go when I get the chops—underdone ones, mind."

He seemed to be quite in earnest. It was four o'clock, and we had had breakfast at one; still, for a long

time, he demanded those underdone chops. Then he changed into riding clothes and went out into the verandah. His pony—the mare had not been caught—would not let him come near. All three horses were unmanageable—mad with fear—and finally Fleete said that he would stay at home and get something to eat. Strickland and I rode out wondering. As we passed the temple of Hanuman, the Silver Man came out and mewed at us.

"He is not one of the regular priests of the temple," said Strickland. "I think I should peculiarly like to lay my hands on him."

There was no spring in our gallop on the racecourse that evening. The horses were stale, and moved as though they had been ridden out.

"The fright after breakfast has been too much for them," said Strickland.

That was the only remark he made through the remainder of the ride. Once or twice I think he swore to himself; but that did not count.

We came back in the dark at seven o'clock, and saw that there were no lights in the bungalow. "Careless ruffians my servants are!" said Strickland.

My horse reared at something on the carriage drive, and Fleete stood up under its nose.

"What are you doing, grovelling about the garden?" said Strickland.

But both horses bolted and nearly threw us. We dismounted by the stables and returned to Fleete, who was on his hands and knees under the orange bushes.

"What the devil's wrong with you?" said Strickland.

"Nothing, nothing in the world," said Fleete, speaking very quickly and thickly. "I've been gardening—botanising you know. The smell of the earth is delightful. I think I'm going for a walk—a long walk—all night."

Then I saw that there was something excessively out of order somewhere, and I said to Strickland, "I am not dining out."

"Bless you!" said Strickland. "Here, Fleete, get up. You'll catch fever there. Come in to dinner and let's have the lamps lit. We'll all dine at home."

Fleete stood up unwillingly, and said, "No lamps—no lamps. It's much nicer here. Let's dine outside and

have some more chops—lots of 'em and underdone—bloody ones with gristle.”

Now a December evening in Northern India is bitterly cold, and Fleete's suggestion was that of a maniac.

“Come in,” said Strickland sternly. “Come in at once.”

Fleete came, and when the lamps were brought, we saw that he was literally plastered with dirt from head to foot. He must have been rolling in the garden. He shrank from the light and went to his room. His eyes were horrible to look at. There was a green light behind them, not in them, if you understand, and the man's lower lip hung down.

Strickland said, “There is going to be trouble—big trouble—tonight. Don't you change your riding things.”

We waited and waited for Fleete's reappearance, and ordered dinner in the meantime. We could hear him moving about his own room, but there was no light there. Presently from the room came the long-drawn howl of a wolf.

People write and talk lightly of blood running cold and hair standing up and things of that kind. Both sensations are too horrible to be trifled with. My heart stopped as though a knife had been driven through it, and Strickland turned as white as the tablecloth.

The howl was repeated, and was answered by another howl far across the fields.

That set the gilded roof on the horror. Strickland dashed into Fleete's room. I followed, and we saw Fleete getting out of the window. He made beast noises in the back of his throat. He could not answer us when we shouted at him. He spat.

I don't quite remember what followed, but I think that Strickland must have stunned him with the long boot-jack or else I should never have been able to sit on his chest. Fleete could not speak, he could only snarl, and his snarls were those of a wolf, not of a man. The human spirit must have been giving way all day and have died out with the twilight. We were dealing with a beast that had once been Fleete.

The affair was beyond any human and rational experience. I tried to say “Hydrophobia,”<sup>1</sup> but the word wouldn't come, because I knew that I was lying.

We bound this beast with leather thongs of the punkah rope,<sup>2</sup> and tied its thumbs and big toes together, and gagged it with a shoehorn, which makes a very efficient gag if you know how to arrange it. Then we carried it into the dining room, and sent a man to Dumoise, the doctor, telling him to come over at once. After we had despatched the messenger and were drawing breath, Strickland said, “It's no good. This isn't any doctor's work.” I, also, knew that he spoke the truth.

The beast's head was free, and it threw it about from side to side. Anyone entering the room would have believed that we were curing a wolf's pelt. That was the most loathsome accessory of all.

Strickland sat with his chin in the heel of his fist, watching the beast as it wriggled on the ground, but saying nothing. The shirt had been torn open in the scuffle and showed the black rosette mark on the left breast. It stood out like a blister.

In the silence of the watching we heard something without<sup>3</sup> mewling like a she-otter. We both rose to our feet, and, I answer for myself, not Strickland, felt sick—actually and physically sick. We told each other, as did the men in *Pinafore*, that it was the cat.<sup>4</sup>

Dumoise arrived, and I never saw a little man so unprofessionally shocked. He said that it was a heart-rending case of hydrophobia, and that nothing could be done. At least any palliative measures would only prolong the agony. The beast was foaming at the mouth. Fleete, as we told Dumoise, had been bitten by dogs once or twice. Any man who keeps half a dozen terriers must expect a nip now and again. Dumoise could offer no help. He could only certify that Fleete was dying of hydrophobia. The beast was then howling, for it had managed to spit out the shoehorn. Dumoise

<sup>1</sup> “Hydrophobia” Aversion to water, a symptom of rabies.

<sup>2</sup> *punkah rope* Cord used to manipulate a punkah, or suspended cloth used as a fan.

<sup>3</sup> *without* Outside.

<sup>4</sup> *Pinafore ... cat* Cf. Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera *H.M.S. Pinafore*, in which some sailors unwittingly mistake the sound of a whip (a cat-o'-nine-tails) for that of a cat.

said that he would be ready to certify to the cause of death, and that the end was certain. He was a good little man, and he offered to remain with us; but Strickland refused the kindness. He did not wish to poison Dumoise's New Year. He would only ask him not to give the real cause of Fleete's death to the public.

So Dumoise left, deeply agitated; and as soon as the noise of the cartwheels had died away, Strickland told me, in a whisper, his suspicions. They were so wildly improbable that he dared not say them out aloud; and I, who entertained all Strickland's beliefs, was so ashamed of owning to them that I pretended to disbelieve.

"Even if the Silver Man had bewitched Fleete for polluting the image of Hanuman, the punishment could not have fallen so quickly."

As I was whispering this the cry outside the house rose again, and the beast fell into a fresh paroxysm of struggling till we were afraid that the thongs that held it would give way.

"Watch!" said Strickland. "If this happens six times I shall take the law into my own hands. I order you to help me."

He went into his room and came out in a few minutes with the barrels of an old shotgun, a piece of fishing line, some thick cord, and his heavy wooden bedstead. I reported that the convulsions had followed the cry by two seconds in each case, and the beast seemed perceptibly weaker.

Strickland muttered, "But he can't take away the life! He can't take away the life!"

I said, though I knew that I was arguing against myself, "It may be a cat. It must be a cat. If the Silver Man is responsible, why does he dare to come here?"

Strickland arranged the wood on the hearth, put the gun barrels into the glow of the fire, spread the twine on the table and broke a walking stick in two. There was one yard of fishing line, gut, lapped with wire, such as is used for mahseer<sup>1</sup> fishing, and he tied the two ends together in a loop.

Then he said, "How can we catch him? He must be taken alive and unhurt."

I said that we must trust in providence, and go out softly with polo sticks into the shrubbery at the front of

the house. The man or animal that made the cry was evidently moving round the house as regularly as a night-watchman. We could wait in the bushes till he came by and knock him over. Strickland accepted this suggestion, and we slipped out from a bathroom window into the front verandah and then across the carriage drive into the bushes.

In the moonlight we could see the leper coming round the corner of the house. He was perfectly naked, and from time to time he mewed and stopped to dance with his shadow. It was an unattractive sight, and thinking of poor Fleete, brought to such degradation by so foul a creature, I put away all my doubts and resolved to help Strickland from the heated gun barrels to the loop of twine—from the loins to the head and back again—with all tortures that might be needful.

The leper halted in the front porch for a moment and we jumped out on him with the sticks. He was wonderfully strong, and we were afraid that he might escape or be fatally injured before we caught him. We had an idea that lepers were frail creatures, but this proved to be incorrect. Strickland knocked his legs from under him and I put my foot on his neck. He mewed hideously, and even through my riding boots I could feel that his flesh was not the flesh of a clean man.

He struck at us with his hand and feet stumps. We looped the lash of a dog whip round him, under the armpits, and dragged him backwards into the hall and so into the dining room where the beast lay. There we tied him with trunk straps. He made no attempt to escape, but mewed.

When we confronted him with the beast the scene was beyond description. The beast doubled backwards into a bow as though he had been poisoned with strychnine, and moaned in the most pitiable fashion. Several other things happened also, but they cannot be put down here.

"I think I was right," said Strickland. "Now we will ask him to cure this case."

But the leper only mewed. Strickland wrapped a towel round his hand and took the gun barrels out of the fire. I put the half of the broken walking stick through the loop of fishing line and buckled the leper comfortably to Strickland's bedstead. I understood then how men and women and little children can endure to

<sup>1</sup> *mahseer* Carp.

see a witch burnt alive, for the beast was moaning on the floor, and though the Silver Man had no face, you could see horrible feelings passing through the slab that took its place, exactly as waves of heat play across red hot iron—gun barrels for instance.

Strickland shaded his eyes with his hands for a moment and we got to work. This part is not to be printed.

