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eingeschlagen haben, und ich darf wohl meiner Hoffnung Ausdruck geben, dass sie beide auf der Grundlage gegenseitigen Verständnisses und harmonischen Zusammenarbeitens einer Mission gerecht werden, die ihnen das Schicksal anvertraut hat.

RUDYARD KIPLING IN JAPAN

By

KENNETH P. KIRKWOOD

IT is rather a far cry from Lafcadio Hearn, the pathetic genius so early deserted in life by his soldier father and his young Greek mother, who, after being brought up under the guardian wing of an Aunt Sarah, had to shift for himself in the world of America and Japan,—to Rudyard Kipling, also born abroad, the nephew of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, the great English artist, nephew of Sir Edward Poynter another great English painter, and cousin of the Right Honourable Stanley Baldwin, Prime Minister of England. Yet although both Hearn and Kipling were in Japan within a year of each other, of Kipling's visit little is now remembered.

There is, so far as I know, no record in history of a poet—certainly of a living poet—who has not only added his name to about 40 books in the roster of English literature but has also added his name eight or more times to the atlas and gazetteer. He has, even while still alive, brought a trail of town names as his enduring monument. In America there are villages named after him from Western Canada to the Gulf of Mexico: There is a Kipling station in Saskatchewan; a Kipling in Ontario; Rudyard in Montana; Rudyard and Kipling in Michigan; Kipling in North Carolina; Rudyard in Mississippi; and Kipling in Louisiana. The Michigan Rudyard and Kipling were named by the president of the Soo Line Railway, who treasured an autograph poem by Kipling. There is, also, probably no living poet whose first printed works are now museum rarities for which from \$1,000 to \$1,300 per copy have been paid. In the great Huntington Library at Pasadena, California (erected by another literature-loving railway magnate),—perhaps the modern equivalent of the great Ptolemaic library of Alexandria—I have seen Kipling's manuscript poems under glass, sharing honours with the manuscripts of Robert Burns and Chaucer.

Born in Bombay in 1865, Kipling spent his first six years in the

romantic East, living much of the time with the servants, stately white-robed Hindus and Muslims, and grew to know the bazaars, the avenues, the shrines of calm-eyed Buddha and the elephant-trunked Ganesh with garlands of marigolds around his neck. Feast-days and processions, the glowing fruit market, the beach at sunset where the Parsees "standing in the scarlet waters, bow down before their God"—all these were his early background. Then he was sent to England to school, at "Westward Ho" College in North Devon, a school for sons of Anglo-Indian civil and military officers. He wrote of his days there in his splendid school-story *Stalky and Co.* In England—in the wet, cold climate, the dreariness and drabness, the lonely homesickness of a sunny-natured lad—he spent ten long, wistful years. Then, at sixteen, he returned to India, rejoining his father at Lahore. He found his first job as sub-editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, and like so many other great luminaries he attained the halls of literature through the back-doors of journalism and the printing-shop. He amused himself at odd moments by writing scraps of verse, as *fillers* for his paper. "Rukn-Din", says Kipling, "the foreman of our side, approved of them immensely, for he was a Muslim of culture. He would say: 'Your poetry very good, sahib: just coming proper length today. You giving more soon? One-third column just proper. Always can take on third page.'" Such was the making of a poet; *Departmental Ditties*, tailor-made, to the measurements of an Indian compositor! When in 1886, he printed his first slender little volume, he was its author, editor, printer and publisher, while he was still barely out of his teens. He sold them by mail-order. "The money", he said, "came back in poor but honest rupees and was transferred from the publisher, the left-hand pocket, direct to the author, the right-hand pocket." Business is hardly as simple in these more complex days!

In 1889 Kipling, by this time well-known, returned to England, where, like Burns in Edinburgh, and Byron who "woke to find himself famous", he found an immediate burst of cordial welcome and appreciation. Two years later he went to the United States, married an American girl, and settled down for five years in Vermont, where he wrote many of his children's books—for he became the proud father of two children while in America. After a subsequent trip to South Africa,

he finally returned to England and settled down in Sussex, where he lives with his children, his dogs and his fishing, now at the ripe old age of seventy.

II

On his way to England in 1889, with his Indian poems in his satchel, he travelled eastward, via Penang, Mandalay, Singapore, Hongkong, and Yokohama and thence to San Francisco and across America.