\* \* \* \* \*

The dawn was beginning to break when the leper spoke. His mewings had not been satisfactory up to that point. The beast had fainted from exhaustion and the house was very still. We unstrapped the leper and told him to take away the evil spirit. He crawled to the beast and laid his hand upon the left breast. That was all. Then he fell face down and whined, drawing in his breath as he did so.

We watched the face of the beast, and saw the soul of Fleete coming back into the eyes. Then a sweat broke out on the forehead and the eyes—they were human eyes—closed. We waited for an hour but Fleete still slept. We carried him to his room and bade the leper go, giving him the bedstead, and the sheet on the bedstead to cover his nakedness, the gloves and the towels with which we had touched him, and the whip that had been hooked round his body. He put the sheet about him and went out into the early morning without speaking or mewings.

Strickland wiped his face and sat down. A night gong, far away in the city, made seven o'clock.

"Exactly four-and-twenty hours!" said Strickland. "And I've done enough to ensure my dismissal from the service, besides permanent quarters in a lunatic asylum. Do you believe that we are awake?"

The red hot gun barrel had fallen on the floor and was singeing the carpet. The smell was entirely real.

That morning at eleven we two together went to wake up Fleete. We looked and saw that the black leopard rosette on his chest had disappeared. He was very drowsy and tired, but as soon as he saw us, he said,

"Oh! Confound you fellows. Happy New Year to you. Never mix your liquors. I'm nearly dead."

"Thanks for your kindness, but you're over time," said Strickland. "Today is the morning of the second. You've slept the clock round with a vengeance."

The door opened, and little Dumoise put his head in. He had come on foot, and fancied that we were laying out Fleete.

"I've brought a nurse," said Dumoise. "I suppose that she can come in for ... what is necessary."

"By all means," said Fleete cheerily, sitting up in bed. "Bring on your nurses."

Dumoise was dumb. Strickland led him out and explained that there must have been a mistake in the diagnosis. Dumoise remained dumb and left the house hastily. He considered that his professional reputation had been injured, and was inclined to make a personal matter of the recovery.

Strickland went out too. When he came back, he said that he had been to call on the Temple of Hanuman to offer redress for the pollution of the god, and had been solemnly assured that no white man had ever touched the idol and that he was an incarnation of all the virtues labouring under a delusion. "What do you think?" said Strickland.

I said, "There are more things ..."<sup>1</sup>

But Strickland hates that quotation. He says that I have worn it threadbare.

One other curious thing happened which frightened me as much as anything in all the night's work. When Fleete was dressed he came into the dining room and sniffed. He had a quaint trick of moving his nose when he sniffed. "Horrid doggy smell, here," said he. "You should really keep those terriers of yours in better order. Try sulphur, Strick."

But Strickland did not answer. He caught hold of the back of a chair, and, without warning, went into an amazing fit of hysterics. It is terrible to see a strong man overtaken with hysteria. Then it struck me that we had fought for Fleete's soul with the Silver Man in that room, and had disgraced ourselves as Englishmen forever, and I laughed and gasped and gurgled just as shamefully as Strickland, while Fleete thought that we had both gone mad. We never told him what we had done.

Some years later, when Strickland had married and was a churchgoing member of society for his wife's sake,

<sup>1</sup> *There are more things ...* From Shakespeare's *Hamlet* 1.5: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

we reviewed the incident dispassionately, and Strickland suggested that I should put it before the public.

I cannot myself see that this step is likely to clear up the mystery, because, in the first place, no one will believe a rather unpleasant story, and, in the second, it is well known to every right-minded man that the gods of the heathen are stone and brass, and any attempt to deal with them otherwise is justly condemned.

—1891

*Mrs. Bathurst*

FROM LYDEN'S IRENIUS<sup>1</sup>  
ACT 3, SCENE 2

GOW. Had it been your Prince instead of a groom caught in this noose there's not an astrologer of the city—

PRINCE. Sacked! Sacked! We were a city yesterday.

GOW. So be it, but I was not governor. Not an astrologer, but would ha' sworn he'd foreseen it at the last versary of Venus, when Vulcan caught her with Mars in the house of stinking Capricorn. But since 'tis Jack of the Straw that hangs, the forgetful stars had it not on their tablets.

PRINCE. Another life! Were there any left to die? How did the poor fool come by it?

GOW. *Simpliciter*<sup>2</sup> thus. She that damned him to death knew not that she did it, or would have died ere she had done it. For she loved him. He that hangs him does so in obedience to the Duke, and asks no more than "Where is the rope?" The Duke, very exactly he hath told us, works God's will, in which holy employ he's not to be questioned. We have then left upon this finger, only Jack whose soul now plucks the left sleeve of Destiny in Hell to overtake why she clapped him up like a fly on a sunny wall. Whuff! Soh!<sup>3</sup>

PRINCE. Your cloak, Ferdinand. I'll sleep now.

FERDINAND. Sleep, then.... He too, loved his life?

GOW. He was born of woman ... but at the end threw her from him, like your Prince, for a little sleep.... "Have I any look of a King?" said he, clanking his chain—"to be so baited on all sides by Fortune, that I must e'en die now to live with myself one day longer." I left him railing at Fortune and woman's love.

FERDINAND. Ah, woman's love!

*(Aside)* Who knows not Fortune, gluttoned on easy thrones,  
Stealing from feasts as rare to coneycatch,<sup>o</sup> *to dupe*  
Privily<sup>o</sup> in the hedgerows for a down *secretly*  
With that same cruel-lustful hand and eye,  
Those nails and wedges, that one hammer and lead,  
And the very gerb<sup>o</sup> of long-stored lightnings loosed *shaft*  
Yesterday 'gainst some King.

The day that I chose to visit H.M.S. *Peridot* in Simon's Bay was the day that the Admiral had chosen to send her up the coast. She was just steaming out to sea as my train came in, and since the rest of the Fleet were either coaling or busy at the rifle ranges a thousand feet up the hill, I found myself stranded, lunchless, on the seafront with no hope of return to Cape Town<sup>4</sup> before 5 p.m. At this crisis I had the luck to come across my friend Inspector Hooper, Cape Government Railways, in command of an engine and a brake-van<sup>5</sup> chalked for repair.

"If you get something to eat," he said, "I'll run you down to Glengariff siding till the goods comes along. It's cooler there than here, you see."

I got food and drink from the Greeks who sell all things at a price, and the engine trotted us a couple of miles up the line to a bay of drifted sand and a plank platform half buried in sand not a hundred yards from the edge of the surf. Moulded dunes, whiter than any snow, rolled far inland up a brown and purple valley of splintered rocks and dry scrub. A crowd of Malays hauled at a net beside two blue and green boats on the beach; a picnic party danced and shouted barefoot where a tiny river trickled across the flat, and a circle of dry hills, whose feet were set in sands of silver, locked us in against a seven-coloured sea. At either horn of the bay the railway line, cut just above high-water mark, ran round a shoulder of piled rocks, and disappeared.

"You see, there's always a breeze here," said Hooper, opening the door as the engine left us in the siding on the sand, and the strong southeaster buffeting under Elsie's Peak dusted sand into our tickey<sup>6</sup> beer. Presently he sat down to a file full of spiked documents. He had returned from a long trip up-country, where he had

<sup>1</sup> *Lyden's Irenius* A fragment mock-Jacobean play never completed by Kipling.

<sup>2</sup> *Simpliciter* Simply.

<sup>3</sup> *Soh!* Exclamation of anger.

<sup>4</sup> *Cape Town* Then the capital of South Africa.

<sup>5</sup> *brake-van* Train car that houses the brake mechanism.

<sup>6</sup> *tickey* South African slang for "threepence."

been reporting on damaged rolling-stock,<sup>1</sup> as far away as Rhodesia.<sup>2</sup> The weight of the bland wind on my eyelids; the song of it under the car roof, and high up among the rocks; the drift of fine grains chasing each other musically ashore; the tramp of the surf; the voices of the picnickers; the rustle of Hooper's file, and the presence of the assured sun, joined with the beer to cast me into magical slumber. The hills of False Bay were just dissolving into those of fairyland when I heard footsteps on the sand outside, and the clink of our couplings.

"Stop that!" snapped Hooper, without raising his head from his work. "It's those dirty little Malay boys, you see: they're always playing with the trucks...."

"Don't be hard on 'em. The railway's a general refuge in Africa," I replied.

"Tis—up-country at any rate. That reminds me," he felt in his waistcoat pocket, "I've got a curiosity for you from Wankies—beyond Bulawayo. It's more of a souvenir perhaps than——"

"The old hotel's inhabited," cried a voice. "White men, from the language. Marines to the front! Come on, Pritch. Here's your Belmont. Wha—i—i!"

The last word dragged like a rope as Mr. Pycroft ran round to the open door, and stood looking up into my face. Behind him an enormous sergeant of marines trailed a stalk of dried seaweed, and dusted the sand nervously from his fingers.

"What are you doing here?" I asked. "I thought the *Hierophant* was down the coast?"

"We came in last Tuesday—from Tristan d'Acunha—for overhaul, and we shall be in dockyard 'ands for two months, with boiler-seatings."

"Come and sit down." Hooper put away the file.

"This is Mr. Hooper of the Railway," I explained, as Pycroft turned to haul up the black moustached sergeant.

"This is Sergeant Pritchard, of the *Agaric*, an old shipmate," said he. "We were strollin' on the beach." The monster blushed and nodded. He filled up one side of the van when he sat down.

"And this is my friend, Mr. Pycroft," I added to Hooper, already busy with the extra beer which my prophetic soul had bought from the Greeks.

"*Moi aussi*,"<sup>3</sup> quoth Pycroft, and drew out beneath his coat a labelled quart bottle.

"Why, it's Bass!" cried Hooper.

"It was Pritchard," said Pycroft. "They can't resist him."

"That's not so," said Pritchard mildly. "Not *verbatim*<sup>4</sup> per'aps, but the look in the eye came to the same thing."

"Where was it?" I demanded.

"Just on beyond here—at Kalk Bay. She was slappin' a rug in a back verandah. Pritch 'adn't more than brought his batteries to bear, before she stepped indoors an' sent it flyin' over the wall."

Pycroft patted the warm bottle.

"It was all a mistake," said Pritchard. "I shouldn't wonder if she mistook me for Maclean. We're about of a size."

I had heard householders of Muizenberg, St. James, and Kalk Bay complain of the difficulty of keeping beer or good servants at the seaside, and I began to see the reason. Nonetheless, it was excellent Bass, and I too drank to the health of that large-minded maid.

"It's the uniform that fetches 'em, an' they fetch it," said Pycroft. "My simple navy blue is respectable, but not fascinatin.' Now Pritch in 'is Number One rig is always 'purr Mary, on the terrace—*ex officio*<sup>5</sup> as you might say."

"She took me for Maclean, I tell you," Pritchard insisted. "Why—why—to listen to him you wouldn't think that only yesterday——"

"Pritch," said Pycroft, "be warned in time. If we begin tellin' what we know about each other we'll be turned out of the pub. Not to mention aggravated desertion on several occasions——"

"Never anything more than absence without leaf<sup>6</sup>—I defy you to prove it," said the sergeant hotly. "An' if it comes to that, how about Vancouver<sup>7</sup> in '87?"

<sup>3</sup> *Moi aussi* French: Me too.

<sup>4</sup> *not verbatim* Not exactly.

<sup>5</sup> *ex officio* By virtue of one's duty or position.

<sup>6</sup> *absence without leaf* "Leaf" is sailors' slang for "leave of absence."

<sup>7</sup> *Vancouver* Port city on the west coast of Canada.

<sup>1</sup> *rolling-stock* Train cars.

<sup>2</sup> *Rhodesia* Now Zimbabwe.

“How about it? Who pulled bow in the gig<sup>1</sup> going ashore? Who told Boy Niven...?”

“Surely you were court-martialled for that?” I said. The story of Boy Niven who lured seven or eight able-bodied seamen and marines into the woods of British Columbia used to be a legend of the Fleet.

“Yes, we were court-martialled to rights,” said Pritchard, “but we should have been tried for murder if Boy Niven ’adn’t been unusually tough. He told us he had an uncle ’oo’d give us land to farm. ’E said he was born at the back o’ Vancouver Island, and *all* the time the beggar was a balmy Barnado Orphan!”<sup>2</sup>

“*But* we believed him,” said Pyecroft. “I did—you did—Paterson did—an’ ’oo was the marine that married the coconut woman afterwards—him with the mouth?”

“Oh, Jones, Spit-Kid Jones. I ’aven’t thought of ’im in years,” said Pritchard. “Yes, Spit-Kid believed it, an’ George Anstey and Moon. We were very young an’ very curious.”

“*But* lovin’ an’ trustful to a degree,” said Pyecroft.

“Remember when ’e told us to walk in single file for fear o’ bears? ’Remember, Pye, when ’e ’opped about in that bog full o’ ferns an’ sniffed an’ said ’e could smell the smoke of ’is uncle’s farm? An’ *all* the time it was a dirty little outlyin’ uninhabited island. We walked round it in a day, an’ come back to our boat lyin’ on the beach. A whole day Boy Niven kept us walkin’ in circles lookin’ for ’is uncle’s farm! He said his uncle was compelled by the law of the land to give us a farm!”

“Don’t get hot, Pritch. We believed,” said Pyecroft.

“He’d been readin’ books. He only did it to get a run ashore an’ have himself talked of. A day an’ a night—eight of us—followin’ Boy Niven round an uninhabited island in the Vancouver archipelago! Then the picket<sup>3</sup> came for us an’ a nice pack o’ idiots we looked!”

“What did you get for it?” Hooper asked.

“Heavy thunder with continuous lightning for two hours. Thereafter sleet squalls, a confused sea, and cold, unfriendly weather till conclusion o’ cruise,” said Pyecroft. “It was only what we expected, but what we felt—an’ I assure you, Mr. Hooper, even a sailor man has a heart to break—was bein’ told that we able seamen an’ promisn’ marines ’ad misled Boy Niven. Yes, we poor back-to-the-landers was supposed to ’ave misled him! He rounded on us, o’ course, an’ got off easy.”

“Excep’ for what we gave him in the steerin’-flat when we came out o’ cells. ’Eard anything of ’im lately, Pye?”

“Signal Boatswain in the Channel Fleet, I believe—Mr. L. L. Niven is.”

“An’ Anstey died o’ fever in Benin,”<sup>4</sup> Pritchard mused. “What come to Moon? Spit-Kid we know about.”

“Moon—Moon! Now where did I last...? Oh yes, when I was in the *Palladium*. I met Quigley at Bunrana Station. He told me Moon ’ad run when the *Astrild* sloop was cruising among the South Seas three years back. He always showed signs o’ bein’ a Mormonastic<sup>5</sup> beggar. Yes, he slipped off quietly an’ they ’adn’t time to chase ’im round the islands even if the navigatin’ officer ’ad been equal to the job.”

“Wasn’t he?” said Hooper.

“Not so. Accordin’ to Quigley the *Astrild* spent half her commission rompin’ up the beach like a she-turtle, an’ the other half hatching turtles’ eggs on the top o’ numerous reefs. When she was docked at Sydney<sup>6</sup> her copper looked like Aunt Maria’s washing on the line—an’ her ’midship frames was sprung. The commander swore the dockyard ’ad done it haulin’ the pore thing on to the slips.<sup>7</sup> They *do* do strange things at sea, Mr. Hooper.”

“Ah! I’m not a taxpayer,” said Hooper, and opened a fresh bottle. The sergeant seemed to be one who had a difficulty in dropping subjects.

<sup>1</sup> *pulled bow in the gig* Worked the oar in the front end of the rowboat.

<sup>2</sup> *Barnardo Orphan* Thomas Barnado (1845–1900) introduced a scheme of child emigration that sent London’s poor children out to the colonies.

<sup>3</sup> *picket* Guard who brings in those who are absent without leave (“AWOL”).

<sup>4</sup> *Benin* Small country in West Africa.

<sup>5</sup> *Mormonastic* Euphemism for “promiscuous”; the Mormon practice of polygamy (outlawed by the Church in the late 1800s) was the basis for this slur.

<sup>6</sup> *Sydney* City in Australia.

<sup>7</sup> *slips* Sloped landing areas for ships.

"How it all comes back, don't it?" he said. "Why, Moon must 'ave 'ad sixteen years' service before he ran."

"It takes 'em at all ages. Look at—you know," said Pycroft.

"Who?" I asked.

"A service man within eighteen months of his pension is the party you're thinkin' of," said Pritchard.

"A warrant<sup>1</sup> 'oo's name begins with a V, isn't it?"

"But, in a way o' puttin' it, we can't say that he actually did desert," Pycroft suggested.

"Oh no," said Pritchard. "It was only permanent absence up-country without leaf. That was all."

"Up-country?" said Hooper. "Did they circulate his description?"

"What for?" said Pritchard, most impolitely.

"Because deserters are like columns in the war. They don't move away from the line, you see. I've known a chap caught at Salisbury that way tryin' to get to Nyassa. They tell me, but o' course I don't know, that they don't ask questions on the Nyassa Lake Flotilla<sup>2</sup> up there. I've heard of a P. and O. quartermaster<sup>3</sup> in full command of an armed launch there."

"Do you think Click 'ud ha' gone up that way?" Pritchard asked.

"There's no saying. He was sent up to Bloemfontein to take over some Navy ammunition left in the fort. We know he took it over and saw it into the trucks. Then there was no more Click—then or thereafter. Four months ago it transpired, and thus the *casus belli*<sup>4</sup> stands at present," said Pycroft.

"What were his marks?" said Hooper again.

"Does the Railway get a reward for returnin' 'em, then?" said Pritchard.

"If I did d'you suppose I'd talk about it?" Hooper retorted angrily.

"You seemed so very interested," said Pritchard with equal crispness.

"Why was he called Click?" I asked, to tide over an uneasy little break in the conversation. The two men were staring at each other very fixedly.

<sup>1</sup> *warrant* Petty officer.

<sup>2</sup> *Flotilla* Fleet.

<sup>3</sup> *P. and O. quartermaster* Petty officer for the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

<sup>4</sup> *casus belli* State of the war.

"Because of an ammunition hoist carryin' away," said Pycroft. "And it carried away four of 'is teeth—on the lower port side,<sup>5</sup> wasn't it, Pritch? The substitutes which he bought weren't screwed home, in a manner o' sayin.' When he talked fast they used to lift a little on the bedplate. 'Ence, 'Click.' They called 'im a superior man, which is what we'd call a long, black-'aired, genteelly-speakin,' 'alf-bred beggar on the lower deck." "Four false teeth in the lower left jaw," said Hooper, his hand in his waistcoat pocket. "What tattoo marks?"