Kipling stopped over in Japan for about a month. Readers of his travel impressions *From Sea to Sea*,—mostly descriptive letters sent back to his paper in India—will have perhaps gained the feeling that here was a somewhat characteristic tourist, something of a "little Englander" in spite of his Indian birth and previous travels, who looked at everything in Japan through very English and very Victorian spectacles, and was, in tourist fashion, confused in his mind by the beauty of old Japan, the horrors of modernism and the new industrial civilization, the aspects and manners of those whom he called the "little Japs" and the viewpoints of the Anglo-American "old residents" in Japan who aired their peculiar views and ideas about the country to all the tourists who passed through. Throughout his visit, he seemed to have been half-preoccupied with thoughts and anticipations of his impending first visit to America; his notes on Japan are repeatedly interrupted with digressions on the Americanisms he discovered in the foreign hotels or in the tourist cohorts of Japan—the slang, the missionaries, the egotism of Bostonians and the rough-and-ready shoot-at-sight manners of the wild West and the Californians. These thoughts distracted him from a full appreciation of Japan; and what he did see was too often the subject for invidious comparisons with either England or India. There is indeed a certain irritating character to his reminiscences of Japan. We are told that the train from Kobe to Osaka had "a London and South Western carriage"; that the temple of Chion-in, at Kyoto, on a cherry festival, had "candles such as Holy Mother Church uses only on her greatest days"; that "the scene before me might have been unrolled in a Roman-Catholic cathedral, say the rich one at Arundel"; that at Arashiyama, "saving a few parts near Dacca and Patna, the face of the land was more thickly populated than Bengal

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and was worked five times better"; that on the journey from Kyoto to Yokohama, (which railway had been completed and opened only five days before Kipling's visit) the train "raced through four or five miles of the suburb of Patna, but a clean and glorified Patna bowered in bamboo plantations. Then it hit a tunnel and sailed forth into a section of the London, Chatham, and Dover, or whatever the railway is that wants to make the Channel Tunnel." Fujiyama must be compared with Kanchinunga in the Himalayas; Hakone was reached "by way of some Irish scenery, a Scotch trout stream, a Devonshire combe, and an Indian river running masterless over half a mile of pebbles". So Kipling the out-and-out journalist rattles on, visiting Miyanoshta and Nikko, stopping at the old Grand Hotel in Yokohama, and some forerunner of the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. In the capital, three months after the new Constitution had been promulgated, he was interested in the political-mindedness of the young men; but, having been brought up in the military circles of India, found even a greater fascination than politics his first day in Tokyo. "I was wrong", he says; "I know it. I ought to have investigated Tokyo and called upon some of the political leaders of the Liberal and Radical parties. There are a hundred things which I ought to have done, but somehow or other the bugles began to blare in the chill of the morning, and I heard the tramp of armed men under my window. The parade-ground was within a stone's throw of the Tokyo hotel; the Imperial troops were going on parade. Would *you* have bothered your head about politics or temples? I ran after them."

Such a light-hearted approach to Japan seems perhaps more in the manner of a Peter Fleming than a poet; but at that time, we must remember, Kipling was little more than a popular young journalist, and may be forgiven. He was then only 24 years of age, and was returning to England to be acclaimed as a catchy soldiers' and music-hall rhymster. Japan was a light interlude, in which he dispensed almost entirely with guide-books and factual knowledge. As he said of his Professor-companion, "the worst of travelling with an accurate man is his accuracy."

But we should not pass the young tourist over too slightly. Here and there we have lovely vignettes revealing his sense of the

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beauty of Japan. On route to Osaka from Kobe,

"on the seaboard we saw an almost continuous line of towns variegated with factory chimneys; inland, the crazy-quilt of green, dark-green and gold. Even in the rain the view was lovely, and exactly as Japanese pictures had led me to hope for."

He looks across at the yellow of the mustard.

"It lay in sheets round the line. It ran up the hills to the dark pines. It rioted over the brown sandbars of the swollen rivers, and faded away by mile after mile to the shores of the leaden sea. The high-peaked houses of brown thatch stood knee-deep in it, and it surged up to the factory chimneys of Osaka."

The Castle at Osaka impressed him greatly.

"Such a fort! Fifty feet was the height of the wall, and never a pinch of mortar in the whole. Nor was the face perpendicular, but curved like the ram of a man-of-war. They know the curve in China, and I have seen French artists introduce it into books describing a devil-besieged city of Tartary. Possibly everybody else knows it too, but that is not my affair; life as I have said being altogether new to me. The stone was granite, and the men of old time had used it like mud. The dressed blocks that made the profile of the angles were from twenty feet long, ten or twelve feet high, and as many in thickness. There was no attempt at binding, but there was no fault in the jointing. . . . Evil must it have been for the armies that led the assault on these monstrous walls. Castles in India I know, and the forts of great Emperors I had seen, but neither Akbar in the north, nor Scindia in the south, had built after this fashion—without ornament, without colour, but with a single eye to savage strength and the utmost purity of line."

We find something of the burning heart of a poet and a beauty-worshipper in another passage:

"Next morning, after a night's rain which sent the river racing under the frail balconies at eight miles an hour, the sun broke through the clouds. Is this a little matter to you who can count upon him daily? I had not seen him since March, and was beginning to feel anxious. Then the land of peach-blossom spread its draggled wings abroad and rejoiced. All the pretty maidens put

on their loveliest crepe sashes—fawn-colour, pink, blue, orange and lilac,—all the little children picked up a baby each, and went out to be happy. . . . I went also, but first ran along a boulevard by the side of the river, pretending to look at the Mint. This was only a common place of solid granite where they turn out dollars and rubbish of that kind. All along the boulevard the cherry, peach, and plum-trees, pink, white, and red, touched branches and made a belt of velvety soft colour as far as the eye could reach. Weeping willows were the normal ornaments of the waterside, this revel of bloom being only part of the prodigality of Spring. The Mint may make a hundred thousand dollars a day, but all the silver in its keeping will not bring again the three weeks of the peach-blossom which, even beyond the chrysanthemum, is the crown and glory of Japan.”

We must pass over Kipling's days at Kyoto, where he describes his days at the Miyako Hotel :

“ consorting with sixty of the *Sabib-log* in the quaintest hotel that you ever saw. . . . We were solemnly assured that hardly anyone came to Kioto. That is why we meet every soul in the ship that had brought us to Nagasaki ; and that is why our ears are constantly assailed with the clamour of people who are discussing places which must be ‘ done ’.”

He remarks that “ An Englishman is a very horrible person when he is on the war-path ; ” and then, to be truly international and to avoid unfair discrimination, adds, “ so is an American, a Frenchman, or a German.” Kipling's descriptions of the cloisonne workshop, the Satsuma pottery, and the blackwood cabinet shop which he visited are excellent ; of a cherry-blossom *matsuri* delightful, and his discovery of the big bell of Kyoto a gem.

Kipling, the youth, did not rise in literary style to the heights of beauty of Hearn, the mature writer, when confronted with the vision of Mount Fuji for the first time ; but then Kipling was only a journalist or literary artisan, while Hearn was consciously a literary artist and weaver of words. Kipling did his best, however, in a short paragraph :

“ I turned and beheld Fujiyama across a sea of upward-sloping fields and woods. It is about fourteen thousand feet high—not

very much, according to our ideas. But fourteen thousand feet above the sea when one stands in the midst of sixteen-thousand foot peaks is quite another thing from the same height noted at sea-level in a comparatively flat country. The labouring eye crawls up every foot of the dead crater's smooth flank, and at the summit confesses that it has seen nothing in all the Himalayas to match the Monster. I was satisfied. Fujiyama was exactly as I had seen it on fans and lacquer boxes ; I would not have sold my sight of it for the crest of Kanchinjunga flushed with morning. Fujiyama is the keynote of Japan. When you understand the one, you are in a position to learn something about the other.”

Hakone, Miyanoshita, the Grand Hotel in Yokohama, Kamakura, Nikko,—all these were included in Kipling's sojourn of one month in the year 1889, just a year before Hearn's arrival. He gives a sort of running account of these places, and inserts two lines :

“ Could I but write the things I see
My world would haste to gaze with me.”

He makes up a fantastic story about the red lacquer bridge at Nikko (which legend, he adds, “ you will not find in the guide-books ”). He sees the temples or what he thinks are temples :

“ I demanded the name of a yet more magnificent shrine across the courtyard. It was red-lacquered like the others, but above its main door were carved in open work three apes—one with his hands to his ears, another covering his mouth, and a third blinding his eyes.

“ ‘ That place ’, said the guide, ‘ used to be a stable when the Daimio kept his horses there. The monkeys are the three who hear no wrong, say no wrong, and see no wrong.’ ”

“ ‘ Of course,’ I said, ‘ What a splendid device for a stable where the grooms steal the grain ! ’ I was angry because I had grovelled before a godown and a stable, though the round world cannot hold their equals.”

Finally he re-met his travelling companion, the unnamed Professor murmuring expletives of admiration. “ ‘ What have you done ? What have you seen ? ’ said he. ‘ Nothing. I've accumulated a lot of impressions of no use to anyone but the owner ’.” And so we may

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conclude these observations of Kipling's visit to Japan. On the eve of his departure to America, a new *terra incognita* to him, he "counted the gain of our sojourn in the Land of Little Children more closely than many men count their silver."