"Look here," began Pritchard, half rising. "I'm sure we're very grateful to you as a gentleman for your 'ospitality, but per'aps we may 'ave made an error in——"

I looked at Pycroft for aid—Hooper was crimsoning rapidly.

"If the fat marine now occupying the foc'sle<sup>6</sup> will kindly bring 'is *status quo* to an anchor yet once more, we may be able to talk like gentlemen—not to say friends," said Pycroft. "He regards you, Mr. Hooper, as a emissary of the Law."

"I only wish to observe that when a gentleman exhibits such a peculiar, or I should rather say, such a *bloomin'* curiosity in identification marks as our friend here——"

"Mr. Pritchard," I interposed, "I'll take all the responsibility for Mr. Hooper."

"An' *you'll* apologise all round," said Pycroft.

"You're a rude little man, Pritch."

"But how was I——" he began, wavering.

"I don't know an' I don't care. Apologise!"

The giant looked round bewildered and took our little hands into his vast grip, one by one.

"I was wrong," he said meekly as a sheep. "My suspicions was unfounded. Mr. Hooper, I apologise."

"You did quite right to look out for your own end o' the line," said Hooper. "I'd ha' done the same with a gentleman I didn't know, you see. If you don't mind I'd like to hear a little more o' your Mr. Vickery. It's safe with me, you see."

"Why did Vickery run?" I began, but Pycroft's smile made me turn my question to "Who was she?"

<sup>5</sup> *port side* Nautical terminology for the left side of a boat; here, left side of Click's mouth.

<sup>6</sup> *foc'sle* Forecastle; deck on the front of a ship.

"She kep' a little hotel at Hauraki—near Auckland,"<sup>1</sup> said Pycroft.

"By Gawd!" roared Pritchard, slapping his hand on his leg. "Not Mrs. Bathurst!"

Pycroft nodded slowly, and the sergeant called all the powers of darkness to witness his bewilderment.

"So far as I could get at it, Mrs. B. was the lady in question."

"But Click was married," cried Pritchard.

"An' 'ad a fifteen-year-old daughter. 'E's shown me her photograph. Settin' that aside, so to say, 'ave you ever found these little things make much difference? Because I haven't."

"Good Lord Alive an' Watchin'! ... Mrs. Bathurst ... ." Then with another roar: "You can say what you please, Pye, but you don't make me believe it was any of 'er fault. She wasn't *that*!"

"If I was going to say what I please, I'd begin by callin' you a silly ox an' work up to the higher pressures at leisure. I'm trying to say solely what transpired. M'rover, for once you're right. It wasn't her fault."

"You couldn't 'aven't made me believe it if it 'ad been," was the answer.

Such faith in a sergeant of marines interested me greatly. "Never mind about that," I cried. "Tell me what she was like."

"She was a widow," said Pycroft. "Left so very young and never re-spliced. She kep' a little hotel for warrants and non-coms<sup>2</sup> close to Auckland, an' she always wore black silk, and 'er neck——"

"You ask what she was like," Pritchard broke in. "Let me give you an instance. I was at Auckland first in '97, at the end o' the *Marroquin*'s commission, an' as I'd been promoted I went up with the others. She used to look after us all, an' she never lost by it—not a penny! 'Pay me now,' she'd say, 'or settle later. I know you won't let me suffer. Send the money from home if you like.' Why, gentlemen all, I tell you I've seen that lady take her own gold watch an' chain off her neck in the bar an' pass it to a bosun<sup>3</sup> 'oo'd come ashore without 'is ticker an' 'ad to catch the last boat. 'I don't know your name,' she said, 'but when you've done with it, you'll

find plenty that know me on the front. Send it back by one o' them.' And it was worth thirty pounds if it was worth 'arf a crown. The little gold watch, Pye, with the blue monogram at the back. But, as I was sayin,' in those days she kep' a beer that agreed with me—Slits it was called. One way an' another I must 'ave punished a good few bottles of it while we was in the bay—comin' ashore every night or so. Chaffin<sup>4</sup> across the bar like, once when we were alone, 'Mrs. B.,' I said, 'when next I call I want you to remember that this is my particular<sup>5</sup>—just as you're my particular.' (She'd let you go *that* far!) 'Just as you're my particular,' I said. 'Oh, thank you, Sergeant Pritchard,' she says, an' put 'er hand up to the curl be'ind 'er ear. Remember that way she had, Pye?"

"I think so," said the sailor.

"Yes, 'Thank you, Sergeant Pritchard,' she says. 'The least I can do is to mark it for you in case you change your mind. There's no great demand for it in the Fleet,' she says, 'but to make sure I'll put it at the back o' the shelf,' an' she snipped off a piece of her hair ribbon with that old dolphin cigar-cutter on the bar—remember it, Pye?—an' she tied a bow round what was left—just four bottles. That was '97—no, '96. In '98 I was in the *Resilient*—China station—full commission. In Nineteen One, mark you, I was in the *Carthusian*, back in Auckland Bay again. Of course I went up to Mrs. B.'s with the rest of us to see how things were goin.' They were the same as ever. (Remember the big tree on the pavement by the sidebar,<sup>6</sup> Pye?) I never said anythin' in special (there was too many of us talkin' to her), but she saw me at once."

"That wasn't difficult?" I ventured.

"Ah, but wait. I was comin' up to the bar, when, 'Ada,' she says to her niece, 'get me Sergeant Pritchard's particular,' and, gentlemen all, I tell you before I could shake 'ands with the lady, there were those four bottles o' Slits, with 'er 'air-ribbon in a bow round each o' their necks, set down in front o' me, an' as she drew the cork she looked at me under her eyebrows in that blindish way she had o' lookin,' an, 'Sergeant Pritchard,' she says, 'I do 'ope you 'aven't changed your mind about

<sup>1</sup> *Auckland* New Zealand's largest city.

<sup>2</sup> *non-coms* Non-commissioned officers; enlisted subordinates.

<sup>3</sup> *bosun* Boatswain; petty officer in charge of rigging.

<sup>4</sup> *Chaffin* I.e., chaffing, or exchanging banter.

<sup>5</sup> *particular* Favorite.

<sup>6</sup> *sidebar* Toll bar on side road.

your particulars.' That's the kind o' woman she was—after five years!"

"I don't *see* her yet somehow," said Hooper, but with sympathy.

"She—she never scrupled to feed a lame duck or set 'er foot on a scorpion at any time of 'er life," Pritchard added valiantly.

"That don't help me either. My mother's like that for one."

The giant heaved inside his uniform and rolled his eyes at the car roof. Said Pycroft suddenly:—

"How many women have you been intimate with all over the world, Pritch?"

Pritchard blushed plum colour to the short hairs of his seventeen-inch neck.

"Undreds," said Pycroft. "So've I. How many of 'em can you remember in your own mind, settin' aside the first—an' per'aps the last—*and one more?*"

"Few, wonderful few, now I tax myself," said Sergeant Pritchard relievedly.

"An' how many times might you 'ave been at Auckland?"

"One—two," he began—"why, I can't make it more than three times in ten years. But I can remember every time that I ever saw Mrs. B."

"So can I—an' I've only been to Auckland twice—how she stood an' what she was sayin' an' what she looked like. That's the secret. 'Tisn't beauty, so to speak, nor good talk necessarily. It's just It. Some women'll stay in a man's memory if they once walk down a street, but most of 'em you can live with a month on end, an' next commission you'd be put to it to certify whether they talked in their sleep or not, as one might say."

"Ah!" said Hooper. "That's more the idea. I've known just two women of that nature."

"An' it was no fault o' theirs?" asked Pritchard.

"None whatever. I know *that!*"

"An' if a man gets struck with that kind o' woman, Mr. Hooper?" Pritchard went on.

"He goes crazy—or just saves himself," was the slow answer.

"You've hit it," said the sergeant. "You've seen an' known somethin' in the course o' your life, Mr. Hooper. I'm lookin' at you!" He set down his bottle.

"And how often had Vickery seen her?" I asked.

"That's the dark an' bloody mystery," Pycroft answered. "I'd never come across him till I come out in the *Hierophant* just now, an' there wasn't anyone in the ship who knew much about him. You see, he was what you call a superior man. 'E spoke to me once or twice about Auckland and Mrs. B. on the voyage out. I called that to mind subsequently. There must 'ave been a good deal between 'em, to my way o' thinkin'. Mind you, I'm only giving you my *résumé*<sup>1</sup> of it all, because all I know is secondhand so to speak, or rather I should say more than second'and."

"How?" said Hooper peremptorily. "You must have seen it or heard it."

"Ye-es," said Pycroft. "I used to think seein' and hearin' was the only regulation aids to ascertainin' facts, but as we get older we get more accommodatin'. The cylinders work easier, I suppose . . . Were you in Cape Town last December when Phyllis's Circus came?"

"No—up-country," said Hooper, a little nettled at the change of venue.

"I ask because they had a new turn of a scientific nature called 'Home and Friends for a Tickey.'"

"Oh, you mean the cinematograph<sup>2</sup>—the pictures of prizefights and steamers. I've seen 'em up-country."