"Nagasaki with the grey temples, green hills, and all the wonder of a first-seen shore; the Inland Sea, a thirty-hour panorama of passing islets drawn in grey and buff and silver for our delight; Kobe, where we fed well and went to a theatre; Osaka of the canals and the peach-blossom; Kioto—happy, lazy, sumptuous Kioto, and the blue rapids and innocent delights of Arashiyama; Otsu on the shoreless, rainy lake; Miyanoshita in the hills; Kamakura by the tumbling Pacific, where the great god Buddha sits and equally hears the centuries and the seas murmur in his ears; Nikko, fairest of all places under the sun; Tokio, the two-thirds civilized and altogether progressive warren of humanity, and composite Franco-American Yokohama; we renewed them all; sorting out and putting aside our special treasures of memory. If we stayed longer, we might be disillusioned, and yet—surely, that would be impossible."

Kipling's passage across the dreary cold Pacific to America was made in May 1889, just a year before Hearn's crossing of the Pacific in the opposite direction in May 1890. Their impressions of their ocean trips are in comparison interesting; Kipling interested in his travelling companions and the human-interest side of ship-board life; Hearn interested in his books and dreams and mental adjustments to his anticipated *terra nova*. Both found the crossing dull and stormy and depressing; for the vessels—half-steam and half-sail in those bygone days—were scarcely vessels of comfort, in late winter seas and seasons.

III

There is internal evidence, from Kipling's collected poems, that he did two things before he joined his ship in Yokohama. He went, in proper tourist style, to Kamakura; and he may have stopped to slake his thirst at the "Dewdrop Dining Rooms",—possibly a long-vanished seaman's resort. The only poem he actually wrote about Japan seems to be *The Buddha at Kamakura*:

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The gray-robed, gay-sashed butterflies
That flit beneath the Master's eyes—
He is beyond the Mysteries
But loves them at Kamakura.

And whoso will, from Pride released,
Contemning neither creed nor priest,
May feel the soul of all the East
About him at Kamakura.

* * *

A tourist-show, a legend told,
A rusting bulk of bronze and gold,
So much, and scarce so much, ye hold
The meaning at Kamakura?

But when the morning prayer is prayed,
Think, ere ye pass to strife and trade,
Is God in human image made
No nearer than Kamakura?

Lafcadio Hearn whose sensitive and extremely percipient gift of criticism needs no mention, was impressed with this poem. In a letter to the late Professor Chamberlain, he wrote, "I hope Mason has preserved for you the pretty lines of Rudyard Kipling about the Daibutsu at Kamakura. I enjoy him,—not the poetry of the effort, but the prose of it. It is delicious. Alas! I had written my commonplace stuff about the Daibutsu long ago;—long before. Would I could atone for it now! But then Kipling is a giant in all things compared to me. I despair when I read that man's work. 'Calm as a deep still water', says an ancient Sutra of the Teacher. And there at Kamakura He is even so—deep, still, and luminous as the ether. . . . To lie about the beautiful is to lie about the Infinite Goodness and the Heart of Life,—and there is forgiveness never for that sin". And in another letter the following year, he remarks: "Kipling's little sketch of Kamakura is true art; perfectly controlled, subtle, didactic. But I wonder if the mass of his readers can feel the delicacy of him. I fear they mostly seek the story only".

One of Kipling's greatest ballads is that of *The Rhyme of the Three Sealers*, the tale of rival captains of piratical ships attempting to steal

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a march in the sealing waters off the Russian coast.

Away by the lands of the Japanee
Where the paper lanterns glow
And the crews of all the shipping drink
In the house of Blood Street Joe,
At twilight, when the landward breeze
Brings up the harbour noise,
And ebb of Yokohama Bay
Swigs chattering through the buoys,
In Cisco's Dewdrop Dining Rooms
They tell a tale anew
Of a hidden sea and a hidden fight,
When the 'Baltic' ran from the 'Northern Light'
And the 'Stralsund' fought the two.

There is not space to tell the tale that Kipling heard that day in Yokohama; but here is how it commences, like the best of thrillers:

It was the sealer 'Northern Light', to the Smoky
Seashore bore;
With a stovepipe stuck from a starboard port and
the Russian flag at her fore.
('Baltic', 'Stralsund' and 'Northern Light'—oh!
they were birds of a feather—
Slipping away to the Smoky Seas, three seal-thieves
together!)
And at last she came to a sandy cove and the
'Baltic' lay therein,
But her men were up with the herding seal to
drive and club and skin.
There were fifteen hundred skins abeach, cool pelt
and proper fur,
When the 'Northern Light' drove into the bight
and the sea-mist drove with her.
The 'Baltic' called her men and weighed—she
could not choose but run—
For a stovepipe seen through the closing mist,
it shows like a four-inch gun
(And loss it is that is sad as death to lose both
trip and ship

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And lie for a rotting contraband on Vladivostock slip.).
She turned and dived in the sea-smother as a rabbit
dives in the whins,
And the 'Northern Light' sent up her boats to steal
the stolen skins.
They had not brought a load to side or slid their
hatches clear,
When they were aware of a sloop-of-war, ghost white
and very near.
Her flag she showed, and her guns she showed—
three of them, black, abeam,
And a funnel white with the crusted salt,
but never a show of steam."