"Biograph or cinematograph was what I was alludin' to. London Bridge with the omnibuses—a troopship goin' to the war—marines on parade at Portsmouth, an' the Plymouth Express arrivin' at Paddin'ton."<sup>3</sup>

"Seen 'em all. Seen 'em all," said Hooper impatiently.

"*We Hierophants* came in just before Christmas week an' leaf was easy."

"I think a man gets fed up with Cape Town quicker than anywhere else on the station. Why, even Durban's more like nature. We was there for Christmas," Pritchard put in.

"Not bein' a devotee of Indian *peeris*, as our doctor said to the pusser,<sup>4</sup> I can't exactly say. Phyllis's was good

<sup>1</sup> *résumé* Summary.

<sup>2</sup> *cinematograph* Motion picture; a cinematograph was first presented in a theater in 1895.

<sup>3</sup> *Portsmouth* Port city in southeast England; *Paddington* London train station.

<sup>4</sup> *pusser* Purser; officer in charge of accounts.

enough after musketry practice at Mozambique.<sup>1</sup> I couldn't get off the first two or three nights on account of what you might call an imbroglio with our torpedo lieutenant in the submerged flat, where some pride of the West country had sugared up a gyroscope;<sup>2</sup> but I remember Vickery went ashore with our Carpenter Rigdon—old Crocus we called him. As a general rule Crocus never left 'is ship unless an' until he was 'oisted out with a winch, but *when* 'e went 'e would return noddin' like a lily gemmed with dew. We smothered him down below that night, but the things 'e said about Vickery as a fittin' playmate for a warrant officer of 'is cubic capacity, before we got him quiet, was what I should call pointed."

"I've been with Crocus—in the *Redoubtable*," said the sergeant. "He's a character if there is one."

"Next night I went into Cape Town with Dawson and Pratt; but just at the door of the Circus I came across Vickery. 'Oh!' he says, 'you're the man I'm looking for. Come and sit next me. This way to the shillin' places!' I went astern at once, protestin' because tickey seats better suited my so-called finances. 'Come on,' says Vickery, 'I'm payin.' Naturally I abandoned Pratt and Dawson in anticipation o' drinks to match the seats. 'No,' he says, when this was 'inted—'not now. Not now. As many as you please afterwards, but I want you sober for the occasion.' I caught 'is face under a lamp just then, an' the appearance of it quite cured me of my thirst. Don't mistake. It didn't frighten me. It made me anxious. I can't tell you what it was like, but that was the effect which it 'ad on me. If you want to know, it reminded me of those things in bottles in those herbalistic shops at Plymouth—preserved in spirits of wine. White an' crumply things—previous to birth as you might say."

"You 'ave a beastial mind, Pye," said the sergeant, relighting his pipe.

"Perhaps. We were in the front row, an' 'Home an' Friends' came on early. Vickery touched me on the knee when the number went up. 'If you see anything that strikes you,' he says, 'drop me a hint'; then he went on clicking. We saw London Bridge an' so forth an' so on, an' it was most interestin.' I'd never seen it before. You

'eard a little dynamo like buzzin,' but the pictures were the real thing—alive an' movin'."

"I've seen 'em," said Hooper. "Of course they are taken from the very thing itself—you see."

"Then the Western Mail<sup>3</sup> came in to Paddin'ton on the big magic-lantern sheet. First we saw the platform empty an' the porters standin' by. Then the engine come in, head on, an' the women in the front row jumped: she headed so straight. Then the doors opened and the passengers came out and the porters got the luggage—just like life. Only—only when anyone came down too far towards us that was watchin,' they walked right out o' the picture, so to speak. I was'ighly interested, I can tell you. So were all of us. I watched an old man with a rug 'oo'd dropped a book an' was tryin' to pick it up, when quite slowly, from be'ind two porters—carryin' a little reticule<sup>4</sup> an' lookin' from side to side—comes out Mrs. Bathurst. There was no mistakin' the walk in a hundred thousand. She come forward—right forward—she looked out straight at us with that blindish look which Pritch alluded to. She walked on and on till she melted out of the picture—like—like a shadow jumpin' over a candle, an' as she went I 'eard Dawson in the tickey seats be'ind sing out: 'Christ! there's Mrs. B.!'"

Hooper swallowed his spittle and leaned forward intently.

"Vickery touched me on the knee again. He was clickin' his four false teeth with his jaw down like an enteric<sup>5</sup> at the last kick. 'Are you sure?' says he. 'Sure,' I says, 'didn't you 'ear Dawson give tongue? Why, it's the woman herself.' 'I was sure before,' he says, 'but I brought you to make sure. Will you come again with me tomorrow?'"

"'Willingly,' I says, 'it's like meetin' old friends.'"

"'Yes,' he says, openin' his watch, 'very like. It will be four-and-twenty hours less four minutes before I see her again. Come and have a drink,' he says. 'It may amuse you, but it's no sort of earthly use to me.' He went out shaking his head an' stumblin' over people's feet as if he was drunk already. I anticipated a swift drink an' a speedy return, because I wanted to see the

<sup>1</sup> *Mozambique* Colony (now a country) in east Africa.

<sup>2</sup> *sugared up a gyroscope* Messed up a level.

<sup>3</sup> *Western Mail* Train.

<sup>4</sup> *reticule* Small bag.

<sup>5</sup> *enteric* Person with intestinal fever.

performin' elephants. Instead o' which Vickery began to navigate the town at the rate o' knots, lookin' in at a bar every three minutes approximate Greenwich time. I'm not a drinkin' man, though there are those present—he cocked his unforgettable eye at me—"who may have seen me more or less imbued with the fragrant spirit. Nonetheless when I drink I like to do it at anchor an' not at an average speed of eighteen knots on the measured mile. There's a tank as you might say at the back o' that big hotel up the hill—what do they call it?"

"The Molteno Reservoir," I suggested, and Hooper nodded.

"That was his limit o' drift. We walked there an' we come down through the gardens—there was a southeaster blowin'—an' we finished up by the docks. Then we bore up the road to Salt River, and wherever there was a pub Vickery put in sweatin'. He didn't look at what he drunk—he didn't look at the change. He walked an' he drunk an' he perspired in rivers. I understood why old Crocus 'ad come back in the condition 'e did, because Vickery an' I 'ad two an' a half hours o' this gipsy manoeuvre, an' when we got back to the station there wasn't a dry atom on or in me."

"Did he say anything?" Pritchard asked.

"The sum total of 'is conversation from 7.45 p.m. till 11.15 p.m. was 'Let's have another.' Thus the mornin' an' the evenin' were the first day, as Scripture says.... To abbreviate a lengthy narrative, I went into Cape Town for five consecutive nights with Master Vickery, and in that time I must 'ave logged about fifty knots over the ground an' taken in two gallon o' all the worst spirits south the equator. The evolution never varied. Two shilling seats for us two; five minutes o' the pictures, an' perhaps forty-five seconds o' Mrs. B. walking down towards us with that blindish look in her eyes an' the reticule in her hand. Then out-walk<sup>1</sup>—and drink till train time."

"What did you think?" said Hooper, his hand fingering his waistcoat pocket.

"Several things," said Pyecroft. "To tell you the truth, I aren't quite done thinkin' about it yet. Mad? The man was a dumb lunatic—must 'ave been for months—years p'raps. I know somethin' o' maniacs, as every man in the service must. I've been shipmates with

a mad skipper—an' a lunatic Number One,<sup>2</sup> but never both together, I thank 'eaven. I could give you the names o' three captains now 'oo ought to be in an asylum, but you don't find me interferin' with the mentally afflicted till they begin to lay about 'em with rammers an' winch-handles. Only once I crept up a little into the wind towards Master Vickery. 'I wonder what she's doin' in England,' I says. 'Don't it seem to you she's lookin' for somebody?' That was in the gardens again, with the southeaster blowin' as we were makin' our desperate round. 'She's lookin' for me,' he says, stoppin' dead under a lamp an' dickin'. When he wasn't drinkin', in which case all 'is teeth clicked on the glass, 'e was clickin' 'is four false teeth like a Marconi ticker.<sup>3</sup> 'Yes! lookin' for me,' he said, an' he went on very softly an' as you might say affectionately. 'But,' he went on, 'in future, Mr. Pyecroft, I should take it kindly of you if you'd confine your remarks to the drinks set before you. Otherwise,' he says, 'with the best will in the world towards you, I may find myself guilty of murder! Do you understand?' he says. 'Perfectly,' I says, 'but would it at all soothe you to know that in such a case the chances o' your being killed are precisely equivalent to the chances o' me being outed.' 'Why, no,' he says, 'I'm almost afraid that 'ud be a temptation.' Then I said—we was right under the lamp by that arch at the end o' the gardens where the trams come round—'Assumin' murder was done—or attempted murder—I put it to you that you would still be left so badly crippled, as one might say, that your subsequent capture by the police—to 'oom you would 'ave to explain—would be largely inevitable.' 'That's better,' 'e says, passin' 'is hands over his forehead. 'That's much better, because,' he says, 'do you know, as I am now, Pye, I'm not so sure if I could explain anything much.' Those were the only particular words I had with 'im in our walks as I remember."

"What walks!" said Hooper. "Oh my soul, what walks!"

"They were chronic," said Pyecroft gravely, "but I didn't anticipate any danger till the circus left. Then I anticipated that, bein' deprived of 'is stimulant, he might react on me, so to say, with a hatchet. Conse-

<sup>1</sup> *out-walk* Walk about; promenade.