That this little story appealed to Lafcadio Hearn greatly is revealed in one of his letters to Professor Chamberlain. "I read Kipling's ballad three times last night, and every time I found new surprises in it. Queer how he hits the local colour and the exact human tone always. I used to chat while stopping at Carey's in Yokohama with just such men and the sealers. I rather like seamen, engineers—all that hard class. They can tell you wonderful things; and their talk is never dull. But to use it like Kipling one must have worked with them, liked their life. I always fail in trying to work out one of their yarns; the stage of the action is too unfamiliar to me". Again, Hearn writes: "The more I read Kipling's 'The Rhyme of Three Sealers', the more I am astonished at the immense power of the thing. It gains with every reading. And how little of the world's modern fiction and poetry does this! It is the sign of true genius,—the perfect imagination that reaches its goal by unknown methods. There is, indeed the trouble you spoke of long ago,—that it is written in a dialect, so to speak, which may change rapidly. Still I doubt if our rough speech changes much more rapidly than does our refined tongue. The English of the eighteenth century is not the English of to-day, though we understand and admire it. Kipling must last, anyhow, a hundred years,—that will make his best work classic.

"But what are 'sheer strakes', 'bends and butts', 'cleats' and 'topping-lifts'? You will confess that, though mysterious to the landlubber, there is a blocky, bumping, raking force, even in the sound

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of them that tells. Yet again, *what*—Oh what is a '*holluschickie*'? Is it a kite?—a pi-yoro-yoro? Weird and funny at once—isn't it?

'And we'll go up to the wrath of God as the *holluschickie* goes'

'But he'll lie down on the killing-grounds where the *holluschickie* go?'

But it seems to me that, leaving the descriptive art of the thing out of the question as above all praise, Kipling reaches his supreme art in the two simple lines:—

'And west you'll turn and south again, beyond the sea-fog's rim,

And tell the Yoshiwara girls to burn a stick for him'. . .

It is, of course, the very first time that any Western writer ever succeeded in making infinite poetry with that much befouled word;—there is more art in that one line than in all '*Madame Chrysantheme*'. But that isn't the wonder alone; the wonder is, that with that simplest touch, a whole world of pathos,—the whole romance and better nature of the rough sailor appears,—his rude tenderness,—his superstition,—his isolation,—his vague empiric education by travel, teaching him that one faith may be as good as another,—his consciousness of no hope from his own by the breaking of every law, human and divine,—and fifty other things. That is sheer magic. One word more would have spoiled the effect. One word less would have rendered it impossible. And no genius—not Victor Hugo—could ever have changed a word without ruining the perfect balance of the whole infinitely pathetic utterance,—the moral of it,—the poetry of it,—'the pity of it'. I won't try to praise the rest of the astonishing study,—the sudden change of feeling from anger to kindness,—the change of the *modern* man, wicked only for a reason, for a profit,—good underneath all. But one could write a book on the thing". To this Hearn wrote an added line: "I wrote an extravagant note to you yesterday about Kipling's last. But it really expressed my conviction and feeling. The thing is wonderful and haunts me asleep and awake".

With this reference to the tale heard in "Cisco's Dewdrop Dining Room" or in the house of "Blood Street Joe", we may leave Kipling. Now that he is spending his septuagenarian years in his beloved Sussex, he perhaps includes a recollection of Japan of 1889, in those lines of the *Tramp Royal*:

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Speakin' in general, I 'ave tried 'em all,
The 'appy roads that take you o'er the world.
Speakin' in general, I 'ave found 'em good
For such as cannot use one bed too long,
But must get 'ence, the same as I 'ave done,
An' go observin' matters till I die.

It's like a book, I think, this bloomin' world,
Which you can read and care for just so long,
But presently you feel that you will die
Unless you get the page you're readin' done
An' turn another—likely not so good;
But what you're after is to turn 'em all.

God bless this world! Whatsoever she 'ath done—
Excep' when awful long—I've found it good.
So write, before I die, " 'E liked it all! "