<sup>2</sup> *Number One* Second in command on a ship.

<sup>3</sup> *Marconi ticker* Telegraph machine, invented by Guglielmo Marconi in 1896.

quently, after the final performance an' the ensuin' wet walk, I kep' myself aloof from my superior officer on board in the execution of 'is duty, as you might put it. Consequently, I was interested when the sentry informs me while I was passin' on my lawful occasions that Click had asked to see the captain. As a general rule warrant officers don't dissipate much of the owner's time, but Click put in an hour and more be'ind that door. My duties kep' me within eyeshot of it. Vickery came out first, an' 'e actually nodded at me an' smiled. This knocked me out o' the boat, because, havin' seen 'is face for five consecutive nights, I didn't anticipate any change there more than a condenser in hell, so to speak. The owner emerged later. His face didn't read off at all, so I fell back on his cox,<sup>1</sup> 'oo'd been eight years with him and knew him better than boat signals. Lamson—that was the cox's name—crossed 'is bows once or twice at low speeds an' dropped down to me visibly concerned. 'He's shipped 'is court-martial face,' says Lamson. 'Someone's goin' to be 'ung. I've never seen that look but once before, when they chucked the gun-sights overboard in the *Fantastic*.' Throwin' gun-sights overboard, Mr. Hooper, is the equivalent for mutiny in these degenerate days. It's done to attract the notice of the authorities an' the *Western Mornin' News*—generally by a stoker.<sup>2</sup> Naturally, word went round the lower deck an' we had a private over'aul of our little consciences. But, barrin' a shirt which a second-class stoker said 'ad walked into 'is bag from the marines' flat by itself, nothin' vital transpired. The owner went about flyin' the signal for 'attend public execution,' so to say, but there was no corpse at the yard-arm.<sup>3</sup> 'E lunched on the beach an' 'e returned with 'is regulation harbour routine face about 3 p.m. Thus Lamson lost prestige for raising false alarms. The only person 'oo might 'ave connected the epicycloidal<sup>4</sup> gears correctly was one Pycroft, when he was told that Mr. Vickery would go up-country that same evening to take over certain naval ammunition left after the war in Bloemfontein Fort. No details was

ordered to accompany Master Vickery. He was told off first person singular—as a unit—by himself."

The marine whistled penetratingly.

"That's what I thought," said Pycroft. "I went ashore with him in the cutter<sup>5</sup> an' 'e asked me to walk through the station. He was clickin' audibly, but otherwise seemed happy-ish.

"You might like to know,' he says, stoppin' just opposite the Admiral's front gate, 'that Phyllis's Circus will be performin' at Worcester tomorrow night. So I shall see 'er yet once again. You've been very patient with me,' he says.

"Look here, Vickery,' I said, 'this thing's come to be just as much as I can stand. Consume your own smoke. I don't want to know any more.'

"You!' he said. 'What have you got to complain of?—you've only 'ad to watch. I'm *it*,' he says, 'but that's neither here nor there,' he says. 'I've one thing to say before shakin' 'ands. Remember,' 'e says—we were just by the Admiral's garden gate then—'remember that I am *not* a murderer, because my lawful wife died in childbed six weeks after I came out. That much at least I am clear of,' 'e says.

"Then what have you done that signifies?' I said. 'What's the rest of it?'

"The rest,' 'e says, 'is silence,' an' he shook 'ands and went clickin' into Simonstown station."

"Did he stop to see Mrs. Bathurst at Worcester?" I asked.

"It's not known. He reported at Bloemfontein, saw the ammunition into the trucks, and then 'e disappeared. Went out—deserted, if you care to put it so—within eighteen months of his pension, an' if what 'e said about 'is wife was true he was a free man as 'e then stood. How do you read it off?"

"Poor devil!" said Hooper. "To see her that way every night! I wonder what it was."

"I've made my 'ead ache in that direction many a long night."

"But I'll swear Mrs. B. 'ad no 'and in it," said the sergeant, unshaken.

"No. Whatever the wrong or deceit was, he did it, I'm sure o' that. I 'ad to look at 'is face for five consecutive nights. I'm not so fond o' navigatin' about Cape

<sup>1</sup> *cox* Coxswain; helmsman.

<sup>2</sup> *stoker* Person who loads coal into the furnace.

<sup>3</sup> *corpse at the yard-arm* Occasionally people were hanged on board ship, with the rod that supports the sail acting as a scaffold.

<sup>4</sup> *epicycloidal* Circular.

<sup>5</sup> *cutter* Rowboat.

Town with a southeaster blowin' these days. I can hear those teeth click, so to say."

"Ah, those teeth," said Hooper, and his hand went to his waistcoat pocket once more. "Permanent things false teeth are. You read about 'em in all the murder trials."

"What d'you suppose the captain knew—or did?" I asked.

"I've never turned my searchlight that way," Pycroft answered unblushingly.

We all reflected together, and drummed on empty beer bottles as the picnic party, sunburned, wet, and sandy, passed our door singing "The Honeysuckle and the Bee."

"Pretty girl under that *kapje*,"<sup>1</sup> said Pycroft.

"They never circulated his description?" said Pritchard.

"I was askin' you before these gentlemen came," said Hooper to me, "whether you knew Wankies—on the way to the Zambesi—beyond Bulawayo?"

"Would he pass there—tryin' to get to that Lake what's 'is name?" said Pritchard.

Hooper shook his head and went on: "There's a curious bit o' *line*<sup>2</sup> there, you see. It runs through solid teak forest—a sort o' mahogany really—seventy-two miles without a curve. I've had a train derailed there twenty-three times in forty miles. I was up there a month ago relievin' a sick inspector, you see. He told me to look out for a couple of tramps in the teak."

"Two?" Pycroft said. "I don't envy that other man if——"

"We get heaps of tramps up there since the war.<sup>3</sup> The inspector told me I'd find 'em at M'Bindwe siding waiting to go north. He'd given 'em some grub and quinine, you see. I went up on a construction train. I looked out for 'em. I saw them miles ahead along the straight, waiting in the teak. One of 'em was standin' up by the dead end of the siding an' the other was squattin' down lookin' up at 'im, you see."

"What did you do for 'em?" said Pritchard.

"There wasn't much I could do, except bury 'em. There'd been a bit of a thunderstorm in the teak, you see, and they were both stone dead and as black as charcoal. That's what they really were, you see—charcoal. They fell to bits when we tried to shift 'em. The man who was standin' up had the false teeth. I saw 'em shinin' against the black. Fell to bits he did too, like his mate squatting down an' watchin' him, both of 'em all wet in the rain. Both burned to charcoal, you see. And—that's what made me ask about marks just now—the false-toother was tattooed on the arms and chest—a crown and foul anchor with M.V. above."

"I've seen that," said Pycroft quickly. "It was so."

"But if he was all charcoal-like?" said Pritchard, shuddering.

"You know how writing shows up white on a burned letter? Well, it was like that, you see. We buried 'em in the teak and I kept ... But he was a friend of you two gentlemen, you see."

Mr. Hooper brought his hand away from his waistcoat pocket—empty.

Pritchard covered his face with his hands for a moment, like a child shutting out an ugliness.

"And to think of her at Hauraki!" he murmured—"with 'er 'air-ribbon on my beer. 'Ada,' she said to her niece ... Oh, my Gawd!" ...

On a summer afternoon, when the honeysuckle blooms,  
And all nature seems at rest,  
Underneath the bower, 'mid the perfume of the flower,  
Sat a maiden with the one she loves the best——

sang the picnic-party waiting for their train at Glengarriff.

"Well, I don't know how you feel about it," said Pycroft, "but 'avin' seen 'is face for five consecutive nights on end, I'm inclined to finish what's left of the beer an' thank Gawd he's dead!"

—1904

<sup>1</sup> *kapje* From the Dutch word meaning "cap."

<sup>2</sup> *line* Railroad track.

<sup>3</sup> *war* Boer War (1899–1902), between the Dutch Boer republics in South Africa, and Great Britain and its colonies.

### *England and the English*<sup>1</sup>

*Beyond the Pillars of Hercules,<sup>2</sup> they do things inversely and, perpetually appearing to dig their own graves, by some means erect world-beheld monuments—an example, however, not to be followed by less confident peoples.*

Royal Society of St. George:<sup>3</sup> April 1920

I think this is an occasion on which it behooves us all to walk rather circumspectly. If you will let me, I will try and tell you why. About sixteen hundred years ago, when Rome was mistress of the world and the Picts<sup>4</sup> and the Scots lived on the other side of the wall that ran from Newcastle to Carlisle, the story goes that Rome allowed all those peoples one night in the year in which they could say aloud exactly what they thought of Rome, without fear of the consequences. So then, on that one night of the year, they would creep out of the heather in droves and light their little wandering fires and criticise their Libyan generals and their Roman pontiffs and the Eastern camp followers, who looked down on them from the top of the great high unbreakable Roman Wall sixteen hundred years ago.

Today, Imperial Rome is dead. The wall is down and the Picts and the Scots are on this side of it, but thanks to our Royal Society of St. George, there still remains one night in the year when the English can creep out of their hiding places and whisper to each other exactly what we think about ourselves. No, it is not quite safe to criticise our masters—our masters who tax us and educate us, and try us, and minister so abundantly to what they instruct us our wants ought to be. Since these masters of ours have not yet quite the old untroubled assurance of power and knowledge that made Rome so tolerant in the days when the Picts and

the Scots lived on the other side of the wall, we will confine ourselves to our own popular and widely recognised defects.

Some of our severest critics, who, of course, are of our own household, have said that there never was such a thing as the English race—that it is at best the intolerably insolent outcome of ancient invasions and immigrations, freshened with more recent continental gaol<sup>5</sup> deliveries. Far be it from me to traverse such statements. I give them on no less authority than that of the late Mr. Daniel Defoe, Liveryman of the City of London, author of *Robinson Crusoe* and of a pamphlet called *The True-born Englishman*. He deals very faithfully with the English. So faithfully that, in deference to the susceptibilities of some races, I will not give his version of the Englishman's pedigree,<sup>6</sup> but in his summing up of the true-born Englishman, Defoe says:

A true-born Englishman's a contradiction,  
In speech an irony, in fact a fiction,  
A metaphor intended to express  
A man akin to all the universe.

In that last line it seems to me that Defoe slips into a blessing where he meant to curse, because a man "akin to all the Universe" cannot be wholly lost. He must have some points of contact with humanity. And the Englishman has had several.

The Phoenicians taught him the rudiments of shopkeeping; the Romans taught him love of sport by hiring him to fight wild beasts in their arenas. Under the Heptarchy<sup>7</sup> he studied social reform, which in those unenlightened days consisted of raising levies on capital in order to buy off the heathen of the North from taking direct action against English industries. He next took a three-hundred-years' course of colloquial and law French under eminent Norman<sup>8</sup> teachers. He did not learn that language then or since, but it left him with a

<sup>1</sup> *England and the English* This is the text of a speech, given by Kipling to The Royal Society of St. George in April, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> *Pillars of Hercules* Promontories along the Strait of Gibraltar, once considered by some to be the western edge of the world.

<sup>3</sup> *Royal Society of St. George* Originally founded in New York in 1770 as an aid organization for expatriate Englishmen, the Society began in England in 1894 "with the noble object of promoting 'Englishness' and the English way of life."

<sup>4</sup> *Picts* Ancient people that inhabited Northern Britain and united with the Scots in 843 CE to form a kingdom that ultimately became Scotland.

<sup>5</sup> *gaol* Jail.

<sup>6</sup> *Englishman's pedigree* "Thus from a mixture of all kinds began, / that hetrogenous thing, an Englishman."

<sup>7</sup> *Heptarchy* Confederacy of seven kingdoms in Britain established by the Angles and Saxons between the fifth and ninth centuries CE.

<sup>8</sup> *Norman* French from Normandy who conquered England in the Norman Conquest of 1066 CE.

profound respect, based on experience, for his neighbours across the Channel, and a conviction, which time has deepened, that they were the only other people in the world who mattered.

For five hundred years his affairs, domestic and foreign, were controlled by French, Italian, Spanish, with occasional Austrian, politico-ecclesiastical authorities, who tried to teach him that “this realm of England” was but part of a vast international organisation destined to embrace, protect, and instruct all mankind. He escaped from those embraces only to find himself subjected to the full rigours of the Puritan conscience, which at that time was largely directed by gentlemen from Geneva, Leyden, Amsterdam, and the Low Countries.<sup>1</sup> While thus engaged he was, under pretext of union, finally and fatally subjugated by the Scot. A few years later he embarked on the swelling tide of party politics in all their attendant purity; since which he has seldom been allowed to look back, and never forward.

I submit that such a nightmare of national experiences would have driven an unmixed race to the edge of lunacy. But the Englishman is like a built-up gun barrel, all one temper though welded of many different materials, and he has strong powers of resistance. Roman, Dane, Norman, Papist, Cromwellian, Stuart, Hollander, Hanoverian, upper class, middle class, democracy, each in turn through a thousand years experimented on him and tried to make him to their own liking. He met them each in turn with a large silent toleration, which each in turn mistook for native stupidity. He gave them each in turn a fair trial and, when he had finished with them, an equally fair dismissal. As an additional safeguard he devised for himself a social system in watertight compartments, so arranged that neither the waters of popular emotion nor the fires of private revenge could sweep his ship of state from end to end. If, in spite of this, the domestic situation became too much for him he could always take a ship and go to sea, and there seek or impose the peace which the Papal Legate, or the Medieval Trade Union, or a profligate Chancellor of the Exchequer denied to him at home. And thus, gentlemen—*not* in a fit of absence of mind—was the Empire born. It was the outcome of the relaxations of persecuted specialists—men who for one cause or another

were unfit for the rough and tumble of life at home. They did it for change and rest, exactly as we used to take our summer holidays, and, like ourselves, they took their national habits with them. For example, they did not often gather together with harps and rebecks<sup>2</sup> to celebrate their national glories, or to hymn their national heroes. When they did not take them both for granted, they, like ourselves, generally denied the one and did their best to impeach the other. But, by some mysterious rule-of-thumb magic, they *did* establish and maintain reasonable security and peace among simple folk in very many parts of the world, and that, too, without overmuch murder, robbery, oppression, or torture.

One secret of the success of the English was, perhaps, their imperturbable tolerance. A race that has been persecuted, or—what comes to the same thing—bored, by every persecuted refugee to whom they have ever given an asylum, naturally learns to tolerate anything. Their immensely mixed origin, too, made the English in a very real sense “akin to all the universe,” and sympathetic in their dumb way with remote gods and strange people. Above all, their long insular experience of imported brainstorms had taught them that men should not try to do better than good for fear lest worse than bad might follow. And there has been enough of worse than bad in the world for the last few years.<sup>3</sup> Our national weakness for keeping to the easiest road to the latest possible minute sooner than inconvenience ourselves or our neighbours has been visited upon us full tale. After ninety-nine years of peace the English were given ninety-six hours in which to choose whether they would buy a little longer peace from the heathen of the North, as some of their ancestors had done, or whether they would make peace with them as our King Alfred made it with the Danes. It was a race that had almost forgotten how to say “No” to anybody who said “Yes” in a sufficiently loud voice. It seemed as if it had quite forgotten that it had broken a church, killed a king, closed a protectorate and exiled another king, sooner than be driven where it did not want to go. But when its hour came, once again it decided to go its own way, and once again by instinct. For it had prepared nothing—it

<sup>2</sup> *rebecks* Medieval stringed instruments.

<sup>3</sup> *worse ... years* World War I (1914–18).

<sup>1</sup> *Low Countries* Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg.

had foreseen nothing. It had been assured that not only was there no need for preparation against war, but that the mere thought of preparation against war was absurd where it was not criminal. Therefore, through the first two years of the war, it was necessary to throw up a barricade of the dead bodies of the nation's youth behind which the most elementary preparations could be begun.

There has been no such slaughter of the English in English history, but the actual war was no more than a large-scale repetition of previous national experiences. If an Elizabethan statesman (or adventurer) could have returned to England during the war he would, I think, in a very short time have been able to pick up his office work almost where he dropped it. His reports and his maps would have been a little more detailed, but he would have been surprisingly abreast of the whole situation.

Where the old English influence had struck deep all the world over, he would have seen help and comfort hurried up to all the fronts from all the world over without count or tale, without word or bond to limit or confirm it. Where the old alien influences that he knew so well had persisted, or where the new influences directed by the old were at work, he would have seen, as he would have expected, all help for the war denied, withheld, or doled out grudgingly, piecemeal at a high price. He would have recognised that what held firm in the days of the Armada<sup>1</sup> held firm at Armageddon;<sup>2</sup> that what had broken beneath his hand then was rotten in our hand now. Bar a few minor differences of equipment, he would have felt just like any sailor or soldier returning to some bitterly familiar job of sea patrol or trench life between '14 and '18. Like those men he would have taken for granted a great deal upon which other nations might have wasted valuable thought and attention. Our stories of Coronel and Zeebrugge,<sup>3</sup> of the English county battalions not one year old that died to

the last man as a matter of routine on the fronts that they were ordered to hold, would have moved him no more and no less than the little affair of Sir Richard Grenville off Flores, in the *Revenge*.<sup>4</sup> That troopers of County Yeomanry in Mesopotamia, picked almost at random, could, single-handed and by sheer force of character, control and conciliate in a few days a turbulent Arab village, would have amazed him no more and no less than any tale of Panama, or of our first venture across the world, told him by Sir Francis Drake or any forgotten captain of the same age. Being of the breed he would have known the breed and would have taken the work of the breed for granted.

And herein, as I see it, lies the strength of the English—that they have behind them this continuity of immensely varied race-experience and race-memory, running equally through all classes back to the very dawn of our dawn. This imposes on them unconsciously, even while they deny or deride it, standards of achievement and comparison, hard perhaps, and perhaps a little unsympathetic, but not low—not low—and, as all earth is witness, not easily to be lowered. And that is the reason why in the things nearest our hearts we praise so little and criticise so lavishly. It is the only compliment which an Englishman dare pay to his country.

As you know, our standards of achievement and comparison do not appear on the surface; nor are they much in men's mouths. When they are, they are mostly translated into terms of sport or the slang of our various games. But whenever the English deal in earnest with each other, or with the outside world, those standards are taken for granted. And it is by the things that we take for granted without word that we live. It was taken for granted during the war that every day was St. George's Day,<sup>5</sup> on one or other of our seven fronts.

And now, we and our kin, after these great years, are sick, dizzy, and shaken—like all convalescents, a little inclined to pity ourselves, a little inclined to stay as long as possible on a diet of invalid slops, and a little more

<sup>1</sup> *Armada* Spanish Armada of 1588, a fleet of ships that had sailed from Spain with the aim of invading England.

<sup>2</sup> *Armageddon* In the Biblical book of Revelation 16.16 the place of the last battle on the Day of Judgment, but used to suggest any great conflict.

<sup>3</sup> *Coronel and Zeebrugge* Ports in Chile and Belgium, respectively; sites of major naval losses for the British in WWI.

<sup>4</sup> *affair ... Revenge* In 1591, Sir Grenville, commander of the naval ship *Revenge*, fought an arduous and bloody battle with the Spanish off the coast of Spain, resulting in his death and the loss of the ship.

<sup>5</sup> *St. George's Day* April 23rd festival in honor of St. George, who was martyred by anti-Christian forces in 303 CE.

than inclined to mistake the hysteria of convalescence for the symptoms of returning life and thought. Here also instinct tells us that the weight, the range, and the evenly spread richness of our national past should ballast us sufficiently to navigate through whatever storms—or brainstorm—there may be ahead. And we are threatened with several.

One school of thought, Muscovite in origin, holds, as the Danes held twelve hundred years ago, that rapine<sup>1</sup> and scientific torture will elevate our ideals, which up to the present have merely taught us to try to do our duty to our God and our neighbour. Others are content to work for the organised bankruptcy of whatsoever is of good repute, including the systematic betrayal of our friends, very much on the same lines as some people used to panic after every Crusade and every visitation of the plague. We are further promised an unparalleled outbreak of education, guaranteed to produce a standardised state-aided mind. The Church evolved almost a parallel system in the Middle Ages, which, much to her surprise, produced the Reformation.

Lastly, lest we should ever again lapse into our “pathetic contentment,” the breed which organised at a week’s notice to achieve the impossible and achieved it—by earth, sea, and air achieved it—is now, as a reward, to be ruthlessly reorganised in every detail of its life, walk, and conduct. That great work was begun by William the Conqueror, *Anno Domini* 1066,<sup>2</sup> and has been before committee or commission ever since.

Norman, Papist, Cromwellian, Stuart, Hollander, Hanoverian, upper class, middle class, democracy, have each in turn tried their fleeting hand on the “man akin to all the universe.” From each in turn he has taken what he wanted; to each in turn he has given a fair trial; and, when he has quite finished, an equally fair dismissal.

What will he do in the future? We are too near to the dust of the main battle to see clearly. We know that

England is crippled by the loss and wastage of a whole generation, and that her position, from the civil point of view today, is the position of our armies in the darkest days of the war. That is to say, all leave is stopped for any man who can manage to stand up to his job, no matter how sick or stale he may feel himself to be, and there is undreamed-of promotion for untried men who, simply because they are not dead, will now have to face heavier responsibility, longer hours, and criticism that certainly will not grow milder as the years pass. But no miracles have occurred.

This world of ours, which some of us in their zeal to do better than good have helped to create, but which we must all inherit, is not a new world, but the old world grown harder. The wheel has come full circle. The whole weight of the world at the present moment lies again, as it used to lie in the time of our fathers, on the necks of two nations, England and France. The sole force under God’s good providence that can meet this turn of our fate, is not temperament, not opportunism, nor any effort to do better than good, but character and again character—such mere ingrained, commonsense, hand-hammered, loyal strength of character as one humbly dares to hope that fifteen hundred years of equality of experience have given us.

If this hope be true—and because we know the breed in our hearts we know that it is true—if this hope be justified, our children’s children, looking back through the luminous years to where we here stumble and falter, will say to themselves: “Was it possible—was it possible that the English of that age did not know, could not see, dared not even guess, to what height of strength, wisdom, and enduring honour they had lifted their land?”

But we will be circumspect! My lords, ladies and gentlemen—for what there is of it—for such as it is—and for what it may be worth—will you drink to England and the English?

—1920

<sup>1</sup> *rapine* Pillage; plunder.

<sup>2</sup> *William ... 1066* William of Normandy, who invaded England in 1066 CE and took the throne. The term “Anno Domini” is Latin for “In the Year of Our Lord” and refers to the years after the birth of Jesus Christ in the Western reckoning of time (AD). It is more usual now to refer to this period as “the common era” (CE).

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### IN CONTEXT

Queen Victoria was widowed when Prince Albert died on 14 December 1861. Although the British public had never warmed to Albert, his partnership with the queen had been an extraordinarily successful one—as a professional partnership as well as in family life. For many years the queen was a recluse—so much so that the public began to lose patience with and sympathy for Victoria in her mourning. It was not until the early 1870s that the queen began to re-emerge. As she did so she gradually regained public favor, and by the time Kipling’s “The Widow at Windsor” was published in 1890 she was widely revered. Her 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Jubilee in 1897—for which Kipling composed “Recessional”—was a massive national celebration.



Frederick Shuckard’s painting of an idealized 18-year-old Princess Victoria receiving news of her accession to the throne in 1837.



Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in the early 1850s. (Photo by Roger Fenton.)



Queen Victoria in mourning, 1867.



Queen Victoria with John Brown, a servant who had been personal ghillie to Prince Albert and later served Queen Victoria; Brown is credited with helping to bring the queen out from seclusion. (Photo by W & D Downy.)



The Queen with Princess Beatrice, Princess Victoria, and great granddaughter Alice, 1867. (Photographer unknown.)



Queen Victoria in the Golden Jubilee procession, 1897.



Queen Victoria circa 1900. A picture of Albert is in the background.

### The "White Man's Burden" in the Philippines

The Philippine Islands had long been a Spanish colony, but Spain's defeat at the hands of American Admiral George Dewey in 1898 during the Spanish American War was followed by an agreement ceding the islands to the United States for \$20 million. Local forces (under Emilio Agninaldo) had been rebelling against the Spanish, and, expecting the American victory to lead to liberation, declared a republic. The Americans, however, deciding that the natives were not ready for independence, ruthlessly suppressed the insurrection of Agninaldo's forces (which continued until 1905). Not until 1946 was the Republic of the Philippines granted full independence. The American annexation of the islands in 1899 was widely popular in the United States, but a significant minority loudly protested the expression of American imperialism that Kipling's poem had so unequivocally lauded. Following are excerpts from the platform adopted by one American organization at their founding meeting in Chicago, 17 October 1899.

#### *Platform of the American Anti-Imperialist League*

We hold that the policy known as imperialism is hostile to liberty and tends toward militarism, an evil from which it has been our glory to be free. We regret that it has become necessary in the land of Washington and Lincoln to reaffirm that all men, of whatever race or color, are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We maintain that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. We insist that the subjugation of any people is "criminal aggression" and open disloyalty to the distinctive principles of our government.

We earnestly condemn the policy of the present national administration in the Philippines. It seeks to extinguish the spirit of 1776 in those islands. We deplore the sacrifice of our soldiers and sailors, whose bravery deserves admiration even in an unjust war. We denounce the slaughter of the

Filipinos as a needless horror. We protest against the extension of American sovereignty by Spanish methods.

We demand the immediate cessation of the war against liberty, begun by Spain and continued by us. We urge that Congress be promptly convened to announce to the Filipinos our purpose to concede to them the independence for which they have so long fought and which of right is theirs.

The United States have always protested against the doctrine of international law which permits the subjugation of the weak by the strong. A self governing state cannot accept sovereignty over an unwilling people. The United States cannot act upon the ancient heresy that might makes right.

Imperialists assume that with the destruction of self-government in the Philippines by American hands, all opposition here will cease. This is a grievous error. Much as we abhor the war of "criminal aggression" in the Philippines, greatly as we regret that the blood of the Filipinos is on American hands, we more deeply resent the betrayal of American institutions at home. The real firing line is not in the suburbs of Manila. The foe is of our own household. The attempt of 1861 was to divide the country. That of 1899 is to destroy its fundamental principles and noblest ideals.

Whether the ruthless slaughter of the Filipinos shall end next month or next year is but an incident in a contest that must go on until the declaration of independence and the constitution of the United States are rescued from the hands of their betrayers. Those who dispute about standards of value while the republic is undermined will be listened to as little as there who would wrangle about the small economies of the household while the house is on fire. The training of a great people for a century, the aspiration for liberty of a vast immigration are forces that will hurl aside those who in the delirium of conquest seek to destroy the character of our institutions.

We deny that the obligation of all citizens to support their Government in times of grave national peril applies to the present situation. If an administration may with impunity ignore the issues upon which it was chosen, deliberately create a condition of war anywhere on the face of the globe, debauch the civil service for spoils to promote the adventure, organize a truth suppressing censorship and demand of all citizens a suspension of judgement and their unanimous support while it chooses to continue the fighting, representative government itself is imperiled.

We propose to contribute to the defeat of any person or party that stands for the forcible subjugation of any people. We shall oppose for reelection all who in the white house or in congress betray American liberty in pursuit of un-American gains. We still hope that both of our great political parties will support and defend the declaration of independence in the closing campaign of the century.

We hold, with Abraham Lincoln, that "no man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent. When the white man governs himself, that is self-government, but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism." "Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defense is in the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men in all lands. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and under a just God cannot long retain it."

We cordially invite the co-operation of all men and women who remain loyal to the declaration of independence and the constitution of the United States.